

# Natural Selections

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

## NEWSABLE

ILEANA M. CRISTEA

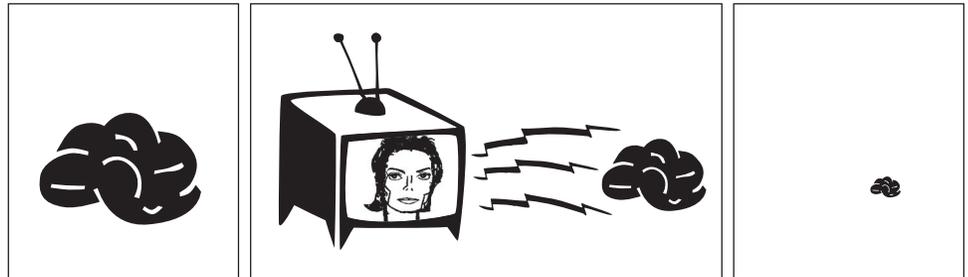
According to the latest<sup>1</sup> (October 2005) ranking of countries in terms of their freedom of press, the US has dropped to 44th place, behind Benin, Namibia, South Africa, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mali, Costa Rica, and Macedonia, to name just a few. First place has been shared consistently for the last few years by Finland, Iceland, Norway, and the Netherlands, with the addition last year of Ireland, Iceland, Denmark, and Switzerland.

The obvious questions that arise are how these scores are being calculated and what their true worth is. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights states "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers." Freedom of the press is the guarantee by a government of free public press for its citizens and their associations, extended to members of the news-gathering organizations and their published reporting. The freedom of the press around the world is assessed annually by international non-governmental organizations. In 2002, the Reporters Without Borders<sup>2</sup> (RWB) organization published the first worldwide press freedom index. RWB ranks countries by assessing the number of journalists murdered, expelled or harassed, the existence of a state or TV and radio monopoly, the possible existence of censorship and self-censorship in the media, the difficulties faced by foreign reporters, and other aspects of the overall independence of the media. Continuing their fight for worldwide freedom of the press, the RWB representative in Washington, Lucie Morillo, testified on February 15, 2006 before the US House of Representatives Committee for International Relations and Humanitarian Affairs. During this hearing, the major US Internet companies, such as Yahoo, Microsoft, Google, and Cisco Systems were required to explain their collaborations with the Chinese authorities on Web censorship.

The RWB index ranked the US as 17th in 2002, 31st in 2003 (with additional criticism raised for US actions beyond its borders, such as the US military's responsibility for the death of several reporters during the war in Iraq), and 22nd in 2004. The US drop of more than 20 places in the 2005 ranking is partly the result of the imprisonment of *The New York Times* reporter Judith Miller and

while managing quite successfully to influence us. We form subjective views about what is interesting, fashionable, acceptable and not acceptable in the world today. This indiscriminate absorption of information at hand has become a big component of our lives. It is then important to have a look at the choice of information that is being delivered to us.

Television has become one of the most



the implications for the ability of journalists to protect the confidentiality of sources.

Another organization, the Freedom House<sup>3</sup>, takes a more general approach in their assessment of the freedom of the press by focusing on a country's political and economical environments to determine whether there is a relationship of dependence that limits in practice the level of the freedom of the press that might exist in theory.

The freedom of the press may be limited by constraints dominated by the interference of politics and governmental interests. But how well is that freedom of press ultimately used by journalists and the public? What are the criteria for choosing the covered news, and why does some news receive more emphasis than others? As journalist Andrew Marr states in his book *My Trade*, "news" is not 'facts'. News is based on facts." So, what 'facts' are then chosen to be made into 'news'? This is an important question considering the power of the news over the public. Through television, radio, newspapers, and the continuously growing Internet, journalism has clearly become an important part our everyday education about the world. The news, however, frequently passes by us unassessed,

powerful instruments of communication, reaching approximately 110.2 million households in the US. Yet, how is this instrument used to inform and inspire the public? The television news is rich in trivial stories, designed to reach us merely on a sentimental level. Indeed, Donald Zec wittily described the elements of popular journalism as "sex, heroism, drama and pet-worship"<sup>4</sup>. It surprises me to see that many of these stories seem to be increasingly focused on bringing out trivial negative aspects of everyday life and faults of society, but in such a way that these become the normal and expected facts of living. For example, on the local television news, we are made familiar on a daily basis with New York crimes, bad mothers, fathers, sons and daughters, almost advertising the awkward characters of our kind and encouraging a continuous state of fear. However, there is considerably less attention paid to the remarkable cultural events that New York is famous for. There is a scarcity of proper advertisements for special concerts at Carnegie Hall or Lincoln Center, of museum exhibitions, or other events that we should be happy to embrace, support, and advertise.

