

Virginia Scholar

Newsletter of the Virginia Association of Scholars

Number 5

ISSN 1073-7235

April 1995

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EDITORIAL..... **SCHADENFREUDE**

“**S**chadenfreude” is one of those words that needs a whole phrase or sentence for faithful translation from its mother tongue (in this case German). *Schaden* means harm, hurt, damage, injury. *Freude* is joy or enjoyment. Surely it is no admirable thing to experience *Schadenfreude*, to take pleasure in the hurt that comes to others. Yet human beings sometimes do “enjoy” that experience.

When I feel it, I can usually find some good rationalization, why it isn’t shameful for me to feel that way. A recent exercise of that sort was granted by President Francis Lawrence of Rutgers University. Tired, giving a rambling talk to members of his faculty, stumbling over words and ideas, Lawrence was dismayed to find himself having just said, “It’s hard for disadvantaged students to pass college entrance exams because of their genetic hereditary background”¹.

Immediately he apologized for “three words jumbled together”. But the apology was of no avail. At half-time of a sold-out intercollegiate basketball game, a couple of hundred protesting students took over the court and forced the second half of the game to be postponed to a later date. *CNN News* featured a later demonstration on the campus, during which a black activist using a public-address system told the crowd that blacks were not treated as human beings at Rutgers.

Who, I wondered, had provided that activist with a public-address system? How, I wondered, would a mob have been treated that stopped a basketball game, were the perceived “grievance” not linked to “race”? Even as they protested, these activists were benefiting from a very benign, forbearing attitude on the part of President Lawrence’s administration and the wider society.

I rejoiced in glorious *Schadenfreude* at President Lawrence’s plight because Rutgers has long been one of the most politically correct campuses in the nation. When I was Dean of Arts & Sciences at Virginia

Tech, ten years and more ago, I recall seeing an “affirmative-action” plan evolved at Rutgers that I, in my then innocence, found extraordinary and hair-raising in its blatant discrimination on the grounds of race (and gender). President Lawrence himself has impeccable PC credentials: as Vice-President at Tulane, he had raised the percentage of black students from 1% to 10%, for example. He’s been for some five years now at Rutgers, which boasts such intellectual treats as “multi-cultural curricular change”, “diversity awareness training”, racially segregated dormitories (in the Lawrentian tongue, “a self-affirming environment”). Lawrence’s own commitment to freedom of thought and intellectual inquiry is illustrated by his statement that he could never read *The Bell Curve*.

So when he gets hit by the PC fanatics, I recall with virtuous pleasure such germane sayings as:

Hoist with his own petard!²

All they that take the sword
shall perish with the sword³

For whatsoever a man soweth,
that shall he also reap⁴

They have sown the wind,
and they shall reap the whirlwind⁵

Those sayings are grounded in a considerable body of actual experience⁶: the provost of Paris who built the Bastille was the first person incarcerated there; the inventor of the Brazen Bull for the Tyrant of Agrigentum was also the first person baked to death inside it; architect Henry Winstanley died when a lighthouse he himself had designed was washed away in a storm; and so on and so forth.

The Lawrences of the PC world should not be surprised when they find themselves treated in an unsympathetic and unprincipled fashion: that, after all, is how they themselves behave. They make administrative decisions not on the basis of *what* is at issue but according to *who* is involved. When a single

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil
is for good men to do nothing

anonymous female asserts that a joke made in class constitutes “sexual harassment”, a dedicated and appreciated teacher of tens of thousands of students over several decades finds no support from administrators against the PC fanatics ⁷, for example – that one is innocent until proven guilty is forgotten, as is common sense, the First Amendment’s guarantee of freedom of speech, the venerable tradition of academic freedom, and so on. Or again, thievery is OK if it happens to be black activists stealing issues of a conservative newspaper.

Nor, of course, should the Lawrences expect gratitude from those to whom they have shown preference. Even the most superficial acquaintance with the past, recent or distant, reveals that benefactors and leaders of every stripe, from the most worthy to the most despicable, are likely to find themselves tossed by their erstwhile followers onto the rubbish heap of history rather than inundated in gratitude. And yet this fact of human group behavior seems to remain unfamiliar even to some social pundits. That incongruity struck me forcibly when, years ago, I read ⁸ that “Emperor Haile Selassie ... died ... under house arrest. More than any other man, he made modern Ethiopia ... and sponsored the development of an educated forward-looking elite. Yet, **ironically** [emphasis added], it was largely this elite that turned on him last year, deposed and humiliated him ...”

Ironically?? Who else would have been expected to depose him if not the forward-looking elite whom he had sent abroad to be educated (or indoctrinated) into the mind-set of democracies and peoples’ democracies? Is it not *the norm* that kings and autocrats get overthrown by the military in backward countries, where the martial profession is almost the only hope of education and of emancipation from the bottom of society?

A related standard sociological fact, akin to Parkinson’s Law, is that social movements in moderately civilized nations become really aggressive and unreasonable only *after* and not before their substantive grievances have been assuaged. Thus the Women’s Movement has been most brazenly insatiable and extreme in the United States, where

women enjoy a better place in society than just about anywhere else in the world. And the Movement has become truly insufferable only in recent years, long after all legal and traditional barriers against women had been breached and when a middle-class professional woman earns more and gets jobs easier than her male peers. So too, the greatest absurdities of PC as to race are perpetrated a couple of decades *after* all the important civil-rights battles were won and when minority students get far better treatment than mere white males.

When something of this sort is characterized as “ironical”, that reveals no more than the characterizer’s ignorance of plain social facts; as when Catherine Didion, executive director of the Association for Women in Science (AWIS) found it ironical that “sensitivity about women’s issues has inhibited informal communication [with male faculty], making them ‘very circumspect in their relations with their women colleagues’” ⁹. Really! Who ever would have thought it? Just because jokes are called sexual harassment, common pronouns are castigated as offensive, and the word of a single woman is taken to be true no matter what an accused white male might actually have said or done! How unexpected, ironical, not to be foreseen!

PCers have little overt respect for Sigmund Freud, that oppressively patriarchal dead-white-male; yet in at least one respect the PC attitude is just like the classical Freudian one: tongue-slips, dreams, inadvertent tactlessness, tasteless jokes – all these are no accident, both Freudians and PCers agree; rather they reveal *the real truth* about the perpetrator. President Lawrence, you may not think that you really believe that minorities are genetically hereditarily disadvantaged, but *you’re wrong*; your mind is an open book, to the PCers if not to yourself ¹⁰. And so you deserve to be publicly humiliated and scorned, and you should publicly confess your sin and do penance.

The Lawrences of this world owe it to themselves, if not to anyone else, to understand that they live in a fool’s paradise if they think that doing what the PC fanatics want will somehow save them from

IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

We have all read the poetry of William Shakespeare ... but how many of us know the powerful work of Nikki Giovanni? ... We have all studied the paintings of Leonardo Da Vinci, but how many of us have seen the magnificent quilts of Pat Carter?
*Donna Lisker, Assistant Director
Women’s Center, Virginia Tech
Collegiate Times 95:3:21 p.A9*

It is, I think, almost a law that what one is afraid to say because it will be rejected by the atmosphere of a time, will turn out to be a few years later the most important thing of all.

Doris Lessing, *African Laughter*, 1992

the fanatics' wrath. Far from it. Just as the Nazis had their "house Jews" so the fanatically PC people-of-color have their "house honkies"; but that sheltered status is revocable at will and whim. Put one foot inadvertently in your mouth, and that's the end for you. Indeed, the Lawrences should remember that the greatest anger of the True Believers is reserved not for their evident enemies but for former allies who deviate even one jot from the Party Line. Stalin could reach accommodations with Hitler and with the Reactionary Capitalist West, but he slaughtered former colleagues for their slightest disagreement with him.

