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The 1995 Nora and Edward Ryerson Lecture

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Introduction

By President Hugo F. Sonnenschein

I am delighted to introduce this afternoon's Ryerson Lecture. The Ryerson Lecture, which honors University benefactors Nora and Edward Ryerson, is given annually by a distinguished member of the Chicago faculty. The Ryerson lecturer is asked to use this occasion to reflect on her intellectual life and work. To be selected to deliver the Ryerson Lecture is the highest mark of the esteem of one's colleagues from throughout the University.

Today's Ryerson Lecture will be given by Wendy Doniger. Wendy is a Sanskrit scholar of the greatest distinction and an expert on Hindu mythology and culture in South Asia. She joined our faculty in 1978 and is a Professor in the Divinity School, the College, the Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations, and the Committee on Social Thought. Wendy was named the Mircea Eliade Professor in 1986. She is widely regarded as the intellectual heir of her late colleague Eliade, as well as one of the foremost historians of religions of the post-Eliade generation.

Eliade is famous for having examined the decadence of myths and their importance in the modern context. Myths are a central

theme in Wendy's work. She has a deep appreciation for the narrative power of epic and folk tales. Wendy has worked throughout her career to put life back into a whole series of classical Indian texts that had been sanitized by earlier translators and interpreters—restoring their candor and freshness—making them accessible to a wide audience. In the embattled discourses about the propriety of picturing India on the basis of classical texts, Wendy stands out as a person who dramatically and cheerfully gives the gift of this extraordinary writing to her students and a wider audience.

Myths shed light on both the particular and the universal themes of human existence. Indian classical texts are extremely rich sources for a vast range of social commentary. And, as some have put it, they are “very juicy.” Many classical tales overflow with sexual fluids, bodily excretions, and blood sacrifices. Entire generations of scholars were introduced to these myths through the texts of nineteenth-century translators and interpreters who tended to insert Protestant traditions and Victorian values into their translations, reading the texts to conform with the morality of their time—thereby avoiding the sexual implications and antics, and thus misrepresenting the texts. In the introduction to her translation

of *The Laws of Manu*, Wendy argues that the most readily available and accepted translation—before her own—is not good enough. In Wendy's words, “[the translator's] squeamishness about sex—or to be fair, the squeamishness of his time—led him not only to use misleading euphemisms but to hedge and even to misconstrue many passages dealing with sexual matters.” This perspective provides the framework for her own work which openly examines the power and meaning of stories about bestiality, homosexuality, sex with menstruating women, rape, and incestuous relations. Indeed, it is not too difficult to imagine that some of the quite earthy descriptive passages, such as myths implying that people are drinking blood, making love to their mothers, or having sex with something other than a member of the opposite sex may still raise a few eyebrows. Wendy has opened up a whole new world—a world where members of inferior castes are called “puppy cooks”—the label used by Brahmins—for whom vegetarianism is an ideal. Wendy's candor—her honest reading—restores the character and imagination of the original text.

Wendy has made important contributions to our understanding of such central issues within the field of the history of

religions as the relationship of religious asceticism and eroticism, the nature of evil, the meaning and significance of androgynous individuals, the dynamic correlations of dreaming, illusion, and reality, the symbolism of animals, heroic motifs, and the relationship of myth and ritual. Her teaching and research address themes that cross cultures, spanning from ancient India and Greece to present-day America.

Wendy is the author or editor of more than twenty books. She is the editor of the English-language version of Yves Bonnefoy's *Mythologies*, the world's most comprehensive encyclopedia of world mythologies. She is the author of *Other People's Myths: the Cave of Echoes; Dreams, Illusions, and Other Realities*; and *Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts*.

She was named a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1989; she is on the board of directors of the American Council of Learned Societies.

On the back of one of her books it says, “like a goddess with ten arms, Wendy casts her illuminating shafts over an expanse of more than 3,000 years.” It is my pleasure to introduce Wendy Doniger, whose lecture today will shed some light on “Myths and Methods in the Dark.”

“Myths and Methods in the Dark”

By Wendy Doniger

The problem of the same and the different has become a major tension within the field of comparative mythology, in which theories that emphasize the identity of two variants of a story and ignore their differences are regarded as amounting to “a night in which all cows are black.” The texts themselves, the stories, shine light on this same question from a different direction, when they present masquerades in which different women (the sexist argument) or different people of another culture (the racist argument) appear to be alike in the night, or in the dark, or in bed—just like those black cows (or, as they often become, gray cats). Our attitude to the animal world, too, as it is expressed both in the metaphors that we use to explain our own animality to ourselves (such as cats in the night) and in the ways in which we define different species through their differential matings, demonstrates the crucial, taxonomizing importance of telling our mates apart. The unique position of myths as both the heart of this problem and its solution is the subject of my Ryerson lecture. That is, I wish to consider myths about the *problems* that arise when someone regards two different individuals in the dark as “the same” and, in so doing, to use those myths in order to demonstrate the *advantages* that arise when a scholar regards stories from two different cultures as, in some ways, the same.

Let me begin with the methodological question of the same and the different as it applies to texts and then consider the basic agenda of the mythology of sexual masquerade and its application first to women

and then to people of other races. After a brief consideration of the problem of differentiation among mating animals, we will, finally, return to texts to consider the ability of myths to mediate between the same and the different.

The Same and the Different

The tension between sameness and difference has become a crucial issue for the self-definitions of post-modernism. This is one of the many reasons why, in the discipline of the history of religions, universalist comparative studies, of the sort that Mircea Eliade once made so popular, have been, by and large, fired from the Western canon. There is, I think, some irony in the fact that the modern comparative study of religion was in large part designed in the pious hope of teaching our own people that “alien” religions were like “ours” (Christianity, more precisely Protestantism) in many ways, so that we would no longer hate and kill the followers of those religions. A glance at any newspaper should tell us that this goal has yet to be fulfilled. We must also acknowledge that we also share the negative aspects of other peoples' prejudices (such as their attitudes to women).

But the academic world, having gone beyond this simplistic paradigm, now suffers from a post-post-colonial backlash: in this age of multinationalism, to assume that two texts from different cultures are “the same” in any significant way is regarded as demeaning to the individualism of each, a reflection of the old racist attitude that “all wogs look alike”—in the dark, all cats are

gray. And in the climate of anti-Orientalism, it is regarded as imperialist of a scholar to stand outside (presumably, above) two different cultures and to equate them.

It is also sometimes argued that transcultural themes, being essentially ahistorical, imprison us in stereotypes of gender and power. But it is by no means the case that what we regard as archetypal, universal, or even natural is immutable or desirable; it is merely *given*.¹ And we can change what is given; indeed it is easier to change it if we acknowledge that it is, in fact, given. “I have seen the enemy, and he is us” is surely true of archetypes. Stories do not merely reflect the eternal, reactionary archetype or even the present hegemonic *Zeitgeist*, but, as Bruce Lincoln has demonstrated, subvert the dominant paradigm.² Storytellers may, like Judo wrestlers, use the very weight of archetypes to throw them, and with them to throw the prejudices that have colored them for centuries. Call it deconstruction, call it subversion, or just call it creative storytelling.

I am unwilling to close the comparativist shop just because it is being picketed by people with whose views I happen, by and large, to agree. I want to salvage the broad comparative agenda, even if I acquiesce, or even participate, in the savaging of certain of its elements. In particular, I want to make peace between pre-modern typologies and post-modern *différence* in comparativism, to bring into a single (if not necessarily harmonious) conversation the genuinely different approaches that several cultures have made to similar (if not the same) human problems.

For where extreme universalism means

that the other is exactly like you, extreme nominalism means that the other may not be human at all.³ Moreover, there is a real danger of leaping from the frying pan of universalism into the fire of the kind of essentialism that results from contextualizing a story in one cultural group; for we may find that the members of the “group” may approach the story very differently, and it is just as insulting to say that all Japanese (or *fin de siècle* types) are alike as to say that the Japanese are just like the French. The monolithic focus on the class or ethnic group can become not only boring, but racist.

One way to sidestep this problem would be to anchor our cross-cultural paradigms in an investigation of the unique insights of particular tellings of our cross-cultural themes, to focus on the individual and the human on both ends of the spectrum—one story, and then the human race—thus not so much ignoring the problematic cultural generalizations in the middle as leaping over them altogether. This focus balances the move outward, from culture to cross-culture, with a move inward, from culture to the individual author. It argues that *Hamlet* must be read not merely as a typical (or even atypical) Oedipal conflict, nor merely in the context of Elizabethan England, but as the peculiar insight of one Elizabethan Englishman who was in many ways different from all other Elizabethan Englishmen. By concentrating on the insights from individual stories, we need not assume that all Hindus are alike, or all Jews. Rather, every telling is different, and a telling from one country is as likely to share something with a telling from another as with a telling from elsewhere in the same country.

The focus upon individual insight leads us to a kind of second naïveté: it leads us to posit a “sameness” based not on any quasi-Jungian universalism but on a kind of

pointillism, formed from the individual points of individual authors whose insights transcend their particular moment and speak to us across time and space: individuals who move us on the level of what David Tracy calls the classic.⁴ Those who would regard universalism as a colonialist debasement of the integrity of the ethnic unit might also regard such an emphasis upon individual creativity as an élitist debasement of the democratic unit. But surely this need not be the case. It is just as foolish to assume that an emphasis on the individual will be élitist as it is to assume that the opposite emphasis, on the entire human race, will be fascist. By searching for our individual artists not merely in the bastions of the Western canon but in the neglected byways of oral traditions and rejected heresies, by paying homage to the many Tolstoys among the Zulus (to respond to Saul Bellow's notorious challenge⁵), one is arguing not for a narrow range of cultural excellence but, on the contrary, for a wider construction of cross-cultural inspiration. It is also arguing, ultimately, for the extreme case of difference, for that particular flash of difference that is best illuminated by the context of sameness.

The argument against sameness, for all its timeliness (or even trendiness) is hardly new. Hegel wrote that a naïve philosophy of Oneness in which "everything was the same in the Absolute" (recognizable to everyone as Schelling's doctrine) meant that the Absolute was "like a night, as people say, in which all cows are black."⁶ Certain Marxists (the Situationists, in Paris in the 1960's) borrowed this methodological metaphor (together with much else) from Hegel. Arguing that bureaucrats in the Soviet Union and China had become identical state capitalists, class powers, even while each accused the other of not being sufficiently revolutionary, they concluded: "Ideology, pushed to its extreme, *shatters*. Its absolute use is also its absolute zero: the night in which all ideological cows are black."⁷ Thus the competing ideologies were, as Michael O'Flaherty has glossed this twist of the trope, all equally black in the shadow cast on all of them by the workers.⁸

Ernest Gellner added another twist when he used the metaphor to tell a joke *against* Marxism:

There is an old East European joke concerning the differences between science, philosophy, and Marxism. What is science? It is trying to catch a very small black cat in a very large, entirely dark room. What is philosophy? It is trying to catch a very small black cat in a very large, entirely dark room, when it is not there. What is Marxism? It is trying to catch a very small black cat in a very large, entirely dark room when it is not there, and pretending that one has caught it and knows all about it.⁹

This is not, I think, a fair characterization of science, or philosophy (except, perhaps, Hegel's Schelling), or Marxism, though it does note their differences, but it is a not entirely inaccurate characterization of myths in which people pretend that they know that all women or Others (cows or cats) are alike. More precisely, these myths demonstrate, as Gellner implies of his three

ideologies, that people are *wrong* to think that they can recognize others in the dark, let alone that the others are all alike in the dark.

The problem that is posed by the analysis of myth—"Why is this variant different from all other variants?" (to invoke the phrasing of the Passover question) is mirrored or doubled by the problem posed within the myth—"Why is this person different from all other persons?" For the metaphor of identical cows or cats in the dark, stigmatizing methods of the analysis of myths which overemphasize the same and ignore the different, is also embodied in the texts of sexual masquerade, in which a person cannot tell two different people apart in the dark.

The Bed Trick

You go to bed with someone you think you know, and when you wake up you discover that it was someone else—another man, or another woman, or a man instead of a woman, or a woman instead of a man, or a god, or a snake, or a complete stranger, or your own wife or husband, or your mother. Why weren't you able to tell the difference in the dark? And why does it matter? These myths begin by assuming that if two people look alike, one cannot tell them apart, but they go on to tell us that the people who look alike are not in fact the same person, that we must strive to find other ways (the voice, the scar, history, memory, the mind, the actions) to tell the two apart. On this second level, the face proves to be a false image of sameness, and the myths warn us that we must go deeper to find the soul beneath the face. Although the stories seem to begin by privileging vision, the fact that the reader or hearer always knows that the people who look alike are not alike is a clue to the not-so-hidden agenda of the ancient stories, which is, like that of our own contemporary discourse, to deconstruct vision.

This myth, which is also the basis of Freud's Family Romance (in which the child's parents turn out to be other, better people than his apparent parents), and which Shakespearean scholars call "the bed trick,"¹⁰ should make it onto anyone's list of the Ten Greatest Hits of World Mythology. In the Western tradition alone, there are Rachel and Leah, and Tamar and Judah, and (I think) Ruth and Naomi in the Hebrew Bible; Isolde and Brangane in the medieval European tradition. There are sexual masquerades in so many Shakespeare plays, especially *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure*, and in opera: Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Così fan tutte*, Richard Strauss's *Rosenkavalier* and *Arabella*, Johann Strauss's *Fledermaus*. And then there are the trans-sexual masquerades in the contemporary theater (*M. Butterfly*, *Prelude to a Kiss*) and films (*Some Like It Hot*, *Tootsie*, *The Crying Game*). And if we move outside the West to India and beyond (if there is anything beyond India), we encounter an eleventh-century Japanese novel about a brother and sister who change places in their respective marital beds,¹¹ a seventeenth-century Chinese satire on the Family Romance,¹² Inuit¹³ and Bedouin¹⁴ tales of women who kill their daughters and take their places in bed, to say nothing of the infinite variety of sexual

masquerades in the Arabian Nights.¹⁵

But can we generalize about the human meanings that flesh out the abstract armatures in all of these myths? We cannot, I think, make many statements that will apply to *all* the myths, but we can isolate several patterns that do seem to occur in many of them and that may represent several alternative views of human sexuality in the mythological context.

Why are sexual masquerades different from all other masquerades? (to invoke another variant of the Passover question). My tentative answer is that the sexual masquerade is the most compelling form of the more general masquerade because the sexual act is in itself the most "doubling" and "undoubling" of acts. Where all other doubles split into two, sexual doubles split into one. That is, there are all sorts of reasons, sexual and non-sexual, for an individual to proliferate personalities; but in the sexual act, the opposite happens: two become one, as the double (the couple) coalesces into the one "beast with two backs," as Shakespeare's Iago put it, in the paradigmatic tale of sexual (and racial) jealousy.¹⁶ The myths of sexual masquerade represent this tension between the urge to diverge and the urge to merge.

Yet another reason why the sexual deception is the most important masquerade, and why there are so many stories about it, is because people are more deceptive about sex than about anything else. As Gottfried von Strassburg remarks of Isolde's bed trick, she "devised the best ruse that she could at this juncture, namely that they should simply ask Brangane to lie at Mark's side during the first night. . . . Thus love instructs honest minds to practice perfidy."¹⁷ We lie to ourselves in bed. We lie about who our partners are and about who we are. As Lord Henry remarks, in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, "When one is in love, one always begins by deceiving one's self, and one always ends by deceiving others. That is what the world calls romance."¹⁸ And as Anthony Lane remarked, in his *New Yorker* review of *The Social Organization of Sexuality* (a runaway bestseller published by the University of Chicago Press): "These books are not about sex. They are not even about dancing. They are about lying. . . . Read a sentence such as, 'Men report that they experience fellatio at a far greater rate than women report providing it,' and you find yourself glancing down a long, shady vista of self-delusion."¹⁹

Yet, despite all the lies that surround it, there is a kind of naked, brutal honesty in the sexual act. Many myths argue that the body tells the truth, and that the sexual act is the ultimate touchstone, the ultimate key to identity. The belief that the sexual act is revelatory of a concealed identity recurs throughout world mythology. In this view, the real person is the person glimpsed in bed, while the person whom we see at other times is a veneer, a superficial double. Sexuality is not the basic problem of identity, a problem that precedes the sexual act, but sexuality provides one way—a most vivid and captivating way—of approaching the question of inside versus outside in narrative.

The brutal form of the paradigm states that truth inheres in the physical act of sex; the more romantic form of the same para-

digim seeks the truth in the more spiritual act of falling in love (which is, of course, not at all the same thing as falling into bed). These myths argue that love, sexual love, is the most reliable criterion of personal identity: the one you love is the one you know, and the one you know is the real one. They argue that, if there is *veritas in vino*, there is surely *veritas in coitu*; it is the outer trappings that lie; at the eye of the sexual storm is another sort of eye that sees the truth, for some people their only truth. Michel Foucault sums up the case very well indeed:

And then, we also admit that it is in the area of sex that we must search for the most secret and profound truths about the individual, that it is there that we can best discover what he is and what determines him. And if it was believed for centuries that it was necessary to hide sexual matters because they were shameful, we now know that it is sex itself which hides the most secret parts of the individual: the structure of his fantasies, the roots of his ego, the forms of his relationship to reality. At the bottom of sex, there is truth.²⁰

But Freud did not invent the belief that sex is where we find the truth about an individual's often masquerading identity; he borrowed it, like so much else, from the texts of myths from other times and other cultures. Nor is it, even in our culture, merely a psychoanalytic truism. There is also a theological basis for our privileging of sexual experience, what Ralph Harper called the "secret hope that in sex we may still be able to experience the intimacy of real presence."²¹ This, too, is expressed throughout the mythology in which sexual desire drives gods to assume human forms, as Zeus became incarnate as Amphitryon to seduce Alcmena, or the Hindu god Indra became incarnate as the sage Gautama to seduce Ahalya.

But, against these more physiologically oriented myths, which argue that bodies don't lie, we must balance the more spiritually oriented myths which seem to argue that the body *does* lie, and that the mind, or the soul, or speech, or knowledge, supplies the touchstone, the key. These are matters of degree: for the myth expresses the paradox as a tension between both of these points of view, the tension between the mind and the body. This, then, is the paradox: the sexual act is simultaneously the most deceptive and the most truth-revealing of human acts.

In the Dark, All Female Cats Are Gray

The use of cats in the dark as a metaphor for the ignoring of difference when sight is obscured enters recorded Indo-European literature as a remark not about cats at all (or cows), but about women. It's in Plutarch, and it occurs in a most interesting context:

One day a woman said to Philip, who was trying to make her come to him against her will, "Let me go. Every woman is the same when the lamp is out." This is a good thing to say to adulterous and lustful men, but a married woman should be, *especially* when the light is out, not the same as random women. On the contrary, when her body cannot be seen,

her wisdom, her constancy, and her affection, and her belonging personally to her husband alone, should be apparent.²²

The proverb of the lamp has a double edge: if a rapist thinks all women are alike, he might be dissuaded from raping any particular one; but if a husband knows that all women are not alike, he will appreciate his wife's good qualities—including the quality that he prizes most in her, that is, that she regards *him* as unique.

The cats stand in for the women in John Heywood's *Proverbs*, in 1546, where the lamps have become candles: "When all candles be out, all cats be grey."²³ Shakespeare used it to suggest homeliness masquerading as beauty in *As You Like It*, when Rosalind, masquerading as a man, mocks Phebe: "What though you have no beauty,—As by my faith, I see no more in you Than without candle may go dark to bed."²⁴ Robert Herrick, in 1648, got rid of the cats, substituted class for beauty (a point to which we shall return) and the phrase "in the dark" for the candles, in a poem actually entitled "No Difference i' th' Dark," which included the lines, "Night makes no difference 'twixt the Priest and Clerk; Joan as my Lady is as good i' the Dark."²⁵ Yeats used the candles in his poem, "The Three Bushes," about a woman who says to her maid (class again), whom she sends to substitute for her in the dark:

'So you must lie beside him
And let him think me there.
And maybe we are all the same
Where no candles are,
And maybe we are all the same
That strip the body bare.'

