

BOOKS, ARTICLES, AND ITEMS OF ACADEMIC INTEREST

Compiled, with Commentary by Carol Iannone

Presumed Guilty

The case of the three Duke lacrosse team members who have been indicted on rape charges has yet to come to trial, but, argues Stuart Taylor, “when a petty-tyrant prosecutor has perverted and prolonged the legal process without disclosing his supposed evidence, and when academics and journalists have joined in smearing presumptively innocent young men as racist sexist brutes—in the face of much contrary evidence—it’s not too early to offer tentative judgments.” On the basis of the available evidence, Taylor is “85 percent confident” that they are innocent and that the accusations against them are false. Taylor asserts also that the report on Duke’s handling of the scandal by former Princeton University President William Bowen and civil-rights lawyer Julius Chambers “is a parody of race-obsessed political correctness.” “In Duke Case, a Rogues’ Gallery,” *National Journal*, 22 May 2006. See also his 29 April 2006 column in the same journal.

Evolving on Evolution

George Gilder writes a thoughtful article describing the development of his ideas about evolution and arguing against Darwinian theory. “Evolution and Me: Darwinian Theory Has Become an All-Purpose Obstacle to Thought Rather than an Enabler of Scientific Advance,” *National Review*, 17 July 2006, also available at the Discovery Institute website. John Derbyshire offers a rather wordy response, “George Gilder, Metaphysic,” *National Review Online*, 13 July 2006.

Imaginative Science?

New York Times editorial writer Brent Staples reports on a special project at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County that enrolls 50 students in a science program in the summer before they begin college. “The students are encouraged to study in groups and taught to solve complex problems collectively, as teams of scientists do.” They are also exposed to cutting edge science in the laboratory. Staples claims that this kind of “imaginative” approach keeps the students “excited” and will improve America’s dismal record in training young people for high-level science, especially among minorities. But is it lack of imagination that discourages our young people from pursuing advanced science and math? Or is it a lack in the basic skills that should have been imparted to them in their earlier years of education? “Why American College Students Hate Science,” *New York Times*, 22 May 2006.

Advancing the Race, Retarding the Student

Are charter schools the answer to public school inadequacy? Think again. The indefatigable journalist Michelle Malkin found dozens of publicly subsidized charter schools sponsored by the Hispanic advocacy group La Raza (The Race) and funded with taxpayer money. For example:

- Aztlan Academy in Tucson, Arizona. According to La Raza, the school's success rests on "Aztlan's ability to integrate a meaningful Chicano Studies program into [the students'] lives, language, and academics, as a means of developing their intellects as well as their pride and self-esteem."
- Mexicayotl Academy in Nogales, Arizona. The school's program is "structured and developed around the concepts of identity, culture, and language." Second mission: supporting local ethnic lobbying efforts "to right social injustices by educating the community and helping create social change."
- Academia Cesar Chavez Charter School in St. Paul, Minn. The school's website features one flag on its front page: the Mexican flag.

"'The Race' Schools: Your Tax Dollars at Work," *Townhall.com*, 12 July 2006.

How the French Do It

In contrast to the bloated, overpriced, all-frills-provided education purveyed by American colleges, France's institutions of higher learning are austere, at times too austere. But tuition averages \$250 a year. Elaine Sciolino, "Higher Learning in France Clings to Its Old Ways," *New York Times*, 12 May 2006.

Overmanaged

Author Matthew Stewart questions the value of the content of the M.B.A. education. In interviewing, hiring, and working alongside hundreds of business-school graduates, the impression Stewart "formed of the M.B.A. experience was that it involved taking two years out of your life and going deeply into debt, all for the sake of learning how to keep a straight face while using phrases like 'out-of-the-box thinking,' 'win-win situation,' and 'core competencies.'" He maintains that Rousseau and Shakespeare "are every bit as relevant to the dilemmas faced by managers in their quest for productivity as any of the management literature." "The Management Myth," *Atlantic*, June 2006.

The Idea of a Bureaucratic University

"What Is a Chief Diversity Officer?" is an inadvertently revealing article about the growing reach and power of the cohort of diversity officers being hired at colleges and universities of all levels today, from top tier down. Written by bureaucrats who have no idea how awful they sound. Damon A. Williams and Katrina C. Wade-Golden, *Inside Higher Ed*, 18 April 2006.

Judeo-Christian Values at Work

Peter Wood writes genially and honestly about his experiences heading The King's College, an evangelical institution located in the Empire State Building, right in the midst of the Big Apple itself. "The Old College Try," *The American Conservative*, 8 May 2006.

In contrast to Princeton philosopher Peter Singer's brief for animal rights (he who believes it acceptable to kill infants up to eight days old), Roger Scruton offers a more traditional understanding of man's relationship to the rest of creation. "A Carnivores Credo," *Harper's*, May 2006.

Boys at Risk

A glossy men's magazine finally notices a "problem" with boys today. Naturally, according to the author, it has nothing to do with feminism. But something tells us that the constant and ecstatic promotion of girls and women, often at the expense of boys and men, as well as television and films filled with displays of female superiority over men on every point, including physical strength, might have something to do with it. Still, the article is a step toward getting mainstream attention, and better than nothing. Tom Chiarella, "The Problem with Boys," *Esquire*, July 2006.

Jihad for Children

A Freedom House report on a sample of official Saudi Arabian textbooks for Islamic studies in current use reveals that these textbooks convey anti-Western and anti-Jewish propaganda and worse.

- From the sixth-grade textbook: "Just as Muslims were successful in the past when they came together in a sincere endeavor to evict the Christian crusaders from Palestine, so will the Arabs and Muslims emerge victorious, God willing, against the Jews and their allies if they stand together and fight a true jihad for God, for this is within God's power."
- From the twelfth-grade textbook: "Jihad in the path of God—which consists of battling against unbelief, oppression, injustice, and those who perpetrate it—is the summit of Islam. This religion arose through jihad and through jihad was its banner raised high. It is one of the noblest acts, which brings one closer to God, and one of the most magnificent acts of obedience to God."

Nina Shea, "This Is a Saudi Textbook," *Washington Post*, 21 May 2006.

Just Another Gulag

How to talk about the atrocities of the Soviet gulag in an age of cultural relativism? "Gulag," an exhibit at Ellis Island that ended on 4 July 2006, shows how—by equating it with every injustice ever committed by man against man. Edward Rothstein, "Laying Bare a Soviet Penal System Gone Unspeakably Awry," *New York Times*, 7 June 2006.