Why has our society so embraced and coddled political correctness and its fanatical extremists? In some part because many PC attitudes are consonant with manners of speaking and behaving – I'm unwilling to say thinking – that are thoroughly ingrained in our culture. The attribution of *motive* where there is none forms a staple of populist sociological discourse. That the role of women has been in many respects subservient to that of men is treated as though it resulted from intention, when in reality it is just one among many relics of the haphazard development of complex "modern" societies. The centuries-long, entirely unplanned evolution of the English language is implied to be a tool of male dominators denigrating women by making masculine pronouns do simultaneous service as generic ones.

And so too with concrete matters: when a vaccine that protects millions from polio instead causes a handful of unfortunates to contract the disease, manufacturers of the vaccine stand at legal risk. Nothing, it seems, will we allow to be a genuine accident, the hand of Fate, the will of God.

There is more than one reason, then, why Lawrence should not have been surprised to find that a mere slip of his tongue could transform him from protector of the faith into heretic fit only for the stake. "Slip of the tongue"? B---s---, President Lawrence; you're a racist through and through. You should have known that, anyway, because the sensitivity trainers your university and others hire have said plainly enough and often enough that *all whites are racists*. You're guilty as charged, and don't you ever forget it.

¹ John Leo, "On Society — The Rutgers Star Chamber", *U. S. News & World Report*, 20 February 1995

² *Hamlet* III: iv

³ *Matthew* 26:52

⁴ *Galatians* 6:7

⁵ *Hosea* 8:7

⁶ The following examples are drawn from "Inventors", p. 570 in *The Wordsworth Dictionary of Phrase & Fable* (1994, revised by Ivor H. Evans)

⁷ Al Mandelstamm's experience, see the bibliography in *Virginia Scholar* #1, December 1993, pp. 12-15

⁸ Geoffrey Godsell, "Haile Selassie: the modernizer", *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal* 65:9:2

⁹ "Site visits to 'chilly climates'", *Science* 265 (16 September 1994) 1655

¹⁰ For a recent, explicitly detailed assertion that Lawrence's slip of the tongue reflects "what an awful lot of white people actually believe", see Barbara Ehrenreich, "Planet of the White Guys", *Time* 95:3:15, p. 114

Thank you!

to the non-member friend who has helped us so steadily with library research, items for *VS*, and financial contributions. He's helping our efforts to bring a time when respect for the Constitution of the United States and for academic freedom — not to speak of common decency — will make it possible for him and the many others like him again to speak their minds without well-

founded fear of reprisal by the fanatics of the PC thought-police and their lily-livered administrative fellow-travelers.

Our publication schedule

remains *ad hoc*: it depends on contributions received and time available to us. We don't believe it useful to publish during the summer months. We did want to bring out another issue this academic year if only as thanks for

the contributions from Fritz Heinen, Mole 003, 'Harriet Tubman', Alex Weiss, 'Theophilus White-man' and others.

Have a good summer

and send us stuff for *VS* #6, which will appear, D.V.¹, early in the 1995-96 academic year.

¹ For *deo volente*, not "*volens*" as we ignorantly put it last time. As is his

wont, Tom MacAdoo set us straight

about it. Thanks, Tom!

LANI GUINIER (A.K.A 'THE QUOTA QUEEN') COMES TO TECH

reported by 'Harriet Tubman'

When I saw that the organizers of Black History Month had asked Lani Guinier to speak at Tech on starting a national dialogue on race, I thought it highly inappropriate. Media coverage of Ms. Guinier during her failed nomination for U.S. Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights had left me with a negative feeling about her. Many publications had painted her as an ideologue with implicitly racist views.

Listening to her speak in Virginia Tech's Squires Student Center, however, I was pleased to find her a readily likable person with a gawky sort of charm and quirky sort of intellectual integrity. She seems, at least in public, remarkably free of bitterness toward the public system that rejected her nomination (though she did call the public scrutiny "humiliating" and her "worst nightmare come true"). Overall, Ms. Guinier came across as the kind of person you'd like to take home, serve a nice meal, and talk seriously with over drinks. Yes — talk with. Confirm for U.S. Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights — no.

Most of those who opposed Ms. Guinier's nomination (and this included many traditional liberals) did so because they believed her attitudes and ideology to be anti-democratic and even implicitly racist. These characterizations derive from examination of her book *Tyranny of the Majority* and some of her law-school writings. Those propound her belief that the present system of voting inevitably leads to blacks becoming "losers" because they will al-

ways be outnumbered in the electorate. To remedy this "tyranny of the majority", Ms. Guinier proposed a system of cumulative voting whereby each voter would get more than one vote that they could distribute as they pleased. It was Ms. Guinier's contention that such a system would be more "fair".

What made this so objectionable to Ms. Guinier's critics was that her writings also indicated that she believed the need for this new type of voting was required because whites were irredeemably racist and incapable of ever representing "authentic" black interests. The rigid racial distinctions of Ms. Guinier's philosophy were what led some of her opponents to label her "The Quota Queen". Other critics pointed out that cumulative voting could be overly responsive to intense interests, replacing a tyranny of the majority with one of the minority, balkanizing society and stifling progress.

Ms. Guinier at Tech did not directly address this controversy. Instead, her talk jumped between what she views as the "unfairness" of the winner-take-all aspects of our political and social system and the lack of communication between races. Her critique of the winner-take-all system seemed to center on the negative aspects of competition, whether it affects children in a kindergarten who lose a vote on what game to play or the disruption in family life caused by airline deregulation.

Into this she wove the theme of our failure to have a national de-

bate on race. She said blacks and whites live in separate worlds and that this leads to a lack of important dialogue. She cited the fact that most blacks are urban while most whites are suburban, that blacks and whites watch different television shows, and that they have numerous code-words for each other — all of which really mean "them". She urged an abandonment of this "us"-versus-"them" mentality and the antagonistic "zero-sum" view of racial conflict it creates. She likewise urged the start of a respectful and honest dialogue between the races, stating that calling people "racist" just because they disagreed with you was counter-productive.

While Ms. Guinier seemed sincere, I found ironic her call for an abandonment of a "zero-sum" attitude toward race relations. In fact, she used code words and phrases indicating she views race relations and politics in just that way. She pointed to the fact, for instance, that in the most recent Congressional elections Tom Foley garnered 49.5% of the vote, yet was defeated. She asked her audience whether it was "fair" that those 49.5% were now "unrepresented".

Surely, this is an overly "us"-versus-"them" approach to democracy. The newly elected representative from Foley's district will in some way work for the interests also of people who didn't vote for him. They, as much as those who did vote for him, will benefit from his efforts on behalf of Oregon and the United States. Likewise, some who voted against the new

representative may agree with him and his supporters on certain issues and form working coalitions on those issues. To imply that one is “unrepresented”, just because one’s candidate loses, paints politics in too stark a light. And when the “losers” are defined as always black, and the winners as always white, and the idea is advanced that whites will never represent “authentic” black interests, we are dealing with an implicitly racist notion that can only further polarize races into “us” and “them”. As nice a person as Ms. Guinier may be, I could not have approved of her enforcing civil rights when she states such beliefs.

As usual, a question-and-answer session followed Ms. Guinier’s talk. Unfortunately, there was the normal tendency to keep the questions politically correct. No one asked difficult ques-

tions about Ms. Guinier’s dangerous and racially charged “losers”-and-“winners” ideology, or about cumulative voting. There was a funny moment, however, when Ms. Guinier responded to a question by saying she liked the way Newt Gingrich and the Republicans were steering the public dialogue toward discussion of ideas and policies. This drew an audible groan of disbelief and dismay from the audience. Likewise, an awkward silence followed her implication that there were some forms of affirmative action that should be jettisoned. I thought I saw Tech’s Provost and its Affirmative Action Director, who were sitting on stage, shift uncomfortably in their chairs at this point.

Overall, Tech did a good thing by inviting Ms. Guinier to its campus. It was a nice start toward an honest dialogue on racial

I hate the term “political correctness” and the gross misuses of the label by people such as Mr. Limbaugh, but people in the academy are kidding themselves if they believe that a young scholar is not bucking the already long odds of finding and keeping a decent job if he or she challenges certain myths of the 60’s

David Farber
“The 60’s: Myth and Reality”
Chronicle of Higher Education
94:12:7, p.B1

issues. Perhaps one day the uni-

versity will even invite a black speaker whose purpose is to challenge, rather than merely confirm, the comfortable pieties of political correctness that govern our campus.

