

Virginia Scholar

Newsletter of the Virginia Association of Scholars

Number 8

ISSN 1073-7235

April 1996

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EDITORIAL LA TRAHISON DES CLERCS

The clerk ... is the disinterested thinker – the man who pursues his knowledge oblivious of the social and economic tendencies of his time. He is devoted to pure thought and sacrifices everything to that end.... [for example] Thomas Aquinas, Roger Bacon, Galileo, Descartes, Montaigne, Newton, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kepler, Pascal, and Kant [and] ... many others, perhaps less renowned, who spent their lives in honest speculation. Now M. Benda's charge is that the clerks of today, almost without exception and whatever their standing, have betrayed the cause of speculative thought to the interests of political passion

Herbert Read, introduction to *The Betrayal of the Intellectuals* by Julien Benda

A life-time of miscellaneous, not to say random reading has left me familiar with words and phrases whose precise meaning, when I stop to think about it, eludes me. Not so long ago, “la trahison des clerics” kept popping into my head. “Why should that be?”, I asked myself. And what exactly was the treason of which the “clerics” were guilty? I sensed a connection with corruption in the Church, the clerics forgetting their holy vocation and becoming worldly minded. Was that indeed the origin of the phrase?

A Belgian friend discovered for me that the phrase is the title of a book that our library happened to have in English translation(*). The search, it turned out, had been well worth while: the book is remarkably germane to our present troubles. That I came to read it only in my 60s also shows – as I find over and over again – how unfortunately insulated we can remain from much of the wisdom of our forebears. An educational apparatus whose focus is increasingly on immediate “relevance” is thereby increasingly *irrelevant* to the major issues of human living.

History offers innumerable illustrations of mischief and damage ensuing when people who are pretty good at thinking become infatuated with the idea of putting their conclusions into social practice and get the opportunity to do so: results include the Soviet Revolution and the Bay of Pigs, for instance; or Robert McNamara(†) taking decades to understand about Vietnam what his vaunted “Whiz Kids” could and should have pressed on him at the time. And in our own days and parochial sphere of interest, university presidents and provosts, whose trust and obligation is the stewardship of intellect, comport themselves instead like petty politicians and would-be social engineers. “It may be said that the ‘clerk’s’ defeat begins from the very moment when he claims to be practical” (Benda, p.151).

The world, Benda points out, is a rough place whose natural “morals” are aggressive and militaristic: individuals fight for self-preservation, families and clans for their independence, nations for hegemony, and so on. “The ‘clerk’ is one who protests against such a morality, by honoring ideal and disin-

terested values ... universal, abstract, eternal or infinite Civilized humanity is made possible by the coexistence of these two elements. A world knowing only a lay morality would be barbarous; a world which only practised the morality of the clerks would cease to exist. Civilization requires that the morality of the clerks should influence, but should not be influenced by, the morality of the laymen”.

The clerks can exert this necessary influence in two ways – through force of example or through active engagement. The latter requires constant vigilance against becoming coöpted and corrupted (xxv).

Benda's case against the clerks is that:

1. They have adopted political passions.

Benda indicts the treasonous Churchmen who put their nation ahead of God and the men of letters who speak not universally but parochially and divisively of “*French science, of German science ... Aryan thought, Aryan painting*” (45).

You can easily tell when a clerk has behaved properly: “he is [like Socrates or Jesus] immediately reviled by the laymen whose

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

interests he thwarts ... the 'clerk' who is praised by the laymen is a traitor to his office" (37).

Our academic leaders should *contradict* the governors and legislators and pundits who want to make of "higher education" a tangible commodity measurable in dollars. They should quote and expound Benda. They should not pretend to competence in economic development.

2. They bring their political passions into their "clerkly" activities.

Historians slant their writings to justify their own clan; and philosophers like Fichte or Hegel indulge in "patriotic metaphysics" that reveals "the triumph of the German world [as] the supreme and necessary development of Being" (59).

And in our own time and place, activist ideologues of all sorts proclaim it only right and proper that they expose students only to their own viewpoint, the politically correct one. They re-write history so that the right sorts of people are revered and the politically correct values illustrated, and they re-invent the language so that only their own viewpoints are expressible.

3. They have not merely acceded to political pressure, they have actually adopted the material, nationalistic values of the laity.

Admittedly, "the humanity of the past, more precisely the humanity of Europe in the Middle Ages, with the values imposed upon it by the 'clerks,' acted ill **but honored the good**", whereas nowadays we act ill **and also honor what is ill**. "Others were at least ashamed of being brigands; but what is to be done with this man, who is proud of it?" (145, emphasis added).

Benda remarks also on the clerks' falling into "the frenzy of impartiality", so determined **not** to say "my country right or wrong" that they proclaim instead that their own country is in the wrong even when it is right (149). So by today's PCers the USA is always judged guilty, but no Third-World country ever is, no matter how tyrannical and barbarous it is: "the just person must inevitably be weak and suffer, ... he must be a victim" (150).

The clerk "is only strong if he is clearly conscious of ... his true function ... that his kingdom is not of this world, that *the grandeur of his teaching lies precisely in ... [the] absence of practical value*". He may then be crucified, "but he is respected, and his words haunt the memory of mankind" (152-3).

Instructive it is, and interesting, that what Julien Benda wrote in the 1920s speaks powerfully to our current dilemmas. Others of course have said similar things in more recent times, for example Adam Ulam[‡]) writing in 1972:

Students have stopped rioting ... but the politicization and bureaucratization of the American university have grown apace, with the corresponding shrinking of the university's proper function

... [Among the] reasons for this unfortunate development ... [are] a number of basic misconceptions about what the university can or ought to be. ... a belief, as erroneous as it is incompatible with democracy, that the university can and ought to instruct society on how to conduct its affairs; that those who instruct and administer it possess ... some special wisdom unavailable to the ordinary citizen and which entitles them, in fact puts them under a special obligation, to prescribe cures for social ills, solutions for foreign policy dilemmas, and the like. ... [So] while trying, and in most cases failing, to do what it should *not* do, the university has increasingly surrendered its authority to do what it *should* do: to run its own affairs with minimum interference by governmental authorities at all levels, pressure groups of all kinds, and by the trends and fashions of the moment.

The educational process is, or at least should be, different from the political one. It is a

virtue of democracy that it is responsive to pressures and passions of the moment, that only its basic principles remain free from the processes of bargaining and compromise. But not so with education; it must adhere to basic rules which remain free from the excitements of a season, and which find their source in the rational arguments alone.

How much nicer the educational landscape would be, were Benda, Ulam, and their ilk read, understood, and acted upon by the leaders of our institutions of higher education.

*No man can serve two masters ...
Ye cannot serve God and mammon*
(Matthew 6:24)

*Render therefore unto Caesar the
things which are Caesar's; and
unto God the things that are God's*
(Matthew 22:21)

* Julien Benda, *The Betrayal of the Intellectuals* (*La Trahison des Clercs*), Boston: Beacon Press, 1955; first edition, Paris 1927; first British edition, 1928, tr. Richard Aldington, *The Great Betrayal* (UK) or *The Treason of the Intellectuals* (USA)

† Robert S. McNamara with Brian VanDeMark, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, NY: Times Books, 1995

‡ Adam Ulam, *The Fall of the American University*, LaSalle (IL): The Library Press, 1973

THE PRICE OF INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

by Sal Choudhury

*There was no connection in capitalist society
between the actual tasks of the organisation of social labour... and teaching*
V. I. Lenin, *On Public Education*

To amuse his children, my late father would reminisce: In Boston, he and his roommate, both from the Indian sub-continent, had grown tired of cafeteria food. On 13th Street they bought a live fish to test their culinary forte (which for both of them put together added to naught). On their way back to campus, my father carrying the still-flapping fish in a brown bag, his roommate pointed out Roscoe Pound, American jurist and philosopher of law, crossing the Yard. They leaped to take cover behind one of the ancient trees dotting the place. It is not clear whether their action, by which they surrendered some of their own freedom, was prompted by the stinking fish or the prospect of facing freedom personified.

Many years later, back in the sub-continent, my father asked why I did not come home again. My answer reflected an unwillingness to part with freedom. There is no other place in the entire world comparable to the campuses of the United States, and they must remain so in face of the forces working against them. Ask around the world whether anyone would like to buy our cars; you are likely to meet with a perfunctory shrug. But ask if they would like to send their children to an American university; rarely will anyone say, "No".

Virginia Tech shares this dis-

tinguished esteem. Not backed directly by a statesman like Mr. Jefferson nor by a sizable endowment, this university grew into a great seat of learning through the sheer determination of many people and the sweat of their brow. Financial support from the state and from benevolent individuals helped it become great, of course. Now it is at a crossroads: attempts at short-term profit-taking may set us back by decades.

**FOR THOSE WHO REMAIN SILENT
DURING A TIME OF ETHICAL
CRISIS,
A SPECIAL PLACE IS RESERVED
IN THE INFERNO**

The politician's, administrator's, manager's, or businessman's (PAMB's) understanding of higher learning is wanting. Unscholarly ideas from Madison Avenue have infected the university – about what can be accomplished by "leaders", by "interpersonal communication", by negotiation, by compromising among conflicting interests, by "team-playing". But "management" is always a management *of something specific*. Management and education are unlike and sometimes contradictory. In a university, education must take an ontological priority over managerial ideas of compromise, mutual sharing of profit, deal-making, partnerships, mergers, acquisitions. Partnerships between business and education may always be conducive to busi-

ness, but they are not so to education. Higher education is simply not a business. Compromises for short-term profit are not beneficial to education. Freedom of the intellect is beyond the reach of any compromise.

