quick to declare modernity dead. "Before we worry about the legitimacy of the modern project, we have to understand what it is. We're just now beginning to understand what the modern world meant for humanity. It's far too soon to be making apocalyptic pronouncements about its demise, its role in imperialist, and so forth." Hegel's modernity, according to Pippin, falls somewhere in between conformity and self-determining individualism.

Hegel was the first thinker to consider art, literature, politics, and religion as aspects of philosophy, all with the same goal: a complete self-knowledge about what it is to be human. And in Hegelian fashion Pippin—who's already explored the literature of Karl Marx and Art—will pursue a project that he'll call "After the Beautiful." It's one project he'll pursue with a $1.5 million Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Distiguished Achievement Award. The grant gives him three years to fly in speakers, hold seminars, and plan Chicago conferences and lecture series on his chosen subjects. "In a way I've become my own little foundation." He also plans to write The Erotic Nietzsche: Philosophers without Philosophy. As the "prophet of the demise of the modern, enlightenment form of life," Pippin says, Nietzsche declared that liberal-democratic institutions were falling as a way of life because of "the failure of desire." Liberal-democrats, he believed, could not excite and sustain the allegiance necessary to be reproducible. "I disagree with him, but I'm interested in the framework of the question"—that is, given the problem of desire as a shared enterprise, perhaps even a shared fantasy, under what circumstances does it originate, and how does it die?" But first there's that book on Hegel.

—A.B.

Speaking of the Balkans

Victor Friedman, AM'71, PhD'78, began his first serious linguistics work as a nine-year-old living in Hyde Park, when he became interested in foreign cultures and societies. His grandfather's brother and my father used rather harsh Russian expressions humorously as terms of endearment," explains Friedman, a grandson of Russian and Romanian immigrants. He started a collection, to which his parents' friends cheerfully contributed.

On weekends he mined the lexicons at Harper Library. By the time he graduated from the Lab School and left for Reed College he had accumulated 2,000 words and phrases, all carefully written down on 3 x 5 cards. Some he took from familiar languages such as French and Italian (Via a Fin- ferone!), others from more exotic languages, including Xhosa, Chinko, Assyrian, and Ashtani (Wānuramo nfu rye ndambal)—"May your ancestral spirits chew their own bone!"

Many are unprintable. He still keeps the cards in a cluttered upstairs room in his Blackstone Avenue house, a few blocks from where he grew up. "I don't use this stuff very much anymore," he said recently, flipping through the collection. "But I can't bring myself to throw it away." Friedman, the Andrew W. Mellon professor of humanities and chair of the Department of Slavic Languages & Literature, is one of the foremost experts on Balkan linguistics, best known for his research into verb systems and the problems of creating standardized languages. But few aspects of language and culture do not interest Friedman, 53, who joined the University faculty in 1983. In a recent course on Romanies, the Gypsy language, he expounded with equal authority on Roman dialectical variations; on the Roman method of making dinitja, the baggy trousers traditionally worn by Muslim women; and on the nuances of drinking rakija, the fiery native brandy made in backyard stills throughout the Balkans. "You don't gulp it in one swallow, the way the Russians do," he told the students. "You sip it."

Linguists first studied the relationships among languages by determining how they were related and tracing them back to common sources. Balkan linguists take a different approach. They study what happens when unrelated languages rub against each other over long periods of time. The modern Balkan languages, including Albanian, Greek, and several Slavic and Romance languages, evolved over centuries among people who spoke each others' languages and interacted daily, sharing words and speaking manners, so that eventually their languages began to resemble one another. That polyglot world no longer exists urbanization, the rise of nation states, and ethnic wars have all hastened its demise. But under the Byzantine and Ottoman empires the Balkans were an extraordinary mosaic, a world that still survives in its languages. The whole discipline of contact linguistics, as it is sometimes called, began with the Balkans.

Like many Balkan linguists of his generation Friedman was drawn to the region as much by its music as by its languages. During the 1960s he regularly joined gatherings in Hyde Park, where he danced to Israeli, country, and Balkan music. Later, as a Chicago graduate student, he spent a month in Macedonia, the southernmost republic of Yugoslavia, and fell in love with the place.

Wedding celebrations in the Roman quarter of Skopje, Macedonia. Friedman first met Romans in the 1970s and is one of the few experts on their language and culture.

He liked almost everything about it: the language, the dancing, the drinking, the food—and most of all the energetic hospitality of the people.

At the crossroads of the Balkans, Macedonia was a linguist's paradise. When Friedman returned to Skopje, the capital, in 1973-74 to research his dissertation on the Macedonian language, he lived on a block that was a kind of miniature Balkans itself. "The landlady was Macedonian, but she spoke fluent Turkish," he recalls. The next-door neighbors were Turks. There were Gypsies who lived upstairs, Albanians across the hall. It was a real multilingual, multilingual encounter. I had to concentrate on my dissertation, but it was wonderful hearing all these languages going on all at the same time."

Four language groups make up what scholars call the "Balkan linguistic league"; Slavic, Romance, Albanian, and Greek.
The facts about truth serum

In a fascinating chapter of Memorized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain (Chicago, 1998) associate professor of history Alison Winter, AR87, details how "truth serum" was commonly used to treat chronic illness. Originally called "animal magnetism" and later "mesmerism" after its creator, Franz Anton Mesmer, the practice required the mesmerist (usually a man) to make "magnetic passes" over his subject (usually a woman) to bend her to his will. These passes—long, sweeping hand gestures over the surface of the subject's skin—were close enough that each felt the body heat of the other, without actually touching.