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Why are some news stories more emphasized than others? A look at the news coverage of international stories shows we frequently miss important events, tragedies or successes, giving a feeling of purposely delivered isolation. For example, the controversies related to the EU Constitution, which at least indirectly affect all of us, were hardly covered, while we were brainwashed all summer with the story of the runaway bride. The inexcusable disregard shown to the genocide in Darfur follows on the still warm traces of the disaster in Rwanda. As we hide in our happy isolation, history seems so easily forgotten, but isn't history a portrait of us and our choices? According to the Tyndall report<sup>4</sup>, which monitors the American television networks' newscasts, the airtime devoted to the genocide in Sudan all last year was only 18 minutes on ABC, five on NBC, and three on CBS, "about a minute of coverage for every 100,000 deaths" as pointed out by journalist Nicholas Kristof<sup>5</sup>. In the month of June 2005, Michael Jackson received over 50 times more coverage on ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC, with an overwhelming total of 6,248 aired segments compared with the 126 segments dedicated to Darfur. Nicholas Kristof ironically remarked: "If only Michael Jackson's trial had been held in Darfur"<sup>6</sup>. The attention grabbing opening sentence of one of the latest articles by Nicholas Kristof, "Disposable cameras for disposable people"<sup>6</sup>, emphasized this issue: "meet some of the disposable people of Darfur, the heirs of the disposable Armenians, Jews, Cambodians, Rwandans and Bosnians of past genocides."

What factors decide which news and people are 'disposable'? Is it the restrictions or interests from higher levels, the views of journalists, the ease of obtaining some news versus others, the financial aspects, or mostly the marketability factor? I think that while factors that are beyond one's control are a real and important challenge to fight for, those that are in one's hands should be considered a duty. The freedom of the press has justly raised controversies due to the selection of news. While the constant need to capture the attention of the public can be used as an explanation for the triviality of the news, the responsibility that comes from the great power of reaching the public seems to be easily ignored. In 1958, news anchor Edward R. Murrow expressed his concern for the direction taken by the television stating "There is a great and perhaps decisive battle to be fought against ig-

norance, intolerance and indifference," and pointed out that television is a powerful instrument to teach and inspire, but "only to the extent that humans are determined to use it to those ends"<sup>7</sup>.

Similarly, we are also to be made accountable for our own choices. We seem to be easily influenced into being interested into what others are curious about, and news does indeed succeed very well in creating trends and fashions. Just consider the boom of the reality shows. The Nielsen Ratings<sup>8</sup>, which ranks the popularity of American television shows, is used by networks as a determining factor for setting advertising rates, schedules, and program content. It looks like we are being served what we like, together with commercials that appear for three minutes every eight minutes for the popular shows. There seems to be a vicious circle: the more journalists feed into the need for shallow truths, the more we lose our individuality and fall into a generalized current trend of what is interesting in the world. The responsibility can be therefore applied to both providers and receivers. There is no need to be 'helped' by spinners to understand what was witnessed during a debate and what message should be taken from it. One should always be able to keep an open mind when presented with some information, public statements, published articles, or the daily news. I think that the most truthful opinion is that formed by perceiving and judging information through one's own prism, and research for fact whenever necessary. The search for truth might be really considered part of one's duty if our conscience tells us not to become puppets in schemes that we do not know about. Can we prove Aristotle right that "All men by nature desire knowledge" and agree with Socrates' belief that "The highest form of human excellence is to question oneself and others"?

Reading J.M. Coetzee's book *Youth*, one powerful paragraph stayed with me and made me think about such issues: "...he must be a simpleton...if he imagines he can get by on the basis of straight looks and honourable dealings when the ground beneath his feet is soaked with blood and the vast backward depth of history rings with shouts of anger." While extreme in an intense and passionate way, this paragraph reminds me of Socrates' statement that "virtue is knowledge." Firmly devoted to the pursuit of truth, Socrates believed that "the only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing" and emphasized the necessity to pursue knowledge even when opposed, and the need to do what

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one thinks is right even in the face of universal opposition.

In a speech given at The Rockefeller University at the second annual Pearl Meister Greengard Prize festivity, Helen Thomas underlined in beautiful words the main common aspect between journalists and scientists saying that "press and science are similar, as they both search, or should search, for the truth, and truth is hard to come by." Although hard to come by, truth is definitely worth fighting for. ☉

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# The E-mails Strike Back: The Return of the Value Meal

BERTRAND MOLLEREAU

Weiss Café is by far the best in the neighborhood for its variety and quality/price ratio. In particular, the choice of three different Value Meals consisting of a hot main course, a soup or salad, and a drink for \$5.95 (tax included) is unbeatable. On February 21, two out of the three Value Meals were abandoned, and the Value Meal station was removed and replaced with larger hamburger, sandwich, and international table sections.

