Cultural Perspectives
Time to Assert American Values

from The New York Times

1 Singapore’s founding leader, Lee Kuan Yew, returned to a favorite theme yesterday in defending the threatened caning of Michael Fay, an 18-year-old American found guilty of vandalism. Western countries value the individual above society; in Asia, he said, the good of society is deemed more important than individual liberties. This comfortable bit of sophistry helps governments from China to Indonesia rationalize abuses and marginalize courageous people who campaign for causes like due process and freedom from torture. Western nations, it is asserted, have no right to impose their values on countries that govern themselves successfully according to their own values.

2 So, the argument goes, when Americans express outrage over a punishment that causes permanent scarring—in this case, caning—they are committing an act of cultural arrogance, assuming that American values are intrinsically superior to those of another culture.

3 There is a clear problem with this argument. It assumes that dissidents, democrats and reformers in these countries are somehow less authentic representatives of their cultures than the members of the political elite who enforce oppressive punishments and suppress individual rights.

4 At times like this, Americans need to remember that this country was also founded by dissidents—by people who were misfits in their own society because they believed, among other things, that it was wrong to punish pilferage with hanging or crimes of any sort with torture.

5 These are values worth asserting around the world. Americans concerned with the propagation of traditional values at home should be equally energetic in asserting constitutional principles in the international context of ideas. There are millions of acts of brutality that cannot be exposed and condemned. A case like Michael Fay’s is important because it provides a chance to challenge an inhumane practice that ought not to exist anywhere.

6 While this country cannot dictate to the government of Singapore, no one should fail to exhort it to behave mercifully. President Clinton provided a sound example when he called for a pardon. Principled private citizens ought now to call for American companies doing business in Singapore to bring their influence to bear.

7 Our colleague William Safire is right to call upon American corporations with subsidiaries in Singapore to press President Ong Teng Cheong to cancel Mr. Fay’s punishment. According to Dun & Bradstreet and the U.S.-Asean Business Council, some CEOs and companies in this category are: Riley P. Bechtel of the Bechtel Group Inc.; John S. Reed of Citicorp; Roberto C. Goizueta of the Coca-Cola Company Inc.; Edgar S. Woolard Jr. of E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company; Lee R. Raymond of Exxon Corporation; John F. Welch Jr. of the General Electric Company; Michael R. Bonsignore of Honeywell Inc.; Louis V. Gerstner Jr. of the International Business Machines Corporation; and Ralph S. Larsen of Johnson & Johnson Inc.
Rough Justice
A Caning in Singapore Stirs Up a Fierce Debate About Crime and Punishment

by Alejandro Reyes

1 The Vandalism Act of 1966 was originally conceived as a legal weapon to combat the spread of mainly political graffiti common during the heady days of Singapore's struggle for independence. Enacted a year after the republic of the Malaysian Federation, the law explicitly mandates between three and eight strokes of the cane for each count, though a provision allows first offenders to escape caning "if the writing, drawing, mark or inscription is done with pencil, crayon, chalk or other delible substances and not with paint, tar or other indelible substances."

2 Responding to reporters' questions, U.S. charge d'affaires Ralph Boyce said: "We see a large discrepancy between the offense and the punishment. The cars were not permanently damaged; the paint was removed with thinner. Caining leaves permanent scars. In addition, the accused is a teenager and this is his first offense."

3 By evening, the Singapore government had its reply: "Unlike some other societies which may tolerate acts of vandalism, Singapore has its own standards of social order as reflected in our laws. It is because of our tough laws against anti-social crimes that we are able to keep Singapore orderly and relatively crime-free. The statement noted that in the past five years, fourteen young men aged 18 to 21, twelve of whom were Singaporean, had been sentenced to caning for vandalism. Fay's arrest and sentencing shocked the American community in Singapore. Schools advised parents to warn their children not to get into trouble. The American Chamber of Commerce said "We simply do not understand how the government can condone the permanent scarring of any 18-year-old boy—American or Singaporean—by caning for such an offense." Two dozen American senators signed a letter to Mr. R. Fay on Fay's behalf.

