

Ben Yagoda

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EMPLOYMENT

Professor of English and Journalism, University of Delaware (1992-2016; full professor, 2002-2016)
Movie critic, *Philadelphia Daily News* (1986-1989)
Articles editor, *Philadelphia Magazine* (1982-1985)
Executive editor, *New Jersey Monthly* (1980-1982)
Assistant editor, *The New Leader* (1976-1978)

EDUCATION

M.A., American Civilization, University of Pennsylvania, 1991
B.A., English, Yale, 1976

PUBLICATIONS

Books:

The B-Side: The Death of Tin Pan Alley and the Rebirth of the Great American Song. New York: Riverhead, January 2015. Paper, December 2015

You Need to Read This: The Death of the Imperative Mode, the Rise of American Glottal Stop, the Bizarre Popularity of "Amongst" and Other Cuckoo Things That Have Happened to the English Language. Ebook. New York: Penguin, 2014.

How to Not Write Bad: The Most Common Writing Problems and the Best Ways to Avoid Them. New York: Riverhead Press, 2013.

Memoir: A History. New York: Riverhead Press, 2009. Paper, 2010.

When You Catch an Adjective, Kill It: The Parts of Speech, for Better and/or Worse. New York: Broadway Books, 2007. Paper, 2008.

The Sound on the Page: Style and Voice in Writing. New York: HarperCollins, 2004. Paper, 2005.

About Town: The New Yorker and World It Made. New York: Scribner, 2000. Paper, 200.

Coeditor, with Kevin Kerrane. *The Art of Fact: A Historical Anthology of Literary Journalism*. New York: Scribner, 1997. Paper, 1998.

Will Rogers: A Biography. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993. Paper, 1994, 2000.

Articles (since 2002, selected):

"Unbiased." Article about my attempt to rid myself of cognitive biases. Accepted for publication by *The Atlantic Monthly*; in process.

Article on the relationship between Sigmund Freud and American diplomat William Bullitt. Accepted for publication by *Smithsonian*.

"The Reviewer's Fallacy: When Critics Aren't Critical Enough." *Slate*, 8 January, 2018.

http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/books/2018/01/the_reviewer_s_fallacy_when_critics_aren_t_critical_enough.html

“Penn v. UPenn: The evolution of the university’s colloquial shorthand term.” *The Pennsylvania Gazette*. September/October 2017.

“What’s Wrong With This Picture? Interspecies-friendship photos and videos don’t hurt anybody. But they perpetuate a mistake made by the Nature Fakers more than 100 years ago.” *Medium*. 28 December 2016. <https://medium.com/@benyagoda.com/https-medium-com-whats-wrong-with-this-picture-a03000238fad#.s5fdn42hd>

“It’s Safer to Back Into Parking Spaces. Why Don’t We Do It?” *Vox*. 1 August 2016. <http://www.vox.com/2016/8/1/11926596/safer-back-into-parking-spaces>

“When Mary Martin Was the Boy Who Wouldn’t Grow Up.” *Longreads*. December 2014. <http://blog.longreads.com/2014/12/02/when-mary-martin-was-the-boy-who-wouldnt-grow-up/>

“Does ‘Novel’ Now Mean Any Book?” *Slate*. 4 August 2014.

http://www.slate.com/blogs/lexicon_valley/2014/08/04/novel_increasingly_used_to_mean_any_book_fiction_or_nonfiction.html

“The Sound of Music (Rewind): The hills are alive again with a new generation of the singing von Trapp family.” *Smithsonian*. July/August 2014.

“7 Things Writers Can Learn from Stand-Up Comedians.” *The American Scholar*. Web. 14 July 2014. <http://theamericanscholar.org/seven-things-writers-can-learn-from-stand-up-comedians/>

“The Sense of an Ending.” *Nieman Storyboard*. 23 June 2014. <http://niemanstoryboard.org/stories/the-sense-of-an-ending/>

“A Short History of ‘Hack.’” *NewYorker.com*. 7 March 2014.

<http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/elements/2014/03/a-short-history-of-hack.html>

“Breaking: Bad.” *NewYorker.com*. 22 January 2014.

<http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/culture/2014/01/breaking-bad.html>

“Do You Say ‘Amongst’ Instead of ‘Among’? Here’s Why.” *Slate*, 22 October 2013.

http://www.slate.com/blogs/lexicon_valley/2013/10/22/amongst_hypercorrection_among_millennials_as_the_line_between_formal_and.html

“How *Arrested Development* Reinvented the Catchphrase.” *Slate*, 13 June 2013.

http://www.slate.com/blogs/browbeat/2013/06/03/arrested_development_catchphrases_reinventions_of_classic_comedy_form.html

“Fact-Checking ‘In Cold Blood.’” *Slate*, 20 March 2013. <http://tinyurl.com/bm3zaat>

“The Most Comma Mistakes, *The New York Times*, May 12, 2012. Web. (This and four other 2012 *New York Times* essays were written for “Draft,” a weekly online column about writing.)