One reason given to justify the change was improvement of the traffic flow within the cafeteria and reduction of the waiting time on line. Before the changes, two long lines were often observed at the Value Meal and Grill stations, so the rationale of combining these two stations into one was far from clear, and many people questioned whether the real reason for the change was to increase profits.

Clearly the cafeteria face-lift was not seen as an improvement by everybody. The issue generated an intense debate within the RU community, comparable to the one about hanging the 9/11 American flag in Faculty House. The cafeteria became the

main preoccupation of the entire university, and people were busy comparing prices and searching for alternative food options in the neighborhood. Receipts for the Sloan-Kettering cafeteria were pinned on notice boards throughout campus for price comparison. Leaving Weiss Café for the one at Sloan-Kettering? This epitomized how desperate people had become.

Many of us exchanged views via the e-mail list Campusmail. This was an opportunity to express frustration not only about the loss of the Value Meal, the pricey international table, but also about the huge amount of disposable waste generated each day by the cafeteria. We even learned how one should wash mesclun. One email sent by Campusmail, quoted here with permission, reflected best



Please, sir, I want some more...

the state of mind of RU employees:

Congratulations to the new Cafeteria! Now we have "a more inviting cafeteria with improved traffic flow" due to the fact that nobody goes to the cafeteria anymore...We mutated completely into a fast food restaurant, with one line just for burgers and one line just for sandwiches. Here at Rockefeller around 50%

of the students (postdoc and graduate) are from other countries who have their main meal at lunch time. The only thing that we want is food. And I do not count burgers as food. As we have already experienced in the past the burgers have always been the cheapest choice. The Million Dollar question is: Why does The Rockefeller University spend its money on a bionutrition center trying to find out which food is best and healthiest when all Rockefeller students have to eat burgers, chips and sandwiches for lunch because they cannot afford another meal for the day. Is there a reason for this?...We needed some improvements in the cafeteria, but those changes did not improve anything. Right now, I am avoiding going to the cafeteria.

The university was poised on the brink of rioting, hunger strikes, or at least a widespread boycott of the cafeteria. However democracy is not completely dead yet, and after a week of mass e-mails, a deluge of customer (un)satisfaction forms, and a *Natural Selections* exposé on the issue about to hit the presses, Human Resources sent a campuswide e-mail on February 24, announcing the return of our dearest Value Meal. Hurrah!!! Now, we can appreciate the cafeteria changes knowing that our wallet will feel the same. I think it looks better actually. ☉

## PDA News: Rent Subsidy – What Was Decided and What Has Happened

MATT RODEHEFFER, BEN SHORT, VALERIE HORSLEY, AND TIRTHA DAS

In the fall of 2004, Rockefeller postdocs united in an unprecedented fashion and defended their rent subsidy. The total subsidy amounted to a mere 0.5% of the RU operating budget and was being removed due to budget and tax-liability constraints, while individual postdocs stood to lose as much as 27% of their net income. Through a series of meetings, the PDA negotiated an agreement with the university so that postdocs hired before September 2004, would continue to receive the rent subsidy whereas those hired after that date would not. Crucial to this arrangement was the university's promise to raise salary scales adequately in the subsequent years, to compensate for the loss of subsidy for postdocs hired after September 2004. The PDA's own analysis had shown that this latter group of postdocs would need a significant raise in sal-

ary at the start of their second year, i.e., Sep 2005<sup>1</sup>. To assess if what was decided has actually happened, the PDA recently performed a

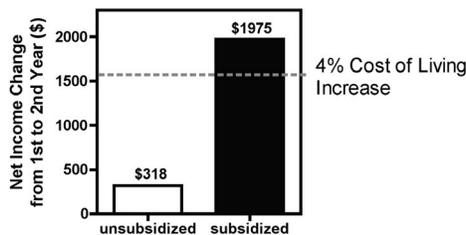


Figure 1. Net yearly income (salary minus rent) change for second year postdocs hired Jan. 2004–Aug 2005. Postdocs hired Jan–Aug 2004 maintained their rent subsidy while those hired after Sep 2004 do not have subsidized rent. Dashed line indicates standard inflation-based 4% cost of living increase.

**Survey Results** Of the almost 400 postdocs in total at RU, of those that were hired after January 2004, 88 responded to our survey. Our results indicate that the average first year salary for postdocs hired between Sep 2004–Aug 2005 was \$39,500, which is above the required minimum of \$38,000. This trend continues as these postdocs transitioned into their second year. Postdocs hired in this period were paid on average \$42,000 in their second year, which is \$2,000 above the minimum. Interestingly, for postdocs hired after Sep 2005, the average first year salary is \$38,700, which is lower than the average salary for the previous year. This decrease may be reflective of lab budget restraints. Overall, the results suggest that, on average, lab heads are compen-

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sating postdocs above the minimums and these actions are helping postdocs partially offset the increased rents.

