FOCUS

Lessons from Chocolate

by Susan G. Polansky, Teaching Professor of Hispanic Studies and Head, Department of Modern Languages

I am part of a long line of chocolate devotees on both sides of my family. For instance, Grandpa Martin, who died in 1999 at the age of 104, was a true chocolate lover, though not a very discriminating one. Two memories stand out. My sister, cousins, and I always marveled that he would pop his selections from boxed assortments into his mouth without identifying their innards. We always had to bite and look to see what we were getting. And he would regularly help himself to the Hershey’s kisses in my aunt’s snack cabinet, one day sampling by accident a kiss-shaped dog yummy. When he realized his mistake, he declared that it was “not bad!”

How has my professional life connected with my being an aficionado of chocolate? As a researcher and teacher, I explore with my colleagues and students the languages and cultures of the Spanish-speaking world, cross-cultural currents between Spain and the Americas, and especially the experiences of the literary generations from early twentieth century Spain, men and women who struggled to create artistic works in and out of their native land. I share five vital lessons to be learned from chocolate, an extraordinary rich substance of complex dimensions and flavors. The story of chocolate is a story of multiple encounters and transformations.

Chocolate points us to the mysteries behind things that become familiar to us, the bitter and sweet intricacies of cross-cultural connections, the dynamics of creativity, the definition of one’s place, and how we and others taste the flavors of life.

Lesson #1 From chocolate we are reminded of the mysterious roots and transformations of the language of things we consider so familiar to us.

Before the Spanish invasion of 1521, ancient Mesoamerica extended from what is now Costa Rica in the south to north central Mexico. When the Spaniards arrived, the Aztecs inhabited the capital city, Tenochtitlán, on an island, now the site of Mexico City. There the Spaniards first tasted chocolate in the form of a cold, tangy, frothy beverage in the royal court. The drink was served only to nobility, warriors, or merchants. It was seasoned with peppers, achiote, vanilla, and corn. The drink was spicy and bitter, although some reports indicate that honey was occasionally mixed into the brew.

If we look at the etymology of the word chocolate, we find that its origin is ambiguous. The English word “chocolate” came from the Spanish “chocolate”, which came from the language of the Aztecs, that is the Nahuatl word: chocolatl.

As will be obvious we have a feature article from the Chair of Senate, Vivian Loftness, a report that outlines achievements, shortfalls and suggests a strong agenda for the incoming senators. In particular we are struck with Vivian’s item #10 which raises the issue of faculty salaries and poses the question of just when would be the optimal moment for that topic to be on the Senate’s agenda. Worth talking about.

We continue with our modest use of color and believe we may have found the perfect photo: the chocolate-covered face on p.5

Once again we are grateful to all of our contributors, who make this possible. We have one more issue to produce this year, due out in early May—so get your letters and articles in now.

As of July 1, both editors will be resuming from their positions on FOCUS, to spend more time with their families. We have enjoyed our time here, and learned a lot. We have good wishes for the next editors, whoever they may be, and high hopes for the future of FOCUS.

SIDEBAR

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--the editors--

The Power of Faculty Senate

by Vivian Loftness, 2007-2008 Faculty Senate Chair

After 3 years of extolling the importance and power of Faculty Senate, Bill Brown finally convinced me to take on the challenge of Senate Chair in 2007. Aimlessly assuming this was a charge to represent issues as they arose, Jay Kadane then convinced me to set goals for my year as chair, addressing unsolved issues – both personal and collective – accrued over 25 years at CMU. With a month remaining, I can only say a year is not enough.

Given a mix of issues arising from the Senate, alongside goals I set a year ago, here are this year’s ten issues, issues that could still be transformed by the collective power of the faculty senate.

1. Strategic Directions for Carnegie Mellon
   Eg. Environmental Sustainability and Human Health? (A charge for all faculty)

Through persistence, the faculty senate was able to add faculty members on each of the six strategic planning committees led by administrators across campus. These faculty members were drawn from Senators and departmental volunteers to join: Research, Education and the Student Experience, Diversity and Community Success, International, Regional Impact, Resources and Infrastructure Strategic Planning Committees.

Each of these six committees has issued a ‘straw man’ this month for faculty-wide written input, and each committee chair is hosting town meetings for faculty verbal input. The dates for the town meetings for faculty verbal input are listed in the column on the right, and the draft strategic issues for each committee can be found at:
   http://www.cmu.edu/strategic-plan/

You will undoubtedly have noticed that these committee titles are structural rather than strategic in nature. What should emerge from the ‘straw men’, however, are a number of strategic cross cutting directions for CMU in the next ten years. My personal strategic goal is a commitment in research, education and outreach to social and environmental problem-solving towards a globally shared quality of life. This is a ten-year strategic vision statement that each faculty member and the Senate must dedicate their time and collective voice to resolve – right now.

This is an invaluable opportunity to be central to writing the strategic plan of the university, a plan that influences the balance of research and education, new directions and facilities, fundraising and administrative energies.

2. Faculty involvement in capital campaign and fundraising (a charge to the Development Office)

Can we go to Donors and Foundations themselves for gifts and grants? The answer to this is no, because there are university strategic directions...
Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day (TODASTWD) has been a tradition at Carnegie Mellon for the past 15 years. Staff Council will sponsor the event’s 16th anniversary on Thursday, April 24 with a full afternoon of activities for children ages nine to fifteen.

