

1 Most Americans share President Joe Biden's enthusiasm for increasing the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour from \$7.25. Two-thirds of them -- and more than 40% of Republicans -- favor such a rise, according to Pew Research Centre, a polling firm. Economists, however, are more divided. When a **panel** of **eminent** scholars was asked in 2015 whether a \$15 minimum would deal a **substantial blow** to employment, 40% of respondents were undecided, and the rest were split evenly for and against. There is an explanation for the indecision: the world has little experience of large minimum-wage rises, and they could cost an **economy jobs**. Yet history also suggests that such increases, **implemented** with care, may **nonetheless** have beneficial longer-term effects.

2 Economists no longer reflexively oppose minimum wages, as most once did. **Empirical** work assembled over the past three decades has demonstrated that **modest** increases in the minimum wage typically have, at most, small negative effects on employment. In an **overview** of research conducted for the British government in 2019, Arindrajit Dube of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst concluded that minimum wages of up to 60% of the median wage, or 80% of the median in low-wage regions, have negligible employment effects. Firms have more **scope** to absorb the cost than economists once supposed. A match between a job and a worker creates a surplus to be divided between employee and employer, in a manner that is largely determined by the bargaining power each side **wields**. Minimum-wage rules may help workers capture more of this surplus. Higher pay comes out of companies' profits with little associated employment cost.

3 The scope for firms to adjust is not infinite, though, and in some parts of America a \$15 minimum, which is more than what at least 30% of workers nationwide were paid in 2019, could be more than employers can handle. Many state and local governments have adopted minimums above the current federal level, in some cases even exceeding \$15. But others observe the \$7.25 minimum. In 21 states, a \$15 wage would more than double the minimum; in 28, it would push the **pay floor** above 80% of the state-level median (rising to a full 100% of the median wage in Mississippi). The Democrats' proposal would phase in the new minimum over four years, in which time median pay would rise, too. Even so, the increase might in some cases **outstrip** firms' capacity to absorb higher labour costs or raise prices without **sacking** workers.

4 What happens after that, though? This is harder to predict, because there have been few comparably large increases before. Perhaps more spending by the workers who receive rises rather than pink slips would support the creation of better paying jobs, offsetting some employment losses. Perhaps interstate migration— which has fallen steadily since the 1980s—would rise as displaced workers sought out opportunities in higher-productivity cities. Or perhaps a political backlash would prompt repeal.

5 America's own experience suggests that a difficult adjustment could be followed by better times. Gavin Wright, an economic historian at Stanford University, **reckons** that something of the sort occurred in the American South as a result of the New Deal. Before the 1930s the southern economy looked very different from the rest of America, which led the world in productivity and income per person. Factories and farms in the South favoured low-productivity, labour-intensive production over the more capital-intensive techniques common elsewhere. Southern governments neglected investment in education, aware that residents who obtained schooling were very likely to migrate.

Whereas the rest of America benefited from a **virtuous cycle** of accumulation of human and physical capital, rapid productivity growth and rising incomes, the South remained stuck in a nasty low-wage rut.

6 Franklin Roosevelt's **imposition** of national wage and labor standards broke this **equilibrium**. Southern producers found themselves with little choice but to adopt labor-saving technologies; low-wage workers, short of employment opportunities, migrated out of the South **in droves**. Fearing mass unemployment and the loss of political **clout** that depopulation would bring, southern governments abandoned their attitude of **insularity** and instead sought to become more attractive to investors from outside the region. Between 1930 and 1980, incomes per head in the South as a percentage of the national average rose by roughly 30 percentage points, and southern cities built around knowledge industries became magnets for migrants from elsewhere.

7 **Convergence** in incomes between poor states and rich ones, so rapid before 1980, has slowed dramatically since, and the productivity gap between superstar cities and others has **yawned**. It is perhaps not a complete coincidence that the federal minimum wage, adjusted for **inflation**, rose steadily between the 1930s and the 1960s, but has alternately **stagnated** and declined **thereafter**. Today's economy is very different from that in the mid-20th century, but a low minimum wage may have once again enabled some firms to rely on pockets of low-skilled labor, rather than investing in modern equipment and processes. A higher minimum wage could press them to change course, eventually yielding benefits to the economy at large.

8 Workers are unlikely to thank politicians who **blithely** create unemployment in pursuit of economic transformation. For that reason, it may be wise to allow low-wage states more time to phase in a \$15 minimum, giving them an opportunity to invest in education and infrastructure, and to **incentivize** the private sector to boost productivity, rather than shut up shop or leave town. The alternative would be high unemployment and perhaps a population **exodus**. It is a risky path. But with the right economic management, higher minimum wages could play a role in lifting up leftbehind people and places.

The Trial That Rocked the World

John Scopes

1 A buzz ran through the crowd as I took my place in the packed court on that sweltering July day in 1925. The counsel for my defence was the famous criminal lawyer Clarence Darrow. Leading counsel for the prosecution was William Jennings Bryan, the silver-tongued orator, three times Democratic nominee for President of the United States, and leader of the fundamentalist movement that had brought about my trial.

2. A few weeks before I had been an unknown school-teacher in Dayton, a little town in the mountains of Tennessee. Now I was involved in a trial reported the world over. Seated in court, ready to testify on my behalf, were a dozen distinguished professors and scientists, led by Professor Kirtley Mather of Harvard University. More than 100 reporters were on hand, and even radio announcers, who for the first time in history were to broadcast a jury trial. "Don't worry, son, we'll show them a few tricks," Darrow had whispered, throwing a reassuring arm round my shoulder as we were waiting for the court to open.

3 The case had erupted round my head not long after I arrived in Dayton as science master and football coach at the secondary school. For a number of years a clash had been building up between the fundamentalists and the modernists. The fundamentalists adhered to a literal interpretation of the Old Testament. The modernists, on the other hand, accepted the theory advanced by Charles Darwin -- that all animal life, including monkeys and men, had evolved from a common ancestor.

4 Fundamentalism was strong in Tennessee, and the state legislature had recently passed a law prohibiting the teaching of "any theory that denies the story of creation as taught in the Bible." The new law was aimed squarely at Darwin's theory of evolution. An engineer, George Rappelyea, used to argue with the local people against the law. During one such argument, Rappelyea said that nobody could teach biology without teaching evolution. Since I had been teaching biology, I was sent for.

5 "Rappelyea is right," I told them.

6 "Then you have been violating the law," one of them Said.

7 "So has every other teacher," I replied. "Evolution is explained in Hunter's *Civic Biology*, and that's our textbook." Rappelyea then made a suggestion. "Let's take this thing to court," he said, "and test the legality of it."

8 When I was indicted on May 7, no one, least of all I, anticipated that my case would snowball into one of the most famous trials in U. S. history. The American Civil Liberties Union announced that it would take my case to the U. S Supreme Court if necessary to establish that a teacher may tell the truth without being sent to jail." Then Bryan volunteered to assist the state in prosecuting me. Immediately the renowned lawyer Clarence Darrow offered his services to defend me. Ironically, I had not known Darrow before my trial but I had met Bryan when he had given a talk

at my university. I admired him, although I did not agree with his views.

9 By the time the trial began on July 10, our town of 1,500 people had taken on a **circus** atmosphere. The buildings along the main street were **festooned** with **banners**. The streets around the three-**storey** red brick law court sprouted with **rickety** **stands** selling hot dogs, religious books, and watermelons. **Evangelists** set up tents to **exhort** the passersby. People from the surrounding hills, mostly fundamentalists, arrived to cheer Bryan against the "**infidel** outsiders" Among them was John Butler, who had drawn up the anti-evolution law. Butler was a 49-year-old farmer who before his election had never been out of his native county.