BOOKS & OTHER READING

Kindly Inquisitors: The New Attacks on Free Thought by Jonathan Rauch, University of Chicago Press, 1993; 178 pp., \$17.95

reviewed by Theophilus Whiteman

The question forming the central issue of Jonathan Rauch’s *Kindly Inquisitors* is, “What should be society’s principle for raising and settling differences of opinion? In other words, what is the right way, or at least the best way, to make decisions as to who is right (thus having knowledge) and who is wrong (thus having mere opinion)?”

It is Rauch’s emphasis on the “right way” and “best way” to make decisions which distinguishes this book. Unlike others, Rauch spends little time examining free speech in the light of its First Amendment protections. Instead, he examines the history of how mankind has gone about determining truth, and seeks to show that while it is not perfect, the system which Western culture has developed, which he calls “liberal science”, is the best we can

hope for.

Rauch defines liberal science as checking each idea through public discourse, with no one having ultimate authority to say what is right or wrong. He notes, of course, that certain sets of ideas will always gain prominence and be used to make decisions. He believes, however, that liberal science requires that no ideas should be final and off-limits to challenge, since constant challenge and debate are necessary to find the “truth”.

Rauch admits that this type of system contains serious drawbacks. He points out, for instance, that the constant shifting of “truth” can be frustrating. Those seeking a stable intellectual environment (Christian fundamentalists) or control (university administrators) may find the system burdensome.

They may seek to control change, and speech, to achieve their goals.

The complaint against liberal science that concerns Rauch most, however, is that it can be cruel. He admits that liberal science can, indeed, hurt feelings. He notes, "Somehow the idea has grown up that 'liberal' means 'nice', that the liberal intellectual system fosters sensitivity, toleration, self-esteem, the rejection of prejudice and bias. That impression is misguided. The truth is that liberal science demands discipline as well as license, and to those who reject or flout its rules, it can be cruel. It excludes and restricts as well as tolerates. It thrives on prejudice no less than on cool detachment. It does not give a damn about your feelings and happily tramples them in the name of finding truth. It allows and – here we should be honest – sometimes encourages offense. Self-esteem, sensitivity, respect for other's beliefs, renunciation of prejudice are all good as far as they go. But as primary social goals they are incompatible with the peaceful and productive advancement of human knowledge. To advance knowledge, we must all sometimes suffer. Worse than that, we must inflict suffering on others".

Rauch is concerned that a new ethic has arisen which holds that those using hurtful words must be punished. The manifestations of this ethic are familiar to everyone – speech codes, students claiming outrage at professors' use of certain words. In response Rauch writes, "No social principle in the world is more foolish and dangerous than the rapidly rising notion that hurtful words and ideas are a form of violence or torture (e.g., 'harassment') and that their perpetrators should be treated accordingly. That notion leads to the criminalization of criticism and the empowerment of authorities to regulate it. The new sensitivity is the old authoritarianism in disguise, and it is just as noxious". The rise of this new "inquisition" lends Rauch's book its title.

Rauch gives names to several schools of thought within the ranks of the new inquisitors. Two of them – fundamentalism and humanitarianism – he sees as particularly dangerous. The fundamentalist threat comes from those – conservative, liberal, libertarian,

religious, non-religious – who refuse to entertain the idea that they might be wrong. Without such skepticism, they have no reason to tolerate opinions they may view as wrongheaded or dangerous. Thus, when the rise of new ideas threatens their belief system, they sometimes turn to repression. A current example of the fundamentalist mind-set would be Francis Lawrence, the embattled President of Rutgers, who said he refused to consider the thesis of "The Bell Curve", much less read the book.

Rauch believes an even more serious threat, however, emanates from humanitarianism, whose "moral traction tugs at anyone who cares about others". Rauch notes that humanitarians claim their attack on liberal science is motivated only by a desire to give previously repressed groups equal access to the system and to protect those groups from harm. He notes, however, that the Spanish Inquisition was also guided originally by humane motives and it, like today's inquisition, slid inexorably into authoritarianism.

In one section of the book, Rauch thoroughly examines all of the humanitarian arguments advanced for limits on speech ("Why tolerate bigotry? We won't block criticism and inquiry, just hate and intimidation. Society will be better off with offensive and vicious opinions driven out, etc.") and

finds all the arguments lacking. I thought this section to be the best in the book since it addresses questions and arguments we hear every day on the campuses, and which can indeed tug at our consciences.

The only "loose end" in this book was its failure to find any limits whatsoever on debate. My mind kept turning to the incident years ago when a group of Nazis sued for, and won, the right to march in Skokie, Illinois, on Hitler's birthday. Sixty percent of the residents of Skokie were Jewish and thousands of them were concentration-camp survivors. The Nazis said they chose Skokie because "Where one finds the most Jews, one finds the most Jew-haters".

Rauch is persuasive in arguing that any restrictions on speech inevitably lead to authoritarianism, but surely there are extreme cases such as Skokie where a bit of authoritarianism would be good for the communal soul. Perhaps Rauch's failure to con-

Not long ago in America, punishing wrong believers along with wrong beliefs was the specialty of the right wing. That was what McCarthyism was all about.... But McCarthyism, in its day, never caught on among professionals in the knowledge business, among academics and journalists. Terrible it is to see that this time around the movement to condemn the mistaken along with their errors is widely respected among the people who most depend on the freedom to err. Intellectuals are losing their nerve or their souls, or both.

sider these extreme cases arises from his “liberal science” analysis rather than from a First Amendment analysis of free speech. From the narrower Constitutional viewpoint, however, it seems that our republic’s free-speech guarantees are based on the notion that ideas should be protected because they may contain substance important to that republic’s orderly progress. Surely we can place some small restrictions on the speech of organizations that would destroy our republic if they could, advocate genocide (and have already practiced it) and seek to affirm these “principles” in the neighborhood of the very people their organization almost killed. Refusal to place some limits on these activities reeks more of an abdication of moral responsibility than a display of open-mindedness. It denigrates the notion of free speech in the same way that “Do your own thing”

denigrates “To thine own self be true”. Rauch could have made me even more of a believer in “liberal science” if he had addressed the hardest cases such as Skokie.

Kindly Inquisitors is slim (163 pages) and well-written (Rauch is a professional journalist and writes frequently for *The New Republic* and other publications). It is intellectually invigorating in the manner of a brisk walk or brief jog (it’s always refreshing to skip through the history of Western thought – Plato, Socrates, Descartes, Hume, Locke, Madison – without having to do the hard reading oneself). Rauch’s sincerity and credibility in defending “hate speech” are reinforced by the fact that he is a Jew and a homosexual. He dedicates his book to Salmon Rushdie, author of *Satanic Verses*.

The Voice of Liberal Learning: Michael Oakeshott on Education

edited by Timothy Fuller, Yale University Press, 1989; 169 pp., \$25 (paper, 1990, \$11)

Refreshing it is to reflect on the positive values that are the grounds for fighting against PC; and there can hardly be a better stimulant to such reflection than this volume.

Six well-chosen lectures and essays by Oakeshott, from between 1948 and 1975, are introduced by Fuller’s informative gloss, “A Philosophical Understanding of Education”: “Oakeshott’s disposition is to conserve ... [he offers] clarity of vision about the distinguishing features of the distinctive human endeavours ... If teaching and learning foster anything, it is intellectual and emotional maturity: finding a way to be at home in the world ... [through] reflective acknowledgment of the world’s vast variety and our incapacity to find an expression of it that is all-encompassing” (15-16).

These pieces show Oakeshott bringing to bear on the thoughtless banalities that bombard us, a sturdy wisdom expressed so cogently as to seem the plainest common sense. It is not light or quick reading, but rewarding in the ideas it brings and in the unwavering steadiness of Oakeshott’s view, sometimes enlivened by picturesque turns of phrase.