Women are implicated as soon as the phrases "in the dark" or "without candles" are taken to imply "in bed" or "for sex" (and, of course, a male subject). Cows and cats present two rather different sorts of sexist images of women—cats being over-sexed, cows under-sexed.²⁶ The Germans (or, rather, if I am to avoid the very cultural essentialism and stereotyping that I am here decrying, *some* Germans) apparently switched from cats to cows (so Indo-Aryan, so bovine, so domesticating, so redolent of *Kinder, Kü[c]he, Kirche*). The metaphor of cats or cows in the dark comes to function primarily as a sexual metaphor, with only secondary philosophical or political overtones. Indeed, it implies not that men have regarded women as indistinguishable *even* in the dark (in bed, in situations of intimacy where we might most expect a difference) but *especially* in the dark, since it was precisely women's sexuality that was taken as their essence and that was regarded as essentially the same in all women in the dark, just as their beauty was essentialized and universalized in the light. Thomas Laqueur argues that, in what he calls the one-sex model of pre-Enlightenment anatomy, woman is merely a flawed double of man, and there is no *difference* not only between women but between women and men.²⁷ R. Howard Bloch defines "misogyny as a speech act in which woman is the subject of the sentence and the predicate a more general term. . . . Even the sentence, 'All women are different' is included in such

a definition, since there are among women as among men, points of resemblance that reduce such a statement to a violating generalization. . . ."²⁸ It is interesting to note, in passing, that Bloch's defense of an individual's difference includes the right to resemble another individual.

The metaphor of cats in the dark expresses men's belief that women are fungible, like certain kinds of money—or certain ideological stances. The sameness is also implicit in the use of "gray" rather than "black" for the invisible animal (except in the Hegel-Marx branch of the family), indicating something neither black nor white, as we might say, something that lacks all color, all character. It was certainly used in this way by Benjamin Franklin, in a letter, written on June 25, 1745, in which he gave eight reasons to bed older women, of which the last, and the most notorious is, "They are so grateful!!!"²⁹ But the fifth is the one that concerns us here:

Covering all above with a Basket, and regarding only what is below the Girdle, it is impossible of two Women to know an old from a young one. And as in the Dark all Cats are grey, the Pleasure of Corporal Enjoyment with an old Woman is at least equal and frequently superior; every Knack being by Practice capable of improvement.

The basket over the head eventually found its way into the American locker-room put-down of women: "Put a bag over her head." The remark about cats is best known in the French, "Dans la nuit, tous les chats sont gris," which not only rhymes but plays upon the obscene feminine meaning of "chat." But the myth is found all over the world.

In the Dark, All Black Cats Are Gray

Sexism may make a man regard the woman as a mere object, so that he does not take the trouble to find out who she really is; so does his scorn for the other, for the person of a lower class or darker color, who is not worth looking at carefully. Both sexism and racism or classism cloud the judgment so that the other is beneath contempt, or at least beneath recognition. Both sexism and racism dehumanize, deindividualize, the sexually and racially other; "All Japanese look alike" is the racist counterpart to the sexist, "In the dark, all cats are grey"—meaning, especially black cats. After all, the essence of prejudice has been defined as the assumption that an unknown individual has all the characteristics of the group to which he or she belongs. "Visible minorities" is the phrase used in Canada for people whose disabilities are not hidden (like those of some nationalities, presumably, as well as people with disabilities like deafness), but written on their faces. Yet, as Ralph Ellison pointed out years ago, people of other races often become virtually invisible.³⁰ We speak of racial discrimination, but the myths teach us that the real problem is racial *indiscrimination*—our unwillingness to discriminate between two different members of another race.

Issues of race and class are endemic to this mythology. The Hindu myth of the

origin of the human race, first recorded in the *Rg Veda* 3,000 years ago, plays upon the term *varna*, meaning type, or class, or color: a goddess abandoned her husband because he was not of the same class (i.e., not immortal like herself), and left in her place a female "of the same class" (*varna*, presumably her class)—whom he took to be the same woman and on whom he begot our ancestors.³¹ In the Epic retelling a thousand years later, this becomes the story of a goddess who abandoned her husband because he was of a darker color, and left in her place her own dark shadow "of the same class" (*varna* again, though now presumably *his* class), with the same results.³² The folklorist Stith Thompson assigned to what he called "The Black and White Bride" an entire Tale Type, TT 403, distributed throughout the world. The dark skin identifies some of these people as lower class (in India, often of lower caste), and others as foreign or of other races.

Racism and sexism are often conflated not merely through peoples' shared attitude to the sameness of the sexual or racial other, but in their *equation* of the sexual and racial other. There is another metaphor of darkness that holds the key to many of these myths, and that is the depiction of the woman herself as dark; or, to put it differently, there are many ways in which the sexual other—the woman—is conflated with the racial other. Freud's use of the term "dark continent" to describe female sexuality has racial implications; he "borrowed the phrase from Victorian colonialist texts in which it was used to designate Africa."³³

The play and film, *M. Butterfly*, is about sexism and racism. (So, of course, is the opera that it quotes, in which the hero is named, significantly, Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton). It was based on the *true* story of a French diplomat who went to China, met a famous male opera singer who played female roles, took him/her to be a woman, fell in love with her/him, was charged with treason, and, perhaps, discovered only in the course of his trial that she was a man. The racism inheres, first of all, in the fact that the Frenchman didn't bother to find out that the Chinese always have men play the roles of women. Moreover, the confusion between the Japanese heroine of the opera and the Chinese heroine of the play is yet another instance of racism: all Japanese not only look alike but look like all Chinese. The masquerade worked by understanding, and circumventing, and, ultimately, manipulating the confluence of sexism and racism in the victim of the masquerade (who is the oppressor of the masquerader). This is how the tables (or beds) were turned in the play, as the masquerader confesses:

The West thinks of itself as masculine—big guns, big industry, big money—so the East is feminine—weak, delicate, poor . . . but good at art, and full of inscrutable wisdom—the feminine mystique. Her mouth says no, but her eyes say yes. The West believes the East, deep down, *wants* to be dominated—because a woman can't think for herself. You expect Oriental countries to submit to your guns, and you expect Oriental women to be submissive to your men. That's why you say they make the best wives.

. . . Being an Oriental, I could never be completely a Man.³⁴

Racial pride also played a part in the trial of the real French diplomat, Boursicot, as Marge Garber points out: "At least one French judge seemed less appalled by the evidence of treachery than by the apparent fact that a Frenchman was unable to tell the difference between a man and a woman. . . . To the British, the answer to the 'conundrum' was that Boursicot was gay; to the French, the answer—shameful to admit—was that he was a nerd."³⁵

The issue of class is also common enough in these stories: the whole Family Romance, after all, is predicated on the child's fantasy that his true parents are of more noble birth, a higher class, than his apparent parents. This same power structure is the basis of the many myths in which women send their servants in their places, like the lady in Yeats's poem. Sometimes this is done to avoid the *droit du seigneur*, when the king takes any woman he wants, or the milder form of this practice, when a father simply marries his daughter to a man of his own choice rather than hers (as in "Beauty and the Beast" or the tale of Rachel and Leah). For there is a chain of subjugation in many of these stories, as, for instance, when Isolde sends Brangane to King Mark: when the king (Mark) inflicts his will upon a lady (Isolde) who loves another man (Tristan), she sends her maid (Brangane) in her place, thus inflicting her own power on an inferior.

The sexual and racial masquerades overlap in many texts in which people of one race "pass" in bed as people of another. The assumption that all dark-skinned people are female underlies Richard Wright's radio play, "Man of All Work," in which a black man cross-dresses to get a job as a maid called "Lucy"; as Marge Garber notes, he "sees that he can pass as a woman because he is, in white eyes, always already a woman: 'We all look alike to white people.'"³⁶ When the man of the house, Mr. Fairchild, makes a pass at "Lucy," Mrs. Fairchild shoots him/her dead, and when the police surgeon discovers that "Lucy" is male, Mr. Fairchild claims that *he* (Mr. Fairchild) had shot him ("Lucy") for attempting to rape Mrs. Fairchild. Similarly, the black man who masquerades as white in Mark Twain's variant of the Family Romance, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, puts on woman's clothing (indeed, his *mother's* clothing) in order to leave the scene of the crime unnoticed.

In Douglas Sirk's film, *Imitation of Life*, when a young black woman who passes as white is asked to serve at table, she carries the tray of food on her head and announces, "I learned it from my mammy and she learned it from her massuh befo' she belonged to you." As Mary Ann Doane comments on this text, "The representational convolutions involved in this scene are mind-boggling. The spectator is faced with a white (Susan Kohner the actress) pretending to be a black pretending to be a white pretending to be a black (as incarnated in all the exaggerated attributes of Southern blackness). Ontology is out of reach."³⁷ But it was well within Shakespeare's reach, for the scene in this film is a direct parallel to the scene in *As You Like It* in which a male actor pretends to be a woman (Rosalind) pretend-

ing to be a man ("Ganymede") pretending to be that same woman (Rosalind). Once again, sexism and racism make the same sorts of masquerade possible, and successful.

The dishonesty of the trickster is justified, in the texts, by the need to subvert oppression. The protagonist, who is often an underdog, weak in status if not necessarily weak in physical power, must survive through the power of his or her wits. The attitude of the oppressor becomes a means of resistance by the oppressed, a weapon of the weak (to use James Scott's term),³⁸ who are able to pass because their survival depends on powers of observation and role-playing. The masquerade succeeds because the victim of the masquerade, the oppressor of the masquerader, believes that "They are all alike," an attitude that gives the underdog the tool with which to subvert: if you think we all look alike, we can fool you. The weak use their wits, as storytellers use their archetypal texts, like Judo techniques to make the big bullies throw themselves. It is, therefore, essential for the weak to know their enemies, to *tell them apart*, and, as Eve Sedgwick points out, to understand "not that all oppressions are congruent, but that they are *differently* structured."³⁹ In myth, as in life, knowledge of *difference* is the key to both sex and politics.

Cats and Other Animals

How do cats tell one another apart (or from cows) in the dark? And do we care? Our anthropocentrism drives us to use as the key to our own ability to tell animals apart the animals' ability to tell one another apart in what we regard as the defining situation of reality (sex): if two animals do not intermate, they are of different species. It is particularly important for animals to recognize one another's mating signals, for sex is the one breach in the otherwise nigh-impenetrable curtain of their xenophobia, the one moment when they allow a strange animal to get close. Only in sexual matters, then, do they have to tell the difference. And they can tell it in the dark; visual clues are of relatively little importance to animals in making these essential sexual distinctions; smell, and a baroque complex of other clues, generally play a far greater role.

Despite all of these clues, however, animals lie in the course of the mating game, a game whose rules were designed to be broken. And they can fool one another with their lies. Animals, who provide us with both basic data and basic metaphors with which to formulate our own sexual masquerades, are capable of both perpetrating and detecting sexual masquerades.

Sometimes the problem consists in distinguishing not between two females of two different species, but between a male and a female of the same species (the *M. Butterfly* scenario). Homophobes often argue that homosexuality, transvestism, and transsexuality are unnatural, but these patterns of behavior occur in nature all the time, especially among insects. A particularly dramatic scenario is enacted by certain fish:

It is noteworthy that in certain conventional male-and-female species, members of one sex may turn such coordination to their advantage by

imitating members of the opposite sex. Such activity may be thought of as another nongenetic form of sexual differentiation.

The bluegill sunfish engages in an intriguing form of such gender bending. . . . Male bluegill sunfish exist in three different forms. Large, colorful males court females and defend their territories. A second kind of male—often known as a "sneaker"—becomes sexually mature at a much younger age and smaller size. These small males live on the periphery of a bigger male's territory and clandestinely mate with females while the dominant male is otherwise occupied. Sneaker males mature into a third kind of male, one that assumes the behavior and drab coloration of a female sunfish. These female mimics intervene between a territorial male and the female he is courting. The female mimic, rather than the courting male, usually ends up fertilizing the eggs.⁴⁰

Apparently the male victim wastes his sperm on the female mimic, who can then fertilize the female.

This is a heightened form of the fakery of the cuckoo, the avine cuckolder. The cuckoo fakes its species—a blow against racism—while the bluegill fakes its gender—a blow against sexism.

Yet the bluegill is far from unique; nature abounds in such tricksters, and transsexual masquerades are, apparently, more basic than many might suppose. Grouper fish have a kind of mid-life crisis in which, unlike humans, they change their own sex rather than their sexual partners. Here is a different sort of snake in the grass:

Male red-sided garter snakes enact a similar form of sexual mimicry. At times of peak sexual activity, males congregate around females, forming a so-called mating ball. . . . In 16 percent of the balls, the snake being courted by the males was in fact a disguised male, what we call a she-male. She-males have testes that produce normal sperm, and they court and mate with females. But in addition to exhibiting male-typical behaviors, she-males produce the same attractiveness pheromone as do adult females. In the mating ball, this second source of the pheromone confuses the more prevalent conventional males, giving the she-male a decided mating advantage.⁴¹

Is the mating ball like the great balls held in Europe where young women came to find their suitors? Where Cinderella met her prince? Do red-sided garter snakes lie about, like Alice, waiting for a frog-footman to bring them "an invitation to the mating ball"? The mind boggles.

Sometimes animals mistake us for their mates, often through the process of imprinting, made famous by Konrad Lorenz and his ducklings.⁴² Imprinting works like the magic drug that Oberon has Puck procure in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and use on Titania: "The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid Will make or man or woman madly

dote Upon the next live creature that it sees."⁴³ In the case of animals, "the next live creature that it sees" upon emerging from the womb or egg strikes it as a kind of mirror; it thinks it must be like that, and, upon sexual maturity, tries to mate with it.

Animals, too, have their sexual illusions. For some animals, in the dark not only all cats but all moving objects are gray.

Microscopes and Telescopes

Let us return now, in conclusion, from the problem of telling animals apart to the problem of telling people apart, and telling texts apart. The simultaneous engagement of the two ends of the spectrum, the same and the different, the general and the particular, requires a peculiar kind of double vision, and myth, among all genres, is uniquely able to maintain that vision.

The metaphor of the microscope and the telescope of myth illustrates the uses of this kind of double image in our daily perceptions. Through the microscope end of a myth, we can see the myriad details that each culture, indeed each version, uses to bring the story to life—what the people in the story are eating, wearing, what language they are speaking, and all the rest. But through the telescope end, we can see the unifying themes.

We might distinguish three levels of the micro-telescope in mythological methods: the big view (the telescope) is the one sought by Freud, Jung, Eliade; the middle view (the naked eye) is the view of contextualized cultural studies; and the small view (the microscope) is the focus on individual insight. Where do we set the f-stop? When do we use a wide-angle lens, a zoom lens?

The subjective nature of what we see through the microscope is best demonstrated, I think, by a story that James Thurber tells of his youth, when his eyesight was already very poor. It seems that in botany class Thurber could never see anything through the microscope, despite the protracted fiddling of his teacher; but one day, as he stared into it and focused up and down, he saw "a variegated constellation of flecks, specks, and dots," which he promptly drew. The instructor came over hopefully, looked at the drawing, squinted into the microscope, and shouted in fury, "You've fixed the lens so that it reflects! You've drawn your eye!"⁴⁴

We are always in danger of drawing our own eye, for we depict our own vision of the world when think we are depicting the world. The choice of microscopic level is indeed arbitrary, but not entirely arbitrary. It is heuristic: we choose a specific level in order to make possible a specific task. Where one focuses depends on the sorts of continuities one is looking for; in all instances, something is lost and something gained. The way I propose to focus asks just one set of questions, but does not stop other people from focusing in other ways. Taking the two extreme ends as I propose to do, the microscope and the telescope, at the cost of the middle focus (or the focus provided by normal human vision), is another way of explaining my choice to focus on the individual and the human race in general, at the cost of the focus on any ethnic group.

My choice of two extreme points of focus is sustained, though hardly validated,

by the ability of the myths themselves to maintain these polarized foci. For the myth allows us to look through both ends of the human kaleidoscope at once, simultaneously to view the personal through the microscope—our own eye—and the general through the telescope—the eye of other cultures. When the microscope of our ego rivets our gaze to the plane of the minutiae of our daily lives, the text shifts gears entirely, into the warp-speed of *mythos* and gives us a mythological telescope with which to think about the stars, and the galaxy, and how small the planet earth is. But we can't live our lives if we think only about the galaxies, or, indeed, only about the children who are, as we sit in this room, dying of starvation or disease or gunshot wounds, on the streets of our own cities, as well as in Bosnia and on the West Bank. We can't think about those things for long, because we are human, and we care about *our* lives, about what video we're going to watch tonight. Yet, and at the same time, we know that there are all those galaxies out there, and all those children. We never entirely forget. This tension in us haunts us and threatens either to dim the intensity of the pleasure that we justly take in our lives or, on the other hand, to weaken our commitment to causes beyond our lives, causes that we undertake for the sake of those who will inhabit this planet hundreds of years after all of us are dead.

On the wall of the central room in the house in Amsterdam where Anne Frank and her family hid from the Nazis, two charts are preserved, side by side: One is a column of short, parallel, horizontal lines by which Otto Frank marked the growth of his children over the years, as my father used to mark mine, and I marked my son's. The other is a map of Europe with pins marking the advance of the Allied forces—too late, as we now know, to allow that first chart to grow more than a few poignant inches. They are roughly the same size, those two charts, and they represent the tragic intersection of the tiniest, most banal personal concern and a cataclysmic world event. They are the microscopic and telescopic view of the Holocaust, side by side.

In great myths, the microscope and the telescope together provide a parallax that allows us to see ourselves in motion against the stream of time, like stars viewed from two different ends of the earth's orbit, one of the few ways to see the stars move. And when we take into account myths not, perhaps, from different ends of the earth's orbit, but at least from different ends of the earth, we have made our mythical micro-telescope a bit longer than the one provided us by our own cultures, and we can use it to see farther, farther inside and also farther away.⁴⁵ The myth is what balances simultaneously the comfort of an ancient, general, commonplace truth and the surprise of totally new, totally specific details. Together, they give the myth the shock of recognition.

A fine example of this mythic scope, and an image beyond words, though I must use words to tell it to you, occurs in Joan Littlewood's film, "Oh What a Lovely War." At the end of the film, the hero whom we have come to know and care about in the course of the film is fighting in the trenches of World War I. He is shot, the movie shifts into slow motion and silence, and we see

him sitting on the grass at a picnic in England with his family, full of the mellow drowsiness of sunshine and wind and wine. He leans back against a tree to take a nap, but the tree becomes a white cross that marks his grave, and he vanishes. As the camera zooms back farther and farther from the cross, enlarging our field of vision, we see that the cross on the grave of the soldier we know is just one cross among the millions of graves on the World War I battlefields of France, one small white tree in a great forest of death. For a second, or perhaps ten seconds, we are able to experience, simultaneously, the intensity of personal grief that we feel for that one soldier and our more general, cosmic sorrow for the astronomical numbers of young men who, as we have long known and long ceased to notice, died in World War I. "One death is a tragedy; a million deaths are a statistic," said Josef Stalin (who knew whereof he spoke). The myth turns the statistic back into a tragedy. For one moment we are able to span the gap between the personal and the cosmic, the trees and the forest. History is the microscope, that lets us see the trees; the structure is the telescope, that lets us see the forest. The details of the myths reveal how many different kinds of trouble you can get into when you mistake one person for another in the dark; the structure of myths from all over the world reveals the same underlying problems of gender, race, and personal identity. Whatever else each one of these stories may be saying uniquely, in this respect, at least, all these myths are the same.

