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EDITORIAL:	2
CULTURE AND MULTI-CULTURALISM	
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION:	6
A Major Threat to Intercollegiate Athletics	
BOOK REVIEW:	9
<i>Cultural Conservatism, Political Liberalism: from Criticism to Cultural Studies</i> by James Seaton	
BARBARIANS AT THE GATES	10
an Honors Graduation address by Darrell Stump	
POTPOURRI	12
Indoctrinating the kids; Choosing courses; Sexism, Racism, Euphemism, & Mokita	
ON ANONYMITY	16
an essay by Hans Christian Rott	
DIVERSITY AND IDENTITY	18
A keynote address at the Association of American Colleges & American Conference of Academic Deans	

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOLARS .. 13, 23

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**EDITORIAL CULTURE AND MULTI-CULTURALISM:
E PLURIBUS UNUM?**

A culture defines itself by what its members take for granted: customs, idioms, traditions.

But no two individuals are exactly alike in what they take for granted: no two individuals share **exactly** the same culture. We learn to take things for granted through what we're intentionally taught as well as through the vagaries of personal experience. No two individuals share **exactly** the same experiences; nor do any two individuals (with the possible exception of identical twins) share **exactly** the same training. So each of us becomes a unique amalgam¹ of a host of cultural influences – one or more national cultures, one or more religious cultures, one or more ethnic cultures; at least one family culture; perhaps a kinship or clan culture; a combination of social cultures determined by economic status, profession, hobbies...

What then does it signify to describe people **collectively** as members of a given culture? It can only mean, to attend to those things that they have in common and to ignore those that they **do not** have in common.

That's often useful. Otherwise there could be no generalizing, no understanding of social processes. But a sharp distinction is needed between **thinking** about society and **regulating** society. A great deal can be – has been – learned from observations in which blacks are compared with whites, women with men, high-school graduates with college graduates, etc. **But nothing in such comparisons mandates that all individuals belonging to any one of those groups should be treated as though that group membership were the only important thing about that individual.** Yet that confusion, that utter absurdity is implicitly claimed by advocates of "multi-culturalism":

The plain truth is that no one of us belongs to a single culture

Gregory S. Butler
cited in *New Mexico Scholar*
Number 10, Spring 1996, p.4

somehow black men and black women, black executives and black unemployed, urban blacks and rural blacks, rich blacks and poor blacks, educated blacks and uneducated blacks, and all sorts of other blacks as well are supposed to share a powerful, transcendent commonality. They are supposed to share it, moreover, with "blacks" whose ethnic heritage may be more white than black, or partly Asian, or Amerindian, or something else again; and moreover that commonality is most recently supposed to be in some manner "African" even for individuals whose closest connection to the actual Africa may be many generations away, moreover separated from it by other generations who were acculturated into South America, the Caribbean, or elsewhere.

Not only do the multi-culturalists thus rob individual blacks of their individuality: they seek so to rob everyone. All whites should feel guilty because they are willy-nilly racists, no matter what their conscious beliefs or their actions might say to the contrary; all women should feel like aggrieved victims of male oppression; and so on.

But what **positive** thing do advocates of "multi-culturalism" actually want? What would be the "culture" in "multi-culturalism"? What would a "multi-cultural" nation actually be?

If it's to **be** a nation, then by definition there must be a national culture whose elements all within it share. Given that, other differences can be accommodated; not given that, the nation must split: what could hold it together if its people have nothing in common?

Thus all other cultures must ultimately be secondary to the national one: the only alternative is secession. One can be a black American or an African-American or any other sort of hyphenated American, so long as one identifies with a national

**THE ONLY THING NECESSARY FOR THE TRIUMPH OF EVIL
IS FOR GOOD MEN TO DO NOTHING**

culture that is overridingly **American**; one can place a minority culture ahead of the national one only as a first step to secession from that nation.

In practice, of course, the multi-culturalists do par-take of the universal American culture. They take for granted things that residents of the United States take for granted but that are **not** taken for granted elsewhere; for example, on American soil everyone feels entitled to criticize American government and society (even some fresh immigrants who, from the tone of their criticism, could be taken for agents of some foreign government or movement). In what other nation than the United States is the question endemic and perennial, whether it is permissible to restrict the freedom of individuals whose stated purpose is to destroy the nation?

In vain one dreams that the freedom enjoyed here might always be exercised responsibly by all those who enjoy it. But it might be a useful next-best-thing, if the multi-culturalists were to make plain, what in their view is or should be **common** to all the multiple “cultures” they assert to be present here. Harping incessantly on differences, how can they ask – as they do – that particular “cultures” be respected by other “cultures”? What common basis for respect is there, in their philosophy?

Multi-culturalists, gender-feminists, post-modernist ideologues of all sorts have succumbed to over-generalizing, to dealing with categories rather than with concrete human beings. I experienced a remarkable example of that recently. A feminist historian presented “work in progress” on the biography of a woman born in Europe who later practiced medicine in the United States.

The focus was on what enabled her to achieve marked success even in those bad old days when women were so much discriminated against. Much was made of issues related to sex or gender, including the possibility of lesbian relationships. Questions and comments ranged more widely, on social and economic status, European traditions transplanted to America, and more. Acknowledging several of these, the speaker summed up her approach thus:

“Sure, though I use ‘gender’ as the basis for analysis, I know it’s not the only possible category. There’s also race and class. But how many categories can one take into account at the same time?”

The tip-of-the-tongue comment I repressed was this: Is it not the job of a biographer to seek as full and authentic as possible an understanding of a

human being? Surely the subject should lead the biographer to recognize which “categories” might provide useful insights; the biographer should attend to as many categories as may be needed to do justice to the subject. Biographers and historians should not make “race, class, gender” into Procrustean beds upon which all humanity is to be crucified.

Among the many sorts of cultures to be found in the United States (and elsewhere) are cultures of ethnicity, of profession, of avocation, and many more. The culture of education is different from that of business or of government or of religion. Within the culture of education there are again distinct cultures, notably those distinguishing primary, secondary, and tertiary education. Within the culture of tertiary education there are distinct cultures of private and public institutions, of research universities and baccalaureate colleges and community colleges; and still others as well. Universities harbor more than simply one culture: the law schools have a different culture than the medical schools or the engineering colleges. And so on and so forth.

One truly foreign culture pervasively present in American institutions of higher education is that of “inter-collegiate athletics”². Just about everything taken for granted in inter-collegiate athletics runs counter to what is taken for granted in the rest of academe:

- Admissions officers judge prospective students according to the likelihood that they will benefit sufficiently from the educational opportunities as to obtain a degree; but “student-athletes” are recruited almost solely on the basis of their athletic prowess.
- Instructors expect students in their classes to fit their extra-curricular activities into the class schedule; but “student-athletes” have their courses chosen to fit with their athletic program, and their academic instructors know better than to expect the same attention to course-work from “student-athletes” as from the rest of the class: “Upon awakening, a loudly slumbering student who was asked if he was tired replied, ‘My coach says I have to be in class every day, but he didn’t say I had to be awake the whole time’”³.
- Professors and students are expected to adhere to the established rules of professional codes of ethics, Honor Systems, and so forth. But it is understood that if there are transgressions of rules by “student-athletes”, the administration will diligently seek ways to ensure that the transgressions

will not prevent the “student-athletes” from taking part in the athletic contests that are the only reason for their presence at the institution.

Those plain truths are routinely denied in public by Coaches, Presidents, Public-Relations Vice-Presidents and others, even as in private and to one another they acknowledge them. The jaundiced view ⁴, however, has received widely publicized support through recent incidents of alleged criminal conduct by “student-athletes”.

Allegations of rape made by Christy Brzonkala revealed clearly enough a university administration focused on finding defenses and excuses for the accused parties and neglecting the opportunity to remark, even in passing, that “student-athletes”, as privileged members of the university community and as visible role models, bear a special responsibility to behave impeccably⁵. But this was only one among quite a number of instances. What was the response by university administrations to the public dismay over “student-athletes” charged with felonious assault, assault and battery, shop-lifting, rape, felony hit-and-run, malicious wounding, trespassing, resist-

ing arrest, or destruction of property? ⁶

A Director of Athletics said, “We have 550 kids in our program. To say we’re in dire jeopardy with four problems ... I think that means we’re doing a good job with 546 of them”. A University President added, “Student-athletes are no more inclined to be involved in altercations than anyone else”.