To compensate for the loss of subsidy, the administration's package includes a one time free month's rent to first year postdocs. This offer basically amounts to a rent subsidy for first year postdocs. However, the PDA was concerned that the current payscales

of \$1,975 in their second year (Figure 1). This amounts to a 5% increase over the average first year salary, which is just above the standard, yearly 4% cost of living increase. In stark contrast, second year postdocs without the subsidy had a paltry \$318 increase in their net income for the year, or a 0.8% increase. These results indicate that the current payscales provide minimal to no increase in net

out the rent subsidy. Given the tight budget constraints that are likely in the next few years with stagnant NIH funding, raising and enforcing the minimums is crucial for guaranteeing fair postdoc compensation.

New York City has one of the highest cost of living indices in the United States<sup>2</sup>. Incomes that would otherwise place families in the middle to upper-middle class bracket in other parts of the country, only allow for frugal living in NYC. Postdoc salaries lag consistently behind that of many blue collar professions<sup>3</sup>, and living in Manhattan for postdocs is possible only through a combination of benefits like subsidized day care, rent subsidy, and yes, free gyms. But the gradual decline or complete removal of these benefits, without appropriate raises in salaries, would make frugal living conditions even grimmer. Top research institutions like RU should consider reallocating part of their generous endowment towards improving compensation for postdocs. Alternatively, these universities should consider major structural changes that would allow top-quality research as well as fair postdoc compensation to coexist in the long run. ©

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Postdoc Years of Experience	Salary Minimums Prior to 9/04	Current Salary Minimums	Proposed Salary Minimums
1	\$34,000	\$38,000	\$38,000
2	\$36,000	\$40,000	\$43,739
3	\$40,000	\$42,000	\$45,587
4	\$43,000	\$44,000	\$47,866
5	\$44,000	\$46,000	\$50,259

Table 1. Proposed Salary Minimums to Protect Postdoc Compensation

do not compensate postdocs adequately in the subsequent years. To assess if salaries for second year postdocs without the rent subsidy were adequate, we determined the amount of net income (salary minus rent) of postdocs that had progressed from their first to second year in September 2005. We compared two groups of postdocs in our survey: a control group of postdocs hired before Sep 2004 (with rent subsidy) and those postdocs hired after Sep 2004 (without rent subsidy). Postdocs receiving the subsidy (hired Jan-Aug 2004) had a net annual income increase

income as postdocs progress from their first to second year.

**Conclusion** The results of our survey suggest that the salary ranges for postdocs in their second year and beyond, without the subsidy, are currently not adequate to provide cost of living and experience based increases in compensation. Our analysis allows us to propose salary ranges that would provide adequate compensation for postdocs in subsequent years (Table 1). We calculated a 5% raise for each year based on the average first year salary for postdocs with-

## Theater Review: *The Light in the Piazza*

TARI SUPRAPTO

*The Light in the Piazza* is a musical that takes place in Italy (mostly in Florence, with a brief visit to Rome in the second act) in 1953. The story revolves around a mother and daughter from North Carolina, Margaret and Clara Johnson, who are revisiting the places that Margaret saw during her honeymoon many years ago. During the course of their sight-seeing, Clara loses her hat in a brief gust of wind, which is recovered by a handsome Italian boy, Fabrizio Nacarelli. It's love at first sight for Clara and Fabrizio, but Margaret does not approve of the relationship for various reasons, some obvious and some not. We also meet Fabrizio's family, including the charming Signor Nacarelli played by Chris Sarandon (formerly the villainous prince in the motion picture *The Princess Bride*).

I was very excited to see this show, which is at the Vivian Beaumont Theater in Lincoln Center. I had heard the singers in this musical had incredible voices and that it had won six Tony awards: Best Original Score, Best Actress in a Musical (for Victoria Clark's portrayal of Margaret Johnson), Best Scenic Design, Best Costume Design Best Lighting Design, and Best Orchestration. I couldn't pass up the discount offered by Playbill either—so off I went on a Friday evening for what I hoped would be excellent entertainment.