TODASTWD is sponsored nationally by the Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Foundation, an organization that encourages children to find mentoring opportunities early in their career development. This year’s event committee is chaired by Staff Council Representatives Audrey Portis, Melissa Borek and Pamela Golubski. Says Portis, “Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day is a wonderful opportunity to bring the entire campus community together: staff, faculty, their children, and current students. It’s an all-encompassing event.”

Participation in the event is not limited to children of staff and faculty; any child of appropriate age is able to attend with the sponsorship of a Carnegie Mellon affiliate.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:
The proposed CMU participation in a project with Saudi Arabia raises similar questions as those relating to the CMU campus in Qatar. Those members of the CMU community involved see CMU as an agent of change in the region bringing young people there into the modern age. I think most people in the Middle East would have a very different view.

They would see CMU as an agent of the US government, particularly considering the close ties of CMU to the Defense Department. The US today is viewed throughout the Middle East and elsewhere as a dangerous imperialist nation that carried out a catastrophic aggression against Iraq and engaged in widespread torture. Given this they would tend to believe that the aim of the US and CMU was to educate a cadre of students who would sever any ties they may have to the Department of Defense or large corporations.

I don’t know if there is any way to change that perception. At least it would help if members of the CMU community directly involved in these enterprises would voice clearly their opposition to present US policies and sever any ties they may have to the Department of Defense or large corporations.

Lincoln Wolfenstein
University Professor of Physics Emeritus

Dear Editor:
We would like to briefly comment on some of the points that Professor Glymour raised about Saudi Arabia in his question in FOCUS’s last issue to President Cohon about CMU’s participation in KAUST.

We start by stating that Saudi Arabia is also a victim of terrorism, most notably by the attacks on May 11, 2003. Moreover, Saudi government officials together with religious scholars and intellectuals have continuously condemned terrorism and battled al-Qaeda. Furthermore, King Abdullah recently called for religious dialogues between Christians, Jews, and Muslims.

Regarding the situation of Saudi women, we do believe that there are areas that need reform and indeed some of those reforms are actually happening now. Women in Saudi Arabia constitute more than 50% of higher education students, engage in high-ranking professional careers such as university professors and physicians, and own their own businesses. Therefore, we believe the association of Saudi Arabia with Apartheid in South Africa is unwarranted. We ask the reader to read the New York Times article “Saudi Women Have Message for U.S. Envoy” for a better understanding of the situation.

In conclusion, with these comments, and KAUST’s founding charter in the spirit of the fairness doctrine, they should not be construed as reflecting university policy. In the spirit of the fairness doctrine, FOCUS seeks a variety of opinions.

Website: http://www.cmu.edu/focus

David Demarest (English)
Founding Editor: David Demarest (English)
FOCUS Management Committee: Jason Niecz (Staff Council); Helmut Vogel (Physics); Bill Messer (CTE); Vivian Livshin (2007/2008 Faculty Senate Chair)

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were changed from Lecturer to Teaching Professor except the ‘As-
Sistant’ level. This was reviewed from faculty senators, with enough con-
cern in the Senate meeting to bring it to the Faculty Affairs Council for a resolution. Under Kenya Dwor-
kin’s chairmanship, debate ensued, and a resolution was brought to the Senators, requiring them to poll their departments in preparation for a vote. With some word-smithing, the following resolution was passed in Senate in March.

The President and Provost have announced that this title change is now ofﬁcial, to be reﬂected in next fall’s appointments. For your interest, there are roughly 1450 faculty, 650 tenure-track, 150 teaching track, 50 research track, and over 500 special faculty on campus (including post docs, visiting scholars, scientists, emeritus...). Senate’s next challenge may be to address promotion and review processes for teaching and research track, but Senators must raise the issue and ﬁnd a constitu-
cy to take the issue further.

#5 Review Committee (DRC) Policy Recommendations (a charge to the Central Admin-
istration).

In parallel to most universities, the Design Review Committee of CMU is assembled “to meet the charge of ensuring the physical quality of the campus and advancing the vision of the University.”

A new DRC Policy for CMU was drafted in 2006, with an opportu-
nity for Senate input under Dave Dzombak’s chairmanship. As a re-
sult of a concentrated effort by a number of faculty and department heads, the draft DRC Policy, draft recommendations were accepted by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate for discussion with the university administration, a task that continued this academic year.