Be those as they may – though we suspect that even if the incidence of altercations is no greater, the effect on the recipient of “altercation” from a football player is likely to be more grievous than from a non-athletic student – just consider how we might regard administrators who offered such explanations in other but similar circumstances:

- President Nixon, instead of saying, “I am not a crook”, might have pointed out, “I’m the 37th President of the United States. Presidents are no more likely to be crooks than anyone else, but by the law of averages you should expect that out of 37 people, one or more would be a bit crooked. What’s the big deal?”
- University Presidents are periodically charged with embezzling or misusing institutional funds.

Instead of going to the trouble of denying such charges, why don't they simply point out that the incidence of such behavior among University Presidents is no greater than among Savings-&-Loans Executives or Members of Congress?

The point is that people of prominence, those who in some manner represent institutions or groups of people, are traditionally and properly held to higher standards of conduct than mere legality, and never can their transgressions be excused just because less prominent and privileged people also commit them.

Yet when it comes to universities disciplining the players who represent them, our Athletic Directors are as one that "any institutional penalty is best applied after legal proceedings. That discourages coaches and administrators from conducting an investigation and acting as judge and jury" ⁷.

One might in principle applaud such delicate regard for procedural justice – though one might wish that the same courtesies were offered those charged with racial or sexual harassment, who find themselves both juried and judged by AA/EO Officers. In practice, though, a common-sense view indicates that athletes **must** be held to certain rules. For example, is a Coach obliged to permit players to take part in a game if, say, the previous evening they broke team curfew?

Here's the Athletic Director's reasoning: "If a relatively swift internal investigation led to a school penalty but the student-athlete were later cleared of charges in court, 'You know what happens then, don't you? ... You get a lawsuit, and we're back in it again'".

Ah yes. Once again, Coaches and Athletic Directors and Presidents are prevented from doing the right thing by the vagaries of the American legal system. I have a modest proposed solution:

Every enrolling student-athlete signs a contract that reads like this: "I understand that my admission to the university, my participation on athletic teams, and my athletic scholarship will become null and void immediately if I should at any time or place commit physical violence on any person under any circumstances (except only the violence that is generally agreed to be a permissible part of organized athletic activity on a playing field or court during an athletic contest or practice)".

That – or something similar drawn up by duly qualified legal eagles – would surely stand up in

court if an act of violence were later committed.

The plain fact of the matter, however, is that university administrations would do anything rather than inhibit their Coaches from seeking Victories. This open secret is occasionally admitted even in public by people from the inside. Thus Robert Sellers, former linebacker at Howard University, now a psychologist who counsels athletes at UVa: "It's not that we let ... [athletes] step across the line. It's that we end up never drawing them a line at all".

Amongst the root problems for student-athletes at most colleges is that their academic preparation is, on the average and by and large, notably inferior to that of most of the rest of the students. Many years ago I suggested to our representative to the NCAA an obvious fix for the perennial issue of minimum academic standards for participation in inter-collegiate athletics. As coaches are wont to point out, it makes no sense to have some inevitably arbitrary SAT or ACT score or GPA or the like as a universal criterion. The obvious solution is that, at every college and university, the student-athletes should approximate the rest of the students on academic measures. For example, if the average SAT of entering students at College Y is 1000 with a standard deviation of 100, then the student-athletes at College Y should be required to have an average SAT of (say) at least 950 with a standard deviation no greater than 100.

What could be wrong with such a scheme? One thing only: the academically "top" institutions would not accept this hindrance to their seeking of Victories on the atheletic playing fields. So, for the foreseeable future, American academe will continue under the implicit motto:

INTER-COLLEGIATE ATHLETICS ÜBER ALLES

¹ See "Diversity and Identity", p.18

² See page 6

³ "Peter Sacks", *Generation X Goes to College*, Chicago & LaSalle (IL): Open Court, 1996, p. 78

⁴ See for example the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 96:4:21, pp.A1,10,11; D1,4,9

⁵ See *Virginia Scholar* #8, April 1996, pp.6-7

⁶ p. A11 of footnote 4 above

⁷ p. A10 of footnote 4 above

[Reprinted without permission from Josef Martin's USA Sports Today, 1998:10:22]

MAJOR THREAT TO INTER-COLLEGIATE ATHLETICS FROM COURT RULING ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The world of inter-collegiate athletics was shaken to its roots by yesterday's long-awaited Supreme Court verdict in the case brought by a confederation of groups representing a variety of minorities. One well-known football coach at a leading academic and athletic institution, willing to speak only off the record, was disbelieving and stunned: "This is the end of college football as we've come to love it and profit from it!", he groaned.

The suit had been lodged by AAA-ExCells (Asian-American Athletes for Excellence in College Sports) joined by several organizations representing Jewish youth and sports groups, two Hispanic organizations, and a Native-American collective. Relying on the EEOC's (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) interpretation of Title IX as requiring "proportionality", these groups charged that major inter-collegiate sports were grossly unproportional in terms of all minority groups with the sole exception of African-Americans. Said a spokesperson for AAA-ExCells: "Asian-Americans are represented among college students at no smaller a percentage than in the American population as a whole. But the proportion of Asian-American athletes, especially in the major and most visible and most materially rewarding sports, is negligible. Yet we support these sports as fans, and through the mandatory fees the colleges make us pay. It isn't fair, and it's time something was done about it. Women have moved a long way towards proportionality over the

last decade or so, and it's time the rest of us shared in this progress".

("Proportionality" is the buzzword long used by women's athletic groups and accepted by federal agencies as a test of whether women are being discriminated against in collegiate sports. To be "proportionate", a school must spend about the same amount of money per female athlete as per male athlete, and the ratio of male to female athletes in overall numbers must be approximately the same as the ratio of male to female students at the school.)

The Supreme Court's ruling was more far-reaching and definitively expressed than anyone had expected. Some observers felt that the Justices had become progressively more irritated with the defenses of current practices offered by the NCAA and the various groups that were involved as co-defendants or "amicus curiae" ("friends of the Court" – parties not involved in a particular litigation but allowed to "advise" the court on matters of law directly affecting the litigation).

The first set-back for the defendants came with their plea that revenues from major sports would decline if they were forced to use proportionality in recruiting. The Court asked whether there was any tangible evidence to support that claim, and several Justices were openly sarcastic:

"Did revenues drop in the 1950s and 1960s when previously all-white football and basketball teams added African-American athletes?"

Lea Billey, representing the NCAA, said that was different, be-

cause black athletes had been kept off teams even though their athletic ability was at least as good as that of the recruited white players.

Court: "What evidence do you have that Asian-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and Native-Americans lack an athletic ability that African-American and European-American athletes possess?"

NCAA: "Your Honors, our colleges recruit based on high-school performances. We go by results, by demonstrated achievement. Our recruiting is not based on claims about relative abilities."

Court: "So if high-school sports discriminate against certain groups, you feel free to be a silent partner in such discrimination through accepting its results?"

NCAA: "Your Honors, we don't believe that high schools discriminate racially in their sporting activities."

Court: "How then do you explain the lack of proportionality there?"

NCAA: "Your Honors, it may well be that some people are better at sports than others ..."

Court: "Counsel should treat very carefully here. Some of us have vivid memories of the time when segregated educational facilities were defended on just such grounds. Some of us moreover have vivid memories of attempts to justify lack of proportionality in student bodies as a whole on such grounds.

In point of fact, it was shown that claimed differences in average IQs and SATs and so forth simply revealed that the tests from which those numbers came

had been constructed in a racially biased way, inevitably so since they had been constructed without the participation of *a priori* excluded groups.”

NCAA: “Your Honors, in sports we don’t rely on achievement-type tests, we simply go by actual results. The individual boys and girls who happen to excel in a particular sport ...”

Court: “Just happen not to belong to groups who have long been subject to denigration and discrimination in countless other ways in society? You’re suggesting coincidence as the explanation for these statistical disparities?”

NCAA: “Your Honors, not coincidence, but differences in tradition and cultural preferences that are not a matter of discrimination. Asian-Americans and Hispanic-Americans and Native-Americans don’t have the tradition of being interested in sports, of seeking to excel in sports ...”