10 The **presiding** judge was John Raulston, a **florid**-faced man who announced: "I'm just a reg'lar mountaineer jedge." Bryan, ageing and **paunchy**, was assisted in his prosecution by his son, also a lawyer, and Tennessee's brilliant young **attorney-general**, Tom Stewart. Besides the **shrewd** 68-year-old Darrow, my counsel included the handsome and magnetic Dudley Field Malone, 43, and Arthur Garfield Hays, quiet, **scholarly**, and **steeped** in the law. In a trial in which religion played a key role, Darrow was an **agnostic**, Malone a Catholic and Hays a Jew. My father had come from Kentucky to be with me for the trial.

11 The judge called for a local minister to open the session with prayer, and the trial got under way. Of the 12 **jurors**, three had never read any book except the Bible. One couldn't read. As my father growled, "That's one **hell** of a jury!"

12 After the **preliminary** **spar**ring over legalities, Darrow got up to make his opening statement. "My friend the attorney-general says that John Scopes knows what he is here for," Darrow **drawled**. "I know what he is here for, too. He is here because ignorance and **bigotry** **are**, and it is a **mighty** strong combination."

13 Darrow walked slowly round the **baking** court. "Today it is the teachers, "he continued, "and tomorrow the magazines, the books, the newspapers. After a while, it is the setting of man against man and creed against creed until we are **marching backwards** to the **glorious** age of the **sixteenth** century when bigots lighted **faggots** to burn the men who dared to bring any intelligence and **enlightenment** and Culture to the human mind."

14 "That damned infidel," a woman whispered loudly as he finished his address.

15 The following day the prosecution began calling witnesses against me. Two of my pupils testified, grinning shyly at me, that I had taught them evolution, but added that they had not been contaminated by the experience. Howard Morgan, a bright **lad** of 14, testified that I had taught that man was a mammal like cows, horses, dogs, and cats.

16 "He didn't say a cat was the same as a man?" Darrow asked.

17 "No, sir," the youngster said. "He said man had reasoning power."

18 "There is some doubt about that," Darrow **snorted**.

19 After the evidence was completed, Bryan rose to address the jury. The issue was simple, he declared "The Christian believes that man came from **above**. The evolutionist believes that he must have come from **below**." The spectators **chuckled** and Bryan **warmed** to his work. In one hand he **brandished** a biology text as he **denounced** the scientists who had come to Dayton to testify for the defence.

20 "The Bible," he **thundered** in his **sonorous organ** tones, "is not going to be driven out of this court by experts who come hundreds of miles to testify that they can **reconcile** evolution, with its ancestors in the jungle, with man made by God in His image and put here for His purpose as part of a **divine** plan."

21 As he finished, jaw out-**thrust**, eyes flashing, the audience burst into applause and shouts of "Amen". Yet something was lacking. Gone was the fierce **fervour** of the days when Bryan had swept the political arena like a **prairie** fire. The crowd seemed to feel that their champion had not **scorched** the infidels with the hot breath of his **oratory** as he should have. Dudley Field Malone popped up to reply. "Mr. Bryan is not the only one who has the right to speak for the Bible", he **observed**. "There are other people in this country who have given up their whole lives **to God and religion**. Mr. Bryan, with passionate spirit and enthusiasm, has given most of his life **to politics**." Bryan sipped from a **jug** of water as Malone's voice grew in volume. He appealed for intellectual freedom, and accused Bryan of calling for a **duel** to the death between science and religion.

22 "There is never a duel with the truth," he roared. "The truth always wins -- and we are not afraid of it. The truth does not need Mr. Bryan. The truth is eternal, immortal and needs no human agency to support it! "

23 When Malone finished there was a momentary **hush**. Then the court broke into a storm of applause that **surpassed** that for Bryan. But although Malone had won the oratorical duel with Bryan, the judge **ruled** against permitting the scientists to testify for the defence.

24 When the court **adjourned**, we found Dayton's streets **swarming** with strangers. **Hawkers** cried their **wares** on every corner. One shop announced: **DARWIN IS RIGHT – INSIDE**. (This was J. R. Darwin's everything to Wear Store.) One entrepreneur rented a shop window to display an ape. Spectators **paid to gaze** at it and ponder whether they might be related.

25 "The poor **brute** **cowered** in a corner with his hands over his eyes," a reporter noted, "afraid it might be true. "

26 H. L. Mencken wrote **sulphurous** **dispatches** sitting in his Pants with a fan blowing on him, and there was talk of **running him out of town** for referring to the local **citizenry** as **yokels**. Twenty-two **telegraphists** were sending out 165 000 words a day on the trial.

27 Because of the heat and a fear that the old court's floor might collapse, under the weight of the

through, the trial was resumed outside under the maples. More than 2 000 spectators sat on wooden benches or squatted on the grass, perched on the tops of parked cars or gawked from windows.

28 Then came the climax of the trial. Because of the wording of the anti-evolution law, the prosecution was forced to take the position that the Bible must be interpreted literally. Now Darrow sprang his trump card by calling Bryan as a witness for the defence. The judge looked startled. "We are calling him as an expert on the Bible," Darrow said. "His reputation as an authority on Scripture is recognized throughout the world."

29 Bryan was suspicious of the wily Darrow, yet he could not refuse the challenge. For years he had lectured and written on the Bible. He had campaigned against Darwinism in Tennessee even before passage of the anti-evolution law. Resolutely he strode to the stand, carrying a palm fan like a sword to repel his enemies.

30 Under Darrow's quiet questioning he acknowledged believing the Bible literally, and the crowd punctuated his defiant replies with fervent "Amens".

31 Darrow read from Genesis: "And the evening and the morning were the first day." Then he asked Bryan if he believed that the sun was created on the fourth day. Bryan said that he did.

32 "How could there have been a morning and evening without any sun?" Darrow enquired.

33 Bryan mopped his bald dome in silence. There were sniggers from the crowd, even among the faithful. Darrow twirled his spectacles as he pursued the questioning. He asked if Bryan believed literally in the story of Eve. Bryan answered in the affirmative.

34 "And you believe that God punished the serpent by condemning snakes for ever after to crawl upon their bellies?"

35 "I believe that."

36 "Well, have you any idea how the snake went before that time?"

37 The crowd laughed, and Bryan turned livid. His voice rose and the fan in his hand shook in anger.

38 "Your honor," he said. "I will answer all Mr. Darrow's questions at once. I want the world to know that this man who does not believe in God is using a Tennessee court to cast slurs on Him..."

39 "I object to that statement," Darrow shouted. "I am examining you on your fool ideas that no intelligent Christian on earth believes."

40 The judge used his gavel to quell the hubbub and adjourned court until next day.

41 Bryan stood forlornly alone. My heart went out to the old warrior as spectators pushed by him to shake Darrow's hand.

42 The jury were asked to consider their verdict at noon the following day. The jurymen retired to a corner of the lawn and whispered for just nine minutes. The verdict was guilty. I was fined 100 dollars and costs.

43 Dudley Field Malone called my conviction a "victorious defeat." A few southern papers, loyal to their faded champion, hailed it as a victory for Bryan. But Bryan, sad and exhausted, died in Dayton two days after the trial.

44 I was offered my teaching job back but I declined. Some of the professors who had come to testify on my be-half arranged a scholarship for me at the University of Chicago so that I could pursue the study of science. Later I became a geologist for an oil company.

45 Not long ago I went back to Dayton for the first time since my trial 37 years ago. The little town looked much the same to me. But now there is a William Jennings Bryan University on a hill-top overlooking the valley.

46 There were other changes, too. Evolution is taught in Tennessee, though the law under which I was convicted is still on the books. The oratorical storm that Clarence Darrow and Dudley Field Malone blew up in the little court in Dayton swept like a fresh wind through the schools and legislative offices of the United States, bringing in its wake a new climate of intellectual and academic freedom that has grown with the passing years.



