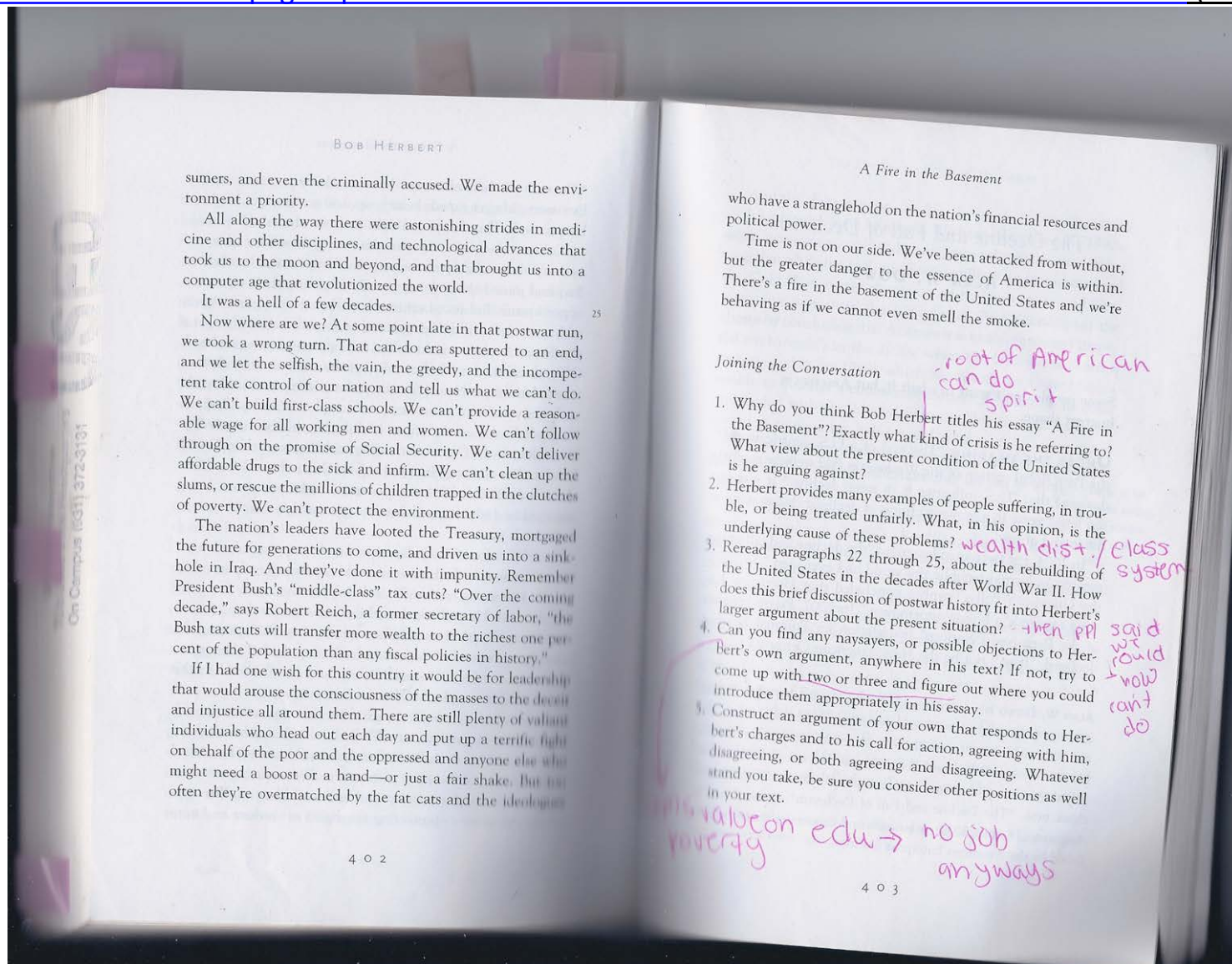
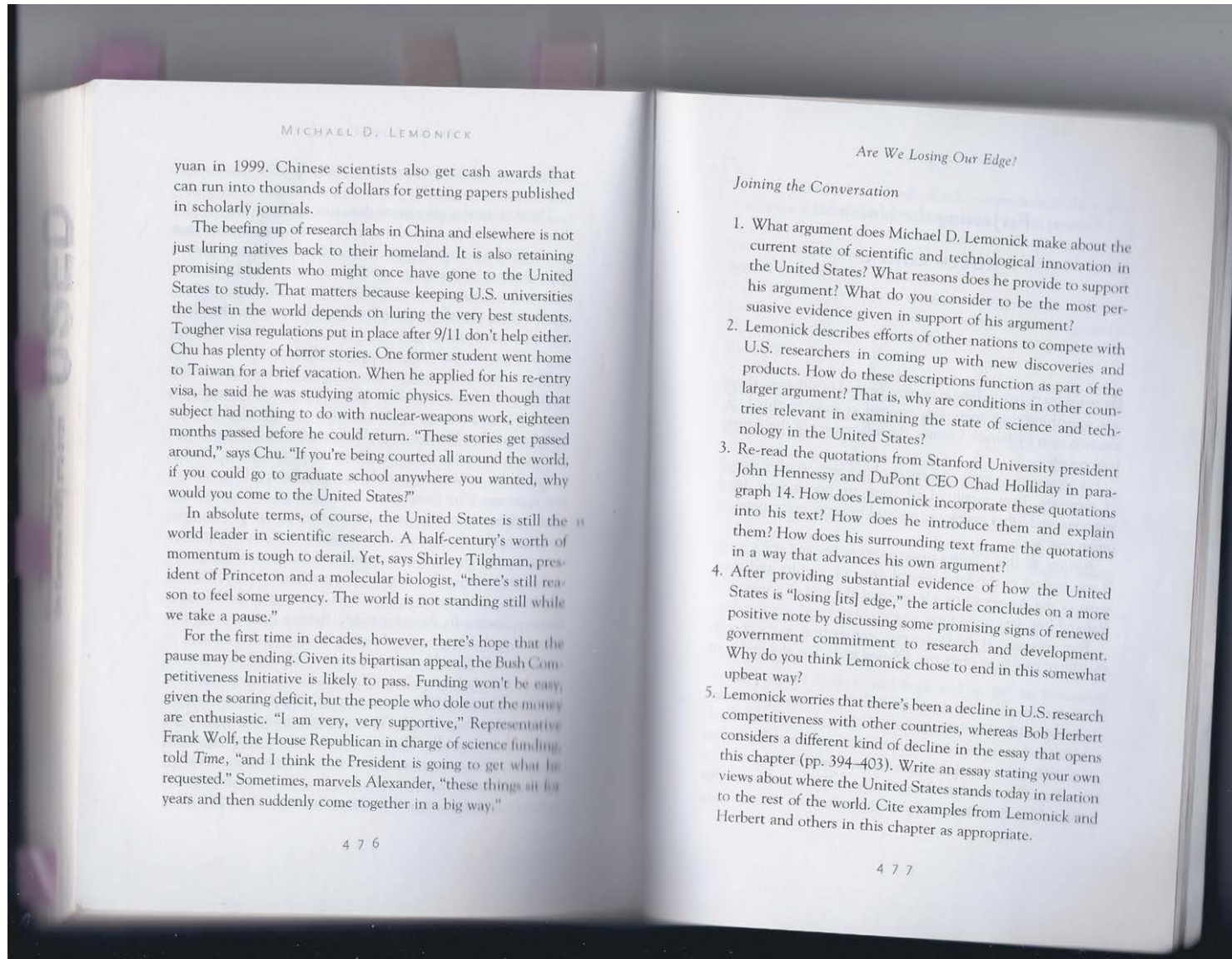


Summer Essay Links

They Say, I Say



a fire in the basement



MICHAEL D. LEMONICK

yuan in 1999. Chinese scientists also get cash awards that can run into thousands of dollars for getting papers published in scholarly journals.

The beefing up of research labs in China and elsewhere is not just luring natives back to their homeland. It is also retaining promising students who might once have gone to the United States to study. That matters because keeping U.S. universities the best in the world depends on luring the very best students. Tougher visa regulations put in place after 9/11 don't help either. Chu has plenty of horror stories. One former student went home to Taiwan for a brief vacation. When he applied for his re-entry visa, he said he was studying atomic physics. Even though that subject had nothing to do with nuclear-weapons work, eighteen months passed before he could return. "These stories get passed around," says Chu. "If you're being courted all around the world, if you could go to graduate school anywhere you wanted, why would you come to the United States?"

In absolute terms, of course, the United States is still the world leader in scientific research. A half-century's worth of momentum is tough to derail. Yet, says Shirley Tilghman, president of Princeton and a molecular biologist, "there's still reason to feel some urgency. The world is not standing still while we take a pause."

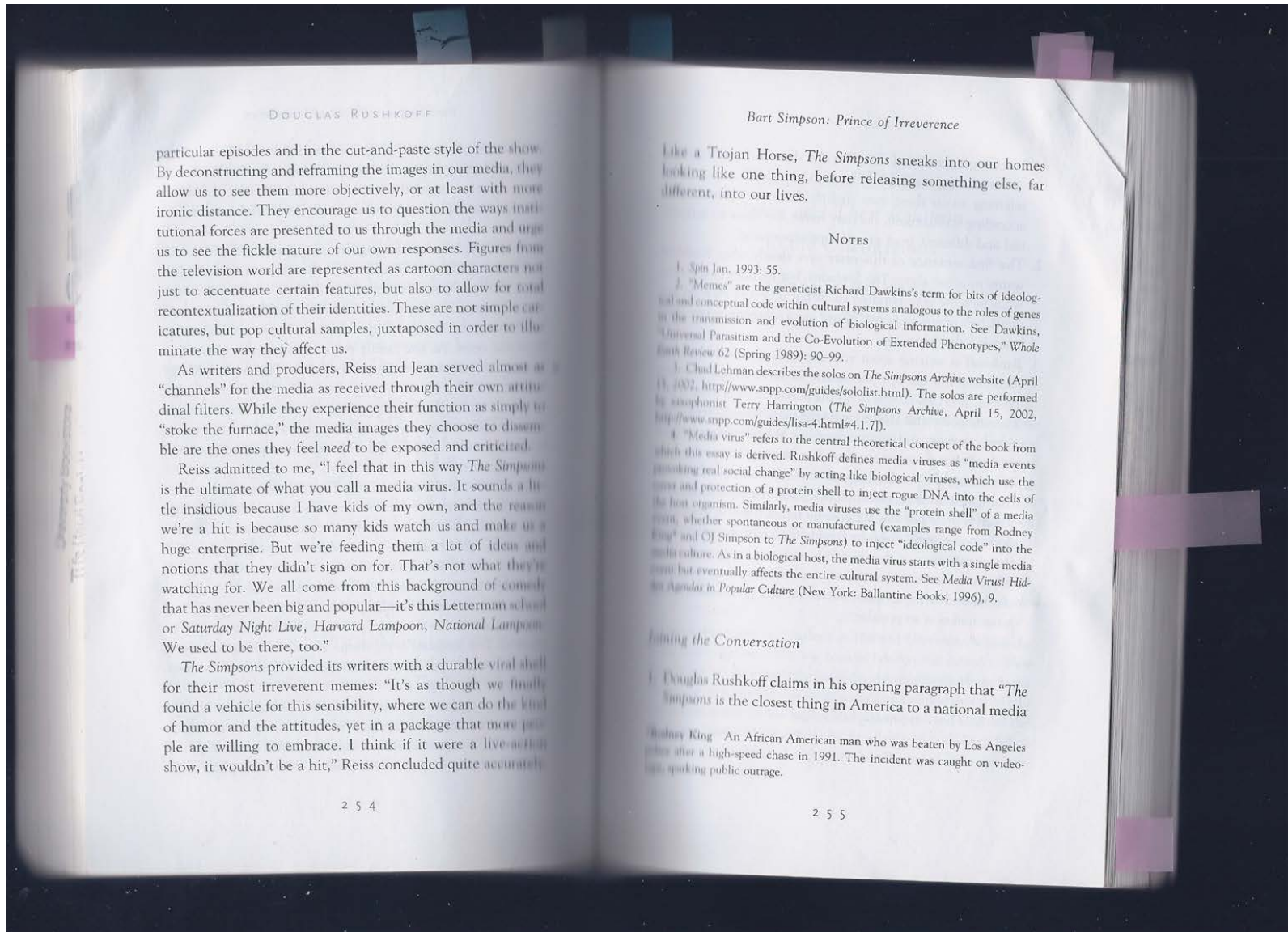
For the first time in decades, however, there's hope that the pause may be ending. Given its bipartisan appeal, the Bush Competitiveness Initiative is likely to pass. Funding won't be easy, given the soaring deficit, but the people who dole out the money are enthusiastic. "I am very, very supportive," Representative Frank Wolf, the House Republican in charge of science funding, told *Time*, "and I think the President is going to get what he requested." Sometimes, marvels Alexander, "these things sit for years and then suddenly come together in a big way."