Court: “Counsel would do well to think a little more before responding to our questions. Who have been the leading table-tennis champions in the last fifty years? Who have been the leading countries competing in gymnastics at the Olympic Games? Who are the leading soccer players in the world? Has counsel any particular knowledge of sports and sports champions?”

NCAA: “Your Honors, I apologize profusely for the egregious misstatements of my Junior Counsel. We are all aware of the delicacy of the issues that we must discuss in litigating this case, and in attempting to tread delicately it may be that Junior Counsel erred largely through attempting brevity. Let us try to put the point at the greater length that it requires. Different cultures tradi-

tionally have prized somewhat different things. In sports, for example, some cultures have developed a special interest in cricket, and others in baseball; some in rugby and others in soccer; and so forth. Junior Counsel suggests, and indeed our client colleges suggest, that present disparities in proportionality in college football and basketball result from such traditional, voluntary, non-externally-imposed preferences and not from any societal or collegiate discrimination.”

Court: “So that a fifth-generation Hispanic- or Asian-American would still prefer to be a bull-fighter or a table-tennis player, even in a society where those activities are not practiced or not highly rewarded, rather than a professional football or basketball star earning millions of dollars annually?”

Let me remind learned counsel again that quite similar arguments were brought in the long battle against de-segregation of higher education as a whole. African-Americans, it was implied, didn’t *want* to become doctors, lawyers, executives, professors, and so forth. Yet lo and behold, no sooner was a determined effort made through affirmative action, than a major movement toward proportionality at all levels ensued.”

NCAA: “Your Honors, indeed, and we have all benefited from it. But while it is clear that intellectually and emotionally and spiritually, all human beings are created equal, that is not the case in terms of physical stature and athletic prowess.”

Court: “Would Counsel care to offer examples of inherent racial differences in physique that impinge on athletic prowess, which

mere skin color obviously does not?”

Does Counsel believe that quickness of reflex would be a useful asset for a basketball player?”

NCAA: “Yes indeed, Your Honors, it would.”

Court: “Then is learned Counsel not aware that Asians on average have the quickest reflexes of any examined racial group? Why are there not at least some Asian-American guards on the major collegiate basketball teams?”

NCAA: “Your Honors, inherent ability and cultural tradition are only two of a number of pertinent factors here. Children form their aspirations quite early, and in part through perceived role models ...”

Court: “Precisely. We continue to traverse very old ground. Blacks didn’t want to be professors because there weren’t any black professors. Catholics didn’t aspire to be president because no Catholic had ever been president.

The way to break such vicious circles, we demonstrated, was by determined **affirmative action**. It doesn’t matter whether some cultural sub-group does or does not place a high regard on a particular activity: democracy and our Constitution require that they be **urged, forced** to place the same regard on every aspiration as every other cultural sub-group within the United States. The history of affirmative action demonstrates that sufficiently vigorous recruiting efforts can turn up individuals who, against all odds, become the sorely needed role models for their fellow erstwhile victims”.

NCAA: “But Your Honors, there just aren’t the high-school basketball and football players avail-

able ...”

Court: “Exactly the same argument was made, by the same clients as you now represent, when it was a matter of recruiting women and blacks onto faculties of academic departments.”

NCAA: “Your Honors, in intellectual matters there aren’t score-cards or discrete games that get won or lost. In basketball and football, alumni and other fans demand that their teams *win* ...”

Court: “Once again, Counsel, tread most warily here. Are you suggesting, in the face of our earlier comments, that currently excluded groups are *inherently* incapable of competing on an equal footing? Or is Counsel suggesting that there are no standards or criteria of excellence in intellectual matters, only in sporting encounters?”

In the end, none of the defending lawyers seemed able to create any argument that found favor with the Justices. So the final decision was not a surprise, though its stringency was. Here are some of the more controversial provisions:

Beginning with the current recruiting year, every inter-collegiate program shall establish numerical goals and timetables for achieving proportionality in its sporting programs

During the oral arguments, the Court had responded to one of the NCAA lawyers that “goals” were not to be interpreted as “quotas”. Quotas were rigid, mechanical, no-matter-what; goals, on the other hand, merely expressed hopes, determination, wished-for consequences:

NCAA: “But, Your Honors, were we to establish appropriately desirable goals and not achieve

them, we might be judged to have failed.”

Court: “Precisely. Clearly your clients will not have been vigorous enough or ingenious enough in pursuing the goals they themselves held to be desired.”

NCAA: “Your Honors, is not that a rigid interpretation, tantamount to a quota?”

Court: “Not at all. Each college will establish its own goals *voluntarily*.”

NCAA: “But, Your Honors, our goals are *not* voluntarily set, they are pre-determined as corresponding to proportionality.”

Court: “Come now! At this stage are you still attempting to dispute that proportionality is desirable? Do your clients not wish to achieve it?”

NCAA: “Your Honors, it’s a matter of timing ...”

Court: “Which we do not mandate. However, we do expect to see tangible progress toward appropriate goals.”

Other quotes from the judgment:

The Court is not imposing on the colleges anything foreign to their nature or indeed their wishes. All colleges have long stated that diversity is a necessary and integral part of academic excellence, and proportionality is simply another term for diversity. If diversity-as-excellence holds for intellectual matters then it surely holds for sporting ones too.

Colleges have long accepted that course syllabi are *de facto* contracts between instructors and students. By the same token, statements made by University Presidents are *de facto* contracts with the University’s clientele. When Presidents say

something is desired, they may be taken to mean what they say.

Not everyone in the colleges has been displeased by the Court’s ruling. In fact some academics expressed considerable satisfaction. Notorious neo-conservative and former Dean of Arts & Sciences at Virginia Tech, Henry Bauer, thought “It’s high time that athletic departments were held to the same stringent requirements as academic departments are. For decades we were told that we had to hire minorities; that they were out there to hire, even when we knew they clearly were not; that ‘goals’ are not ‘quotas’ even though we were punished for not having and meeting them; that there is more than one sort of ‘excellence’ and that SAT scores and IQ tests and every other tangible measure couldn’t be used as evidence because they were biased, because they gave non-proportional results.

I’m just absolutely delighted, and most of my colleagues are as well. Maybe soon the athletic departments will be treated like academic departments in other respects as well, like being expected to live within their budgets.”

But most of those who expressed satisfaction did so on the grounds that the Court had delivered simple justice. “This will finally eradicate the last traces of racial prejudice and discrimination”, thought Philosophy Professor Roarity, “Proportionality is the final solution, an entirely color-blind solution.”

Others were less sure. Prominent Philosopher Wilton Benedict declared, “It is illogical to pretend that something is a non-racial solution when the criterion for success is defined by counting on the

basis of race”.

The real concern, though, was how this would affect the devotion displayed by fans and alumni: Would they be willing to accept a lower level of performance? (For in private, no one – rumor has it, not even a Supreme-Court Justice – was willing to maintain that

standards would not be negatively affected.) What would the effect be on revenues from TV? And what might now happen in the world of professional sport? Would professional teams take a cue from the Court’s ruling before they too were presented with a legal demand?

Perhaps the only certain thing was that across the country, university coaches and administrators were huddled in desperate sessions of brain-storming, trying to come up with strategies for coping with the crisis.

BOOK REVIEW

[A slightly abbreviated version of this review appeared in the *Roanoke Times*]

Cultural Conservatism, Political Liberalism: From Criticism to Cultural Studies

by James Seaton. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996, \$42.50

This well-wrought, well-researched book tackles one of the major academic battles of our times, the culture wars. The purpose is set forth in the introduction: “to make a case for the continuing vitality of a tradition of cultural criticism obscured by present-day ‘post-modernists’ and deconstructionists”. It endorses a tradition going back to Samuel Johnson and Matthew Arnold. It denounces, or at least criticizes, “contemporary cultural leftists” such as Richard Rorty, Fredric Jameson, Edward Said and Stanley Fish – all of whom agree that the past is not a corrective to the present but a source of error. The error, Seaton argues, is theirs.

If it be an error, it is not hard to find running rampant in academia, and indeed dominating “critical studies” and many English departments. Seaton can testify to this fact from his position at Michigan State University; we need only look in our own back-yard. Constructive thought has given way to deconstruction. Words are said to lack meaning – and the words of many of our cultural leftists seem to prove the point.

