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The opinions expressed herein represent the opinions of the authors (or maybe just the speakers), and in any case, do not represent the opinions of the University of Maryland in any way.

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The Terrapist Manifesto
Or; The Terrapist is a Satire Magazine
A.M. Bowen

The proliferation of wireless ear pieces is my favorite technological event in years. Finally, someone has found a way to make large swaths of our population appear, in public places, as though they’re shouting at themselves. It’s a brilliant innovation, and it fits perfectly with our current national character. We appear a little self-absorbed and very goofy, but we actually just want somebody to listen—even a disembodied voice. Unfortunately, our national debate on important issues—like our country’s use of power—seems like it is increasingly carried on by a few people who are really just shouting at themselves.

That said, or written, the editors at The Terrapist1 fear two connected trends that deserve to be stated as clearly as possible: 1) there are not enough voices in the national debate, and 2) the voices that get through are too loud and simplistic. These trends deserve to be fought, and really, the fight has been going on for some time. This fight took (and takes) place in the debate about the foundation of morals.

The twentieth century had some brilliant thinkers who laid an enticing case for relativism. The relativists believe, generally, that absolute values—of the moral and not the math kind—are dangerous bunk.2 Accordingly, there is a well articulated position against relativism—that relativism will unleash the sinister forces of Anything Goes.3 It should be stated that the relativist position I refer to does not purely rest upon some namby-pamby ideal of diversity: particular theorists explicitly warned against the power of an all-powerful, encroaching system of thought that drowned out opposition or new ideas; and frankly, totalitarians are scary.4 However, the relativists and their antagonists can still be friends: relativists just need to accept5 that people have strongly held, absolute moral convictions, and that those of us who tend towards relativism cannot tenably argue against those convictions, since we don’t believe in absolute claims. Thus, dialogue—between relativists and anti-relativists, or any sides of any debate, for that matter—is the key to understanding. In other words, the best way to navigate this terrifying era is to take in all perspectives, view them critically, and then come to some conclusions about how to live with a little more understanding and happiness.

Given that this is the era of shock and awe,6 this will be a difficult task. However, there are some important things to consider in this ‘fostering openness of ideas and such’ adventure. Though the thought of shaping what people talk about around the country is daunting, it helps to remember that the war starts at home (or that all politics is local, depending on your preference). Our university is not immune to the loudness that characterizes debate in this country. Read the Op-Ed section of the Diamondback after the next example of prevalent racism, or

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1 Worthy of a capitalized article.
3 I do not mean to oversimplify the debate on relativism into a for/against dichotomy; I am simply choosing two arguments in a multi-faceted debate. And while we’re at it, Anything Goes ate my face.
4 Lyotard, 66.
5 Irony!
6 Which might be more subtle than I imply.
Vanity Fair Can Read Your Mind
Come On Feel the Homogeneity
The Editors

The question for Vanity Fair’s 2005 essay contest was a vacuous one: “What is going on inside the minds of American youth today?” The essay prompt reflected upon the activities of the ‘50s and ‘60s, referring to the sit-ins of the Civil Rights era, Vietnam protests, and anti-presidential instigation (in the LBJ and Nixon varieties), as if to suggest that the kids of Generation Y aren’t making the principled stands of their parents—as if to suggest that all we care about are celebrities, videogames, and our MTV. Some members of the Terrapist’s editorial staff answered the essay question just to reveal, sometimes indignantly, that we do have things on our minds. Lots of things. Enjoy them:

Anne says,
Since the great thinker Aristotle used the format of the syllogism as a tool of logic, and Aristotle is such a large part of The Canon and therefore undeniably right, any enlightened mind of America’s Youth can see that the syllogism is the appropriate method for determining what is in fact on the minds of America’s Youth:

(A) Because America’s Youth is obviously a single mental entity collectively thinking the same thing at the same time, and (B) because I, being a nineteen-year-old college student, am technically a member of America’s Youth, (C) it logically follows that all of America’s Youth is currently thinking about bacon.

Adam says,
Sex.

Having sex, watching sex, straight sex, gay sex, sex with one’s self, sex with multiple partners, sex on beds, sex on boats, sex with strangers, sex with celebrities, worrying about getting diseases from sex, worrying about what to do with unwanted fetuses resulting from sex, worrying about not getting enough sex, and generally figuring out how to have more sex. Also, I’d like to point out that it hasn’t been “my” MTV, “your” MTV, “their” MTV or anyone else’s possessive MTV since before the Minds of America’s Youth could tie their shoes. Get with it, editors of Vanity Fair.

In summation, sex.

Andy says,
There are a lot of messages transmitted by outsiders to members of my generation; innumerable messages, in fact, vying for us to support this cause or that cause. I don’t mean to claim that my generation is made of computers that must be coded by outsiders. I just mean that the Homosexual Agenda is alive, strong, and convincing. Welcome to the new gay generation, actively recruited on college campuses by members of the vast queer conspiracy. Computer projections made by members of the Homosexual Agenda indicate that everyone in my generation will be thinking about his or her love for his or her own sex by May 2007. And once my entire generation is conquered, it’s on to the next. This is the truth of the matter, Vanity Fair, so get used to it: the dudes of my generation—are thinking about dudes.
Gun Beats Everything
The Horrors of Domestic Democratization, Volume 1
Adam Mirvis

One of the darker trends in our political debate these days centers around the concept that the legislature ought to have the power to overrule decisions by the Supreme Court. Ideologues from both wings of the American political spectrum seem to decide from time to time that the very idea of an unelected "judiciary," with the capacity to do things—agency and duty meaning “activism” in such times—is a silly and dangerous precedent that flies in the face of democracy.

By way of example, the little-publicized and ironically titled "Constitution Restoration Act of 2005," sponsored by Alabama Republicans Sen. Richard Shelby and Rep. Robert Aderholt (with a celebrity appearance by Chief Justice Roy S. Moore of Ten Commandments fame), declares that "the Supreme Court shall not have jurisdiction to review, by appeal, writ of certiorari, or otherwise, any matter to the extent that relief is sought against an entity of Federal, State, or local government, or against an officer or agent of Federal, State, or local government, (whether or not acting in official or personal capacity), concerning that entity's, officer's, or agent's acknowledgment of God as the sovereign source of law, liberty, or government." In other words, were this bill to pass, the federal judiciary would be forbidden from confronting the executive branch on violations of the establishment clause. This effectively means no more establishment clause. Were a president to take to the idea of declaring a state religion, there would be no means of recourse. This somehow strikes me as less than wise.