Are We Losing Our Edge?

Joining the Conversation

1. What argument does Michael D. Lemonick make about the current state of scientific and technological innovation in the United States? What reasons does he provide to support his argument? What do you consider to be the most persuasive evidence given in support of his argument?
2. Lemonick describes efforts of other nations to compete with U.S. researchers in coming up with new discoveries and products. How do these descriptions function as part of the larger argument? That is, why are conditions in other countries relevant in examining the state of science and technology in the United States?
3. Re-read the quotations from Stanford University president John Hennessy and DuPont CEO Chad Holliday in paragraph 14. How does Lemonick incorporate these quotations into his text? How does he introduce them and explain them? How does his surrounding text frame the quotations in a way that advances his own argument?
4. After providing substantial evidence of how the United States is "losing [its] edge," the article concludes on a more positive note by discussing some promising signs of renewed government commitment to research and development. Why do you think Lemonick chose to end in this somewhat upbeat way?
5. Lemonick worries that there's been a decline in U.S. research competitiveness with other countries, whereas Bob Herbert considers a different kind of decline in the essay that opens this chapter (pp. 394-403). Write an essay stating your own views about where the United States stands today in relation to the rest of the world. Cite examples from Lemonick and Herbert and others in this chapter as appropriate.

are we losing our edge



particular episodes and in the cut-and-paste style of the show. By deconstructing and reframing the images in our media, they allow us to see them more objectively, or at least with more ironic distance. They encourage us to question the ways institutional forces are presented to us through the media and urge us to see the fickle nature of our own responses. Figures from the television world are represented as cartoon characters not just to accentuate certain features, but also to allow for total recontextualization of their identities. These are not simple caricatures, but pop cultural samples, juxtaposed in order to illuminate the way they affect us.

As writers and producers, Reiss and Jean served almost as "channels" for the media as received through their own attitudinal filters. While they experience their function as simply to "stoke the furnace," the media images they choose to disseminate are the ones they feel need to be exposed and critiqued.

Reiss admitted to me, "I feel that in this way *The Simpsons* is the ultimate of what you call a media virus. It sounds a little insidious because I have kids of my own, and the reason we're a hit is because so many kids watch us and make us a huge enterprise. But we're feeding them a lot of ideas and notions that they didn't sign on for. That's not what they're watching for. We all come from this background of comedy that has never been big and popular—it's this Letterman school or *Saturday Night Live*, *Harvard Lampoon*, *National Lampoon*. We used to be there, too."

The Simpsons provided its writers with a durable viral shell for their most irreverent memes: "It's as though we finally found a vehicle for this sensibility, where we can do the kind of humor and the attitudes, yet in a package that more people are willing to embrace. I think if it were a live-action show, it wouldn't be a hit," Reiss concluded quite accurately.

Like a Trojan Horse, *The Simpsons* sneaks into our homes looking like one thing, before releasing something else, far different, into our lives.

NOTES

1. Spin Jan. 1993: 55.
2. "Memes" are the geneticist Richard Dawkins's term for bits of ideological and conceptual code within cultural systems analogous to the roles of genes in the transmission and evolution of biological information. See Dawkins, "Universal Parasitism and the Co-Evolution of Extended Phenotypes," *Whole Earth Review* 62 (Spring 1989): 90-99.
3. Chad Lehman describes the solos on *The Simpsons* Archive website (April 13, 2002, <http://www.snpp.com/guides/sololist.html>). The solos are performed by saxophonist Terry Harrington (*The Simpsons* Archive, April 15, 2002, <http://www.snpp.com/guides/lisa-4.html#4.1.7>).
4. "Media virus" refers to the central theoretical concept of the book from which this essay is derived. Rushkoff defines media viruses as "media events provoking real social change" by acting like biological viruses, which use the cover and protection of a protein shell to inject rogue DNA into the cells of the host organism. Similarly, media viruses use the "protein shell" of a media event, whether spontaneous or manufactured (examples range from Rodney King and OJ Simpson to *The Simpsons*) to inject "ideological code" into the media culture. As in a biological host, the media virus starts with a single media event but eventually affects the entire cultural system. See *Media Virus! Hidden Agendas in Popular Culture* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996), 9.

Ending the Conversation

1. Douglas Rushkoff claims in his opening paragraph that "*The Simpsons* is the closest thing in America to a national media Rodney King. An African American man who was beaten by Los Angeles police after a high-speed chase in 1991. The incident was caught on videotape, sparking public outrage.

bart simpson prince of irreverence

literacy program" and describes the show as "nothing short of a media revolution." What features of the cartoon is he referring to in these two slightly different claims? How, according to Rushkoff, do they make the show so influential and different from previous programming?

2. The first sentence of this essay says clearly what Rushkoff wants to argue about *The Simpsons*, but he doesn't spell out what view he is responding to. What unstated view do you think he's arguing against? Write out a sentence or two summarizing the "they say."
3. Rushkoff is writing *about* young people (or, as he puts it, "screenagers") but not necessarily *for* an audience of young people. Who would you say is the audience he is writing for? How do you think this essay might be different—in its language, its tone, and its arguments—if Rushkoff were writing primarily for young viewers of *The Simpsons*?
4. What happens in the long example of the episode where Bart acts as a "media manipulator" and creates a scenario in which a little boy has supposedly fallen down a well? How does this example illustrate Rushkoff's larger argument about the significance of the show?
5. Choose a television show that you and your peers watch regularly, and write an essay in which you give your view of what makes it so popular.

Family Guy and Freud: Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious

ANTONIA PEACOCKE

—@—

WHILE SLOUCHING IN FRONT of the television after a long day, you probably don't think a lot about famous psychologists of the twentieth century. Somehow, these figures don't come up often in prime-time—or even daytime—TV programming. Whether you're watching *Living Lohan* or the *NewsHour*, the likelihood is that you are not thinking of Sigmund Freud, even if you've heard of his book *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*. I say that you should be.

What made me think of Freud in the first place, actually, was *Family Guy*, the cartoon created by Seth MacFarlane.

ANTONIA PEACOCKE is a student at Harvard University, where she plans to study physics. She was born in London and moved to New York at age 10, on exactly the same day that the fourth Harry Potter book came out. She's always loved writing and worked as a copy editor and columnist for her high school newspaper—and received the Catherine Fairfax MacRae Prize for Excellence in Both English and Mathematics. A National Merit Scholar, she wrote the essay here specifically for this book.

SHERRY TURKLE

children. Data on "aliveness" can be shared on a "need to know" basis, for a purpose. But what are the purposes of living things?

Twenty-five years ago the Japanese realized that demography was working against them and there would never be enough young people to take care of their aging population. Instead of having foreigners take care of their elderly, they decided to build robots and put them in nursing homes. Doctors and nurses like them; so do family members of the elderly, because it is easier to leave your mom playing with a robot than to leave her staring at a wall or a TV. Very often the elderly like them, I think, mostly because they sense there are no other options. Said one woman about Aibo, Sony's household-entertainment robot, "It is better than a real dog. . . . It won't do dangerous things, and it won't betray you. . . . Also, it won't die suddenly and make you feel very sad."

Might such robotic arrangements even benefit the elderly and their children in the short run in a feel-good sense but be bad for us in our lives as moral beings? The answer does not depend on what computers can do today or what they are likely to be able to do in the future. It hangs on the question of what we will be like, what kind of people we are becoming as we develop very intimate relationships with our machines.

Why we should care. See pp. 92-95 for text on saying why it matters.

Joining the Conversation

1. Sherry Turkle opens her essay by questioning the human costs of technological development: "Thanks to technology, people have never been more connected—or more alienated." Summarize briefly the five points she makes about

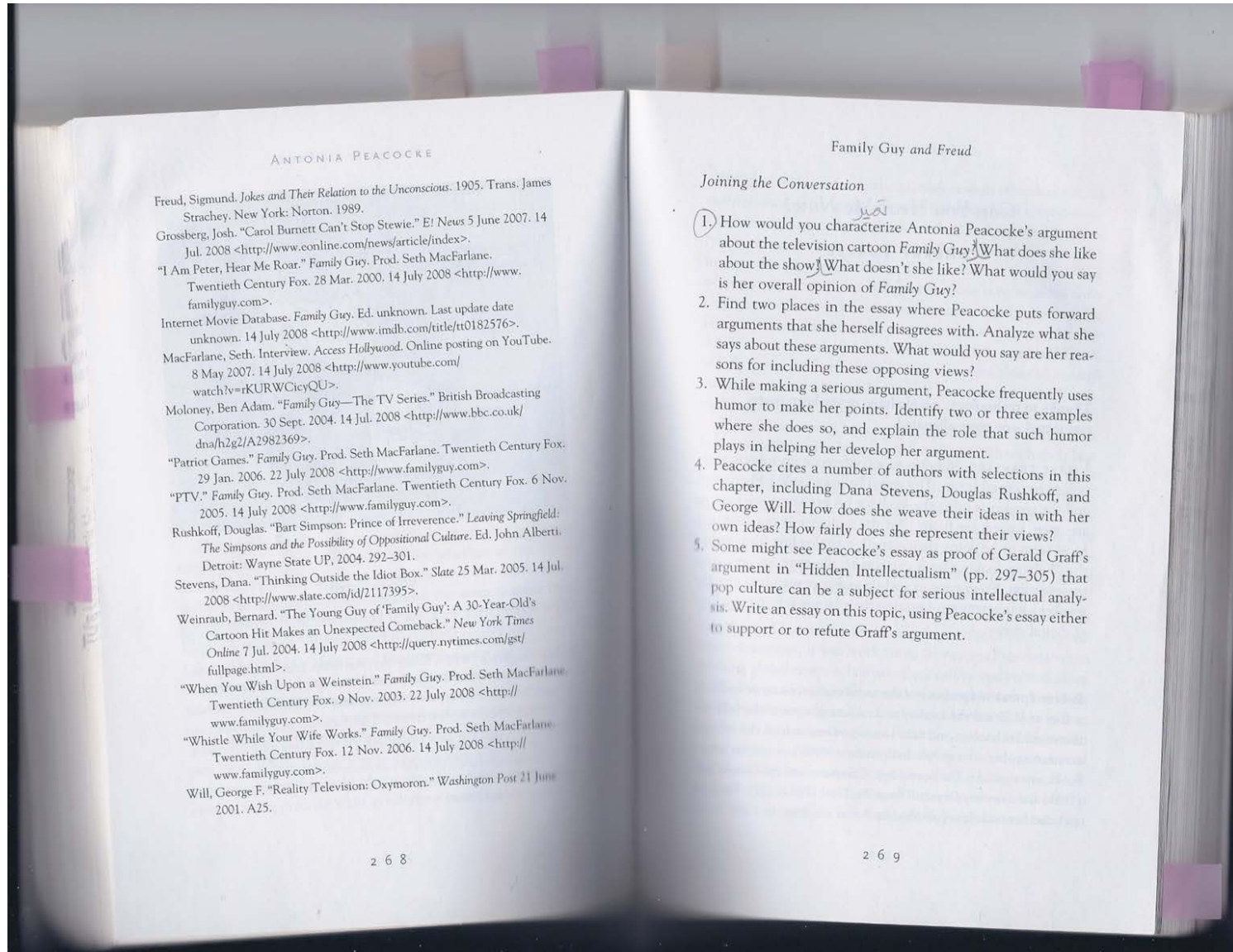
Can You Hear Me Now?

how life is diminished by what she sees as an over-reliance on technology.