“A Place of Learning” reminds us¹ that “none of us is born human; each is what he learns to become” (21). As to how and what to learn, Oakeshott exposes

as vacuous such popular educationese goals as “learning to think for oneself” ... to “think logically” and so forth: “of course, all these and more are aptitudes and virtues that a learner may hope to acquire or to improve. But neither they, nor self-understanding itself, can be made the subject of learning” (32). “Liberal learning is learning to respond to the invitations of the great intellectual adventures in which human beings have come to display their various understandings of the world and of themselves” (32). The separation or distinction of the “social sciences” from the humanities marks the attempt “to remove human action and utterance from the category of intelligent goings-on (that is, chosen responses of self-conscious agents to their understood situations which have reasons but not causes ...) ... Rules are misidentified as regularities, ... conduct as ‘behaviour’ and contingent relationships as causal or systematic connections” (35).

“Learning and Teaching”, too, asserts that “the only way of becoming a human being” is to enter the *geistige Welt* that is our common inheritance: “This world can be entered, possessed and enjoyed only in a process of learning” (45). And that process can come in many forms: “if you were to ask me the circumstances in which patience, accuracy, economy, elegance and style first dawned upon me, I would have to say that I did not come to recognize them in literature, in argument or in geometrical proof until I had first recognized them elsewhere ... [owing] to a

¹ As does Jacques Barzun: “The reason teaching has to go on is that children are not born human; they are made so” — *Teacher in America* (Anchor/Doubleday, 1954) p.17

Sergeant gymnastics instructor ... not on account of anything he ever said, but because he was a man of patience, accuracy, economy, elegance and style" (62).

"Human beings ... are composed entirely of beliefs about themselves and about the world they inhabit" (64); "a world composed, not of 'things', but of meanings (65)". A good school is a place where one escapes from the immediacy of everyday practical life; its "marks ...are that in it learning may be recognized as, itself, a golden satisfaction which needs no adventitious gilding to recommend it" (70); would that our colleges and universities as well as grade schools might understand that! But the "self-corruption of uni-

versities exceeds that of any other part of the educational engagement of European peoples ... they have anticipated almost every design of governments to transform them into instruments of 'socialization', hardly needing to be bribed to undertake this destruction of themselves" (89-90). "The pursuit of learning is not a race in which the competitors jockey for the best place, it is not even an argument or a symposium; it is a conversation" (98). Over and over again, Oakeshott repeats "conversation" as the best description of what learning and life are about.

Still, a university "is not a contrivance for making scholars ... For about 400 years in England the education of the would-be scholar and of the man of the world has been the same, and this tradition belongs to our idea of a university" (100). "A university

THE UNIVERSITY

There are few earthly things more beautiful than a University

It is a place where those who hate ignorance may strive to know, where those who perceive truth may strive to make others see; where seekers and learners alike, banded together in the search for knowledge, will honor thought in all its finer ways, will welcome thinkers in distress or in exile, will uphold ever the dignity of thought and learning and will exact standards in these things.

They give to the young in their impressionable years, the bond of a lofty purpose shared, of a great corporate life whose links will not be loosed until they die.

They give young people that close companionship for which youth longed, and that chance of the endless discussion of the themes which are endless, without which youth would seem a waste of time.

There are few earthly things more splendid than a University.

In these days of broken frontiers and collapsing values, when the dams are down and the floods are making misery, when every future looks somewhat grim and every ancient foothold

has become something of a quagmire, wherever a University stands, it stands and shines; wherever it exists, the free minds of men, urged on to full and fair inquiry, may still bring wisdom into human affairs.

John Masefield

We saw this posted in the Research Division at Virginia Tech, and liked it a lot (and like the folks in the Research Division for thinking it worth posting there). But we've not been able to find it in the collected works of Masefield. Can anyone tell us when this was written? For some special occasion, perhaps?

will have ceased to exist when its learning has degenerated into what is now called research ... and when ... [students] come with no understanding of the manners of conversation but desire only a qualification for earning a living or a certificate to let them in on the exploitation of the world" (104).

In "The Universities", written in 1949 as commentary on *The Crisis in the Universities* by Sir Walter Moberly, Oakeshott dissects some misguidedness that is still very much with us and that "suggests that by putting 'social' in front of 'justice' something significant has been said, ... accepts the ... identification of unselfishness with equalitarianism and extends an indiscriminating

approval to all those who claim to be allied with 'all the forces making for social progress'" (120). The "burning questions" that educational pundits like to bring up "are the sort which give a faint flicker round about midnight and have burnt themselves out by the next morning ... let us also be aware of their triviality: no question is inherently 'burning', and the most probable way of making an important question trivial is by hotting it up" (122); "if there is a quack about the place, if there is an intellectual crook, you may be certain that he will not lack dynamism" (124). "The problem of the universities today is how to avoid destruction at the hands of men who have no use for their characteristic virtues, men who are convinced only that 'knowledge is power'" (130).

PC is POLITICAL CLEANSING*U. Magazine*, January/February 1995, p.24

“Political Education” exposes the fallacies and dangers of ideological indoctrination in the name of some sort of education: “it suggests that a knowledge of the chosen political ideology can take the place of understanding a tradition of political behavior” (146). How more succinctly to point to the invalid radical attitude in which it is enough to “know” that women and workers and people of color have all been oppressed, rather than having a sense of the centu-

ries and millennia of contingencies that have molded our current society? But Oakeshott acknowledges the possible heuristic value of ideological preconception: “the distorting mirror of an ideology [may] reveal important hidden passages in the tradition, as a caricature reveals the potentialities of a face” (148).

I trust the quotations have whetted the reader’s appetite for the whole book. It is an aid to understanding our world and discussing it realistically: “there being, perhaps, some advantage in thinking and speaking and arguing in a manner consonant with what we are really doing” (156).

The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion by Stephen Carter, Basic, 1993; 328 pp., \$25; Anchor/Doubleday, 1994, \$14.95

“Unsparring logic and needle-sharp intelligence” was our appraisal¹ of Stephen Carter on reading his earlier book, *Reflections of an Affirmative Action Baby*. We reiterate that after reading this one.

The book’s sub-title and title describe it well enough. The popular, superficial view that Americans remain notably religious is punctured by Carter’s observation that only trivial, non-significant religious banalities are acceptable in our public discourse. In Carter’s view, religion is properly a path to knowledge and belief; an *alternative* to the commonly accepted secular paths, be they “political” or “scientific” or something else. So he sees the proper and necessary role of religion as *resisting* secular pressures; or, after de Tocqueville, as providing the moral foundation needed if democracy is to work. In our society “religious” groups tend to appeal to religion *a posteriori* in support *and justification* of particular political positions. For Carter, religion is more fundamental than that: political attitudes should arise from pre-existent religious belief.

Many will find it easy to disagree with Carter’s sentiments in this; or in his dislike of the “melting-pot” ideal of American assimilation (57), or in his acceptance (287) of Anita Hill’s charges against Clarence Thomas. Few if any, however, will be able to fault Carter’s reasoning. If you want to disagree with him then you must reject his starting assumptions; yet those appear in themselves quite attractive. So Carter is a first-rate teacher: he challenges us to face the logical consequences of principles to

which we tend usually to give only thoughtless assent. I had thought of titling this review, “Caution!! Mind At Work”.

That we use religion only as justification of and gloss on our political views, Carter illustrates by observing that “supporters of the ordination of women include many people for whom politics drives spiritual commitment” (75). Still, Carter hastens to add, “that is no more an argument against ordination of women than the fact that many opponents are sexists is an argument in favor”. If religion is to be the driving force, then the question, whether or not to ordain women, “has everything to do with discerning and then enacting the will of God, and nothing to do with the rights of women” (77).

Keeping the faith exacts a stiff price,
especially on those who are not quite sure
what faith they’re keeping ...