Upon entering the theater, I saw a well-designed set representing a small town square in Italy. The lighting was particularly striking; very

soft and warm for a theater set. To set the mood, the public announcement regarding cell phones and pagers was in Italian. Little did I know that the Italian characters would be speaking and singing in Italian for most of the first act and there was no place for subtitles as there would be for an opera. I found this to be irritating because I believe the lyrics in a musical are essential to the story. It also didn't help that the orchestra often drowned out the singers, thus making the English lyrics difficult to understand and I couldn't enjoy the singers' voices as much as I felt I should. If the imbalance between the orchestra and the singers was due to the fact that I was seated more to the side of the stage, then I would think they would have figured out the acoustics of the space by now. I also think the singers were not using microphones (I couldn't tell as I can in most shows)—that's refreshing, but then the orchestra should have been playing at a lower volume to accommodate the lack of electronic amplification. When I could hear the singers, it was evident that I had been missing out on a lot as I found the cast to be very talented both as actors and musicians.

Victoria Clark, is an excellent singer and actress; her Margaret is a protective mother but also a woman appreciative of love. She sometimes portrayed the "ugly American tourist" stereotype but also showed sophistication and good manners in the Nacarelli home. Kelli O'Hara

plays Clara Johnson radiantly—and her opera training shows through in her performance of the songs. She is also a good actress although I didn't feel there was a lot of chemistry between her and Aaron Lazar, who plays Fabrizio. The women in the Nacarelli family are both portrayed by opera singers with amazing ranges who also have great comic timing. The strong vocal component seemed to clash with the orchestral score, which was dissonant in many places. Perhaps I have an unsophisticated ear, but it was a little jarring to hear clashing notes and strange harmonies throughout the performance of a romantic storyline. My companion simply stated that he liked the story, but found the music to be “weird.” I certainly overheard other people in the audience who thought the music was incredible. So, this could be a matter of taste.

Another thing that made my experience of *The Light in the Piazza* less than enjoyable was that the characters often lit and smoked pungent herbal cigarettes, and I found the smell of the tobacco and herbs to be very strong and unpleasant. Keep this in mind if you are sensitive to cigarette smoke—you may want to sit further from the stage, although that would mean you couldn't get close and personal with the characters.

I have to admit I felt some regret in seeing this show—it wasn't terrible, but it didn't meet my expectations for a musical with so many accolades. While I can appreciate the talents of the cast, my evaluation of a performance is based on the overall experience. In this case, it wasn't a spectacular one for me. *Caveat emptor!* ☉

*Editor's note: The role of Clara is currently played by Katie Clarke.*

## In Pursuit of *Better*: 'Science Shops 201'

JOSÉ MORALES AND ALLAN COOP

In a recent article we proposed that the Republican abuse of science is embedded in a longer-term science-society split (“The Republican War on Science: An Interview with Chris Mooney,” *Natural Selections*, Nov 2005). In that article we also observed that this split may be symptomatic of a longer and more dangerous decline that threatens our democracy and the Enlightenment tradition of *better* we have inherited from Europe. Given such circumstances, science advocates seek solutions to both the short- and long-term aspects of this problem. Many, like Chris Mooney and ourselves, recognize a particular class of solutions that clears a path from abuse and its associated social decline towards *better*. These solutions involve an amplification of the science/public relationship or science democratization. In our interview, we noted that Chris Mooney mentioned various democratization solutions, one of which was European efforts. In a previous article, we presented one of these European initiatives, the now global movement of Science Shops (“Shopping for Science,” *Natural Selections*, Mar 2005). We contend that Science Shops are one cure for the conservative anti-science that Mr. Mooney has described, and that ultimately feeds the science-society split that we described in that earlier article. We thought it of value to provide more detailed information about Science Shops from their source, “Living Knowledge,” the European Commission sponsored International Science Shop Network ([www.ScienceShops.org](http://www.ScienceShops.org)).

An understanding of Science Shops is predicated on the concept of “civil society” which itself has numerous definitions. We

take civil society to refer to the “totality of voluntary civic and social organizations or institutions which form the basis of a functioning society as opposed to the...structures of a state.” Thus, civil society, whose “institutional forms are distinct from those

### *Science Shops seek to*

- 1) *provide civil society with knowledge and skills through research and education*
- 2) *provide their services on an affordable basis*
- 3) *promote and support public access to, and public influence on, science and technology*
- 4) *create equitable and supportive partnerships with civil society organizations*
- 5) *enhance understanding among policymakers and education and research institutions of the research and education needs of civil society*
- 6) *enhance the transferable skills and knowledge of students, community representatives and researchers*

of family and market, commonly embraces a diversity of actors that vary in their degree of formality, autonomy, and power” and includes, for example, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private voluntary organizations (PVOs), cooperatives, academia, the media, and organized religion. Further, we note from the “Living Knowledge” definition, mission and criteria statement that “There is no structure of an organization that can be seen as the ultimate construction. How Science Shops are organized and operate is highly dependent on their context. When establishing a network of Science Shops new contexts may add new organizational structures. Therefore the definition of

Science Shops is a working definition. The term Science Shop should be considered a brand name, including all kind of organizations that fit in the definition.” It is for these reasons that we do not present examples of Science Shop projects here. Instead, we have excerpted portions of the “Living Knowledge” Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) listing<sup>2</sup> which covers not only general issues such as the history, location, and definition of Science Shops, but also more detailed aspects such as advice on working with clients or civil society partners, scientists, and students.