Notes

1. Lorraine Daston, personal communication, March 1995.
2. Bruce Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).
3. Lorraine Daston, personal communication, March 1995.
4. David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), p. 102.
5. Charles Taylor discusses this statement, often attributed to Saul Bellow, in his *Multiculturalism*.
6. W. G. F. Hegel, *Phaenomenologie des Geistes* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952 [first published in 1807]), p. 19. I am grateful to Robert Pippin for finding this for me.
7. Unsigned, "The Explosion Point of Ideology in China," pp. 185–194 of *Situationist International Anthology* ed. and trans. Ken Knabb (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981). Translated from the French of the original publication, *Internationale Situationiste* (Paris, 1967), no. 11. Here, pp. 186 and 194.
8. Michael Lester O'Flaherty, personal commu-

nication, May 1, 1995.

9. Ernest Gellner, review of Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School*, and Klaus-Dieter Krohn, *Intellectuals in Exile*, *Times Literary Supplement*, September 23, 1994, pp. 3–5.

10. W. W. Lawrence, *Shakespeare's Problem Comedies* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1960; first edition 1931), p. 51.

11. Rosette F. Willig, trans., *The Changelings: A Classical Japanese Court Tale*, with an introduction and notes (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983).

12. Li Yu, "Nativity Room," pp. 221–249 of *A Tower for the Summer Heat*, trans. Patrick Hanan (New York: Ballantine, 1992).

13. The tale of Kivioq, told in *How Kabloomat Became and Other Legends*, ed. Mark Kalluak (Canada: Program Development, Department of Education, Government of Canada, 1974), pp. 18–21; in Knud Kasmussen, *Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos*, trans. W. E. Calvert (1932; reprinted New York: AMS Press, 1976, p. 289); and by Annie Dillard in *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (New York: Bantam Books, 1975), p. 273.

14. Lila Abu-Lughod, *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 138.

15. See, especially, "The Two Viziers," "Mohammed the Shalabi and His Mistress and His Wife," and "The Tale of Kamarr al Zamamm," in *The Arabian Nights*, trans. Husain Haddawy, based on the text edited by Muhsin Mahdi (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990).

16. Iago uses this phrase to Brabantio, in Shakespeare's *Othello*, 1.1.117.

17. Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan and Isolde*, trans. A. T. Hatto and supplemented with the surviving fragments of the *Tristan* of Thomas (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), p. 205.

18. Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, ed. Donald L. Lawler (New York: Norton, 1988), p. 200.

19. Anthony Lane, "Sex in America," review of *The Social Organization of Sexuality (The New Yorker*, December 19, 1994, pp. 110–114), p. 113.

20. Michel Foucault, introduction to *Hercule Barbin: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth-Century French Hermaphrodite*, trans. Richard McDougall (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), pp. x–xi.

21. Ralph Harper, *On Presence: Variations and Reflections* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991), p. 107.

22. Plutarch, *Conjugalia Praecepta* (or, *Gamika Paragelmata*), no. 46 (part of the *Moralia*).

23. John Heywood, *Proverbs* (1546), part 1, chapter 5.

24. William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 3.5.35.

25. Robert Herrick, *Hesperides*.

26. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

27. Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

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29. This letter, in which "Benjamin Franklin Urges a Young Friend to Take an Old Mistress," is reproduced on pp. 159–162 of *A Treasury of the World's Great Letters*, ed. M. Lincoln Schuster

(New York: Simon and Schuster, 1940).

30. Ralph Waldo Ellison, *Invisible Man* (New York: Modern Library, 1952).

31. Rg Veda, 10.17.1–2. For a complete translation of this text and one of the subsequent Puranic versions, see Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), pp. 56–70. For an analysis, see O'Flaherty, *Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts*, pp. 164–203.

32. *Harivamsa* (Poona, 1969), 8.1–48.

33. Mary Ann Doane, *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), p. 209. I am indebted to Miriam Hansen for leading me to this text.

34. David Henry Hwang, *M. Butterfly* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 1988), Act 3.

35. Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), p. 235.

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37. Doane, p. 237.

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39. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 33.

40. David Crews, "Animal Sexuality" (*Scientific American*, January 1994, pp. 108–114), pp. 113–114.

41. David Crews, "Animal Sexuality," pp. 113–114.

42. Konrad Lorenz, *King Solomon's Ring* (London, 1952).

43. William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2.1.170–172.

44. James Thurber, "University Days," in *The Thurber Carnival* (New York and London: Harper Brothers, 1931) p. 222–3.

45. See C. S. Lewis's metaphysical use of "farther in and farther up" in *The Last Battle*.

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The Nora and Edward Ryerson Lectures

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The Aims of Education Address “Academic Freedom and Responsibility”

By Geoffrey R. Stone

September 24, 1995

Welcome to what you will come to know as *The University* and to the beginning of what I hope and trust will be one of the great adventures of your life. Whenever I think of students arriving here for the first time, I can't help but recall an incident involving Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. At the time of this incident, Holmes was a very old man, nearing ninety years of age, in the autumn of his very long and very distinguished career as a justice of the United States Supreme Court.

On this particular occasion, Holmes was on a train headed north from Washington. He was deeply engrossed in reading a legal brief when the conductor knocked on the door to his compartment. Recognizing Holmes, the conductor respectfully asked for his ticket. Holmes looked in his coat pocket—no ticket. He looked in his vest pocket—no ticket. He reached into his trouser pocket—no ticket. Growing ever more frantic, Holmes began rummaging desperately through his briefcase—still no ticket. At this point, the conductor, trying to calm Holmes, said “Never mind, Mr. Justice. It's really not a problem. When you find the ticket, just mail it in to the company.” To which Holmes exploded: “You dolt! I don't give a damn about your ticket, I just want to know where the hell I'm supposed to be going!”

In your first days on this campus, you must feel a bit like Justice Holmes—you want to know where the hell you're supposed to be going. My task this afternoon is to provide at least a small piece of the answer.

I should like to begin by telling you a bit about my world. It is the world of the law. More specifically, it is the world of Constitutional law. Law is about stories. It is about real people involved in real disputes with real consequences. So, I shall tell you a story.

This story begins during World War I. As you may or may not know, World War I was not a particularly popular war with the American people. Many individuals were hostile to the draft and seriously questioned the wisdom and even the morality of the war. Needless to say, such opposition did not sit well with the government. In 1917, Attorney General Thomas Gregory, attacking the loyalty of war opponents, declared: “May God have mercy on them, for they can expect none from . . . an avenging government.”

Gregory wasn't kidding about the “avenging” government. In 1918, Congress enacted the Sedition Act, which made it a crime for any person to utter “any disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language intended to cause contempt . . . for the . . . government of the United States, the Constitution, or the flag.” True to the Attorney General's threat, federal authorities launched more than 2,000 prosecutions against individuals who wrote or spoke against the war effort.

One such prosecution involved five young, Russian-Jewish emigrants—Jacob Abrams, Mollie Steimer, Hyman Lachowsky, Samuel Lipman, and Jacob Schwartz. In the summer of 1918, the United States sent a contingent of marines to Vladivostok. Concerned that this was the first step of an Allied effort to crush the Russian Revolution, these five self-pro-

claimed socialists and anarchists threw several thousand copies of each of two leaflets—one in English, the other in Yiddish—from several rooftops on the Lower East Side of New York.

The leaflets, which were boldly signed “The Rebels,” were addressed to other Russian emigrants. After stating that they hated “German militarism” even more than the “hypocritical tyrants” in Washington, the Rebels warned those who worked in ammunition factories that they were “producing bullets, bayonets, and cannon to murder not only the Germans, but also your dearest, your best, who are in Russia and are fighting for their freedom.” The leaflets concluded by calling for a “general strike” in response to the “expedition to Russia.”

The Rebels immediately were fingered by a government spy and arrested by the military police. After a controversial trial, at which it became clear that they were despised for their antiwar and socialist views, they were convicted of violating the Sedition Act of 1918. Noting that the “only thing [the defendants] know how to raise is hell, and to direct it against the government of the United States,” the trial judge sentenced the Rebels to terms ranging up to *twenty* years in prison.

The defendants appealed their convictions to the Supreme Court of the United States, claiming that they had been punished for exercising their Constitutional rights. Specifically, they argued that their convictions violated the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, which guarantees that “Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech.”

In *Abrams v. United States*, the Supreme Court, in a seven-to-two decision, rejected this claim and upheld the convictions. For the majority of the Court, this was an easy case. Because the natural tendency of the defendants' speech was to interfere with the war effort, it simply was not within “the freedom of speech” that is protected by the Constitution.

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, the same Justice Holmes who some years later was to lose his railway ticket, dissented. Holmes's dissenting opinion in *Abrams* is worth reading, for it remains one of the most eloquent statements ever written by a Justice of the Supreme Court about the First Amendment.

Holmes wrote: “Persecution for the expression of opinion seems to me perfectly logical. If you have no doubt of your premises . . . and want a certain result with all your heart, you naturally express your wishes in law and sweep away all opposition. . . . But when men have realized that time has upset many fighting faiths, they may come to believe . . . that the ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas—that the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market, and that truth is the only ground upon which their wishes safely can be carried out. That at any rate is the theory of our Constitution. It is an experiment,” Holmes continued, “as all life is an experiment. . . . [But] while that experiment is part of our system I think that we should be eternally vigilant against attempts to check the expression of opinions that we loathe and believe to be fraught with death, unless they so imminently threaten

immediate interference with the lawful and pressing purposes of the law that an immediate check is required to save the country. . . . I regret,” Holmes concluded, “that I cannot put into more impressive words my belief that in their convictions upon this indictment the defendants were deprived of their rights under the Constitution of the United States.”

I first read this passage, written seventy-five years ago, when I was a student at this University twenty-five years ago. It has engaged my energy and curiosity ever since. Indeed, I think it is fair to say that it was my puzzling over this passage under the probing tutelage of Professor Harry Kalven that, for better or worse, put me on the path to my career and, indeed, to where I stand this afternoon. I learned a great many things from Professor Kalven. I learned from him, not that dissenters ought to be tolerated, but that they ought to be heard. Kalven believed that even radical dissenters deserve First Amendment protection, not because they are harmless, but because they have something to say and ought to be heard in a democratic society. Kalven also taught me to appreciate eloquence in judicial writing, but also to view it with a wary eye.

Holmes's argument surely is eloquent. But is it persuasive? Keep in mind that Holmes failed to persuade seven of his eight brethren on the Court. Were they so obviously wrong?

Consider the following difficulties with Holmes's argument: First, the Rebels did not state their opposition to the government's intervention in Russia in an effort to *persuade* the government to reverse its policy. Rather, they attempted to *subvert* the policy of a democratically elected government by advocating conduct that would *obstruct* that government's ability to achieve its goals. Surely Holmes is right that the First Amendment should protect even those ideas that “we loathe and believe to be fraught with death” insofar as they are addressed to the political process, but should the First Amendment protect speech that seeks to bring about change, not by political persuasion, but by obstruction, or force or violence?

Second, Holmes argues that a speaker should not be punished unless his speech “so imminently threatens immediate interference with the lawful and pressing purposes of the law that an immediate check is required to save the country.” But can this be right? Suppose there are many groups of “Rebels,” each of which independently advocates general strikes among munitions workers. Can it really be that the government is powerless to protect itself against the cumulative impact of such groups merely because no one of them independently satisfies Holmes's test? And although free speech surely is important, is it obviously so important that it necessarily outweighs society's interest in protecting the lives of soldiers, even in wartime?

And third, suppose the Rebels had been prosecuted, not for violating the Sedition Act of 1918, but for violating an ordinance against littering. Can it really be that the First Amendment gives the individual a constitutional right to throw thousands of leaflets from a rooftop unless “an immediate check is required to save the country”? What are the limits of Holmes's logic?

On another occasion, Holmes observed that my right to swing my arm ends where your nose begins. When we're thinking about free speech, where, exactly, does your nose begin?

But now I must change direction, for this is not to be a discourse on the First Amendment. It is, rather, to be a talk about education. Happily, these are not unrelated subjects. To the contrary, the longer I have puzzled over the meaning of free expression, and the longer I have thought about education, the more the two seem to me to converge. Indeed, neither really is worth all that much without the other. And, with that in mind, I would like to turn to what I see as the intersection of free expression and education, to the subject of academic freedom, for it is at this intersection that we will find the most fundamental values of the world that you are about to enter.

I hope to accomplish three things in this part of my talk. First, I will trace briefly for you the history of academic freedom, for it is only by understanding where we have been that we can appreciate—in both senses of the word—where we are today. Second, I will talk a bit about this university and about the special role it has played in the struggle to establish and to preserve academic freedom. And third, I will offer some thoughts about what all this means for you and about the responsibilities that we bear in common.

Let me begin, then, with some history. Although the struggle for academic freedom can be traced at least as far back as Socrates' eloquent defense of himself against the charge that he corrupted the youth of Athens, the modern history of this struggle begins with the advent of universities, as we know them today, in the twelfth century.

In the social structure of the Middle Ages, universities were centers of power and prestige. They were protected, courted, and even deferred to by emperors and popes. There were, however, sharp limits on the scope of intellectual inquiry, for there existed a hard core of authoritatively established doctrine which was made obligatory on all teachers and students. It was expected that each new accretion of knowledge would be consistent with a single system of truth, anchored in God, and this expectation was often rigidly enforced by the Church, particularly when the authority of the Church itself was questioned.

As scholars and teachers gradually became more interested in science, and began to question some of the fundamental precepts of religious doctrine, the conflict between scientific inquiry and religious authority grew intense. When Copernicus published his astronomical theories in 1543, he did so *very* carefully, cleverly dedicating his work to the Pope himself and presenting his theories *entirely* in the guise of hypotheticals. Partly because of these precautions, his heretical publications did not immediately arouse much of a furor.

But by the time Galileo published *his* telescopic observations some seventy years later, the situation had changed. Galileo immediately was listed as a suspect in the secret books of the Inquisition and was warned that further discussion of the condemned opinion would have its dangers. Despite this warning, Galileo persisted in his work and, as a consequence, he was

summoned to Rome, threatened with torture, compelled publicly to disavow his views, and imprisoned for the remainder of his life. This was, by the way, an early and rather perverse twist on the concept of tenure.

For the next several centuries, university life remained largely bounded by the medieval curriculum. Real freedom of thought was neither practiced nor professed. As one statement of the then-prevailing ideal put the point, the teacher was “not to . . . teach or suffer to be taught anything contrary to prevalent opinions.”

This was the general attitude in America, as well as in Europe, and freedom of inquiry and teaching in America was severely limited by the constraints of religious doctrine. In 1654, for example, Harvard’s president was forced to resign because he denied the scriptural validity of infant baptism. Harvard explained that it would not keep as teachers persons who had “manifested themselves unsound in the faith.”

This was the prevailing attitude until the latter part of the eighteenth century, which saw a brief period of relative secularization as part of the Enlightenment. By opening up new fields of study, and by introducing a note of skepticism and inquiry, the trend toward secular learning began gradually to liberate college work. The teacher of science introduced for the first time the discovery, rather than the mere transmission, of knowledge into the classroom.

This shift was short-lived, however, for the rise of fundamentalism in the early years of the nineteenth century, and a growing counterattack against the skepticism of the Enlightenment, produced a concerted and successful effort on the part of the Protestant churches to expand their influence and to tighten their control over intellectual and spiritual life. Thus, the American college in the first half of the nineteenth century was deeply centered in tradition. It looked to antiquity for the tools of thought and to Christianity for the laws of living. It was highly paternalistic and authoritarian. Its emphasis on traditional subjects, mechanical drill, and rigid discipline stymied free discussion and stifled creativity.

Three factors in particular contributed to this environment. First, the college professor of this era was regarded exclusively as a teacher. Because academic honors hinged entirely on teaching, there was no incentive or time for research or original thought. Indeed, it was generally agreed that research was positively harmful to teaching. In 1857, for example, a committee of trustees of Columbia College attributed the low state of the college to the fact that some of its professors “wrote books.”

Second, educators of this era generally regarded the college student as intellectually naive and morally deficient. “Stamping in,” with all that phrase implies, was the predominant pedagogical method, and learning was understood to mean little more than memorization and repetitive, mechanical drill. Moreover, colleges of this era subjected their students to a dizzying array of rules and regulations that constrained and depressed student life. One university, by no means unique, prohibited any student from leaving campus without permission, from singing or talking during the time dedicated to study, from playing billiards or

cards at any time, from associating with idle or “dissolute” persons, or—this is my favorite—from fiddling on Sunday. Needless to say, a college that regards its students as both gullible and depraved is unlikely to engender an atmosphere that even remotely resembles a marketplace of ideas.

Third, freedom of inquiry was smothered by the prevailing theory of “doctrinal moralism,” which assumed that the worth of an idea must be judged by its *moral* value, an attitude that is, quite simply, anathema to intellectual inquiry.

The most important moral problem in America in the first half of the nineteenth century was, of course, slavery. By the 1830s, the mind of the South had closed on this issue. When it became known, for example, that a professor at the University of North Carolina was sympathetic to the anti-slavery 1856 Republican presidential candidate, the faculty repudiated his views, the students burned him in effigy, and the press demanded his resignation. Refusing to resign, he was dismissed by the trustees. There simply was *no* open discussion of the issue.

The situation in the North was only slightly better. Most Northerners distinguished sharply between those who condemned slavery in the *abstract* and those who supported *immediate* abolition. The latter often were silenced. A *few* northern institutions, however, were open centers of abolitionism, but they were no more tolerant than the South of opposing views. At Franklin College, for example, the President lost his post because he was not an abolitionist, and Judge Edward Loring was dismissed from a lectureship at the Harvard Law School because, in his capacity as a federal judge, he had enforced the fugitive slave law.

Between 1870 and 1900, there was a *revolution* in American higher education. Dramatic reforms, such as the elective system, graduate instruction and scientific courses, were implemented, and great new universities were established at Cornell, Johns Hopkins, Stanford, and Chicago. New academic goals were embraced. To criticize and augment, as well as to *preserve* the tradition, became an accepted function of higher education. This was an extraordinary departure for a system that previously had aimed primarily at cultural conservation. Two forces in particular hastened this shift. The first was the impact of Darwinism. The second was the influence of the German university.

By the early 1870s, Darwin’s theory of evolution was no longer a disputed hypothesis within the American scientific community. But as scientific doubts subsided, religious opposition rose. Determined efforts were made to hold the line by excluding proponents of Darwinism whenever possible. The disputes were bitter and often very public.

This conflict brought together like-minded teachers, scientists, scholars, and philosophers who believed in evolution and who developed new standards of academic inquiry. In their view, to dissent was not to obstruct, but to enlighten. The great debate over Darwinism went far beyond the substantive problem of whether evolution was true. It represented a profound clash between conflicting cultures, intellectual styles, and academic values. In this conflict, sci-

ence and education joined forces to attack both the principle of doctrinal moralism and the authority of the clergy.

A new approach to education and to intellectual discourse grew out of the Darwinian debate. To the evolutionists, all beliefs were tentative and verifiable only through a continuous process of inquiry. The evolutionists held that every claim to truth must submit to open verification, that the process of verification must follow certain rules, and that this process is best understood by those who qualify as experts.