Hugh Pearson
Heterodoxy, September 1994, p.6

Similarly, our knee-jerk reaction that the Churches should stay out of politics, when they have the effrontery to oppose abortion, is not based on any principle of “separation of Church and State”: we welcomed and applauded the involvement of Churches in politics when they were leaders in the Civil Rights Movement. (And it goes with science as with religion: for a long time science was co-opted as a socially “progressive” influence; but when scientific knowledge seems to stand against some of the wishes of the radical Left, science like religion becomes something that should bow to populist attitudes.) “If

¹ VS #1, December 1993, p.11

the Christian Coalition is wrong for America, it must be because its message is wrong on the issues, not because its message is religious" (266); "we must not assume that it is *the fact of believing deeply* that made the Davidians dangerous, even if it is true that *what they believed deeply* made them dangerous.... Otherwise, the putative 'fanaticism' of the Davidians becomes virtually indistinguishable from the 'fanaticism' of Martin Luther King, Jr. – for both were willing to risk the wrath of secular society for what they believed" (277).

Not that Carter would want *Churches* involved in politics; it is the role of *religion* that he's concerned with. He recognizes the Inquisition as an illustration that "the institutional church gave up the right to die for its beliefs in exchange for the right to kill for its beliefs" (82). "The religions enjoy no special immunity from the tendency of power to corrupt – and of absolute power to corrupt absolutely" (83). Carter challenges the churches to consider whether the benefits of tax-exemption may not be outweighed by the power that gives government through its ability to decide when such exemptions can properly be withheld, as with Bob Jones University in 1983 because it was held to practice racial discrimination (150ff.).

"Nothing about the nature of religion requires either exclusivity or universality", Carter maintains (91). While a "claim of exclusivity is not a moral evil ... it is the nature of *that individual's faith*, not the nature of *religion itself*, that dictates the exclusivity. So Christians who insist that Jews (or Muslims or Buddhists or anyone else) cannot find salvation without accepting Jesus Christ as savior should not insist that they are making only the argument that every religion demands; they should confess freely that they are making the argument that their reading of Christianity demands" (92).

How should we regulate "the presence of religions in the public square"? We've turned for help to the courts who "promulgated and nurtured the sensible doctrine of separation of church and state. The problem is whether the courts have got the doctrine right, or whether ... it has become a tool for treating religions worse than other American institutions" (101). The latter is the case, it turns out; for "the metaphorical separation of church and state originated in an effort to protect religion from the state, not the state from religion" (105). "It does not mean ... that people whose motivations are religious are banned from trying to influence government, nor that the government is banned from listening to

them" (106). The present tendency to interpret "separation" as "to protect the secular from the religious" can only lead to "the establishment of religion as a hobby, trivial and unimportant for serious people, not to be mentioned in serious discourse. And nothing could be further from the constitutional, historical, or philosophical truth" (115).

We seem to fear that there is more harm to individual freedom when a religious vision of the good life seeks to impose on society than when a secular vision of the good life seeks to impose itself (145); Carter questions whether that fear is justified.

"Questions" and "challenges" are indeed appropriate descriptions of Carter's discussion, for he does not claim to have all the answers. "Indeed, if one takes seriously both equality and religious autonomy, there may be no good answer" (155). But it is surely less important to be offered answers than to be brought to see that activists pushing for multi-cultural curricula and activists pushing for scientific creationism to have equal time with evolution are doing the same thing: "both are exercises in resistance to central authority in the teaching of children" (180); both are doing the same thing even though typically those (on the Left) who embrace the multi-culturalist movement find the creationist initiative offensive while those (on the Right) who push for creationism are often offended by the multi-culturalist initiative.

Our society, or at least our liberal intelligentsia, has granted to science alone the role of arbiter of fact. "Part of the trouble with contemporary liberal epistemology is that it is not capable of treating as a factual inquiry a question like 'Can a Jehovah's Witness achieve salvation after receiving a blood transfusion?' – or, for that matter, a question like 'Is there life after death?' These questions, to liberal theory, involve matters of belief, not of fact" (221).

**"THE PERSON WHO SPEAKS ENGLISH
WILL NOT BE IN TODAY"**

This sign was discovered
not in some far-away land
but on the information window
Office of the State Department of Motor Vehicles
White Plains, New York, U.S.A.
by Arthur Witkin of Hartsdale, NY
(reported in *Chemical & Engineering News*,
5 September 1994, p.64)

Want to stretch your mind? Read this book. It's based on earlier essays and lectures, and that his-

tory accounts for less-than-ideal organization and a bit of repetition; but the substance is first-rate.

The Imperiled Academy edited by Howard Dickman

Transaction Publishers, 1993; \$ 32.95 cloth, \$18.95 paper

As with most edited collections, different readers will like different pieces in this collection. I found points of particular interest in "Leviathan U." by Daniel Bonevac: for example that multi-culturalism began not in the United States but in Britain (2).

Why do administrators hire radicals and then cater to them? In this fresh, thought-provoking piece, Bonevac makes the persuasive case that PC is the New Luddism, another resurgence of Romanticism, antagonistic to science and to independence of thought; thus PC is most prominent in the least scientific disciplines and in those where salaries are lowest (12-13). Bonevac also discusses the dilemmas conservatives encounter in resisting PC.

Eric Mack, in "The Limits of Diversity: The New Counter-Enlightenment and Isaiah Berlin's Liberal Pluralism", gives a devastating description (103-5) of what "diversity" currently stands for and a tightly argued account of a stable society's need for common norms (110). Mack also finds analogies to the current scene in such instances of nationalism as the German reaction against the French Enlightenment.

"Racial Preferences in Admission to Institutions of Higher Education" by Lino Graglia is verbal dynamite. Why do we have PC excesses of "affirmative action" long after the civil rights battle was won? Because "[i]t is not to be expected ... that so great and victorious a moral crusade would be permitted to come to an end merely because its objective has been

accomplished" (128). Naturally, "[t]he admission of a racially identifiable group of greatly underqualified students ... is virtually a prescription for frustration, resentment, loss of self-esteem, and racial animosity. Forces powerful enough to institute so radical and unpromising a program will, however, be powerful enough to respond to its disastrous consequences with something other than a concession that they have made a terrible mistake" (135) – and so curricula must be changed, new fields of study created, "service-learning" invented, and so forth; **political correctness becomes necessary to avoid admitting the nature and failure of affirmative action**. And so PC brings with it the terrible intellectual and moral burden of mandatory hypocrisy and prevarication.

Those burdensome consequences lead Alan Kors to his *cri de coeur*, "Bad Faith: The Politicization of the University *In Loco Parentis*". The current "tenured radicals", many of them now administrators, perpetrate today what they fought against in the 1960s. "The generation that earned itself the right to vote at eighteen now wishes eighteen- to twenty-two-year-olds to sit at its feet for moral and political instruction" (162). No speech or harassment codes were needed, surely, to protect "a student from a professor who shouted 'Hey, Jew-boy (or 'nigger,' or 'honky'), sit in the back row'" – any common understanding of proper professorial behavior, any code of professional conduct would protect against that. What the speech and harassment codes do, by contrast, is to shield students from unorthodox viewpoints, protecting for example Jewish students from professors who might believe (or simply argue) that the U.N.'s creation of Israel was a violation of Palestinian rights (164). And moreover the codes are enforced in a blatantly one-sided manner, as everyone knows: claiming that men are not as sensitive as women doesn't constitute sexual harassment, for instance; and no one has been charged for calling another a "Jesus freak", "Moonie", or "born-again bigot" (165).

Jerry Martin, in "The University as Agent of Social Transformation: The Postmodern Argument Considered", gives a nice summary of the PC argu-

**ANOTHER INALIENABLE RIGHT:
THE RIGHT TO BORROW**

The federal Equal Credit Opportunity Act prohibits creditors from discriminating against credit applicants ... because all or part of the applicant's income derives from any public assistance program ... The federal agency that administers compliance with this law ... is: Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, Regional Director, 25 Ecker Street, Suite 2300, San Francisco, California 94105 [emphasis added]

That was on a letter from our Visa company. Everyone to whom we've mentioned it has not believed us, until we showed them the original. Maybe your Congress-persons don't know about it. We suggest you ask them.

ment and of detailed counters to it, including a happy comment on relativism and “perspectivism”: “It is said that, visiting the zoo one day, the British philosopher G. E. Moore and his friend came upon an unusually large elephant. ‘What a huge elephant!’ exclaimed the friend. ‘From this side at least,’ added the cautious Moore” (213).