In the chapter, "Emanations from the Sickroom," well-known Victorian intellectuals—including poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning, mathematician Ada Lovelace, and journalist Harriet Martineau describe mesmerism's power. Their accounts are so persuasive that a reader could be sucked into the Victorian mindset, convinced—for a while, anyway—that the technique had curing ability. But Mesmerism is not at all concerned about whether mesmerism "worked." Instead Winter, who earned her Ph.D. at the University of Cambridge in 1993, re-constructs the Victorian debate over mesmerism's validity—a challenging task, given that when she started her research she considered the practice "totally ridiculous," though as a historian she suspended such judgment.

Although truth serums have been associated with hostile police interrogations since the 1930s, Winter believed her research for the opposite purpose: to exonerate the innocent. Convinced that the justice system was deeply corrupt, he gave "sociopolitical interviews" to suspects protesting their innocence. Most courts rejected these interviews, which presented a "neat circular issue," Winter explains. For the truth-sera testimony to be reliable, it would have to be given involuntarily; but involuntary testimony would violate the legal principle against compelling a suspect to testify, even in his own defense.

Next Winter traces the psychiatric use of two synthesized "truth drugs," sodium amytal and sodium pentothal, which made patients more communicative. During the Vietnam War, these drugs were dispensed to treat a mental condition known as "battle exhaustion." In a classic catch-22, military doctors were taught that the drugs were so powerful, patients who knew they'd be taking them would be sent back to the front. If the treatment worked, the soldiers were considered better and also were sent back to the front. After the war the applications for these drugs changed yet again, when CIA researchers experimented with a "lie serum"—a technique for fabricating memory and even understanding of one's self—to brainwash agents.

Winter's chronological survey, which includes "truth technologies" such as polygraphs and forensic laboratories, concludes with what she describes as "over remembered memories—eye witness testimony to adult memories of childhood abuse—a subject that indirectly inspired the entire project. At the California Institute of Technology, where she taught from 1994 until 2001, Winter was often asked by her scientists colleagues to explain mesmerism in contemporary terms: Was it like hypnosis? Or was it a hypnotic technique, or was the brain totally different in the 19th century, she says. The closest analogy, Winter decided, was the recovered memory debate, which were "incredibly important in the '80s and the early '90s."

Ferreting out the truth about truth technologies has been more difficult than Winter anticipated. Partially she was spoiled by the ease of researching the Victorians, who were obsessed with "documenting their own lives," she says. Many wrote daily letters, preserved the letters in books, and willied the books to descendents. The increasingly tight control over contemporary U.S. government documents makes research more difficult: some CIA files that were once in the public domain, for example, have since been quietly withdrawn.

"I was afraid I can't twist my face, but, thank God, I paused the polygraph..."

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Citations

Cancer treatment response is in the genes

Your genes may determine how you respond to cancer treatment, reports Chicago oncolgist Mark Ratain. In a study of 61 colon-cancer patients, Ratain found that a patient's UGT1A1 gene variant determines his or her susceptibility to new cancer drugs imotucan. Patients with the gene variant 7/7 taking the drug experience a substantial white-blood cell drop and become infection prone. Ratain, who announced his findings at a symposium in June, said the new gene analysis is a "very promising" clinical tool.

Zen of golf

Professional golfers generally keep their emotions in check when competing, so when golfers lose, the emotions may be felt keenly. But no college golfers, or college students who have played golf, reported a death in the family. Instead, they reported golfing-related stress.

Wealth of families

Children of both the wealthy and the poor tend to mimic their parents' financial habits, says Erik Hurst, assistant professor of economics, and Kerwin Kofi Charles of the University of Michigan. Hurst and Charles examined 1,491 parents-child pairs from 1960 to 1990, and found that young people are more likely to adopt their parents' socioeconomic status over time. Education, often thought to be a major factor in predicting children's continued wealth, turned out to be relatively a small role. Instead, Hurst and Charles argue, a child's role is based on the importance of saving money keep most children of wealthy parents well off. The study will be published in the Journal of Political Economy later this year.

Teach to the hand

Teachers unconsciously pick up on cues from students' gestures and adjust their instruction accordingly, psychology professor Susan Goldin-Meadow and colleague Melissa Singer, AM97, found. Goldin-Meadow and colleagues had previously discovered that students are ready to learn more when their gestures don't match their speech. For example, a student might incorrectly add the numerals on both sides of an equation's equation, but still correctly gesture to each side separately. The study, published in the May Developmental Psychology, says that teachers showed "mismatches" new ways to solve problems.

What happens when you mix drugs and alcohol

A nicotine-blocking drug used to help smokers quit also reduces alcohol euphoria in casual drinkers. In associate professor of psychology Harriet de Wite's study, published in the May Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research, participants were given a mecamylamine pill or a placebo followed by either an alcoholic nonalcoholic drink. Alcohol drinkers who received mecamylamine reported less euphoria and a reduced desire to drink more. Nicotine receptors in the brain are thought to moderate brain cell death, and when they are stimulated, the researchers suspect mecamylamine blocks alcohol from acting on those receptors and thus decreases dopamine levels in drinkers. Researchers study the drug's effects on heavy drinkers but hope that it may help treat alcoholics.

PM and D.G.R.