The triumph of Darwinism shifted the educator’s expectations of the student. To train students to comprehend and to explore the mysteries of nature was the new meaning of education. Education now was conceived as the leading out of the mind. It required the teacher to foster individual responsibility and the student to assume the risk of uncertainty. The pedagogical practice of rote recitation was replaced by the exploration of the laboratory and the advent of discussion and even debate as new forms of pedagogical discourse.

The other factor that played a critical role in the transformation of American higher education in the late nineteenth century was the influence of the German university. More than 9,000 Americans studied at German universities in the nineteenth century, and these students enthusiastically transported the methods and ideals of the German university into the United States.

The modern conception of a university as a research institution was in large part a German contribution. The object of the German university was the determined, methodical, and independent search for truth, without regard to practical application. Such a vision of the research university attracted individuals of outstanding abilities, rather than mere pedagogues and disciplinarians, and this had an important impact on the nature and quality of teaching, for professors who “wrote books” brought a freshness, a curiosity, and a creativity to the classroom. The German professor and student enjoyed an unparalleled freedom of inquiry, and the German system held that this freedom was the essential condition of a university.

Although American canons of education were not receptive to this vision of a university in the first half of the nineteenth century, by the end of the century the old assumptions had been cast aside. The single greatest contribution of the German university to the American conception of academic freedom was the assumption that academic freedom defined the true university. As William Rainey Harper, the first President of the University of Chicago, observed at the turn of the century: “When for any reason . . . the administration of [a university] or the instruction in any . . . of its departments is changed by an influence from without, [or any] effort is made to dislodge an officer or a professor because the political sentiment or the religious sentiment of the majority has undergone a change, at that moment the institution has ceased to be a university. . . . Individuals or the state or the church may found schools for propagating certain special kinds of instruction, but such schools,” Harper concluded, “are not universities.”

Although American universities bor-

rowed heavily from the German in this era, there evolved two critical differences between the American and German conceptions of academic freedom. First, whereas the German conception permitted the professor to convince his students of the wisdom of his own views, the American conception held that the proper stance for professors in the classroom was one of neutrality on controversial issues. As President Eliot of Harvard declared at the time: “Philosophical subjects should never be taught with authority. They are not established sciences; they are full of disputed matters, open questions, and bottomless speculations. It is not the function of the teacher to settle philosophical and political controversies for the pupil. . . . The notion that education consists in the authoritative inculcation of what the teacher deems true . . . is intolerable in a university.”

Second, the German conception of academic freedom distinguished sharply between freedom within and freedom outside the university. Within the walls of the academy, the German conception allowed a wide latitude of utterance. But outside the university, the same degree of freedom was not condoned. Rather, the German view assumed that, as civil servants, professors were obliged to be circumspect and nonpolitical, and that participation in partisan issues spoiled the habits of scholarship.

American professors rejected this limitation. Drawing upon the more general American conception of freedom of speech, they insisted on participating *actively* in the arena of social and political action. American professors demanded the right to express their opinions even outside the walls of academia, even on controversial subjects and even on matters outside their scholarly competence.

This conception of academic freedom has generated considerable friction, for by claiming that professors should be immune, not only for what they say in the classroom and in their research, but also for what they say in public debate, this expanded conception essentially empowers professors to engage in outside political activities that can and sometimes *do* inflict serious harm on their universities in the form of disgruntled trustees, alienated alumni, and disaffected donors. Not surprisingly, the demand for such immunity often has strained both the tolerance of trustees and the patience of university administrators.

These issues were brought to a head in the closing years of the nineteenth century, when businessmen who had accumulated vast industrial wealth began to support universities on an unprecedented scale. For at the same time that trusteeship in a prestigious university was increasingly becoming an important symbol of business prominence, a growing concern among scholars about the excesses of commerce and industry generated new forms of research, particularly in the social sciences, that often were sharply critical of the means by which the trustee-philanthropists had amassed their wealth.

The moguls and the scholars thus came into direct and serious conflict in the final years of the nineteenth century. A professor was dismissed from Cornell for a pro-labor speech that annoyed a powerful benefactor, and a prominent scholar at Stanford was

fired for expressing his views on the silver question, to cite just two of many possible examples. This tension continued until the beginning of World War I, when it was eclipsed by an even larger conflict.

As we already have seen, during the First World War patriotic zealots persecuted and even prosecuted those who challenged the war or the draft. Universities faced the almost total collapse of the institutional safeguards that had evolved up to that point to protect academic freedom, for nothing in their prior experience had prepared them to deal with the issue of loyalty at a time of national emergency.

At the University of Nebraska, for example, three professors were discharged because they had "assumed an attitude calculated to encourage . . . a spirit of [indifference] towards [the] war." At the University of Virginia, a professor was discharged for disloyalty because he had made a speech predicting that the war would *not* make the world safe for democracy. And at Columbia, the board of trustees launched a general campaign of investigation to determine whether doctrines that tended to encourage a spirit of disloyalty were taught at the university.

This is not, of course, the end of the story, for I have not even touched upon more recent controversies, such as McCarthyism, the tensions of the Vietnam era, or the current debate over political correctness. But by 1920 the basic contours of academic freedom already were well defined, and several important themes had emerged. First, and perhaps most important, academic freedom is *not* a law of nature. It is a practical, highly vulnerable, hard-bought acquisition in the struggle for intellectual freedom. Second, the real threat to academic freedom comes, not from the isolated incident that arises out of a highly particularized dispute, but from efforts to impose a pall of orthodoxy that would broadly silence all opposition. Third, every form of orthodoxy that has been imposed on the academy—whether religious, political, patriotic, scientific, moral, philosophical, or economic—has been imposed by groups who were fully convinced of the *rightness* of their position. And finally, with the benefit of hindsight and perhaps some objectivity, one can confidently conclude that every one of these groups has later come to be viewed by most thoughtful people as inappropriately intolerant, at best, and as inappropriately intolerant and wrong, at worst.

So, what does all this have to do with you and with the University of Chicago. Well, from its very founding, the University of Chicago has been at the forefront of the struggle to define and to preserve academic freedom. At the turn of the century, when universities across the nation faced bitter conflicts between their trustees and their professors over faculty views about social and economic conditions, the University of Chicago declared in no uncertain terms that "the principle of complete freedom of speech has from the beginning been regarded as fundamental in The University of Chicago" and "this principle can neither now nor at any future time be called into question." Indeed, at the very height of these controversies, President Harper emphasized that: "Whatever may or may not have happened

in other universities, in the University of Chicago neither the Trustees, nor the President, nor anyone in official position [may call] an instructor to account for any public utterances. . . . A donor," Harper added, "has the privilege of ceasing to make his gift . . . but . . . he has no right to interfere with . . . the instruction of the university."

Half a century later the University confronted a direct threat to its academic integrity and independence. It was the age of McCarthy. In the spring of 1949, the infamous "Broyles Bills" were introduced in the Illinois legislature. These bills prohibited any person who was "directly or indirectly affiliated with any communist [or] communist front organization" to hold any governmental position, from dog catcher to school teacher, in the State of Illinois. A group of 106 students traveled to Springfield on buses chartered by the University of Chicago chapter of the Young Progressives of America to oppose this legislation. The students paraded through the streets of Springfield, chanted their opposition and, along the way, sat in at a segregated lunch counter. The Illinois legislators were furious. One proclaimed that he would not send his "pet dog to the University of Chicago" and another asserted that "the students looked so dirty and greasy on the outside that they couldn't possibly be clean American on the inside."

From where we sit today, these words seem rather quaint, perhaps even ridiculous. They were not. These were dark and dangerous days. It was a perilous time to speak. Only a few days after the student demonstrations, Senator Broyles launched a formal investigation of the University of Chicago to determine the extent to which the University was infected by communism and harbored professors who indoctrinated students with subversive and "un-American" beliefs.

President Robert Maynard Hutchins was the first witness to testify before the Broyles Committee. Listen to what Hutchins had to say: "These students . . . were entirely right to disapprove of [the] pending legislation. The Broyles Bills are, in my opinion, . . . unconstitutional. . . . It is now fashionable to call anybody with whom we disagree a Communist or a fellow-traveler. . . . One who criticizes the foreign policy of the United States, or the draft, . . . or who believes that our military establishment is too expensive, can be called a fellow-traveler, for the Russians are of the same opinion. One who thinks that there are too many slums and too much lynching in America can be called a fellow-traveler, for the Russians say the same. One who opposes racial discrimination or the Ku Klux Klan can be called a fellow-traveler, for the Russians claim that they ought to be opposed."

"The faculty of the University," Hutchins continued, "is . . . one of the most distinguished in the world. [The] principal reason why the University has such a distinguished faculty is that the University guarantees its professors absolute and complete academic freedom. [It] has . . . been said that some of the faculty belong to so-called 'communist-front' organizations. [But the] University of Chicago does not believe in the un-American doctrine of guilt by association. . . .

"[As] is well known," Hutchins added, "there is a Communist Club among the

students of the University. [Its] members . . . are interested in studying Communism, and some of them, perhaps all of them, may be sympathetic towards Communism. . . . [The] policy of the University is to permit students to band together for any lawful purpose in terms of their common interests. This is conformable to the spirit of the Constitution of the United States. . . . The University [asserts] that the policy of education is better than the policy of repression. . . ."

At the conclusion of the hearings, a petition bearing the names of 3,000 courageous University of Chicago students was submitted to the investigative committee. The petition read: "As students of the University of Chicago, we believe that the position of our University, which encourages and maintains the free examination of all ideas, is the strongest possible safeguard against indoctrination. Because we believe that this policy of academic freedom for both students and teachers is the best preparation for effective citizenship in the American tradition, we are confident that the people in the State and nation will join with us to encourage the freedom of the University of Chicago and to support it against attack."

I say these students were "courageous" because, in the perilous days in which they lived, they were taking a serious risk in putting their names to so "subversive" a statement. Indeed, the immediate reaction of Senator Broyles upon receiving the petition was to demand "to know . . . something about the signers, of the type of students" they are. "We shouldn't," he said, "accept just anything."

In the 1960s, the University of Chicago, like other universities, found itself buffeted by the storms of the Vietnam War. The University appointed a committee, chaired appropriately by Professor Harry Kalven, to advise the community on the University's role in political and social action. The Kalven Report declared: "A university faithful to its mission will provide enduring challenges to social values, policies, practices, and institutions. . . . To perform [this] mission, a university must sustain an extraordinary environment of freedom of inquiry, . . . embrace, be hospitable to, and encourage the widest diversity of views, [and ensure] the fullest freedom for its faculty and students . . . to participate in political action and social protest."

In a radio address to America in 1931, George Bernard Shaw startled his audience with the following proposition: "Every person who owes his life to civilized society and who has enjoyed . . . its very costly protections and advantages should appear at reasonable intervals before a properly qualified jury to justify his existence, which should be summarily and painlessly terminated if he fails to justify it." I do not advocate such a program. But I do suggest that every one of us who enjoys the protections and advantages of our hard-won system of academic freedom has a responsibility to justify his existence under it.

There are several ways in which we can meet this responsibility. First, like the students of 1949, we can defend academic freedom when it comes under attack. Like every liberty that is precious to us, the preservation of academic freedom demands vigilance, independence, and, sometimes,

courage.

Second, we must struggle to define the meaning of academic freedom in our time. As we saw in *Abrams*, the Constitution's guarantee of freedom of speech is not self-defining. Neither is academic freedom. Each generation must give life to this concept in the special circumstances of its own conflicts. This is not as easy as you might think, for the arguments advanced for limiting academic freedom always are seductive. As Justice Holmes observed in *Abrams*, "persecution for the expression of opinion seems . . . perfectly logical."

At the turn of the century, for example, it would have been easy for universities to conclude, in the face of threats from philanthropists and trustees, that academic freedom covers only what professors and students say in their classrooms, not what they say beyond the four walls of the academy, and some did. And in the 1940s and '50s, it would have been easy for universities to conclude, in the face of threats from the McCarthys and the Broyles, that universities should not harbor teachers or students who associate with groups that the government has determined may be involved in an international conspiracy to tear down our constitutional system, and some did.

Today, the principal challenge to academic freedom turns on issues of so-called political correctness. As in the past, these can be difficult issues. Does academic freedom protect the professor who teaches his students that homosexuality is a disease, that gays are depraved, and that they do not belong in a "civilized" university? Does it protect the student who runs for student council on a "Free Speech" platform and displays campaign posters on campus that incorporate *Playboy* or *Hustler* centerfolds to make his point? Does it protect the feminist student who defaces these posters as a form of "counter-speech"? Does it protect students who establish an organization on campus that aggressively espouses the view, both in and out of class, that blacks are genetically inferior?

How will you address these issues? What are the lessons of history? Are *no* restrictions on free expression in a university consistent with academic freedom? Are these, or some of these, or some variants of these restrictions permissible because, unlike past restrictions on heretics, abolitionists, anti-war activists, and Communists, *these* restrictions are *reasonable*? Or are we merely victims of our own generation's version of blindness, prejudice, and intolerance? How would Justice Holmes resolve these issues? How will *you* resolve them?

Third, and most important, we have a responsibility to live up to the *principle* of academic freedom. Often, it is easier to defend a principle than to live up to it. Half a century ago, President Hutchins asked what it is "that makes the University of Chicago a great educational institution." The answer he gave then remains true today: "It is," he said, "the intense, strenuous and constant intellectual activity of the place. . . . Presented with many points of view, [students are] compelled to think for [themselves]. We like to think that the air is electric, and that from it the students derive an intellectual stimulation that lasts the rest of [their] lives. This," Hutchins concluded, "is education."

This is the tradition that you inherit. Unlike college students of the past, your task is not to submit to mechanical drill or rote memorization, not to accept without question conventional values and staid opinions as they are presented by your teachers. It is, rather, to exercise the responsibility of freedom—to test what you are taught at every turn, to challenge your teachers, your classmates, and yourselves, to choose your own values and your own beliefs.

To meet this responsibility, you will have to be independent, you will have to be daring, you will have to take risks. It is not easy to tell your professor, who has devoted years, perhaps decades, to mastering his subject, that you disagree with his latest pronouncement. But we urge you to see the discourse of this university as an incitement to high risk. As Professor Richard Shweder said on this occasion two years ago, “At the University of Chicago, . . . provocation is a fundamental virtue.” It is also a duty. If you find yourself hesitating, if you feel timid, if you wonder if it’s worth it, think of the Rebels in *Abrams*. At an age not much older than you, they dared to take on the government of the United States. You certainly can take on a mere professor.

The faculty of this university ask nothing of you that they do not also ask of themselves. Professor Gary Becker, Nobel laureate in economics, recently observed that “good research often fails.” Remember that. Even the most gifted teacher and scholar suffers frustration and failure. It is only by taking risks, by daring to ask questions no

one else ever has asked, that real contributions are achieved. As John Gunther once observed, the University of Chicago “is a school that stands for . . . freedom of spacious inquiry, freedom to be a gadfly if necessary and freedom not only to be right but to take a chance on being wrong.” If your professors ask you to take risks, know that they take risks as well.

But fulfilling the responsibility of academic freedom means more than challenging your classmates and your teachers; it also means challenging yourself. It means being willing to reconsider what you yourself have come to accept as true. In 1921, after two years in prison, Mollie Steimer, one of the *Abrams* Rebels, was deported to the Soviet Union. It was not what she expected. Disappointed in the political and economic system she found there, Steimer again agitated against the government. Again, she was arrested, prosecuted, and convicted of sedition. In 1923, she was deported from the Soviet Union. I don’t know for sure, but I rather suspect that this was an unparalleled achievement—to be convicted of sedition and deported within five years from both the United States and the Soviet Union. Whatever else one might think of her, Mollie Steimer was not afraid to reconsider her positions.

In 1919, a majority of the Supreme Court in *Abrams* rejected the bold approach of Justice Holmes and opted for a “safe” view of the First Amendment. Fifty years later, the Supreme Court unanimously overruled the majority opinion in *Abrams* and, em-

bracing Justice Holmes’s dissenting opinion, held that the government may not punish even speech that we “loathe and believe to be fraught with death” unless that speech is both intended and likely to incite imminent lawless action. To reach this result, the Court had to challenge the first principles of its predecessors and to overturn half a century of precedent.

A great university, like a successful court, must dedicate itself to the rigorous, open-minded, unyielding search for truth. You will learn here to ask the hard questions. But it is not enough to examine the premises, beliefs, and assumptions of an earlier time and find them wanting. It is too easy to dismiss those who thought that the earth was the center of the universe, that its resources were boundless, or that separate could ever be equal. You must remember that you, too, hold beliefs that your children or your children’s children will rightly regard as naive, foolish, perhaps even obscene. You must be prepared to challenge your beliefs, to reform your world, just as the Rebels in *Abrams* struggled to reform theirs. You, too, must challenge the nature of things.

So, to return to the question with which I began, “Where the hell are you supposed to be going?” As you’ve no doubt surmised, your adventure has no predetermined path, no assigned destination. Let the journey engage you, for as Will Rogers once observed, “Even if you are on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there.”

That track, I should note, offers more

than the classroom, the textbook, and the 3 a.m. debate over Nietzsche. These are, of course, essential to your education, but your education is about more than the four corners of the curriculum. It is also about your growth as a person, as a person with a range of interests and passions, as a person of culture and sensibility. You are at a great university which has the extraordinary advantage of being located in one of the world’s great cities. Make this campus and this city your playground. Explore Chicago’s jazz clubs and ethnic restaurants, its theater, its museums, its galleries. Remember, too, that you have at your fingertips a vast array of athletic, community service, and student organizations. Let them energize your curiosity, stimulate your interest, and soothe your soul. The opportunities for creativity are boundless. This is a time not only for academics, but for adventure.

President Edward Levi once noted that our faculty warmly welcome our students “because students are where the future lies.” It is in this spirit this we welcome you. We hope you will find in these halls the air that Hutchins said is “electric” and that you will take away from this place a stimulation that will last the rest of your days. As Justice Holmes mused in *Abrams*, “All life is an experiment.” May your life’s experiment be filled with curiosity, boldness and courage.

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Report of the Committee on Crime Prevention and Security on Campus and in the Neighborhood

July 3, 1995

The Standing Committee on Crime Prevention and Security on Campus and in the Neighborhood met twice this past year to review the University's Crime Notification Program and other issues that may have an impact on safety and security in the University community. In addition to our general charge, we monitored the University's response to the specific recommendations submitted in our committee report of July 18, 1994. Briefly stated, we issued five recommendations last year regarding:

1. broader dissemination of the quarterly Safety and Security Report and the annual *Common Sense*;
2. inclusion of a "rationale" or "fact sheet" statement in the above publications defining the purpose and background of the University's multifaceted crime notification program;
3. "softening" the quarterly security report so that it is not dominated by technical jargon or statistics, while at the same time highlighting crime prevention tips and practical advice;
4. issuance of a small wallet card that lists key telephone numbers, names, and locations with respect to security (e.g., police, hotline, Deans on Call, van service, victim counseling);
5. making better use of the bulletin boards around campus that carry the security alerts (e.g., post relevant telephone numbers in addition to crime prevention tips); and

6. continuous monitoring of the crime reporting system.

Overall, our committee is very pleased with the University's action in addressing each of these recommendations. For example, all evidence we reviewed suggests that the University is now at a "saturation point" in terms of crime reporting. The Crime Notification Program is well established and has become a routine part of community life. Few, if any, complaints have been received. Certainly the University cannot be charged with hiding information—if anything we may be guilty of over-reporting.

Similarly, there seems to be a better understanding about the purpose of the notification program and the nature of the alert system. While there continues to be (and must be) some gray area in the decision-making criteria for alerts, overall the notification system is working as intended. The only new recommendation we make is that the posting of alerts on the Internet be explored, albeit limited to the users in the University community. As long as the electronic alerts are limited to local dissemination, the general feeling is that this may be a low cost option to pursue.