The seven person Senate subcom-
mittee that I chaired submitted rec-
ommendations for improving the DRC procedures document in two key areas: the committee member-
ship; and rigor in the design team submissions for review and input over the life of the project. The goal of the Senate recommen-
dation was to strengthen Carnegie Mellon’s position as an expert cli-
ent and steward for the campus, to assess declarations from the design team relative to leading practice and to campus needs, and to challenge the team to provide the high-
est-quality work to CMU, given that other clients may be more dam-
aging and higher proﬁle. The Faculty Senate recommended doubling the size of the DRC to add professional peer review repre-
sentation to strong campus review members. A DRC without signiﬁ-
cant expertise from key disciplines would be like a journal replacing peer reviewers with the general readership. In the Senate words: “The critical expertise required to evaluate the implications of pro-
gramming, budget, siting, massing, enclosure, space planning, exterior and interior public space design, as well as high performance building infrastructures, will be met by DRC members selected with commen-
rate experience in campus buildings … from the professionals of: architec-
ture, building engineering, planning, and landscape architecture. The critical peer review process for ensuring the highest long term qual-
ity in design and engineering, will be met by DRC members selected from the professional community in the City of Pittsburgh, professionals with a portfo-
ilio of campus projects. Members shall include:

- Architect of Research Buildings with Environmental Excellence
- Architect of Campus Buildings with Environmental Excellence
- Engineer of Campus Buildings with Environmental Excellence
- Campus Planner Urban Designer
- Landscape Architect with Environmental Excellence

The critical participatory process for engaging the campus community will be met by DRC members from each College (as stated in the draft docu-
ment from legal counsel).

While there were other speciﬁc rec-
ommendations from the Senate for the DRC draft policy, a second em-
phasis was on review timing, mate-
rials and summaries to be required by DRC members selected from the professional community in the City of Pittsburgh, professionals with a portfolio of campus projects. Members shall include:

- Architect of Research Buildings with Environmental Excellence
- Architect of Campus Buildings with Environmental Excellence
- Engineer of Campus Buildings with Environmental Excellence
- Campus Planner Urban Designer
- Landscape Architect with Environmental Excellence

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 Depression treatment can be highly personal and involves a partnership between a patient and a therapist. It is important for a therapist to understand the patient's unique needs and work with them to develop a treatment plan that is effective and comfortable. Therapy can be a powerful tool for recovery, but it requires commitment and effort from the patient as well. The building of therapy relationships is a process that takes time, and it is important for both the patient and the therapist to be patient and work together to achieve success.

#6 Readable Oracle printouts for (a charge to next years Senate and the CFO)

In addition to the strengthening of our Design Review process, the sec-
ond personal goal I set for this year was to propose a simpliﬁed month-
ly printout from the Oracle system for principal investigators. At ﬁrst, I thought this might just be a personal-

failing, unable to piece together where my half dozen small proj-

ets stood, but after discussion with other faculty and department heads, I found numerous others who had to painstakingly ‘shadow’ spread sheets to track their project revenues.

Now clearly, the university cannot create dozens of customized inter-
faces for PI’s across campus. So the question was and still is whether the Faculty Senate can create a 1-2 page monthly accounting ‘master’...
Choco for cacao combined with at for water becomes agua del ca-cao or cacao water. But it turns out that word chocolate is not found in early sources on NahuaI language from the 1500’s and the NahuaI word for chocolate drink is not chocolate but rather cacahual, or “ca-cao water”. The switch from cacahual to chocolate might have been to avoid the Romance Language word caca for feces, especially since this was a thick, dark brown drink that Spaniards had begun to appreciate! And then there is a kind of regional chauvinist theory. Near the rich cacao-growing region of Tabasco, the modern residents call themselves chocos, and they claim that the word chocolate comes from them.

To conclude and review lesson #1, chocolate can remind us that what we call our very own, what has become so familiar, is often a complex blending of elements borrowed from many others.

Lesson #2: From chocolate we can learn about the intricacies of cross-cultural connections, and that sometimes, unfortunately, these interactions can prove bitter in more ways than one.

When Cortés landed his fleet at what is now Veracruz in April of 1519, the Aztecs believed that he was the Aztec god Quetzalcatl returning from over the sea accompanied by other deities. With the help of other native peoples who resented the Aztec ruler Moctezuma, and with the translation assistance of Malinche, the young Indian woman who served as his interpreter, Cortés managed to capture the city of Tenochtitlán and take Moctezuma hostage, which led to the surrender of the Aztec capital in 1521. Díaz del Castillo, one of the soldiers of Cortés, described in vivid detail the feasts hosted by Moctezuma and the details of the drinking of chocolate in cup-shaped vessels of pure gold served to him with great reverence by women. Díaz del Castillo also alludes to the powers of chocolate as an aphrodisiac. It was thought Moctezuma drank his chocolate to perform well with his concubines. For the most part, the brew did not appeal to the Spanish palate. One soldier wrote in his diary that cacao would be better thrown to the pigs than consumed by men, although Díaz del Castillo did write that after one had drunk this beverage, one could travel all day without fatigue and without taking any nourishment.

A Dominican friar, Diego Durán, described the use of cacao in rituals and ceremonies and how the elders would watch for signs of melancholy in the victims who were about to be sacrificed to Huiztilpopochtli, the primary god of the Aztecs. After drinking the beverage, the victim would become unconscious, forget what he had been told, and then he returned to his usual cheerfulness and dance. It sounds like the Aztecs were in touch with the mood lifting endorphins associated with chocolate!

Through and after the conquest, the Spaniards set up a political, social, and economic structure that subjugated the indigenous peoples of New Spain as well as other parts of the Americas. Hundreds of thousands of Indians were literally worked to death or succumbed to diseases. The devastation of the Indian population throughout the New World created a significant labor shortage, which led to the importing of thousands of African slaves. For more than two centuries, enslaved people labored to produce cacao, sugar and other crops in the colonized lands. In some tropical countries, harsh labor conditions prevailed long after the end of slavery; the sweet taste of chocolate ultimately derived from African slave labor.