Growing Brighter

1 From the outside it looks like a tall, metal-clad barn. But step in, through a large airlock designed to keep out the bugs, and a kaleidoscopic scene emerges. A central aisle is flanked by two pairs of towers. Each tower is stacked with a dozen or so trays on which are growing strawberries, kale, red lettuce and coriander. And each tray is bathed in vibrant light of different colors, mostly hues of blue and magenta. Douglas Elder, who is in charge of this artificial Eden, taps some instructions into an app on his mobile phone and, with a short whirr of machinery, a tray of lush, green basil slides out for his inspection.

2 Mr. Elder is product manager for Intelligent Growth Solutions (IGS), a “vertical farming” company based at Invergowrie, near Dundee, in Scotland. Each of the nine-meter-high towers in the demonstration unit that he runs occupies barely 40 square meters. But by stacking the trays one on top of another an individual tower provides up to 350 square meters of growing area. Using his phone again, Mr. Elder changes the colors and brightness of the 1,000 light-emitting diodes (LEDs) strung out above each tray. The app can also control the temperature, humidity and ventilation, and the hydroponic system that supplies the plants, growing on various non-soil substrates, with water and nutrients. Armed with his trusty phone, Mr. Elder says he can run the farm almost single-handedly.

Plant power

3 Vertical farming of this sort is not, of itself, a new idea. The term goes back to 1915, though it took a century for the first commercial vertical farms to be built. But the business is now taking off. SoftBank, a Japanese firm, Google’s former boss Eric Schmidt and Amazon’s founder Jeff Bezos have between them ploughed more than \$200m into Plenty, a vertical-farming company based in San Francisco. And in June Ocado, a British online grocery, splashed out £17m (\$21.3m) on vertical-farming businesses to grow fresh produce within its automated distribution depots.

4 The interest of investors is growing just as technology promises to turn vertical farming operations into efficient “plant factories”. The high-tech LEDs in IGS’s demonstration unit are optimized so that nary a photon is wasted. The hydroponics, and the recycling that supports them, mean the only water lost from the system is that which ends up as part of one of the plants themselves. And towers mean the system is modular, and so can be scaled up. Most of the systems which IGS hopes to start delivering to customers early next year will consist of ten or more towers.

5 Some people, however, remain skeptical about how much vertical farms have to offer that good-old-fashioned greenhouses do not. Vertical farms are certainly more compact—a bonus in places like cities where land is expensive. Since sales of fresh produce to the urban masses are often touted as one of vertical farming’s biggest opportunities, that is important. But a greenhouse gets its light, and much of its heat, free, courtesy of the sun. And modern greenhouses can also use solar-powered supplementary LED lighting to extend their growing seasons and hydroponic systems to save water, says Viraji Puri, co-founder of Gotham Greens, an urban-farming company that operates greenhouses on the roofs of buildings in New York and Chicago. As for food miles, they could not

get any shorter for Gotham Greens's rooftop greenhouse in Brooklyn, which supplies the Whole Foods Market located downstairs.

6 The biggest drawback of vertical farming is the high cost of the electricity required to run the large number of LEDs. This has meant that production has been commercially **viable** for high-value, **perishable** produce only, such as salad leaves and herbs. That, nevertheless, is a market not to be sniffed at. But for a broader range of produce, it can prove too expensive. In 2014 Louis Albright, an **emeritus** professor of biological and environmental engineering at Cornell University in America, calculated that a loaf of bread made from wheat grown in a vertical farm would be priced at about \$23.

Blue is the color

7 One way of saving electricity is **to use LEDs** that generate only the colors that plants require, instead of the full spectrum of plain white light. Plants are green because their leaves contain **chlorophyll**, a **pigment** that reflects the green light in the middle of the spectrum while absorbing and using for **photosynthesis** the blue and red wavelengths at either end of it.

8 The vertical farm at Invergowrie takes this idea further. **It uses LEDs that are highly tuneable.** Although the lights produce mostly blue and red wavelengths, researchers now know that other colors play an important role at various stages of a plant's development, says David Farquhar, IGS's chief executive. A dose of green at an appropriate moment produces a higher yield. A timely spot of **infrared** can improve the quality of **foliage**. The lights can also produce various blue/red mixes.

9 To operate these LEDs efficiently, the company has developed **a low-voltage power-distribution system**. This, says Mr. Farquhar, can cut energy costs to about half of those **incurred** by existing vertical farms. As a result, all four towers can produce 15-25 tons a year of herbs, salad leaves, fruit, and vegetables. This, the company claims, is between two and three times more than a conventional greenhouse with an equivalent but horizontal growing area, and equipped with supplementary lighting and heating, could manage. And the system can grow all this produce at a similar cost-per-kilogram.

10 One of the jobs of the Invergowrie unit is to **develop lighting regimes tailored** to individual crops. Another is to **develop algorithms to control**, in an equally **bespoke** way, **the climatic conditions** preferred by different crops. **The idea is to design crop-specific weather "recipes"** in order to boost the yield and quality of whatever varieties are grown in the vertical farm. All the processes involved are **engineered** to be efficient. Irrigation, for instance, relies on captured rainwater. This is cleaned and recycled, but only 5% gets used up by each harvest—and most of that as the water-content in the plants themselves. Ventilation is also a closed loop, harvesting surplus heat from the LEDs while managing humidity and oxygen levels.

11 By reducing running costs, the system should **make it profitable to grow a wider variety of** produce vertically. The firm has already succeeded with some root vegetables, such as **radishes** and baby **turnips**. **Bulk** field crops, such as wheat and rice, may never make sense for a vertical farm, and larger, heavier vegetables would be **tricky** to raise. This means **full-grown** potatoes are probably

off the menu, at least with existing technology.

12 Seed potatoes, though, are a good candidate, says Colin Campbell, head of the James Hutton Institute, a plant-science research center backed by the Scottish government. It is based next door to IGS and works with the company. Many fields around the world, Dr Campbell observes, are suffering a growing burden of pests and disease, such as potato-cyst nematode. In the controlled environment of a vertical farm, from which both pests and diseases can be excluded, seed potatoes could be propagated more efficiently than in the big, bad outdoor world. This would give them a head start when they were planted out in fields.

13 The institute's researchers are also looking at plant varieties that might do particularly well indoors, including old varieties passed over in the search for crops which can withstand the rigors of intensive farming systems. By dipping into the institute's gene banks, Dr Campbell thinks it may find some long-forgotten fruits and vegetables that would thrive in the security of a vertical farm.

14 All this could go down well with foodies, and unlock new and forgotten flavors. Shoppers might even find some exotic varieties growing in supermarket aisles. In Berlin a company called Infarm provides remotely controlled shelved growing cabinets for shops, warehouses, and restaurants. Herbs and salad leaves, including exotics such as Genovese basil and Peruvian mint, are resupplied with seedlings from the company's nursery as the mature plants are picked.

15 Vertical farming then will not feed the world, but it will help provide more fresh produce to more people. It may even be that, as vertical-farming systems improve further, miniature versions will be designed for people to put in their kitchens— thus proving that there is nothing new under either the sun or the LED. Such things used once to be called window boxes.

A Friend in Need

For thirty years now I have been studying my fellowmen. I do not know very much about them. I shrug my shoulders when people tell me that their first impressions of a person are always right. I think they must have small insight or great vanity. For my own part I find that the longer I know people the more they puzzle me.

These reflections have occurred to me because I read in this morning's paper that Edward Hyde Burton had died at Kobe. He was a merchant and he had been in business in Japan for many years. I knew him very little, but he interested me because once he gave me a great surprise. Unless I had heard the story from his own lips, I should never have believed that he was capable of such an action. It was more startling because both in appearance and manner he suggested a very definite type. Here if ever was a man all of a piece. He was a tiny little fellow, not much more than five feet four in height, and very slender, with white hair, a red face much wrinkled, and blue eyes. I suppose he was about sixty when I knew him. He was always neatly and quietly dressed in accordance with his age and station.