In his conclusion, Seaton takes us back to Aristotle and the notion of the good life – “which requires not innocence but, rather, prudent judgment and practical wisdom”. Where do we get this wisdom? Not only from our own personal experience, but also from the absorption of human experience embodied in literature, philosophy and religion. This humanist tradition in literary criticism is what Seaton is defending, and he does so with gusto and authority. He even provides names of those who he thinks have championed it: Lionel Trilling, H. L. Mencken,

Irving Babbit, Dwight MacDonald, Edmund Wilson, Diana Trilling and Ralph Ellison. They all believe that literature can aid us in the difficult art of life.

They, and not their faddish detractors, are our best hope for the future. Seaton’s case is carefully presented and well documented. There are twenty pages of notes and a full list of works cited. When he makes charges, he cites chapter and verse. This is scholarship, not diatribe.

At the same time, it is written with passion and conviction. He does not take kindly to Stanley Fish, for example: “If Stanley Fish is a dangerous opponent, he is perhaps even more worrisome as an ally”. And of Edward Said: “Said’s problem is not that his background spans two cultures – that is, indeed, an advantage – but that his intellectual stance is based on a determination to avoid entangling alliances with any tradition at all”. What would generally be called a “conservative defense” such as Seaton’s has produced two bestsellers: E. D. Hirsch’s “Cultural Literacy” and Allan Bloom’s “The Closing of the American Mind”. Their significance, Seaton argues, “derives from their attempts not simply to carry on the debate but also to redefine its terms”. He finds flaws in both books, but concludes: “Whatever Bloom’s flaws, he retained a sense of wonder, and of possibility, that goes far to redeem the limitations of his best-seller”.

Seaton’s book may not end up a best-seller, but it, too, argues well for that “sense of wonder” which is, by anyone’s measurement, our priceless heritage and hope.

reviewed by *Marshall Fishwick*

BARBARIANS WITHIN THE GATES

from an address to the graduating Honors students at Radford University
by **Darrell Stump, Emeritus Professor of History** and former **Dean of Arts & Sciences**.

Your invitation ... gives me the chance to repeat what I was told in similar circumstances by a senior professor – “Be proud, he said, you have accomplished this; not parents or professors, you. You now enter into an elite that places special duties of thoughtful service to mankind.” I congratulate you on this elite status.

Your achievements are many and varied. You represent the best of the College of Arts and Sciences and, indeed, the university. ... You are a cross-section of our ablest students, and you, and others such as you, will cause Radford University to develop a proud national reputation.

Do not be reticent about being proud – indeed proclaim this night from the rooftops. This university and college exists only to nurture your kind of student. So be confident and face your future. To you much has been given – ability – discipline – all kinds of talents for learning. And from you much will be expected. To be here today, I know that you have excelled in all areas of academic life. The major department you represent and its faculty can be especially proud.

But I am convinced that the area of academic study called general education also helped form your intellectual character. These broad requirements exposed you to the best minds and ideas of many and varied civilizations. And it is this absolutely necessary area of academic life, general education, that has come under attack. Indeed, the Barbarians are within the gates at Radford University.

General education is an attempt to present the values and accomplishments of Western civilization within a framework of world civilizations. Hopefully, you have learned of other great world cultures, such as the Tang and Sung dynasties (ca. 650-1300) in China and the flowering of the Arab-Islamic Middle-Eastern civilization from 900 to 1200. Indeed, since the beginning of the Christian era, the greatest civilizations are China – 650-1300, Islamic Middle-Eastern 900-1200, and Western Europe 1650-present.

You are fortunate to have received an education comprised of knowledge and substance and based on the Western concepts of science, math, history, politics, and the role of the individual and the group. Radford University requirements attempt – **attempt**

– to impart a knowledge and appreciation of many civilizations, but you must know your own culture to be multi-cultured.

You, as student consumers at Radford, are the result of a diverse faculty with knowledge to impart, thereby assuring the continuance of a rational civilization. To be able to contribute to your education, your faculty have undergone a rigorous pursuit of knowledge. In our History Department, we have specialists in East-Asia, U.S., ancient and medieval Europe, modern Europe, Great Britain, and Latin America. Other Departments mirror this by their specialized training. Radford faculty must impart knowledge – continue civilization – nurture humanity. That is our mission. But there are Barbarians abroad – anti-intellectual – anti-individual – anti-truth and anti-Western.

I must inform you that the Barbarians are already within the gates, even at cloistered Radford. Using positive-sounding titles to hide their true identity – such as democratic inclusiveness, multiculturalism, and political correctness – these are movements of destruction. There is positive content in all three terms, content taken from Western civilization, such as including minorities and women in history, making sure we appreciate diversity within our society, and learning about, crediting, and appreciating the great accomplishments of all civilizations. After all, Europe in 1200 was a very backward area compared to the Islamic Middle-East or Sung China.

But Europe, after 1500, will flower and blossom, creating a great civilization based on rational logic, the scientific method, optimism about the individual, and acceptance of the idea that rational change can correct evil. These foundations of Western civilization are under attack based on anti-intellectual, anti-Western assumptions. In their more extreme form, these movements reject the 17th-century Scientific Revolution and its assumptions about knowledge; reject the 18th-century Enlightenment’s idea of progress; and reject a society based on the individual.

And what would these anti-Western Barbarians have us believe? That science lacks rational validity; that my science is as good as your science; that his-

tory cannot ascertain truth, so no society is ever better than or superior to another; that there are no universal values – i.e. Western values should never be imposed, even by criticism, on another society.

In the name of this new Barbarism we are to ignore, thereby tacitly approve, second-class status for women in Singapore, Indonesia, and some African countries; ignore, tacitly approve, mutilation of women in Africa; ignore, tacitly approve, the dying rooms in Chinese orphanages where girl babies are exposed to death. Dear God, is slavery next? Damn these Barbarians!!!

But, what? Barbarians at Radford? Yes, they dominate the “general-education” committee presently bent on destroying general education, especially in its transmission of Western-European knowledge and civilization. The committee has significant support in the Radford administration. Avowedly abandoning knowledge, the committee presumably seeks to impart skills in thinking, communication, research.

But what will you think **about?** Write **about?** Communicate **about?** Last summer’s vacation??

Some “general-education”-committee members brag that they are no longer teachers – they no longer have knowledge to share with a new generation. They are “coaches”... Of what? Why? Ease of instruction? Popularity? In short, easy money? **These Barbarians are superfluous to the mission of this university!**

This university must continue to impart the Western view of people and the world – the ideas of the importance of the individual – of rationalism as a basis for seeking knowledge – of the concept of equality of all – and of the concept of right and wrong, whenever and wherever found. Wrongdoing – sin if you prefer – is an essential concept for the moral, good life. It is these basic intellectual assumptions the New Barbarians would destroy. We would become absolute relativists – adrift intellectually in a sea of feeling good but ignoring the dilemmas of all people – ignoring concepts of good and evil – ignoring goals for society – ignoring the individual as the most important, most basic social unit.

This New Barbarism must be destroyed, root and branch. **You, before you leave Radford University,** must help destroy these Barbarians. Otherwise, we will cease to have persons such as you – both skilled and knowledgeable – to attend these functions in the future.

I cannot help you in this vital task.

I am retiring at the end of this semester after thirty-four years at Radford University devoted to students and faculty, both as academic Dean of Arts & Sciences and History Professor. (I prefer History Professor). So, I can only challenge those who remain. I like to think that, with the support of my wife of forty-four years, I have already fought the good fight.

After coming to Radford College in 1962, my first history paper was presented at the National Meeting of the Society for the Study of Negro Life and Culture. My wife and I marched, and appeared on the front page of the Radford newspaper, in the Dr. King Memorial March in Radford the Sunday following his assassination. That, and other civil-rights activities, together with our children’s welcoming blacks to formerly white schools, caused some of our children’s classmates to call them the “N-word”. But progress was achieved.

But progress had a price. A great loss, to myself personally and the university, came when several professors at Radford defended academic freedom, advocated civil rights, and protested the Vietnam War. Since I was protected by tenure, I could not be fired without cause and proof. But my wife and I were one of three professorial couples – close friends – the other two professors were fired – they didn’t fit in. My best friend was fired for participating in a District-of-Columbia anti-Vietnam-War peace-march. These losses, and others equally hurtful, makes it very difficult to discuss these matters even today. There are real holes in our lives from the 1960’s.