The entire problem with this kind of reworking of the balance of power is that it is always incredibly short-sighted, regardless of which side is pushing for it. It seems the party which holds the White House or the majority in Congress at any given time is forever guilty of the assumption that the location of power is never going to change. Thus, the tendency is to seek out ways of altering the system itself to give one's party more power.

The voting population can often be brought on board as enthusiastic supporters of such changes, if the message is framed as change in the name of democratization. Case in point: wherever legislatures have considered implementing referendums or ballot initiatives, their constituencies have been very supportive. Starting in 1898 and most recently in 1996, the question of state ballot initiatives has come before voters forty-seven times. Thirty-eight of these measures were passed; five of those that did not pass constituted a simple majority. Of the measures that passed, twenty-five passed by better than a 2-1 ratio, fourteen by better than a 3-1 ratio.²

In California, where propositions and ballot initiatives are the norm, 85% of the state budget (as of 2004) has been "pre-assigned" by referendum, and is not under the control of the legislature or the governor. California voters have exercised direct democracy on issues from education reform to assisted suicide.³ No matter one's political affiliation, everyone seems to agree that more democracy, in a faster, purer, more direct form, without excess baggage like checks, balances, and the rule of law, is better. This is analogous to the logic that makes crack more appealing than regular old cocaine. Never mind that the voters of California are incapable of composing an education budget on the fly, and should not be expected to be capable of such—that voters are represented by career politicians who tend to be more informed than the GED crowd is really just another layer of bureaucracy between the people and their freedom. While debating politics, a friend of mine recently declared dismissively, "There you go with your 'tyranny of the majority' again." I quickly reminded him of how unmoderated governance by popular opinion was responsible for fascism.

But back to the courts. Because transferring power from the Supreme Court to the elected Congress means more direct control by the people, individuals like Richard Shelby can argue that their cause is red white and blue pro-democracy, the kind of idea that merits the waving of flags and possibly sparklers. And as we all know, democracy is the opposite of terrorism. Unfortunately, in the excitement to give ourselves more democracy, we have forgotten two important lessons from our youth. One is from the day in U.S. history class when we went over why the government is organized the way it is. The other is from an even earlier time—

¹ Introduced as identical House bill H.R. 1070 and Senate bill S. 520 on 3 March 2005. The bill has been previously introduced twice in the Senate and once in the House, as The Constitution Restoration Act of 2004. Available at: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c109:S.520:>
the time you learned how to play Rock-Paper-Scissors. Ah, Rock-Paper-Scissors. Rock is so cool, it totally kicks scissors’ ass. Too bad rock gets owned by unassuming paper. Ah, paper—it, then, must be the best. But no, here comes scissors, slicing through paper with its razor-sharp jaws of steel! In that one moment, that sweet epiphany, the concept of balance of power became clear. We just didn’t know what to call it yet. The balance of Rock-Paper-Scissors is an ideal analogy for the federal government. To wit, let us say the legislative branch is paper. Say you throw down rock. Rock is the executive branch. Paper comes along and impeaches it. But suppose you threw down scissors instead? Those Supreme Court scissors would come by and declare paper unconstitutional. Finally, President Rock has the power to appoint justices and determine the make-up of the Scissor Court, thus completing the cycle. (As a side note, it is a proven fact that any dispute may be resolved by either Rock-Paper-Scissors or Nose Goes [where the last person to touch their nose is punished with some odious task]. In our geopolitical model, the latter is analogous to how the international community handles humanitarian crises.)

Now, do you recall the one kid no one wanted to play R-P-S with? The one who would always go, “Rock…paper…scissors…shoot…GUN!!!!! Ahahahahaha, gun beats everything, you lose, ahaahahaha!” and would then go on his merry way until he met the kid that would go, “Rock…paper…scissors…shoot…ATOMIC BOMB!!!!! Ahahaha, atomic bomb beats everything including gun, you lose, ahaahahaha!” Then the first kid would go cry. The subtlety was so patently lost on them that we couldn’t help but shake our heads.

Unfortunately, those gun and atomic bomb kids went on to become legislators and judges and presidents. In time, the struggle for power between the parties has eclipsed in importance the balance of power between the branches of government, and has co-opted and perverted it to its own devices. While the country is a-buzz on the fate of landmark court rulings like Roe v. Wade, the silent victim may be far more fundamental than that. I’m looking at you, Marbury. Ultimately, this worrisome trend needs to be stemmed and people reminded what good government is all about. Essentially, we, as a nation, just need to watch Schoolhouse Rock again.
Robert Bork’s nomination to the Supreme Court in 1987 felt like destiny to Justice Scalia and Chief Justice Rehnquist, as it was Bork who perfected the technology for the “Originalist Direct Line,” a phone that, when picked up, would connect any legal scholar directly to a member of the Constitutional Convention. A quick conversation with one of the Framers would help the modern day scholar know, as directly as possible, the Constitutional principles the Framers intended to enact—allowing for an “Originalist” interpretation. Bork’s nomination was defeated, but he gave the phone to Scalia and Rehnquist in a “no hard feelings” sort of way. Below are examples of how the phone has been used to aid in Originalist (or at least strict constructionist) interpretations of the Constitution.

[Transcript: June 25, 2003, 11:34 PM EST, concerning Lawrence v. Texas, No. 02-102, in which the majority opinion held that “The Texas statute making it a crime for two persons of the same sex to engage in certain intimate sexual conduct violates the Due Process Clause.”]
Scalia: Alex?
Hamilton: Yef? To whom an I fpeaking?
S: Antonin Scalia, Alex, how are you?
H: Quite well. I just won an epic forensic battle with Jefferfon over how we fhould regard thofe pesky French.
S: Oh yeah, bastards. Anyway, how do you feel about striking down sodomy laws created by the states? One of those homosexual civil rights things, you know?
H: Oh yef. Clarence read me the majority opinion earlier today. Well, put it like thif: “Today’s opinion is the product of a Court, which is the product of a law-profession culture, that has largely signed on to the so-called homosexual agenda, by which I mean the agenda promoted by some homosexual activists directed at eliminating the moral opprobrium that has traditionally attached to homosexual conduct.” [Slight pause.] If that sufficient?