**What is a Science Shop?** A Science Shop is “a unit that provides independent, participatory research support in response to concerns experienced by civil society.” Science Shops use the term ‘science’ in its broadest sense, incorporating social and human sciences, as well as natural, physical, engineering and technological sciences. They provide their services on an affordable basis, free of financial

barriers. Furthermore, they seek to create equitable and supportive partnerships with civil society organizations where knowledge and ideas from society are used as a cross-fertilization to the research field. Science Shop projects can include educational efforts, but are distinct from regular social/welfare based social support. These projects are not proactive, but are generated in response to particular requests and do not answer curiosity-driven questions. Thus, Science Shops are not ‘shops’ in the traditional sense of the word but rather small entities, usually university related, that carry out scientific research in a wide range of disciplines—usually free

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of charge—on behalf of local civil society. The fact that Science Shops respond to civil society's needs for expertise and knowledge is a key element that distinguishes them from other knowledge transfer mechanisms. We note that in the USA there are centers for community-based research that resemble Science Shops<sup>3</sup>. However, these centers typically interact more closely with civil society organizations than with universities.

**How can Science Shops help make the research agenda more responsive to the needs and demands of civil society?**

Scientific progress has created enormous gains for society and is seen as the key to economic development and international competitiveness. Yet industrial and commercial development has also given rise to numerous social and environmental problems. Both resolution of these problems and evaluation of the impact of new technologies depend upon further scientific knowledge and political and economic decisions. This knowledge is not neutral, but contested and negotiated within political frameworks. Further, economic and organizational resources for research and development are unequally distributed at the national and international level. Businesses and governmental authorities and institutions have more resources and easier access to and influence on research facilities than NGOs and citizen groups such as consumer organizations, environmental organizations, trade unions, social welfare organizations, etc. The growth of the knowledge economy and society creates pressure for universities to become more closely involved in civil society. The university can increasingly become a forum of reflection, as well as of debate and dialog between scientists and people. Science Shops were founded to provide a strategy for giving small and medium NGOs access to research capacity, which allowed them to influence the research agenda at the universities (and through this the wider societal agenda). In turn, Science Shop projects developed the perception of the NGOs about what is researchable through science, and what are the potentials and limits of research. By accumulating projects across different NGOs and over time, Science Shops can act as a knowledge repository, where knowledge about particular topics is gradually built from project to project. In this way, the otherwise individual focus of small-scale research or student-conducted projects can be moved forward from what might otherwise be a project with limited

scientific value.

**How can a Science Shop be financed?** Science Shops have different sources of funding, depending on the local situation. Those associated with universities may be either fully or partially funded by the university. Full funding provides the most readily sustainable model. Staff can be dedicated employees or university academics who conduct part of their research/teaching within the Science Shop. Alternatively, some Science Shops are part-funded by a university in combination with external funding from government programs or private and charitable grants. If the external funding covers concrete projects, overheads from such funding may be able to finance part of the day-to-day administration. Non-university Science Shops act as social entrepreneurs supporting socially beneficial research activity with NGOs by conducting profitable research or other activities with organizations and funding agencies that can pay market costs. This model can also be developed within universities where a Science Shop might be part of a research center. Science Shops may also be involved with NGOs when the latter are making application for external funding by having Science Shop research written into the bid to evidence monitoring and evaluation of services. For funders this ensures an independent scientific assessment as part of the bid, which is likely to be less expensive than commercial research and evaluation services. A further funding model would provide dedicated studentships and grants for graduate and postgraduate students or scientists in Science Shops, thus enabling research in an area for several years.

Many observers and practicing scientists may react negatively to the idea of science democratization and consider Science Shops in particular to be an unnecessary intrusion and irrelevant for science. Such people may also look at the current situation in the US as an anti-science aberration, a short-term spike in science abuse. They may believe that science is essentially OK, asserting that we can just go back to the ways things were before the current administration; in short...“If it ain't broke don't fix it.” However, the broader view of the science/democracy symbiosis is also of concern here. Like many issues currently clamoring for our attention, science and democracy may be more ‘broke’ than is easily acknowledged.