As Dean of Arts & Sciences from 1972 to 1987, I resisted the temptations to agree with power. I appeared before the Board of Visitors for faculty members. I recommended faculty salary increments, promotions, and tenure based on merit despite pressure to make, on occasion, political decisions. In particular, I reject the present method of distributing salary-increments at Radford University based on racism and prejudice against long and faithful service to this University. Such bigotry calls out for immediate termination.

Such independence of thought and action caused my low salaries and pressure to resign. In 1987, I returned to a better class of people, students and faculty colleagues.

Despite all trials and tribulations, I have relished my years at Radford with their joy and accomplishments, their pain, and their loss. But, I now must pass the torch to you and others. I leave you

with the admonition to do justice, love mercy, and life....
walk humbly with Thy Lord all the days of your

P O T P O U R R I

Give me the children...

Glenvar Elementary School (Roanoke County, VA) sent home with all students a pamphlet headed “Exceptional Children’s Week – 1996”. The sub-head is “Using people-first language to portray persons with disabilities”. Among the wisdom proffered was this:

Out of respect for the uniqueness and worth of the individual and because a disabling condition may or may not be handicapping, use the word *disability* rather than the word *handicap*

Now what makes a “disability” less pejorative than a “handicap”? Why does my dictionary **define** “handicap” as “disability”? When can a disability **not** be a handicap? But what would then make it a dis-ability?

Because the person is not the condition, reference to the person in terms of the condition he or she has is inaccurate as well as demeaning

“Hard of hearing” is to be replaced by “person/individual who has a partial hearing loss”! What’s pejorative about “hard of hearing” that is not pejorative about “partial hearing loss”? Actually the latter sounds more disabling, more somehow **inherent**, than the former, does it not?

But then I’m not an educationist administrator. I did learn to write English, though, and one of the cardinal injunctions proffered by every teacher of writing that

I’ve ever come across, is that the briefer the better; never use ten words where one will do. Not so for the Glenvar language dictators:

Instead of “drain/burden”, they insist, say “the person whose condition requires additional responsibilities, intensive or additional care or adjustment”.

It happens that my wife and I gladly cared for aging parents for a number of years in our home. We didn’t hesitate to speak of the experience as “draining” and “a burden”, and no-one we talked with thought ill of us for it, knowing the drain/burden was voluntarily accepted and recompensed us in a rich variety of ways.

Not “homebound” but “the person whose ability to leave the home is limited”; not “inflicted” but “the person whose disability is caused by”.

Not “lame” but “the person/individual with a physical disability” – what, **any** physical disability? I thought it meant specifically having difficulty with one’s leg(s). Not “birth defect” but “the person with a difference in physical structure at birth; with lack of formation of; with disability present at birth; born with”.

So let’s not talk of a rich person but of a person who has richness; not of a scientist but of someone who does science; not of a coronary patient but of a patient who has coronary disease.

HUH?? **What difference does**

it make?

How does it come about that so many people for so many years now have been stupid enough to claim that social problems can be solved through manners of speaking? And how does it come about that so many institutions and well-meaning dunderheads have gone along?

As so often remarked, the idiocy of the politically correct cannot be satirized. Is it any wonder that our students come out of school having certain deficiencies? Not, note, “deficient”, just having certain deficiencies – that’s nothing to be ashamed of, maybe even something to be proud of. Who knows? My head is spinning, I’m disoriented – OOPS, I mean I feel I have disorientation.

The pamphlet acknowledges that it is “Adapted from guidelines developed by the National Easter Seal Society”. When did that Society become a qualified authority in the language-teaching business? A language-skills resource for our schools??

An outraged parent sent a protesting letter about the hand-out to Mr. Danny Guard, Principal of the Glenvar Elementary School. The response was typically mealy-mouthed bureaucratic evasion:

Thank you for your letter of concern. I have forwarded the letter to the proper source.

Far be it from a Principal to accept any responsibility for a

hand-out distributed to students in the school of which he is Principal. If ever you wonder what might be wrong with our schools, just take a close look at the people who are their Principals (*pace* Golo Mann¹).

That hand-out gives the cited examples as illustrations of the general command to "Avoid all terms carrying negative or judgmental connotations and replace them with objective descriptors". But that's exactly what **words** are, **descriptors**. The **connotations** of any given word are not fixed by the letters that form that word, but by the people who use that word, **and it can never be guaranteed to be the same connotation for different people**. "Bloody" means covered with blood; except that in Britain and Australia it's an expletive as well. "Hello, there, you old bastard!", is a common, affectionate form of greeting among mates in Australia; yet it might well sound negative or even judgmental to a language expert from the National Easter Seal Society or a Principal at Glenvar Elementary School.

Defining Racism

Remember all those sensitivity trainers and EO/AA gurus who explain that only whites can be racist because racism isn't possible unless you have power?

Apparently in Haiti they don't know that. "[President] Aristide's marriage drew disapproval from a

public that lionized him. Many Haitians are upset that their hero, a dark-skinned descendant of African slaves like most peasants here, chose a bride they classify as a patrician, lighter-skinned foreigner"².

Not only Haitian blacks deplore marriage between dark-skinned and light-skinned, though; so do prominent African-Americans. The "964,000 interracial marriages" in the USA were condemned on BET (Black Entertainment Television) by a panel "comprised of a Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina, the editor of *Emerge* magazine and a BET talk-show host". Discussing the O. J. Simpson trial, "the panelists informed their viewers that what Simpson was really guilty of was miscegenation, or race-mixing"³.

I make myself a little resolution. On every future form that enquires "race", even "for statistical purposes only", and irrespective of the offered categories, I shall write in the only anthropologically and biologically correct answer: "human". Maybe the only way that all this PC foolishness and evil can come to an end is if all we **JUST SAY "NO"** whenever we're asked to categorize ourselves as some sub-species.

Choosing Courses

I was delighted, years ago, when my daughter described with positive relish and pleasurable an-

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOLARS

You will have received a separate notice about the Association's 1996 Membership Meeting: Saturday 5 October, 1 p.m. 2211 GPAB (General Purpose Academic Bldg.) 901 West Main St., Richmond

Immediately following that meeting, the Board of Directors will hold their Annual Meeting

VASNET

VAS members can communicate with one another through the electronic bulletin board, VASNET.

To subscribe: send the following message to listproc@gmu.edu

subscribe vasnet {your full name}

To unsubscribe: send the following message to listproc@gmu.edu

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VASNET enables us to act promptly when necessary, by keeping one another informed about what's happening and about what needs to be done.

Join up now. You may not need to use the list often, but if you do it will be invaluable.

PLEASE HELP THE CAUSE

Share Virginia Scholar with as many people as you can. Pass it around. Tell us who to send complimentary copies.

We have extras of most of the back issues. Ask us for a bunch and **send them to the Departments on your campus** with a request that they be circulated among the faculty.

¹ There are many reasons for the fall of the German Republic.... But if you happen to meet abroad the men who occupied the decisive positions at decisive moments, you have your answer, you need seek no further for reasons for the collapse.

Golo Mann, 1938, *Reminiscences and Reflections: A Youth in Germany*

² Roanoke Times 96:1:21, p.A11

³ Kevin Alexander Gray, "Who's racist now?", Washington Post, undated clipping, circa 1st or 2nd week of February 1996. Gray is a national board member of the American Civil Liberties Union who happens to be black

SPECIES-ISM

Post-modernist animal-rightists assert that what goes for humans should go for other species as well.

Native-American rights advocates have had ancient Indian bones removed from museums and re-buried.

Species Equity demands that all **animal** bones should similarly be removed from museums and re-buried.

Good-bye to paleontology as well as physical anthropology.

participation the courses she was going to take in the coming semester, even saying about one, "It'll be excellent".

I wish every parent could have such joy. But not everyone shares my belief that students should choose their courses for the learning that they can get from them. At Virginia Tech, the Student Government Association is publishing the grade distributions for each class "which is useful for highlighting both professors who tend to give high grades and those who give low grades. ... most of the professors ... have not been overly enthusiastic This will not provide as much information as teacher evaluations, but it is more information than (students) have now" ⁴.

Yes, they'll have more information; but will it be **good** information? **Useful** information?