A critical misunderstanding has invaded the university: that it could and should, by *fiat*, fulfill the economic and social agenda of the body politic. A university is incapable of that, as Aristotle well knew: "The first stage of action is the last in the procedure of thought and the first in the procedure of thought is the last in action"¹; "the first cause, in the order of discovery, is the last"². The existence of higher education cannot rest on its ability to further human commerce.

Unquestionably this land-grant university must directly further the welfare of the people of the Commonwealth. But its public accountability can only be measured on a time-scale of decades or centuries. Political bodies, business and industry, however, are accountable on time-scales of a few years. A succession of short-term-accountable PAMBs can subvert the university and be gone long before they can be held to account for the destruction they brought.

It took over a century for Tech to be where it is now. Through the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s Tech changed radically, but its

¹ *De Anima* iii, 10.433^a17-18

² *Nicomachean Ethics* iii, 3.1112^b19-20, 23-24

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This essay was abridged (by about half) to fit into the available space in this issue, with the author's gracious approval

steady advance was on a solid foundation built during preceding *decades*. Now PAMBs wish to harvest all Tech's golden-goose-eggs in a fell swoop, for two purposes: immediate economic benefit and social engineering.

One might wonder how Mr. Jefferson had failed to see that this is what universities are for; after all it has been quite plain to such other leading thinkers as Vladimir Lenin. One wonders how Jefferson could have imagined that "All men are created equal"; our universities now enact affirmative action, quotas, sensitivity training, and so forth based on the premise that "All men are created prejudiced".

Yet we *are* all created equal: equally free to make ourselves, to become enlightened – a state not bestowed automatically with the initial equality. Enlightenment of the mind enables democracy even as it is not itself democratically distributed. Neither the questions of thermodynamics nor those of the *Divine Comedy* can be settled by public opinion; nor should children be asked whether the multiplication table pleases them.

Peccant partnership between business and education, as for example in Japan, is attractive to PAMBs. But we must avoid that model at all costs. Indeed American universities helped to give the nation the atomic bomb and to put a man on the moon, but these acts are not the *raison d'être* of the American university. This is what the body politic finds so difficult to comprehend. It can ask what good it is to conjugate a Latin verb, or to study Ptolemy's *Almagest*; but it cannot understand the answer, nor that there can never be a tangibly demonstrable answer.

We can point out that centuries of "ivory-tower" activity have helped us move a little more away from barbarity and toward civilization, but of what good is such an answer to the PAMBs who know no history and have had no liberal education? No scholar can convince a PAMB of the importance of *Macbeth* and the second law of thermodynamics.

A university is not an advanced community college. We do not train students for a trade. The word "business" is a confounding prefix to education. Higher education does not conform to the statistics of a Labor Department interested in the literacy of a labor force required by the economy during the next biennium. In their graves, Lenin smirks as Mr. Jefferson spins. To the delight of the PAMB, universities in Japan operate in a profitable manner. Every student is trained to be immediately productive in a targeted business or an industry. But are people all over the world queued up to attend Japanese universities?

Why do people who are so well suited to Madison Avenue come to our campuses instead? The language, tone, and nature of official magazines currently circulated by the university ape the quarterly report of a Fortune-500 company. The now-vogue language, the premises, the arguments, the pandering for profit to the appetite of the populace are mimicked in these magazines. But the university should not be an amateur corporation.

My nephew sought advice whether to attend Harvard Business School or Sloan School of Management at MIT. I told him he should do neither but use his

intelligence and study theoretical biology. He may have been less impressed by my argument than by the insignificance of my old car, a Volkswagen Beetle: "You want me to be a think tank", he said, "but I want to be a fat cat". Later in life he left for Madison Avenue and then Fleet Street. At least he knew what he was doing.

Human intellect discovered the law of supply and demand; the existence of supply and demand did not produce human intellect. Should a university encourage and advance courses to nourish the mind, or should it put its resources where the demand happens to be the highest? Should the university expand its sections because there are tremendous job opportunities in sales or scuba diving?

As to the second front, social engineering: Must the university really attempt to legislate civility? That too is a Leninist rather than a Jeffersonian dream. Recall Voltaire: "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it". Economic welfare and social grace are certainly desirable; but they are not the prime mission of a university: its mission is the reasoned search for truth, its quest is for excellence. Establishments in search of short-term gain have no stake in preserving intellectual freedom in thought or in action.

"For those who remain silent during a time of ethical crisis, a special place is reserved in the Inferno" (Dante, *Inferno*, Canto III, 60). After a hundred years, a silence has befallen this university. It is the silence of the grave destined to inherit the wind.

P O T P O U R R I

O tempora, o mores

In her first month as a student at Virginia Tech, Christy Brzonkala claims, she was raped by a couple of male student-athletes whose room she had entered with a friend who left again almost immediately.

The matter became something of a *cause célèbre* after the penalty imposed by the University Judicial System, and twice confirmed upon appeal, was lessened by the Provost, from suspension to probation¹. Miss Brzonkala then sued for \$8.3 million, hardly by coincidence the amount generated by the Sugar Bowl in which Tech had played².

There are enough doubtful "facts" and unsavory aspects in the whole affair to feed gossip and argument for a long time to come. These situations have no good resolution: one needs to choose whom to believe in absence of in-

¹ For example: Terry Padalino, "Provost overrules judicial sanction", *Collegiate Times* 95:11:28, pp.A1,2; Editorial, *ibid.*, "A Hokie linebacker's crime and punishment", p.A6; Chad Willis, "The provost blew it", *ibid.* A7; Paul Torgersen, "CT misrepresented facts of Hokie linebacker" (letter), *Collegiate Times* 95:12:1, p.A8; Betty Hayden & Allison Blake, "Woman says Tech denied her justice in assault case", *Roanoke Times* 95:12:1, pp.C1,4; Allison Blake, "Tech hears fear of sex crimes", *ibid.*, 95:12:6, pp.A1,2

² More recently, the suit has been revised and the ante has been upped to \$10 million: Betty Hayden, "Player added to suit", *Roanoke Times* 96:3:2, pp.C1,3

dependent witnesses, and one cannot be equally fair to someone who may be unjustly accused and also to one who may be making an entirely accurate accusation. Yet in this particular case, no-one seems to have commented on ***one unquestioned FACT*** that speaks volumes:

"Morrison admits having sex with Brzonkala, but says it happened only once and that he used a condom"³.

Amid all the arguing of whether she said "Yes" or "No", in what sequence, how often, or how emphatically, and whether the sex was condom-"safe" or not — is it not worth comment that two students who met only ten minutes earlier indulged immediately in an entirely casual act of sex?

And how is it that we take apparently for granted that a young woman might plausibly say "Yes, now" to someone she has just met? Is it really the accepted norm, that we treat one another as instantly usable sex-objects?

Is there really no room for some university spokesperson to say, even just in passing, that maybe such casual sex isn't a good idea even if it be consensual and "safe"? Was I totally off-the-wall in having hoped that our President or Provost or Coach might have ventured something along those lines?

Don't tell me, please, that the lawyers will have prevented any

such statement so long as there's a lawsuit going on. The University's lawyers do what they're told to do, and they have the ingenuity to evolve public statements upholding moral behavior without prejudicing a specific case. Administrators cannot use as an excuse, that they couldn't be truthful or couldn't say the right thing because the lawyers told them not to.

One of the claims often made for intercollegiate athletics is that it serves to build character. Am I the only one who thinks that the Coach should make clear to his players that their prominent position makes them, willy-nilly, role models for the other students? And that they should behave accordingly? Or else? And that promiscuity is ***not*** behaving properly? That when sports commentators speak approvingly of a player as "a real animal", they mean it figuratively and not literally?

Four decades ago at the University of Sydney (Australia), there was a small cult called the Free Thought Society whose members practiced mandatory "free" love (mentioned for instance in Jill Ker Conway's marvelous memoir, *The Road from Coorain*). One of my friends who moved in that circle told me once how different and strange it had recently felt to him, as he had first gotten to know someone and ***then*** gone to bed with her, rather than the other way around which was the expected cultic practice. I thought

³ Jan Vertefeuille & Betty Hayden, *Roanoke Times* 96:1:20, pp.C1,4

that a little sad at the time. I still do; and certainly I never dreamed that it would within my life-time become the standard experience of young folk, implicitly accepted and endorsed by our leaders, spokespersons and role models.

Not so long ago, casual sex between near strangers was called “bohemian” and thought to occur on the fringes of society rather than in its mainstream. Now, it seems, the culture of rock-and-roll and gangster-*rap* **is** our mainstream.

There is cold comfort in this whole matter even if the scenarios offered by the University and by the accused players are to be believed. According to one of the players, Brzonkala was “really drunk”. Common sense indicates that she was then not in a position to make good judgments. Is it then acceptable behavior for men who represent our University so to take advantage of an inebriated co-ed? Should not a coach drop from his team anyone who behaves like that?