Though his offices were in Kobe, Burton often came down to Yokohama. I happened on one occasion to be spending a few days there, waiting for a ship, and I was introduced to him at the British Club. We played bridge together. He played a good game and a generous one. He did not talk very much, either then or later when we were having drinks, but what he said was sensible. He had a quiet, dry humor. He seemed to be popular at the club and afterwards, when he had gone, they described him as one of the best. It happened that we were both staying at the Grand Hotel and next day he asked me to dine with him. I met his wife, fat, elderly, and smiling, and his two daughters. It was evidently a united and affectionate family. I think the chief thing that struck me about Burton was his kindness. There was something very pleasing in his mild blue eyes. His voice was gentle; you could not imagine that he could possibly raise it in anger; his smile was benign. Here was a man who attracted you because you felt in him a real love for his fellows. At the same time he liked his game of cards and his cocktail, he could tell with point a good and spicy story, and in his youth he had been something of an athlete. He was a rich man and he had made every penny himself. I suppose one thing that made you like him was that he was so small and frail; he aroused your instincts of protection. You felt that he could not bear to hurt a fly.

One afternoon I was sitting in the lounge of the Grand Hotel when Burton came in and seated himself in the chair next to mine.

"What do you say to a little drink?"

He clapped his hands for a boy and ordered two gin fizzes. As the boy brought them a man passed along the street outside and seeing me waved his hand.

"Do you know Turner?" said Burton as I nodded a greeting.

"I've met him at the club. I'm told he's a remittance man."

"Yes, I believe he is. We have a good many here."

"He plays bridge well."

"They generally do. There was a fellow here last year, oddly enough a **namesake** of mine, who was the best bridge player I ever met. I suppose you never came across him in London. Lenny Burton he called himself. I believe he'd belonged to some very good clubs." "No, I don't believe I remember the name."

"He was quite a remarkable player. He seemed to have an instinct about the cards. It was **uncanny**. I used to play with him a lot. He was in Kobe for some time."

Burton sipped his gin fizz.

"It's rather a funny story," he said. "He wasn't a bad **chap**. I liked him. He was always well-dressed and smart-looking. He was handsome in a way with curly hair and pink-and-white cheeks. Women thought a lot of him. There was no harm in him, you know, he was only wild. Of course he drank too much. Those sort of fellows always do. A bit of money used to come on for him once a quarter and he made a bit more by card-playing. He won a good deal of mine, I know that."

Burton gave a kindly chuckle. I knew from my own experience that he could lose money at bridge **with a good grace**. He stroked his shaven chin with his thin hand; the veins stood out on it and it was almost transparent.

"I suppose that is why he came to me when he **went broke**, that and the fact that he was a namesake of mine. He came to see me in my office one day and asked me for a job. I was rather surprised. He told me that there was no more money coming from home and he wanted to work. I asked him how old he was.

"'Thirty-five,' he said.

"'And what have you been doing **hitherto**?' I asked him.

"'Well, nothing very much,' he said.

"I couldn't help laughing.

"'I'm afraid I can't do anything for you just yet,' I said. 'Come back and see me in another thirty-five years, and I'll see what I can do.'

"He didn't move. He went rather pale. He hesitated for a moment and then he told me that he had had bad luck at cards for some time. He hadn't been willing to stick to bridge, he'd been playing poker, and he'd got **trimmed**. He hadn't a penny. He'd **pawned** everything he had. He couldn't pay

his hotel bill and they wouldn't give him any more credit. He was **down and out**. If he couldn't get something to do he'd have to commit suicide."

"I looked at him **for a bit**. I could see now that he was **all to pieces**. He'd been drinking more than usual and he looked fifty. The girls wouldn't have thought so much of him if they'd seen him then.

"Well isn't there anything you can do except play cards?" I asked him.

"I can swim,' he said.

"Swim!"

"I could hardly believe my ears; it seemed such an insane answer to give.

"I swam for my university.'

"I got some **glimmering** of what he was **driving at**. I've known too many men who were little **tin gods** at their university to be impressed by it.

"I was a pretty good swimmer myself when I was a young man,' I said.

"Suddenly I had an idea."

Pausing in his story, Burton turned to me.

"Do you know Kobe?" he asked.

"No," I said, "I passed through it once, but I only spent a night there."

"Then you don't know the Shioya Club. When I was a young man I swam from there round the **beacon** and landed at the creek of Tarumi. It's over three miles and it's rather difficult on account of the currents round the beacon. Well, I told my young namesake about it and I said to him that if he'd do it I'd give him a job.

"I could see he was rather **taken aback**.

"You say you're a swimmer,' I said.

"I'm not in very good condition,' he answered.

"I didn't say anything. I shrugged my shoulders. He looked at me for a moment and then he nodded.

"All right,' he said. 'When do you want me to do it?'

"I looked at my watch. It was just after ten.

"The swim shouldn't take you much over an hour and a quarter. I'll drive round to the creek at half past twelve and meet you. I'll take you back to the club to dress and then we'll have lunch together.'

"Done,' he said.

"We shook hands. I wished him good luck and he left me. I had a lot of work to do that morning and I only just managed to get to the creek at Tarumi at half past twelve. But I needn't have hurried; he never turned up."

"Did he **funk** it at the last moment?" I asked.

"No, he didn't funk it. He started all right. But of course he'd ruined his **constitution** by drink and **dissipation**. The currents round the beacon were more than he could manage. We didn't get the body for about three days."

I didn't say anything for a moment or two. I was a **trifle** shocked. Then I asked Burton a question.

"When you made him that offer of a job, did you know he'd be drowned?"

He gave a little mild chuckle and he looked at me with those kind and **candid** blue eyes of his. He rubbed his chin with his hand.

"Well, I hadn't got a vacancy in my office at the moment."



ILLINOIS JOURNEY

Saul Bellow

1 The features of Illinois are not striking; they do not leap to the eye but lie flat and at first appear monotonous. The roads are wide, hard, perfect, sometimes of a shallow depth in the far distance but so nearly level as to make you feel that the earth really is flat. From east and west, travelers dart across these prairies into the huge horizons and through cornfields that go on forever; giant skies, giant clouds, an eternal nearly featureless sameness. You find it hard to travel slowly. The endless miles pressed flat by the ancient glacier seduce you into speeding. As the car eats into the distances you begin gradually to feel that you are riding upon the floor of the continent, the very bottom of it, low and flat, and an impatient spirit of movement, of overtaking and urgency passes into your heart.

2 (1) Miles and miles of prairie, slowly rising and falling, sometimes give you a sense that something is in the process of becoming, or that the liberation of a great force is imminent, some power, like Michelangelo's slave only half released from the block of stone. Conceivably the mound-building Indians believed their resurrection would coincide with some such liberation, and built their graves in imitation of the low moraines deposited by the departing glaciers. But they have not yet been released and remain drowned in their waves of earth. They have left their bones, their flints and pots, their place names and tribal names and little besides except a stain, seldom vivid, on the consciousness of their white successors.

3 The soil of the Illinois prairies is fat, rich and thick. After spring plowing it looks oil-blackened or colored by the soft coal which occurs in great veins throughout the state. In the fields you frequently see a small tipple, or a crazy-looking device that pumps oil and nods like the neck of a horse at a quick walk.... (2) Along the roads, with intervals between them as neat and even as buttons on the cuff, sit steel storage bins, in form like the tents of Mongolia. They are filled with grain. And the elevators and tanks, trucks and machines that crawl over the fields and blunder over the highways - whatever you see is productive. It creates wealth, it stores wealth, it is wealth.

4 As you pass the fields, you see signs the farmers have posted telling in short code what sort of seed they have planted. The farmhouses are seldom at the roadside, but far within the fields. The solitude and silence are deep and wide. Then, when you have gone ten or twenty miles through cornfields without having seen a living thing, no cow, no dog, scarcely even a bird under the hot sky, suddenly you come upon a noisy contraption at the roadside, a system of contraptions, rather, for husking the corn and stripping the grain. It burns and bangs away, and the conveyor belts rattle....