To conclude and restate lesson #2, chocolate, a bitter delicacy prized by indigenous peoples of the Americas, reminds us about the harsh and unpleasant tastes resulting from the encounters of races and cultures and the loss of the indigenous cultures.

Lesson #3: Chocolate demonstrates the dynamics of creativity and transformation.

The first concrete evidence of the arrival of cacao to Europe dates to 1544 and the Dominican friars who brought to Spain a delegation of Maya nobles to visit Prince Phillip the Second. Quickly, the drink became a habit of the Spaniards, who added to the original recipe guindil and cinnamon. By the 1550’s, it was a thick, dark brown drink thatched and sweetened. Díaz del Castillo also describes how the drink was served and the República was established by Malinche, the young Indian woman who served as his interpreter, Cortés managed to capture the city of Tenochtitlán and take Moctezuma hostage, which led to the surrender of the Aztec capital in 1521. Díaz del Castillo, one of the soldiers of Cortés, described in vivid detail the feasts hosted by Moctezuma and the details of the drinking of chocolate in cup-shaped vessels of pure gold served to him with great reverence by women. Díaz del Castillo also alludes to the powers of chocolate as an aphrodisiac. It was thought Moctezuma drank his chocolate to perform well with his concubines. For the most part, the brew did not appeal to the Spanish palate. One soldier wrote in his diary that cacao would be better thrown to the pigs than consumed by men, although Díaz del Castillo did write that after one had drunk this beverage, one could travel all day without fatigue and without taking any nourishment.

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Lessons from Chocolate...cont’d from page 3

France 11.38, Italy 6.13, Japan 3.9, Spain 3.37.

Country-of-origin bars
(such as Santander bars
from Colombia) come
from any region in the
given country. Plantation
bars (such as Valbona’s
Grand Couva) contain beans
which come exclusively
from just one plantation (a
few acres of land) on the
island of Trinidad. Single-estate bars
come from a particular region, (such as Chuo, a region north of Cara-
cas in Venezuela). As far as cacao and chocolate are concerned, sense
of place can connect with the place of grinding, the site of manufactur-
ing, the location of consumption, or a combination of all of the above.

To sum up lesson #4, chocolate can give us an importantly broad sense
of place. The next time you bite into your favorite kind of chocolate, it’s
likely you will not be thinking of global markets, exports, imports, and
world consumption, but you will be bringing together a world of plac-
es near and distant. You may also feel connected with specific people
and special times in your life, like I connect with my grandparents, or
remember a special life-cycle event, like the wedding of my children.

Lesson #5: Chocolate can help us to appreciate the different flavors in
our world.

Chloé Doutrou-Roussel, author of The Chocolate Connoisseur, divides
chocolate lovers into two categories: those who are so wedded to their
current favorites that nothing anybody says to the contrary will change
their mind, and there are also those who want to learn more. To bor-
row the terminology of philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah, are you
a fundamentalist type, that is, a cultural preservationist who resists
changes and hangs on to your private culture of chocolate? Or do you
have more cosmopolitan tastes, which embrace the many cultures of
chocolates with their flavors full of both continuities and changes?

Appiah, who grew up in Kumasi, Ghana, in one of the main cacao-producing
regions of the world, wrote an essay entitled, The Case for Contamination
that can lead us to think about how chocolate can teach us a lesson about
contaminating ourselves in a positive way. We all continue to hear the con-
flicting reports about the health benefits of chocolate, though we certainly
want to believe that it has special antioxidants and that it’s great for our
cardiovascular health. I also like the “feel good” brands of chocolates, like
Endangered Species Chocolate Company, which donates 10% of profits to
protecting endangered animals, or other fair trade certified varieties that
support education or charitable causes (like Dagoba or Ithaca). And, fin-
ally, the tasting process is a way of engaging all of our senses, to identify what
is obvious and what is less obvious. It can heighten our sensitivities to dif-
ferent aromas and flavors. It leads us to a new interest in something from
another place or blend of places. When we taste chocolate, we can explore
what we like and what we don’t like. We can share our perspectives; we
can learn about each others’ tastes and how these tastes evolve and change.
We can get used to the tastes of others. Chocolate can challenge our pre-
conceived notions, and can sensitize us to the complexity of difference.

About this process of learning about what is foreign Appiah wrote, “I am
urging that we should learn about people in other places, take an inter-
est in other civilizations, their arguments, their errors, their achievements,
not because that will bring us to agreement but because it will help us get
used to one another—something we have a powerful need to do in this

To review lesson #5, tasting chocolate can be a metaphor for appreciating the
complexities of our world in this globalized era. Ideally, these five lessons
should be followed by a final exam, an exam that is impossible to fail if one
really tastes, learns to appreciate what one is tasting, and listens to what others
have to say about what they taste. Let’s all pursue an understanding of our
selves and of diverse peoples and cultures. Let’s all savor some chocolate!

From the Archives.....