The role of University administrators has been variously described in various official statements that, again, provide cold comfort to friends of the University. Thus “Brzonkala alleges ... that head football coach Frank Beamer and his agents were responsible for initiating the process by which the sanction against Morrison was overturned” but “the university denies the claim”⁴. Did not the coaching staff and its academic advisors discuss the matter with the accused players before the appeals were made? Is it not made plain

A Kwanza Month?

Afrocentric achievements include the instant tradition of Kwanza (see VS #2, March 1994, p.5). Now comes a re-definition of the length of a month: “Black History Month will be celebrated between January 13th and February 29th” (Memo to faculty and staff, Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, 18 December 1995)

to players that the coaches must be told as soon as anything happens that might affect the players’ good standing and eligibility? Is it conceivable that the coaching staff would not offer advice in such a situation? Is it conceivable that a scholarship football player would act against the advice of the coaching staff?

If the answer is “Yes”, then one wonders what sort of guidance our players **do** get from their coaches and academic advisors, and by what miracle we ever win a game.

If the answer is “No”, on the other hand, then the University stands guilty of misrepresenting the facts sufficiently as to qualify for the description of **lying**. Anyone can, of course, think up many hair-splitting arguments as to “initiating”, “responsible”, “agents”, and so forth that make it possible for University spokesmen to deny on purely technical grounds that they lied; but I think we are entitled to ask from the leaders of institutions of higher education a somewhat higher morality than that. I would like it so much, if my University were to speak with non-forked tongue and moral vigor instead of aping the antics of defense lawyers to whom

justice is one thing while their job is quite another.

The same melancholy train of thought ensues from the University’s claim that “There was no contact between anyone in the athletic department and people who were conducting the hearings”². Perhaps that is even true of the initial hearings by the Judicial Board; but what of the subsequent appeal to the Dean of Students? Or the later one to the Provost? Or shall we insist, smirking at our own cleverness, that “appeals” are not “hearings”?

If on the other hand it is indeed true that there was no contact between the athletic department and the Dean of Students or the Provost about this matter, then all concerned ought to be fired forthwith. When it is a matter of one person’s word against another’s, or two against two, judging credibility can surely be aided by recourse to character witnesses – friends, employers, coaches, professors: was that not done in any of these hearings or appeals? But even apart from that: Surely Presidents and Provosts impress on coaches that anything in their bailiwick that might produce unfavorable publicity must be brought to their attention at the earliest possible time – and any coach worth a grain of salt understands that anyway without having to be told.

If anyone can convince me that we need not be ashamed of the University’s behavior in this, I’ll be most grateful.

Athletic role models

The prominence of intercollegiate athletics inevitably makes it a role model for collegiate academe. One can hardly believe that “winning is everything” in football without taking

⁴ Terry Padalino, “Tech disputes civil lawsuit”, *Collegiate Times* (VPI&SU) 96:1:23, pp.A1,2

the same attitude in other matters. One can hardly believe that more money is always better, as athletic programs do, without taking the same approach on other matters as well.

"Fighting over seats"⁵ tells of several universities who are declaring "no longer operative" their assignment of priority seating to members of various booster clubs now that the universities believe they can extract even larger sums of money than before from people wanting the best seats. The university spokespeople have delivered themselves of such statements as:

The bottom line ... is that there's no other business out there that, if it has a lucrative product, doesn't sell it for what it's worth (Cindy Bell, Ticket Manager, Nebraska)

Well, Ms. Bell, "for what it's worth", I had thought that there is a difference between a university and a business. But the salient question for athletic and collegiate morality came from Charlie Barnes, executive director of Florida State University's Seminole Boosters, who asked,

How long does loyalty last?

The events had made it reasonable to ask that. But I remain in hope that we will never come to ask, "How long **should** loyalty last?"

Saving Money

The budgets of academic Departments in the College of Arts & Sciences at Virginia Tech are being reduced by an average

⁵ Peter Monaghan, *Chronicle of Higher Education* 95:9:22, p.A55

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of about 8% over the next two years. For most Departments – namely in the humanities and the social sciences – this means decreasing the number of faculty or staff positions, because the "operating" proportion of their budgets is less than 5%.

But for the really important things, there's always money to be found. For example, \$30,000 or so has been allocated so that faculty members in the Department of Foreign Languages can get a new \$2700 computer. They already have one each, of course, and only a few years old – but those are PCs, and the university is switching to Macintoshes as part of its scheme for becoming more efficient by utilizing educational technology. (Bill Gates, do you hear?)

One of my colleagues (a kinder man than I) suggested, "I bet the old computers were just 286s, long superseded and needing replacement". But no: they are 486s.

"Well, then, at least some other faculty, who have no computer or

only a 286 or 386 like me, can benefit by getting the superseded ones from Foreign Languages", continued The Optimist.

No again. The Foreign Language faculty will keep the 486s too, because they have so much work stored on them and it would be too much trouble to convert it to Mac format. So they will just have two computers in their offices.

And what major advances will come from the Macintoshes, to which the University is converting to make best use of Information Technology? Well, the best the Foreign Language

faculty have so far come up with is that students will acquire foreign-speaking students overseas as e-mail pen-pals.

If not money saved, then at least money well spent. Especially since the money to buy the computers came "from another fund", one of the many that apparently is not available for needed expenditures on everyday academic matters.

NOT Saving Money

In our last issue⁶, we predicted that the recommendation of the Commission on Research would not be followed, to disband the Women's Research Institute which spent a little over \$500,000 in 3 years.

Well, we were right; not that we take much satisfaction from that, only from this further illustration that for politically correct matters there are always ample funds available even as academic

⁶ *Virginia Scholar* #7, January 1966, pp.9-10

units are starved.

Not that there was any announcement made about it. We found out quite by chance, through seeing an advertisement for positions in the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies that “brings together ... Black Studies, Center for Programs in the Humanities, Center for the Study of Science in Society, Interdisciplinary Studies major, International Studies, Religious Studies, Science and Gender Equity, and Women’s Studies”⁷. As a member of the Center for the Study of Science in Society, naturally I was surprised at the “Science and Gender Equity” bit – it was the first I had heard of it⁸! Upon enquiring, I discovered that this was the new incarnation of the Women’s Research Institute. Where the \$500,000 or so to fund it for the *next* 3 years is coming from, I wasn’t told. I’m quite curious, though, since CIS, like all other units in the College, has to cut its budget by around 8-10% over the next couple of years.

More Political Correctness

A few years ago, the then Provost at Virginia Tech made himself a laughing stock by circulating a list of “religious holidays” to which faculty were supposed to be “sensitive”.

Apparently determined to top that absurdity, Tech’s Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies approved a University Policy on Religious *and Ethnic* Holidays that “allows students to work with their instructors in making up work missed

due to participation in religious and ethnic celebrations”⁹.

That mealy-mouthed language is typical of PCers and too many administrators. What do those words mean? Was there ever any bar to students making up missed work by doing what their instructors told them they needed to do?

So what conceivable purpose could such a policy statement have? Only to tell students that going to class is of a lower priority than other things. Only to encourage students to miss class whenever they feel like it, in the comfortable knowledge that the university has somehow put the onus for making up the work *on the instructor* rather than, or as well as, on the student.

But even this is not enough pandering to non-academic activities, it turns out. On December 11, 1995, the Commission approved an amendment to include “commemorative holidays significant to our university community”; and in response to a request from the Black Student Organization, the first day of Spring Semester, January 15, Martin Luther King, Jr., Day, was designated to be such a commemorative holiday.

What requires a student to miss class in order to commemorate something? Like most days, January 15 has 24 hours, and few students have classes for more than a few of those hours. Quite often we celebrate or commemorate on a different day than the actually designated one, on weekends say, so as not to miss work. There are a few days that have very special and long traditions of

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being observed on only a specific day, like Christmas or the Day of Atonement; but most “holidays” are not of that sort, for example the Queen’s (or King’s) Birthday in Britain is celebrated on a day that may bear no relation at all to the current monarch’s actual day of birth.

The most powerful reason for the Commission’s action, though, is undoubtedly Political Correctness, to “make a statement” that black Americans should feel equally valued. But surely designating the day was enough to do that; and then again, Martin Luther King himself, like many other black leaders, wanted to *integrate* and not *divide*; surely “his” day is for the whole country. And since the University has decided that its curriculum requires that classes be held even on such commemorative days as Labor Day or Lee-Davis-King Day, then surely it ought not to encourage students to skip class on such days.

Dear Board of Visitors:

Do you really approve policies that encourage students to skip class as they like for religious, ethnic, and commemorative holidays? Do you really approve of the implication that the onus is somehow *on the instructor* to make up missed work for the students?

⁷ Attachment to memo of 95:2:20 to CIS faculty

⁸ Though it is also mentioned in pamphlets describing CIS

⁹ Memo, 96:1:10, to all academic departments from Wanda Hankins Dean, University Registrar

In answering, please note that on the Thursday afternoon before Spring Break, both my classes had in attendance fewer than 50% of those enrolled.

And More PC

Such pandering is not, of course, confined to any one of the Commonwealth's "institutions of higher learning"¹⁰. Mr. Jefferson is surely spinning in his grave as UVa's Department of Anthropology invites students to answer *anonymously*, "Did the instructor create a classroom atmosphere where students of all kinds felt equally welcome and valued?"