[Transcript: April 23, 1992, 02:34 AM EST, concerning Planned Parenthood v. Casey, No. 91-744, in which a majority of the court upheld a woman’s Constitutional right to abortion (originally held in Roe v. Wade, 1973, No. 70-18)].
Rehnquist: [Phone rings.] It’s ringing. [Picked up on other end.]
George Mason: Yef? Hallo?
R: Uhm...Alex?
GM: No. This is George Mafon.
R: That makes things complicated. Uh, what’s the date where you are?
GM: 1 October 1787. Who wantf to know?
R: Well, you’re the complicated one. You went to the convention and uh, you became an anti-Federalist, right?
Think you’re better than us?
That’s harsh. It’s only the sixth page.
But we’d like you to try and prove that you are, whether you’re a student, faculty member, or alum.

Send submissions to TheTerrapist@gmail.com

www.terrapist.com
A Private Investigator’s Letters  
Noir With an Inner Monologue

To My Dearest Cousin Morris,

I hope this letter finds you well, and that the recorded histories of my last exploits left you in good spirits. Here is another doozy of a tale for you to tell the fellows down at Speedy’s Check Cashing Depot. Maybe you could also put it in the company newsletter? I’m really trying to get published, but I digress.

It was just another rainy night in the windy city when the dame knocked on my door. Whack! You could hear the ring of her dame-like knuckles press heartlessly against the polished maple of my French Colonial door. Whack! Whack! Again the knocking; at first careless, then purposeful…but then, I only deal with dames with a purse and a purpose. You need big coin to play the big games with the big boys, and I play with the biggest boys in town. No, I’m not a homosexual; in retrospect that last sentence must make it seem that way, but try to stay focused on the dame for a minute. See, I’m getting ahead of myself telling you the present without giving you the past: the name’s Terrence McElroy and I’m a Private Eye. Also, I’ve been known to prepare taxes for close friends, but this is something I do not disclose to the attractive women that hire me to spy on cheating spouses, or to the lumbering Mafioso-henchmen that need me to spy on the competition – it is not because I am a chauvinist Neanderthal, or a pernicious racist; on the contrary, I have many female friends and acquaintances, and I also regularly listen to rap music. Whack! It’s funny, in the sick, twisted way that everything in my life seems to be, that this particular dame’s knock rattled so purposefully against my office door that it even penetrated my iPod headphones as I grooved to the new Kanye album. And so you see, I may be a tremendous PI, but I am far from an ethnocentric, malcontented bigot with little more separating him from the Grand Wizard of the KKK then the fact that I reside in the windy city, and not say Montgomery, Alabama or Hagerstown, Maryland. In fact, Mr. Namby-Pamby Philosophy/French/Finance major, Mr. Smithsonian Institute “Harvard with Honors” guy, the reason I keep my fledgling tax practice a secret is because I work exclusively with small businesses. And small business is not why dames come to my door on dark, stormy, nights like these.

With the last of her tremulous knocking resounding in my head, I opened the door, just as she was getting ready to leave. And here I should point out that she looked as good leaving as she did coming, with her D&G dress, and her Manolo Blahniks—and here I was thinking that now that Carrie and the gang had moved on to the ‘burbs, strappy high heels were a thing of the past—but again, I’m moving ahead in my story. Her hair was a layered blonde with highlights; if you asked me what color to this day I wouldn’t have an answer. And her legs…whoa boy, now I don’t consider myself a legs man, but if I were, I would be on those like the last helicopter out of Saigon. See, but there I go again appearing as both one who objectifies young, attractive women, and as someone with a complete disregard for the cultural and sociopolitical mores that defined an entire decade of conflict and redemption in Southeastern Asia. Far from it in fact; I frequently watch ABC’s The View to hear Barbara Walters’s insights into the fairer sex, and I have read Tom Brokaw’s The Greatest Generation from cover to cover not once but TWICE—so believe you me, I understand what ‘Nam was all about.

The dame turned around when I said “Ma’am.” I tipped my hat in a gentlemanly fashion and inquired as to her business. She was a quiet dame, as these dames usually are, but after some careful questions, I learned why she had sought my services out on a miserable Ash Wednesday evening, rather than remain home with her loving family in solemn and reverential observance of the holiday, filled with the cautious optimism that one feels as Easter beckons right around the corner. I should pause here to point out that I myself am a card carrying ACLU atheist, and perhaps am not fit to judge or discuss the Christian faith, but perhaps you will also indulge me this once—after all, I once stalked a cheating hubby through two showings of It’s a Wonderful Life and Miracle on 34th Street; as it happened, this philandering fellow was carousing with the projectionist at the old movie theatre on 2nd Street and West. So I think I know a little something about the philosopher Jesus and his noble sacrifice.

I’m sad to say that this gorgeous dame, like all the rest, was caught in a loveless marriage, with certain divorce looming in her future and a desperate need to prove her husband was an adulterer, thus ensuring a lucrative alimony payment and a life of luxury in Miami Beach. Standard PI work, I told her, telling her my rate of $1,000 a day plus expenses. She was taken aback by my rates, but was more relaxed when I reminded her that Chicago Lifestyles Magazine had voted me the number one private detective four years running in their “Best of Dining, Dilettantes and Detectives” issues. I was on the collage cover with Morton’s and Dick Daley’s delicious daughters, I pointed out. Not to toot my own horn mind you, but it is rare in my profession to receive that kind of public recognition when one is still alive. Convinced of my professionalism, the dame agreed and left
Glass, Bamboo, and the Other Ceilings of Our Time

Craig Keenan

A little while ago, an intriguing article ran in The Week, a wonderful magazine that helps sum up all the craziness this world has to offer to those people who prefer living life and drinking beer to being news junkies. My grandmother recommended the magazine to me.

Recently, a columnist from some syndicated newspaper talked about the “bamboo ceiling” prevalent in corporate America today. In other words, he was talking about how there is a disproportionately low number of Asian-Americans in the higher ranks of American corporations. He then discussed how this facet of business life was not unlike the one faced by women. First off, I applauded this journalist’s clever synthesis of “glass ceiling” and the word “bamboo.” Because whenever I think of the world’s largest continent and nearly half of the world’s population, I think of bamboo—oh, and pandas that can’t sustain erections.