This article was found in the February 1989 copy of FOCUS. It is titled “CMU Implements Compromise on South Afri-
can Divestment” by Stephanie Reedy.

CMU has apparently kept last summer’s promise to sell most of its
stocks in companies invested in South Africa.

According to CMU treasurer Ed Hunia, the university has sold near-
ly $1 million in stocks by the end of September. In October, a group of
students, including representatives of Spirit and the National Society
for Black Engineers (NSBE), met with Hunia and reviewed the endowment
portfolios of the previous three months. The portfolios showed that
the university had dropped stock in 12 different companies during au-
gust and September.

Hunia declined to reveal to FOCUS the names of individual com-
panies, but students who saw the portfolios, including NSBE presi-
dent Lalisa Lawrence, agree that the stock was sold.

Following its original plan – which President cyert and the
trustees have insisted is not an of-
ficial anti-apartheid policy of “di-
vestment” – CMU has not sold its
half-million dollars worth of stock
in USX, one of the largest US in-
vestors in South Africa. According
to Hunia, “The plan involves
the selling of stocks, but not those of
companies who are ‘friends’ of the
university.” USX is known to be a
generous CMU benefactor.

CMU also makes no claims that it
will refuse future gifts from com-
panies involved in South Africa.
Hunia: “We’ve clearly stated that
we will accept gifts of stock in such
companies.”

CMU’s current investment pol-
icy in regard to South Africa was
formulated after nearly a year of
protest and debate on the part of
students, faculty, and staff, as well
as pressures and petitions from such
community groups as the Pittsburgh
Presbytery and the Pittsburgh City
Council.

Last May a group of students
led by Spirit and NSBE students
Against Apartheid (SAA) approached
the board of trustees with a demand for
complete divestment, which was
rejected by the trustees in a 17-14
vote. Lawrence told FOCUS that
she believes the trustees felt the stu-
dents were telling them what to do,
and that “If someone is backed into
a corner, they’re going to come out
fighting.”

Over the summer, President Cy-
ert and chairman of the board Doug
Danforth worked together to come
up with a compromise that the trust-
es would accept. Finally the board
agreed by phone to sell most of its
remaining S. Africa investments,
and CMU administrators met with
students in August to inform them
of their decision.

Now, why do they think the trustees
changed their minds three months
after their negative vote, Ed Hunia
said that Cyert and Danforth’s effort
for a compromise came at a time of
“continued pressure to divest” from
a combination of sources, including
students.

In early summer, Pittsburgh City
Council publicly pressured CMU to
divest by threatening to withhold
the building permit CMU needed for
its new dormitory. According to
Havard Albright, leader of the
SAA, “City council had more to do
with CMU’s decision to sell its
South African stock than the students
did. They don’t care about us.”

Johnny Monroe, associate execu-
tive presbyter of the Pittsburgh
Presbytery, adds, “It seems to me
that CMU is trying to appease ev-
erybody concerned – the commu-
nity and the students, while trying
to keep USX happy.”

Anti-apartheid activists strongly
disagree with CMU’s current policy.
Patti Heckart, a CMU staff mem-
ber and leader of the Coalition for
a Free South Africa (CFSA), feels
that CMU’s actions are inadequate.
“They should come out with a di-
vestment statement saying that they
will not do business in South Africa,
but they refuse to do that.”

According to Hunia, the main rea-
son CMU has not made such a state-
ment is a belief that the university
should not get involved in political
issues. He also claims that admin-
istrators and trustees are skeptical
about the benefits of divestment to
South African blacks.

Andy Barnes, who teaches “A
History of South Africa,” shares the
skepticism. “Divestment is an ideolo-
 gistical idea that distracts from
methods that could make a differ-
ence for South African blacks.

“The private sector in the US
(i.e., universities) should change
what is happening in South Africa,”
Barnes argues. “The America public
can make a difference – by fighting
for US government policies against
apartheid. I only hope that the di-
vestment issue at CMU is finally re-
solved, and that we can move on.”

Albright counters: “I can’t tell you
the effects of divestment. I can tell
you that Donald Woods told me
that the blacks in South Africa want
us out, and that they think we’re help-
ing the government to suppress
them by not getting out.”

continued on page 8
for the CMU Oracle team to consider for monthly printouts to meet the real needs of principal investigators and Department Heads. This work has been initiated, and the Oracle data warehouse may be made available to PI’s to support customized excel spreadsheets. I personally would still suggest that the Senate proactively assemble their statement of needs for a ‘default’ project output by: 1. Collecting examples of “shadow” spreadsheet summaries being created by departments and researchers around campus, to find commonalities in structure.

2. Creating a tight, 1-2 page monthly accounting ‘master’ of value to the greatest number of PI’s and Department heads.

3. Submitting to faculty senate for ratification a single request for the default output for end users to the CMU Financial Office. There will need to be full agreement on functionality, and the content would need to be based on our existing Oracle data base.

Until that time, we will continue to forage through multiple web sites to determine which student was funded on which project each month, what purchases were made, if bills were sent and honored, whether contract end dates are near, and we will continue to send every administrative staffer to day-long Oracle training sessions to help them learn to navigate the massive data base for what might be a set of very shared outputs.