5 When you leave, this noise and activity are cut off at one stroke: you are once more in the deaf, hot solitude of trembling air, alone in the cornfields.

6 North, south, east and west, there is no end to them. They line roads and streams and hem in the woods and surround towns, and they crowd into back yards and edge up to gas stations. (3) An exotic stranger might assume he had come upon a race of corn worshipers who had created a corn ocean; or that he was among a people who had fallen in love with infinite repetition of the same details, like the builders of skyscrapers in New York and Chicago who have raised up bricks and

windows by the thousands, and all alike. From corn you can derive notions of equality, or uniformity, massed democracy. You can, if you are given to that form of mental play, recall Joseph's brethren in the lean years, and think how famine has been conquered here and super-abundance itself become such a danger that the Government has to take measures against it.

7The power, the monotony, the oceanic extent of the cornfields do indeed shrink up and dwarf the past. How are you to think of the small bands of Illini, Ottawas, Cahokians, Shawnee, Miamis who camped in the turkey grass, and the French Jesuits who descended the Mississippi and found them. (4) When you force your mind to summon them, the Indians appear rather doll-like in the radiance of the present moment. They are covered in the corn, swamped in the oil, hidden in the coal of Franklin County, run over by the trains, turned phantom by the stockyards. There are monuments to them...throughout the state, but they are only historical ornaments to the pride of the present...

Disappearing Through the Skylight

Osborne Bennet Hardison Jr.

1 Science is committed to the universal. A sign of this is that the more successful a science becomes, the broader the agreement about its basic concepts: there is not a separate Chinese or American or Soviet thermodynamics, for example; there is simply thermodynamics. For several decades of the twentieth century there was a Western and a Soviet genetics, the latter associated with Lysenko's theory that environmental stress can produce genetic mutations. Today Lysenko's theory is discredited, and there is now only one genetics.

2 As the corollary of science, technology also exhibits the universalizing tendency. This is why the spread of technology makes the world look ever more homogeneous. Architectural styles, dress styles, musical styles--even eating styles--tend increasingly to be world styles. The world looks more homogeneous because it is more homogeneous. Children who grow up in this world therefore experience it as a sameness rather than a diversity, and because their identities are shaped by this sameness, their sense of differences among cultures and individuals diminishes. As buildings become more alike, the people who inhabit the buildings become more alike. The result is described precisely in a phrase that is already familiar: the disappearance of history.

3 The automobile illustrates the Point With great clarity. A technological innovation like streamlining or all-welded body construction may be rejected initially, but if it is important to the efficiency or economics of automobiles, it will reappear in different ways until it is not only accepted but universally regarded as an asset. Today's automobile is no longer unique to a given company or even to a given national culture, its basic features are found, with variations, in automobiles in general, no matter who makes them.

4 A few years ago the Ford Motor Company came up with the Fiesta, which it called the "World Car." Advertisements showed it surrounded by the flags of all nations. Ford explained that the cylinder block was made in England, the carburetor in Ireland, the transmission in France, the wheels in Belgium, and so forth.

5 The Fiesta appears to have sunk Without a trace. But the idea of a world car was inevitable. It was the automotive equivalent of the International Style. Ten years after the Fiesta, all of the large automakers were international. Americans had Plants in Europe, Asia, and South America, and Europeans and Japanese had plants in America and South America, and in the Soviet Union Fiat (= Fabbrica Italiana Automobile Torino) workers refreshed themselves with Pepsi-Cola). In the fullness of time international automakers will have plants in Egypt and India and the People's Republic of China.

6 As in architecture, so in automaking. In a given cost range, the same technology tends to produce the same solutions. The visual evidence for this is as obvious for cars as for buildings. Today, if you choose models in the same price range, you will be hard put at 500 paces to tell one make from another. In other words, the specifically American traits that lingered in American automobiles in the 1960s--traits that linked American cars to American history--are disappearing.

Even the Volkswagen Beetle has disappeared and has taken with it the visible evidence of the history of streamlining that extends from D'Arcy Thompson to Carl Breer to Ferdinand Porsche.

7 If man creates machines, machines in turn shape their creators. As the automobile is universalized, it universalizes those who use it. Like the World Car he drives, modern man is becoming universal. No longer quite an individual, no longer quite the product of a unique geography and culture, he moves from one climate-controlled shopping mall to another, from one airport to the next, from one Holiday Inn to its successor three hundred miles down the road; but somehow his location never changes. He is cosmopolitan. The price he pays is that he no longer has a home in the traditional sense of the word. The benefit is that he begins to suspect home in the traditional sense is another name for limitations, and that home in the modern sense is everywhere and always surrounded by neighbors.

8 The universalizing imperative of technology is irresistible. Barring the catastrophe of nuclear war, it will continue to shape both modern culture and the consciousness of those who inhabit that culture.

9 This brings us to art and history again. Reminiscing on the early work of Francis Picabia and Marcel Duchamp, Madame Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia wrote of the discovery of the machine aesthetic in 1949: "I remember a time ... when every artist thought he owed it to himself to turn his back on the Eiffel Tower, as a protest against the architectural blasphemy with which it filled the sky.... The discovery and rehabilitation of ... machines soon generated propositions which evaded all tradition, above all, a mobile, extra human plasticity which was absolutely new...."

10 Art is, in one definition, simply an effort to name the real world. Are machines "the real world" or only its surface? Is the real world that easy to find? Science has shown the in substantiality of the world. It has thus undermined an article of faith: the thingliness of things. At the same time, it has produced images of orders of reality underlying the thingliness of things. Are images of cells or of molecules or of galaxies more or less real than images of machines? Science has also produced images that are pure artifacts. Are images of self-squared dragons more or less real than images of molecules?

11 The skepticism of modern science about the thingliness of things implies a new appreciation of the humanity of art entirely consistent with Kandinsky's observation in *On the Spiritual in Art* that beautiful art "springs from inner need, which springs from the soul." Modern art opens on a world whose reality is not "out there" in nature defined as things seen from a middle distance but "in here" in the soul or the mind. It is a world radically emptied of history because it is a form of perception rather than a content.

12 The disappearance of history is thus a liberation--what Madame Buffet-Picabia refers to as the discovery of "a mobile extra-human plasticity which [is] absolutely new." Like science, modern art often expresses this feeling of liberation through play--in painting in the playfulness of Picasso and Joan Miro and in poetry in the nonsense of Dada and the mock heroics of a poem like Wallace Stevens's "The Comedian as the Letter C."

13 The playfulness of the modern aesthetic is, finally, its most striking--and also its most serious and, by corollary, its most disturbing--feature. The playfulness imitates the playfulness of science that produces game theory and virtual particles and black holes and that, by introducing human growth genes into cows, forces students of ethics to reexamine the definition of cannibalism. The importance of play in the modern aesthetic should not come as a surprise. It is announced in every city in the developed world by the fantastic and playful buildings of postmodernism and neo-modernism and by the fantastic juxtapositions of architectural styles that typify collage city and urban adhocism.

14 Today modern culture includes the geometries of the International Style, the fantasies of facadism, and the gamesmanship of theme parks and museum villages . It pretends at times to be static but it is really dynamic. Its buildings move and sway and reflect dreamy visions of everything that is going on around them. It surrounds its citizens with the linear sculpture of pipelines and interstate highways and high-tension lines and the delicate virtuosity of the surfaces of the Chrysler Airflow and the Boeing 747 and the lacy weavings of circuits etched on silicon, as well as with the brutal assertiveness of oil tankers and bulldozers and the Tinkertoy complications of trusses and geodesic domes and lunar landers. It abounds in images and sounds and values utterly different from those of the world of natural things seen from a middle distance.