4 But according to a string of polls, Fay's caning sentence struck a chord in the U.S. Many Americans fed up with rising crime in their cities actually supported the tough punishment. Singapore's embassy in Washington said that the mail it had received was overwhelmingly approving of the tough sentence. And a radio call-in survey in Fay's hometown of Dayton, Ohio, was strongly pro-caning.

5 It wasn't long before Singapore patriarch Lee Kuan Yew weighed in. He reckoned the whole affair revealed America's moral decay. "The U.S. government, the U.S. Senate and the U.S. media took the opportunity to ridicule us, saying the sentence was too severe," he said in a television interview. "The U.S. does not restrain or punish individuals, forgiving them for whatever they have done. That's why the whole country is in chaos: drugs, violence, unemployment and homelessness. The American society is the richest and most prosperous in the world but it is hardly safe and peaceful."

6 The debate over caning put a spotlight on Singapore's legal system. Lee and the city-state's other leaders are committed to harsh punishments. Preventive detention laws allow authorities to lock up suspected criminals without trial. While caning is
12 Yet harsh punishments alone are clearly not the salvation of Singapore's society. The predominantly Chinese city-state also has a cohesive value system that emphasizes such Confucian virtues as respect for authority. "No matter how harsh your punishments, you're not going to get an orderly society unless the culture is in favor of order," says Woon. "In Britain and America, they seem to have lost the feeling that people are responsible for their own behavior. Here, there is still a sense of personal responsibility. If you do something against the law, you bring shame not only to yourself but to your family.

13 That "sense of shame," Woon reckons, is more powerful than draconian laws. "Loosening up won't mean there will be chaos," he says, "But the law must be seen to work. The punishment is not the main thing. It's the enforcement of the law. The law has to be enforced effectively and fairly."

Second Read
- Reread the article to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

4. Craft and Structure: The author states: "Recently an acquittal was overturned and a bus driver was sentenced to death for murder based only on circumstantial evidence." Use context and the definitions of the words circumstance and evidence to explain the meaning of "circumstantial evidence" in this sentence.

5. Knowledge and Ideas: Both selections in this activity are about Singapore's punishment for Michael Fay, an American found guilty of vandalism. How is the author's purpose different in "Time to Assert American Values" and "Rough Justice"?

Working from the Text
6. Return to each of the texts and locate examples of evidence in the texts that you marked and identify whether it is empirical, logical, or anecdotal. With your group, discuss the impact of the evidence on the text and the reader, using examples from the text to support your answers.
Check Your Understanding

What fallacies are commonly used in arguments? Explain how anecdotal evidence could be an example of false or fallacious reasoning.

Explain How an Argument Persuades

Describe and evaluate the arguments for and against the punishment prescribed in the Michael Fay case as they are presented in the editorial and the article. Assess the validity of the arguments and identify the one that, in your opinion, has the most relevant and sufficient evidence to support it. Be sure to:

- Start with a statement that identifies both arguments you will discuss, including the titles and authors of the passages you reference. Then state your claim about which article is best supported by evidence.
- Explain how the author builds an argument for or against the issue to persuade an audience, providing relevant evidence from the passage.
- Identify any false statements or faulty reasoning.
- Use words, phrases, and clauses to show how your ideas are related.
- Provide a concluding statement that follows from the argument you have presented.
2 But through the other method of combating injustice, we alone suffer the consequences of our mistakes, and the other side is wholly spared. This other method is satyagraha. One who resorts to it does not have to break another's head; he may merely have his own head broken. He has to be prepared to die himself suffering all the pain. In opposing the atrocious laws of the Government of South Africa, it was this method that we adopted. We made it clear to the said Government that we would never bow to its outrageous laws. No clapping is possible without two hands to do it, and no quarrel without two persons to make it. Similarly, no state is possible without two entities, the rulers and the ruled. You are our sovereign, our Government, only so long as we consider ourselves your subjects. When we are not subjects, you are not the sovereign either. So long as it is your endeavour to control us with justice and love, we will let you to do so. But if you wish to strike us from behind; we cannot permit it. Whatever you do in other matters, you will have to ask our opinion about the laws that concern us. If you make laws to keep us suppressed in a wrongful manner and without taking us into confidence, these laws will merely adorn the statute books. We will never obey them. Award us for it what punishment you like; we will put up with it. Send us to prison and we will live there as in paradise. Ask us to mount the scaffold and we will do so laughing. Show us what suffering you like most; we will gladly endure all and not hurt a hair of your body. We will gladly die and will not so much as touch you. But so long as there is life in these our bodies, we will never comply with your arbitrary laws.

