When honesty disappears

当诚实消失时

1 "Is anybody truly honest?" As numerous accounts of cheating, lying, and fraud crowd our newspaper pages and TV news, it seems that honesty is a rapidly vanishing value. And the reports indicate that, around the globe, corruption and dishonesty are so widespread that the health and well-being of society are at risk. These reports include stories such as the students who faced criminal charges for selling in advance copies of a university final exam, a student who was expelled when he turned in a term paper with the purchase receipt for it still inside the pages, and a clerk who ran his own Christmas cards through the office postage meter and was found out when he sent one of the cards to the company treasurer! We have all read or heard accounts such as these, not to mention the stories of dishonesty amongst all layers of society as exemplified by consumers who steal and politicians who demand bribes. Travelers ripped off so many towels last year that it cost a major hotel chain $3 million to replace them. Especially troubling are the reports that dishonesty is increasing amongst student populations around the world.

“有真正诚实的人吗？”我们的报纸版面和电视新闻充斥着不计其数的有关欺骗、说谎和诈骗的报道，诚实似乎已经成为正在迅速消失的价值观。而且这些报道表明，全球范围内腐败和不诚实现象蔓延范围之广已经危及到了社会的安康。这些报道中包括诸如此类的故事：学生因考试前贩卖大学期末考题而面临犯罪指控；一名学生因提交买来的、还夹着收据的学期论文而被勒令退学；一名职员用公司的邮资机来邮寄自己的圣诞贺卡，他在寄了一张贺卡给公司的财务主管后被发现！我们都读过或听过类似的事情，更别说社会各层面存在的种种不诚实行为，如偷窃东西的顾和索取贿赂的政客。去年一年，一家大型连锁酒店的大量毛巾被游客偷走，酒店因此花费了300万美元来添置新毛巾。尤其令人担忧的是，世界范围内有关学生不诚实行为的报道越来越多。

2 But are these reports truly accurate or do they exaggerate the situation? Should we be alarmed by these accounts of falling standards of principles and morality? The assumption is that student dishonesty is more extensive now than it was 20, 50, 100 years ago. If so, what's behind it? If this is indeed the case, it's deeply troubling as today's students are tomorrow's leaders! It's possible that the desire to cheat is no greater than in the past. However, the critical importance of having a university degree may have increased the pressure to cheat in academic environments. Undoubtedly, modern technology facilitates the means and opportunities to cheat. The demanding task of writing term papers has always been a source of tense nerves and frustration, if not the ultimate homework nightmare. But now, with Internet access, illegal resources are just a few links away.

不过这些报道确实是真实的还是言过其实了呢？我们该不该因这些关于行为准则和道德水准下降的报道而感到不安呢？人们认定现在学生中的不诚实现象比20年、50年或100年前更为广泛。如果是这样，其背后的原因是什么呢？如果情况确实属实，那就令人十分担心了，因为今天的学生就是未来的领袖！也许现在学生骗人的欲望并不比从前大。然而，由于大学学位至关重要，这可能给学生带来更大的压力，使他们在学术上造假。毫无疑问，现代科技使人更容易获得造假的方法和机会。写学期论文这一艰巨的任务即便不是最可怕的作业，也一直是导致学生神经紧张和沮丧的原因之一。但是现在，网络唾手可得，点击几下鼠标就能找到非法的资源。

3 Modern students who want to fake a term paper don't have to browse long. They only have to locate the appropriate website, purchase or order online papers, or even download them for free. One web service offers "highest quality papers at the lowest possible prices", only $5.95 per page. Busy, cost-conscious students will find other "low-priced" term papers on websites that promise consumers "You will be happy and successful." Some people worry that the Internet, once hailed as the ultimate learning tool, could become the best aid yet for cheating.