Stanley Rothman gives some cultural history in “Tradition and Change: The University Under

Stress”. Seymour Martin Lipset considers “The Sources of Political Correctness on American Campuses”. Joseph Hamburger writes on “Liberal Intolerance”, *inter alia* contrasting John Stuart Mill and Marcuse. Fred Sommers makes a case for realism in “‘The Enemy is Us’: Objectivity and Its Philosophical Detractors”.

Altogether, a useful and relevant collection, a worthy addition to the literature.

A Professor’s Duties: Ethical Issues in College Teaching by Peter J. Markie
Rowman & Littlefield, 1994; 247 pp., \$54.50 cloth, \$21.95 paper

“**A**s a result of accepting a certain role within the cooperative venture of higher education, professors gain significant power over others and a great deal of discretion in its use. If we use the power appropriately, we educate students; if we use it inappropriately, we deprive them of an education and may harm them in other ways as well” (7).

So Peter Markie takes us back to fundamentals in this timely work that every professor should read. The first third of the book comprises Markie’s outline of the ethics of college teaching, in four chapters: “To Be a Professor”; “What to Teach”; “How to Teach”; “Beyond the Classroom”. The rest of the book is by other authors: ten essays, some of them written long before.

Though Markie “takes a narrow focus on the obligations of individual professors”, I think his discussion makes plain enough how the obligations of professors interlock with those of departments and institutions as a whole.

Markie addresses some self-indulgent shibboleths. It is false, he points out, to suggest “that all our ethical obligations are determined by the explicit provisions of our contract and the university regulations” (10); ethical obligations arise from any number of sources – from considerations of justice, of the good or bad consequences of one’s action, of the respect due to other people. John Searle is cited to the same effect: “Any healthy human institution ... grants its members rights that far exceed the bounds of morally acceptable behavior” (13).

What a revolution would we experience if schools and colleges put into practice the plainly valid principle that “admission requirements should be designed so that each student admitted has a reasonable chance of success, where success is not simply receiving a passing grade but is being intellectually challenged and attaining knowledge” (18). “How

many times has the faculty engaged in a discussion of the general purpose of their program and the role of each course? To what extent does the training of those graduate students likely to be the next generation of professors include a consideration of what it is to be educated in the field and to be an educated person in general?” (22).

Markie spells out the obligation we have to teach competing sides of issues, which we cannot abrogate just by saying that our course is being taught from some particular standpoint, be it Marxist or utilitarian or anything else: the students are there to learn *the subject*, not to provide a professor with a captive audience. It is also our obligation “to limit our teaching to those areas in which we have sufficient expertise” (25) — and if *that* were honored in practice then any number of recently introduced ideological fads would wither on the vine. “It is ... a mistake to argue that, since each of us has a right to academic freedom, we may each teach whatever we believe to be most appropriate, whether it is a particular set of values or a particular scientific theory. Our right to academic freedom does not excuse us from ethical duties with regard to what we teach, any more than our right to free speech excuses us from ethical duties about what we say (e.g. the duty to tell the truth)” (28).

Would that our newly paternalist administrators, so anxious to protect over-sensitive students, might understand that “professors cannot teach without offending some students in some ways. Teaching requires exposing students to new and different ways of thinking, and new and different ways of thinking often offend. Students can be offended by the theory of human evolution, criticisms of government’s policy, conservative social institutions, various forms of art and literature, and the practices of other cultures. Some students are offended by

PROOF POSITIVE

A history professor ... accompanied a class on a tour of French cathedrals and art museums. After a week of this, one of the brightest young things in the class observed that they had been viewing all these paintings and statues of mothers with a child, and in every case the child was a boy. "How could anyone deny that that's evidence of sexism?" she wanted to know

First Things
"While We're At It", April 1995, p.64

teaching styles that challenge them to develop and defend their own views. Some are offended by criticism of their work. The mere fact that conduct will offend does not, in and of itself, obligate us to avoid it" (48).

Romantic associations between faculty and students have again in the last few years been a prominent topic of discussion and rule-making. Some professors have taken the stance that "[m]ost college students ... are legal adults Professor bell hooks at City College in New York, who had affairs with professors while a student and once became the lover of a younger man after she had taught him, says, '... why do we think that banning relationships between faculty and students will keep them from having them?' Barry Dank ... argues that such prohibitions 'infantilize' students, [and] has formed a ... group ... called Consenting Academics for Sexual Equity"¹. Markie, to the contrary, is quite clear that "[w]e must not be friends with students.... Friendships with our students ... conflict with our fundamental obligations as professors" (70), which include giving

all students equal consideration in instruction, advising, and evaluation; with friends, we suffer a conflict of interest here. Again, professors are *not* "independent contractors permitted to distribute our instruction and advice in whatever way best fits our own personal commitments.... We act for the university, not ourselves ..." (72). "We risk misusing our power even in trying to establish friendships with students ... to get them to join extracurricular activities ... be it a social engagement or chauffeuring us to the airport" (73).

"Every argument against friendships is matched by an equally strong argument against romantic relations.... the fundamental obligations of the position [of professor] do not allow it" (73). Every professor and administrator should read at least this section of Markie's discussion, "Relations with Students: What's Not Permitted" (70-79).

The essays collected in the latter part of this book add little if anything to Markie's analysis. I found of most interest here the first part of Joan Callahan's "Academic Paternalism". Larry Churchill, "The Teaching of Ethics and Moral Values in Teaching: Some Contemporary Confusions" is unexceptionable but not particularly novel; so too Elias Baumgarten ("Ethics in the Academic Profession: A Socratic View") and Ernest Boyer ("Enlarging the Perspective"). Steven Cahn on "Rethinking Examinations and Grades" makes useful points but could have been much shorter. But the first part of the book is worth the price of the whole volume.

¹ "Romancing the Student", *Time* 95:4:3, 58-9

Seth Williamson of WVTF (PBS, Roanoke) published a piece, "Too Christian for Public Radio?", in the *Washington Times* after he had received from "Advocate of Diversity" this postcard: "You are a tax supported institution. During the Christmas season you played many religious pieces. NOT EVERYBODY in your audience is a Christian. This music is unsuitable for a radio station that takes tax money."

Seth pointed out *inter alia* that here "[s]omeone who ostensibly favors diversity in programming – that is, variety – wants to begin by banning an entire category of classical music from the airwaves". Stephen Carter's informative book, *The Culture of Disbelief* (see p.10), should be required reading for

potential writers of postcards bearing on the question of separation between Church and State.

Fritz Heinzen sent us some pieces from *First Things*¹ that make us put that periodical on our reading list and advise you to do the same. In the April 1994 issue, for instance, George A. Tobin writes ("Groping with the Invisible Hand") on the economic aspects of condom consumer education: "Pregnancy, once greatly feared by males, is now perceived as an exclusively female disorder for which

¹ Institute on Religion & Public Life, 156 Fifth Ave., Suite 400, New York NY 10010. For subscriptions, Dept. FT, Box 3000, Denville NJ 07834-9847 (800-875-2997)

abortion is a socially sanctioned remedy". Proposed remedies can be dangerous: "This new approach runs an enormous risk of accentuating the link between sex and reproduction as well as the danger of instilling community values in the individual teen". In the March 1994 issue, Peter L. Berger had writ-

ten not only about "Rites of Spring" but managed to include a lesson on grammar: "The pronouns hem/hems/hemum (to replace he/his/him and she/her ...) are for the use of individuals who opt out of the binary gender lexicon of traditional English".

P O T P O U R R I

What can we do?