2. What view is Turkle arguing against? Where in her essay do you find a statement or other indication of that view? What examples can you find throughout the essay where she mentions a point of view that she disagrees with? What is her purpose in mentioning such examples?
3. This piece was written for *Forbes*, a business magazine known as "the capitalist tool" and for its annual list of the richest Americans. If Turkle were writing for an audience of young, technologically proficient people who are comfortable using the gadgetry she describes, how might she have written the essay differently?
4. Turkle argues that children do not learn personal responsibility as quickly as they used to because they are in such constant touch with their parents via cell phone. Does she offer any naysayers to this argument? If not, what counter-arguments can you suggest?
5. Do you agree with Turkle? Disagree? Agree and disagree? Write an essay setting forth what you think, being careful to frame your argument as a response to what Turkle says.

can you hear me now

No link ☹️ (must read in book)



ANTONIA PEACOCKE

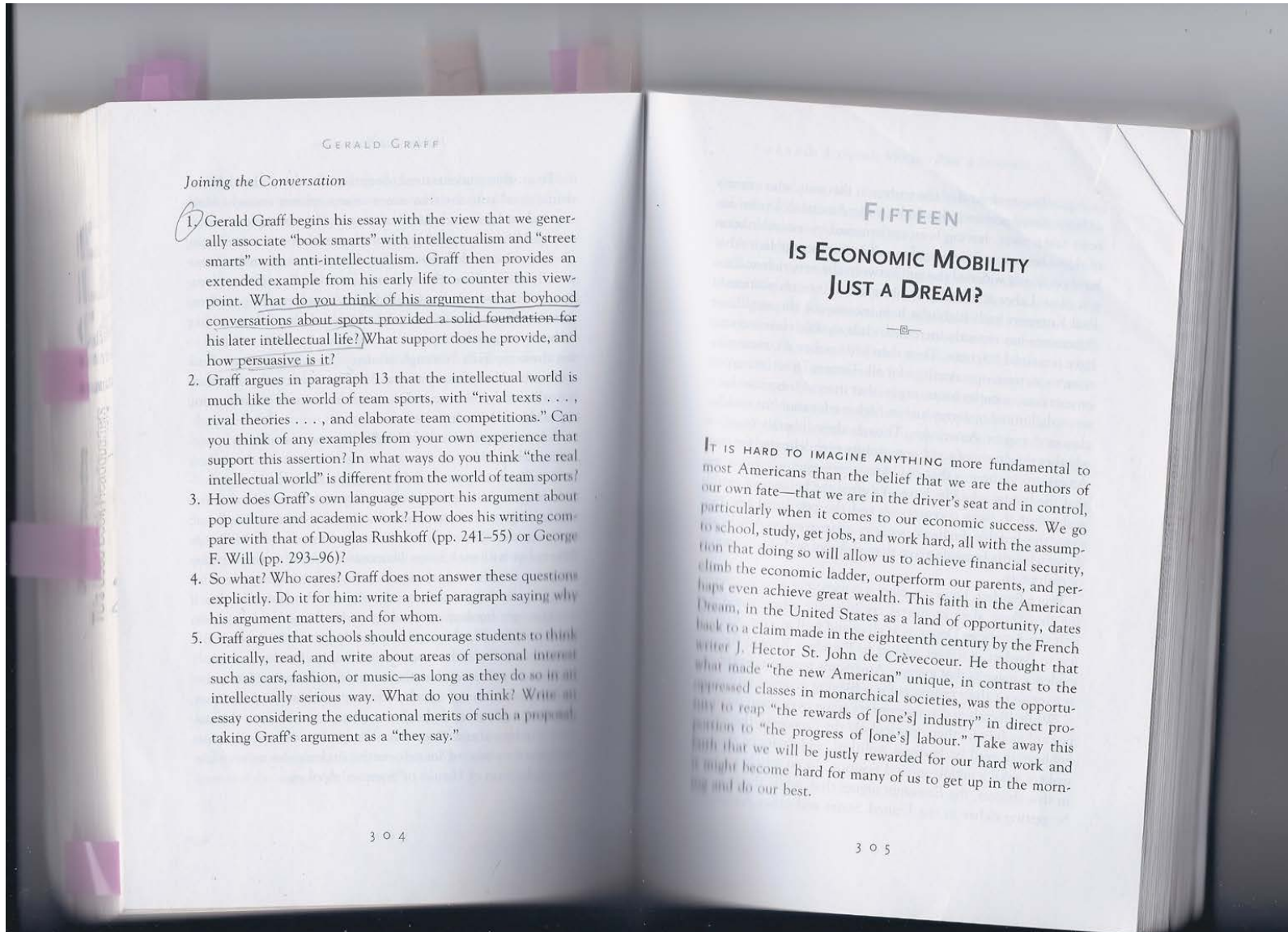
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Family Guy and Freud

Joining the Conversation

1. How would you characterize ^{with} Antonia Peacocke's argument about the television cartoon *Family Guy*? What does she like about the show? What doesn't she like? What would you say is her overall opinion of *Family Guy*?
2. Find two places in the essay where Peacocke puts forward arguments that she herself disagrees with. Analyze what she says about these arguments. What would you say are her reasons for including these opposing views?
3. While making a serious argument, Peacocke frequently uses humor to make her points. Identify two or three examples where she does so, and explain the role that such humor plays in helping her develop her argument.
4. Peacocke cites a number of authors with selections in this chapter, including Dana Stevens, Douglas Rushkoff, and George Will. How does she weave their ideas in with her own ideas? How fairly does she represent their views?
5. Some might see Peacocke's essay as proof of Gerald Graff's argument in "Hidden Intellectualism" (pp. 297–305) that pop culture can be a subject for serious intellectual analysis. Write an essay on this topic, using Peacocke's essay either to support or to refute Graff's argument.

family guy and freud



GERALD GRAFF

Joining the Conversation

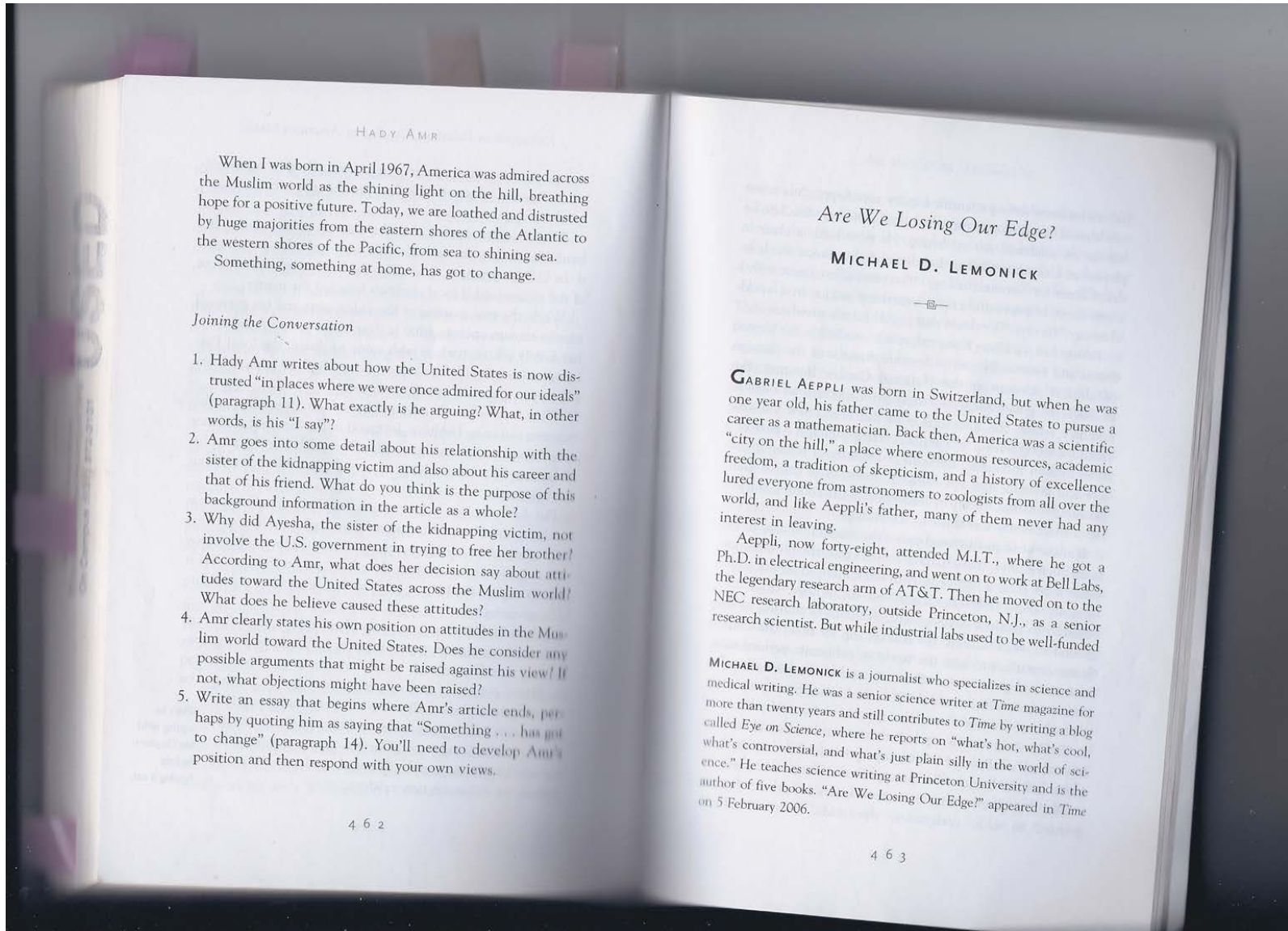
1. Gerald Graff begins his essay with the view that we generally associate “book smarts” with intellectualism and “street smarts” with anti-intellectualism. Graff then provides an extended example from his early life to counter this viewpoint. What do you think of his argument that boyhood conversations 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. How does Graff’s own language support his argument about pop culture and academic work? How does his writing compare with that of Douglas Rushkoff (pp. 241–55) or George F. Will (pp. 293–96)?
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.”

