

that a college education was a privilege, not necessarily a birthright, and concludes, consequently, “too many people are going to college.” Murray believes that too much emphasis is placed on the most elitist Ivy League institutions, that a perfectly good education can be had from a state university, and that, simply, not all children are cut out for college. There are, after all, other vocations for which the less than academically gifted could be (and Murray might claim, should be) trained.

Murray concludes his book with a chapter declaring that “America’s Future Depends on How We Educate the Academically Gifted,” and I doubt that Susan Jacoby would object to this notion. “The elite is already smart,” Murray states, but “it needs to be wise.” To attain wisdom, he demands “rigor,” rigor in verbal expression, rigor in forming judgments, rigor in thinking about virtue and the Good, and, finally, humility. Murray’s approach is certainly elitist, but also disarmingly pragmatic. If he believes that half of the children are below average, he also has notions about how to “teach the forgotten half how to make a living.” He discusses education not in terms of intelligence, but in terms of abilities, following the example of Howard Gardner’s *Frames of Mind* (1983), classified as follows: Bodily kinesthetic (“from someone who trips over his own feet to Fred Astaire”), Musical (“tone-deaf to Mozart”), Spatial (“from someone who gets lost two blocks from home to Daniel Boone”), Linguistic (“from unable to form a sentence to Shakespeare”), Logical–mathematical (“from unable to understand cause and effect to Aristotle”), Interpersonal (“autism to Bill Clinton”), and Intrapersonal (“from an undisciplined narcissist to Confucius”). How each of these “abilities” might be taught is then discussed in detail. Murray’s book is only half the length of Jacoby’s, but it might be considered twice as useful, despite its PowerPoint tendency to score its points. On the other hand, Jacoby’s *Jerimiah* is far more enjoyable, even if the older you are, the more nostalgic you may become while reading it, though even the nostalgic may take some pride and satisfaction, from the outcome of the election of 2008.

Note

1. Jacoby, Susan. “Call Me a Snob, but Really, We’re a Nation of Dunces.” *The Washington Post* 17 Feb. 2008: B1, B5.

—Jim Welsh
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The Benjamin Lee Whorf Legacy

Peter C. Rollins, Editor. Ridgemont Media Productions: Cleveland, OK, 2008.

The *Benjamin Lee Whorf Legacy* adds a new dimension to our understanding of the businessman/linguist associated with “the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis.” This electronic archive supplies primary and secondary materials to amplify Whorf’s arguments about how languages shape perceptions; it also throws light on the 1920s controversy between science and religion. The collection is edited by Peter C. Rollins, whose first conference paper on Whorf was delivered at an early meeting of the Popular Culture Association and later published in a special issue of *JPC* devoted to The Occult (Ed. Robert Galbreath). Later, the association endorsed a book-length study of Whorf (included on this CD-ROM). It was my great pleasure to be standing next to Marshall Fishwick at the Kellogg Center on the Michigan State University campus when the first paper on Whorf was given, and I have followed Rollins’ study of Whorf as it evolved over the decades.

Previously unpublished articles by Whorf discuss the history of linguistic theory. Also in the collection of “new” articles are discussions of what Whorf derides as “scientific unanimity.” Moving to the world of physics, this graduate of MIT (chemical engineering) proposed a “flux-outlet” theory of matter which incorporated what at that time was called the “new physics.” The supposed conflict between science and religion is considered in an imaginative essay entitled “The Newtonian Room and the Christian Rosebush.” For scholars interested in the steps of Whorf’s exposure to new ideas, there is an entry for “Library Books Read: 1924–1928,” a list which evidences a concurrent interest in linguistics, psychology, and relativity—all synthesized in the famous linguistic relativity hypothesis associated with Whorf and his mentor, Edward Sapir.

During the trial of John T. Scopes, Whorf set out to answer H. L. Mencken, whom Whorf scorned for his lack of understanding of both religion (for which Mencken had contempt) and science (in which Mencken had no training). In 1925, Whorf sat down after work (at the Hartford Insurance Company) and, in fewer than six months, completed a novel titled *The Ruler of the Universe*. This idiosyncratic work of po-

lemical fiction attempted to demonstrate by both argument and narrative that the sciences—especially the physics of Max Planck and the relativity theory of Albert Einstein—were not in conflict with an imaginative reading of Genesis. The novel predicts—by way of a dream—a future war in which airplane technology facilitates attacks on large cities; in the armaments race, scientists develop a weapon which taps the basic energy of the universe. How prescient were such “fantasies” in 1925!

This collection includes three journal articles on Whorf, a book on Whorf, and even the hefty dissertation submitted to Harvard University’s American studies program. An introduction to the collection takes a cultural studies approach to Whorf, and the dissertation will be of interest to scholars of the post-World War I decade because it places the discussions of religion, science, and language within a historical context. (After the “war to end all wars,” Alexander Korzybski devised his famous “structural differential” and launched the General Semantics movement while Ludwig Zamenhof and others devised and popularized the artificial language of Esperanto—both efforts by Polish intellectuals to promote international understanding and peace.)

The “Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis” is discussed every day on the Internet, often with a “shock of recognition,” to use Edmund Wilson’s expression (borrowed from Melville). *The Legacy of Benjamin Lee Whorf* should provide a jump start for new scholarly investigations into American popular perceptions.

There are some software needs connected with this scholarly tool, but the required items are already on most computers and, if not, are included on the CD-ROM for downloading. Many of the documents are word-searchable, an important aid for scholars who might be more interested in the issues of the 1920s and 1930s than with specifics about Whorf. I would urge every major university teaching linguistics, ESL, and anthropology to acquire this important scholar resource.

—Ray B. Browne

Ray & Pat Browne Popular Culture Library
Bowling Green State University

The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy 1945–89

Nicholas J. Cull. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Cull’s book provides a comprehensive survey of the development of the United States Information Agency (USIA), which for five decades operated as the principal outlet for “telling America’s story to the world” through international information, broadcasting, culture, and exchange programs. The agency became an essential tool of foreign policy, projecting positive images of the country and its democratic principles, and minimizing the potential damage caused by events such as the Vietnam War.

The book adopts a narrative format, with each chapter devoted to the USIA during successive presidential administrations. Cull draws on a wealth of historical evidence, from governmental archives, libraries and the oral testimonies of over a hundred leading figures connected with the agency. A concluding chapter explains how the USIA survived the fall of communism, but was eventually swallowed up by the State Department on September 30, 1999.

What emerges most tangibly from Cull’s account is just how vulnerable the USIA was to political interference. Some politicians treated it as an instrument of propaganda, despite the fact that the term acquired a negative connotation after the First World War (“[it] now stood in relation to information as murder to killing” (9)).

Other politicians considered USIA a waste of federal resources; as chair of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee, Lyndon Johnson commented in 1957 that “more money is wasted by this agency than by any other agency” (142). USIA strove to maintain good relations with the State Department: “cultural work needed to be far enough from the great diplomatic machine to maintain integrity [. . .] but still close enough to retain relevance to the broadest goals of foreign policy” (343). This they achieved by continually redefining their aims and objectives according to changing socio-political priorities.

Cull concludes by offering several lessons about public diplomacy, which are as important today as they