现在的学生如果想要伪造学期论文的话不必在网上浏览太长时间。他们只需要找到合适的网址，然后购买或订购网上论文，或者甚至免费下载论文。一个网络服务站提供“质量最高、价格最低的论文”，每页只需5.95美元。忙碌的、注重节约成本的学生还会找到其他出售“低价”论文的网站，这些网站向顾客许诺“你会既开心又成功。”有些人担心，曾经被奉为最棒的学习工具的互联网会成为作弊者最得力的帮手。

4 To cope with the growing plague of cheating, universities around the world now use anti-plagiarism software and have very strict cheating and plagiarism policies. If students are caught plagiarizing or cheating in any way, they will be immediately expelled from school. Some college faculty decided to do more than talk about rising student cheating. Professors at a major university launched a campaign to try to eliminate one form of cheating. As 409 students filed out of their Introduction to Psychology exam, they found all but one exit blocked. Test monitors asked each student to produce an ID card with an attached photo. If they provided a satisfactory ID, they were fine. If they had left their ID at home, the officials confronted them and took their picture. The purpose of the campaign was to reveal hired cheaters, students who take tests for other students. The majority of students at the university applauded the new strategy.

为解决作弊泛滥的问题，世界各地的大学现在都在使用反抄袭软件，并且针对作弊和抄袭行为有严厉的惩罚政策。如果学生被抓到以任何方式抄袭或作弊，他们就会立刻被勒令退学。一些大学的教师不再只是谈论日益增多的学生作弊行为，他们决定采取行动。一所重点大学的教授发起一项运动，努力消除一种作弊行为。当409名学生排队离开“心理学入门”考试的考场时，他们发现除了一个出口以外，其他所有的考场出口都被堵上了。考官们要求学生出示带有照片的身份证件。如果他们能够提供令人满意的身份证件，他们就可以离开。如果他们把证件落在家里了，考官们就会当面质问他们，并拍下他们的照片。这项运动的目的就是要揭露那些雇来的作弊者，即替其他学生考试的学生。这所大学的大部分学生都对这个新举措拍手称快。

5 With awareness of increasing dishonesty in today's society, it's sometimes implied that in "the good old days" people were better, happier, and more honest. Were they more honest? Maybe yes, maybe no. Long ago, all American schoolchildren knew the historical story of how Abraham Lincoln walked five miles to return a penny he had overcharged a customer. It's the kind of story that we think of as myth. But in the case of Lincoln, the story is true.

随着人们意识到当今社会的不诚实行为日益增多，有时这就暗示着在“过去的好时光”里，人们更好、更快乐、更诚实。过去的人更诚实吗？也许是，也许不是。很久以前，所有的美国学童都知道亚伯拉罕•林肯步行5英里去归还他多收顾客的一便士的历史故事。这是那种我们认为是杜撰出来的故事。但是，发生在林肯身上的这个故事的确是真实的。

6 Like the Lincoln tale, every society has stories stressing the absolute value of honesty. It is these stories that students need to remember when temptation induces them to cheat. Whether discovered or not, dishonesty has an undesirable effect on anyone who practices it. Equally importantly, the ill effects are not confined to the dishonest person alone. Without trust, ordered societies would descend into chaos. It's important that we do what we say we will do, pay when we say we will, and create words that are our own. Perhaps the most important lesson our schools can teach is that we must trust each other. When honesty disappears, the affirmative, durable bonds of trust are eliminated and we all lose. The future of our society depends on mutual trust.

就像林肯的故事一样，每个社会都有强调诚实的绝对价值的故事。这些故事正是学生在受到作弊的诱惑时需要记住的。不管是否会被发现，不诚实都会给任何一个作弊者带来不利影响。同样重要的是，作弊不仅仅只给作弊者带来负面影响。没有诚信，有序的社会就会陷入混乱。我们承诺要做的事就一定要做，我们承诺要付出的就一定要付出，自己的东西一定要自己写，这些都是很重要的。也许我们的学校要教给学生的最重要的一课就是大家要彼此信任。当诚实消失时，信任这一积极的、持久的纽带就会消失，我们都会迷失。我们社会的未来依赖于我们彼此间的相互信任。

Rays of Hope in Rising Rudeness

粗鲁现象虽增，希望之光初显

1 Rudeness is a common element of modern life. "If you don't like it, lump it." Or "Mind your own business." Or "Get out of the way." This kind of talk and attitude is cropping up more often in public experiences — on the highways, in theater lines, on public transport. Whether it is people smoking in public, or people cutting in line, the examples are almost endless.