FIFTEEN

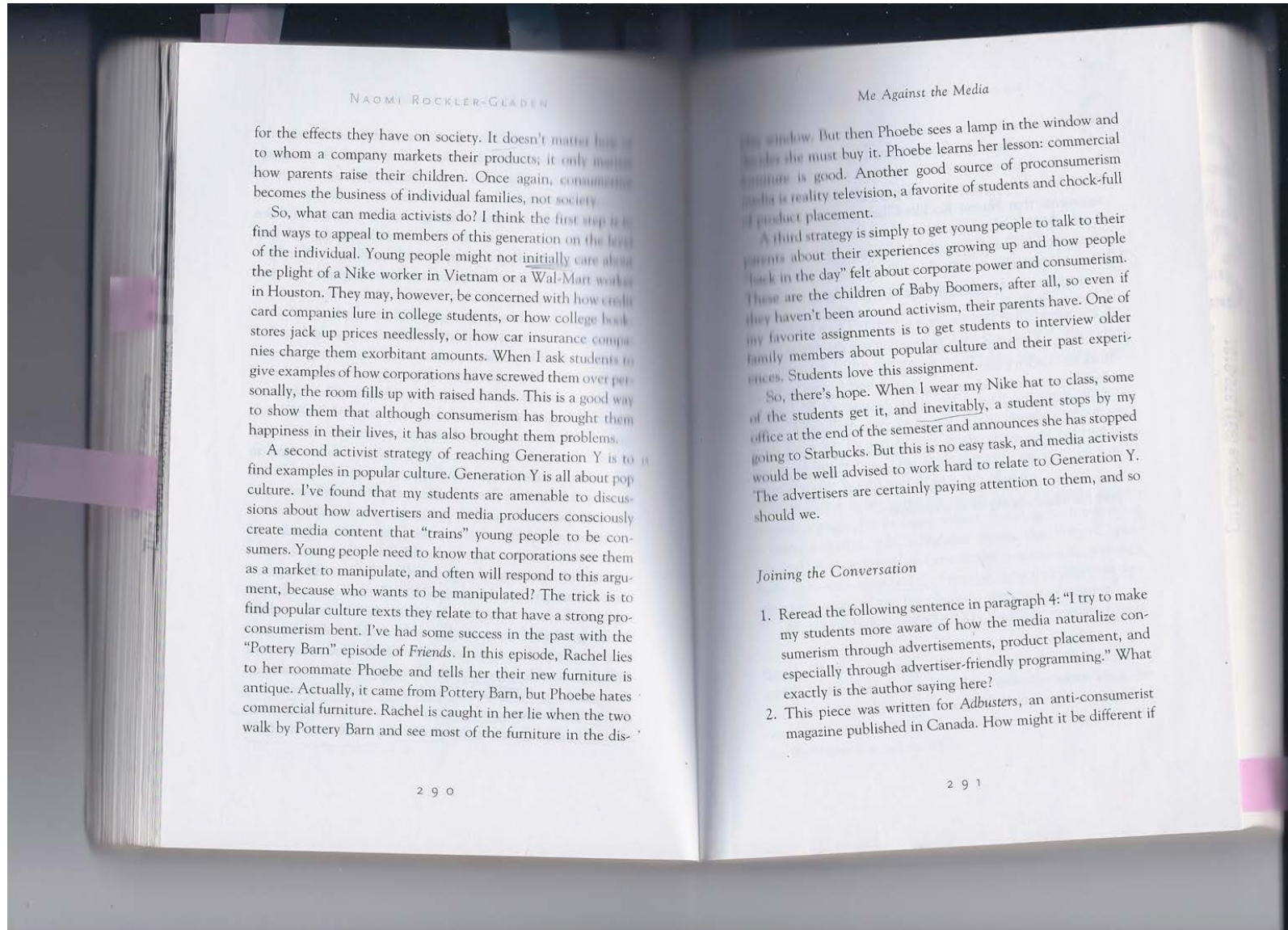
**IS ECONOMIC MOBILITY
JUST A DREAM?**

IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE ANYTHING more fundamental to most Americans than the belief that we are the authors of our own fate—that we are in the driver’s seat and in control, particularly when it comes to our economic success. We go to school, study, get jobs, and work hard, all with the assumption that doing so will allow us to achieve financial security, climb the economic ladder, outperform our parents, and perhaps even achieve great wealth. This faith in the American Dream, in the United States as a land of opportunity, dates back to a claim made in the eighteenth century by the French writer J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur. He thought that what made “the new American” unique, in contrast to the oppressed classes in monarchical societies, was the opportunity to reap “the rewards of [one’s] industry” in direct proportion to “the progress of [one’s] labour.” Take away this faith that we will be justly rewarded for our hard work and it might become hard for many of us to get up in the morning and do our best.

hidden intellectualism



kidnapped in pakistan: the end of american ideals?



me against the media

it had been written in a textbook, say for a media studies class? Notice that it is *about* students; how would it be different if it were written *for* an audience of students?

3. Identify and summarize in your own words the counterarguments that Naomi Rockler-Gladen entertains in this article. How fairly does she represent these counterarguments, and how well does she answer them?
4. There's no doubt that Rockler-Gladen cares passionately about this issue, but does she make clear why it matters? If so, where does she do so? If not, how might she have done so?
5. Read Amy Goldwasser's essay on pp. 236-40. Contrast Rockler-Gladen's view that young people are easily manipulated by consumer advertising with Goldwasser's argument that young people today are strong critical thinkers. What do you think? Write an essay taking your own stand on this issue, providing examples from your own experiences and observations. Frame your essay as a response to one or both authors, citing their arguments as appropriate, either as support for what you say or as a naysayer.

Reality Television: Oxymoron

GEORGE F. WILL

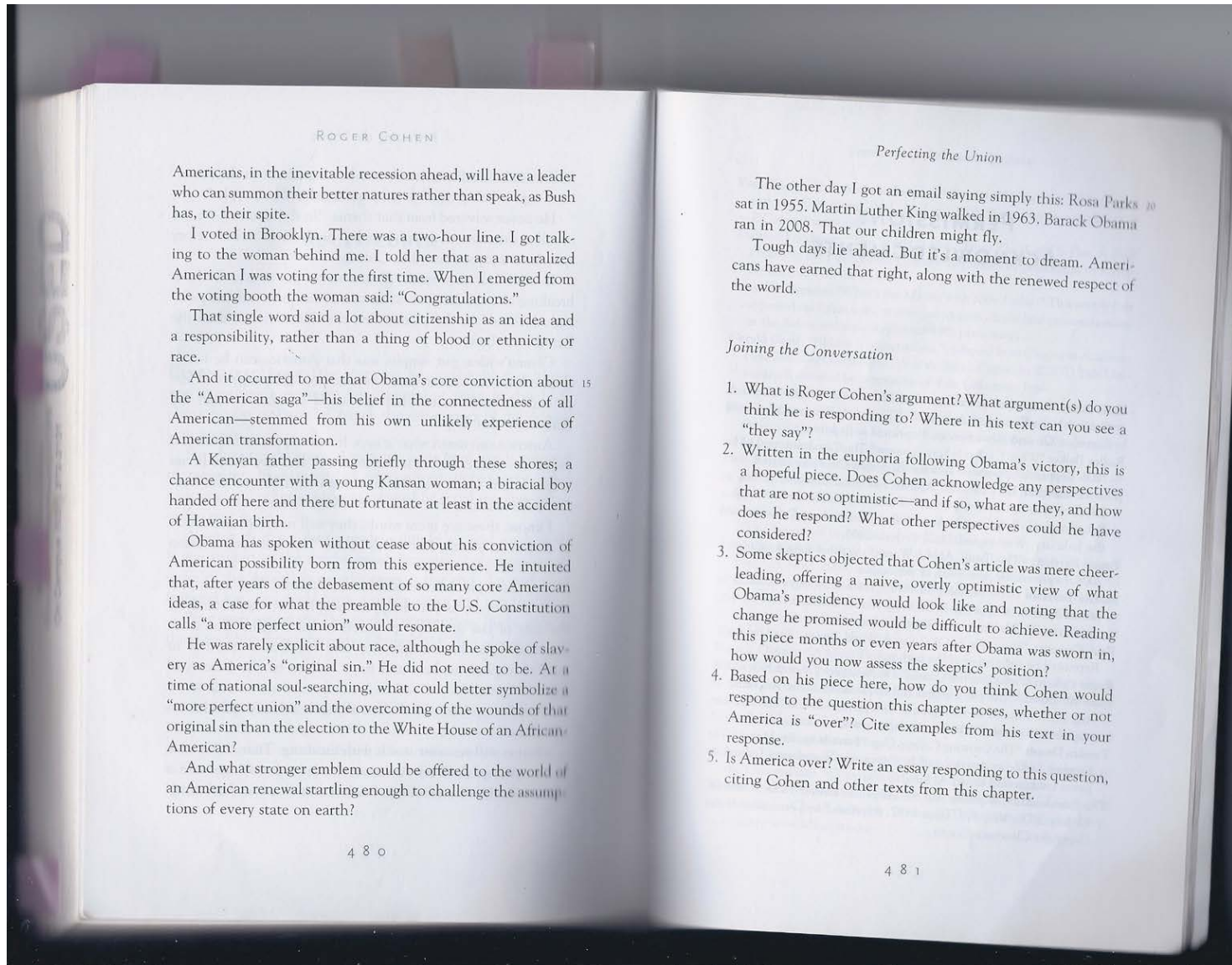
FRED ALLEN, a mordantly sophisticated radio performer, died just as television was permeating America, in 1956. He warned us: "Imitation is the sincerest form of television." So there will be imitations of *Fear Factor*.

That NBC program, in its first episode last week, attracted nearly 12 million voyeurs to watch simpletons confront their fears, for a fee. In that episode, confronters were covered by a swarm of biting rats. This week the program featured a willingness to eat worms and sit in a tub of them.

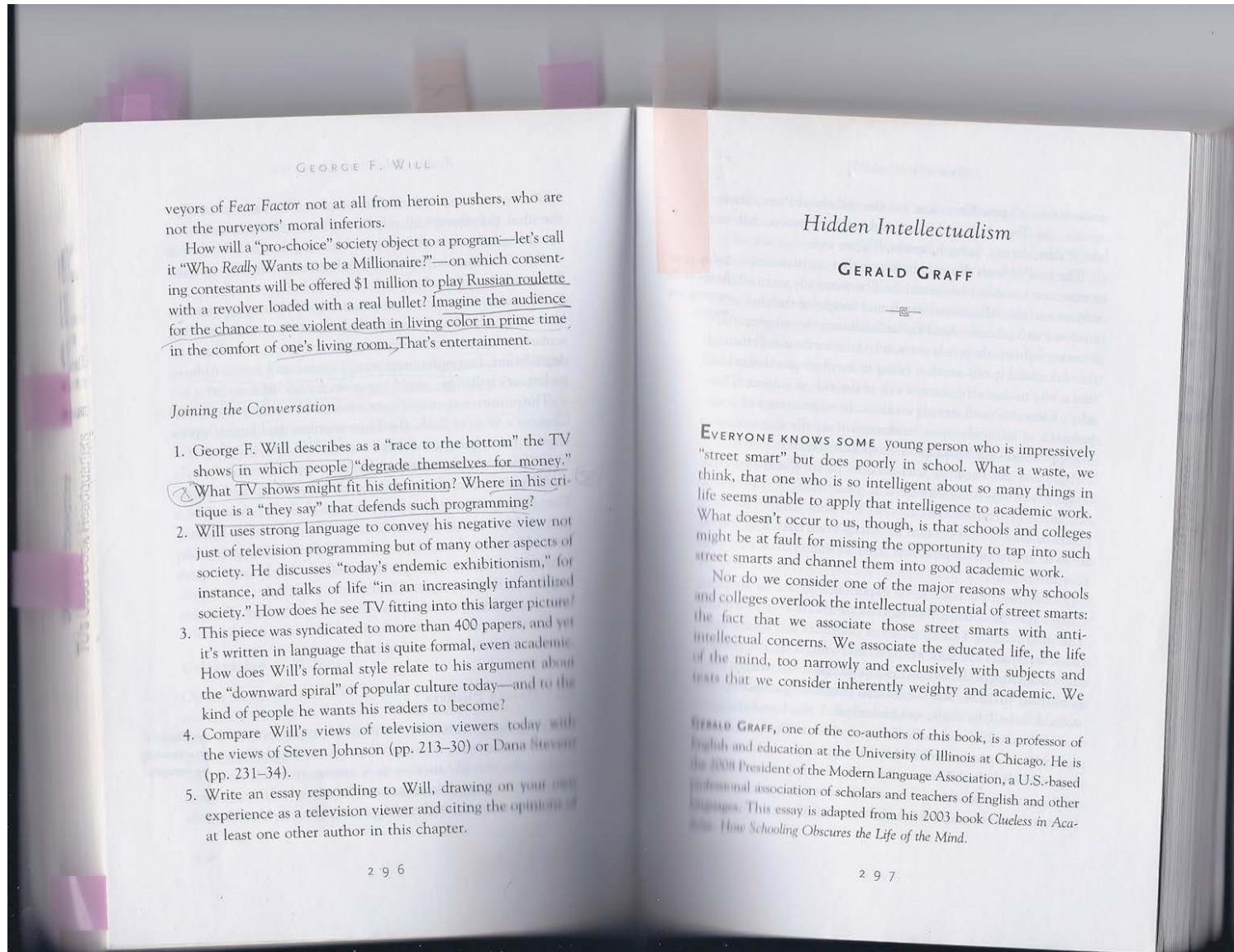
Fear Factor is an imitation of an MTV program, *Jackass*, named, perhaps, for its target viewer. But American television is being imitative. ABC's *Nightline* reports that French, Spanish, and Japanese television have similar programming, although none has—yet—matched the Peruvian show that pays poor people to eat maggots and be splattered with frog excrement.