Against such stupidity, as the saying goes, even the gods are helpless. Does an instructor single-handedly create a classroom atmosphere? Do the students have no part in it? Does not the university's administration have a large part in it through the propaganda to which it subjects all students through orientation and incessant declaiming of slogans? Who – short of the Good Lord Himself – could create an atmosphere in which it could be guaranteed that no single person, "of any kind" – so no matter how disgruntled or impossible to please or ignorant or lazy – would feel "equally" "welcome" and "valued"? Is there any good reason why an instructor *should* make someone feel welcome who doesn't wish to study, say? Or to feel valued without learning anything?

Perhaps, though, an instructor could most readily satisfy that

¹⁰ Were David Starr Jordan writing nowadays, his book *The Higher Foolishness* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1927) would undoubtedly have a chapter on politically correct nonsense as a fine example of what he calls "sciosophy" – "systematized ignorance"

"equally" by being so obnoxious that all students "equally" felt (un)welcome.

UVa's Astronomy Department invites students – again anonymously, of course – to rate the instructor on "Freedom from culture/gender/race bias in class". Does anyone who invents these "instruments" of "evaluation" ever stop to ponder, what qualifications students – or anyone else, for that matter – may have to form an opinion about such characteristics?

Diversity in action

As a change from supplements on Women's Stuff, VPI&SU's

staff-faculty newspaper¹¹ had one on **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AT VIRGINIA TECH**, headed by the usual quote from the Institution's President about diversity and those other good things.

Presumably to illustrate what "diversity" means, all 4 photographs are of people who are evidently black of skin.

The list of EOAA [sic] staff has six names: Elyzabeth —, Michele —, Rene —, Virginia —, Karen —, Sue —. Rene, the only male, is surnamed "Rios". Does equity and diversity really demand 5 women to every man? Why?

¹¹ *Spectrum* (VPI&SU) 96:1:18

BOOK REVIEWS**THE TRAGEDY OF AIDS***(CONTD. FROM V.S. #7, JANUARY 1996)*

The AIDS War: Propaganda, Profiteering and Genocide from the Medical-Industrial Complex by John Lauritsen, New York: ASKLEPIOS, 1993 [Pagan Press/Asklepios, Box 1902, Provincetown, MA 02657-0245]

Poison by Prescription: The AZT Story by John Lauritsen, New York: ASKLEPIOS/Pagan Press, 1990 (4th printing 1992)

The Myth of Heterosexual AIDS by Michael Fumento, New York: Basic Books, 1990

SYNOPSIS OF REVIEWS IN V.S. #7: For various unsavory reasons, among them the prevailing societal attitude of political correctness, it is not widely realized how strong is the evidence that the virus, HIV, is **not** the cause of AIDS. Many people have died with AIDS-type symptoms without having been exposed to HIV. But since the 1984 announcement of the discovery of HIV, the official definition of "AIDS" has been changed several times and it now makes HIV-exposure a necessary criterion. Yet the actual predicament of Acquired Immune-Deficiency can be brought on by many things: prescription drugs, illegal drugs, the trauma of surgery, human cells of foreign origin (as in blood transfusion), and more.

"Epidemics" in restricted areas or within restricted groups of people are not necessarily caused by infectious agents; they have been *wrongly* attributed to viruses or bacteria in a number of instances where the culprit later turned out to be malnutrition or drugs. Much of the data cited in support of the notion that HIV=AIDS and AIDS=HIV, might be equally or better explained in other ways. However, epidemiological surveys of AIDS usually fail to gather such crucial information – for testing other hypotheses of AIDS causation – as medical history, other infections experienced, or current treatment for AIDS.

HIV is transmitted with much more difficulty than typical STDs are. The incidence of AIDS continues to be restricted largely to the same groups in which it was first identified, namely drug-users and fast-lane homosexuals. Re-examination of the HIV=AIDS hypothesis is being urged by Nobel-Prize winners and other eminent scientists. One reason why the matter is urgent is that AZT is almost routinely prescribed for people who are HIV-positive but have no other symptoms: and AZT kills, typically within a few years.

Each of the three books reviewed below adds further to the case against "HIV equals AIDS"; ironically, even where (e.g. in *The Myth of Heterosexual AIDS*) the author himself believes that HIV does cause AIDS.

If you're going to read only one book about AIDS, it should be *The AIDS War*, a collection of essays, some new for this book and others originally published in newspapers or magazines between 1985 and 1993. The author "began researching 'AIDS' in early 1983. Initially I was shocked by the incompetence with which the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) conducted survey research, my own profession since 1966. Later I would be shocked by the dishonesty, venality, and ruthlessness of the AIDS Establishment" (10).

Strong stuff. Lauritsen, himself gay, describes as "genocide" the prescribing of AZT for HIV-infected people. That may be unwarranted: "Never attribute to malice what can be explained by incompetence; the latter is so much more common". "Genocide" connotes an awareness and deliberate intention for which the evidence is not in; but the evidence **is** in that the consequences of current practice have the same result as deliberate genocide would. It is another instance of the banality of evil: incompetents seeking advancement, honest scientists keeping

quiet, bureaucrats covering up, misunderstanding of what medicine and science are capable of, Establishment-cowed media, companies seeking profits — all those common human and social characteristics seem to be responsible here that so often tritely conspire to produce evil. As Lauritsen also points out, “It is a comment on our age: *Nobody is responsible for anything*” (435).

Anyone concerned about AIDS — everyone, in other words — ought to read this book. Discount Lauritsen’s stronger accusations and language if you will and as you like; discount Lauritsen’s pedantry (which I happen to share¹) as to syntax and grammar; allow him his tendency to health-faddism (226 ff.) — still he gives chapter and verse, authoritative evidence and clear logic, that go far to make these salient points:

- HIV is **not** the cause of AIDS;
- drug abuse is likely a primary cause;
- AZT treatment is iatrogenic homicide.

Along the way, readers benefit in several respects from a viewpoint that is not readily available elsewhere. For example, on using the presence of antibodies to HIV as a diagnosis of AIDS and inevitable death, Lauritsen reminds us that the induction of antibodies used to be called “vaccination” and immunity against the disease (50). Reading that I remembered the test for tuberculosis that I’d been given in Australia: a positive showing of antibodies was taken — among those born in Australia where TB is rare — as a warning of possibly active infection with tuberculosis; but among migrants from Europe where TB was endemic, the showing of antibodies was taken as a sign of having become immune.

Already in 1985 (Chapter I) Lauritsen had shown how the CDC’s manner of presenting the data misrepresented the place of drugs among risk factors; and he had suggested that AIDS stems from multiple insults to the immune system, as Root-Bernstein argued in 1993 in *Rethinking AIDS*². Lauritsen was also the first (in 1987) to challenge the dire official predictions of an exploding epidemic (119), which predictions can by now be seen to have been unsound.

HIV is currently implicated in AIDS **by defini-**

tion. Any of **29** disparate diseases, **when encountered in the presence of HIV antibodies**, is now defined as constituting “AIDS”; and those 29 are truly an odd, miscellaneous collection — bacterial, fungal, viral, and even of unknown etiology. Those same 29 diseases also occur in absence of HIV. Where is the proof that it was the HIV that caused the immune-deficiency that allowed one (or more) of those diseases to become active? After all, as articles in *Science* and similar journals do periodically illustrate, we are still trying to discover how HIV could destroy the immune system as it is presumed to do. Lauritsen’s concluding Chapter XXXV indicates indeed that the dissident or unorthodox view, that HIV is **not** the cause of AIDS, is beginning to prevail. (*Rethinking AIDS*² is devoted almost in its entirety to demonstrating that HIV has not been proven the cause of AIDS.)

Here are some of the points that particularly caught my attention:

- There has never been a substantive reply from the AIDS Establishment to Peter Duesberg’s comprehensive, professional argument that HIV is not the cause of AIDS (68, 135, 136).
- Robert Gallo’s earlier claim of a “leukemia” virus (HTLV-I) has also been challenged (50 ff.).
- Luc Montagnier, the actual discoverer of HIV, agrees with Duesberg that retroviruses are characteristically **benign** rather than disease-inducing (169).
- Of 8871 health-care workers who developed AIDS by September 1992, **only 7 did not have such risks as IV-drug use, hemophilia, transfusion, homosexuality, etc.** Occupational exposure to HIV is not very risky!
- Hysteria that HIV causes AIDS and inevitably a gruesome death may itself be deadly when someone tests positive for HIV antibodies: we know that people who are convinced that they will soon die, often do (266 ff.). Such contagious hysteria has affected people even recently in Britain (461).
- Though 2/3 of all AIDS cases may be gays, **just a small percentage of gays have AIDS** (188-9). It is only “*the commercial gay milieu*”, the “fast-lane” homosexual scene, that has the deadly combination of “recreational” drugs, unrealistic or unhealthy attitudes, and much venereal disease with consequent over-use of antibiotics. **Lauritsen has made this point to “hundreds of PWAs [People With AIDS]” without being contradicted** (191).

¹ Thus Lauritsen correctly places periods and commas *outside* quote marks unless the punctuation belongs to the quote — the proper (and British) usage albeit not the standard American one

² Reviewed in V.S. #7

- The evidence is quite clear, from the FDA's own Establishment Inspection Report, that the AZT trials that led to its approval as a treatment for AIDS were invalid (chapter XXIX & pp. 452-3). No one has lived more than three years on AZT treatment (263, 302).
- "In the last couple of years, gay men in San Francisco and New York City, two epicenters of the 'AIDS epidemic', have gone back to the levels of drug abuse and promiscuity that obtained in the 70s and early 80s" (424-5).
- Is it needle-sharing or the drugs themselves that are dangerous? *Who says IV-drug-abusers typically share needles?* (185-6). "Clean needles" campaigning among drug-users amounts to saying that using drugs is not a risk to health!
- An excellent reason for unorthodoxy: "Only dead fish swim with the stream" (263).
- Our contemporary tendency to jump to the conclusion that illness results from viruses is illustrated by the usage "computer virus" – not "sabotage", "parasite", "fungus", "pollutant", "bacterium", "poison", or any of the other possible terms that might have been used (463) ³.