Though the problem of political correctness is nationwide (and indeed international), solutions must be found locally: somewhere specific, something specific has to be done. One good place to start is the local newspaper. Fellow Scholar (and VAS secretary) Bob Detlefsen had an opinion piece, "Academia's ideals are cast aside", in the *Roanoke Times & World-News* (94:1:18, p.A8): "for the sake of a spurious conception of 'diversity', race and gender have supplanted excellence in teaching and research as the most prominent criteria for hiring and promoting professors".

Some years earlier, before the existence and ramifications of PC had been generally recognized, Bob had described for a national audience the **Actively Working Against Racism and sExism** (AWARE) week at Harvard ("White like me", *New Republic* 89:4:10, pp.18-21): the opening exercise in collective guilt, the atmosphere of a religious revival meeting — "to the extent that the charge of 'racism' is . . . gratuitously tossed about as it was during AWARE week . . . the evil of genuine racism will become trivialized". Detlefsen more than held his own in subsequent correspondence ("AWARE Week Revis-

ited", 89:5:22, p.6). His article was seconded in a later issue ("A New Awareness", 89:5:29, p.6): "As a black man . . . I must admit that . . . Detlefsen's piece . . . rings true". That issue of *New Republic* also brought some nice reminders that one of the Afro-radicals' sillier claims, that "white" always means good and "black" bad, is demonstrably wrong: for example in the much-sought black gold of Texas; the despised white feathers of cowardice; the whited sepulchers that are metaphors of hypocrisy.

"English" at UVa — they're at it again!

In VS #3 we reported titles of I sessions and papers at a conference of graduate students in the field of English at the University of Virginia. The intervening year has brought no improvement. Here are some of the tid-bits on offer this time:

A session, "From Resistance to Revolt: Reclaiming the Radical Legacy of Cultural Studies", features "100% WhiteGirl: Identity Politics and Multiculturalism"; "Drop the Attitude, Fucker: Ben Weasel in Birmingham"; "Stark Raving Normal: Appropriation and Subversion in a Post-Ideological Age".

"Blondes Have More Fun, But Less Subjectivity: Feminist Sub-

texts in the Novels of Inchbald, Gaskell, and Braddon" offers "What has a woman to do with any boots?: The Intricate Incoherence of A Simple Story"; "Sexing the Detective: The Politics of Gender and Desire in Lady Audley's Secret"; "Beware the Stylish Woman: The Tasteful Woman's Double Bind in Wives and Daughter".

Then we get "Contexts of Hybridity: Constructions of Post-modern Identity" with "Mixed Reviews of a Hybrid Film: The Piano as Post-Structuralist Melodrama"; "Warhol and the Politics of Cultivated Postmodern Naivete"; "Feminism Transsexed: Women Born, Women Made". Naturally!

The section on "(Re)Creating Self-Identity: Women of Color in the North American Context" contains such expectable treats as "The Resolution of Cultural Pain in Asian American Women's Autobiography" and "Naming as Power in the Female Quest Narrative: Zora Neale Hurston's 'Their Eyes Were Watching God'". And so it goes on, buzzword after buzzword, mind-bite after mind-bite: "Institutionalizing Ideology"; "Power and Subversion"; "Dialectical"; "Power Dynamics"; "Shifting Sexuality"; "Melanin and Genitals: The Sexual Politics of Stereotype"; "Race and Space";

“John Travolta’s Body in the Intersections of Class and Sexuality”.

We used to be taught not to replace words with symbols (“or” by “/”, for example) and to *spell out* our arguments in clear prose. By contrast, the Cultural Critics, Mod Feminists, With-It Postmodernists and Company say all the little that’s in their minds in the cute titles liberally sprinkled with punnish parentheses:

“Who Was (Is)?”; “Poe(t)heory”; “the (Post)(Modern)”.

— credit: Mole 003

English at the MLA

Why should not graduate students at UVa take their lead from their professors? Among the many proposed special sessions noted in the Spring 1995 *MLA Newsletter*:

Lesbianism and Orality. Orality as a determining trope in figurations of lesbianism. Orality and narrative, speech and writing, oral erotics and notions of the “pre” (presexual, preoedipal, pre-cultural). Deconstructive and psychoanalytic perspectives especially welcome....

Whiteness. Practical deconstructions, local histories, the social construction of whiteness. Its (in)visibilities, (im)purities, mythologies. Remediating whiteness, particularly in relation to class and gender. Queering whiteness. Why whiteness now? Before and after whiteness....

— credit: Alex Weiss

Asking for more

UVa’s Student Council is pressing the university¹ to appoint a Vice-President for di-

¹ Victoria Barasch, “UVa looks into adding diversity vice president”, *Roanoke Times & World-News* 95:3:19, B6

NO FUNNY BUSINESS! DON’T TRY TO JOKE ABOUT PC OR DIVERSITY

Virginia Tech’s student paper, *Collegiate Times*, often carried advertisements by B.C.R. Property Management about its “Scottish Economizer bargains”, driving the point home by means of this little figure of a stereotypical Scot with bag-pipes and kilt.

Here was an opportunity, it occurred to your editor, to point out how unsymmetrical are the usually voiced concerns about insensitivity. At U.Cal Riverside, for example, a fraternity had been so mention of Spring Break with the fig Why then, I asked myself, should it still be open season on white Scots males?

So I sent the *Collegiate Times* a Letter to the Editor, hoping for a certain reaction once the following was published:

“The Editor:

How could you be so insensitive as to accept that advertisement from B.C.R. Property Management (page B5, February 28) for “Scottish Economizers” in which there was also shown a stereotyped Scot? Don’t you know that the frugality of the Scots was a life-saving necessity adopted under oppression and exploitation by the Anglo-Saxon Sassenachs? Don’t you know that much of the population of this region, in which our university is situated, is of Scots ancestry?”

I got no acknowledgment that my letter had been received. But that’s quite normal, and I continued to wait expectantly, scanning each issue of *Collegiate Times* as soon as it appeared. After a few weeks, I concluded reluctantly that the letter was not going to be published.

But when I later told a friend about it and wanted to show him one of the offending advertisements, I realized that the “insensitivity” had been quietly (or surreptitiously) eliminated. Since the date of my letter (92:2:29), I’ve seen many ads from B.C.R. Property Management in *Collegiate Times*, but nary a one that mentions “Scottish” or shows a kilt.

So much, then, for the attempt to combat PC with humor. I’m reminded of Erstwhile Mole, who always remarked that people just don’t understand my (and his) “flippancy”. Mine is a cultural heritage, of course: much typically Jewish humor reflects entirely serious concerns in a light tone — it’s sometimes called “black” humor or “gallows humor”. Genuine multi-culturalists and diversity enthusiasts surely ought to approve of it.



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versity. “The idea was sparked by a protest by black students last spring about a lack of attention to minority issues on campus”.

At the same time it's reported that “Many of our black students ... have 100 percent of their [financial] need met' ... Six black out-of-state students a year get \$10,000 Jerome Holland Scholarships.... the peer advising program for blacks ... pairs freshmen with more than 60 upperclass mentors ... Since 1990, UVa has hired a few high-level black administrators ... vice president for student affairs ... dean of UVa's Commerce School ... assistant dean of students.... Black student organizations include seven fraternities and sororities, the Black Student Alliance, the Black Voices singing group, black pre-professional groups ... and Skandaline, a news magazine focusing on black Christian issues. ‘Even so, a common complaint ... is the social life for black students is not that great ... There aren't a lot of parties’².

Seems to fit with what our editorial said: “social movements in moderately civilized nations become really aggressive and unreasonable only *after* and not before their substantive grievances have been assuaged”.

Curriculum improvement

In Fall 1995 students at Va.Tech will be able to take a new course, for 1-hour credit: “Researching & Choosing an Academic Major”. Students will

- gain a working knowledge of the decision-making process
- develop a personal understanding of their interests and

abilities

- understand and be able to use a variety of research materials related to choosing a major
- gain an understanding of the relationship between specific academic majors and the world of work
- choose a major or develop a plan to choose a major

Bumf: it's mandatory!