But I’m happy that this journalist has learned, most importantly, how to craft such clever terms to help describe problems in American society. Because nowadays, people are too lazy to have things merely explained to them; they need asinine names to go with the explanations.

But I’m glad our journalist pointed something out: there are too many white guys running companies. In fact, WASPs make up 99% of all corporate positions.1 But Asian-Americans are not the only minorities suffering. So to help my fellow journalist, I will shed light on the various ceilings that are so prevalent in this bigoted society by giving them silly names:

- Mexican-Americans: The Tortilla Ceiling
- Arab-Americans: The Sand Ceiling
- Italian-Americans: The Spaghetti Ceiling
- Irish-Americans: The Whiskey Ceiling
- Jewish-Americans: The Latke Ceiling
- Native Americans:
  - Sioux: The Teepee Ceiling
  - Iroquois: The Longhouse Ceiling
  - Algonquian: The Wigwam Ceiling
  - Navajo: The Hogan Ceiling
  - Eskimo: The Igloo Ceiling
- African-Americans: The Institutionalized Racism Ceiling

Well, maybe not all of them are that silly. In any case, I hope that I have been of some small assistance in spreading awareness of certain discriminatory business practices. Thank you.

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1 I love statistics like this, because if you care enough about the subject, you don’t care if this is factual.
Why I No Longer Believe In the Market Economy

Karl von Hausaufgaben

For more than a century now, dead white men in ridiculous shirts have been lauding the wonders of the “market economy” at us, the less well-kempt masses. I, for one, wholly bought into these arguments until Monday, 14 November 2005, when shopping for a birthday card. What I found during my interaction with the market disturbed me, and I, for one, now advocate complete centralization of all resources to achieve a more morally upright and thoughtful means of distributing scarce resources.

My eyes were opened while looking for a birthday card for a friend. Naively, I went into the shop believing that the invisible hand of the market would ensure that all useful and necessary birthday cards would be available for my purchase. Thus, I entered the shop with my heart set upon a high-culture work sitting on a folded sheet of high-quality, thick paper-board. I wanted a card of Rembrandt’s Polish Nobleman, at once a worthy work for any display and a piece of master-craft entirely appropriate to wish a dear friend another year of health.

Alas! The market hath forsaken those of taste in this arena and in untold others. I could not find a card with this masterpiece. I found cards with crudely drawn “cartoon” creatures and pictures of Felis domestica falling from pathetic tress, but no Rembrandt. Indeed, I even found cards with photographic and acrylic “art” by local photographers and “painters” (if you will begrudge them such names, as I will not)—but no international masterpiece.

This situation obviously betrays several problems with the existing economic organization in this country. For one, how can we even begin to claim that a market that allocates resources so inefficiently is adequate for us? If the market were efficient, only international masterpieces would appear on cards to be presented as presents. The existing “art” cards betray yet another problem of late capitalism: its local focus. If the market were truly efficient, we would not be buying cards from two-bit local artisans; we would be buying only the best art, created in countries of culture like Russia, Cuba, China, and France. An international socialist revolution would bring in international sensibilities and would purge us of our provincial blinders through a gentle reeducation.

An international socialist revolution is exactly what we need. The economy must be centralized to allow people of discernment and taste to dictate proper and intelligent uses of resources. This will ensure that only the best birthday cards are produced, as selected by a qualified panel of planners. This will hopefully buttress our declining standards of taste and morality and ensure a greater level of quality; the poor overworked laborer cannot expect to make intelligent purchasing decisions on his or her own, and the current market situation shows that he or she demands the help of the government in doing so. This revolution can easily be realized by legislatively streamlining the government into a single, powerful executive branch that will efficiently allocate resources; mandate production; create, interpret, and enforce laws; and generally watch over the people to ensure equitable and fair operation of all social functions. Congress must act to make this so; otherwise, we must bury them.
Every time you don’t carpool, the terrorists win.

By driving solo, you waste more of our strategically vital oil reserves, increasing our energy dependence on despotic middle-eastern regimes that fund global terrorism, and forcing our leaders to fawn over thugs. We live in a society with freedom of choice, and you have the right to live and act however you’d like. But remember, every time you drive without a buddy, you’re putting Al-Qaeda in the passenger seat.

A message from the Federal Transit Authority and Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration
FTA MVA
A Different Kind of Open Door
Understanding China, and Moving Beyond Fear
A.M. Bowen

Cultural exchange is a tricky, multifaceted endeavor. It occurs on numerous levels between people of different countries: amongst members of governments; between businesses, academics, artists, citizens and on and on. Beyond person-to-person exchanges are reports, analyses, predictions, warnings, admonishments, et cetera from elements in the media—and the media (like governments, like citizenry, and like all other groups that one may assume or consider to be homogenous, unitary actors) is made of innumerable interests, factions, ideologies, and personalities that communicate with varying levels of information on the subject at hand. Cultural exchange is more than just student exchange programs—it includes all the information about cultures that pass between cultures.

Thus, information is the currency of cultural exchange. As follows, the more bank one has, the better one’s standing. If the U.S. has a lot of information about a country (as communicated by media outlets, interest groups, academics, etc.), its policymakers can make better informed decisions towards that country, and its citizens can urge its policymakers to make better decisions. Regarding information about China, is the United States impoverished, facing an embarrassment of riches, or somewhere in between?

Numerous perspectives about China are presented by numerous actors in numerous areas: media, government, and academia, to name a few. As Americans read about China in the media, the government of China is interested in what is being said about their country. Cultural exchange is occurring. What is most important is that every player in the exchange gathers as much information as possible so that the cultural exchange is healthy, and the relationship between China and the United States can progress without undue trepidation. This article looks to 1) differentiate the way the PRC’s government perceives itself from the way more Sinophobic types in the U.S. perceive China, 2) present some information and more enlightened perceptions of China as offered by College Park’s own China experts, 3) explain a few similarities between coverage of China today and coverage of Japan in the 1980s, and 4) offer a final word on what to make of tensions in the U.S.-China cultural exchange.

Which China is Real?
A glance at some recent U.S. media about China suggests that there are numerous Chinas being reported upon by journalists. There is China as a rising power. There is China as a rising threat. There is China as the object of study. This last viewpoint suggests an important question: how does China’s government define itself?