Second Read
- Reread the speech to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

1. Craft and Structure: How does Gandhi show that the method of satyagraha could succeed in changing a country's unjust laws where violence could not?

2. Key Ideas and Details: How might Gandhi advise you to respond to an unjust law? Use evidence from the text to support your reasons.

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satyagraha: (Sanskrit) insistence on truth; a term used by Gandhi to describe his policy of seeking reform by means of nonviolent resistance
Argument Writing Prompt

Is civil disobedience a moral responsibility of a citizen? Write an essay that addresses the question and support your position with evidence from texts in this part of the unit and real-life examples to illustrate or clarify your position. Be sure to:

- Write a precise claim and support it with valid reasoning and relevant evidence (avoid false statements and fallacious reasoning).
- Acknowledge counterclaims that anticipate the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases while also refuting the evidence for those claims.
- Create an organizational plan that logically sequences claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- Maintain a formal tone, vary sentence types, and use effective transitions.

ON YOUR OWN PAPER

ON SURGERY
AT BEAR MOUNTAIN 1931!
Second Read
- Reread the speech to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

1. **Craft and Structure**: Which rhetorical appeal does Chief Joseph primarily use to appeal to his listeners: ethos, pathos, or logos? Give examples and explain their appeal.


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**About the Author**
Susan B. Anthony (1820–1906) became a prominent leader for women's rights, giving speeches in both the United States and Europe. With Elizabeth Cady Stanton, she created and produced The Revolution, a weekly publication that lobbied for women's rights. The newspaper's motto was “Our rights, and nothing more—women's rights, and nothing less.” After lobbying for the right to vote for many years, in 1872 Anthony took matters into her own hands and voted illegally in the presidential election. Anthony was arrested and unsuccessfully fought the charges. She was fined $100, which she never paid. Anthony delivered this address to explain her own civil disobedience.

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**Speech**

On Women's Right to Vote

by Susan B. Anthony

Philadelphia 1872

1 Friends and fellow citizens: I stand before you tonight under indictment for the alleged crime of having voted at the last presidential election, without having a lawful right to vote. It shall be my work this evening to prove to you that
Second Read

- Reread the speech to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

3. Knowledge and Ideas: What evidence does Anthony use to support her claim that she committed no crime when she voted?


Working from the Text

5. Explain how each of the rhetorical appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos might be used to create an effective argument.

Writing to Sources: Explanatory Text

Compare and contrast how the author of each historic speech uses argument to take a stand on a legal issue. Identify the issue in each speech and the arguments for and against as presented by the speaker. Which type of rhetorical appeals are used, and what are the similarities and differences in how the authors use them?

Be sure to:
- Identify the title, author, and issue presented in each speech.
- Begin with a thesis statement that provides your main idea about how each author approaches the issue.
- Include relevant textual evidence and examples to support your thesis.
- Link main points with effective transitions to clearly identify similarities and differences in the way the speeches address the issue at hand.
- Provide a concluding section that supports your main point.

ON OWN PAPER

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3 Whereas the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth,

4 Whereas the need for such special safeguards has been stated in the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924, and recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the statutes of specialized agencies and international organizations concerned with the welfare of children,

5 Whereas mankind owes to the child the best it has to give,

6 Now therefore,

7 The General Assembly

8 Proclaims this Declaration of the Rights of the Child to the end that he may have a happy childhood and enjoy for his own good and for the good of society the rights and freedoms herein set forth, and calls upon parents, upon men and women as individuals, and upon voluntary organizations, local authorities and national Governments to recognize these rights and strive for their observance by legislative and other measures progressively taken in accordance with the following principles:

Principle 1

9 The child shall enjoy all the rights set forth in this Declaration. Every child, without any exception whatsoever, shall be entitled to these rights, without distinction or discrimination on account of race, color, sex, language, religion, political opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, whether of himself or of his family.

