

# CONTENTS

---

<i>Introduction</i>	XI
<b>PART 1 PERSONAL REFLECTIONS</b>	1
1.1 My Life Report	3
1.2 'Tis the Season	7
1.3 Max the Plumber	10
1.4 Is It Good for the Jews?	13
1.5 My Life on the Court	18
1.6 The Kid and Old Blue Eyes	21
1.7 Travel Narrows	24
1.8 I Am, Therefore I Pollute	26
1.9 Why We Can't Just Get Along	29
1.10 Truth and Conspiracy in the Catskills	32
1.11 Moving On	35
<b>PART 2 AESTHETIC REFLECTIONS</b>	37
2.1 Why Do Writers Write?	39
2.2 Two Aesthetics	42
2.3 Norms and Deviations: Who's to Say?	47
2.4 The Ten Best American Movies	52
2.5 Giving Kim Novak Her Due	59
2.6 Larger than Life: Charlton Heston	62
2.7 Vengeance Is Mine	67
2.8 Little Big Men	70
2.9 Narrative and the Grace of God: <i>The New True Grit</i>	73
2.10 <i>Les Misérables</i> and Irony	76
2.11 No Way Out: <i>12 Years a Slave</i>	80
2.12 Stand Your Ground, Be a Man	84
2.13 Country Roads	87
<b>PART 3 CULTURAL REFLECTIONS</b>	91
3.1 Professor Sokal's Bad Joke	93
3.2 French Theory in America	98
3.3 Dorothy and the Tree: A Lesson in Epistemology	105
3.4 Does Philosophy Matter?	109
3.5 What Did Watson the Computer Do?	112
3.6 None of the Answers: Charles Van Doren Finally Speaks, or Does He?	115

3.7	Can I Put You on Hold?	120
3.8	So's Your Old Man	123
3.9	Two Cheers for Double Standards	126
3.10	Favoritism Is Good	129
<b>PART 4</b>	<b>REFLECTIONS ON POLITICS</b>	133
4.1	Condemnation without Absolutes	135
4.2	The All-Spin Zone	138
4.3	Against Independent Voters	142
4.4	When "Identity Politics" Is Rational	145
4.5	Blowin' in the Wind	149
4.6	Looking for Gas in All the Wrong Places	151
4.7	When Principles Get in the Way	154
4.8	Revisiting Affirmative Action, with Help from Kant	157
4.9	Is the NRA Un-American?	162
4.10	All You Need Is Hate	167
4.11	How the Right Hijacked the Magic Words	170
<b>PART 5</b>	<b>REFLECTIONS ON THE LAW</b>	175
5.1	Why Scalia Is Right	177
5.2	How Scalia Is Wrong	180
5.3	Intentional Neglect	185
5.4	What Did the Framers Have in Mind?	189
5.5	What Is the First Amendment For?	192
5.6	How the First Amendment Works	198
5.7	What Does the First Amendment Protect?	203
5.8	The First Amendment and Kittens	207
5.9	Sticks and Stones	212
5.10	The Harm in Free Speech	215
5.11	Hate Speech and Stolen Valor	220
5.12	Going in Circles with Hate Speech	225
5.13	Our Faith in Letting It All Hang Out	231
<b>PART 6</b>	<b>REFLECTIONS ON RELIGION</b>	235
6.1	The Three Atheists	237
6.2	Atheism and Evidence	242
6.3	Is Religion Man-Made?	246
6.4	God Talk	249
6.5	Suffering, Evil, and the Existence of God	254
6.6	Liberalism and Secularism: One and the Same	260

6.7	Are There Secular Reasons?	266
6.8	Serving Two Masters: Sharia Law and the Secular State	271
6.9	Religion and the Liberal State Once Again	276
6.10	Religion without Truth	281
6.11	Is the Establishment Clause Unconstitutional?	283
6.12	The Religion Clause Divided against Itself	288
6.13	When Is a Cross a Cross?	291
6.14	Being Neutral Is Oh So Hard to Do	294
<b>PART 7</b>	<b>REFLECTIONS ON LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION</b>	299
7.1	Why We Built the Ivory Tower	301
7.2	There's No Business like Show Business	304
7.3	Tip to Professors: Just Do Your Job	307
7.4	Devoid of Content	311
7.5	What Should Colleges Teach?	315
7.6	Will the Humanities Save Us?	320
7.7	The Uses of the Humanities	324
7.8	The Value of Higher Education Made Literal	331
7.9	A Classical Education: Back to the Future	334
7.10	Deep in the Heart of Texas	339
7.11	The Digital Humanities and the Transcending of Mortality	343
7.12	Mind Your P's and B's: The Digital Humanities and Interpretation	349
<b>PART 8</b>	<b>REFLECTIONS ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM</b>	357
8.1	Conspiracy Theories 101	359
8.2	Always Academicize: My Response to the Responses	363
8.3	A Closing Argument (for Now)	368
8.4	The Two Languages of Academic Freedom	374
8.5	Are Academics Different?	378
8.6	The Kushner Flap: Much Ado about Nothing	384
8.7	Sex, the Koch Brothers, and Academic Freedom	388
8.8	To Boycott or Not to Boycott, That Is the Question	395
8.9	Academic Freedom against Itself: Boycotting Israeli Universities	402
8.10	Boycotting Israeli Universities: Part 2	407
8.11	So Long, It's Been Good to Know You	412
	<i>Acknowledgments</i>	415
	<i>Index</i>	417