As tends to go with modern nations, a Constitution is a good place to look. The Preamble to the PRC’s 1982 Constitution indicates that the PRC’s government has held for its long term goals exactly what it is doing right now: interacting with the rest of the world, and advancing culturally and economically. The Constitution clearly points out these goals:

The Chinese people of all nationalities will continue to adhere to the people’s democratic dictatorship and the socialist road and to uphold reform and opening to the outside world, steadily improve socialist institutions, develop socialist democracy, improve the socialist legal system, and work hard and self-reliantly to modernize the country’s industry, agriculture, national defense and science and technology step by step to build China into a strong, prosperous[,] culturally advance[d], democratic socialist nation.

The development of Chinese power on an international scale, the Constitution effectively says, is a national destiny, along with fighting “imperialism, hegemonism and colonialism.” So the question becomes: how does the hegemon (the United States) engage with China?

One answer, from certain voices in the media and government, seems to be: engage with China in a way that asserts the U.S. as the hegemon, whether China likes it or not.

Over the summer, when the Chinese oil company CNOOC (China National Offshore Oil Corporation) tried to buy the U.S. oil company UNOCAL (Union Oil of California), members of Congress demanded that the Bush Administration review CNOOC’s bid as a national security consideration. Said Representative Ron Wyden (D-OR), “I don’t think being a free trader is synonymous with being a sucker and a patsy.”

And that summer, the China threat was growing ever graver—that is, to some media outlets. The cover of Forbes

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1 The Constitution I am looking at is that posted on http://www.usconstitution.net/china.html.
from 25 July had the scandalizing teaser, “Chinese Spies In Your Computer.” The article, actually titled “Chinese Takeoff” (stereotypes can never be exhausted), read tantalizingly, “The Middle Kingdom isn’t just trying to buy American companies on the open market. It’s also stealing industrial secrets by taking over corporate computers.” A Trojan horse virus appeared on some computers in the U.S., relaying mechanical designs to computers back in China “with the tacit okay, or at least the nonintervention, of the Beijing government.”

A Trojan horse that engages in corporate espionage is scary—and it is news that deserves to be reported. But is it necessary, or even responsible, to broach the subject with such explicit overtones of conspiracy, and with such overwrought and sensational language? Trojan horses are small fry, however, when compared to what the Atlantic Monthly foretold in its June 2005 issue.

“How We Would Fight China,” by Robert D. Kaplan, a reporter of military affairs, detailed how “the Chinese will approach us asymmetrically” in warfare, “as terrorists do.” “But,” Kaplan continued, “the Chinese are poised to show us the high end of the art.”

In short, Anakin Skywalker’s turn to the dark side last summer did not match, in theatrics or imagination, the heights of that season’s Sinophobia scene. Not that all perspectives from media players exhibit the tone or fear found in the two aforementioned pieces. There is not enough space in this article—or in any medium of analysis—to cover all perceptions of China held by journalists, politicians, and other people who should have knowledge of China. Despite a lack of openness, and the perception held by some that Americans still are not getting enough information about China.

**Academic Perspectives**

Dr. Miranda Schreurs is a specialist on environmental politics and policy making in East Asia and Japan. She lived in Japan in the early 1980s when American fascination with Japan took flight. She notes that “The 1980s were sort of Japan’s decade,” and as Japan’s economy prospered, interest in the country grew. “A lot of it was popular or business interest, some of it was academic…and I think the same thing is happening now with China.”

Despite China’s lack of open, democratic government, the potential for human rights violations that comes from a lack of openness, and the perception held by some that China “could at some point in time…become militaristic or spread its sphere of influence militarily,” Dr. Schreurs sees a lot of changes in China that are making it more open, cosmopolitan, and internationally oriented. She herself is interested in areas where the U.S. and China can cooperate, such as in working to address environmental degradation. There are many in the academic community who believe in the importance of learning more about China and working together with their Chinese counterparts. Schreurs has taken University of Maryland students to China to see and learn about the country with their own eyes.

And still, characterizations of the PRC as wholly undemocratic and continually abusive towards human rights do not stand up to recent developments. Dr. George Quester, an expert on international politics, American foreign policy, and international military security, believes that China is moving towards democratization, albeit slowly. Open competition, inclusive of politicians that do not belong to the Communist Party, has been allowed in local elections in China. Furthermore, Dr. Quester mentions that “American political scientists who are experts on American politics” have been called upon by members of the Communist Party to teach lessons on how to contest elections and face opposition. Rapid democratization and change can be a scary and unpredictable force, and such a thought makes the government of China wary of rapidly changing the political structure. At the same time, Dr. Quester says that “The Communist Party likes to have a monopoly on power,” and “Dictators enjoy being dictators.” Some Party members still do take “Marxist ideology very seriously and are not so happy about the changes.” Yet nevertheless, some movement towards democratization is occurring. Those who desire the spread of democracy must be patient, but signs of openness are not absent.

Furthermore, the PRC’s government is improving its human rights record. According to Dr. Quester, the average Chinese citizen is much freer than he or she was twenty-five or even ten years ago. “Generally speaking,” Dr. Quester says, “if you don’t rock the boat in China, they [government officials] leave you alone. You can read what you want to read, you can do what you want to do, [and] you can make a lot of money.” Furthermore, people do go to church in China, though many churches exist underground. Dr. Quester notes that religious repression sometimes increases prior to an American President’s visit to China, as some activists clamor to expose repression prior to an American leader’s visit.

With regards to alleviating poverty, Dr. Schreurs says that China’s progress is “remarkable,” and that “China is still poor, but people aren’t starving.” Progress is being made on the human rights front in China. Whether or not that progress will come to outweigh the images of Tiananmen Square is yet to be seen. Furthermore, improvement in the human rights field does not excuse human rights violations, past or present. Nevertheless, information on human rights advances in the PRC is encouraging, and deserves to be known.

Yet such information is not widely known. Should those who champion an atmosphere of greater understanding about China be afraid?

Dr. Deborah Cai, a communication researcher who has

done extensive research about Chinese media, views fear-mongering about China as an effort by some to give the U.S. a rival. She notes in an interpretive manner that “the U.S. needs to have a rival. It’s a great way, to a certain extent, to wag the dog; a great way to keep a cohesiveness is to have some sort of common enemy. The Soviet Union served that role for a long time, Japan for a certain time.” And as China has opened up to the U.S., Dr. Cai notes that China has “been a fascination,” and also “a convenient replacement as far as a rival.” At that, “the Asian is still somewhat perceived as a cultural unknown. They’re different than the typical American.” This view of China as the ‘other,’ Dr. Cai notes, can be lessened once Americans become more “culturally aware.” However, Dr. Cai does not see perspective of China as the ‘other’ as having disappeared yet.