Principle 2

10 The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially, in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. In the enactment of laws for this purpose, the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration.

Principle 3

11 The child shall be entitled from his birth to a name and a nationality.

Principle 4

12 The child shall enjoy the benefits of social security. He shall be entitled to grow and develop in health; to this end, special care and protection shall be provided both to him and to his mother, including adequate pre-natal and post-natal care. The child shall have the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services.

Principle 5

13 The child who is physically, mentally or socially handicapped shall be given the special treatment, education and care required by his particular condition.
Second Read
- Reread the proclamation to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

1. Key Ideas and Details: Reread the statements at the beginning of the proclamation beginning with "Whereas." How do these statements serve to set up the principles that follow?

2. Craft and Structure: The word *paramount* is based in part on an Old French word, *amont*, meaning "above." How does this root, combined with the context, help you determine the meaning of the word as it is used in Principle 21?

World Health Organization Graph
Read the following graph, and then discuss the statistics on world hunger from the World Health Organization.

**Number of Hungry People in the World**
925 Million Hungry People in 2010

- Developed Countries: 19 million
- Near East and North Africa: 37 million
- Latin America and the Caribbean: 33 million
- Sub-Saharan Africa: 239 million
- Asia and the Pacific: 578 million

Source: World Health Organization
School's Out for Summer

by Anna Quindlen

1. When the ad council convened focus groups not long ago to help prepare a series of public service announcements on child hunger there was a fairly unanimous response from the participants about the subject. Not here. Not in America. If there was, we would know about it. We would read about it in the paper. We would see it on the news. And of course we would stop it. In America...

2. Is it any wonder that the slogan the advertising people came up with was ‘The Sooner You Behave, the Sooner We Can End It’?

3. It's the beginning of summer in America's cement cities, in the deep hidden valleys of the country and the loop/de loop sidewalkless streets of the suburbs. For many adults who are really closet kids, this means they're now 28. But they're also free. The old beloved promise of long aimless days of dirt and sweat and sunshine, T-shirts stained with Kool Aid and flip-flops gray with street grit or backyard dust...

4. But that sort of summer has given way to something more difficult, even darker, that makes you wonder whether year-round school is not a notion whose time has come. With so many households in which both parents are working, summer is often a scramble of scheduling, day camps, school programs, the X, the community center. Some parents who can't afford or find those kinds of services park their vacationing children in front of the television, lock the door, and go to work hoping for the best, calling home on the hour. Some kids just wander in a wilder world than the one that existed when their parents had summers free...

5. And some kids don't get enough to eat, no matter what people want to tell themselves. Do the math: During the rest of the year fifteen million students get free or cut-rate lunches at school, and many of them get breakfast, too. But only three million children are getting lunches through the federal summer lunch program. And hunger in the United States, particularly since the institution of so-called welfare reform, is epidemic. The numbers are astonishing in the land of the all-you-can-eat buffet. The Agriculture Department estimated in 1999 that twelve million children were hungry...
But wishing don't make it so, as they say in policy meetings, and proposals aren't peanut butter and jelly. Find a food bank and then go grocery shopping by proxy. Somewhere nearby there is a mother who covets a couple of boxes of spaghetti, and you could make her dream come true. That's right. In America.

Second Read
- Reread the essay to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

5. Key Ideas and Details: How does the author use the "hook" of the Ad Council's focus groups and slogan to set up her argument about hunger in America?

6. Craft and Structure: Why does Quindlen use the metaphor "ground zero" to describe the problem that sumner creates in the battle to keep kids fed?

7. Key Ideas and Details: What data and anecdotal evidence does the author provide to support her thesis that America has a big hunger problem for children even though it might be hard to believe?

8. Knowledge and Ideas: Do you think the author would say that the United States is meeting the principles outlined in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child? Why or why not?