Opponents of PC, deconstructionism, post-modernism and the like will also be interested to learn that at meetings of the Gay Academic Union, on "a number of occasions ... presentations were canceled or speakers were shouted down, because they were considered to be 'politically incorrect'.... a distinguished gay scholar was heckled and silenced when he attempted to present a brief critique of 'Social Construction Theory', an ill-defined set of beliefs that was then in vogue among the younger and less knowledgeable gay scholars" ⁴ (260).

Scholars will also be inclined to agree with Lauritsen's conclusion on what needs to be done: "Somehow we must return to older and better standards. This means a return to the authority of intellect and ethics, as opposed to the authority of money and power" (458).

³ "Virus" may be particularly apt, though, because it does no harm and does not reproduce until a program is executed: biological viruses, too, need a host cell's machinery running in order to reproduce.

⁴ Would that it were no longer in vogue among professors of English, Sociology, and Science & Technology Studies!

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

I had been quoted as saying that the Papuans had no Proust and that the Zulus had not as yet produced a Tolstoy, and this was taken as an insult As a onetime anthropologist, I know a taboo when I see one. Open discussion of many major public questions has for some time now been taboo.... We can't open our mouths without being denounced as racists, misogynists, supremacists, imperialists or fascists.... As for the media, they stand ready to trash anyone so designated

Saul Bellow
New York Times 94:3:10, Op-Ed page

Poison by Prescription has not been superseded by *The AIDS War*, though the latter better reflects Lauritsen's recent views⁵. Four printings of it have been sold out.

The book has a dedication to "the 'AIDS dissidents' – who dared to speak out during an epidemic of lies" – AIDS activists like Michael Callen; such organizations as the Group for the Scientific Reappraisal of the HIV-AIDS hypothesis, H.E.A.L., and Positively Healthy; journalists like John Crewdson; doctors and scientists including Peter Duesberg, Walter Gilbert, Kary Mullis, Robert Root-Bernstein, Harry Rubin, Joseph Sonnabend.

The case against AZT, one might think, would need no more making than a reminder that "AZT was designed over twenty years ago for the treatment of leukemia ... by termination of DNA synthesis. However, since AZT failed to prolong the lives of leukemic animals, it was not accepted for cancer chemotherapy".

The rationale of AZT therapy ...[is that] the retrovirus HIV depends on DNA synthesis for multiplication, and AZT terminates DNA synthesis.... Yet ... many studies show that no more than one in 1,000 lymphocytes are ever infected with HIV – even in people dying from AIDS. Since AZT cannot distinguish between an infected and an uninfected cell, 999 uninfected cells must be killed to kill just one HIV-infected cell. ... there is no rational explanation of how AZT could be beneficial to AIDS patients, even if HIV were proven to cause AIDS.

Nevertheless "in 1988, the designers of AZT received a Nobel prize for medicine, although there

⁵ Personal communication, 4 December 1995

was no evidence that AZT would cure or prevent AIDS" (7).

Chapters I and II show beyond any doubt that the "Phase II trials" that led to the adoption of AZT therapy against AIDS were irretrievably flawed. Thus "the study became unblinded almost immediately" (14). Neither of the chief authors of the reports on the trials "could explain the tables in the reports that they themselves had supposedly written. They both repeatedly said that I should call Burroughs-Wellcome to find out how the tables were developed ... I should 'forget about the tables' ... the report would be 'just as good without them'" (27).

FDA analysts who examined the Case Report Forms found many changes made in them, sometimes long after the initial report (33); but these were not discarded because the data-base would have become so small if all that violated the protocols had been tossed out – as proper scientific method would have required, however. It is elementary that much bad data does not amount to a little good data. All that bad data can do is mislead: "vast numbers of flying saucers or 'unidentified flying objects' (UFOs) ... were observed in the '60s. None of the observations were very well documented, but there were so many of them! How could it be that they were all wrong!? I take no position ... [on UFOs] but merely point out that such visitations remain to be demonstrated. Likewise with the benefits of AZT" (111).

The sole apparent result in favor of AZT was an apparent lowered death rate *in people treated for only a few months*; and Lauritsen gives ample specific reasons why these data are very likely to be incorrect, quite apart from the pervasive malfeasance of protocol violations. Moreover "AZT was found to have 'no significant antiviral activity against a variety of other human and animal viruses, including herpes simplex ..., cytomegalovirus, adenovirus, measles ..., rhinovirus 13, bovine rotavirus, and yellow fever virus. It has been shown to inhibit the replication of Epstein Barr virus ... though the clinical significance of this finding is unknown"; "an FDA analyst concluded that AZT treatment is likely to be worse than disease in the long run" (43); "although the dose varied, anemia was noted in all species (including man) in which the drug has been tested" (46). Another highly critical review of the Phase II trials was written by Joseph A. Sonnabend, "Review of AZT Multicenter Trial Data Obtained Under the Freedom of Information Act by Project Inform and ACT-UP", *AIDS Forum*, January 1988

(88). And "much of the AZT research for the past three years has relied upon results from the p-24 antigen test ... which is now admitted, even by advocates of the HIV hypothesis, to be worthless" (132).

AZT kills bone marrow, which is why it causes anemia; and it is a potential human carcinogen (95), having produced cancer in animals (104). Burroughs Wellcome played that down: "results from rodent carcinogenicity studies are of limited predictive value for humans" (104). Yet in other cases than AZT, such studies have nevertheless often been sufficient to keep a drug from market. Moreover, AZT carcinogenicity had also been indicated by earlier Cell Transformation Assay studies, which are generally regarded as highly predictive of human carcinogenicity (108). And indeed AZT had never even been tested as an anti-cancer drug in humans when it was first considered for that use in the 1960s (110), no doubt because of its toxicity and carcinogenicity.

Chapter III, "The Epidemiology of Fear", points to the lack of evidence that HIV causes AIDS: "Although there is undeniably a correlation between HIV antibodies and the development of AIDS, the correlation is far from perfect, and it is only a hypothesis that the relationship is causal" (51). In "New York only about one out of 100 'infected' individuals (1%) developed AIDS, whereas in San Francisco 21 out of 84 (25%) developed AIDS. If HIV is the sole cause of AIDS, it is not possible for both sets of data to be correct" (57); but different life-styles in the two cities *would* be a plausible reason for the difference.

Not only that the trials were scientifically incompetent. The manner in which their purported results were defended reeks of self-interest and butt-covering bureaucrats. "Shortly after Burroughs Wellcome sent a check for \$55,000 to Samuel Broder of the National Cancer Institute ... Burroughs Wellcome received exclusive rights to market AZT, even though AZT had been in existence for 20 years and Burroughs Wellcome had played no part in the drug's development" (19). "William Haseltine and Max Essex, who are two of the top five AIDS researchers in the country, have millions in stocks in a company they founded that has developed and will sell AIDS kits that test for HIV" (157). AZT was "Wellcome's second-highest-selling product with sales of ... \$214 million" in 1988-89 and "is widely expected to be one of Wellcome's fastest-growing products in the early 1990s" (112). But "what's good for Wellcome is not necessarily good for human be-

ings" (116).

People who question the role of HIV in AIDS are censored, shouted down and shunned. At a panel at Columbia University in November 1988, the moderator "screamed that there would be 'no discussion from the floor' ... a security guard approached ... [Lauritsen] , and said he had been asked to 'escort' [him] from the building" (69). Again at a conference in Washington DC in 1990, Lauritsen was told that "an 'overflow situation' existed, and that if I even attempted to take a look inside the main room, guards would be called ... but one of my colleagues, who had simply walked into the main room, informed me that, far from an 'overflow situation', there were at least three dozen empty seats" (125-6). "Most of the participants ... were not ... evil. Some of them were weak, conformist, susceptible to peer pressure or bribery. But the majority were good people doing their best to make fair and rational decisions based on the information available to them.... Evil people do exist, and some of them were present ... whose unchecked egocentrism has made them indifferent or even hostile to the welfare of their fellow human beings. But for the most part, the triumph of evil follows when good people remain silent" (139).

Among the important things I hadn't known and that I learned from Lauritsen is that the United States, unlike most industrialized countries, has no system to ensure that adverse drug effects are reported. Once the FDA has approved a drug, "it's clear sailing In theory, physicians are supposed to report adverse effects to manufacturers, who are supposed to relay the information to the FDA. But ... with no incentives for compliance, no punishments for noncompliance, and with no federal data gathering system, the post-marketing surveillance is haphazard at best" (93). And so People With Aids discover only by talking with each other what the debilitating consequences of taking AZT are. "AZT ... was rushed through the approval process faster than any drug in the FDA's history ... the officially recognized toxicities of AZT are far from complete ... [and] the 'non-official' toxicities ..., well known through the formidable PWA grapevine, are not being systematically recorded" (94).