We contend that damage to the science/democracy symbiosis is evidenced by two trends. One trend sees an increased societal dependence on a progressively more powerful scientific technocracy that exists within a steadily declining social foundation characterized by low levels of science education and social ambivalence towards science. This is a trend towards the modern equivalent of the dark ages where a “scientific priesthood” dominates a populace that is all but illiterate. The other trend is typified by increasingly powerful anti-science forces springing from deep and abiding religious conservatism coupled to a corporate agnosticism regarding science. This trend seems to lead to some kind of bumbling and incompetent theocracy. Neither option is acceptable. *Better* of necessity requires *better* of both science and democracy.

What may be blinding science advocates to the real possibility of the decline we have spoken of are the contradictory views espoused towards both democracy and the public. There is a paternalism that assumes an essentially ignorant and unreliable public in need of constant instruction as to their good. Alternatively, there is a glossy view of the public as the untarnished source of all knowledge, wisdom, and virtue. Advocates of science democratization should seek a middle ground that sees ordinary people as capable of extraordinary insight ONLY with sufficient preparation and motivation. We are thus led to a Jeffersonian view of the science/democracy symbiosis, where it is “safer to have the whole people respectfully enlightened than a few in a high state of science and many in ignorance”<sup>4</sup>. We suggest that a perspective incorporating such mechanisms as Science Shops has an inherent capacity to subvert any science/society split and thus holds a promise of *better*. As Jefferson said, “If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be”<sup>5</sup>. ©

**References:**

1. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil\_society, www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/introduction.htm.
2. www.scienceshops.org/new%20web-content/framesets/fs-about-faq.html
3. See www.niehs.nih.gov/translat/cbpr/cbpr.htm.
4. Peterson, Merrel D. (1960). *The Jefferson Image of the American Mind*. New York, Oxford University Press. p. 241.
5. *ibid.* p. 89.



This month, *Natural Selections* features **Raji Edayathumangalam**, *Postdoctoral Associate in the Darst Lab*  
**Country of Origin: India**

## New York State of Mind

**1. How long have you been living in New York?** I moved to NYC just this past summer. It's been almost nine months now—it's still my honeymoon phase in the city. I was ecstatic about living in the city the day I landed here and it's my hunch that the feeling is here to stay.

**2. Where do you live?** Fortunately, I get to live right next door to work. I live in one of the RU apartment buildings right by the campus—the only way for me to dare to live in this uppity neighborhood (smirk)!

**3. Which is your favorite neighborhood?** I am still exploring the city but I already have some favorites. I like Lower Manhattan, particularly around City Hall and the Brooklyn Bridge for how historic the place is. The Village is a fun place to hang out and enjoy various activities. Inwood is an area I like to visit every so often. It's a serene spot tucked away in the northern tip of the city; it's a good respite from the city's endless energy.

**4. What do you think is the most overrated thing in the city? And underrated?** Hmm...The housing options for most people are severely limiting and very overrated. People seem to be left with only one of two insane options—to either pay outrageously for a shack in the city or to move out and add that painful commute to the daily schedule. That I might have to move out of Manhattan one day peels off some of the romance I associate with NYC. Now, what do I consider underrated? Having grown up in crowded cities in India, I am not used to excessive politeness on the streets. So New Yorkers feel just like home to me, but they tend to be underrated at times. In fact, New Yorkers hold a certain appeal—I am constantly amazed by how the peoples of the world huddle together, and I find it to be an extremely interesting and a very entertaining experience.

**5. What do you miss most when you are out of town?** I just came back from my first real vacation away from the city since I moved here last summer. I must say that when I was away, I missed the city for its endless sights and sounds, and for all the liveliness and energy.

**6. If you could change one thing about NYC, what would that be?** I'd like to see a more affordable New York for the general

population. I'd also like to see a New York where there's more intermingling of people from the various cultures and ethnicities. To me, the city still appears segregated in many ways. I'm being utopian, I suppose...

**7. Describe a perfect weekend in NYC.** My first weekend here is still very fresh in my mind. It was a bright sunny day as I walked across the Brooklyn Bridge, got my first peek of the Statue of Liberty and one of the best views of Lower Man-



hattan at dusk from the promenade in Brooklyn Heights. Now, how about that for a memorable impression?!

**8. What is the most memorable experience you have had in NYC?** I've had many memorable experiences in NY. My first ever visit to NY was two days before Christmas in 1999. As I stood there enjoying the spectacular view of the city from the top of the Empire State Building, I told myself that this is the city after my heart and that I'd like to live in this city someday. I think the wish came true!

**9. If you could live anywhere else, where would that be?** I fall in love with cities that are culturally diverse and that can be explored by foot and public transportation. San Francisco, Amsterdam, and Bombay (Mumbai) are cities I would consider.