Count me as one of the professors who is not overly enthusiastic. I shall now have to prepare a new addition to my syllabi, spelling out in even greater detail how grades are earned in my classes,

⁴ Christie Walker, "SGA offers grade distributions", Collegiate Times (VPI&SU) 96:4:23, pp.A1,10

beginning with the reminder that, contrary to SGA, I do not "give" high grades or low grades: students earn the grades they get.

I shall have to explain how it comes about that in some of my classes the average grade is between a "C" and a "D" while in other of my classes it is between an "A" and a "B". I shall have to explain why some students who take one of the latter classes nevertheless fail the course, perhaps because the high average grade of the previous semester hoodwinked them into inferring incorrectly that no work is required for a high grade in my class – when in point of fact I demand a considerable number of handed-in assignments throughout the term.

The SGA wish to publicize teacher evaluations and grade distributions might have provided a useful opportunity for academic leaders to offer some advice and education about choosing courses, about the purpose of a college education, about "giving" grades versus "earning" them, and so on. Strangely, though, no spokesperson for the faculty or for the administration seized the opportunity. No doubt they were busy with such more pressing educational matters as sexual-harassment seminars, Women's-Week celebrations, and providing funds for panel discussions on "Systems of Privilege: Understanding White Privilege and Male Privilege" ⁵.

⁵ 25 March 1996, co-sponsored by Amnesty International, Black Student Alliance, and Womanspace; speakers were Peggy McIntosh (author of White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack), Beverly Bunch-Lyons (Professor of African American History and Black US Women [sic]), Rodney Pulliam

That panel featured three people, all holding the same view as expressed in its title, taking for granted that whites and males have privilege. More suitable to a university setting might have been a panel on, say, "Understanding Privilege" and including people who might offer a **diversity** of viewpoints. I used to think – I still in fact believe – that the purpose of higher education is to offer us opportunities to widen our understanding, even on occasion to change an opinion drastically. It is perhaps the very worst feature of Political Correctitude that it dooms its adherents, and the innocents they seduce, to a prison of limited perception and lack of analytical thought. Their constipated definition of "diversity" features only skin color and genital inclination, not ideas.

Once more Mokita⁶

Every now and again someone in public life forgets that certain truths are not supposed to be expressed in public. One of my archetypal memories on that score is of George Romney, briefly a candidate for the Presidential nomination of the Republican Party during the Vietnam War. Romney opined that he had been subjected to "brain-washing" about the war by the Defense Department. That was a perceptive comment; it badly needed to be made about the casualty figures and other data that we were being fed by the Defense Department via the media; but the pundits made that remark the death knell

(Black Graduate Student Association)

⁶ Truth that we all know but agree not to talk about; see *Virginia Scholar* #6, p. 20

of Romney's candidacy.

A more recent victim is Admiral Richard C. Macke, forced into retirement on the spot and prematurely for quite sensibly pointing out that the American servicemen who had raped an Okinawan girl were not only despicable criminals but stupid as well, because for less than the cost of the car they had rented, they could have hired a prostitute. Said Navy Secretary John Dalton unctuously, "There is no place in the Navy for attitudes that reflect a regard for women as property or that show insensitivity toward the victim of rape and brutal assault. Admiral Macke's desire to retire was most appropriate".⁷

How, Mr. Secretary, does recognition of the fact that prostitution exists, constitute "a regard for women as property"? In what way was the admiral insensitive to the victim? Who does Dalton expect to believe that the decision to retire was the admiral's own?

"I absolutely cannot believe this statement," Foreign Minister Yohei Kono said. The Honorable Minister isn't aware, in other words, that prostitution exists?

"Macke insulted all of us women and the Japanese," echoed women's-rights activist Noriko Yamaguchi. Right, Ms. Yamaguchi; speaking truth and acknowledging facts can be very insulting indeed.

Suzuyo Takazato, a city assemblywoman [sic] in the Okinawan capital, said Macke's remarks show that the rape was "not just a problem caused by the three accused servicemen, but a fundamental problem involving the U.S. military." Right, Ms. Takazato, and a merry Mokita to

you too.

More Euphemism?

When it strikes close to my home, of course I'm as susceptible to the pleasures of euphemism as the next person:

A man in his late sixties wonders if he's losing his mind. He misplaces keys, glasses and other necessities with alarming frequency, and he forgets appointments much more than he used to.

Reading this, I experienced that eerie feeling that comes when a stranger seems to have intimate knowledge of you. How very reassuring it was to read further and discover that this is merely

BENIGN FORGETFULNESS

"Benign", it turns out, because it is not necessarily associated with dementia or the loss of brain-cells⁸.

Sex Discrimination

A flyer⁹ from the Psychological Services Center at Virginia Tech about its "Anger Control Program for Men": One who "finds himself behaving in an argumentative, aggressive, or even violent manner ... may be a candidate".

But what about an equivalent program for women? After all, if VMI has to admit women...

Or is it that only men experience anger?

Or is it perhaps that it's OK for women to behave "in an argumentative, aggressive, or even violent manner"? Certainly the

⁸ Ingrid Wickelgren, "Is hippocampal cell death a myth?" *Science* 96:3:1, 1229

⁹ 24 January 1996, from Director of the Center to "Faculty/Staff/Graduate Students"

public behavior of many prominent gender-feminists¹⁰, could lend credence to the view that they do believe that.

Discrimination and

Oppression are

Good for Your Health!

It's no secret that women have been discriminated against and oppressed, especially in the Eurocentric patriarchies of Western Eurasia and the United States. What has not been quite so widely acknowledged is how wonderfully well women have thrived on it – their average lifespan exceeds that of their male oppressors:

Expectation of life at birth¹¹

	MALE (yrs.)	FEMALE (yrs.)
1840	39.6	42.5
1850	40.3	42.8
1860	41.1	43.4
1870	42.3	44.7
1880	43.9	46.5
1890	45.8	48.5
1900	48.9	52.1
1910	52.7	56.0

Average difference: + 2.7

Before the Post-Modern (late-20th-century) Enlightenment, one might have been tempted to interpret this surprising fact as stemming from biological factors. One could then suggest that women would have out-lived men by an even greater amount, had

¹⁰ "When a woman behaves like a man, why doesn't she behave like a *nice* man?" Dame Edith Evans, cited in *Observer* 56:9:30

¹¹ Average of Denmark, England, Wales, France, Massachusetts, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, p.213 in John Marks, *Science and the Making of the Modern World* (Heinemann, 1983)

⁷ *Roanoke Times* 95:11:19, p. A18

they not been so sorely oppressed. But nowadays, since we recognize

that sex differences are **socially constructed**, that explanation

can no longer be invoked.

ON ANONYMITY

an essay by *Hans Christian Rott* (College of Architecture, VPI&SU)

In steter Notwehr

Bleibt auch das redliche Gemüt nicht wahr.

Das eben ist der Fluch der bösen Tat,

Daß sie, fortzeugend, immer Böses muß gebären.

Schiller, "Die Piccolomini"

In constant battle with spite and malice

Even the upright spirit stays not true -

This namely is the curse of evil deeds

That they will never cease to breed and bring forth evil

trans. J. F. Lamport, Penguin 1979

Hardly is there a better way to describe the effects the anonymity clause in the faculty evaluations has on the operations and the minds of faculty and administrators alike. How it discredits an otherwise very valuable teaching tool.

As an example let me present a story, just as a friend relayed it to me, about how his department is affected by this policy.

For several years many on the faculty have attempted to eliminate the anonymity clause from faculty evaluations. Moreover many students have over the years complained about being treated with contempt by the administration by being invited to become informers, rather than mature human beings who are willing and able to stand up for what they say.

I personally have been on the Honorifics Committee for three terms. I can unequivocally state that the committee, and that includes the student representatives, after having heard lengthy discussion pro and con, voted in the majority for elimination of this pernicious clause. Since the faculty and student vote did not coincide with the faculty handbook, this decision and the new form which was under development in conjunction with the vote were simply set aside, a new committee formed and an

"interim" form, including the anonymity clause, put back in place.