The Safety and Security Report has been noticeably revised based on our recommendations and input. In particular, the format has been softened and crime "tips" are now highlighted early and often. We are told that students heed this crime prevention advice more than ever—especially by walking in

pairs or groups at night. Evidence to support this interpretation is that robberies of students declined significantly over the past year. We recommend that the report publicize some of this information in future editions so that students get positive feedback on how their preventive behaviors can have the intended results. We also recommend the use of "call outs" in the report that visibly highlight tips and other feedback information on crime prevention.

It is difficult to know how many students have use the wallet cards. However, the responses from students have been positive, and some students have even requested a "key chain" that also lists key security numbers. To reduce cost, these key chains could be issued to new students only (while continuing the wallet card insert in *Common Sense*). We believe this recommendation deserves further exploration by the University.

Finally, the use of the bulletin boards has been changed to reflect our recommendation of last year. When an alert is not posted, crime tips are highlighted (usually in bright green) as are relevant numbers on campus regarding security and safety.

In sum, our general consensus is that the system is now running smoothly and needs only minor tinkering. This tinkering would involve slight modification to the distribution of alerts (electronic posting), increased emphasis in the security report on crime prevention tips and feedback from behavioral responses on campus (e.g., "robberies

of students down" . . .), and possible issuance of key chains (along with wallet cards in *Common Sense*) to incoming freshmen. Our recommendation that the crime notification system be continuously monitored was also met, and we are pleased to have served in this manner.

Committee on Crime Prevention and Security on Campus and in the Neighborhood

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Report of the Student Ombudsperson for Winter and Spring Quarters 1995

By Andrew Varcoe

The Student Ombudsperson investigates and attempts to resolve student grievances that arise from life at the University. He or she works on behalf of the President, who appoints him to the office for a term of one year. He acts only in cases in which the appointed remedies for the grievances have been tried and exhausted. If the remedies have not been tried, then he offers advice about how to make use of the remedies.

The Student Ombudsperson for the 1995-96 academic year is Marc Blitz. He is a graduate student in the Department of Political Science. Students in need of help—graduate students, professional students, undergraduates—may telephone Mr. Blitz at 702-8422.

The Ombudsperson and the Assistant Ombudsperson investigate complaints that involve a wide range of departments and activities: housing and financial aid; grading and billing; the Hospitals and the Library; athletics and student activities; harassment; and many other matters. Their aim is not to visit misery on the lives of hapless University employees, but simply to ensure that students' complaints receive fair and thorough hearings. They keep conversations in confidence. They strive to be

advocates not solely for students' concerns, but for fairness, for impartiality. A faculty member or administrator who is telephoned by the Ombudsperson should not expect to be speaking with an adversary. He or she should, however, expect to be speaking with an impartial mediator, whose responsibility is to take student grievances seriously.

To this end, the Ombudsperson and his assistant conduct investigations. They propose remedial steps in the resolution of complaints. Occasionally, they refer complaints to officials with more substantial powers. In some cases, they do this on behalf of individual students. In other cases, they do the referring on behalf of the general good—in the name of improving the way that the University works.

During the Winter and Spring quarters, my assistant and I intervened in a wide variety of complaints. Several of these were quickly dispatched. This public report includes a summary of many of the complaints, indicating the range of matters that our office handled. The report also includes one or two lengthier accounts of specific grievances. (To protect the anonymity of the persons involved, I have altered some crucial details in what appears below.) In

the report, I write about the concerns of two graduate students who each applied to transfer from one program in the University to another program. Each student claimed that the University was slow in rendering a decision on his application. I also discuss some complaints about grades, with an eye to considering the possibilities that are presently available to students with such complaints. I suggest that the College make more explicit what a student, having a question or complaint about a grade, should do.

Summary

Our office helped students from all over the University: the College, the divisions, and the professional schools. Many complaints were familiar. As always, students complained of billing problems at the University Hospitals. Some students, continuing a cherished Chicago tradition, griped about life in University housing: not just in the undergraduate Houses, but in dwellings set aside for graduate students, such as Neighborhood Student Apartments.

General causes of disputes, unremarkably, included rudeness and plain inconsiderateness. I heard from many students who would never have complained,

had only they been treated with civility by others.

A number of students complained about the "M" shuttle, operated jointly by the University and the Hospitals, that recently replaced the University's "F" evening bus route. The shuttle's route, according to some students, is inconvenient. Worse, say others, the shuttle follows the route with only sporadic attention to the schedule that the shuttle is alleged follow. To remedy the latter problem, the Hospitals will install a device that will send radio signals to a dispatcher. The signals will allow the dispatcher at any time to figure out the exact location of the shuttle.

A few students complained about professors who failed to submit their grades to the Registrar on time. One or two phone calls usually solved these sorts of problems. Another student complained about an overcrowded classroom. Another student complained about an impolite secretary; we put the student in touch with the secretary's supervisor. One student was fired from her job; we gave her some counsel and directly helped her to negotiate a settlement that improved her future work prospects. (Immediate help for students with employment troubles may be found in the *Student Infor-*

mation Manual, in the section entitled “Student Employment Guidelines.” It is on page 57 of the 1994–95 *Manual*.) One student complained about a student organization that seemed to practice arbitrariness—to practice exclusivity, so she alleged—in allowing some students and not others to participate in its central activities.

A student asked that a second stop sign be placed on University Avenue at its intersection with 58th Street. The University, which has no direct authority over such matters, was able to lobby the city, we think successfully, to install a sign there. The city is unlikely, however, to place a stop sign on Woodlawn Avenue, outside Woodward Court. The avenue is one of Hyde Park’s few thoroughfares for drivers who are going north or south.

One student wanted to know how to get hold of the University Directory. That publication is available for a fee from Networking, Telecommunications, and Computing Services (NTCS). It may also be examined, for free, in the libraries and in some of the residence halls. In the 1995–96 academic year, says NTCS, the Directory will likely be available over the Internet.

One student called to confirm the existence of a shuttle that runs directly from campus to downtown train stations (and the other way, too). The shuttle is operated by the University Hospitals. Tickets for individual rides, at \$2.50 each, are available in the Hospitals cashier’s office, at the Goldblatt Pavilion (860 East 59th Street; 702-6257).

A pregnant graduate student called because her department had seemingly renegeed on an agreement to allow her to take her qualifying examinations at an unusually late date. The department seemed to be insisting that the candidate take the exams at the same time that the candidate’s body was insisting that the candidate deliver the baby. Happily, a quick conversation with the department resulted in a reaffirmation of the department’s original agreement.

A graduate student was charged for the loss of a missing library book that he says he returned a year or two ago. After waiting for the Library to complete a lengthy review process—a process that is meant by the Library to be as fair as is possible to borrowers—he learned that the Library’s searches had uncovered no sign of the book. To fend off the Library, the student offered to pay half the costs of binding and of directly replacing the book: about \$50. In response, the Library offered to pay only binding and administrative costs, leaving the student to pay about \$100.

For serious fiscal reasons, the Library will not abandon its current return policy. The introduction of the current policy, some years ago, occasioned a substantial reduction in the number of books that it lost per year. Fewer lost books means more funds for the Library to carry on its activities.

The year, as a whole, was relatively uneventful for the office. The total number of complaints that we reported for the year is the lowest that the office has recorded in its twenty-seven years of operation. The year’s sum, in fact, is lower than the sums recorded for some past *quarters*. Why is this so? Whatever the reason, this year’s decline in complaints is part of a general trend. Until the 1990–91 academic year, the office

recorded about two hundred grievances per academic year. Each year since then, however, the office has recorded about half that number of grievances.

Graduate Admissions Practices: Two Applications for Transfer between Programs

The following accounts are both of graduate students who applied for transfer from one department within the University to another department. The accounts may disclose trends, or at least potential problems, in the admissions practices of some graduate programs. Or maybe not; it is hard to tell. Our office does not usually hear complaints from applicants to University programs, if only because most such persons are not University students at the time that they apply for study.

In the first case, the department neglected to act for several weeks, thereby breaking several solemnly stated “deadlines,” before finally deciding to admit the student to study. In the second case, the student and the department disagreed about whether she even submitted an application for readmission to its program. The student, in any case, was never admitted to the program.

The first student applied to a department early in the Winter Quarter of 1995, hoping to gain admission by the Spring Quarter. The department’s chairman told him that the department would decide on the application by a date in early February. When the date arrived, no decision had been made. The deadline was postponed. Week by week, the deadline continued to recede: from the end of February, to the middle of March, to the end of March. By the end of that time, happily, the department decided to admit the student to the program.

The second student was in a different predicament. She began, some years ago, in one of the University’s graduate programs. After a time, she transferred to a second program, planning to work for an M.A. and then to cease study at the University. After the student’s academic performance improved, she decided to apply for readmission to the first program. She said she applied after being encouraged to do so by two professors in the program. The student *says* that she attempted for two successive academic years to apply, but that the relevant department never responded to her applications. The student wondered if the University had lost or ignored those applications.

It was unclear, though, whether the student ever really applied for readmission to her former program. The student *thought* that she had given application “forms” to the department, at least twice, but wasn’t sure what those were. She had never kept copies of the “forms.” The student did not seem to have known very clearly what she was planning to do at the University. In any case, the relevant department and division say that they never received a formal application from her. (A formal application would include a specific proposal for study, showing how an applicant would satisfy the program’s requirements.) Both years, the division’s Dean of Students says, he had assumed that the student would apply. Accordingly, he had sent her divisional file to the department. The Dean says also that he expected the department to render a deci-

sion on whether to admit her. (Curious this fact is, if indeed the student never submitted a formal application for study to the program.) The department, however, made no decision.

The Dean now thinks that the University should have told the student in writing what it told her orally—and that it should have insisted that *she* communicate in writing. More fundamentally, the dean believes that the department gave mixed signals to the student. He thinks that the department should have told the student a plain “no” two years before, and that he himself should have nudged the department to do this much earlier.

After talking with me, the Dean wrote directly to the student to clarify a few questions. Thus prompted, the student decided to give up her hopes for studying in the department. End of story, from her perspective. Yet the story, in some respects, echoes concerns that previous Ombudspersons have articulated. Struggling graduate students often feel excluded in various ways from their programs. The feelings, naturally, contribute to continued poor performance. Finally comes the painful point when the programs won’t allow the students to continue, at which point the students feel bitter and used. In the cases that I know about directly, it seems that the students’ academic advisers may have been unwilling or unable to tell the students about the inadequacy of their performance until very late in the students’ careers at Chicago.

What is the similarity between these cases and the case of the unsuccessful applicant? Not that persons in each case feel alienated. No, the similarity consists in the extent to which faculty didn’t make clear academic decisions about questions that were key to the future of the students involved. In the applicant’s case, no one seemed to claim responsibility, until it was too late, for ensuring that a decision would be made to admit or reject her. If the department had said “no” to the applicant in a timely manner, then she would have avoided much confusion. But no one seems to have been willing to do this. As the student noted, some of the faculty members even encouraged her to apply.

A departmental administrator, who had been involved in the case, told me that to encourage someone to try applying to a program is not to tell that person that he is a good candidate. This does not ring true to me. In admissions matters, it seems to me, to speak “encouraging words” is to take an action that entails substantial consequences: among other things, to assume some responsibilities.

These two cases do not commend the administrative workings of our departments, at least when it comes to admissions. The departments, obviously, cannot each imitate the College or Law School admissions offices. But perhaps some departments require more guidance, in conducting admissions at least, than they receive at present from the central administration.

Grading in the College: Some Attempts to Appeal Grades

The College’s “policy” on grade complaints, to the extent that a policy exists, is almost entirely informal. Perhaps because of this,

students possess widely different understandings of what they could do if dissatisfied with grades. Some, particularly first-year and second-year undergraduates, seem to think they are powerless. Other students are more aggressive. Almost none, however, are aware of the range of avenues to be explored if one is seeking that a grade be reviewed.

There should be no surprises about the general rule. The University, almost always, defers to the grading decisions of its instructors. A student is unlikely to persuade an administrator to act to change a grade unless he can show that an instructor has been grossly unfair. In most cases, of course, a College student with a question or complaint about a grade should talk first to his instructor. The student should have course assignments and examinations on hand and should know how the course grade was calculated.

A discrepancy may have resulted from a simple clerical error. Mistakes do happen. In my own case, some years ago, an instructor changed a course grade from a C to a B+ after he discovered that he had made a calculation error. Some instructors are very willing to discuss, at great length, the substantive judgments that they make in awarding grades.

If an instructor is willing to make a grade change, the College is often willing to waive some of its usual rules in order to speed the process. If an instructor is unhelpful, however, and if a student thinks that the unhelpfulness is unjust, then the student may talk to an academic administrator. Usually, the student may talk either to the director of undergraduate studies for the department in which the course was offered or to the chairman of that department. The student may also speak with the Master of the Collegiate Division in which the course was offered. (Or the student may speak with the Ombudsperson.) If a complaint sounds plausible, then an administrator may choose to talk with an instructor informally about a grade to see whether the instructor might reconsider it. Practices vary from administrator to administrator and from department to department. Some persons, and some offices, are better than others at resolving grading complaints.

In the Spring Quarter, we met with a number of College students who sought advice about how to proceed with complaints about grades. For at least three students, we intervened directly: in some cases, talking directly with instructors; in other cases, working with administrators.

One student, some years ago, received an F in a Common Core course. Now the student wanted to see if he could retroactively receive a grade of W or WF. To this end, I offered to set up a meeting between the instructor and the student. The instructor, however, was not interested in a meeting. The complainant, he told me, had attended only three class sessions over the entire quarter; had routinely submitted homework late; had submitted his final examination after the course was finished. The instructor had repeatedly told the student that he was failing and had even recommended that the student drop the course.

The student says that he was given no such warnings. (To be sure, he acknowledged, he *had* cut class a lot.) He said a lot of

other things, too, the bulk of which diverged sharply from the claims of fact that the instructor had made. Unless the student could prove malice on the part of the instructor, I doubted that he could get anywhere with his complaint. This I told to the student, adding that now he must decide himself whether to ask an administrator to review his *F* grade.

A second student seemed to have a stronger case. She received a low quality grade in a popular course. At the start of the Winter Quarter, the course instructor announced that he would not allow students to take the course on a *Pass/Fail* basis. (This was perfectly within the instructor's discretion.) Midway through the quarter, the student met with the instructor and asked him if she could take the course *Pass/Fail*. The instructor said that he would think about the request and decide on it soon. In the past, he said, he had allowed students to take the course *Pass/Fail*. After waiting for a week or so, the student began writing to the instructor by electronic mail, reminding him about the request. He responded to none of her reminders. On the day before the final exam, the student telephoned the instructor in his office, to learn that he had decided to reject the request.

The student's contention was that the instructor had not made good on his promise to tell her within a reasonable period of time whether she could take the course *Pass/Fail*. No argument seems to me clinchingly compelling against this simple claim.

The department's chairman for undergraduate studies declined to ask the instructor to change the grade. The instructor would not change it, either. He told me that he had announced his grading policy early; that he had never made a commitment to changing the grade. He regretted having responded to the student's request so late. He had nothing against *Pass/Fail* grading, as such; he had forbidden it only in order to make the class smaller; but now was too late for him to allow it. Now the instructor had no way of notifying the whole class about changes in the grading rules. He would not allow an exception just for this student.

The student, having received no satisfaction from the chairman or the instructor, decided that she would speak directly to the Dean of Students in the College about the grade.

A third student received a *W* in a Core course that he took in Winter Quarter 1994.

The student, after talking with classmates, came to believe that he deserved an *I* ("Incomplete") for the course. During that Winter Quarter, the student says, he was worrying about serious family troubles. As a result, his grade in the course suffered. When the student visited the course instructor to discuss what he might do, the instructor told him flatly to withdraw. The instructor refused to let the student discuss the troubles. The student did not ask the instructor for an *I* at that time. Nor did he ever talk to the instructor again about the grade.

I did not think that the student had a strong chance of changing the grade. It turned out, though, that I was wrong in my judgment. The College catalog says that instructors have discretion on granting *I*'s. In some cases, however, the College grants *I* grades retroactively, without the explicit permission of instructors. (In this case, the College allowed the student retroactively to receive an *I* for last Winter Quarter's course and to receive, alongside the *I*, the quality grade that he received in a section of the course that he was auditing in Winter Quarter 1995.) The College seems to do this only on the advice of academic administrators. Who possesses the authority? A director of undergraduate studies for a department told me that the College has the authority, even though the College consults him before making any changes in his area of expertise. The College told me that the director has the authority. Maybe both exercise it jointly.

There are many strengths to the present practice. Administrators tend to consider each complaint on its merits, often spending hours to help particular students. The informality of complaint proceedings tends to preserve the autonomy of instructors.

A difficulty, however, is that not many students know about the opportunities available to them. The less that students in general know about what they may do, the more likely that more aggressive and knowledgeable students will be rewarded. The favored students would not include those who perhaps do not enjoy the best relationship with their advisers or with the University in general, or who are just (relatively) submissive or uninquisitive.

A brief written statement about the current options, placed prominently in University publications, would be helpful for the less aggressive sorts of students. Written properly and carefully, a statement would encourage students to ask the right ques-

tions. Some of the University's professional schools already publish statements of this kind. The business school, for example, in its student handbook, clearly indicates how a student may make requests for review of grades.

The faculty of the College is responsible for making fundamental decisions about academic policies. It may well be that these faculty, through such agencies as the College Council, will want to craft a statement that will articulate exactly what grades mean—and what students may do if they have complaints or questions about the grading of particular instructors.

Conclusion

I must express deep thanks to the many remarkable individuals who made my term as Ombudsperson so enjoyable and fruitful. Some persons I spoke with nearly every week; others I met irregularly. About these persons I have few complaints. May God bless them.

Some final words, about my title. "Ombudsman" comes from the Swedish: it means "citizen's representative" or "commissionman." According to Noah Webster, the typical ombudsman investigates complaints, reports findings, and helps achieve equitable settlements. Newspapers, governments, universities: all employ ombudsmen. The University appointed its first Student Ombudsman in 1968.

"Ombudsperson," I find, is generally unintelligible. I suspect, but am not sure, that its unintelligibility contributes to the slowness of business at my office. I am certain, in any event, that the title contributes to my embarrassment. I can't remember how many times I have been asked "what an omni-buds-person does, exactly." Nor do I remember how often I have heard "oms-buds-person."

Common sense, if she speaks to me at all, speaks for changing the name somehow. We could revert to "Ombudsman," but only halfway, and say "Ombudsman/Ombudsperson." In this case, the partisans for each word, with appropriate gusto, could pronounce the word that he or she likes, omitting to pronounce the other word. I have suggested "Student Mediator," infelicitous as that would be; yet I am not content with it.

The new Ombudsman, I am sure, would appreciate suggestions about how best to

advertise the services of the office: to the University in general, and to particular constituencies within the institution.

This report includes a table that lists the numbers of grievances in which the Ombudsperson's office became directly involved during the Winter and Spring quarters. The numbers do not refer to the many grievances in which the office became indirectly involved, either by giving advice or by referring students to other University offices. It is possible to list some grievances in more than one category of problem. However, in keeping with what I believe was the general practice of my predecessors, I chose to count each grievance only for one category. Accordingly, each quarterly total represents the total number of student complaints recorded for the quarter—neither more nor fewer.

Andrew Varcoe was the Student Ombudsperson for the University during the 1994-95 academic year.