Last spring NBC concocted XFL football, promising more

GEORGE F. WILL is a syndicated columnist for the *Washington Post* and *Newsweek* who writes about politics and other topics. He is also a regular on ABC News. He won the Pulitzer Prize for distinguished commentary in 1977. The piece included here was first published in the *Washington Post* in June 2001.



perfecting the union



GEORGE F. WILL

veyors of *Fear Factor* not at all from heroin pushers, who are not the purveyors' moral inferiors.

How will a "pro-choice" society object to a program—let's call it "Who *Really* Wants to be a Millionaire?"—on which consenting contestants will be offered \$1 million to play Russian roulette with a revolver loaded with a real bullet? Imagine the audience for the chance to see violent death in living color in prime time in the comfort of one's living room. That's entertainment.

Joining the Conversation

1. George F. Will describes as a "race to the bottom" the TV shows in which people "degrade themselves for money." What TV shows might fit his definition? Where in his critique is a "they say" that defends such programming?
2. Will uses strong language to convey his negative view not just of television programming but of many other aspects of society. He discusses "today's endemic exhibitionism," for instance, and talks of life "in an increasingly infantilized society." How does he see TV fitting into this larger picture?
3. This piece was syndicated to more than 400 papers, and yet it's written in language that is quite formal, even academic. How does Will's formal style relate to his argument about the "downward spiral" of popular culture today—and to the kind of people he wants his readers to become?
4. Compare Will's views of television viewers today with the views of Steven Johnson (pp. 213–30) or Dana Stevens (pp. 231–34).
5. Write an essay responding to Will, drawing on your own experience as a television viewer and citing the opinion of at least one other author in this chapter.

Hidden Intellectualism

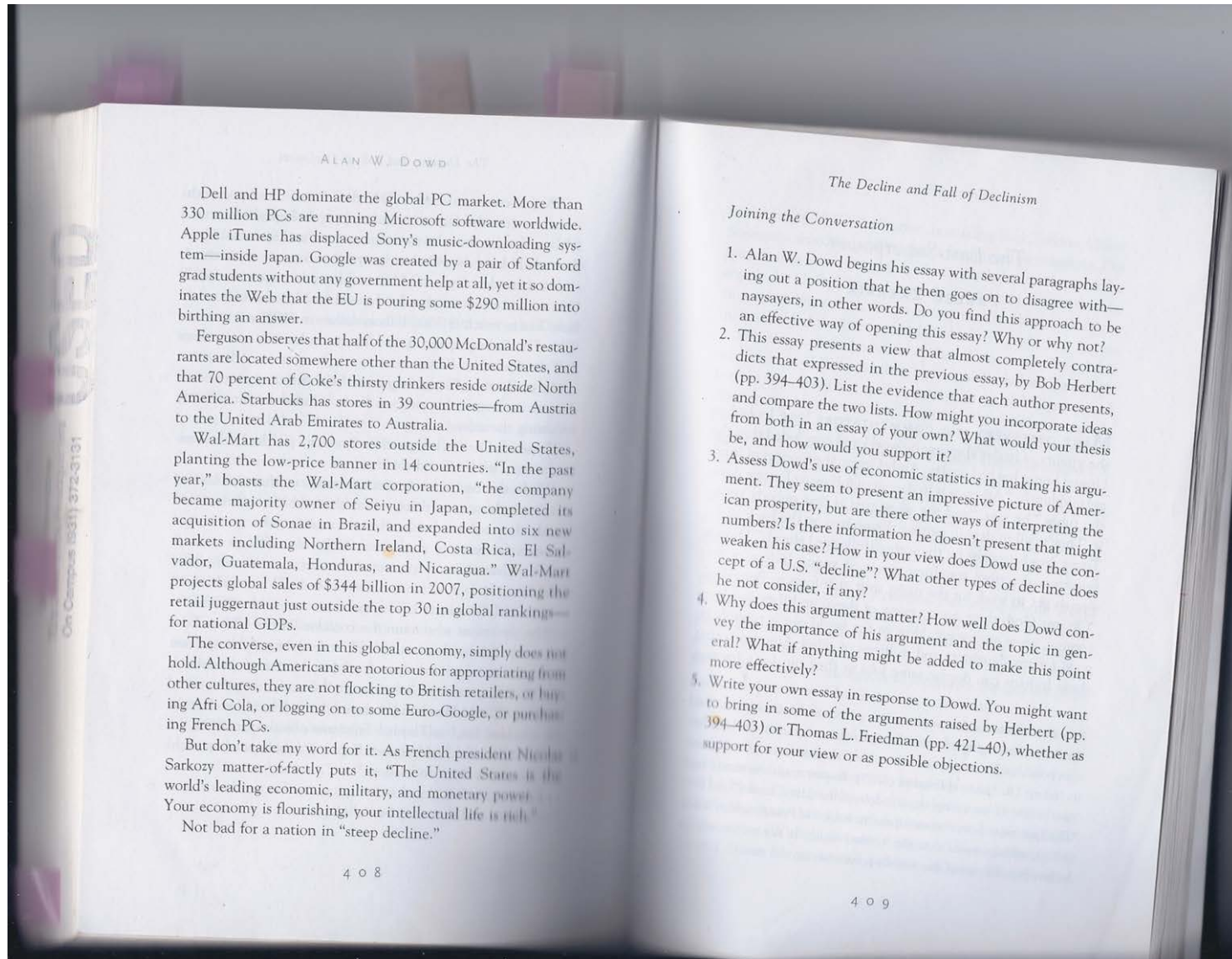
GERALD GRAFF

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

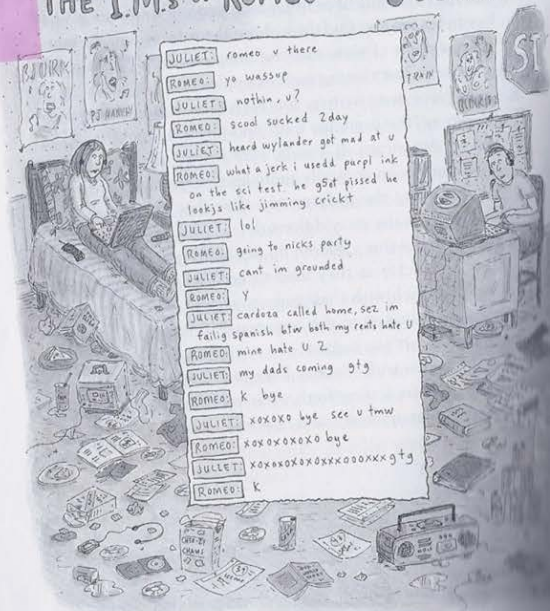
GERALD GRAFF, one of the co-authors of this book, is a professor of English and education at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is the 2008 President of the Modern Language Association, a U.S.-based professional association of scholars and teachers of English and other languages. This essay is adapted from his 2003 book *Clueless in Academia: How Schooling Obscures the Life of the Mind*.

reality television: oxymoron



the decline and fall of declinism

THE I.M.s OF ROMEO AND JULIET

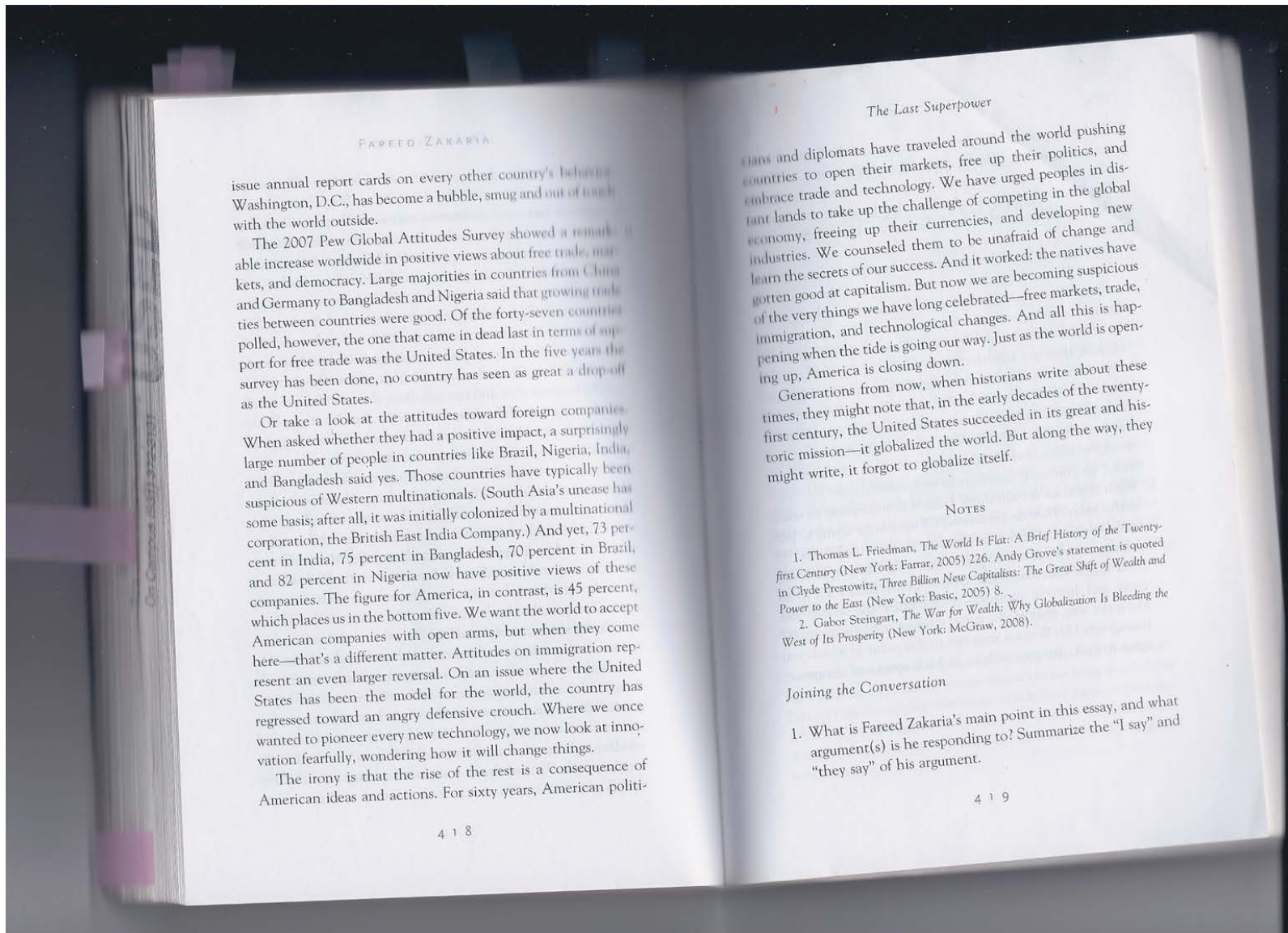


ROZ CHAST is a staff cartoonist for the *New Yorker*, where this cartoon first appeared in 2002. She is also the author or illustrator of many books, among them *Theories of Everything* (2006).

