

if you listen to the Rumsfeld coterie, and if you consider what we actually *did* in Afghanistan, you realize that the State Department is just being stately. Where our serious interests are engaged and when time is a factor, we can't possibly act through NATO: too much consultation, too much difference in capability. Henceforth, in urgent matters we'll assemble a "coalition of the willing" and just move in, while State assembles a cheering section.

Everybody in the NATO orbit is, of course, buzzing about Iraq. Top commanders assured me that action by NATO as such was not now contemplated, and that's very easy to believe. I found agreement that, if necessary, we could carry off the campaign solo. The big reason is simply that while it took 10 sorties to kill a tank in the Gulf War, thanks to improved munitions, one sortie killed up to two tanks in Afghanistan, making an Iraq air campaign possible with our carrier wings plus flights from Insirlik. Saudi bases would not be essential. First would come flak suppression, then killing Iraqi tanks if they concentrated. After that, we hope, a Northern Alliance-style advance from the South and the North, covered, as in Afghanistan, by our airpower. Our generals seem remarkably confident. On the other hand, the Palestine uproar seems to have thrown off our timing very seriously.

The Europeans ask why we are so excited about Iraq and North Korea. There is little risk of another Gulf War, or a Korean War, nor will Iraq lob a missile at London and get obliterated for its pains. So why fret? The reason is that both of them are ready, willing and able to leak weapons of mass destruction to terrorists, of which many are already based within our borders. As Bush told Putin, our cardinal foreign policy aim is stopping that from happening. Since Putin has the same problem, thanks to the Chechens, he understands perfectly. Thus, *de facto*, we and the Russians are in the same boat, as is solemnized by our inviting them to the NATO conference table.

Does a U.S. combat division lose its

fighting capability during an extended peace-keeping mission? You sometimes hear this denied by high-level Army spokesmen, but not on the ground. As General Huber, our commander in Macedonia, put it, "the troops learn leadership skills, but degrade mechanical skills." Playing cop or schoolteacher to a civilian population is uplifting, but using an armored unit for the purpose costs too much. The 10th Mountain Division, part of which is covering Kosovo, is preparing for extensive retraining when its deployment ends.

Interestingly enough, the *process* of enlarging NATO, quite aside from the fact of its expansion, has a tremendous effect on those concerned. To enter, a country enlists in the Partnership for Peace, and eventually may be considered as a possible candidate. Then begins the MAP—Membership Application Process. To get through this phase, the applicant has to reform its military, to bring it under civilian control and make it an efficient fighting force. It has to settle quarrels with its neighbors and internal minorities. And it must develop interoperability with the rest of NATO—including introducing English in the armed services—and, in general, shape up. This can take years. Recent successful applicants are detailed to coach the petitioners, like getting an upperclassman to tutor you in college. The whole procedure has a highly invigorating effect on the applicants.

Once inside the alliance, the member country can be relatively relaxed about local threats, since there is a ring of increasingly compatible neighbors to calm things down. Countries that look both east and west, like Turkey, become more directed toward Europe. (Greece and Turkey might well have gone to war already if they'd not both been NATO members.) They're all in the same fraternity, as it were.

So NATO most assuredly has a purpose, just not the original purpose. It creates a lake of stability in what had been an area so turbulent that for centuries it engendered horrible conflict after horrible conflict, two of which America entered to restore the balance. It's better this way. ↘



J. Gordon Coogler Award Worst Book of the Year

BY R. EMMETT TYRRELL, JR.

It is that time of year when critics in various fields of intellectual endeavor bestow their awards for "the best." There are the Pulitzers, the Emmys, the Oscars. Perhaps less well-known, but surely more exacting in their standards, are the Cooglers. Critics of a contrarian cast of mind also suffer the urge to solemnize.

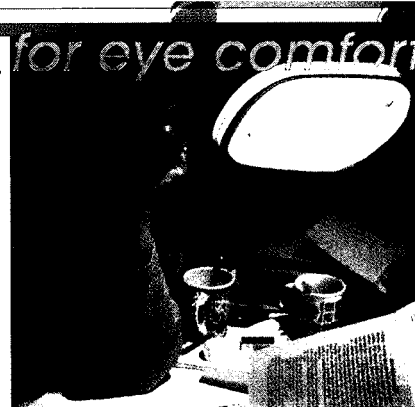
Pulitzers, Emmys and Oscars are the awards conferred by conventional critics responding to that mainstream American quest, "Why not the best?" We contrarians sitting on the committee that confers the J. Gordon Coogler Award pursue a different quest, namely, "Why not the worst?" and so we confer Cooglers upon the worst: the worst book, the worst journalism. In our January/February issue, we conferred our first Coogler for shabby journalism to *The Washington Post's* Michael Grunwald for his reporting on PCB phantasms in deepest Alabama. Now we have settled on a Coogler for the worst book.