#7 FCE and +/- grading (ongoing charge to the Faculty and Student Senates)

In 2007, the Faculty Senate recommended a shift from a 25 question on-line Faculty Course Evaluation (FCE) to the following three question University Course Assessment (UCA).

How do you rate this course?
How do you rate the instructor for this course?
Open comments

A fourth question has been proposed by Student Senate and may be added to the on-line questionnaire: How many hours per week do you spend on work outside of class?

Many of us still mourn the paper based 10 questions, and wonder whether the on-line version is really providing the feedback and insight that is needed. You might be interested to know the following results from John Papinichak:

The outstanding questions for the Senate are whether to stay with this mini, on-line assessment, with no reports for low response rates, to reinstate a paper based version (obviously of greatest need in CFA and HSS), or to let each College of Department establish their own plus course feedback mechanism. More critically, the question of how this feedback in used and promotion and tenure is a wide open question.

The Senate also initiated the personnel discussion of whether plus minus grading should be instituted in final grading for all undergraduates. This resulted in: a debate on the value of a five point scale over ten or one hundred; meetings with Student Senate to find out about their resistance (QPAs would drop, competition would be even more fierce); and discussions of running a trial with shadow grades to test the QPA hypothesis (I think it will raise QPAs). In the end, I think we will punt on this issue and leave it for another Senate to raise...

#8 Open access resolution for Journal article ownership (a first phase completed)

Many faculty members, including myself, sign away our rights to publish or even distribute what we have written in our efforts to ensure publication in leading journals. The CMU libraries have undertaken a proactive effort to ensure that faculty member know there publication rights, and self-archive their work before journal submission to ensure ongoing rights for access. This year the Senate passed the following resolution:

Therefore be it resolved that: The Faculty Senate strongly encourages Carnegie Mellon faculty to: Know their publishing rights, Retain the right to self-archive their work, Self-archive and provide open access to their work in keeping with publisher open access policies.

Be it further resolved that: The Faculty Senate strongly encourages the Office of Legal Counsel and the Libraries to Continue the Authors Rights and Wrongs program to help faculty understand the issues.

This is just a first step, however, and the Senate will need to further debate the implications of seeking to publish only in journals that maintain individual ownership rights. The Senate is also now developing a resolution regarding the establishment of an Institutional Repository for providing open access to Carnegie Mellon research papers to ensure that Carnegie Mellon publications are available to the broadest audiences.

#9 Smoke free by 2010? (an ongoing charge to the Senate)

Anita Barkin asked the Faculty Senate to address the issues related to a smoke-free Carnegie Mellon campus by 2010, and we will vote on a modest resolution in May.

This resolution replaces an existing ruling that permits smoking anywhere beyond 20 feet from a building with a resolution that only permits smoking at 30 designated containers across campus.

The hesitation to declare the campus fully smoke-free seems to be our general fear of a ‘big brother’ state and our general celebration of individual rights. On the other hand, many of us are not thrilled with the smoke curtain at the front door, or the ongoing health implications of smoking for our students. At this point, I would recommend that the challenge be given directly to the remaining smokers on campus, with the following on-line questionnaire. A no to the first two questions, would take the respondent off line, so that those to whom it matters the most will develop the solution set.

possible questionnaire - do you smoke? - is it critical to smoke during the work/class day? - how would you gracefully enforce the existing no-smoking rules - (no smoking in any building or within 20 feet of any buildings)? - how would you design designated smoking areas - where could they be and what could they look like?

When adjusted for inflation, the Chronicle of Higher Education has identified declining salary compensation across US universities over the past five years; even while tuition increases have exceeded inflation. Given the state of the US economy, and the wonder of teaching outstanding students from around the world, maybe this is not the time to raise the question...

My thanks to the Senate team

It has been an amazing race to address key faculty issues, mostly unfinished. I cannot tell you how important each of the following faculty are to our collective future, and the energies they put into the efforts described. It has been a privilege and an honor to serve as Senate Chair, and I truly wish I could personally thank Bill Brown for encouraging me to serve... and for many other reasons as well.

CMU Faculty Senate Executive Committee 2007-2008

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Denise Novak, Libraries
Chair Elect 2008-2009
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Immediate Past Chair
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Focus Editors

"In Senate, the activism is truly wonderful. VL"
In Search of August Wilson: The Piano Lesson
by Jean Alexander, Head, Hunt Reference, University Libraries

Since moving to Pittsburgh from Chicago ten years ago, I’ve heard a lot about August Wilson and seen five of his plays: *Fences*, *King Hedley II*, *Gem of the Ocean*, *Two Trains Running* (in Chicago), and most recently *The Piano Lesson*, performed at Carnegie Mellon this February. Because Wilson is so well known in his native town, and has become a legendary figure here, I felt a bit timid about writing a review of *The Piano Lesson*, which so many readers of Focus know more about than I do. In a spirit of humility, I decided not to expound on or stand in judgment over the play or the performance, but just to describe some of my recent discoveries about the man, his life and works.