Chapter IX is again hair-raising and spine-chilling: "AZT for Healthy People". "It is hard for the mind to grasp the horror of what is happening" (122). "How is Burroughs Wellcome to persuade ... [HIV-antibody-positive people with no symptoms of

illness] to take an expensive drug, with no scientifically established benefits, that will give them violent headaches, destroy their bone marrow, and cause their muscles to shrivel up? ... The answer is to conduct a massive propaganda campaign ... 'HIV is a manageable disease' is one of the new slogans" (121). There was a panel considering how to manage AZT therapy because of its intolerable side-effects: "reduce doses, or discontinue therapy; whether to resume therapy, and at what doses, and so on. To pose such a question is to answer it: What should be done if the administration of a toxic drug has caused a patient to become anemic, or his muscles to ache violently and shrivel up? How much common sense dose it take to make a decision?" (137).

So how did AZT become the routine treatment for HIV infection? Partly because of the prevailing beliefs that HIV causes AIDS and that AIDS is inevitably fatal, as well as "the American faith in drugs as the appropriate treatment for almost everything" (23). I would add that the pressure was enormous on the Government and on the Science Establishment to come up with a cure for AIDS, and no doubt it seemed to umpteen functionaries much better to be doing *something, anything*, rather than to admit being stymied.

As with any book based on essays, there is some repetition in *Poison by Prescription*, but even so it is a compelling read.

Michael Fumento has degrees in law and in political science, and correspondingly his book focuses on how people interacted rather than on the substantive biological and statistical evidence.

Fumento does not question the claim that HIV causes AIDS: "of course it's the sharing of needles, not the actual drug use itself, that spreads disease" (29) – directly the opposite of John Lauritsen's view. When two authors with such different beliefs nevertheless agree on some matters and cite copiously the available evidence, the points on which they agree ought to carry a great deal of weight. So one should accept their demonstrations that not only has no epidemic of heterosexual AIDS occurred but none was, in point of fact, ever indicated by the available evidence; and that funds were injudiciously diverted from other research, for example on sexually transmitted diseases (139f.). Of course that becomes even more serious if "AIDS" is a multi-factorial syndrome to which infection by various STDs contrib-

utes, as Root-Bernstein and others argue.

Fumento does cite copiously, 50 pages of notes accompanying the 350 pages of text; and there is a 10-page index. Some of the book is hardly exciting reading as the evidence gets adduced, while other parts are likely to strike an emotional response. Thus Chapter 1, "The Reign of Terror", recalls the predictions that utter disaster supposedly faced America in just a few short years, the widely propagated image of HIV as a *completely hidden yet sure killer* that could strike **anyone**, just anyone. Quotes from the media coverage reveal metaphors, fake stories, sound-bite slogans and other insidious devices – for instance that every act of heterosexual intercourse is actually somehow intercourse with all the partners that one's actual partner had in the last 10 years.

The hysterical publicity of 1986-87 featured predominantly white, middle-class heterosexuals describing the risk everyone was running, even as the data then showed that less than 0.5% of AIDS cases could have been occasioned through sexual transmission among white, middle-class heterosexuals (130-31). The per-capita incidence among Hispanics was 2.5-3 times that, and among blacks 3.5-6 times that among whites; the incidence among Hispanic women was 8 times that, and among black women 12 times that among white women. Fewer than 15% of HIV-infected babies were white.

Fumento shows conclusively (as does Lauritsen in the books reviewed above and Ellison and Root-Bernstein in the books reviewed in our previous issue) that the cold odds of contracting HIV through heterosexual contact were and are quite other than the myth would have had it. Thus the Public Health Service never even put female prostitutes into the "at risk" or "high risk" categories (98)!

Why was the myth of everyone at the same risk, of "heterosexual AIDS", pushed so hard? Fumento points out that both racism and PC offer possible reasons. Racists would be concerned with the risk to whites, no matter that it was very small – the much larger risk to blacks and Hispanics would be of no concern to them (141-2). To PCers, on the other hand, it would seem "stigmatizing" to note that blacks, Hispanics, homosexuals and IV-drug abusers were most at risk (142 ff. & chapter 11). Yet surely to acknowledge facts ought not be called stigmatizing: "While we can perhaps argue that it's unfair that those walking down dark alleys be disproportionately attacked, or even that the government has

an affirmative duty to prevent such attacks, it is hardly a sane policy to pretend that such attacks do not disproportionately occur simply because some of us feel that there's nothing morally wrong with walking down dark alleys" (150).

What harm did the hysteria do? Surely encouraging "safe sex" would be a good thing at any time?

No. "Television shows that pretended to be public service messages ended up terrifying those not at risk and [thereby!] inducing complacency in those who were" (143). Fumento points out that the only rational way to discuss risks is by **comparing** them, quantitatively wherever possible. That, of course, applies to many other public arguments as well: what to do about pollution, environmental carcinogens, etc. etc. Fumento gives this analogy: breast cancer afflicts primarily women, yet men do contract it too. So breast cancer could, like AIDS, be trumpeted as "no one is safe" and "it's everybody's disease"; white men could be featured in ads urging frequent testing; and so forth. Yet that would be misleading when 130,000 women and 900 men are so diagnosed annually (151, 337). Still, to put it in perspective, **"more native-born American males are diagnosed with ... [breast cancer] each year than the total number who have contracted AIDS through heterosexual intercourse since the AIDS epidemic began"** (151).

Excellent, and not covered in any of the other books on this subject reviewed in *Virginia Scholar*, is Fumento's description of how "heterosexual AIDS" was coöpted by various groups making their own political hay:

America's obsession with AIDS became an obsession with condoms; and birth control advocates seized on the AIDS epidemic as a vehicle for promoting their chosen cause. Having tried for decades, with limited success, to get young people to use contraception ... they now sought to use fear of AIDS to get the recalcitrants to distribute or use condoms (164).

The major thrust of the conservative position on AIDS was to discourage heterosexuals from engaging in illicit relations (187).

Frustrated with the reaction to their admonition that "Sex will cost you your soul," the moralists have cynically exchanged it for "Sex will cost you your life." Moral suasion is replaced with mortal terror (188). ... [*But*] To believe that adverse temporal consequences must follow immoral behavior is bad theology and will ultimately undermine itself (189).

many homosexuals have been eager to promote the thesis of a general heterosexual breakout motivated by ... denial, and the need for research funds (198).

Fumento allows himself some righteous indignation about the self-interested propaganda on all sides:

the foisting of condoms on children, the effort to accustom teenagers to their use, and treatment of condoms generally that bordered on the ancient Roman worship of phalluses, is difficult to construe as anything less than decadent. One need not be a certified moralist, a conservative, or a Christian to be horrified at what the condomites passed off as responsible behavior As with any religious war, the excesses of the zealots on both sides were stomach turning.... the profligate prevarication of the anticondomites and the deific adoration of a tube of rubber on the part of the condomites – were both committed in the name of a single god, and that god was a false one. This Lord of the Flies was the epidemic of heterosexual AIDS. (177)

During the AIDS crisis, the American people turned to the government for leadership and found demagoguery and special-interest catering. They turned to the media for information and found yellow journalism. ... Hollywood came to them, bringing confusion, deception, and hypocrisy posing as social responsibility (226).

Shifting blame, Fumento reminds, is a human characteristic, including where infectious diseases are concerned:

syphilis was the “French pox” to the English, *morbus Germanicus* to the Parisians, the “Naples sickness” to the Florentines, and the “Chinese disease” to the Japanese Italians called it the “French pox” ... but the French called it the “Italian pox” ... Poles called it the “German pox” ... Russians called it the “Polish pox” ... Persians labeled it the disease of the Turks (201).

So some homosexuals blamed AIDS on Haitians, Africans, or intravenous drug users (201f.) and pointed out that homosexual *practices* are also engaged in by heterosexuals (203). Wildly invalid and spurious statistics were deployed to bolster such attempts (204 f.).

In “Lies, Damned Lies, and Statistics” (chapter 17), Fumento discusses in a generally useful way some of the pitfalls for the unwary presented via “statistical data”, in particular the (ab)use of pie-charts. Consider country A of 50,000,000 with only 10 AIDS cases of which 1 is homosexual; whereas in country B, also with 50,000,000 people, there are 1,000,000 with AIDS, 90% of them homosexuals. The

alarmists can cry about country A, “90% of AIDS cases are heterosexual!”, even though the incidence of heterosexual AIDS there is only about 1 in 2,500,000 whereas in country B, though only 10% of heterosexuals are infected, the incidence of heterosexual AIDS is 100,000 times greater, about 1 in 25! So in Japan, for example, most of the AIDS cases were hemophiliacs, but that doesn’t mean hemophiliacs in Japan were at greater risk than hemophiliacs in the United States, even though their portion of the pie-chart in Japan was so much greater (246). In another sleight of statistics, the incidence of AIDS in babies in New York City was used as a projection for what awaited the whole United States – “By 1991, 1 in 10 Babies May Be AIDS Victims” (*USA Today*, 20 July 1988) – even though New York City then had about 1/3 of all pediatric cases in the country (249).

Predictions based on wildly invalid data have sometimes been justified on the grounds that “even if the estimate is high by a factor of ...”, there would be cause for alarm. To the contrary, Fumento points out: bad data means a bad model that should not be used (306).