I have served on the Coogler panel for years and endured some excruciatingly bad books, both fiction and nonfiction. This year the Coogler

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr. is editor in chief of *The American Spectator*.

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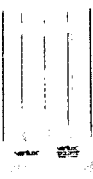
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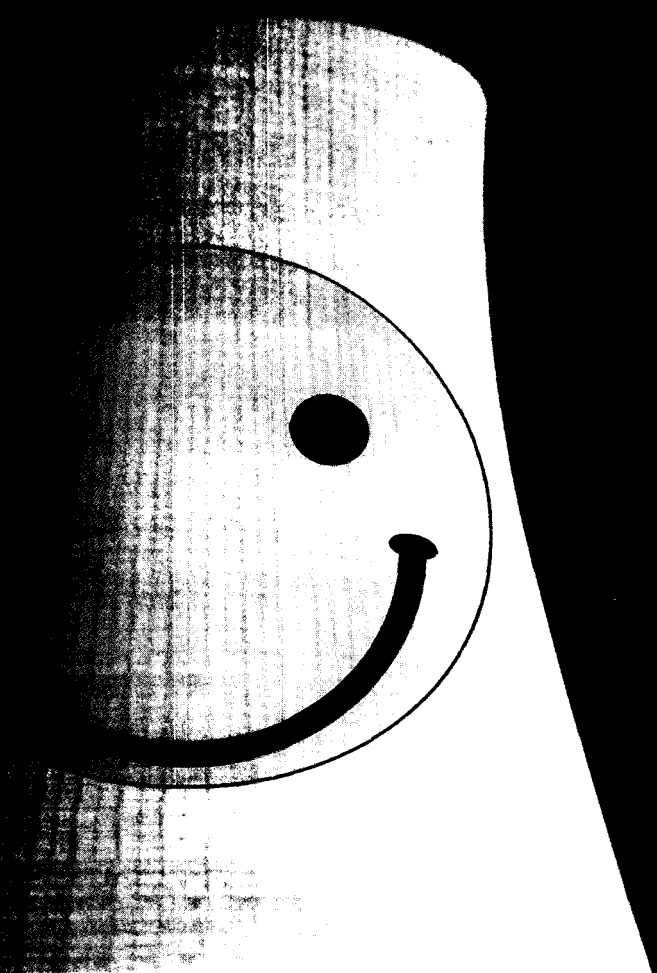
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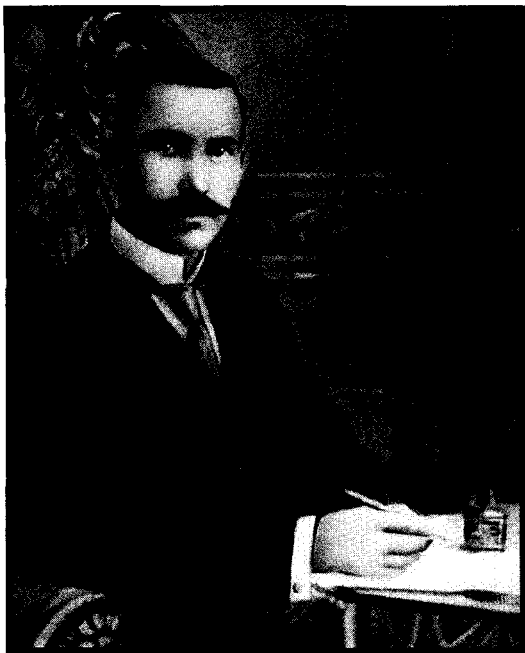
The American Spectator



Award for the Worst Book of 2001 breaks new ground. Usually my colleagues and I have conferred it in recognition of ghastly prose or imbecilic analysis or a preposterous thesis or all of the above. Cognizant, however, of an emerging trend in American intellectual life, we have wanted this year to go beyond mere bad writing and give especial consideration to America's intellectual trend-setters, the elite intellectuals who are on the cutting-edge of literary technique. That is to say we have focused on our country's growing number of talented plagiarists and hoaxers.