Statistics Winter and Spring Quarters 1995		
	Winter	Spring
Academic Affairs	7	15
Admissions	0	2
Grade Appeals	1	4
Policy Inquiries	2	4
Other	4	5
Student Affairs	9	4
Athletics	1	0
Hospitals	3	0
Housing and Commons	3	4
Student Activities	1	0
Student Employment	1	0
Other	0	0
Administrative Affairs	5	2
Bursar	1	0
Discipline	0	0
Facilities and Security	3	2
Financial Aid	0	0
Legal Problems	0	0
Library	1	0
Registrar	0	0
Other	0	0
Sexual Harassment	0	0
Discrimination	0	0
Miscellaneous	3	6
Total Cases	24	27

The 439th Convocation

Address: "The Use and Misuse of Personal Information in a Technological Age"

By Dr. Kenneth S. Polonsky

I am honored to have been invited to participate in this joyous occasion. As you may know, the convocation address at the University of Chicago is always given by a member of the faculty. Frankly, I have never quite understood the reason for this tradition. After four years of hard work, I'm sure that the last person you would choose for your convocation speaker would be another professor. I'm also sure that you are all terrified that I will talk about some obscure aspect of my research. You're probably thinking, "Why didn't they invite one of the really important figures in Chicago life to give this address—someone like Oprah or Michael Jordan?" I confess to having similar thoughts myself as I prepared my remarks. I can assure you that I have no slides, and that you have all the course credits you need to graduate. Furthermore, after I *really* thought about it, I realized that Michael Jordan could not have represented the University. He has won only three championships in a row, while the University has earned a "four-peat." Chicago is the only institution of higher education in the world to have faculty members win the Nobel Prize four years in a row, 1990 through 1993 in economics. Of course, we didn't win in 1994, but neither did the Bulls.

Now, Michael Jordan may have been an important figure in your lives during the last few years. But as a professor, I view graduation as a time to reflect on the *academic* progress you have made since you first arrived here. And on reflection, I believe the most important skill that your Chicago education provides is the ability to think critically—to evaluate new information in a careful and analytical way and to understand its significance. This is an absolutely vital skill. We live in a time when advances in both basic knowledge and applied technology are occurring with such unparalleled speed that much of the factual information that you have learned will soon be out of date. As a result, your ability to analyze *new* information critically represents perhaps the most important skill you will take with you as you leave the University, and your mastery of this skill will be tested repeatedly.

You have all experienced the feeling of exhilaration and sense of accomplishment that come with mastering new knowledge. What we often overlook in our initial excitement when we think a problem is solved is the realization that the solution to each problem usually creates a new set of challenges. Dr. Baruch Blumberg, Nobel laureate in medicine, in his writings about the scientific process and innovation, has termed this phenomenon the Daedalus effect.

You may recall that Daedalus was the legendary builder and inventor of the ancient Greek world. As the story goes, Daedalus became trapped in a labyrinth of his own making together with his son Icarus. Since Daedalus's creativity knew no limit, he invented wings made of feathers and wax so that he and his son could escape. Triumphant, Daedalus and Icarus soared up into the sky. But Icarus flew too high, the heat of the sun melted the wax, the wings fell off his body, and he plunged to his death. Through this legend, the Greeks clearly meant to show that progress is never perfect. There is a continuous cycle in which imperfect advances in knowledge create new

problems and challenges. We must understand the implications of our discoveries—we must perceive the hidden dangers—or the consequences may be disastrous.

It is easy to find examples of the Daedalus effect today. Your experiences here may have left you with the impression that the Internet was developed largely for students to allow them to maintain long-distance relationships at low cost. Or, to discuss the profound philosophical questions of our time, such as whether or not Pearl Jam should be considered a true alternative rock band. But this vast worldwide network actually has some very serious applications, and—more important—several disturbing incidents have raised serious questions about our ability to maintain privacy on the information superhighway. The Daedalus effect arises again as we isolate and characterize human genes. There is a great deal of optimism that application of this genetic technology will lead to important medical breakthroughs, but these advances are certain to pose challenging social, psychological, and personal dilemmas for all of us in the near future.

We all know that the cells of the body contain a genetic blueprint in the form of DNA that we inherited from our parents. The information contained in this genetic code determines many of the simple traits that make us unique as individuals—the color of your hair, whether you will go bald or not and at what age, or whether you are color blind. Your genes also influence more complex traits such as your body weight, intelligence, how long you will live, and your susceptibility to cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease. Environmental factors also interact with our genes in shaping us into what we are. We are now beginning to understand the details of how abnormalities in our genes can lead to human disease. We expect that the structure of the 80,000 to 100,000 genes which comprise the human genetic blueprint will be known within the next five to ten years, making it possible to obtain anyone's detailed genetic profile from a single blood test. This information will form the knowledge base that will allow us to improve our understanding of important physical functions of the body. But it should also allow us to understand the basis of intelligence, emotions, and the varied abilities that characterize human behavior.

There is every reason to be extremely optimistic that these advances in the basic biological sciences will lead to substantial improvements in the human condition. They will fundamentally alter the type of medical information that you will be able to obtain from your doctor. Physicians will soon routinely order blood tests to characterize the nature of your genes. What this means is that when you visit your doctor for a checkup you may be told that you carry a gene that increases your chances of developing, say, heart disease. Although you will not be pleased to receive this news, it is likely that the information will be very helpful, since there are many effective treatments and strategies for prevention of heart disease. Such information will likely motivate you to reduce your risk by relatively simple changes in your lifestyle—following a healthy diet, exercising regularly, and perhaps taking medications. In this case, access to genetic

information can improve the long-term outlook for your health in a very positive way.

But as the ancient Greeks would have predicted, access to genetic information also has the potential to put you in a very difficult situation. What if you were told that you had a gene that increases your chances of developing a disease for which the best treatment is invasive and painful surgery? This is the case with breast or colon cancer. If you knew that you had a predisposition to either of these diseases, you would face a serious personal dilemma. You would have to decide whether or not to allow a surgeon to remove your breast or colon in order to prevent cancer from developing at some time in the future, even though you felt well and were perfectly healthy at the time of the operation. It could be devastating if a genetic test indicated that you were predisposed to a serious disease for which there is no prevention and no effective treatment. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to see how you would be helped by having such information and the psychological consequences would be painful at least. Having access to detailed personal genetic information is not always positive. I have looked at these issues from the perspective of patients consulting their physicians. All of us will be in that situation sooner or later. Those of you who are about to graduate from medical school will also have to take a different perspective, namely that of a physician being asked to advise your patients which genetic tests should be ordered, to help them with the interpretation of the results, and to recommend the most appropriate treatment strategies.

Such dilemmas make one thing clear—society must ensure that information regarding our genetic makeup is properly gathered and not misused. If we look carefully and back far enough into our family histories, every one of us has some adverse genetic predisposition. Steps must be taken to guarantee that this information, if it were to become part of our medical record, would not be used against us in an inappropriate fashion. Many of you already have jobs. Some will be looking for jobs. As job applicants we want to be confident that potential employers are not allowed to deny us employment on the basis of a genetically determined predisposition to a medical condition that we are likely but not certain to develop at some time in the future. Recent legislation has achieved such a goal. On the other hand it is less clear that such protection will be available in the future when we apply for life and/or health insurance. If insurance companies are allowed to request genetic information from people who have applied for insurance coverage, it is possible that individuals could be charged a higher premium or even denied coverage on the basis of a perceived problem in their genes. Or imagine that genetic information available through the application of this technology could be used by parents to select genetic characteristics of their unborn children. Such a practice would have profound biological implications for our society by limiting natural diversity, and equally profound cultural effects.

As ordinary citizens, you may come to believe that the results of genetic tests should remain confidential and not be used against you unfairly. As parents, you may come to

believe that children should be the beneficiaries of the most up-to-date methods for the diagnosis and treatment of disease. As business leaders, you may come to believe that it is essential to maintain the ability to hire productive workers while at the same time extending employment opportunities to people of diverse backgrounds and skills. As lawyers, you may come to believe that the laws that govern the use of genetic information should balance the legitimate rights of individuals whom you represent as well as large corporations. As religious leaders, you may come to believe that the application of modern medical technologies should not come into conflict with ethical and human values. As physicians, you may come to believe that everything should be done to hasten these advances in science.

And after careful consideration, some of you may come to believe that the moral and ethical issues raised by access to detailed information on the genetic makeup of individuals are so profound and far-reaching that research in this area should be slowed and its nature and extent strictly controlled and regulated. But this would inevitably limit the potential to develop new approaches to reducing human suffering. I believe that society should promote rather than limit the advancement of knowledge and then take the necessary steps to ensure that advances are used wisely. This will require open discussion with input of thoughtful people from different backgrounds. The important social and ethical decisions cannot be made by scientists alone and certainly should not be left purely to the government. This is where you—and your skills in critical thinking—can play an important role.

As students at Chicago, you were routinely exposed to the free and open debate needed for tough moral and ethical questions. As a result of your experiences and training, you are among the best equipped to evaluate these issues critically and to help guide us to the best approaches. We need people of your caliber and intellect to help make these decisions, people who have the wisdom to foresee the next set of challenges once those in hand have been solved.

In closing, I would like to quote President John F. Kennedy. Although these words were written before many of you were born, they are as pertinent today as they were in 1959: "What we need now in this nation, more than atomic power, or air power, or financial, industrial, or even manpower, is brainpower. The dinosaur was bigger and stronger than anyone else but he was also dumber. And look what happened to him."

It is your mission as graduates of the University of Chicago to ensure that we do not go the way of the dinosaurs. Your success indicates that you are well prepared for this role since you have been able to look beyond your own personal prejudices and evaluate issues critically and objectively. Allow me to congratulate you and your families on your achievement. The quality of our students is a great source of pride to the faculty at the University of Chicago. I know that I speak for all our faculty when I say how much we look forward to your future accomplishments. Good luck and thank you.

Dr. Kenneth S. Polonsky is Professor in the Department of Medicine and Chief of the Endocrinology Section.

Remarks by Joseph Neubauer

It's an honor and privilege to be here with you this evening. Thirty years ago, I was sitting where you are, wondering how I was going to make my way in a world turned upside down by social and political upheaval.

The world had just stepped back from a nuclear Armageddon. A president had been assassinated. The country was involved in a very unpopular land war in Asia. An angry anti-war movement was sweeping American campuses. In a small corner of San Francisco, Haight-Ashbury, we saw the rise of a new American phenomenon—the *hippie*. Guys who dressed like girls, girls who dressed like guys, all tripping on *acid*, listening to psychedelic music, and proclaiming love and peace to all who would support them.

And if all this wasn't enough, the country was being re-invaded by the British—this time, principally, by two bands. I remember predicting with absolute certainty that the *Rolling Stones* would never last. You do realize, of course, Mick Jagger is older than I am.

The so-called sexual revolution was in full swing—though I still couldn't get a date on Saturday nights. Maybe it's because, in those days, the "B school" guys were the only ones on campus still wearing ties and jackets.

And technology. You don't want to know. Ever heard of "batch processing"? "Punch cards"? We had to use them to access the mainframe. You know . . . mainframe? Each card contained the admonition: "Do not bend, fold, staple, or mutilate." Once in awhile, a practical joker would re-sort your deck just to make those early morning hours at the "Information Center" a bit more interesting. I never thought about bending, folding, or stapling. But mutilating on the other hand . . .

Thirty years ago when I was sitting out there, it seemed like the world was lurching about in some very erratic ways. My guess is it looks pretty much the same to you right now. And you're right. Only now, the changes are even more dramatic than what was happening in 1965.

Both the pace and scope of change today makes what was happening thirty years ago seem like a Saturday night in Butte, Montana. That's before the cowboys show up.

Today we have change in "sense-surround." It's cultural *and* social, economic *and* political, ideological *and* technological. A lot of us are having a hard time figuring it out. We literally are living through the end of one age and the beginning of another. It is a very, very exciting time to be alive.

And an even better time to begin a career. Because all the old rules are out. And new ones are being rewritten every day. Many of them by people of your generation.

Your challenge is one of leadership. Virtually every one of you will ultimately bear the responsibility for managing large quantities of money or people. In many cases, *both*. To succeed, your frame of reference may have to shift from yourself to others.

You're going to have to understand the needs and wants, the hopes and fears of the people you are working with and the markets you serve. And that will prove to be the beginning of a growth, both personal and professional, that will make your professional life abundantly rewarding.

Let me be specific for a moment. I'm told there are 689 of you in today's graduating class. Your average age is 27. This makes you an official member of that illustrious group known as "Generation X." Don't feel bad. My generation was known as "Generation Y" as in "Why . . . did they turn out like *this*?"

Now, there are two views of Generation X. The view of the social critics is that you are a generation of whiners and gripers who are angry and alienated because you see less opportunity today to achieve *your* dreams.

The other view, and I share it, is less publicized. It says that you're the most "take charge" entrepreneurial generation in American history.

For example, when asked whether they intended to start a business, and whether starting a business was part of the so-called "American Dream," more Generation X'ers said "yes" than any other age group.

Maybe your generation is telling mine that our symbols of success and security are not yours. And what's wrong with that? Nothing.

What I see in your generation is a desire to control your own destiny. To redefine success in terms that are real to you. That makes a lot of sense at a time when the contract between the enterprise and the professional employee or manager is changing radically.

It used to be you went to school and acquired skills that would last an entire career. Once you landed a position, there was an implied contract that said if you did a reasonably good job, you got to keep it. Success was measured by promotions. The idea was to get to the corner office so that you could tell everybody else what to do.

But the old contract is dead. Done in by technology and deregulation and global competition.

In its place, there is a new contract. It goes something like this: If you can help add economic value to our enterprise, *today*, we have a job for you, *today*. And it's your responsibility to keep your skills current *throughout your career*. Because the global market only rewards ever-higher levels of productivity.

Now if I've got this right, many in your generation are saying: "OK. We can play by those rules. But we'll create our own enterprise, either within yours, or entirely on our own, and we'll succeed on *our* terms."

Your challenge then is twofold: first, you have to figure out, ultimately, where *you* fit in all of that. Then, and this may be the more difficult challenge, you're going to have to manage an entirely new set of market requirements and employee expectations.

In other words, once you get yourself where you want to be, how will *you* recruit the "best people" to help run *your* enterprise? And how will *you* keep them, once you get them? Make no mistake about it: it's all about "best people" today. "Best people" create "best practice." And "best practice" is what wins in the marketplace.

Two examples. Some years ago, Atlantic

Richfield made a strategic decision to invest billions to produce its own crude oil on Alaska's Northern Slope. They believed continuing political turmoil in the Middle East would eventually provide them with a competitive advantage. Sure enough, in 1991, America goes to war in the Gulf over oil. All the other major oil companies raise prices. ARCO freezes theirs, giving up tens of millions of dollars in profits. The customer notices. Today, ARCO's return on equity is fully three times industry average.

Or take SONY. They introduced a mini-camcorder that produces the best profit margin the company has ever earned on a single product. Yet at the time of product launch, they had four other teams competing among themselves to introduce a better mini-camcorder which would make the one they just launched obsolete. How'd you like to be one of SONY's competitors?

These companies, and others, are successful today because they have "best people" producing "best practices" that give their customers something they demand: incremental value with every transaction.

Another by-product of the new contract: Organizations are flatter with fewer layers. They're decentralized with greater individual and operational autonomy. Smart, lean teams are in. Each person on the team brings something unique—some special skill or knowledge.

My son Lawrence, who sits among you today, tells me this has been brought to the academic world as well. Here at the business school you have been trained to work in teams and to respect, and depend on, the unique contributions of others.

Thirty years ago, we were largely trained to figure it out ourselves. We were trained for a command and control world that has now disappeared.

This is particularly true in the service industries in which our company ARAMARK competes. We have about 140,000 employees of which about 4,000 are managers. We serve about 15 million customers a day, in 11 different countries.

Do you think command and control would work at ARAMARK?

No way. Because in the service business, production and consumption occur at the point of transaction, and customers today expect more value each time they transact with you. You can't command and control that. Not for 15 thousand customers every day let alone 15 million.

It's about creating culture, attracting talent, and giving people real power to do whatever it takes to create economic value in the marketplace every day.

In short, it's about management. And that's your special challenge.

From the time you arrived here at the University, you've been trained to lead. Soon, you will be called to lead. As you move on in your life and in your career, people will begin to look to you for solutions to problems.

Perhaps it's already begun. This is the intersection where "preparation meets opportunity." This is where you begin to exercise what I call "stewardship."

Let's talk about it for a minute. This class, the 1995 University of Chicago Graduate School of Business class, will manage a disproportionate share of global resources,

both capital and human. That's not a particularly bold prediction. It's a mathematical certainty.

How you exercise that stewardship will largely determine the success you achieve in your professional life. If you begin your journey today thinking about amassing power and wealth and using it to buy privacy and security just for yourself . . . frustration and anxiety await you.

But if you begin with a slightly different approach, a more enlightened view of your own identity and purpose, you will enjoy a much fuller life.

Collective enterprise enables men and women to realize their full potential. Leaders understand this. They learn how to draw on the unique contributions of others, *all* others, regardless of who they are. Leaders become *inclusive* people, not *exclusive* people. They come to see themselves as enablers, helping *others* realize *their* wants and dreams.

Last week, I addressed the presidents of our fourteen divisions. I reminded them that each of us had succeeded, in economic terms, well beyond our dreams.

I told them there were thousands of managers in our company who are at a different point in their careers. Men and women who are working very hard to exceed our customers' expectations in the hopes that they, too, might build some economic security for themselves and their families.

I challenged them. I told them we who have more must give more of ourselves so others can realize their dreams. I urged them to understand the needs and wants, the hopes and dreams of both their customers *and* their managers. And to rededicate themselves to putting their own skills in service of the others.

I urge the same of you. The world doesn't need more wealthy men and women. It needs more men and women who understand how to create wealth for others.

You have been educated and trained for leadership. Be worthy of the love and sacrifice it took to bring you to this moment in your life. Make sure those who have given the love, who have made the sacrifice, *feel* your gratitude.

Live your life as an expression of that gratitude, and I guarantee you, you will draw others to you. You will be a beacon of light in a sea of darkness and confusion. And all the things that you want from life, all the dreams that have guided you in your journey to this point, will be realized.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this special day with all of you. Congratulations to each of you. And Lawrence, I love you.

Joseph Neubauer, M.B.A. '65, is a Trustee of the University and a Member of the Council on the Graduate School of Business. He is Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Aramark Corporation. Mr. Neubauer delivered these remarks at the third session of the 439th convocation, at which Master of Business Administration degrees in the Graduate School of Business were awarded.

Bachelor's Degree Candidates' Remarks

Remarks by Rebecca Lee Feldman

There is something terrible about graduating, for we are losing a community. Here at the University, we know who we are, there are people we are fond of, and a routine that, though generally filled with hard work, sustains us.

Right now we are like milkweed seeds inside a milkweed pod, all placed and lined up, so that together we look like a fish, or a sleeping bird. This is the last time we will be arranged in an order together.

And as we prepare for the dispersal of our community, we experience an inner dispersal. In a certain sense, at the same time that we must say good-bye to the places that map our memories and the people we love, we are also saying good-bye to ourselves over and over. As a friend and fellow graduate said, "I am disappearing."

However, as the process of graduating continues, I find—as perhaps many of you have—that I've been gaining a new calm and self-confidence amidst contingency. I no longer have to worry about losing this place I am fond of. Now the task is to say good-bye.

This is how I see graduation: You're walking down a hallway with mirrored sides. Everywhere you look you see yourself and whomever you're with. The mirrors are your life at the University, which shows you who you are. You come to graduation and the mirror stops. Once you begin your so-called new life the mirror starts up again. How do you know that the person you saw reflected in your old and new lives are the same?