“Bento Box Bingo.” *Mr. Beller’s Neighborhood*. (<http://mrbellersneighborhood.com/2012/02/bento-box-bingo>) February 26, 2012.

“Cheerio, ‘Bumbershoot’: The word is not actually British for ‘umbrella.’” *Slate.com*. November 4, 2011.

“Memoir’s Truthy Obligations: A Handy How-To Guide. *Nieman Storyboard* (<http://www.niemanstoryboard.org/2011/07/28/yagoda-memoir-truth-charts-delorenzo/>) July 28, 2011.

“Trial and Eros: When *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* ran afoul of Britain’s 1959 obscenity law, the resulting case had a cast worthy of P.G. Wodehouse.” *The American Scholar*. Autumn 2010.

“Benevolent Dreamer: Ben Yagoda on St. Clair McKelway, Who Wrote with Lucidity About His Own Mental Illness.” *Columbia Journalism Review* 45.5 (2007).

"Michiko Kakutani." *Slate.com*. 10 April 2006. Reprinted in David Plotz, ed., *Backstabbers, Crazed Geniuses, and Animals We Hate: The Writer's of Slate's Assessment Column Tell It Like It Is*. New York: Atlas Books, 2006.

"Grunt's-Eye View: Ben Yagoda on Walter Bernstein's 'Keep Your Head Down.'" *Columbia Journalism Review* 43.6 (2005) (2352 words) Reprinted in *Second Read: Writers Look Back at Classic Works of Reportage*, ed. James Marcus.. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.

"The Adjective—So Ludic, So Minatory, So Twee." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 20 February 2004.

"Heavy Meta." *The American Scholar* 73.3 (2004). Reprinted in JT Leroy, ed., *Da Capo Best Music Writing 2005*. New York: Da Capo, 2005.

"The Case of the Overrated Mystery Novel." *Salon.com*. 6 January 2004.

"Nice Guys Finish..." (profile of tennis player Tim Henman). *The New York Times Magazine*, 23 June 2002.

Essay publications and encyclopedia entry :

"Don Khan and Truck-Driving Wives: Dylan's Ever-Changing Lyrics." *Poetics of Song Lyrics*, ed., Charlotte Pence. University Press of Mississippi, 2012.

"The New Yorker." *The Encyclopedia of American Journalism History*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

"Distant Son: Jimmie Rodgers and Will Rogers." *Waiting for a Train: Jimmie Rodgers's America*, ed., Mary Davis. Boston: Rounder Books, 2009.

"Sins Against the Language." *The Enlightened Bracketologist: The Final Four of Everything*, ed., Richard Sandomir. New York: Bloomsbury, 2007.

"Introduction." *The Writer's Digest Handbook of Magazine Article Writing*. Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books, 2005.

Book Reviews (selected, since 2004):

Draft No. 4, by John McPhee. *Wall Street Journal*, 2 September 2017.

Rosset: My Life in Publishing and How I Fought Censorship, by Barney Rosset. *New York Times Book Review*, 14 October, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/16/books/review/barney-rosset-publishing-memoir.html?r=0>

Culture Crash: The Killing of the Creative Class, by Scott Timberg. *New York Times Book Review*, 17 March 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/22/books/review/culture-crash-by-scott-timberg.html>

The Sense of Style: The Thinking Person's Guide to Writing in the 21st Century, by Steven Pinker. *The Forward*, 11 September 2014.

Born Standing Up, by Steve Martin. *Slate.com*. 6 March 2008.

Charles Addams: A Cartoonist's Life, by Linda Davis. *New York Times Book Review*, 3 December 2006.

Teacher Man: A Memoir, by Frank McCourt. *New York Times Book Review*, 4 December 2005

The 9/11 Commission Report. *Slate.com*. 8 November 2004.

Blogs:

"Lingua Franca" (<http://chronicle.blogs/linguafranca>) *Chronicle of Higher Education* blog about writing and language. I have contributed a weekly post since 2011.

“Not One-Off Britishisms” (<http://britishisms.wordpress.com>) The blog is about British expressions that have become popular in the United States. To date it has been viewed more than 1,800,000 times. February 2011-present.