I was able to download the script of *The Piano Lesson* from the Black Drama database at the library. I read it diligently before seeing the play. To be honest, I wasn’t enthralled, although I dutifully wrote marginal notes on the themes of money and migration, the central conflict over the piano, and the virtuosic monologues about trains. What a surprise it was to see the School of Drama actors literally breathe life into the dead words on the page, infusing them with humor and personality I hadn’t imagined. All credit goes to Jon Michael Reese and Amanda Payton, who played the lead roles of Boy Willie and his sister Berniece; Larry Powell and Mathanee Treco as the uncles, Dosker and Wining Boy (one steady and one wild); Kyle Belltran as the Boy Willie’s sidekick Lymon; Tyree Robinson as Berniece’s suitor Avery; and Cherish Morgan as the child Maretha. This play takes place in 1936, so the girl Maretha is around the age, perhaps, of Wilson’s own mother.

August Wilson suddenly started popping up everywhere in my life. News about the historical marker at his childhood home at 1727 Bedford in the Hill District, owned by his loving nephew Paul Ellis. Progress reports on the August Wilson Center for African American Culture being built downtown. During intermission at a recital by the opera singer Denyce Graves, I happened to overhear a conversation between the August Wilson Center’s director and the new head of the Heinz Foundation about staged readings of all ten of Wilson’s plays going on at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. But while I think it’s fitting that Pittsburgh pay homage to Wilson, public recognition and civic pride wouldn’t bring me any closer to August Wilson himself. For that, I needed to do some research on my own.

George Plimpton published a wonderful interview with August Wilson in 1999 in the Paris Review, which I highly recommend as an introduction to Wilson’s artistic development, working methods, and aesthetic creed. Wilson describes his early days as a writer in Pittsburgh, when he and Bob Penny “worked in the elementary schools—they let us use the auditoriums there.” The audience was mostly black. We charged fifty cents admission…We literally went into the street a half-hour before the show and talked people into going in.” He talks about how *The Piano Lesson* was inspired by one of Romare Bearden’s paintings, subtitled Homage to Mary Lou Williams, “who was a jazz pianist in Pittsburgh.” Everyone knows that August Wilson started out writing poetry. In this interview, he mentions that “I still write poetry and think it is the highest form of literature. But I don’t call myself a poet-playwright. I think one of them is enough weight to carry around.”

Doubling Down on the High Life: a look at Fritz Stern’s “Five Germanys I Have Known”

by Andreea Deciu Ritivoi, Associate Professor of English and Rhetoric

Fritz Stern’s 2006 memoir, *Five Germanys I Have Known* is not a disappointment for the reader interested in rich historical detail, eager to get an account of German culture and society filtered through the consciousness of a native who is at the same time a detached critic, both an insider and an outsider, a witness and, given his training as a historian, a professional storyteller. A Columbia University Emeritus Professor with an impressive publications record, Stern has not only authored several important monographs (the best known among them Gold and Iron: Bismarck, Bleichröder, the Building of the German Empire and Einstein’s Germany), but has also participated directly in some of the most significant political events of the twentieth century. The book is also not a disappointment for a reader interested in intellectual memoirs, where scholarly commentary accompanies, and often takes over personal narrative. This memoir is also a high society chronicle, with name dropping its main technique. Stern has not only written about key historical figures—such as Albert Einstein—but has also met them in person and become their friend (or enemy). Einstein, for instance, was a family friend (he even advised Stern on the choice of a profession, and recommended medicine!). Finally, and here comes a bit of disappointment, the book is more about Stern himself than anything or anyone else, the five Germanys (ancestral Germany, Weimar, the Third Reich, the Federal Republic, and reunified Germany) mostly a pretext for tracking his own personal and intellectual transformation over the years, from the childhood spent under the Nazi regime to his adult life in America.

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The anthologyed poem, originally published in 1970, is entitled Theme One: The Visions. It is written in a very different, much looser and more accessible style. The lyric voice is celebratory and ecstatic, proclaiming the joy of black bodies, breath, and spirit. Here you can perhaps hear a foreshadowing of Wilson’s later dramatic monologues (or “arias,” as some critics have dubbed them), although the language is still formal, as in the earlier four poems. The literal subject of the poem appears to be a performance by the Arthur Hall dance group of Ameri- can Indian groups in America to perform African dance. According to the Arthur Hall archives, this group performed on May 19, 1968, at the University of Pittsburgh. Martin Luther King had just been assassinated on April 4. It’s good to be reminded that August Wilson lived through that time and those events, was inspired and undoubtedly also scarred by them. Something of those times surely lives on in the characters in his great plays.

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Doubling Down....continued from page 7

the United States. His political education was crucially informed by his German childhood and teenage years, but was also further influenced by the events taking place in America throughout the more turbulent decades of the twentieth century. This double-grounding, in German and American culture and society, is a feature the memoir tries to describe as the author’s defining characteristic. If we read the memoir as an attempt at self-fashioning—which most memoirs are, this one no exception—Stern’s “masterplot” is designed to emphasize his dual citizenship and identity. More than just a biographical fact, this double belonging is in Stern’s case of form of self-legitimization. As a German Jew, he takes a particular kind of critical stance against America: invoking his experience with Nazi totalitarianism, Stern has warned against the danger of radicalization among right wing conservatives, and has been an especially vocal critic of McCarthyism in the 1960s, and more recently of the Bush administration. As an American, in his discussions of post-war German politics he adopts an advisory role that relies heavily on his familiarity with political life in a democracy that was still deemed exemplary in the aftermath of World War II.

