

Provost Steven E. Hyman, to whom the committee reports, “We really have to be thinking very deeply about the ethical implications of the new science and the new medicine.”

Hyman has asked professor of government Michael Sandel, who also serves on the nation’s President’s Council on Bioethics, to lead a “free and active ethical [discussion], to create the intellectual background [for weighing] these [activities] both in terms of national policy and biomedical ethics.” Given the highly politicized and emotional debate engendered by stem-cell research, a first-rate research institution like Harvard, with a tradition of rational, inclusive deliberation and responsible science, would seem well positioned to tackle both the ethical and scientific issues.

The center, one of several large, collaborative science projects announced in the last few years, was created as the result of a “grass-roots faculty effort,” Hyman explains. “Science has changed and is changing. The current model, which is the individual laboratory investigator with her students and post docs,” he says, “will remain a very important part of science. Having said that, it is really quite clear that much cutting-edge science will depend on large infrastructures....What we see are scientists who are at the cutting edge aggregating into new collaborative coalitions.”

Even in that greater context, HSCI seems uniquely positioned to draw on resources from many parts of the University. Stem-cell science will be taught to undergraduates, graduate students, and medical students, and cuts across many areas, including biology, medicine, government and public policy, law, ethics, business, and religion. “We’re a university that can cover this whole field,” Melton says.

The institute will be “knit together in a very decided and focused way,” in order to tackle specific scientific and clinical problems. Melton quickly sketches a matrix. On the horizontal axis he lists a series of disease targets: diabetes, blood disease, neurodegenerative disease, cardiovascular disease, and so on. Down the left axis, he jots some of the stages between isolating a stem cell and actually using it in a patient: self-renewal (keep-

HARVARD PORTRAIT



Louis Menand

THOUGH READERS of the *New Yorker* might identify him as a gifted book critic and stylish essayist—his pieces are 2004 National Magazine Award finalists in both categories—professor of English and American literature and language Louis Menand considers himself an “intellectual historian. I’m interested in where ideas come from, and the influence of one writer on another.” His book *The Metaphysical Club* absorbed 10 years (“It was fun,” he says), and won the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for history. It shows how Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., William James, Charles Sanders Peirce, and John Dewey launched pragmatism and moved “American thought into the modern world.” Menand does “a version of American studies,” he says. “But nothing before the nineteenth century.” Known as “Luke” since childhood (his eponymous father taught political science at MIT), Menand earned a degree in creative writing from Pomona College in 1973, then spent one year at Harvard Law School. “I didn’t have the personality to be a lawyer,” he says. “I don’t like to argue.” Instead, he earned a Ph.D. in English from Columbia, then taught at Princeton and CUNY before coming to Harvard last fall. Menand teaches courses on the Jameses (Henry, William, and Alice), and on the art and thought of the Cold War period from 1945 to 1965, the subject of his next book. With his wife, Emily, and two adolescent sons in Manhattan, he commutes between there and Beacon Hill. Menand’s elegant prose doesn’t emerge from revision: “I don’t write drafts,” he explains. “My habit is to write one draft, very deliberately.” Will there someday be a novel, a screenplay? “Ha!” he says. “I wish.”