If you walk down the hallway, get to the part with no mirrors, and still feel inside yourself like much the same person, that is quite a calming and powerful sense of existence. I think it is also the feeling of American individualism that we have been taught to value. When I say individualism, I mean not personal uniqueness, but general self-sufficiency. It is a type of freedom.

When I came here, I quickly learned in my social science core class that the ideal of the self-supporting, self-sustaining, "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" individual is an ideal that is not shared by cultures from all times, places, and with all economic systems. Now, entering a moment in my life of exhilarating individualism and freedom, I know that it is only one ideal among many possible ideals, but it has its merits, and since it is an ideal for adulthood in our culture, I belong to it, and it belongs to me.

Is the loss of a community a prerequisite for independent adulthood for many people in this country?

I would argue that as we lose community on a literal level we gain it on an abstract level. The people you love come with you when you leave, when the mirror stops. This is a different ideal—the community internalized. The author Irving Massey recently told me, "If you've ever dreamed, you know that people never go away."

Pippi Longstocking's friends love playing at Pippi's house, and are sad when their mother says they must come home. Pippi says to them, "Don't cry. Don't you see, if you don't leave you can't come back." Pippi means what she says literally; we should

come back. She sees no reason for permanent separation, which is part of why her world seems so wonderful. I mean come back literally, but also in the friends we continue to love, the memories we keep, and the communities we will help form, that show us who we were and who we are.

Rebecca Lee Feldman received a Bachelor of Arts degree with honors during the convocation. Her major area of study was General Studies in the Humanities.

Remarks by Andrew James Spellman "Diving into Unknown Waters"

Three years ago when I decided to leave the College of William and Mary and come here in search of a "real education," I found that transferring to the University of Chicago is like diving into Lake Michigan in January wearing an aluminum foil, bikini-style swimsuit. [Hold up giant aluminum foil bikini.] The immersion into my new life was sudden, complete, and kinda tingly. For living quarters I was surprised to find myself stationed in the nether world of the dormitory known as Max Mason House, home of freaks, recluses, and lost souls. By the end of orientation week I felt my mind crumbling like a stale asbestos muffin. I needed to escape, so on that first day of classes I stepped out the door and started along the weary half-hour trek towards campus. Just as I rounded the corner at Hyde Park Boulevard and Woodlawn Avenue, which, by the way, is the intersection where 90 percent of the crimes reported in Hyde Park occur, a raging blizzard enveloped the city. Bizarre objects flew at me from all directions. An overdue notice from Mr. Regenstein pelted me in the belly button, a helping of chicken tetrazzini from the Pierce cafeteria slapped me in the face and froze to my mustache, providing hours of continued enjoyment. The pale, waxen face of the Hyde Park poster child appeared mumbling about *The Critique of Pure Reason* in exasperation. A copy of *Wealth of Nations* landed underfoot and sent me reeling while a wild pack of Morry's fifty-cent hot dogs circled viciously, waiting to close in. It was more terrifying than being surrounded by graduate students and their babies. Hopelessness and doubt filled my heart, but then the simple question entered my head: "Can University of Chicago undergraduates overcome such adversity?" The answer had to be: "Yes We Can!"

Miraculously, I was saved from this perilous predicament by an official, white, University of Chicago security van, which, by a most circuitous route, deposited me at the threshold of Swift Hall. After those earlier, harrowing experiences, here began the positive, exciting aspects of my education. Where else but at the Divinity School book sale can you watch a pair of Nobel laureates get into a fist fight over a stack of steamy, used Jackie Collins romances? My soul thus fulfilled, I progressed to Henry Crown Field House for some bodily enlightenment. Here our rigorous physical education program taught me an important lesson: Don't procrastinate. If there's a bunion in your boot, don't just live with the pain, get it lanced right away! And of everything that's happened to me in the past three years, the thing I'm most excited about—thanks to the University of Chicago and the modern wonders

of electronic mail—I've finally met the woman of my dreams. I don't know what she looks like, but she has the most *alternative* web page I've ever seen.

Yes, the glorious and the demoralizing, the beautiful and the ugly—they have all been part of our University of Chicago experience, our time of growth and learning. So let us now take that brand-new, warm diploma, fold it into a cozy, bikini-style swimsuit, and dive headlong with confidence and strength into the unknown waters of the rest of our lives.

Andrew James Spellman received a Bachelor of Arts degree with honors during the convocation. His major area of study was Slavic Languages and Literatures.

Remarks by Andrea Robin Wood

We tend to think of convocation as a time for remembering good times and close friendships. In the past few days, however, I have discovered that the poignancy of this occasion results as much, if not more, from the classes that didn't quite fit into my schedule; the concert I couldn't quite make it in time for; and the people with whom I exchanged hellos daily, but whose phone numbers never quite made it into my book.

For all of the things we will take with us, we have had to leave many others behind. If we each took inventory of what the College has given us along with our diplomas, undoubtedly the lists would be very different. However, I believe we would all have at least one item in common.

If nothing else, this University has forced us to develop our ability to create, articulate, and defend ideas. The opportunities for improving the world around us are endless in the wake of our capacity to challenge the status quo, to discover new and better ways to do things, and to persuade others to follow our lead.

If power is best identified by the degree to which an individual can influence others and make an impression on the world, then nothing can be more powerful than a persuasive idea. The ability to influence what people believe is the greatest power a person can possess. This is the power that produces the greatest works of art, builds nations, and inspires social movements.

However, along with this great opportunity comes a great responsibility. Despite, or rather because of, their awesome creative power, ideas also have the potential for destruction. They have justified racism, slavery, violence, and many evils which defy simple rational explanation.

Alice Walker, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author, once said: "Ignorance, arrogance, and racism have bloomed as Superior Knowledge in all too many Universities." I believe Ms. Walker has hit upon the greatest danger inherent in what we do here. We wield the power of ideas. It is a weapon as well as a tool. And we are responsible for what it destroys as well as what it creates.

As people with the power to influence what others believe, we each have a special responsibility to consider the consequences of our ideas before putting them at the mercy of the world. It's been said that one person cannot be both political scientist and policy-maker because the former deals with establishing principals and the latter deals with compromising them. Yet in reality, the

best political scientists are necessarily policy-makers, because they are the source of the ideas from which everything else is drawn.

When I first started in the College, I was disturbed by what I felt was a generally held belief that in order to be a true intellectual one also had to be dispassionate. You could not really care about the issues without compromising academic authority. Ideas were for political scientists, passions for politicians. It seemed that here, where the pool of ideas was greater than perhaps anywhere else, the passion to carry them through was being lost.

After four years, I now can say for certain that passion isn't being lost here—it's just often buried under the avalanche of our daily lives. I have witnessed the power and the passion here among us. And honestly, the potential is awe-inspiring. I've seen my peers compose and stage an original musical; organize protests to demand changes in University policy; and bring other powerful ideas to life.

I'd like to close by challenging each of you to accept the responsibility and seize the opportunities created by the power of your own ideas, and support them with the passion and conviction necessary to see them through to their conclusions. I can hardly wait to see the results.

Andrea Robin Wood received a Bachelor of Arts degree during the convocation. Her major area of study was Law, Letters, and Society.

Honorary Degrees

Bradley Efron, Max H. Stein Professor of Statistics, Stanford University.

Presentation by Peter McCullagh, Professor in the Department of Statistics and the College.

Professor Bradley Efron is an extraordinarily original and innovative statistician, a scientist of the first rank in his own or in any other generation. His grasp of the relationship between scientific inference and statistical models has led to a set of works that have set the research agenda for much of current statistics. These have made a significant impact upon a variety of sciences, from astronomy and paleontology to demography and medicine. His work on empirical Bayes methods brought unity to areas previously thought unrelated, random-effects models and shrinkage estimation. His brilliant insight on the intimate connection between the curvature of a statistical manifold and the deficiency of a statistical estimator has generated an enormous literature on the connections between statistical asymptotics and differential geometry. But Bradley Efron is best known for seeking to harness modern computational power to measure statistical uncertainty. The idea is disarmingly simple: in circumstances where analytical calculation is not feasible, one can often approximate the distribution of a statistic by sampling with replacement from the observed data and using the empirical distribution of the estimates thus obtained. Efron has extended this re-sampling device to encompass scientific problems of great complex-

ity, thereby opening the entirely new field of inference by computer-intensive simulation, now called the bootstrap method. Efron's work is characterized by its mathematical originality, by its emergence from applications as diverse as linguistics and clinical trials, and by the conceptually challenging nature of his ideas.

Thomas V. Gamkrelidze, Director, Tsereteli Institute of Oriental Studies, Academy of Sciences of Georgia; Professor, Tbilisi State University, Republic of Georgia.

Presentation by Howard I. Aronson, Professor in the Departments of Slavic Languages and Literatures and Linguistics.

Professor Thomas V. Gamkrelidze's contributions to almost every area of linguistic research, from phonology to semiotics to typology have contributed greatly to the development of structuralist linguistic theory. He is best known for his contributions to the study of historical linguistics. Together with the late Givi Machavariani he produced the groundbreaking, definitive reconstruction of the phonology and morphophonology of Kartvelian (South Caucasian), the family to which Georgian belongs. Few scholars would be able to reconstruct one proto-language, but Thomas Gamkrelidze has produced, in collaboration with V. V. Ivanov, a monumental reanalysis of the Indo-European proto-language, based on a new theory, the glottalic theory, in turn based on his own studies of phonological universals. This work fundamentally revised the phonological system of the proto-language and also presented a radical new hypothesis on the Urheimat of the Indo-Europeans. All subsequent research on the history of the Kartvelian and Indo-European languages has had to take into account the results of this work. The fields of Kartvelian and Indo-European linguistics have been forever changed through the scholarship of Thomas Gamkrelidze. He has left a lasting mark on linguistic study. His innovative, insightful, and meticulous scholarship serves as a model for those who follow in his footsteps.

David Lewin, Professor of Music, Harvard University.

Presentation by Richard L. Cohn, Associate Professor in the Department of Music and the College.

Professor David Lewin has fundamentally revolutionized the field of music theory over the past thirty-five years. His development of transformational networks as models for twentieth-century atonal repertoires has given scholars a means to explore how atonal composers engage musical time and how their music acquires power to "move" listeners. His discovery that these networks apply to Romantic harmony, and to rhythm in both atonal and tonal repertoires, has provided profound insights into previously impenetrable aspects of musical structure. Professor Lewin's work has forged links between the studies of tonal and atonal repertoires, of harmony and rhythm, demonstrating the permeability of long-standing intradisciplinary boundaries. Professor

Lewin's unique scholarly voice abounds in the joy of focused inquiry and exhibits his uncanny gift for rendering technical abstractions musically, psychologically, and even emotionally viable and meaningful. His work sets a new standard for what may be achieved by applying systematic methods to problems of central interest to students of the arts, aesthetics, and the humanities in general.

Richard E. Smalley, Gene and Norman Hackerman Professor of Chemistry and Professor of Physics, Rice University.

Presentation by Donald H. Levy, the Ralph and Mary Otis Isham Professor in the Department of Chemistry, the James Franck Institute, and the College.

Professor Richard Smalley established the field of cluster science and is its leading practitioner. His development of the instrumentation necessary to study atomic and molecular clusters has driven the enormous progress in this field over the last ten to fifteen years. His invention of the laser ablation source turned cluster science into a major research area in chemistry and physics. Much of the experimental and theoretical methodology that are now standard in the field can be traced back to his ideas and pioneering work. Professor Smalley is responsible for one of the most important—and certainly the most spectacular—advance in cluster science, the discovery of fullerenes. The original carbon-sixty buckyball and its relatives have captured both the scientific and popular imagination. To the trained eye, this third form of carbon has both the beauty and fascination of its relative, diamond. His ongoing work on the material properties of the fullerenes is demonstrating they have not only symmetry and beauty but also utility.

Robert B. Wilson, Atholl McBean Professor of Economics, Graduate School of Business, Stanford University.

Presentation by Nancy L. Stokey, Professor in the Department of Economics and the College.

Professor Robert B. Wilson has made fundamental contributions to many of the most important questions in economics, management, and decision sciences, including the theory of auctions and price formation, the theory of the firm, the behavior of syndicates, game theory, incentive problems, and information economics. His work is guided by an interest in understanding the behavior of individuals and groups, how institutional arrangements affect that behavior, and whether some arrangements lead to better behavior and better outcomes. Wilson's work clearly demonstrates the power of abstract economic theory for describing and understanding important real-world phenomena. It is a model of how economic science can contribute to answering questions about how individual incentives and social institutions interact to form the world around us.

The Llewellyn John and Harriet Manchester Quantrell Awards

The University's Llewellyn John and Harriet Manchester Quantrell Awards for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching were presented during the 439th convocation on June 10, 1995.

Upon the recommendation of John W. Boyer, Dean of the College, and Geoffrey R. Stone, Provost, Hugo F. Sonnenschein, President, designated the following winners.

Kathleen N. Conzen, Professor in the Department of History and the College.

Presentation by Edward M. Cook, Jr., Associate Professor in the Department of History and the College; Dean of Students in the University and Associate Provost for Graduate Programs.

Kathleen Neils Conzen is an internationally respected scholar in the areas of American urban history, immigration history, and the history of rural communities, who brings these themes together in her pathbreaking studies of the immigrant experience in American cities and rural settlements, and her thought-provoking essays on urban history, immigration, and rural communities. She has a distinguished record of leadership in the learned societies that make scholarly communities of these fields of study.

Kathy Conzen brings her dedication to scholarship and her willingness to lead to her role as a teacher. In the classroom, she is known for her thorough knowledge of her subject and her ability to convey to students the complexity and nuance of historical experience. She is known even more to students for her teaching in informal settings. For many years she has been a leading director of bachelor's papers. Students approach her because of the range of her scholarly interests, and because she conveys a willingness to take each student seriously and a gift for finding a promising direction in even the vaguest glimmer of a paper topic. Then they stay for her patient guidance, and her shrewd editorial advice, and return again for other kinds of advice to a professor they recognize as a generous friend and a true teacher.

Professor Conzen's commitment to undergraduate students is also manifest in her service as director of the undergraduate history program for the past three years. In this capacity she has spent many hours with students, steering them into exciting and challenging programs of study. She has also brought to bear her gift for graduate teaching, recognized five years ago with a Burlington-Northern Faculty Achievement Award, to guide and inspire the graduate student preceptors who work with history concentrators. Finally, she has worked with her colleagues, recommending and implementing structural changes to make the program more rewarding to both teachers and students.

Kathleen Conzen is a respected scholar, a dedicated teacher, and an unselfish citizen of her profession. Her commitment of her scholarship and her citizenship to service as a teacher is a gift to her students and a reflection of the highest ideals of the University.

Herbert George, Associate Professor in the Committee on Art and Design.

Presentation by Thomas Mapp, Associate Professor in the Committee on Art and Design and in the College; Director of Midway Studios.

Herbert George is an outstanding teacher and artist who has served his students and his university with distinction. His work as a sculptor is recognized both nationally and internationally.

Herbert's teaching represents both an abiding belief in the creative potential of each of his students, and a fierce and intelligent dedication to the art of sculpture. Sculpture, after all, is with us, in our lives in a way that the fictions of painting are not. Without the protective barrier of the picture plane, sculpture must compete for our attentions in the hurly-burly of our own space. And it is at this point that it must distinguish itself from the quotidian through its imaginative power, and its ability to uncover what is true about ourselves. This is what Herbert's sculpture does. This is his path.

It is a path he shares generously with his students. This way toward understanding through the resistance and difficulties of sculpture is his mission as a teacher and an artist. He asks his students to think carefully about what matters in their lives. Then with the materials available, be they wood, steel, or cement, plastic, paper, or glass, he encourages students to make the transformations which would reveal the sense of their experience and the shape of their vision. Herbert is always there for them, not to prescribe creative decisions, but rather as a resource: an exemplar. Herbert is also an inspiration to his graduate students. He demands that they work hard, listen well to criticism, but maintain a clear vision of their artistic project.

And he thinks about and contributes enormously to our programs, our physical circumstance, and to our standing in the community. Herbert George in his life as an artist and teacher is a worthy example for us all.

Richard G. Kron, Professor in the Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics and in the College; Director of Yerkes Observatory.

Presentation by Donald G. York, the Horace B. Horton Professor in the Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics, the Enrico Fermi Institute, and the College.

Richard Kron is an outstanding astrophysicist. Many of the hallmarks of his research style permeate his classroom style. That style makes him admired by peer researchers and students alike.

Professor Kron's research is marked by an ability to focus on and describe the "thing itself," be it a star, a stellar system, a class of objects such as quasi-stellar objects, or even the Universe. While conversant with modern theory, he never allows simplified descriptions to stand as barriers to the deep understanding available from assiduous observation. The thing itself has integrity beyond our interpretation of it. For him, the books we would all like to write are already written, ready to be picked from the shelves

of the Universe and read in detail.

This particular view of the world leads to a clarity in lecturing that is readily adaptable to students of all ages. Deeply interested in communicating his understanding to others, he has made teaching the first priority of his busy life. His graduate students are among the best prepared and most promising in the field. His advanced graduate courses on extragalactic objects are among the best attended in the department and regularly draw not only graduate students but professors and postdoctoral researchers. His teaching success with undergraduates provides a model for us all.

His desire to communicate goes beyond the lecture room. He has spent long hours improving the undergraduate laboratories that are critical to our definition of a liberal arts education. In addition, he led the fundraising for the Dunham Teaching Telescope, developed a program to train teaching assistants for it, and developed the lab exercises that lead significant numbers of students through a hands-on experience of how professional astronomers view the world. He was instrumental in acquiring the radio telescope on top of the Kersten Physics Teaching Center that allows students to understand the significance of radio eyes on the Universe.

Tomorrow's scholars are in the high schools of today. The urgency of incorporating all races and creeds into the academic sphere has led Professor Kron to spend many hours teaching physics to inner-city high school students. He also hosts gatherings for their parents to show them the work of the students and the University environment, in order to assure that the students receive the necessary parental support for their endeavors. His unique view of the meaning of knowledge allows him to make the Universe accessible to even the youngest minds.

While teaching graduate students, his colleagues, undergraduate non-science majors, and high school students, Richard Kron has carried out a flourishing observational research program, guiding numerous graduate students in substance and style. At the same time, he has been a leader in establishing two large projects, the Sloan Digital Sky Survey and the Center for Astrophysical Research in Antarctica. These projects assure that the flow of facts required to advance his personal teaching agenda will continue at a level worthy of this master teacher.

Teaching and research do not complete his list of activities and accomplishments in the service of academia. Professor Kron has changed the infrastructure and character of Yerkes Observatory, an entity that dates to the founding of this University. He currently serves as Observatory Director. Recently, he has also established an Experimental Astrophysics Group at Fermilab, which he currently serves as Head.

Richard Kron is deeply involved in the increase of knowledge, and its propagation to a wide range of students. He stands in a long tradition of University scholars who regard teaching as a worthy partner of research, to assure that knowledge not only increases, but that there will be teachers to teach it tomorrow.

Stephen Pruett-Jones, Associate Professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolution, the Committee on Evolutionary Biology, and the College.

Presentation by Michael J. Wade, Professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolution, the Committee on Evolutionary Biology, and the College.

Steve Pruett-Jones is the consummate modern field biologist, who, in his research, combines painstaking observations in remote and barely habitable sites with laboratory molecular genetic methods. His quantitative field studies of Darwin's classic cases of sexual selection in the birds of paradise already have earned him a place in the textbooks, although he is a relatively young research scholar. In his current ornithological research, he is comparing patterns of male behavioral dominance with genetic patterns of paternity to determine the adaptive consequences of different male reproductive behaviors.