I have encountered similar strategies of self-legitimization in other immigrants, especially intellectuals. And even though it might seem unproblematic—the widely celebrated idea of the hyphenated identity of immigrants is based on it—for those who live it, this double belonging is a difficult predicament. Rather than “both (American), and (German)” it can often translate as “neither-or,” leaving the immigrant in the tenuous position of not being fully assimilated in the host society, while also no longer recognized as a full-fledged member of the original homeland. Based on the narrative presented above, it seems that Stern experienced this double exclusion before he was able to turn it into a double allegiance. The episodes describing his rejection by the host society are more poignant—Stern seems to hurt more than those capturing his feeling of no longer belonging to Germany, which suggests to me that assimilation into his new country has been very important to him. For example, in 1954 Stern was invited to write a write for the liberal journal Commentary, in response to a book recently published in Germany at that time, in which the author mocked the American questionnaires issued for Germans applying for civic employment. His article was modified by the famous editor Elliot Cohen, who apparently inserted several anticommunist comments in Stern’s piece. When the latter refused to accept the changes, Cohen is quoted as having threatened to destroy him, and having called him “a mere refugee” who was behaving “anti-American” (216). Stern, however, was not intimidated and continued to refuse to make any changes. Nor was he intimidated when, the same year, after becoming a member of the highly prestigious and elite American Committee for Cultural Freedom, “a virtual Who’s Who of American intellectuals” (216), Stern resigned because he refused to co-author a study about Communist propaganda in the United States, a study he deemed flawed in its method and assumptions. Interestingly, there are almost no similar cases in his relationship with Germany—hard to say whether because they truly never happened, or because the author was not bothered enough to record them.

The stories of rejection, both coming from him and from Americans, are important in a memoir that is otherwise heavily focused on describing the impressive alliances the author has made over the years, the great shoulders he has rubbed, and the famous hands he has shaken. These stories signal that the acceptance into the American intelligentsia was not automatic, and indeed required effort and personal integrity. Stern sets out to challenge a common view (probably launched by Allan Bloom in his Closing the American Mind) that describes the intelligentsia of this country as all too willing, out of sheer ambition, to welcome in its midst pretentious Europeans. To the extent that he succeeds in challenging this view, Stern does so by taking advantage of the “neither-or” logic applied to immigrants. No matter how much he stresses his commitment to both America and Germany, Stern is ultimately a cosmopolitan, a member of the intellectual equivalent of what Samuel Huntington has called the “Davos group.”

Given such an identity, perhaps self-aggrandizing is inevitable. Stern comes across as primarily focused on chronicling the series of amazing successes his life has been. The major events of Stern’s life are no doubt momentous, and they speak for themselves in featuring the author as a major personality, a “living national treasure” for both Germans and Americans, as Richard Holbrooke, former U.S. ambassador to Germany calls him on the back cover. Stern has been awarded several important prizes and distinctions in Germany, the most impressive among them Germany’s Peace Prize in 1999. Whether justifiably or not, there is very little humbleness in his memoir, so much so that one is left wondering if the historical events discussed in the book were chosen less for their intrinsic significance, and more for how they portrayed the author.

Memoirs are supposed to be self-centered. The self that emerges from Stern’s account is perhaps too triumphant, and the story itself quickly becomes too predictably happy. Perhaps this is a deliberate choice reflecting a more general point, rather than mere self-indulgence. In the Introduction, Stern explains that his goal is to offer a history of the five faces of Germany “as a text for political and moral lessons, as a drama in dread and hope” (11). If the optimism ensuing from the political and moral lessons offered by his own, highly successful life can be transferred to the more general level of history, then Stern’s book is an encouraging tale, one that can prompt more hope than dread. Or, perhaps life lived in such high circles, among potentates and intellectual luminaries, can only be happy.

From the Archives...continued from page 5

Albright feels that CMU’s policy is “a complete joke.” “Anybody can say ‘we’ll divert, and if we want to reinvest, we will, and if people want to give us stock, we’ll keep it.’ CMU hasn’t taken any kind of stance, it just sold some stock.”

Lawrence is prepared to be conciliatory, suggesting that President Cyert’s main concern in developing the new policy was not to jeopardize the position of students or the university. “Some of the companies CMU is invested in give the university a lot of money and thus create a lot of opportunities for students here. Cyert didn’t want to take that away from anybody.”

Lawrence characterizes Cyert as “the middleman in all of this” and respects him for his efforts: “This university is almost like a business, a corporation. I understand their not wanting to get too political about some of their commitments. CMU’s policy is not what we want ideally, but it’s better than what we had before.”

Hunia emphasizes, “There’s no hidden nor secret agenda here. CMU’s investment managers have been directed not to buy any stock in companies invested in South Africa.”

Lawrence adds that “CMU has said it will investigate every company it’s about to invest in, and if a company deals with South Africa, and there is an equal or better option for investment, CMU will take it. I’d be pretty shocked if CMU backed away from this policy. Image is very important to this university, and it would be very bad publicity for them to go back on their word.”

Smoking No Longer Allowed In This Area!

photo by Erin Goldberger