粗鲁是现代生活中常见的现象。“你不喜欢，也得忍着”，或者“管好你自己的事”，或者“闪开”。这种粗鲁的语言和态度在公共场合越来越常见——在公路上、在电影院排队的队伍中、在公共交通工具上。不管是有人在公共场所吸烟，还是有人插队，这样的例子几乎数不胜数。

2 It is generally thought around the world that the inhabitants of large cities are ruder than their fellow citizens from smaller towns or the countryside. Walk down streets of any major capital around the world and you will encounter taxi drivers who believe a "Walk" sign at a walkway is an automatic invitation to bump their cars against pedestrians' knees. Recently, an angry pedestrian reacted by kicking a cab, prompting the driver to get out and give chase. And hardly a day goes by without a reluctant office worker riding an elevator with someone talking loudly on the cell phone, despite the obvious disturbance to fellow passengers. "If you don't like it, get out and switch to another elevator," one cell phone user recently told another passenger who objected to his loud voice. In New York and other cities, quiet walks are a thing of the past. Who is to blame? The cell phone users talking loudly as well as the annoying drivers behind beeping car horns. In some big cities, subway terminals are bulging with herds of commuters, elbowing their way to grab seats, intimidating the old, the young, the disabled and the pregnant. It's common to hear people on the bus or subway talking on their cell phones very loudly, being a nuisance to those around them.

世界范围内，人们普遍认为大城市的居民比较小城镇和农村的居民更为粗鲁。如果你走在世界上任何一座大都市的街上，你都会遇到那种出租车司机，他们把人行通道上的“行人通行”信号当作他们去撞行人膝盖的自动邀请。最近，一位愤怒的行人用踢出租车的方式回应了这样的粗鲁行为，结果却招致该出租车司机下车追赶他。还有，几乎每天都会发生这样的事：办公室职员不得不和一个用手机大声打电话的人同乘一部电梯，而这个人完全不顾自己已经明显干扰到了电梯里的其他乘客。最近，有个在电梯里打手机的人告诉电梯里反对他大声打电话的乘客说：“如果你不喜欢，出去换乘另一部电梯。”在纽约和其他城市里，安安静静地步行已成为过去的事了。这是谁的错？是那些打手机声音太大的人的错，也是那些令人讨厌的按喇叭的司机的错。在一些大城市里，地铁站里挤满了通勤的上班族。大家互相推搡，争抢座位，吓坏了老人、小孩、残疾人和孕妇。经常听到有人在公共汽车或地铁上非常大声地打电话，着实令周围的人厌烦。

3 What can we detect about such incidents? Some experts say the trend began decades ago when people became resistant to traditional values and manners. Others blame fast-paced modern lifestyles for contributing to a society that has little time to be polite. This is particularly true in big cities, where people are surrounded by strangers. As a noted psychologist has observed, "In a small town, the person to whom you are rude is more likely to be someone you are going to see again tomorrow." In the city, if you have a minor conflict, it's very unlikely you will ever encounter that person again.

从这些事件中我们可以看出什么端倪呢？一些专家说，这种趋势早在几十年前人们抵制传统价值观及传统习俗时就已经开始了。还有人指责快节奏的现代生活方式催生了人们无暇顾及礼貌的社会。在人们身边充满陌生人的大城市里尤其如此。正如一位著名心理学家所说的：“在小城镇里， 你对一个人粗鲁，明天你更有可能还会遇到这个人。”在城市里，如果你和某人有个小摩擦，很可能你不会再碰到这个人。

4 Stress also plays a role in incidents of ignorant behavior. Cindy Kludt, a counselor who works with overworked nurses, says rudeness in hospitals corresponds with the stress of people constantly working under life-and-death circumstances. "If people at the top are rude or uncaring, rudeness moves on downward, affecting everyone's behavior."