15 It is a human world, but one that is human in ways no one expected. The image it reveals is not the worn and battered face that stares from Leonardo's self-portrait much less the one that stares, bleary and uninspired, every morning from the bathroom mirror. These are the faces of history. It is, rather, the image of an eternally playful and eternally youthful power that makes order whether order is there or not and that having made one order is quite capable of putting it aside and creating an entirely different or the way a child might build one structure from a set of blocks and then without malice and purely in the spirit of play demolish it and begin again. It is an image of the power that made humanity possible in the first place.

16 The banks of the nineteenth century tended to be neoclassic structures of marble or granite faced with ponderous rows of columns. They made a statement "We are solid. We are permanent. We are as reliable as history. Your money is safe in our vaults."

17 Today's banks are airy structures of steel and glass, or they are store-fronts with slot-machinelike terminals, or trailers parked on the lots of suburban shopping malls.

18 The vaults have been replaced by magnetic tapes. In a computer, money is sequences of digital signals endlessly recorded, erased, processed, and reprocessed, and endlessly modified by other computers. The statement of modern banks is "We are abstract like art and almost invisible like the Crystal Palace. If we exist at all, we exist as an airy medium in which your transactions are completed and your wealth increased."

19 That, perhaps, establishes the logical limit of the modern aesthetic. If so, the limit is a long way ahead, but it can be made out, just barely, through the haze over the road. As surely as nature is

being swallowed up by the mind, the banks, you might say, are disappearing through their own skylights.

NOTES

1. Hardison: Osborne Bennet Hardison Jr. was born in San Diego, California in 1928. He was educated at the University of North Carolina and the University of Wisconsin. He has taught at Princeton and the University of North Carolina. He is the author of *Lyrics and Elegies* (1958), *The Enduring Monument* (1962), *English Literary Criticism: The Renaissance* (1964), *Toward Freedom and Dignity: The Humanities and the Idea of Humanity* (1973), *Entering the Maze: Identity and Change in Modern Culture* (1981) and *Disappearing Through the Skylight* (1980).
2. Ford Motor Company: one of the largest car manufacturing companies of America
3. International Style: as its name indicates, an architectural style easily reproduced and accepted by countries throughout the world. These structures use simple geometric forms of straight lines, squares, rectangles, etc., in their designs. It is often criticized as a rubber-stamp method of design. These structures are meant to be simple, practical and cost-effective.
4. Fiat: the biggest Italian car manufacturing company. Fiat is an acronym of the Italian name, *Fabbrica Italiana Automobile Torina*.
5. Pepsi-Cola: a brand name of an American soft drink. It is a strong competitor of another well-known American soft drink, Coca-Cola.
6. Volkswagen Beetle: model name of a car designed and manufactured by the German car manufacturing company, Volkswagen
7. D'Arcy Thompson: D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson (1860-1948) placed biology on a mathematical foundation. In his book *On Growth and Form*. Thompson invented the term Airflow to describe the curvature imposed by water on the body of a fish, The airflow or streamlining influenced the future designing of cars and airplanes to increase their speed and reduce air friction.
8. Carl Breer: auto-designer, who designed the Chrysler Airflow of 1934.
9. Ferdinand Porsche: auto-designer of the original Volkswagen
10. Holiday Inn: name adopted by a hotel chain
11. Picabia: Francis Picabia (1878-1953). French painter. After working in an impressionist style, Picabia was influenced by Cubism and later was one of the original exponents of Dada in Europe and the United States.
12. Duchamp: Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), French painter. Duchamp is noted for his cubist-futurist painting *Nude Descending a Staircase*, depicting continuous action with a series of overlapping figures. In 1915 he was a cofounder of a Dada group in New York.
13. Madame Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia: perhaps wife of Francis Picabia
14. Eiffel Tower: a tower of iron framework in Paris, designed by A.G. Eiffel and erected in the Champ-de-Mars for the Paris exposition of 1889
15. self-squared dragons: a picture of a four-dimensional dragon produced by computer technique
16. Kandinsky: Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), Russian abstract painter and theorist. He is usually regarded as the originator of abstract art. In 1910 he wrote an important theoretical study, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*.
17. Picasso: Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), Spanish painter and sculptor, who worked in France. His landmark painting *Guernica* is an impassioned allegorical condemnation of fascism and war.
18. Miro: Joan Miro (1893-1983), Spanish surrealist painter. After studying in Barcelona, Miro

went to Paris in 1919. In the 1920s he came into contact with cubism and surrealism. His work has been characterized as **psychic automatism**, an expression of the subconscious in free form.

19. Dada: a movement in art and literature based on deliberate irrationality and **negation** of traditional artistic values; also the art and literature produced by this movement

20. Stevens: Wallace Stevens (1879-1955), American poet, educated at Harvard and the New York University Law School. A master of exquisite verse, Stevens was specifically concerned with creating some shape of order in the "**slovenly wilderness**" of chaos.

21. game theory: a mathematical theory of transactions developed by John Von Neumann. He called this theory, which has important applications in economic, diplomacy, and national defense, "game theory". Even though they are serious, however, the games are often so **intricate** and their rules so strange that the game becomes overtly playful.

22. virtual particles: particles that serve all practical purposes though they do not exist in reality

23. black hole: A star in the last phases of gravitational collapse is often referred to as a "black hole". Even light cannot escape the black hole but is turned back by the enormous pull of gravitation. Therefore, it can never be observed directly.

24. lunar lander: a vehicle designed to land on the surface of the moon

25. collage city: Collage City (1975) by Colin Rowe. In it he calls for a city that is a rich mixture of styles. It also implies the preservation of many **bits and pieces** of history. collage: an artistic composition made of various materials (as paper, cloth or wood) glued on a picture surface

26. adhocism: This is a key term used by Charles Jencks in his book. The Language of Post-Modern Architecture (1977). The ad hoc city is intended to avoid the horrors of the totally planned city. The ad hoc city clearly shows a fondness for **clashing styles** and **queer postmodern buildings** as well as fantastic architectural complexes.

27. facadism: It is a form of **mosaic** architecture. In mosaic architecture bits and pieces of older buildings are combined with bits and pieces of modern buildings. In facadism fronts of nineteenth-century buildings may be propped up while entirely new buildings are created behind them and often beside and above them.

28. theme parks and museum villages: Such places try to reproduce history certain themes through architectural complexes. For example, Disneyland Anaheim, California, tries to reproduce the main street of a typical nineteenth century American town, but everything is stage set and nothing is real.

29. Chrysler Airflow: a car model manufactured by the Chrysler Corporation of America

30. Boeing 747: an airplane model manufactured by the Boeing Company of America

31. Tinkertoy: a trademark for a toy set of wooden **dowels**, joints, wheels etc., used by children to assemble structures

32. Crystal Palace: building designed by Sir Joseph Paxton and erected in Hyde Park, London, for the great exhibition in 1851. In 1854 it was removed to Sydenham, where, until its damage by fire in 1936, it housed a museum of sculpture, pictures, and architecture and was used for concerts. In 1941 it **demolition** was completed because it served as a guide to enemy bombing planes. The building was constructed of iron, glass, and **laminated wood** One of the most significant examples of 19th century **proto-modern architecture**, it was widely imitated in Europe and America.

Hidden Intellectualism

GERALD GRAFF



EVERYONE KNOWS SOME YOUNG PERSON who is impressively “street smart” but does poorly in school. What a waste, we think, that one who is so intelligent about so many things in life seems unable to apply that intelligence to academic work. What doesn’t occur to us, though, is that schools and colleges might be at fault for missing the opportunity to tap into such street smarts and channel them into good academic work.

Nor do we consider one of the major reasons why schools and colleges overlook the intellectual potential of street smarts: the fact that we associate those street smarts with anti-intellectual concerns. We associate the educated life, the life of the mind, too narrowly and exclusively with subjects and texts that we consider inherently weighty and academic. We assume that it’s possible to wax intellectual about Plato, Shakespeare,

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the French Revolution, and nuclear **fission**, but not about cars, dating, fashion, sports, TV, or video games.