**10. Do you think of yourself as a New Yorker? Why?** Yes, I very much do consider myself a New Yorker. I went to graduate school in a small college town in Colorado. Although I enjoyed that experience, I knew it wasn't the place for me. I could never relate to the slow pace and the lack of cultural and social diversity. New York is exactly my kind of place. I get much more than I bargained for, in terms of meeting my sociocultural needs. ☺

## ACADEMIA NUTS



cartoon by Sean Taverna

*"I sense a great unhappiness in R278Q."*

## Foreign Student and Scholar Tax Workshop

Tuesday March 21, Caspary Auditorium

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., continental breakfast at 9:30 a.m

The workshop will address U.S. tax return filing requirements, U.S. residency status determination, completion of the Form 8843, Form 1040NR and Form 1040NR-EZ, New York State filing requirements, and other relevant topics.

If you have any questions regarding this event contact Kretina Wright at [cookk@rockefeller.edu](mailto:cookk@rockefeller.edu)



## REMINDER

### Annual Rockefeller Scientific Poster Session

Friday March 3 & Friday March 10

1:00-3:30 p.m.

Weiss Research Building

17th Floor



"Yeah, he goes slightly overboard when he spots a competitor in the room."

## The Rockefeller Film Series

LUKASZ KOWALIK

For your enjoyment, The Rockefeller University Film Series is again screening two films this month. The first one, Marziyeh Meshkini's debut *The Day I Became A Woman*, is a short (78 min.) feature, consisting of three separate episodes, each one contemplating a woman at a different age in contemporary Iran. They all center on the near impossibility for a woman to escape assigned female roles in a controlling society: be it a girl about to be clad in her first chador (Fateme Cheragh Akhtar), a young wife (Shabnam Toloui), or a wealthy widow (Shabnam Toloui). The movie remains silent about the backgrounds or motives of its protagonists, which we are left to explore on our own, presenting us with the stories and stunning images that remain with the viewer, rich in detail and metaphor. Regard-

less of whether you want to commemorate the International Women's Month by rallying against the sexist orthodoxy, immerse yourself in poetic images depicting another culture, or just brush up on Iranian cinema (as it is widely known, you cannot possibly call yourself a modern intellectual without having something to say on Iranian filmmaking), show up in Caspary on March 13.

Towards the end of March, Spring approaches, all kinds of creatures awake to life around us, and the Caspary Auditorium is no exception. On March 27, legions of zombies will threaten civilization (or Great Britain anyway) and it will be up to one stereotypical twentysomething everyman (Shaun, played by Simon Pegg) to save the world as we know it, and salvage his relationship at the same time. *Shaun*

*Of The Dead*, a nod to George Romero's zombie trilogy, directed by Edgar Wright, is a romantic comedy with zombies—or a heartfelt zombie movie—that delivers surprisingly clever, witty entertainment. The movie's main joke, that many of the living are almost indistinguishable from the dead, never wears out. Other than obvious zombie references, there is something here from *The Simpsons*, *Monty Python*, and, well, *Bridget Jones's Diary*. Go ahead then and treat yourself and your loved ones to a horror movie with brains. Or, rather, with braaaaaainsssss.

All screenings are in Caspary Auditorium on Monday nights at 8 p.m. Admission is free, no tickets or reservations are required. Guests and family members are welcome. ☉

## Share an Ingenuity License!

Several labs at the Rockefeller University have recently expressed interest in using Ingenuity Pathways Analysis. "Ingenuity" ([http://www.ingenuity.com/products/pathways\\_analysis.html](http://www.ingenuity.com/products/pathways_analysis.html)) is the largest curated network knowledge base available that allows researchers to analyze gene and protein data towards understanding mechanism and function. Furthermore, journal reviewers are increasing looking for data analysis using "Ingenuity" as seen in the quote below.

We would like to combine our resources and purchase an "Ingenuity" static license. Three Labs have expressed an interest which would allow all participating labs to use the software at the RU Genomics Resource Center. We currently need several more labs to commit to participation (\$1000/lab/year) to acquire the static license.

Please consider "Ingenuity" for your research and together we can cooperate to make this resource available to our research!

If there is sufficient interest, we will organize a company seminar to explain the program's features

ACTUAL REVIEWER COMMENT

Reviewer

"...In this regard, other pathway analysis (e.g. Ingenuity Systems, etc) should be performed to integrate the findings and determine potential outliers".

The Journal of Clinical Investigation

If you're interested in "Ingenuity", contact...

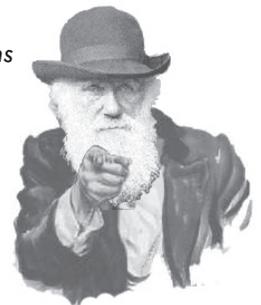
[www.ingenuity.com/products/pathways\\_analysis.html](http://www.ingenuity.com/products/pathways_analysis.html)

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