The I.M.s of Romeo and Juliet

Joining the Conversation

1. What argument is Roz Chast making with this cartoon? That is, what larger point about young people's use of technology is she trying to make?
2. What assumption or position do you think Chast is responding to?
3. This is a visual text, though it includes words as well as pictures. Imagine you wanted to cite this cartoon in an essay about instant messaging. Write a paragraph about the point Chast makes, quoting from the cartoon for examples. Be sure to introduce any quotations and to follow them up with your own explanation.
4. Rewrite the dialogue between Romeo and Juliet using formal English. How does this change in language affect the way you read the cartoon? What sort of pictures should accompany your revision?
5. Take a passage from another classic literary text and rewrite it as Chast has here, as an instant message. You might try something from *The Odyssey*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Great Gatsby*, or any other text you have studied.



issue annual report cards on every other country's behavior. Washington, D.C., has become a bubble, smug and out of touch with the world outside.

The 2007 Pew Global Attitudes Survey showed a remarkable increase worldwide in positive views about free trade, markets, and democracy. Large majorities in countries from China and Germany to Bangladesh and Nigeria said that growing trade ties between countries were good. Of the forty-seven countries polled, however, the one that came in dead last in terms of support for free trade was the United States. In the five years the survey has been done, no country has seen as great a drop-off as the United States.

Or take a look at the attitudes toward foreign companies. When asked whether they had a positive impact, a surprisingly large number of people in countries like Brazil, Nigeria, India, and Bangladesh said yes. Those countries have typically been suspicious of Western multinationals. (South Asia's unease has some basis; after all, it was initially colonized by a multinational corporation, the British East India Company.) And yet, 73 percent in India, 75 percent in Bangladesh, 70 percent in Brazil, and 82 percent in Nigeria now have positive views of these companies. The figure for America, in contrast, is 45 percent, which places us in the bottom five. We want the world to accept American companies with open arms, but when they come here—that's a different matter. Attitudes on immigration represent an even larger reversal. On an issue where the United States has been the model for the world, the country has regressed toward an angry defensive crouch. Where we once wanted to pioneer every new technology, we now look at innovation fearfully, wondering how it will change things.

The irony is that the rise of the rest is a consequence of American ideas and actions. For sixty years, American politi-

cians and diplomats have traveled around the world pushing countries to open their markets, free up their politics, and embrace trade and technology. We have urged peoples in distant lands to take up the challenge of competing in the global economy, freeing up their currencies, and developing new industries. We counseled them to be unafraid of change and learn the secrets of our success. And it worked: the natives have gotten good at capitalism. But now we are becoming suspicious of the very things we have long celebrated—free markets, trade, immigration, and technological changes. And all this is happening when the tide is going our way. Just as the world is opening up, America is closing down.

Generations from now, when historians write about these times, they might note that, in the early decades of the twenty-first century, the United States succeeded in its great and historic mission—it globalized the world. But along the way, they might write, it forgot to globalize itself.

NOTES

1. Thomas L. Friedman, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Farrar, 2005) 226. Andy Grove's statement is quoted in Clyde Prestowitz, *Three Billion New Capitalists: The Great Shift of Wealth and Power to the East* (New York: Basic, 2005) 8.
2. Gabor Steingart, *The War for Wealth: Why Globalization Is Bleeding the West of Its Prosperity* (New York: McGraw, 2008).

Joining the Conversation

1. What is Fareed Zakaria's main point in this essay, and what argument(s) is he responding to? Summarize the "I say" and "they say" of his argument.

the last superpower

2. In writing about the short-term future of the United States in paragraph 4, Zakaria asserts that the country “will face the most intense economic competition it has ever faced.” Summarize his arguments about the domestic and international challenges that he believes the United States will face.
3. In paragraph 13, Zakaria discusses the effects of the United States’ history of isolation from the rest of the world. He writes, “Americans speak few languages, know little about foreign cultures, and remain unconvinced that they need to rectify this. Americans rarely benchmark to global standards because they are sure that their way must be the best and most advanced. The result is that they are increasingly suspicious of this emerging global era.” These comments are the reflections of someone who was born and raised abroad but has chosen to live his life in the United States. How would you respond to his characterization of Americans based on your own experiences and observations?
4. What audience do you think Zakaria is attempting to reach in this essay? How do you know? Of what is he trying to persuade the reader, and how effective do you think he is?
5. Zakaria concludes his essay by suggesting that future historians might note that “the United States succeeded in its great and historic mission—it globalized the world. But along the way, they might write, it forgot to globalize itself” (paragraph 18). Write a response to this point in which you agree with it, disagree with it, or both agree and disagree.

The World Is Flat

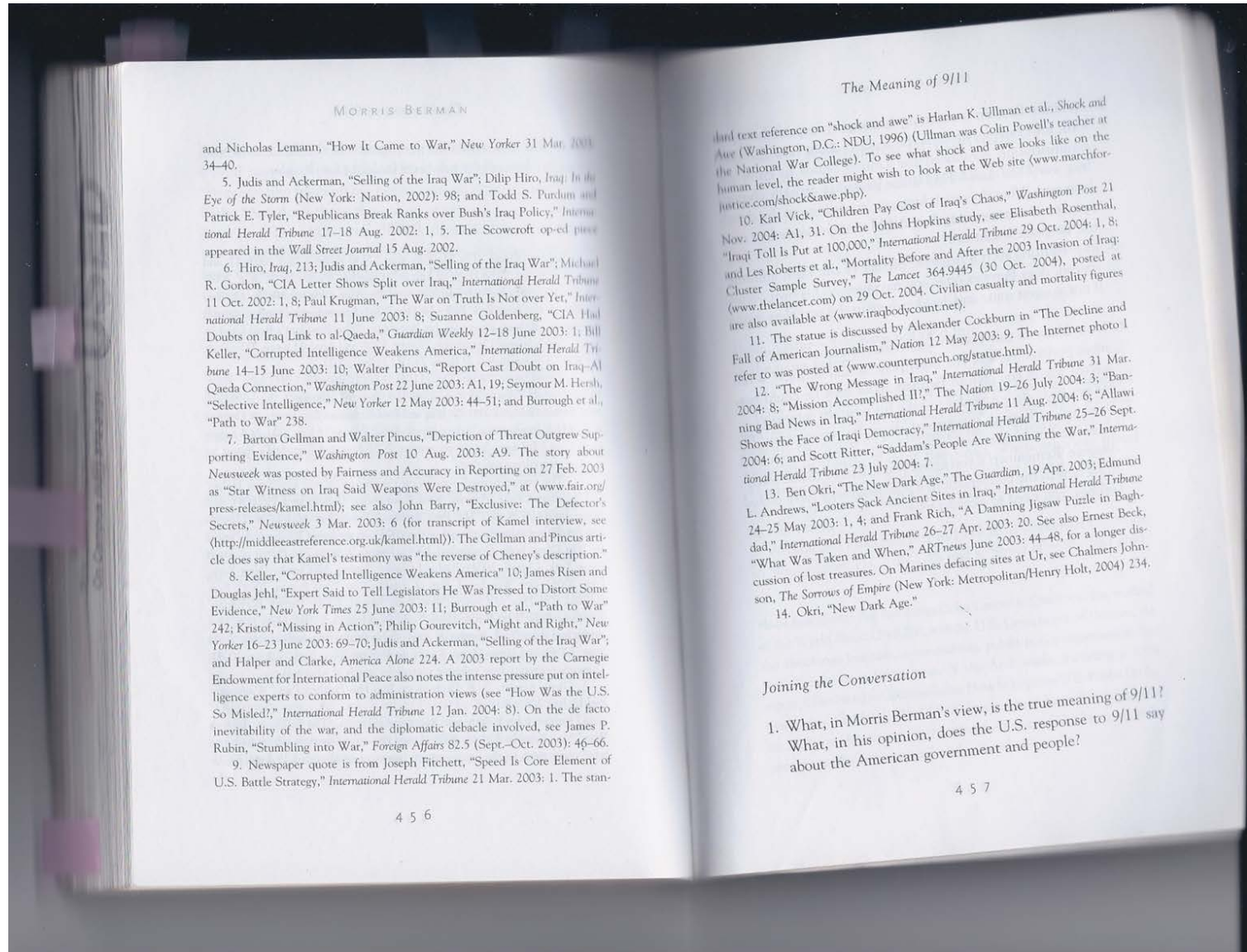
THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN



NO ONE EVER gave me directions like this on a golf course before: “Aim at either Microsoft or IBM.” I was standing on the first tee at the KGA Golf Club in downtown Bangalore, in southern India, when my playing partner pointed at two shiny glass-and-steel buildings off in the distance, just behind the first green. The Goldman Sachs building wasn’t done yet; otherwise he could have pointed that out as well and made it a threesome. HP and Texas Instruments had their offices on the back nine, along the tenth hole. That wasn’t all. The tee markers were from Epson, the printer company, and one of our caddies was wearing a hat from 3M. Outside, some of the traffic signs were also sponsored by Texas Instruments, and the Pizza Hut billboard on the way over showed a steaming pizza, under the headline “Gigabites of Taste!”

THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN is a columnist with the *New York Times*, writing regular op-ed pieces on foreign affairs. He has been awarded the Pulitzer Prize three times. His books include *From Beirut to Jerusalem* (1989), *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (1999), and *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century* (2005), from which the piece here was taken.

No link ☹️ (must read in book)



MORRIS BERMAN

and Nicholas Lemann, "How It Came to War," *New Yorker* 31 Mar. 2003: 34-40.

5. Judis and Ackerman, "Selling of the Iraq War"; Dilip Hiro, *Iraq In the Eye of the Storm* (New York: Nation, 2002): 98; and Todd S. Purdum and Patrick E. Tyler, "Republicans Break Ranks over Bush's Iraq Policy," *International Herald Tribune* 17-18 Aug. 2002: 1, 5. The Scowcroft op-ed piece appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* 15 Aug. 2002.

6. Hiro, *Iraq*, 213; Judis and Ackerman, "Selling of the Iraq War"; Michael R. Gordon, "CIA Letter Shows Split over Iraq," *International Herald Tribune* 11 Oct. 2002: 1, 8; Paul Krugman, "The War on Truth Is Not over Yet," *International Herald Tribune* 11 June 2003: 8; Suzanne Goldenberg, "CIA Had Doubts on Iraq Link to al-Qaeda," *Guardian Weekly* 12-18 June 2003: 1; Bill Keller, "Corrupted Intelligence Weakens America," *International Herald Tribune* 14-15 June 2003: 10; Walter Pincus, "Report Cast Doubt on Iraq-Al Qaeda Connection," *Washington Post* 22 June 2003: A1, 19; Seymour M. Hersh, "Selective Intelligence," *New Yorker* 12 May 2003: 44-51; and Burrough et al., "Path to War" 238.

7. Barton Gellman and Walter Pincus, "Depiction of Threat Outgrew Supporting Evidence," *Washington Post* 10 Aug. 2003: A9. The story about *Newsweek* was posted by Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting on 27 Feb. 2003 as "Star Witness on Iraq Said Weapons Were Destroyed," at (www.fair.org/press-releases/kamel.html); see also John Barry, "Exclusive: The Defector's Secrets," *Newsweek* 3 Mar. 2003: 6 (for transcript of Kamel interview, see (<http://middleeastreference.org.uk/kamel.html>)). The Gellman and Pincus article does say that Kamel's testimony was "the reverse of Cheney's description."