Dr. Douglas Grob, an expert on Chinese legal reform, characterizes the U.S.’s cultural understanding of China thus: a learning curve. It is either getting steeper, or we have reached the steeper part. “We are now overcoming our ignorance of China at a faster rate than before. It is a necessary process, a developmental process, but it is also an uneven process and not always a comfortable process.” And that sometimes makes it difficult to understand and interpret. Dr. Grob notes that “China is not a homogeneous or monolithic entity when it comes to interests,” which further complicates the notion of what is an “accurate” portrayal of the media.

One need not always be alarmed by fear-mongering on the part of some in the media or government. As Dr. Grob says, “Placing conflict in a positive light and seeing it as productive tension wherever possible is a plus. But it can be hard to keep that spin on it when the tone of the conflict turns particularly sharp, or when very real dangers do appear.”

Similar Fears Have Been Expressed Before, and How to Get Over Them

As was previously mentioned, there was a great deal of interest among American business, government, and media actors in Japan in the 1980s, akin to the interest in China seen today. In 1979, this fascination was boosted in large part with the publication of Japan As Number One, a book by Harvard professor Ezra Vogel. Japan As Number One reflected the line of thought that the U.S. should replicate Japanese reforms in business and government in order to stay competitive and strong. Vogel trumpeted the success of Japan. But a decade makes a difference, and some Japanese commentators began to notice an element of Japan bashing.4

A book was released in China recently whose title roughly translates to The China That Can Say “No.” In short, some elements in China are well aware of the way they are portrayed in the U.S. But for all the differences between the U.S. and China, provoking a serious nationalistic, anti-U.S. response from China is not a sensible goal. Human rights abuses in China deserve to be reported and curbed, and a lack of openness is not to be encouraged. The environmental degradation occurring in China should be addressed and corrected. Dr. Margaret Pearson, an expert on Chinese domestic politics and foreign policy, cites China’s need, like ours, “to face up to the conflict between break-neck economic development and environmental degradation.” Nevertheless, diplomatic and cultural engagement, which includes recognition of both China’s progress and shortcomings in terms of the aforementioned issues, is a sensible and peaceful path to dealing with our serious, substantial concerns about China. The U.S. should encourage China’s entrance into the international system, as it largely has. With that, the U.S. government, media outlets, and academies should concentrate on ending ignorance about China in the U.S. We need to fully utilize the magic of cultural diplomacy, minus the concentrated propaganda campaigns, and with a renewed emphasis on person-to-person exchange. Dr. Pearson notes that China has done a lot to engage in cultural exchange going in one direction - absorbing Western culture through sending students abroad, and generally absorbing many elements of western popular culture. My own view is that it is us that has a lot more to do in terms of getting to know China. Getting our students to Asia, and indeed the rest of the world, is incredibly important. It is often life-changing for a student who has never left North America.

And as for our current growing pains in starting a cultural exchange, as reflected in certain voices in the media? Not all are something to worry about, so long as we remedy the issue that at least some of the pains stem from: ignorance. As Dr. Grob says, “Ignorance on both sides becomes negative when you don’t address it, and it becomes a problem when it serves as the basis for action. We’re addressing our ignorance of China now. The media is full of ‘schools.’ There are good schools, there are bad schools, and people will disagree on which is which, but that’s as it should be. In the media, you get to choose your schools. So listen critically and choose carefully.”

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Many thanks to Drs. Schreurs, Quester, Grob, Pearson, and Cai, as well as UMCP’s Institute for Global Chinese Affairs.
The Smith School knows the digital economy better than anyone. So why not raise your children the Smith School way?

Overview
Since 1921, The Robert H. Smith School of Business has been dedicated to teaching the next generation of business leaders through its undergraduate and graduate programs. However, with the first decade of the 21st century half-over, the Smith School is moving beyond teaching: it wants to raise your child.

Mere education really isn’t enough. With the digital economy developing faster and faster, your child needs to be prepared to lead as early as possible. That’s why the Smith School Cradle to Grave Plan (SSCTGP) is so vital: we’ll give your child the resources to move beyond the sandbox and towards the deposit box.

Do you want your son or daughter left behind, or do you want your beloved to be nurtured into the veritable guru of the digital economy that he or she has the potential to be? Please take the time to read about our plan, and see what the Smith School can do for your progeny.

The Smith School Growup Life Plan provides life insurance at low premiums to your budding executive. The Smith School Growup Life Plan is available for any child, aged first trimester to age eighteen. Compare this to Gerber’s Growup Life Plan, which isn’t available until your child is aged 14 days. The conclusion is obvious: the Smith School cares more about your baby than Gerber does.

In addition to the sense of security afforded by our prenatal life insurance, any child belonging to the SSCTGP gets an unlimited supply of Smith School Baby Formula. The product was created and marketed by members of the Hinman CEOs program, and we attest to its quality. It contains all the vitamins and other nutrients vital to developing your child’s immune system and accounting skills.
“I never had a better time than my summer with SSDS’s Learning Through Labor Program. Hauling hay, chopping wood—that’s my ultimate Smith Experience.” Jon Wood, 12th grader at SSDS

Once your Smith child is ready for the first step in their rigorous education, he or she will enter the prestigious Smith School Day School (K-12). Starting in Kindergarten, your son or daughter is exposed to a diverse environment with maximum intellectual stimulation. It must be noted, however, that your child is not officially admitted to SSDS or the SSCTGP until they have maintained Cs or better in their K-1st Grade Smith Core Classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Class</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>SSDS 095</td>
<td>Introduction to Business Fingerprinting</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSDS 097</td>
<td>Principles of the Alphabet</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSDS 101</td>
<td>Adding I</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSDS 103</td>
<td>Subtracting I</td>
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Once your child has finished their prestigious education at SSDS, they will finally begin their journey through the Smith School of Business at UMCP. But the SSCTGP has so much more to offer!

Don’t want your child to associate with people who don’t possess Smith School degrees? Your payment into the No Bonds Like SSCTGP Bonds...