His commitment and enthusiasm for original research carries over into the classroom, where the intensity of his teaching contacts with students stands in marked contrast to the isolation he experiences in his remote field research. Steve is a clear and thoughtful teacher, skillfully mixing difficult conceptual issues with cogent empirical examples, many from his own research experiences. Because he is an interdisciplinary scholar with a unique research expertise, he is equally at home teaching methods in field ecology or teaching laboratory genetics. He views both research and teaching as constituent parts of a career in science.

He came to Chicago in 1988 from California. At Berkeley, he was a doctoral student of Dr. Frank Pitelka, himself a widely renowned mentor of graduate students, and, at San Diego, he was a postdoctoral student of Dr. Jack Bradbury. Steve quickly found his voice as teacher and he has taught a wide variety of college courses, ranging from Genetics to Animal Behavior to Field Ecology, and taught them well. However, his signature course in our undergraduate curriculum is Field Ecology. In this course, he takes a group of ten or eleven students to the Archibald Field Station in Florida where they conduct original research projects. An important, albeit unusual, prerequisite for admission to the course requires the student to write a proposal in the style of a National Science Foundation grant proposal. These proposals become the basis for the student research projects. This course teaches the students how to formulate questions into testable hypotheses, how to collect and analyze data, and how to rebound when experiments fail despite all efforts. Most importantly, it provides the kind of authentic research experience that helps a student crystallize a decision to pursue an advanced degree and a career in science. This course is very enthusiastically received by our students who tend to characterize it as "awesome," "the best course in four years," and as a college experience they will never forget, which gave them a taste of real science.

Faculty Awards for Excellence in Graduate Teaching

Four Faculty Awards for Excellence in Graduate Teaching were presented during the 439th convocation on June 9, 1995. These awards, established in 1986, recognize and honor faculty members for their effective graduate teaching, including leadership in the development of programs and a special ability to encourage, influence, and work with graduate students.

Nominations and recommendations for the Faculty Awards for Excellence in Graduate Teaching are made by faculty and graduate students; selection is by a faculty committee appointed by the Provost.

Sheila Fitzpatrick, Professor in the Department of History and the College.

Presentation by Tetsuo Najita, the Robert S. Ingersoll Distinguished Service Professor in the Departments of History and East Asian Languages and Civilizations, and in the College.

Dedicated and inspiring teacher and mentor, you have fostered in your students independence, intellectual rigor, and a devotion to the highest standards of teaching and research.

John A. Goldsmith, Professor in the Department of Linguistics.

Presentation by Philip Gossett, the Robert W. Reneker Distinguished Service Professor in the Department of Music, the Committee on General Studies in the Humanities, and the College; Dean of the Division of the Humanities.

Innovative scholar and devoted teacher of linguistics, you have created for your students the kind of supportive and open intellectual environment in which they develop the independence of mind that makes them, in turn, innovative scholars and devoted teachers.

George Haley, Professor in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures and in the College.

Presentation by Elissa Weaver, Professor in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures and in the College.

Inspiring teacher and mentor, you communicate to your students high standards of clarity of mind and expression and are an example of impeccable scholarship and dedication to teaching. You are a model of excellence and of generosity of spirit for a generation of scholars and teachers of Spanish literature.

Robert J. Richards, Professor in the Departments of History, Philosophy, and Psychology and in the College; Director of the Morris Fishbein Center for the History of Science and Medicine and of the Program in History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Science and Medicine.

Presentation by Daniel Garber, Professor in the Department of Philosophy, the Committee on the Conceptual Foundations of

Science, and the College.

Through your model, your urging, and your unfailing support you have inspired our graduate students in the history, philosophy, and social studies of science with a sense of professionalism, and a desire to participate in both the intellectual community of the University and the larger professional community beyond.

Summary

The 439th convocation was held on Friday, June 9, and Saturday, June 10, 1995, in Rockefeller Memorial Chapel. Hugo F. Sonnenschein, President of the University, presided.

A total of 2,178 degrees were awarded: 635 Bachelor of Arts in the College, 44 Bachelor of Science in the College, 5 Master of Science in the Division of the Biological Sciences and the Pritzker School of Medicine, 68 Master of Arts in the Division of the Humanities, 7 Master of Fine Arts in the Division of the Humanities, 26 Master of Science in the Division of the Physical Sciences, 91 Master of Arts in the Division of the Social Sciences, 4 Master of Arts in Teaching in the Division of the Social Sciences, 1 Master of Science in Teaching in the Division of the Social Sciences, 9 Master of Liberal Arts in the Center for Continuing Studies, 38 Master of Laws in the Law School, 685 Master of Business Administration in the Graduate School of Business, 12 Master of Arts in the Divinity School, 48 Master of Arts in the Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies, 98 Doctor of Medicine in the Pritzker School of Medicine, 115 Master of Arts in the School of Social Service Administration, 10 Master of Divinity in the Divinity School, 174 Doctor of Law in the Law School, 15 Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of the Biological Sciences and the Pritzker School of Medicine, 22 Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of the Humanities, 22 Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of the Physical Sciences, 39 Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of the Social Sciences, 9 Doctor of Philosophy in the Divinity School, and 1 Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Social Service Administration.

Five honorary degrees were conferred during the 439th convocation. The recipients of the Doctor of Humane Letters were Thomas V. Gamkrelidze, Director, Tsereteli Institute of Oriental Studies, Academy of Sciences of Georgia, and Professor, Tbilisi State University, Republic of Georgia; and David Lewin, Professor of Music, Harvard University. Recipient of the Doctor of Science were Bradley Efron, Max H. Stein Professor of Statistics, Stanford University; and Richard E. Smalley, Gene and Norman Hackerman Professor of Chemistry and Professor of Physics, Rice University. Recipient of the Doctor of Laws was Robert B. Wilson, Atholl McBean Professor of Economics, Graduate School of Business, Stanford University.

Four Llewellyn John and Harriet Manchester Quantrell Awards for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching were given, to Kathleen N. Conzen, Professor in the Department of History and the College; Herbert George, Associate Professor in the Committee on Art and Design; Richard G.

Kron, Professor in the Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics and in the College; Director of Yerkes Observatory; and Stephen Pruett-Jones, Associate Professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolution, the Committee on Evolutionary Biology, and the College.

Four Faculty Awards for Excellence in Graduate Teaching were given, to Sheila Fitzpatrick, Professor in the Department of

History and the College; John A. Goldsmith, Professor in the Department of Linguistics; George Haley, Professor in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures and in the College; and Robert J. Richards, Professor in the Departments of History, Philosophy, and Psychology and in the College; Director of the Morris Fishbein Center for the History of Science and Medicine and of the Program in History, Philoso-

phy, and Social Studies of Science and Medicine.

Dr. Kenneth S. Polonsky, Professor in the Department of Medicine and Chief of the Endocrinology Section, delivered the principal convocation address, "The Use and Misuse of Personal Information in a Technological Age."

Bachelor's degree candidates' remarks were given by Rebecca Lee Feldman, An-

drew James Spellman, and Andrea Robin Wood.

Joseph Neubauer, M.B.A.'65, Trustee of the University and Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Aramark Corporation, delivered remarks at the third convocation session.

The 440th Convocation Address: "Human Ability and the Return to Skill"

By James Heckman

This occasion celebrates your success in completing an educational milestone. The degrees you are about to receive signal both your perseverance and your ability to meet a high standard.

This is a time for well-justified pride. It is also an occasion for taking stock of the consequences of the choices that you have made and of the choices made by others. In the past few years, many of you have no doubt asked yourselves on more than one occasion whether your sacrifices were worth it.

Today I want to assure you that from the perspective of the economic return—the payment for skills and the return on the costs of your education—your decision was a wise one. The market for skills is booming. And don't forget the vast non-material benefits of your University of Chicago education.

The New American Labor Market

At the same time, the poorly educated are less fortunate. The real earnings of high school dropouts are lower than they were fifteen years ago. Male high school graduates earn less now than they did then. Inequality in earnings among skill groups has grown rapidly in the past fifteen years. Part of the growth in crime, teenage illegitimacy, and other social pathologies is linked to declining opportunities for less-skilled persons.

The Appropriate Response to the New Inequality

Moreover, there is a lot of evidence that society is segregating into skill groups. Admissions policies based on merit have led to a much greater concentration of bright students in the elite colleges than was true forty years ago. Workplaces have become more segregated by education and skill. The levels of educational attainment of husbands and wives have become more positively correlated in recent years. The more educated now appear to live in a different world from the less educated, and the growing segregation of skill classes raises a challenge to American political and social institutions.

The New Inequality is the topic of a vast literature. There is general agreement about the magnitude of the problem. There is much less agreement about the source of the problem or the best way to solve it. Most

discussions assume that the forces of technology and international trade will inexorably operate to increase the economic return to skilled labor.

It hasn't always worked this way. Skill differentials have narrowed over most of this century. The forces of technical change and international competition that have created the New Inequality are not yet well understood. For that reason, it is dangerous to be overly confident that current trends in wages will continue on into the indefinite future.

Still, surveys of firms indicate that many companies are upgrading skill requirements for jobs and are requiring higher levels of numeracy and literacy. The trend in the premium for skills has been fairly steady for the past fifteen years. This trend looks like it will continue for quite a while. It seems unwise to simply wait for it to go away.

Many people have argued that the appropriate response to the New Inequality is to make everyone in America more skilled and to duplicate graduation scenes like this one everywhere and fill the Rockefeller Chapels and their counterparts in community colleges to overflowing. By making every American skilled, so the argument goes, we can prevent the problem of declining real incomes for many Americans and reduce the problem of income inequality. However, such a policy applied across the board to the entire work force would be very costly one.

The Levels of Investment Needed to Reduce the Current Levels of Wage Inequality

Many proposals have been made for investing in the less-skilled. An investment typically yields returns many years after initial costs are incurred. For the human capital of college graduates, a roughly correct average rate of return is 10 percent. For each ten dollars invested in a college graduate, the expected annual return is one dollar.

At this rate of return, to add \$1,000 in earnings per year to the average person of college graduate calibre it is necessary to make an investment of \$10,000 in that person. Using a 10 percent rate, the investment needed to reduce any wage gap is ten times the amount of the gap.

Many of you have paid \$160,000 or more for your educational expenses including tuition costs and all of the money that

you could have earned but did not because you were taking classes. The average return on this investment is \$16,000 per year. This is a substantial return, but it is purchased at a great price.

Turning to the economy at large, what level of investment would be required to restore skill parities (i.e., educational salary differentials) to their 1979 levels without lowering the wages of anyone? The answer is a staggering 1.7 trillion (1989) dollars.¹

Return to Ability or Return to Skill?

The human capital investment approach for reducing income inequality is thus an expensive one. In fact, my 1.7-trillion-dollar cost figure may greatly understate the costs of a full-blown human capital investment strategy designed to eliminate the growth in inequality in the past fifteen years. There is a lot of evidence that a 10 percent return is far too optimistic, especially when we consider the effectiveness of education and training programs for less-skilled and less-able persons. The rate of return from government skill-training programs targeted at such groups is very low.

This brings us to age-old questions. Are the earnings of the educated a consequence of their education or a consequence of their native ability? Can education and skill training be profitably extended to less-able persons? Are you here today only because the University of Chicago has certified your basic ability and not because you have learned anything?

Intelligence and insight are rare skills that are difficult to produce. During the heyday of the War on Poverty, in the 1960s, there was widespread optimism about the ability of society to overcome personal skill deficits. Miraculous reports of boosts in IQ by fifty points or more were claimed for the Head Start program. Job training programs were pronounced to be successful even among the very unskilled.

Today we know that these claims were wrong. IQ is not very malleable, and training unskilled persons to perform at high skill levels is now acknowledged to be a very difficult task. But how fixed are human abilities? Are they fixed from birth? Are all interventions designed to improve abilities futile? At what age do they become futile?

Some of these issues have recently been addressed in the controversial book *The Bell Curve* by Charles Murray and the late

Richard Herrnstein.²

Those authors are very pessimistic about the likely success of skill enhancement programs. They claim that native intelligence is central to economic and social success, and that it has a strong heritable component.

They do not discuss the costs or benefits of specific skill programs. They seek to avoid the hard work required to make an honest evaluation of alternative skill improvement strategies by claiming that there is an important genetic basis for skill differences. What they actually show is that scores on achievement tests taken at age seventeen are moderately predictive of social and economic performance. They do not explain the factors that give rise to the test score—they could be genetic or environmental or both. Their analysis leaves plenty of room for the possibility that interventions can boost social performance. Discussions of nature versus nurture are irrelevant to practical policy discussions couched in terms of costs and benefits.

The recent rise in the economic return to education cannot be equated with a rise in the return to cognitive ability. A vast empirical literature indicates that even after the effects of ability on earnings are controlled, there is a substantial economic return to schooling and training. Controlling for IQ reduces the economic return to education by as much as 25 percent, but those returns are still substantial. Schooling and training raise earnings for everyone except those at the lowest levels of ability.³

Ability and education are not the same thing, and both command substantial economic rewards. Other skills besides raw intelligence also command important market rewards. There is plenty of evidence that social policy can eliminate earnings differentials among persons of the same ability level. What is less clear is the answer to the all-important question: How effective are education, job training, and skill remediation programs at equalizing the earnings of persons of different ability levels? Over what ranges of ability are they effective and at what ages?

A Lifecycle Perspective

What little is known indicates that ability—or IQ—is not a fixed trait for the young (persons up to age eight or so). Sustained high-intensity investments in the education of young children, including parental activi-

ties like reading and responding to children, stimulate learning and further education. Good environments promote learning for young children of all levels of ability.

Economic theory demonstrates that the returns to human capital investments are greatest for the young. Younger persons have a longer horizon over which to recoup the fruits of their investments. Also, skill begets skill. Early learning facilitates and motivates later learning. At the same level of ability, it pays to invest in the young.

Interventions are most effective when they are applied to the young. The evidence from high-intensity enriched environment programs points in this direction. Even though it is difficult to boost IQ, long-term pilot studies have shown that it is possible to boost motivation and improve social performance even among populations of moderately low-IQ children.⁴

These studies, numerous studies in the psychological testing literature, and common sense all strongly indicate that other factors besides IQ affect performance in society, and that these can be affected by interventions. However, such programs are costly. Skill investment is costly. Halfhearted, poorly financed programs are unlikely to have any lasting effects, as many studies of typical Head Start programs have shown.

The Conflict between Economic Efficiency and the Work Ethic

A growing body of evidence assembled from studies of many government skill remediation programs suggests that persons from disadvantaged environments are not very malleable after their late teens or perhaps their early twenties. Successful skill interventions for such people are known to be costly and ineffective.

There is thus a conflict between policies that seek to alleviate poverty by investing in low-skilled adults and policies that raise the wealth of society at large. Private sector training and college education, even community college education, earn high rates of return for the people currently receiving these services. Estimated returns to government training are low.

In making this comparison, it is important to notice that private sector training is typically not given to low-skilled and low-ability persons. Private firms may be more

effective in providing training. More important, however, the fact that private firms can be exclusive in a way that government training programs for disadvantaged individuals are designed not to be. The lack of interest of private firms in training low-skilled, disadvantaged persons indicates the difficulty of the task and the likely low return to the activity of adult training. Training programs are an inefficient investment for low-skilled adults.

The available evidence indicates that the most economically justified strategy for improving the incomes of the current stock of the adult poor with low skills is to divert funds away from them and instead invest in young children so that there will be many fewer illiterate, unskilled adults in the next generation. The evidence also suggests that it is socially profitable to make additional investments in the more highly skilled and more able adults, to tax them, and then to redistribute the tax revenues to the less skilled and the less able.

Such a social policy is unlikely to gain wide acceptance. Many people accept the work ethic as a basic value. They fear that cultivating a large class of transfer recipients will foster a culture of poverty and helplessness. They also fear that such a policy would further widen the social separation between the skilled and the unskilled that is part and parcel of the New Inequality.

If value is placed on work as an act of individual dignity and because of its general benefit for integrating persons and their families and communities into society at large, then society should be prepared to subsidize inefficient jobs. Job subsidies are not, however, the same as skill investment subsidies.

Moreover, economically inefficient skill investments may have important non-monetary benefits. A purely economic evaluation of investment policies would then be inappropriate. If, however, such economically inefficient investments are to be made, the cost of reducing the skill gap grows beyond the enormous sum of 1.7 trillion dollars that I previously mentioned.

Summary

As you collect your hard-earned degrees, you should now be confident that you have made the right choice. There was never a

better time to be educated and pursue higher education. The available evidence also suggests that education is more than just a payment for your raw ability, so the faculty and administration at the University of Chicago can honestly claim to have added value to you.

As you leave the academic enclave and enter the wider world, I hope you will reflect on what has been said here. For the lesser-educated in your cohort, the economic and social prospects are not so bright. The economic and social gap between the less-educated and the more-educated is growing. The New Inequality has profound and disturbing implications for the society in which you live.

Many recent proposals for alleviating the New Inequality are costly and unlikely to be effective. Investment in the current stock of unskilled adults is also likely to be ineffective. For them, policies that recognize their problems and attach them to society through other methods like job subsidies are more likely to be more effective.

The available evidence suggests that there are many methods for motivating and improving the social capacities of the young of all ability levels and that, while they are costly, they can make a difference, and many are economically efficient. There are many options that we can and should explore before we resign ourselves to the fatalism of genetic predestination.

Thank you for your attention and good luck.

Notes

1. James Heckman "Is Job Training Oversold?" *The Public Interest* 115 (Spring 1994).

James Heckman, Rebecca Roselius, and Jeffrey Smith, "U.S. Education and Training Policy: A Reevaluation of the Underlying Assumptions behind the New Consensus," in Lewis Solmon and Alec Levenson, eds., *Labor Markets, Employment Policy, and Job Creation* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994), pp. 83-143.

2. See my reviews: James Heckman, "The Cracked Bell," *Reason* (1995): pp. 49-56, and "Lessons From *The Bell Curve*," *Journal of Political Economy* (October 1995).

3. See Christopher Taber, "The Rising College Premium in the Eighties: Return to College or Return to Ability?" unpublished manuscript (The University of Chicago, November 1994).

4. See Larry Schweinhert, Hazel Barnes, and David Weikart, *Significant Benefits: The High Scope Perry Pre-School Study Through Age 27* (Ypsilanti: Mich.: High Scope Press, 1993).

James Heckman is the Henry Schultz Distinguished Service Professor in the Department of Economics, the Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies, and the College.

Summary

The 440th convocation was held on Friday, August 25, 1995, in Rockefeller Memorial Chapel. Hugo F. Sonnenschein, President of the University, presided.

A total of 467 degrees were awarded: 46 Bachelor of Arts in the College, 1 Master of Liberal Arts in the Center for Continuing Studies, 6 Master of Science in the Division of the Biological Sciences and the Pritzker School of Medicine, 13 Master of Arts in the Division of the Humanities, 24 Master of Science in the Division of the Physical Sciences, 60 Master of Arts in the Division of the Social Sciences, 7 Master of Arts in Teaching in the Division of the Social Sciences, 177 Master of Business Administration in the Graduate School of Business, 16 Master of Arts in the Divinity School, 1 Master of Laws in the Law School, 1 Master of Arts in the Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies, 2 Master of Arts in the School of Social Service Administration, 11 Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of the Biological Sciences and the Pritzker School of Medicine, 16 Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of the Humanities, 26 Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of the Physical Sciences, 44 Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of the Social Sciences, 4 Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of Business, 10 Doctor of Philosophy in the Divinity School, and 2 Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Social Service Administration.

James Heckman, the Henry Schultz Distinguished Service Professor in the Department of Economics, the Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies, and the College, delivered the convocation address, "Human Ability and the Return to Skills."