The trouble with this assumption is that no necessary connection has ever been established between any text or subject and the educational depth and weight of the discussion it can

See pp. 58–59
for tips on
disagreeing,
with reasons.

generate. Real intellectuals turn any subject, however **lightweight** it may seem, into **grist** for their **mill** through the thoughtful questions they bring to it, whereas a **dullard** will find a way to drain the interest out of the richest subject. That's why a George Orwell writing on the cultural meanings of penny postcards is **infinitely** more **substantial** than the **cogitations** of many professors on Shakespeare or globalization (104–16).

Students do need to read **models** of intellectually challenging writing—and Orwell is a great one—if they are to become intellectuals themselves. But they would be more prone to **take on** intellectual identities if we encouraged them to do so at first on subjects that **interest** them rather than ones that interest us.

I offer my own adolescent experience **as a case in point**. Until I entered college, I hated books and cared only for sports. The only reading I cared to do or could do was sports magazines, on which I became hooked, becoming a regular reader of *Sport* magazine in the late forties, *Sports Illustrated* when it began publishing in 1954, and the annual magazine guides to professional baseball, football, and basketball. I also loved the sports novels for boys of John R. Tunis and Clair Bee and autobiographies of sports stars like Joe DiMaggio's *Lucky to Be a Yankee* and Bob Feller's ***Strikeout Story***. In short, I was your typical teenage anti-intellectual—or so I believed for a long time. I have recently come to think, however, that my preference for sports over schoolwork was not anti-intellectualism so much as intellectualism by other means.

In the Chicago neighborhood I grew up in, which had become a **melting pot** after World War II, our block was solidly middle

class, but just a block away—doubtless concentrated there by the real estate companies—were African Americans, Native Americans, and “hillbilly” whites who had recently fled postwar joblessness in the South and Appalachia. Negotiating this class boundary was a tricky matter. On the one hand, it was necessary to maintain the boundary between “clean-cut” boys like me and working-class “hoods,” as we called them, which meant that it was good to be openly smart in a bookish sort of way. On the other hand, I was desperate for the approval of the hoods, whom I encountered daily on the playing field and in the neighborhood, and for this purpose it was not at all good to be book-smart. The hoods would turn on you if they sensed you were putting on airs over them: “Who you lookin’ at, smart ass?” as a leather-jacketed youth once said to me as he relieved me of my pocket change along with my self-respect.

I grew up torn, then, between the need to prove I was smart and the fear of a beating if I proved it too well; between the need not to jeopardize my respectable future and the need to impress the hoods. As I lived it, the conflict came down to a choice between being physically tough and being verbal. For a boy in my neighborhood and elementary school, only being “tough” earned you complete legitimacy. I still recall endless, complicated debates in this period with my closest pals over who was “the toughest guy in the school.” If you were less than negligible as a fighter, as I was, you settled for the next best thing, which was to be inarticulate, carefully hiding telltale marks of literacy like correct grammar and pronunciation.

In one way, then, it would be hard to imagine an adolescence more thoroughly anti-intellectual than mine. Yet in retrospect, I see that it’s more complicated, that I and the 1950s themselves were not simply hostile toward intellectualism, but divided and ambivalent. When Marilyn Monroe married the playwright Arthur Miller in 1956 after divorcing the retired baseball star

Joe DiMaggio, the symbolic triumph of **geek** over **jock** suggested the way the wind was blowing. Even Elvis, according to his biographer Peter Guralnick, turns out to have supported Adlai over Ike in the **presidential** election of 1956. “I don’t dig the intellectual bit,” he told reporters. “But I’m telling you, man, he knows the most” (327).

Though I too thought I did not “dig the intellectual bit,” I see now that I was **unwittingly** in training for it. The germs had actually been planted in the seemingly **philistine** debates about which boys were the toughest. I see now that in the **interminable** analysis of sports teams, movies, and toughness that my friends and I engaged in—a type of analysis, needless to say, that the **real toughs** would never have stooped to—I was already betraying an **allegiance** to the **egghead** world. I was practicing being an intellectual before I knew that was what I wanted to be.

It was in these discussions with friends about toughness and ¹⁰ sports, I think, and in my reading of sports books and magazines, that I began to learn the **rudiments** of the intellectual life: how to make an argument, weigh different kinds of evidence, move between particulars and generalizations, summarize the views of others, and enter a conversation about ideas. It was in reading and arguing about sports and toughness that I experienced what it felt like to propose a **generalization**, restate and respond to a counterargument, and perform other intellectualizing operations, including composing the kind of sentences I am writing now.

Only much later did it **dawn on me** that the sports world was more compelling than school because it was *more intellectual than school*, not less. Sports after all was full of challenging arguments, debates, problems for analysis, and intricate statistics that you could care about, as school **conspicuously** was not. I believe that street smarts beat out book smarts in our culture

not because street smarts are nonintellectual, as we generally suppose, but because they satisfy an intellectual thirst more thoroughly than school culture, which seems pale and unreal.

They also satisfy the thirst for community. When you entered sports debates, you became part of a community that was not limited to your family and friends, but was national and public. Whereas schoolwork isolated you from others, the pennant race or Ted Williams's .400 batting average was something you could talk about with people you had never met. Sports introduced you not only to a culture steeped in argument, but to a public argument culture that transcended the personal. I can't blame my schools for failing to make intellectual culture resemble the Super Bowl, but I do fault them for failing to learn anything from the sports and entertainment worlds about how to organize and represent intellectual culture, how to exploit its gamelike element and turn it into arresting public spectacle that might have competed more successfully for my youthful attention.

For here is another thing that never dawned on me and is still kept hidden from students, with tragic results: that the real intellectual world, the one that existed in the big world beyond school, is organized very much like the world of team sports, with rival texts, rival interpretations and evaluations of texts, rival theories of why they should be read and taught, and elaborate team competitions in which "fans" of writers, intellectual systems, methodologies, and -isms contend against each other.

To be sure, school contained plenty of competition, which became more invidious as one moved up the ladder (and has become even more so today with the advent of high-stakes testing). In this competition, points were scored not by making arguments, but by a show of information or vast reading, by grade-grubbing, or other forms of one-upmanship. School

competition, in short, reproduced the less attractive features of sports culture without those that create close bonds and community.

And in **distancing** themselves from anything as enjoyable and absorbing as sports, my schools missed the opportunity to **capitalize** on an element of drama and conflict that the intellectual world shares with sports. Consequently, I failed to see the parallels between the sports and academic worlds that could have helped me cross more readily from one argument culture to the other.

Sports is only one of the **domains** whose potential for **literacy** training (and not only for males) is seriously underestimated by educators, who see sports as competing with academic development rather than a route to it. But if this argument suggests why it is a good idea to assign readings and topics that are close to students' existing interests, it also suggests the limits of this **tactic**. For students who get excited about the chance to write about their passion for cars will often write as poorly and unreflectively on that topic as on Shakespeare or Plato. Here is the **flip side** of what I pointed out before: that there's no necessary relation between the degree of interest a student shows in a text or subject and the quality of thought or expression such a student manifests in writing or talking about it. The challenge, as college professor Ned Laff has put it, "is not simply to exploit students' nonacademic interests, but to get them to see those interests through academic eyes."

To say that students need to see their interests "through academic eyes" is to say that street smarts are not enough. Making students' nonacademic interests an object of academic study is useful, then, for getting students' attention and overcoming their boredom and **alienation**, but this tactic won't in itself necessarily move them closer to an academically rigorous treatment of those interests. On the other hand, inviting students to

write about cars, sports, or clothing fashions does not have to be a pedagogical cop-out as long as students are required to see these interests “through academic eyes,” that is, to think and write about cars, sports, and fashions in a reflective, analytical way, one that sees them as microcosms of what is going on in the wider culture.