Shortly after this, an administrative personnel evaluation within our department was started. The committee in charge of soliciting faculty commentary sent out a memorandum, stating that anonymous evaluations would not be accepted. Double standard, blatant power-play, you name it, all possibilities must have been going through individual minds. I must put the blame on the anonymity clause and not on the individuals responsible for the administrative evaluations. Having known the committee members for years I feel rather certain that they put their anonymity boundary in place **in order to break the vicious cycle** of cloak and dagger, of innuendo, of character assassination¹. The faculty response was such that the form was changed. And here I blame the anonymity clause again: the form was not changed to saying we must abolish anonymous evaluations because they are morally destructive of the entire fabric of a university; it was changed to saying *de facto*, that

anonymous contributions will be accepted...

... "that they will never cease to breed and bring forth evil."

It seems unthinkable that all this is new to anyone but the greenest freshmen in an academic setting. Why then is it with such persistence, that an obvious wrong cannot be righted? Why is it so difficult to eliminate what could be eliminated with just a stroke of the pen?

Besides the obvious reason of building a base among certain parts of the student body, which is a simple case of political demagoguery, there is the academic side to this problem.

It finds its origin in Sociologism, the position which assumes that Sociology is the binding intellectual and epistemological matter of all fields of knowledge. Although thoroughly discredited in many academic circles it still finds its way into the American university and through its offspring, political correctness, has pervaded campuses across the nation. Since Sociologism finds parts of its base in the psychologizing of statistics it must take advantage of what Sociology employs in order to achieve scientific objectivity or disinterest: anonymous data-collection.

This is not only a highly questionable reversal of fundamental philosophic principles, but also

¹ As a matter of fact, some of them have served with me on the Honorifics Committee and previous committees concerned with this question and have argued tenaciously against anonymity

questionable science. In its application to socially engineered intellectual utopias, anonymity also assures that testing of the veracity of data is made extremely difficult, nearly impossible. The danger lies in the possibility to draw bizarre conclusions about individual behavior based on statistical data.

Another, and possibly more dangerous side-effect is that it also makes the "leak" a real methodological possibility. Leaking information which has identifiable sources is risky – a breach of confidentiality can be traced if there is an identifiable origin. But under the mantle of anonymity, the leak can be an outright lie, no one will ever be the wiser.

As a matter of fact, the Anonymity clause is in itself a leak in reverse, it is a damning innuendo. It introduces the student to a faculty which cannot be trusted. A faculty which is vindictive, abusive of its "power" and needs vigilantes to keep it in tolerable boundaries. By the same token it implies "empowerment" to the student, an "empowerment" apparently far superior than the normal constitutional and legal channels would offer, in an educational environment, for example, through the acquisition of knowledge: The empowerment of the denouncer, the despicable creature we know so well from every cops-and-robbers show. Some of us also remember it from the Third Reich, when children were encouraged to inform on their parents and friends, on transgressions from the Nazi speech codes to anything else a child could be made to believe to be subversive.

This dual effect on the characters and lives of both faculty and

student, not to speak of the inner worlds of those who actually make use of such methods, is among the evils following the initial deed. Are we surprised when our educated youths break into databases, abuse the anonymity of the "cyber-world" and destroy inestimable hours of human effort and monetary value? We are teaching the freshmen that this is the way you deal with anything you don't like, anything you feel uncomfortable with; since comfort, not conscience, and preemption of adversity, not conquest thereof are apparently the goals of our education. Anonymity is the way of the future. Another evil following from the deed: it needs no active "midwifery" to assist in its "birthing".

And now to the saddest of all the consequences of the anonymity clause: the anonymous cry for help. You read it in the purified version of the evaluations, so even the handwriting cannot give you a clue, torn out of context, so that you have no way of really finding out who needs help. If you make a general attempt, you run the risk to really mess things up; because then you break assumed confidentiality and you never know who else might know about a particular problem.

Confidentiality is the first victim of anonymity, privacy the second, justice the third. We should really try to replace the anonymity clause with a strong commitment to confidentiality wherever it is necessary. And very carefully scrutinize when and how we use "anonymity" and all its offspring. Particularly wherever they have to do with the academy. It would help us come to find character, strength, courage and possibly even a necessity for truthfulness

in places where we have long come to forget them.

No one can deny that there is often a need for confidentiality. Not everything one says is for all ears. Anonymity has eroded all belief in confidentiality; deniability has taken the place of trust.

Who is the worse character, the liar or the one who invites others to denigrate the value and the reality of truth?

The anonymity clause amounts to indoctrination into the paradigm that one's actions have no consequences. It might also be related to the ever more strongly expressed belief that grades and academic performance have nothing to do with each other, are not causally linked. It fosters the belief that the efficaciousness of human action is not a glorious reality and produces the illusion that the connected responsibility with all its strenuous consequences can be avoided. And if it cannot be avoided, then the opportunity to take revenge, protected by anonymity is right at hand; empowerment equals academic qualification.

Once social engineering starts to affect engineering, chemistry, philosophy, the arts, etc., we as a society better start to take heed. If the accreditation a degree implies has been reduced to the affirmation that bogus grade-averages have been reached, when the lack of personal responsibility for one's action spills over into what I hear so often called the "real" world, let us see where reality will take the socially engineered individual and his society.

Some say that the university is a social laboratory, fine, let that stand. But the social change this implies must come through the

efficacy of knowledge in individuals and their responsible ac-

tions after they graduate.

A short-cut through the make-

believe politically correct utopia will not serve.

DIVERSITY AND IDENTITY

Henry H. Bauer

(a.k.a. 'Josef Martin', author of *To Rise Above Principle: The Memoirs of an Unreconstructed Dean*)

[Keynote Address, 49th Annual Meeting of the American Conference of Academic Deans (ACAD)
& Annual Meeting of the Association of American Colleges (AAC), Seattle (WA), 13-16 January 1993]

I appreciate this very much. Among the things that former deans miss – among the *very few* things we miss – is easy access to captive audiences.

On the other hand, active deans may have captive audiences, but they rarely feel free to speak their minds; usually they just say what everyone expects deans to say. It's been suggested that the closest thing to real freedom of speech is enjoyed by tenured full professors approaching retirement. Former deans, too, can feel that sort of freedom: no longer hampered by administrative policies or administrative loyalties or by wondering how the student newspaper might garble what was said.

When I stopped being dean, I made an excellent resolution: not to criticize publicly any administrative actions at my university. That resolution held good for half-a-dozen years; but it crumbled in the fall of 1991, when racism and sexism were made institutional policy. We were told to label by race and gender prospective members of search committees, so that committees of the right "diversity" would be selected.

I'm going to argue that much of what's being said about "diversity" is sadly misguided. One reason that people get away with that is because they're allowed to talk in highfalutin abstraction and generalization. I want rather to talk about actual experiences of actual people.

I owe this opportunity to my identity as Josef Martin, author of a dean's memoirs. But – like every other human being – I've got more than one identity. I'm an Austrian, by birth. By education, I'm an Australian. By choice – as well as great good fortune – I'm a citizen of the United States. I'm also a chemist, and I'm a professor. I've been a competitive chess-player. I'm a True Believer in the existence of the Loch Ness monsters. And so on.

Each of those identities tells you something about me; none of them tells you *all* the *significant* things about me. That I'm a professor tells you that I'm inclined to talk rather than to act; yet at times I've been a man of action. My belief in the Loch Ness monsters shows me to be downright peculiar; yet in many ways I'm conventional, even stodgy. That I'm a chemist tells you that I recognize the existence of a

real world about which we can gain true knowledge. But that I'm a chemist doesn't tell you whether or not I believe in God.

Such identities characterize a class or group. They're stereotypes as well as identities. Applied to human beings, stereotypes are both right and wrong. They're valid to the extent that every member of an identifiable group does indeed have the characteristic that defined the group in the first place. But stereotypes are usually also invalid, when *other* attributes, correlated only statistically, are assumed *inevitably* to go along with the defining characteristic. Above all, though, stereotypes are wrong when applied to individuals because, like me, no one has just one groupie identity, everyone has a lot of them.

We hear incessantly about "the woman's viewpoint" or "what Afro-Americans want" or what's right for "Native Americans". But there is no opinion or viewpoint that's shared by all the people who happen to be female by contrast to all the people who happen not to be female. There is no thing that *all* Afro-Americans want or deserve, by contrast with all those people who are *not* Afro-Americans. Every human being, be it a woman or a member of a protected minority, or a member of an unprotected minority or of a so-called majority, is very much more than just a member of that one group; and it's demeaning, dehumanizing, simply wrong to deal with anyone, not as *who* they are but as what one of their stereotypes happens to be.