A young man needs guidance, I suppose. And a business background never hurts, either. My parents enrolled me in the SSCTGP before I was born, because they just knew from the sonogram that I was a born Information Systems specialist. But the wildest thing I never expected from the SSCTGP was the friendship I would get...

Mike R., 20
I’m not totally sure what convinced my parents to put me into the SSCTGP—but it was a good idea. Not only for all of the instruction, nurturing, and comfort that it gives me (and will forever), but because I managed to meet the best friend I think I’ll ever have...

Alice G., 20

SSCTGP will ensure your child a home in the soon-to-be-built neighborhood Frank’s Landing, named after our own Dean Howard Frank. Frank’s Landing, scheduled to be completed in 2008, is a gated community inhabited only by Smith School of Business graduates. Located next to Baltimore Avenue, behind Graduate Gardens, and encompassing the entirety of what was once known as Hyattsville, Frank’s Landing is not only the next generation of gentrification projects—it’s also an incubator for the leaders of the digital economy to live and grow old together. Frank’s Landing has an outdoor family swimming pool, tennis courts, gym, food court, and Smith School Sponsored Food Lion for all of your child’s needs.

As a Smith School of Business graduate, your child will, from time to time, feel the stress that only a leader of the digital economy can truly understand. Not to worry! Attend the Smith School Wellness Center for therapy, yoga, acupuncture, family and marriage counseling, and/or drug/alcohol rehabilitation.

Sense that your child’s lack of interest in wearing the power ties he once enjoyed is a cry for help? Call the Smith School Mid-Life Crisis Suicide Helpline at 4LIFE from your home at Frank’s Landing.

When the time comes, a house the size of a starter mansion on Frank’s Landing is just too much space. After all, by now your grandchildren will be embarking on their own journey through the SSCTGP, and your child may be experiencing empty nest syndrome. Thus, Frank’s Landing has its own retirement community built on top of West Hyattsville: Frank’s Fields. At Frank’s Fields, your aged offspring will have a luxury condominium, containing room for one or two; a parking space; a big-screen TV; a round-the-clock recreational schedule, including calisthenics and Tai-Chi; and continuing education classes. All of our classes at Frank’s Fields are taught by Smith School graduates, so you can expect the same focus on honesty and accountability in everything from “Living with High Blood Pressure” to “Pinochle by the Pool.” And, as always, we maintain high standards to make sure there’s no cheating.

A life spent leading the digital economy is sure to be taxing, and thanks to that, we know each other: intellectually, sure, but also as great friends. We know we’ll share the Smith Experience together until death and nothing is stronger than that.
and your son or daughter deserves a peaceful exit from the
digital economy. Thus, the SSCTGP offers the **Smith School Hospice.** All end of life needs will be taken care of so that
your son or daughter can have a softer landing to their Smith School experience. Again, the SSCTGP is proud to staff their Hospice with only the finest Smith School graduates—with students from the Business Honors program. Though our graduates are not trained in medicine, rest assured that our graduates/leaders of the digital economy can handle anything—everything from Type II Diabetes to terminal cancer. And just as the Smith School wanted to raise your child, we also want to bury your dead. Thus, the SSCTGP offers a **Smith School Funeral at Van Munching Hall.** Your son or daughter will have the most professional service possible: Smith students are known to dress well for class alone; imagine the respectful attire at a Smith School funeral! At that, your payment into the SSCTGP will determine the type of casket that your loved one will receive:

- **$5,250,000:** The Eternity Terp: Polished Italian Marble with a 14 Kt. Gold “Smith School of Business” logo tastefully included on top. It attests to your loved one’s importance.
- **$4,100,000:** Cole Field Casket: Beautiful black steel, also with a 14 Kt. Gold Smith School logo. Makes a powerful impression.
- **$1,500,000:** Byrd Box: Elegant and sturdy domestic white pine. Includes Smith School commemorative pen and pencil set.

We have just scratched the surface on what the Smith School Cradle to Grave Program can do for your child. Please read more about our program at [www.rhsmith.umd.edu/ctgprogram](http://www.rhsmith.umd.edu/ctgprogram). We hope you think of your child’s future and choose Smith. For life.
TAPTICS: A Taxonomy of Proof Techniques in Computer Science

Arun Vasan

Abstract — Computer Science is often criticized as lacking scientific proof techniques. However, our findings show that Computer Science has a plethora of techniques, which have been accepted by the community as proofs. Firstly, we characterize the Computer Science research community in a graph-theoretic framework. Then, we present a taxonomy of techniques accepted as valid proofs by this community. We illustrate an identifying feature of each classification wherever possible.

I. INTRODUCTION

A typical comment made by researchers outside CS (abbreviations are considered the norm in Computer Science) is, “Fine, you folks build Quadrillium-9 processors with 1.9 TeraHz frequency and write obnoxiously junky and clunky software that doesn’t work, but are you really a science? Do you have a structured research community? How do you prove something in Computer Science?”

We answer this question with a structural characterization of the research community in Computer Science and a taxonomy of techniques accepted as proof in this community.

In addition to defending the honor of CS in the assembly of sciences, this work is bound to be of use to researchers in CS, who wonder how to be “known in the community” as well. The taxonomy will also serve as a veritable tool-chest of sorts to budding CS researchers.

II. THE CS RESEARCH COMMUNITY (CSRC)

Intuitively, the CSRC bears remarkable resemblance to the mafia in its organizational structure. Like the Mafiosi, it is a very closely knit set of people, who are hierarchically organized. For a new member to be accepted by the CSRC, the researcher first tries to join one sub-community in CS (like say Artificial Intelligence or Networks) and then works his or her way up.

Every step of his or her career, he or she is reminded in a Godfather-esque manner, “Never go against the community.”

We now present a mathematical characterization of the CSRC. The CSRC can be represented as a directed graph $G = (V, E)$, whose vertex set $V$ represents members of the community and edge set $E$ represents the Kisses-The-Ass-Of (K-TAO or $k - \tau$) relationship. Therefore, if a member $X$ kisses $Y$’s ass, there is an edge from $X$ to $Y$ in the graph.

When a student begins graduate school, an edge is added from him to his advisor. A senior member of the community is characterized by many incoming edges, i.e., she gets her ass kissed by many. The $k - \tau$ relationship is transitive, is not reflexive, and may or may not be symmetric.

The $k - \tau$ graph typically forms closely connected cliques, which are then inter-connected by leading researchers. By “lead,” we mean that they lead the newer members of the community like dogs on a leash.