8. Keller, "Corrupted Intelligence Weakens America" 10; James Risen and Douglas Jehl, "Expert Said to Tell Legislators He Was Pressed to Distort Some Evidence," *New York Times* 25 June 2003: 11; Burrough et al., "Path to War" 242; Kristof, "Missing in Action"; Philip Gourevitch, "Might and Right," *New Yorker* 16-23 June 2003: 69-70; Judis and Ackerman, "Selling of the Iraq War"; and Halper and Clarke, *America Alone* 224. A 2003 report by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace also notes the intense pressure put on intelligence experts to conform to administration views (see "How Was the U.S. So Mised?," *International Herald Tribune* 12 Jan. 2004: 8). On the de facto inevitability of the war, and the diplomatic debacle involved, see James P. Rubin, "Stumbling into War," *Foreign Affairs* 82.5 (Sept.-Oct. 2003): 46-66.

9. Newspaper quote is from Joseph Fitchett, "Speed Is Core Element of U.S. Battle Strategy," *International Herald Tribune* 21 Mar. 2003: 1. The stan-

The Meaning of 9/11

ard text reference on "shock and awe" is Harlan K. Ullman et al., *Shock and Awe* (Washington, D.C.: NDU, 1996) (Ullman was Colin Powell's teacher at the National War College). To see what shock and awe looks like on the human level, the reader might wish to look at the Web site (www.marchfor-justice.com/shock&awe.php).

10. Karl Vick, "Children Pay Cost of Iraq's Chaos," *Washington Post* 21 Nov. 2004: A1, 31. On the Johns Hopkins study, see Elisabeth Rosenthal, "Iraqi Toll Is Put at 100,000," *International Herald Tribune* 29 Oct. 2004: 1, 8; and Les Roberts et al., "Mortality Before and After the 2003 Invasion of Iraq: Cluster Sample Survey," *The Lancet* 364.9445 (30 Oct. 2004), posted at (www.thelancet.com) on 29 Oct. 2004. Civilian casualty and mortality figures are also available at (www.iraqbodycount.net).

11. The statue is discussed by Alexander Cockburn in "The Decline and Fall of American Journalism," *Nation* 12 May 2003: 9. The Internet photo I refer to was posted at (www.counterpunch.org/statue.html).

12. "The Wrong Message in Iraq," *International Herald Tribune* 31 Mar. 2004: 8; "Mission Accomplished II?," *The Nation* 19-26 July 2004: 3; "Banning Bad News in Iraq," *International Herald Tribune* 11 Aug. 2004: 6; "Allawi Shows the Face of Iraqi Democracy," *International Herald Tribune* 25-26 Sept. 2004: 6; and Scott Ritter, "Saddam's People Are Winning the War," *International Herald Tribune* 23 July 2004: 7.

13. Bert Okri, "The New Dark Age," *The Guardian*, 19 Apr. 2003; Edmund L. Andrews, "Looters Sack Ancient Sites in Iraq," *International Herald Tribune* 24-25 May 2003: 1, 4; and Frank Rich, "A Damning Jigsaw Puzzle in Baghdad," *International Herald Tribune* 26-27 Apr. 2003: 20. See also Ernest Beck, "What Was Taken and When," *ARTnews* June 2003: 44-48, for a longer discussion of lost treasures. On Marines defacing sites at Ur, see Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire* (New York: Metropolitan/Henry Holt, 2004) 234.

Joining the Conversation

1. What, in Morris Berman's view, is the true meaning of 9/11? What, in his opinion, does the U.S. response to 9/11 say about the American government and people?

the meaning of 9-11

2. At times Berman uses strong language to express his opinions; for example, he calls the section about how the Bush administration convinced the United States to enter the Iraq war "The Lies." Find other examples of such charged language. What does such language contribute to the development of Berman's argument that more measured or neutral language might not?
3. In presenting such a negative picture of the Bush administration, does Berman offer any naysayers to his own views? If not, suggest some and decide where in the text they might go.
4. How likely is this piece to convince someone who has a more positive view of the Bush policies and actions? What advice would you give to Berman about how he could better persuade such a reader to take his position seriously?
5. Respond to Berman's argument. Start by summarizing his views, and then agree with them, disagree, or both agree and disagree. Remember: if you agree, you still need to add something new to the conversation; if you disagree or have mixed feelings, you need to explain why.

Kidnapped in Pakistan: The End of American Ideals?

HADY AMR

Doha, Qatar—You have not read this
in the news before.

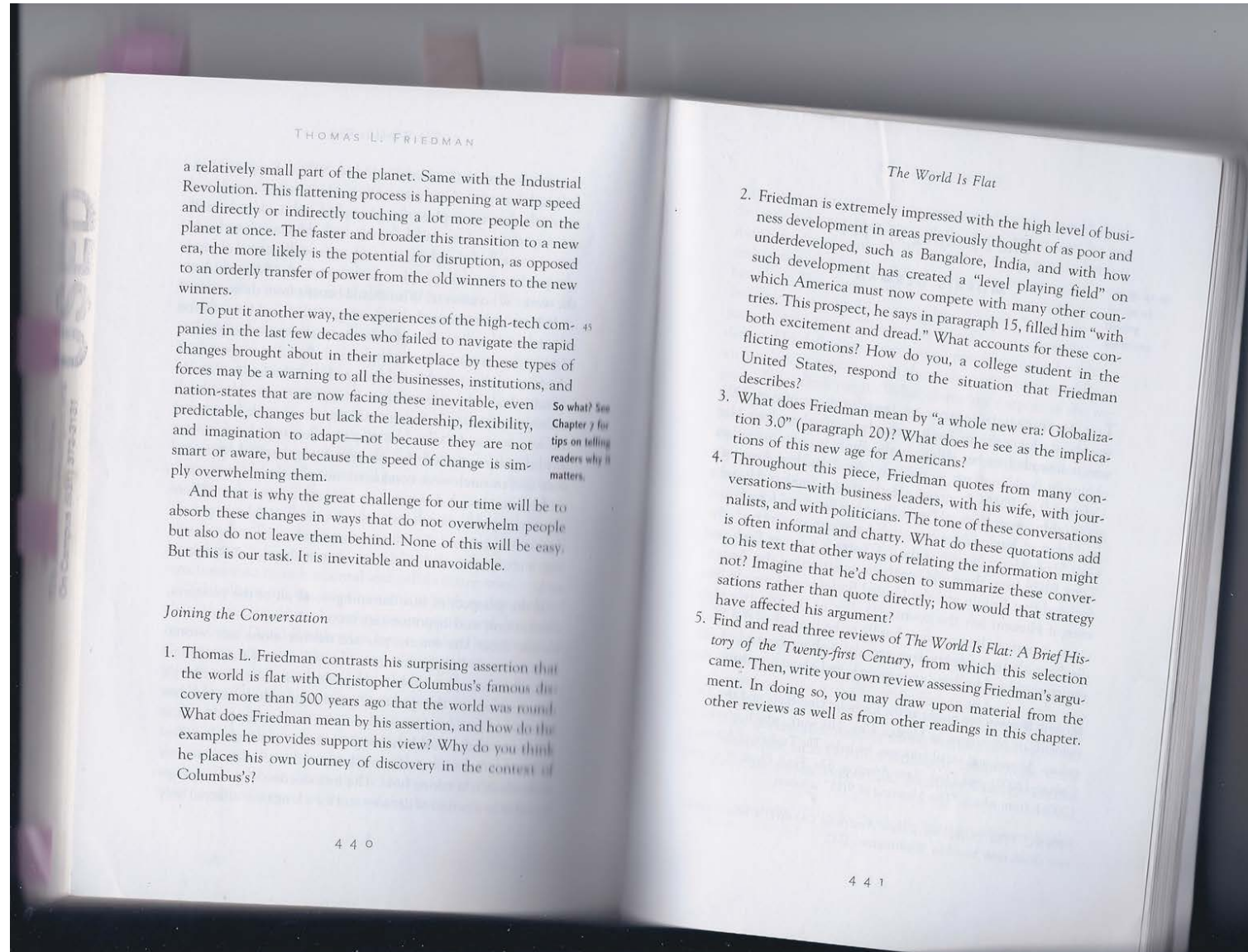
THREE MONTHS AGO, an American citizen was kidnapped in Northwest Pakistan. He was murdered. His body was just recently recovered by his bereaved family. I learned about the kidnapping shortly after it happened, when my dear friend Ayesha wrote to tell me that her brother, Imran, had been abducted in Northwest Pakistan, still bravely expecting him to be recovered.

Ayesha and I had first met in 1999 as co-workers at our office in Washington, D.C., on 17th and K Street after she had grad-

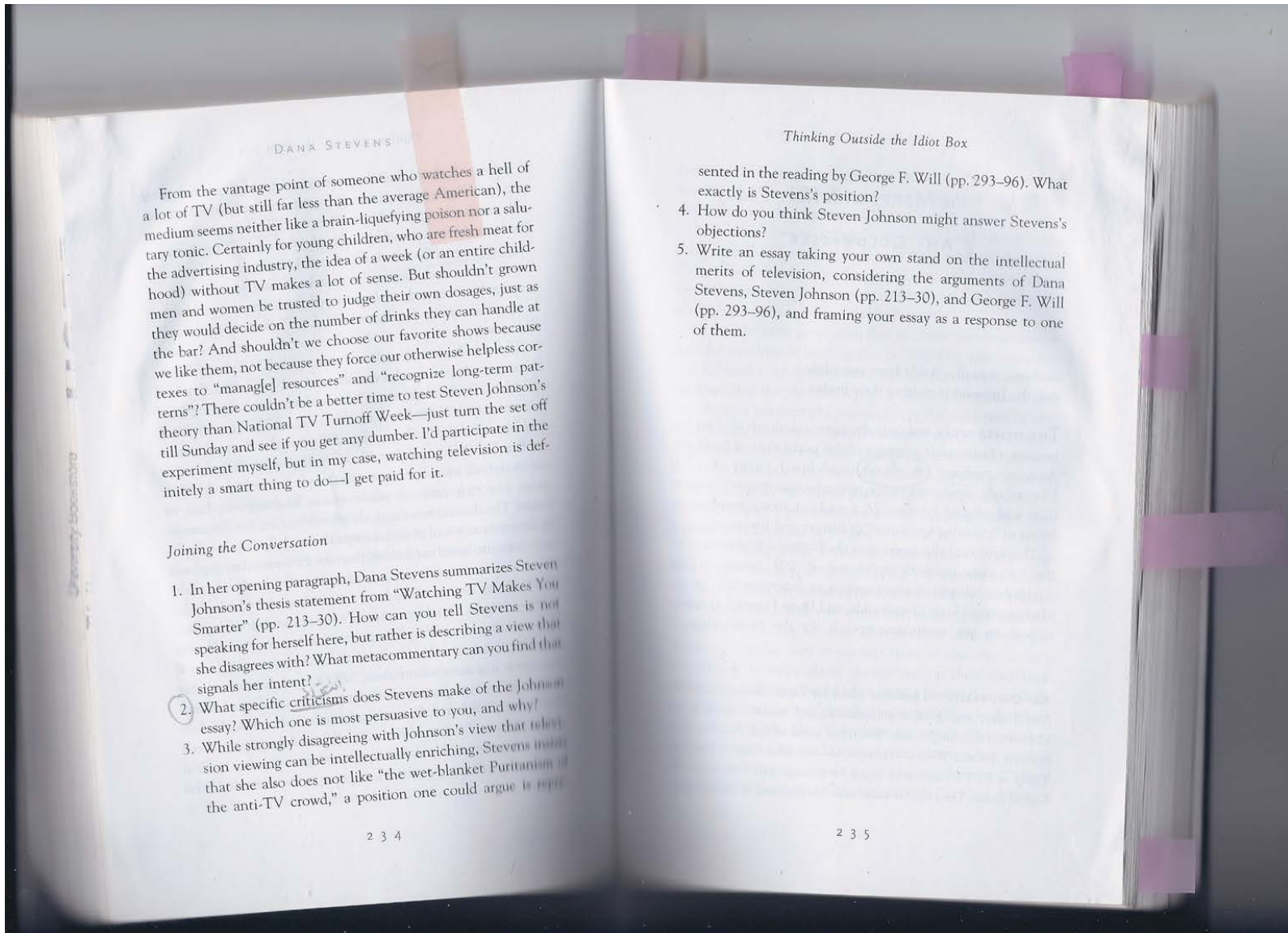
HADY AMR directs the Brookings Doha Center in Qatar and has worked at the World Bank, UNICEF, and the U.S. Department of Defense. At the Brookings Institute, a nonpartisan public policy organization, his work focuses on political issues of the Arab world, including a 2004 report, "The Need to Communicate: How to Improve U.S. Public Diplomacy with the Islamic World." "Kidnapped in Pakistan" first appeared in 2008, on *Aljazeera.com*, the site of Aljazeera Publishing, an independent media organization based in London.