If I am right, then schools and colleges are missing an opportunity when they do not encourage students to take their nonacademic interests as objects of academic study. It is self-defeating to decline to introduce any text or subject that figures to engage students who will otherwise tune out academic work entirely. If a student cannot get interested in Mill’s *On Liberty* but will read *Sports Illustrated* or *Vogue* or the hip-hop magazine *Source* with absorption, this is a strong argument for assigning the magazines over the classic. It’s a good bet that if students get hooked on reading and writing by doing term papers on *Source*, they will eventually get to *On Liberty*. But even if they don’t, the magazine reading will make them more literate and reflective than they would be otherwise. So it makes pedagogical sense to develop classroom units on sports, cars, fashions, rap music, and other such topics. Give me the student anytime who writes a sharply argued, sociologically acute analysis of an issue in *Source* over the student who writes a lifeless explication of *Hamlet* or Socrates’ *Apology*.

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Joining the Conversation

1. Gerald Graff begins his essay with the view that we generally associate “book smarts” with intellectualism and “street smarts” with anti-intellectualism. Graff then provides an extended example from his early life to counter this viewpoint. What do you think of his argument that boyhood conversations about sports provided a solid foundation for his later intellectual life? What support does he provide, and how persuasive is it?
2. Graff argues in paragraph 13 that the intellectual world is much like the world of team sports, with “rival texts . . . , rival theories . . . , and elaborate team competitions.” Can you think of any examples from your own experience that support this assertion? In what ways do you think “the real intellectual world” is different from the world of team sports?
3. Imagine a conversation between Graff and Mike Rose (pp. 277–89) on the intellectual skills people can develop outside the realm of formal education and the benefits of these skills.
4. So what? Who cares? Graff does not answer these questions explicitly. Do it for him: write a brief paragraph saying why his argument matters, and for whom.
5. Graff argues that schools should encourage students to think critically, read, and write about areas of personal interest such as cars, fashion, or music—as long as they do so in an intellectually serious way. What do you think? Write an essay considering the educational merits of such a proposal, taking Graff’s argument as a “they say.”

A Definite Aim in Reading

Noah Porter

1 In reading, we do well to **propose** to ourselves definite ends and purposes. The more **distinctly** we are aware of our own wants and desires in reading, the more definite and permanent will be our acquisitions. **Hence** it is a good rule to ask ourselves frequently, "Why am I reading this book, essay or poem? or why am I reading it at the present time rather than any other?" It may often be a satisfying answer, that it is convenient; that the book happens to be at hand; or that we read to pass away the time. Such reasons are often very good, but they ought not always to satisfy us. Yet the very habit of proposing these questions, however they may be answered, will involve the calling of ourselves to **account for** our reading, and the consideration of it in the light of wisdom and duty.

2 The distinct consciousness of some object at present before us, imparts a **manifoldly** greater interest to the contents of any volume. It **imparts** to the reader an appropriate power, a force of **affinity**, by which he **insensibly** and unconsciously attracts to himself all that has a near or even a remote relation to the end for which he reads. Anyone is conscious of this who reads a story with the purpose of repeating it to an absent friend; or an essay or a report with the design of using its facts or arguments in a debate; or a poem with the design of revisiting its **imagery**, and reciting its **finest** passages. Indeed, one never learns to read effectively until he learns to read in such a spirit - not always, indeed, for a definite end, yet always with a mind **attent** to appropriate and **retain** and turn to the uses of culture, if not to a more direct application.

3 The private history of every self-educated man, from Franklin onwards, **attests** that they all were uniformly not only earnest but **select** in their reading, and that they selected their books with distinct reference to the purposes for which they used them. Indeed, the reason why self-trained men so often surpass men who are trained by others in the effectiveness and success of their reading, is that they know for what they read and study, and have definite aims and wishes in all their dealings with books. The **omnivorous** and indiscriminate reader, who is at the same time a **listless** and passive reader, however ardent is his curiosity, can never be a reader of the most effective sort.

4 Another good rule is suggested by the **foregoing**. Always have some solid reading in hand; i.e., some work or author which we carry forward from one day to another, or one hour of leisure to the next, with persistence, till we have finished whatever we have undertaken. There are many great and successful readers who do not observe this rule, but it is a good rule **notwithstanding**.

5 The writer once called upon one of the most extensive and persevering of modern travelers, at an early hour of the day, to attend him upon a walk to a distant village. It was after breakfast, and though he had but few minutes at command, he was sitting with book in hand - a book of solid history he was perusing day after day. He remarked: "This has been my habit for years in all my wanderings. It is the one habit which gives solidity to my intellectual activities and imparts tone to my life. It is only in this way that I can overcome and **counteract** the tendency to the **dissipation** of my powers and the distraction of my attention, as strange persons and strange scenes present themselves from day to day."

6 To the rule already given – read with a definite aim – we could add the Rule – make your aims to be definite by continuously holding them rigidly to a single book at all times, except when relaxation requires you to cease to work, and to live for amusement and play. Always have at least one iron in the fire, and kindle the fire at least once every day.

7 It is implied in the preceding that we should read upon definite subjects, and with a certain method and proportion in the choice of our books. If we have a single object to accomplish in our reading for the present, that object will of necessity direct the choice of what we read, and we shall arrange our reading with reference to this single end. This will be a nucleus around which our reading will for the moment naturally gather and arrange itself.

8 If several subjects seem to us equally important and interesting, we should dispose of them in order, and give to each for the time our chief and perhaps our exclusive attention. That this is wise is so obvious not to require illustration. “One thing at a time,” is an accepted condition for all efficient activity, whether it is employed upon things or thoughts, upon men or books. If five or ten separate topics have equal claim upon our interest and attention, we shall do to each the amplest justice, if we make each in its turn the central subject of our reading. There is little danger of weariness or monotony from the workings of such a rule.

9 Most single topics admit or require a considerable variety of books, each different from the other, and each supplementing the other. Hence it is one of the best of practices in prosecuting a course of reading, to read every author who can cast any light upon the subject which we have in hand. For example, if we are reading the history of the Great Rebellion in England, we should read, if we can, not a single author only, as Clarendon, but a half dozen or a half score, each of whom writes from his own point of view, supplies what another omits, or corrects what he under- or overstates.

10 But, besides the formal histories of the period, there are the various novels, the scenes and characters of which are placed in those times, such as Scott’s Woodstock; there are also diaries, such as those by Evelyn, Pepys, and Burton; and there are memoirs, such as those of Col. Hutchinson; while the last two have been imitated in scores of fictions. There are poems, such as those of Andrew Marvell, Milton, and Dryden. There are also shoals of political tracts and pamphlets, of handbills and caricatures.

11 We name these various descriptions of works and classes of reading, not because we suppose all of them are accessible to those readers who live at a distance from large public libraries, or because we would advise everyone who may have access to such libraries, to read all these books and classes of books as a matter of course, but because we would illustrate how great is the variety of books and reading matter that are grouped around a single topic, and are embraced within a single period.

12 Every person must judge for himself how long a time he can bestow upon any single subject, or how many and various are the books in respect to it which it is wise to read; but of this everyone may be assured, that it is far easier, far more agreeable, and far more economical of time and energy, to concentrate the attention upon a single subject at a time than to extend it to half a score, and that six books read in succession or together upon a single topic, are far more interesting and profitable

than twice as many which treat of topics remotely related. A lady well known to the writer, of the least possible scholarly **pretensions** or literary **notoriety**, spent fifteen months of leisure, **snatched** by fragments from **onerous** family cares and brilliant social engagements, in reading the history of Greece as written by a great variety of authors and as illustrated by many accessories of literature and art.

13 Nor should it be argued that such rules as these, or the habits which they enjoin, are suitable for scholars only, or for people who have much leisure for reading. It should rather be urged that those who can read the fewest books and who have at command the **scantiest** time, should aim to read with the greatest concentration and method; should occupy all of their divided energy with single centers of interest, and **husband** the few hours which they can command, in reading whatever **converges** to a definite, because to a single, impression.