All sensitive readers of the public prints must know by now that many of the most celebrated writers in the land steal other writers' material and often simply make things up—for instance, footnotes, archival evidence and even their own biographies (remember Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Joseph Ellis' apocryphal revelations of his Vietnam and civil rights exploits—he also lied about his high school football days—and what he has told his shrink about his sex life is not to be imagined). News stories and feature articles in our most prestigious publications have often seemed larded with nonsense, but now many renowned editors are admitting to having published as fact stories that are almost total fiction.

Just a few months back *The New York Times* admitted that one of its prized writers, Michael Finkel, published as factual reporting a story in *The New York Times Magazine* that was sheer fabrication, a tearjerker about an impoverished Ivory Coast laborer. Thus the *Times* joins the ranks of such venerable publications as *The New Republic* (Stephen Glass and Ruth Shalit), *The New Yorker* (Rodney Rothman) and *Slate* (Jay Forman) in admitting to having published stories that were humbug—and I might add obvious humbug to any readers haunted by a skeptical mind. The *Slate* story was a beaut, claiming that in the Florida Keys outdoorsmen cast fishing lines into trees and reeled in shrieking monkeys. That was the on-the-scene report of Mr. Forman. Where is he now?



J. Gordon Coogler circa 1897

instance, Stephen Ambrose and Doris Kearns Goodwin. Goodwin is actually boasting of her plagiarism as the mark of a very hard-working "wife and mother." Doubtless she will remain an esteemed figure.

And so it is that this year in recognition of this promising trend in our intellectual life the J. Gordon Coogler Award for 2001 goes to the most gifted of the New Charlatans, Professor Michael Bellesiles, author of *Arming America: The*

Origins of a National Gun Culture.

A year ago this past April, the book won America's most prestigious award for history, the Bancroft Award, despite its fabricated sources, mis-stated historical events, implausible thesis and the author's inability to defend its integrity. For over a year, ever more of the book's deceptions have been exposed, yet the Bancroft still glitters on Bellesiles' chest. He stands by his story as adamantly as Alger Hiss once stood by his. And his thesis really is implausible. Bellesiles claims that up through the mid-19th century guns were relatively rare in America. Apparently the early American held off angry Indians and secured dinner for his frontier family by resorting to wholesome fisticuffs, perhaps heaving a few stones at the passing fauna and coaxing a nearby war party to calm down. And Bellesiles defends his position by citing documents that no other scholars can find. The book is a nonsense and a fraud. It wins the Coogler for the year 2001.

Let the carpers complain that the book was actually published in the year 2000. To us modernists on the Coogler Committee, it all depends on the meaning of the word year. Besides, *Arming America* came out in paperback in 2001.

Skeptical readers will also recall the columnists who so often get caught passing off their infantile fantasies as real people ground down by cruel America. Remember Mike Barnicle of *The Boston Globe*, gone from the *Globe* now but still huffing and puffing on cable television. Recall Michael Daly's resignation from the *New York Daily News* for passing off a fictional character as real flesh and blood or Patricia Smith's sad departure from *The Boston Globe*.

As I say, these hoaxers are not necessarily discredited by being exposed. Many go on to higher things, for plagiarism and fraud are becoming marks of genius among some of America's most famous intellectuals. Barnicle survives as a TV sage. Daly went on to *New York* magazine. Smith, though always dubious, had been nominated for Pulitzers. Then there is the inimitable Michael G. Gartner who in 1993 resigned as president of NBC News after acknowledging that one of his news teams had broadcast a hoax. He left for a small Iowa newspaper where four years later the Pulitzer Committee awarded him a Pulitzer for "editorial writing." An essential technique in this growing intellectual movement seems to be an aptitude for plagiarism. Within the past year, illustrious historians have admitted to repeated acts of plagiarism, for

BLINDED BY THE BIAS

Why bother being serious?

BY JOHN CORRY

Political and social commentary is a game anyone can play. No expertise is needed, and if you play the game properly, you can make a tidy living. You need only to pretend to know what you're talking about, and while you may know nothing at all, you will never be penalized for being wrong. In fact, you probably will be asked to appear on cable television. Conservatives as well as liberals can, and do, play the game, and while both can be tendentious and tedious, liberals have an advantage. The dominant media culture is more supportive of them than it is of conservatives, and they are encouraged to roam about more freely. You never know where one will pop up next.

Often, of course, they are perfect-

MEN WALK ON MOON

ASTRONAUTS LAND ON PLAIN; COLLECT ROCKS, PLANT FLAG

Voice From Moon: 'Eagle Has Landed'

WASHINGTON, July 20 (AP) — The first lunar landing mission, Apollo 11, ended in triumph Sunday as the Apollo 11 lunar module touched down on the moon's surface.



A Powdery Surface Is Closely Explored

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