Well taken too are Fumento’s illustrations of the media’s talent for creating “experts” who really aren’t: on epidemiology, “an obscure virologist and a heretofore-unknown army infectious disease specialist” because the *real* epidemiologists were not saying sufficiently alarmist (= “news-worthy”) things (256). Media-generated crises of brief duration are common enough, we ought to know by now: regarding the danger of pit-bulls, for example (270) or the prevalence of missing children (271) – “some estimates of lost children [per year] run as high as 2 million More than 100,000 children are abducted each year”.

Alarmism in general ... is here to stay...[because it is] damned profitable. As a society we encourage alarmists; they seem so concerned and compassionate We march them before congressional committees We award them fat book contracts and government grants....

By contrast, we discourage those who dare challenge the prevailing hysteria. Their coolness is taken to be coldness and indifference ... “irresponsible” ... “uncompassionate”

Another oddity that Fumento holds up to scrutiny is how propaganda has converted victims of disease into role models:

In the 1940s, the pink triangle was used to send homosexuals to German concentration camps, often to their deaths. In the 1970s, the pink triangle

became a symbol of Gay Liberation, of a demand to be treated with the same rights and respect given to heterosexuals. By the late 1980s, the pink triangle was used like an American Express Platinum Card, as a means of getting special privileges available only to the bearer. AIDS victims began the 1980s by asking to be treated no worse than victims of other fatal diseases. But within a few years they were demanding funding and other treatment far superior to that received by sufferers of any other disease (330).

Appealing about this book are Fumento's intellectual independence in reasoning from the evidence. One (predictable) result is that he has been attacked by the extremists of both Left and Right (xii). He makes some important points that the other books reviewed do not; and he adds emphasis to some points that the others also make, like that the "goal of the AIDS industry in general is sheer self-perpetuation" (350).

Fumento makes clear that he accepts that HIV causes AIDS (198) and cites evidence **against** that without drawing the appropriate conclusion, for instance a Swedish study that showed only 22 of 270 HIV-positive IV-drug abusers dying within 5 years – **none of them from AIDS** (134)! But Fumento's whole case points to the same conclusion: an outbreak of AIDS into the general population was predicted on the presumption that it is caused by a readily and sexually transmitted virus, namely HIV; that the prediction was wrong surely counts against the truth of the underlying assumption.

So the case is clear enough that HIV cannot be the sole cause of AIDS. It is clear that AZT is a poison, not a treatment. It is clear even from the CDC's own data that the epidemic has passed its peak, which came between 1990 and 1993 **under the original definition of AIDS**, early in 1993 under the 1987 definition, and then or even earlier under the 1993 definition⁶. It is quite clear that the Establishment explanation of AIDS is **wrong**: all predictions based on it have been wrong for more than a decade, and most particularly, incidence has not spread appreciably beyond the originally discovered risk groups – drug abusers, fast-lane homosexuals, hemophiliacs,

⁶ HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, 5 #4 (through December 1993), p. 29 (from the Division of HIV/AIDS, National Center for Infectious Diseases, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Public Health Service, US Department of Health & Human Services)

recipients of major blood transfusions.

Nevertheless there remain any number of puzzling questions:

- Does HIV play, if not the crucial role then an important subsidiary role, perhaps as the final clincher for an already and otherwise weakened immune system?
- Where and when did HIV originate? What is its prevalence in general populations?
- What exactly is going on in those other countries where one reads that HIV/AIDS is beginning to spread? In Thailand, where vaccines are to be tested? In Africa, where huge numbers of people are said to be infected and dying?

And under any theory of causation, it remains **an urgent matter** to get good answers, or else some large number of otherwise healthy people with antibodies to HIV will be killed iatrogenically by AZT and similar chemicals.

POSTSCRIPTS:

Interesting tidbits to hand since the above was written include:

"20 years after infection, 10 to 17% of HIV-infected individuals will be AIDS-free"; 80-85% develop AIDS with a median time of about 10 years from initial infection; only about 10% progress to AIDS within 2 or 3 years⁷. The last group of "rapid progressors are characterized by lower levels of antibodies to HIV proteins ... the immune response to HIV is ineffective in rapid progressors ... neutralizing antibodies may well be important for the control of HIV in non-progressors ... in non-progressors, it appears that immune responses are sufficiently effective to maintain or at least markedly prolong the clinically latent phase of HIV infection. ... many non-progressors to AIDS have an immune response to HIV that is quantitatively and qualitatively superior to ... [that in rapid progressors]".

That sounds just like what Root-Bernstein has been saying, doesn't it? That HIV is dangerous only to people whose immune system has already been stressed or damaged. But do the Establishment workers who reported as above draw that conclusion? No. They suggest that "non-progressors are genetically programmed to successfully control HIV"! It's not that their immune system is functioning

⁷ Barton F. Haynes, Giuseppe Pantaleo, Anthony S. Fauci, "Toward an understanding of the correlates of protective immunity to HIV infection", *Science* 271 (96:1:19) 324-8

better in general – they must have some specific hereditary immunity to HIV – even though HIV only appeared very recently!? For what other infectious disease does modern medicine take such a view?

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

A federal jury has awarded Peter Duesberg and his publisher Regnery \$477,000 against Bryan Ellison for unauthorized selling of their jointly drafted book (AP, 95:12:4).

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

A study of HIV-infected hæmophiliacs found no statistically significant effect on the progression toward AIDS of the purity of the factor VIII that is used to provide blood-clotting ability. Such a possible correlation was the point of the study. The data show, however, that the relative hazard of progressing to AIDS among this group was 4.46, and of death 2.37, when taking zidovudine (AZT): 450% more likely to

get AIDS, 240% more likely to die, when taking AZT.

The study's authors try to explain this away as "probably because zidovudine was administered first to those whom clinicians considered to be at highest risk". If so, however, those clinicians were using poor intuition about risk rather than clinical data, for "**Adjusted for baseline CD4 and age** [emphasis added], subjects who had started on zidovudine had increased risks, especially for AIDS and death".

(James J. Goedert, Alan R. Cohen, Craig M. Kessler, Sabine Eichinger, Stephanie V. Seremetis, Charles S. Rabkin, Frances J. Yellin, Philip S. Rosenberg, Louis M. Aledort, "Risks of immunodeficiency, AIDS, and death related to purity of factor VIII concentrate", *Lancet*, 344 (17 September 1994), 791-2)

OTHER READING

One thing can lead to another. One book sends us to another because we want to know more about the subject; or because we're curious about what else an author has written. Ellison on AIDS (see VS #7) spurred me to look for *Poison by Prescription* by John Lauritsen. Our Library catalogue did not list it, but it did have Lauritsen's *The AIDS War*.

So impressed was I by the essays in *The AIDS War* that I also borrowed the other Lauritsen book in our library, *The Early Homosexual Rights Movement (1864-1935)*, New York: Times Change Press, 1974 (by John Lauritsen & David Thorstad). Blessedly often when something causes me to read a book on a subject that I am not aware of having any particular interest in, I learn something new and am led to re-examine opinions that I didn't know needed re-examining. So with this short book (fewer than 100 pages). I recommend it.

I often tell my students that one cannot really understand a subject without knowing something of its history. Given the current public prominence of issues about homosexuality, one really ought to be aware of the organized and open push for civil rights for gays in the late 19th century, especially in Germany, and of the interplay with politics.

The book is largely factual, albeit the author's sympathies are clear enough, for example (51n), "without hesitation, one can now describe homosexuality as a basic component of the human animal. There is nothing whatever wrong with homosexuality; in no way is it opposed to or incompatible with heterosexuality. ... What needs to be explained is not homosexuality, but rather the taboo against it, and the persecution of homosexuals ... with the exception of Zoroastrianism ... antihomosexual prejudice and repression have been limited to cultures under the influence of Judeo-Christianity".

One does not need to share the authors' opinions, of course, to be stimulated to ponder over that. Christians might, even if they disagree, remain clear that they are called to love the sinners even as they hate the sin. For secular humanists and sociobiologists, a pertinent question becomes, what beneficial role homosexuality might have for *Homo sapiens* since evolution has produced or sustained the phenomenon.

Tid-bits from abroad

Paul Sheehan used to be US correspondent for Sydney, Australia's *Sydney Morning Herald*. A friend there sent us Sheehan's article, "Four Stories

the US Media **Refuse to Tell**" (*SMH* 95:5:20, Section 5 – SPECTRUM, pp. 1A, 4A). The first of those four is "The Race War of Black Against White".

Huh?? Isn't it white society that's oppressing blacks?? Not according to Sheehan:

The longest war America has ever fought is the Dirty War ...: for the past 30 years a large segment of black America has waged a war of violent retribution against white America ...

According to the latest US Department of Justice survey ... of ... 6.6 million violent crimes ... 20 percent, or 1.3 million, are inter-racial ...

Most victims of race crime – about 90 percent – are white, according to the survey "Highlights from 20 Years of Surveying Crime Victims", published in 1993.

Almost 1 million white Americans were murdered, robbed, assaulted or raped by black Americans in 1992, compared with about 132,000 blacks who were murdered ... [etc.] by whites ...

... per capita ... blacks are committing more than 50 times the number of violent racial crimes as whites.

... with blacks murdering whites at 18 times the rate that whites murder blacks. ...

the racist character of the Dirty War is obvious every day in a cascade of large and small animosities. ...

the naked racism and anti-Semitism of the black news media...

the atavistic rhetoric of the Rev. Louis Farrakhan ... my own experience with black Americans in the past decade, which includes attempted murder, assault, theft, bottle-throwing, being showered with beer, and being called "cracker", "honkey", "motherf...er", "white trash", and "blue-eyed devil". ...