The cover letter on 4 pages of “Alcohol and Drug Policy Information for Employees” acknowledged “comments that the mailing was wasteful and unnecessary”; but it is *required by statute* under “the provision that specific drug and alcohol policy information be disseminated in writing to every employee and student annually”.

– memo, 95:3:5
from Personnel Services

Bumf: Commonwealth wins hands down

with its distribution *to all State employees* – 100,000 or so³ – of half-a-dozen books plus pamphlets, total thickness **2½ inches**, more than **1000 pages**, to guide our choice of health plans for the coming year. No matter how efficiently they produced it, I guess it cost about a month's health-insurance premium per employee. Or aggregate it and you're talking about 7-figure dollars.

Of course we continue to get also the Commonwealth's *Personnel Communiqué*, *VSRS Memo to Members*, *Spotlight on Benefits* (which highlights for us how the “benefits” are getting less and the burden of thinking about them heavier). Also the October 1994 revision of the *Handbook for*

Members weighing in at 32 pages plus covers (100,000 copies of each of those, remember; yet when we want information that's in there, we usually ask a personnel officer because we can't find what we want in the booklet, or have misplaced it, or can't be bothered going through it when there's someone to ask who already knows the answer).

Many copies

came to us of the latest *Virginia Issues & Answers*, sent by colleagues outraged that so useless and expensive a thing is distributed at a time when academic departments are being told that their budgets for 1995-96 are to be reduced again⁴, by another 5-9%. Thirty-two pages of expensive paper (“acid-free, chlorine-free, recycled”) plus thick covers, in several colors: say a couple of dollars per copy, add person-time, multiply by the 6000 copies printed (“with soybean ink”), add postage and distribution costs ... maybe \$20,000 “worth”?

As one of our correspondents put it:

It ... purports to publish articles that ‘look at issues facing the commonwealth’... very slick and expensive ... the present issue contains a lot that goes a long way beyond ‘issues facing the commonwealth’. For example, there's a long article on how females supposedly get mistreated by the educational system with no application to Virginia specifically. Moreover, this article spouts speculations as if they were received truths. In a section entitled ‘Around the Commonwealth,’ there is a segment on the number of ‘poor’ people in the

² Kirsten Williams, “Black students finding success at UVa”, *Roanoke Times & World-News* 95:3:19, B1,6

³ Jeff Shapiro, “Allen's job cuts too political, group charges”, *Richmond Times-Dispatch* 94:8:9, B1

⁴ Allison Blake, “Tech falls in \$12 million hole”, *Roanoke Times & World-News* 95:4:8, pp.C1,4

U.S. Again, nothing specifically to do with Virginia. It is mainly devoted to whining about the fact that the number of 'poor' people has increased but fails to point out that the percentage has remained about the same. Another 'Around the Commonwealth' segment is devoted to the economic advantage of having a college degree. What does that have to do with Virginia? It's the same everywhere.

Is there anyone to complain to about this who might do something about it?

Well, we do try. *Virginia Scholar* is distributed widely, including to members of Boards of Visitors and sundry administrators.

We also received from colleagues several copies of *Virginia Tech Research*, full of color photographs; they printed 10,000 copies of that one, say \$40,000 "worth"?

And we got several copies of *The Pedagogical Challenge* for Spring 1955, 12 pages, only 2400 copies of that one printed – maybe just \$1000 or \$2000 (but what wouldn't our faculty give to have that in their Department's operating budget to underwrite copying costs!). Spring also brought another *Connecting Through Writing*, 10 pages, 2500 copies – as well as an 8-page "Resources for Writing Across the Curriculum, Spring and Summer 1995". More *International Notes*, *Energy Outlook*, utterly vacuous *Quality Improvement in Action*, a February *Enabler*; and *Appalachian Studies News* (3 pages), *LA Sc News* (6 pages); and a real cute "Continuous Process Improvement at Virginia Tech" from the University Leadership Development Program, 7000 printed. We were going to describe its contents, which mention TQM and ISO9000 and so forth, but took ill. Maybe in a later issue.

Spectrum (VPI&SU) treated us to an 8-page lift-out, *Women at Virginia Tech* (Winter 1995). We also got an 8-page *Women's Month 1995*.

OUTREACH AT VIRGINIA TECH – A Preliminary Report (March 1995), 14 pages, 9000 copies, had been prepared in response to the charge "to formulate a **stronger** [emphasis added] conceptual and pragmatic rationale for outreach programs": in other words, we don't have a rationale for what we're doing, please find one for us. That approach may explain a curious omission from the section, "History of Outreach and Extension at Virginia Tech": it skips from the mid-70s to 1988 with nary a mention of the Commonwealth's JLARC⁵ study of the early 1980s. At that time Tech was directed **not** to broaden its traditional, agricultural-extension mission into some more inclusive "outreach"; or at least Tech was told that if it wanted to, Tech would have to pay for it – the Commonwealth was not going to. One result was that the Donaldson Brown Center and its continuing-education programs had to become self-supporting instead of being subsidized through the Extension budget.

Other good ways to spend money

include raising concrete sidewalks by a few inches in preparation for re-surfacing perfectly good campus roads. Of course, that "reserve maintenance" money could not be used for academic operating budgets. But it *could* be used to improve the many classrooms that are not air-conditioned, or the unventilated,

un-airconditioned cubby-hole offices that a goodly number of faculty continue to occupy (for example in the English Department in Williams Hall).

Shamelessly

we quote this from our e-mail:

Finally, after three years, I got around to reading your paper in *Academic Questions* on Allan Mandelstamm, sexual harassment, political correctness, and the attendant – and vigilant – bureaucracy. I wanted to say that I thought the paper was right-on in the Mandelstamm case, and that the EO/AA office is indeed an office that answers to no one. I do believe that an EO/AA office that is subject to the checks and balances of the system, with faculty participation, etc., could benefit the university (and all universities), if such a structure were possible. I don't know if it is.

NEVER TOO YOUNG?

The State Department of Human Rights [in Minnesota] ruled in favor of a grade-school girl who complained that boys as young as 6 made lewd remarks and sexual taunts on the school bus. The agency found probable cause that the Eden Prairie School District discriminated against Cheltzie Hentz and other girls because the boys were not handled as violators of the district's sexual-harassment policy [but merely] ... warned ... about inappropriate language and temporarily banned ... from the bus

Roanoke Times & World-News
93:11:12, p.A4 (AP)

⁵ Joint Legislative & Review Committee

THE VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOLARS

believes that rational discourse is a necessary foundation of academic life and of a democratic society. So we seek to foster and protect

- the free exchange of ideas;
- academic freedom: *Lehrfreiheit* and *Lernfreiheit*;
- the substance and integrity of scholarship and learning;
- respect for our intellectual heritage;
- rigorous standards of excellence in teaching, learning, and research;
- the evaluation of students strictly on the merit of their individual performance;

and we aim to

- create forums in which university life can be rationally discussed;
- provide informed comment on immediate and on perennial issues in higher education;

and we urge academic leaders to

- recognize learning and scholarship as the pre-eminent and primary purpose for which colleges and universities exist;
- behave responsibly in pursuit of that purpose;
- practice honesty with the public, with students and parents, with faculty, and with everyone else.

Further, we shall resist

- attempts to subsume academe under political goals;
- ideological corruption of teaching and scholarship;
- intimidation of students or faculty who voice unfashionable views;
- treatment of students, faculty, and others as ciphers and symbols of groups instead of as individuals worthy of individual consideration.

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1. The National Association of Scholars, which includes a subscription to the quarterly *Academic Questions* and automatic membership in the Virginia Association for those who reside or work in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Write to the National Association of Scholars, 575 Ewing Street, Princeton, NJ 08540 (dues \$36, graduate students \$18);

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2. The Virginia Association of Scholars, 4010 Sherbrook Road, Richmond, VA 23235 (dues \$15, graduate students \$10).

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