the meaning of 9-11 - part 2

<http://www.ur.mx/Portals/0/PDF/TheWorldIsFlat.pdf> (from “No one ever gave me directions...” to “it is inevitable and unavoidable”)



the world is flat



DANA STEVENS

From the vantage point of someone who watches a hell of a lot of TV (but still far less than the average American), the medium seems neither like a brain-liquefying poison nor a salutary tonic. Certainly for young children, who are fresh meat for the advertising industry, the idea of a week (or an entire childhood) without TV makes a lot of sense. But shouldn't grown men and women be trusted to judge their own dosages, just as they would decide on the number of drinks they can handle at the bar? And shouldn't we choose our favorite shows because we like them, not because they force our otherwise helpless cortices to "manag[e] resources" and "recognize long-term patterns"? There couldn't be a better time to test Steven Johnson's theory than National TV Turnoff Week—just turn the set off till Sunday and see if you get any dumber. I'd participate in the experiment myself, but in my case, watching television is definitely a smart thing to do—I get paid for it.

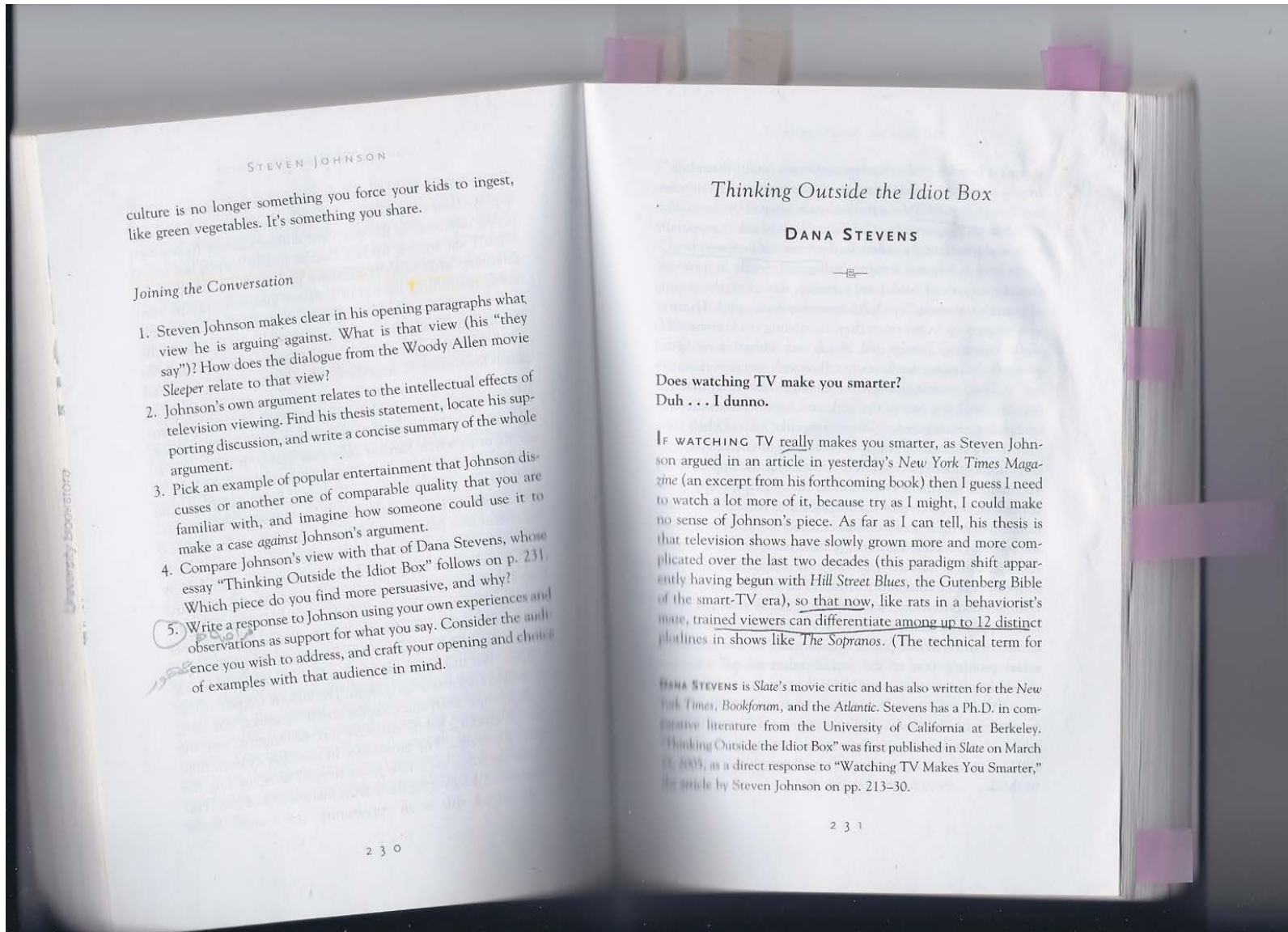
Joining the Conversation

1. In her opening paragraph, Dana Stevens summarizes Steven Johnson's thesis statement from "Watching TV Makes You Smarter" (pp. 213–30). How can you tell Stevens is not speaking for herself here, but rather is describing a view that she disagrees with? What metacommentary can you find that signals her intent?
2. What specific criticisms does Stevens make of the Johnson essay? Which one is most persuasive to you, and why?
3. While strongly disagreeing with Johnson's view that television viewing can be intellectually enriching, Stevens insists that she also does not like "the wet-blanket Puritanism of the anti-TV crowd," a position one could argue is repre-

Thinking Outside the Idiot Box

- sented in the reading by George F. Will (pp. 293–96). What exactly is Stevens's position?
4. How do you think Steven Johnson might answer Stevens's objections?
 5. Write an essay taking your own stand on the intellectual merits of television, considering the arguments of Dana Stevens, Steven Johnson (pp. 213–30), and George F. Will (pp. 293–96), and framing your essay as a response to one of them.

thinking outside the idiot box



STEVEN JOHNSON
culture is no longer something you force your kids to ingest, like green vegetables. It's something you share.

Joining the Conversation

1. Steven Johnson makes clear in his opening paragraphs what view he is arguing against. What is that view (his "they say")? How does the dialogue from the Woody Allen movie *Sleeper* relate to that view?
2. Johnson's own argument relates to the intellectual effects of television viewing. Find his thesis statement, locate his supporting discussion, and write a concise summary of the whole argument.
3. Pick an example of popular entertainment that Johnson discusses or another one of comparable quality that you are familiar with, and imagine how someone could use it to make a case against Johnson's argument.
4. Compare Johnson's view with that of Dana Stevens, whose essay "Thinking Outside the Idiot Box" follows on p. 231. Which piece do you find more persuasive, and why?
5. Write a response to Johnson using your own experiences and observations as support for what you say. Consider the audience you wish to address, and craft your opening and choice of examples with that audience in mind.

Thinking Outside the Idiot Box

DANA STEVENS

Does watching TV make you smarter?
Duh . . . I dunno.

If WATCHING TV really makes you smarter, as Steven Johnson argued in an article in yesterday's *New York Times Magazine* (an excerpt from his forthcoming book) then I guess I need to watch a lot more of it, because try as I might, I could make no sense of Johnson's piece. As far as I can tell, his thesis is that television shows have slowly grown more and more complicated over the last two decades (this paradigm shift apparently having begun with *Hill Street Blues*, the Gutenberg Bible of the smart-TV era), so that now, like rats in a behaviorist's maze, trained viewers can differentiate among up to 12 distinct plotlines in shows like *The Sopranos*. (The technical term for

DANA STEVENS is *Slate's* movie critic and has also written for the *New York Times*, *Bookforum*, and the *Atlantic*. Stevens has a Ph.D. in comparative literature from the University of California at Berkeley. "Thinking Outside the Idiot Box" was first published in *Slate* on March 13, 2003, as a direct response to "Watching TV Makes You Smarter," the article by Steven Johnson on pp. 213–30.

watching tv makes you smarter

AMY GOLDWASSER

Once we stop regarding the Internet as a villain, stop presenting it as the enemy of history and literature and worldly knowledge, then our teenagers have the potential to become the next great voices of America. One of them, 70 years from now, might even get up there to accept the very award Lessing did—and thank the Internet for making him or her a writer and a thinker.

Joining the Conversation

1. What is the view that Amy Goldwasser argues against, and what evidence does she offer in support of that view?
2. What is your reaction to the quotation from Nobel Prize-winning writer Doris Lessing, in paragraph 2? Why do you think Goldwasser quotes Lessing?
3. What benefits does Goldwasser attribute to young people's Internet use? What support does she provide for her position? Compare and contrast the learning benefits that Goldwasser says the Internet offers with what Steven Johnson says about the benefits of watching TV. How does each author seem to understand thinking and learning as they relate to our interactions with technology?
4. So who cares? Does Goldwasser make clear to her readers why this topic matters? What else could she say to make this point more effectively?
5. In paragraph 16, Goldwasser asserts, "Once we stop regarding the Internet as a villain, stop presenting it as the enemy of history and literature and worldly knowledge, then our teenagers have the potential to become the next great voices of America." Using this statement as a "they say," write your own essay in response to this assertion.

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Bart Simpson: Prince of Irreverence

DOUGLAS RUSHKOFF

THE SIMPSONS is the closest thing in America to a national media literacy program. By pretending to be a kids' cartoon, the show gets away with murder—that is, the virtual murder of our most coercive media iconography and techniques. What began as entertaining interstitial material for an alternative network variety show has revealed itself, in the twenty-first century, as nothing short of a media revolution.

The marginality of the show's origins may be the very reason *The Simpsons* works so well. The Simpson characters were born to provide *The Tracey Ullman Show* with a way of cutting to commercial breaks. Their very function as a form of media

DOUGLAS RUSHKOFF teaches media theory at New York University. According to his blog, he "focuses on the ways people, cultures, and institutions create, share, and influence each other's values," seeing "media" as the landscape where this interaction takes place, and "literacy" as the ability to participate consciously in it." His books include *Open Source Democracy: How Online Communication Is Changing U.S. Politics* (2003) and *Media Virus: Hidden Agendas in Popular Culture* (1996). The essay here was first published in *Leaving Springfield: The Simpsons and the Possibility of Oppositional Culture* (2004).

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what's the matter with kids today?