All these are facts, yet by simply writing this story ... I would be deemed a racist by the American news media. It prefers to maintain a paternalistic double-standard in its coverage of black America, a lower standard.

Sheehan's views here seem rather extreme. It is unfortunate that they might seem to gain support from the unwillingness of university administrators to punish individuals who commit crimes but hold protected minority status; see for example Gary Brator's account of events at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst¹.

The second story is "Bill Clinton's Sex Addiction". It's startlingly explicit about that, but the chief

LEADERSHIP

When the Church of England Synod voted in November 1993 on the ordination of women, those in favor were:

House of Laity, 67.3%

House of Clergy, 70.4%

House of Bishops, 75%

Alumnus Chronicle (Univ. of St. Andrews)
#86, June 1995, p.29

point, about the American media, is made by contrasting their coverage of Paula Jones's allegations of sexual harassment against Clinton with their coverage of Anita Hill's against Clarence Thomas. That seems a little unfair, given that it is *the Courts* that have ruled to defer Jones's suit until Clinton is no longer President.

The third of Sheehan's illustrations is more pertinent to PC: "The Victory of the Right-Wing Women".

- "The number of women running ... as Republicans last year increased by 36 per cent compared with 1992, while the number ... seeking office as Democrats dropped 15 per cent. ...
- Every Republican woman in Congress was re-elected, and their numbers surged by 43 per cent.
- One in four Democratic women incumbents in the House ... was defeated, and the ranks of Democratic women in the House and Senate thinned from 40 to 35.
- Three Republicans ... became the first women Attorneys-General in their States. ...

When I asked the League of Women Voters why the record victory total had not made news, a spokesperson replied: 'Have you heard about some of these Republican women?' When I asked the same question at the National Organisation [sic] for Women (NOW), a spokesperson replied: 'the number reflects gain by women, but does not reflect a gain for women'. ... In other words, some women count; others do not."

Sheehan's fourth story, the conclusion: "It is probably not surprising that the American news media have failed to tell the story about the decline of the American news media..."

- A survey by the Washington pollster Peter Hart found that just 19 per cent of Americans approved of how the news media did their job.

¹ Gary Crosby Brator, "Weimar in Amherst", *Academic Questions* 8 #2 (Spring 1995) 69-89

- A *Times-Mirror* survey found that most Americans believed the news media were actually an obstacle to solving society's problems.
- The American Society of Newspaper Editors' 1994 survey found that most Americans not only distrusted the ethical standards of journalists but also their choice of what was important to society.
- A 1995 Gallop poll ... found a consensus among journalists that the quality of the news media had declined during the past 10 years.

Also from Australia, "Science & Superstition" by Roger Sandall, *IOPA Review* vol. 47 #4 (1995) 47-51, a very favorable review of Gross & Levitt's *Higher Superstition*. It is one of life's oddities that PC should be even more prominent in Australia and in Canada than in the United States. The number of the "oppressed" and "victimized", which PCers use as excuse for their shenanigans, is far smaller in those countries, be it measured in numbers of people, or in the proportion of the population, or in the variety of groups that qualify as inherently victimized and oppressed.

On the other hand, the tradition of Government interference with all aspects of life is much stronger in Australia and Canada. That might indicate what the actual spur to PCness really is.

Sandall's review offers this example of Down-Under idiocy:

Draft curriculum guidelines circulating in ACT² schools last December stated that the history of space travel should be taught using Aboriginal Dreamtime stories and that a gender equity perspective (emphasizing 'female' values and abilities) should be incorporated into mathematics.

Australian universities should set aside a number of professorships for women applicants only and use head-hunting firms to ensure more women apply for top-ranking jobs, according to one of the country's most senior female academics.... [namely] Millicent Poole, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University (ANU) ... She said that the ANU had experimented with the introduction of 'females-only' professorships in one research school and this had proved successful, although she conceded it had been

² Australian Capital Territory, Australia's answer to the District of Columbia

highly controversial.

(Luis M. Garcia, "Professor calls for 'women only' uni posts", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 95:10:23, p. 9)

"Had proved successful" ...

Given that the only criterion was to fill a position with a female, how could that not succeed?

The "controversial" part reflects, no doubt, that some people think universities have some other *raison d'être* that should override the providing of jobs specifically for women.

THE OLD COUNTRY provides a clipping from the *Inverness Courier*, p. 2 of Friday July 8 (unfortunately the year is missing). At the head of the *Situations Vacant* section stands this:

**SEX DISCRIMINATION
ACT**

It is unlawful to publish advertisements which indicate, or might reasonably be understood to indicate, an intention to discriminate in employment on the grounds of sex. Accordingly, terms such as "waiter," "barmaid," "salesman," are no longer permissible. Exceptions are staff for private houses; certain occupations, such as mine workers or midwives; and one-sex establishments such as convents.

Note the placement of commas inside quote marks, contrary to traditional British practice. This may be another illustration of Orwell's theorem that faulty language and faulty thinking are unavoidably intertwined.

In the Good Old USA, institutions vie to create the most with-it aff-act statement:

The University of Massachusetts at Lowell proudly proclaims itself "*an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action, Title IX, H/V, ADA 1990 Employer*" (I had to look twice because at first I thought it said "HIV").

East Stroudsburg is merely an "AA/EEO employer M/F/D/V"; but note how it tests the with-it

VIRTUAL REALITY

Computer scientist:

We ought to have virtual department heads, so we could “page” them in and “page” them out at will

Kibitzer:

Trouble is, too many department heads think they're for real

nature of prospective employees by expecting them to know the meanings of those abbreviations. I'm used to M-F as standing for male-female; but can the “M” here really mean that *men* are encouraged to apply??

The University of Toronto is “committed to employment equity and encourages applications from women, visible minorities, aboriginal peoples and persons with disabilities” and yet directs the ad “in the first instance to Canadian citizens and permanent residents”. Tough luck, Australian aborigines and crippled non-residents of Canada. I'm also intrigued by that “visible” minorities. I guess that means that, unlike in the USA, mere possession of an Hispanic surname doesn't get you a job ³.

Breaking the Maya Code by Michael D. Coe (NY: Thames & Hudson, 1992) seemed an interesting read that would take my mind off things like PC for a while. But in it I found this (p.47):

Mexican law forbids the teaching in schools of the Yucatec Maya tongue The modern world has been transfixed by the new demands of oppressed nationalities for their place in the sun, but little or nothing is heard from the millions upon millions of indigenous, ‘Fourth World’ people in Latin America. How many heads of state in those countries have any ‘Indian’ blood to speak of? And when has any Native American language been heard in the halls of the United Nations? The answer is ‘none’ and ‘never.’ No imperial conquest has ever been so total, or a great people so shattered.”

Hispanics make pretty good oppressors, it seems. I suspect Native Americans do, too. It now appears that the earliest humans in the Americas came here 40,000 years ago or so, to be wiped out by what we now call “Native Americans” who came here 15,000 years ago or thereabouts.

A Season in the West by Piers Paul Read (Random House, 1988) had been recommended to me as an amusing tale of a refugee writer from Communist Czechoslovakia trying to adjust to Western mores. The book runs out of steam towards the end, but before then it does have some authentic insights, for example pp. 67-69 on life under Communism; pp. 40-41 on British minor public schools;

“she did not care for the Irish but then no one did, and that was not racial prejudice because the Irish were white” (101);

“It is ironic ... In Czechoslovakia it is dangerous to criticize the government. Here it is dangerous not to criticize the government.” (110)

“But what is so debilitating, so *spiritually* debilitating, is that no one believes in the Party line, least of all those who are charged with enforcing it” (32).

That last bit somehow reminded me of higher education in Virginia, with Pooh-Bahs galore pontificating about re-structuring, educational technology, breaking class-hour-credit-hour molds, and so on in the attempt to hide their fiscal impotence and intellectual vacuity.

Unsent Letters is what the title says: letters that **Malcolm Bradbury** has only thought of sending. If you read just three of them, make them “The Spouse in the House”, “Remembering the Fifties”, and “Inspeak: your streetwise guide to linguistics and structuralism”. You're guaranteed some belly laughs as well as many chuckles.

The Fifties, of course, were “when the British Empire ended, ... duly replaced with the British Council”; when “they all wanted to be outsiders” “where nowadays everyone wants to be an insider trader”; when “Dylan Thomas constantly toured America”. Bradbury had once thought of “writing a book about the writers who refused to join the Left in the 1930s, but I could not find any.” “Marxism as the God that had failed, except of course at MI5. ... Treason was no longer in fashion, now that Auden and Isherwood were in America, Burgess and Maclean in jeopardy, and Spender in confusion.”

“Inspeak” reminds me to recommend also Bradbury's book-length satire of post-modernist-deconstructionist-structuralist idiocies, *My Strange Quest for MENSONGE – Structuralism's Hidden Hero* (London: André Deutsch, 1987, 104 pp.).

³ These examples are all from p. 57 of *Chemical & Engineering News* 95:12:18

ONE-COLUMN

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- 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;

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- practice honesty with the public, with students and parents, with faculty, and with everyone else.

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- intimidation of students or faculty who voice unfashionable views;
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