Each of these cliques holds an annual conference, where only members’ papers are accepted. The total weight of a clique in the broader graph is directly proportional to the number of papers the conference rejects. Some cliques get together and publish journals too, where again the authors are mainly the editors themselves.

Given such a CSRC graph, research information has to flow between nodes for the community to thrive. CS Research has evolved several techniques, which the community accepts as valid proofs of an idea. We now present a taxonomy of such research techniques and illustrate their use in the community wherever possible.

III. PROOF TECHNIQUES USED IN CS

We classify techniques primarily used by computer systems researchers, although definite contributions from other communities are acknowledged wherever possible.
A. Proof by Intimidation:
Often used by senior members of the community in their papers. When author names and biographies are known to referees, they typically don’t pass judgments that are against members of the conference committee or editorial board of the journal. If the reviewing is blind, the authors cite at least a dozen of their own papers as references in order to make a subtle statement: “Be warned. This is my paper. I am on the committee and don’t forget a rejection easily.”

B. Proof by Simulation:
The darling of computer system designers, this proof technique saves them the trouble of actually building a system or measuring an existing system. The technique can be recognized by a statement which is structurally close to “We demonstrate the validity of our idea with extensive simulations. Our results show [some result we claim] to be true 98.765% of the time with 123.45% confidence.”

C. Proof by Obfuscation:
A standard technique often used by the “theoretical”, “analytical”, and “formal” members of the community, it is characterized by referees tearing out whatever hair remains on their otherwise wise heads. Finally, the referee gives the author the benefit of doubt, declaring, “If I can’t understand it, then I don’t know if it is wrong.”

D. Proof by Implementation:
The community recognizes this technique by the signature, “As proof of concept, we have implemented a prototype system.” Practiced by computer system builders, this technique’s uniqueness lies in convincing its audience of the lack of need for something as trivial as reality.

E. Proof by Assumptions:
The key principle behind this technique is, if you can’t solve a problem with your tools, resize the problem by making some assumptions so that it fits your tools. It is recognized by a pair of sentences, which may be separated by a few other sentences:

- For the sake of [tractability, brevity, ease of exposition...], we make the following assumptions.
- Assume that [what we claim] is true. Under these assumptions, [what we claim] is true.

F. Proof by Transformations:
In this technique, one transforms the problem by making use of other techniques (assumptions, intimidation, etc.) into a problem in an area as far from Computer Science as possible. This can easily be identified by the following lines: “We cast this problem in an Ill-be-damned-if-you-know-

G. Proof by Measurement:
The “performance” sub-community in CS, who study the performance of their systems (It should be emphasized they don’t measure their own performance), is characterized by all members swearing an oath of undying loyalty to measurement-based proofs. The proof technique relies on measuring a system’s characteristics anywhere, anytime, and anyhow. A typical proof would be: “We measured the number of packets in the link 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for one whole month, without leaving the room. The steep fall at time 11:45 AM on the 12th of December was caused by a technician accidentally pulling the network cable out of the measuring computer. However, the overall trends confirm our claim.”

IV. CONCLUSION
We characterized the structure of the CS research
community in a graph-theoretic framework. We presented a taxonomy of techniques accepted as proofs in the CS research community.

It is hoped that this taxonomy will give rise to new and more powerful techniques, which will then be accepted as valid proofs by the community. It is also hoped that the community does not decide to excommunicate the author for daring to defend it.

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author asserts exclusive rights over any discredit for this work. He absolves his past and current colleagues, mentors, and professors of any association with this piece of research.

A Brief Guide To Things That Are Neither Couth Nor Funny

The Editors

Having finished the first issue of this magazine, the editors of The Terrapist feel a certain level of social responsibility. We set off with grand ambitions, and we hope we came close to meeting them—but we were not flawless, and we feel that we have implicitly endorsed certain kinds of humor of which we do not actually approve.

A note of further explanation: before we intended to add voices to debates and whatnot, this magazine was born of a simple desire: to give the University of Maryland a classy satire magazine. The grand mission we have set for ourselves is still compatible with the “classy satire magazine” desire. Nevertheless, we have a problem: our magazine’s name has made more than one person grimace.

We do not wish to set out for sure why our name made some people grimace. The name The Terrapist is a parody of the magazine name The Economist. Our logo should be a dead giveaway—as in, we ripped off The Economist’s logo. Unfortunately, we cannot always show someone our logo when saying, “We’re called The Terrapist.” And lacking the immediate association with The Economist, people are left to come up with their own conception of what The Terrapist is referencing in its name.

Again, we do not presume to know what those who grimace actually associate our magazine’s name with. Nevertheless, we feel obliged to explain that we find the following neither couth nor funny:

- Jokes about terrorists.
- Jokes about rapists.
- Jokes about therapists.
- The word “piss,” all of its tenses, and its adjective form.
- Filler at the end of the magazine.
- People who stick to their standards.

We hope that you have had some sort of reaction in reading this magazine. If that previous sentence came off as self-righteous, we did not mean it that way. If you had no reaction, then you are likely dead, and we do not want a pall over campus when we’re trying dearly to celebrate the release of our first issue. And that brings us to our final addition to the list:

- Jokes about dead readership.

That’s just a bad way to start things off, and we want you to know that we think of ourselves as pure, and you as a star. Goodnight, dear, and be happy.
The Order of Things

Raytheon      Lockheed Martin             Northrop Grumman            Halliburton

The Powers That Be

The Center for American Progress
Honors Humanities

The Terrapist

The Socialist Alternative

More socially acceptable left-wing alternatives

The liberal universities
The liberal media

Ché t-shirts

Sprouts (North Campus Dining Hall)

Organic farms
Gardenburger™
What is The Terrapist?
A primer by Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini, translated into English from the French translation of the Arabic original.

[Editor’s Note: The following is a classic piece of literature from the 1979 Iranian Revolution.]

Q: What is The Terrapist?
A: A typical toxic product of the evil West. And a satire magazine from the University of Maryland that shall contain humorous pieces akin to something ripped off from the New Yorker.

Q: What is the proper way to regard camel’s meat that has been sodomized?
A: Carefully, but with tenderness.

Submit to:
The Terrapist

Submissions to: TheTerrapist@gmail.com
Refer questions to: ChiefTerrapist@gmail.com
www.terrapist.com