压力也是造成漠视行为的一个因素。辛迪·克拉特是一位辅导过劳护士的咨询师。她说，医院里的无礼行为与人们总是在生死攸关的环境下工作所面对的压力相关。“如果医院的上层领导粗鲁无礼或不关心员工，粗鲁就会向下层传播，影响每个人的行为。”

5 Rudeness comes with stress and this is becoming strikingly common. Motorists regularly force bicyclists off the road, and large trucks intimidate autos moving too slowly in front of them. Disgraceful insults are shouted and even bottles and trash are thrown at road crews by upset drivers because lanes are restricted.

人们因为压力而变得粗鲁，这成为非常普遍的现象。机动车司机经常迫使骑自行车的人让路，大货车紧逼着他们前面那些开得太慢的汽车。因修路车道被封，心情烦躁的司机会脱口骂出难听的话，甚至会向养路工人丢掷瓶子和垃圾。

6 Public officials are often the target of people's frustration. Staff assistants in public institutions tell of rude, hostile, and sometimes threatening words from people who feel government agencies are rude or mistreating them. As rudeness in public dealings cuts both ways, citizens perceive that public servants habitually ignore them, and they in turn treat the public servants in an offensive fashion.

公共机构的官员常常是人们发泄不满的对象。公共机构的工作人员说，一些人对他们说出粗鲁的、充满敌意的、有时是威胁性的话，因为这些人觉得政府机构对他们粗鲁或者没有善待他们。在公共交往中粗鲁行为是双向的，由于市民感到公务员对他们总是熟视无睹，他们反过来也对公务员咄咄逗人逼人、气势汹汹。

7 Sometimes, such behavior goes beyond verbal abuse. A worker in a restaurant was slapped and cursed by a customer after she told him no table would be available for two hours. A man in the United States recently won damages for injuries suffered when he made a complaint about a woman for using bad language in her loud conversation. After being told to "get lost", he was beaten with an umbrella by the woman and punched by her companion. Utility crews in big cities report increasing violence from people who have complaints against the power company. "Our repair crews have a rough time in some apartment houses where a lot of people live with relatively little space," says a utility company executive. "That makes short tempers, and angry, rude behavior shows up."

有时候，这种行为不只是言语辱骂。当一名餐厅的员工告知一位顾客两小时之内餐厅无空位时，这位顾客扇她耳光并咒骂她。最近美国一名男子起诉一妇女得到了损害赔偿金。说他在抱怨那个妇女大声喧闹、口吐脏字后遭受到身体伤害。那个妇女对他说“滚开”后，又用雨伞打他，她的同伴也挥拳打他。据大城市里的公共事业工作人员反映：对电力公司有怨气的用户对他们施以暴力的行为越来越多。“有些公寓房里的很多住户不得不住在相对狭小的空间里。我们的维修人员去那里工作时很不容易。”一位公共事业公司的管理人员说道，“空间狭小使住户爱发脾气，愤怒和粗鲁的行为也就随之出现。”

8 There is disagreement as to whether the situation is improving or not. Many see little hope for a decline in today's rude behavior. In fact, some see a new pattern emerging in big cities — the "norm of non-involvement" as one psychologist calls it. Others are feeling more hopeful. For example, one international organization, the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation, inspires people to practice kindness and to pass it on to others! The organization points to a variety of indicators showing kinder and more compassionate citizens. More people are volunteering their time for community projects; also, donations of goods and money to charities have increased. These acts of kindness would have a positive effect on others and would help to reduce the stress in society. Let's hope this optimistic view prevails and brings a better, brighter world for us all.

这种情况现在是否有所改善，大家对此意见不一。很多人对于如今无礼行为是否会减少不抱什么希望。事实上，有些人看到城市中正在出现一种新的模式，一位心理学家称之为“不介入模式”。另一些人则感到比较乐观。例如，一个叫“随机善举基金会”的国际组织鼓励人们行善，并把友善传递给其他人！该组织指出，有各种迹象表明，更友善和更富同情心的市民大有人在。越来越多的人自愿花时间从事社区项目而且，捐给慈善机构的钱物也有所增加。这些友善的行为会给他人带来积极的影响，并有助于减少社会上的压力。我们希望这样的乐观看法可以流行开来，并给我们所有人带来一个更加美好、更加光明的世界。