The "diversity" movement does explicitly treat people in terms of one of their stereotypes. Members of "under-represented" groups must be brought in, it's said, because of the special viewpoints they allegedly hold, inevitably and uniformly, by group-definition.

The civil-rights revolution that culminated in the 1960s was phenomenally successful in a phenomenally short space of time in a phenomenally peaceable fashion. No one's been able to tell me of anything like that in any other country or era, where the morally right thing was done, where society opened its doors to previously excluded people, so quickly, so completely, with so little violence. Surely that was because the aims of the movement were so

clearly moral and the tactics of the revolutionaries so non-violent. One couldn't gainsay what Martin Luther King said; one could hardly fail to admire his willingness to accept the consequences of practicing non-violent civil disobedience.

American society was *shamed* into doing the right thing. That right thing, of course, was to treat all people as "created equal ... endowed ... with certain unalienable rights". What's sauce for the goose, in other words, has to be sauce for the gander too.

But that's not what those who press for diversity and multi-culturalism want; they're determined that all individuals shall *not* be treated equally. We're acting out the satires of George Orwell in *Animal Farm* and in *1984*, the nightmares of Franz Kafka, the simplistic scenarios of Ayn Rand, especially in *Atlas Shrugged*. On every pamphlet put out by my university it says, "Virginia Tech does not discriminate ... on the basis of race, sex, handicap" etc. That's a lie.

We do treat women differently from men, and blacks differently from everyone else. Segregation by race used to be bad, but now it's supposed to be good. My university has separate minority study-halls and recreational centers, and separate housing is just around the corner. It was wrong in the past to fill positions by word of mouth, without open advertising, and to restrict appointments by race or gender; nowadays our administration makes available positions to be filled on the condition that only a woman or a black be appointed, and that's not stated openly in the advertisement, it's made known by word of mouth only.

Let's be quite clear about it. The claim is made that women, blacks, Native Americans, and all people of any color know significant things or understand deeply important matters or feel emotions or have viewpoints that I, as a white male, do not or cannot.

That's utter nonsense. Some things are common to every human being, and those are truly the most important: wanting to live; wanting to be secure; wanting to belong; wanting to know who we are. Other things are contingent, different for different people, matters of happenstance. *Various* are the particular dangers that threaten our various individual lives; *disparate* are the things that make different individuals feel insecure; *many* are the specific barriers that stop people from feeling that they belong; *innumerable* are the ideologies and individ-

ual neuroses that can block a sense of personal identity. Our lives may be threatened in war, or by abusive parents, or by criminals; we feel insecure for many and much more subtle reasons than those; we may feel left out through being black in a white society, or Jewish in a Christian society, or white in a black community, or for countless other reasons – being too small to succeed at basketball or football, say, or having siblings who seem able to do everything better. Yet under those contingent skins, all human beings are the same: if pricked, we all bleed, no matter what caused the wound; when excluded, we all hurt, irrespective of the basis for the exclusion.

"Nothing human is alien to me," said Terentius the Roman two thousand years ago; and the literature of the world illustrates that insight. As a writer describes particular, contingent experiences authentically, he also speaks universally; for the authenticity enables us to *empathize*. Drawing on our own experiences, superficially different but fundamentally similar, we can translate into our own personal idioms what other human beings experience. What Terentius thought and felt is not alien to us, here and now.

If the claims of the diversifiers – the dividers-by-groups, the stereotypers – were true, if I were barred by my white maleness from empathy with blacks or women, how then could it happen that the two books that have, in the last couple of years, most moved me, were written the one by a woman and the other by a black man?

Over the years, I've occasionally read books I thought so good that I bought several copies to distribute among family and friends. Most recently I did that with Jill Ker Conway's *The Road from Coorain* and Shelby Steele's *The Content of Our Character*.

Jill Ker, an Australian-born girl, grew up in the outback; I, a refugee to Australia out of Europe, was raised largely in cities. But we both became intellectuals under the same unfriendly, intellectually primitive, even anti-intellectual conditions; so that we both felt impelled to leave our families and the country in which we'd lived the couple of decades of our youth. Our striving toward individual identity was akin.

Id come to read Conway's book quite naturally, through seeing it mentioned in the University of Sydney's alumni magazine; but I came to read

Shelby Steele for altogether the wrong reasons.

I've already mentioned breaking my resolution not to criticize happenings at my university. When I did make an open protest against political correctness, it led to public interviews and debates. I needed to survey what others were saying about these things. Important sources for me, obviously, were the dissidents among the to-be-protected groups: women like Midge Decter, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Carol Iannone; blacks like Stephen Carter, Glenn Loury, Thomas Sowell, Shelby Steele. So I thought it my *duty* to read Steele's book – for ammunition, not for edification let alone pleasure. Which made it all the nicer when I found myself thoroughly engaged by these conspicuously honest, insightful essays about a human being's struggle for individual identity in a society that insists he cannot be himself, that he should be a stereotype in order to satisfy some higher, abstract goal of social justice.

That's an entirely universal human story. The *particular* high, abstract goal that people are told they must serve can be almost anything at all: familial, religious, social, political. Those who try to impose it might be parents, the government, terrorists, or well-meaning pressure groups.

Everyone, of course, *means* well. In the name of freedom, the Irish Republican Army kills and maims people at random. To save souls, the Inquisition tortured specific individuals. On October 25 of last year, the television show *Sixty Minutes* showed how loved and loving little children had been torn from loved and loving foster parents – just because the parents were white and the children black.

No matter what the particular abstract goal may be, no matter who tries to impose it, it's *wrong* to treat people not as individuals but as symbolic units, ciphers, statistics. It demeans and dehumanizes – and it doesn't even bring that abstract, desirable goal any closer. The ends never justify the means because the means you use determine what ends you'll actually reach. It's just as wrong now for self-anointed black leaders to tell Shelby Steele what his place and role in society must be, what it's permissible for him to feel, think, and say, as it was wrong when Jim-Crow laws told each black person what his place and role had to be.

There's no basis in logic for forcible, group-wise diversification. And there's no basis for it in facts, either. Evidence offered is unsound in the same way that the logical and ethical bases are unsound: statistics about *groups* are applied to the treatment of

individuals. Every competent statistician knows that valid statistics requires proper sampling and *disaggregation*; and even then, no correlation in itself proves a cause-&-effect relationship. The diversifiers, the dividers-by-group, ignore that routinely. For example, they'll cite the fact that the median annual salary for bachelor's graduates in science and engineering in 1990 was \$26,100 for whites and only \$24,000 for blacks: obviously just another illustration of continuing discrimination. But the median for Asian-Americans at \$30,000 was much higher than both; so it would be just as valid to conclude that whites are improperly discriminated against in comparison to Asian-Americans.

Those who want to bring us group diversity also want to bring us group sensitivity: no member of any protected minority should ever feel offended by anything that any non-member of that group might say. Again I'm going to deal in anecdotes rather than abstractions, but I can't resist making one snide general comment first. We've proved ourselves as a society, as an educational establishment, incapable of producing universal literacy. What possible reason is there to imagine that we have the wisdom or the know-how to produce universal sensitivity? At least *some* societies, if not ours, *have* been able to instill universal literacy; none has ever been able to establish universal sensitivity.

But beyond that, even if we could get it, who would want it? What would it be good for?

In the Australia of my youth, foreigners or immigrants were "Chinks", "Dagos", "Frogs", "Pommies", "reffos", "Wops"; in fact "*bloody Pommies*", "*bloody reffos*", and so on. Those were not usually terms of affection or respect. But it was at the same time true that some people who used those terms were singularly kind and helpful to *individuals* within all those groups, as they dealt with them in day-to-day life. I suspect it was very good for me to learn that people who make stereotypically denigrating remarks about refugees, Jews, people with accents, intellectuals, people who don't play football, and so on, might still be kind and helpful to me personally even though I belong in all those despicable categories.

"Sticks and stones can break my bones, but names will never hurt me", we said in those days. I think it helped me put things into perspective so that, for instance, I've liked and respected and conversed comfortably with some people who use the phrase, "getting jewed down". What would my life be

like if, whenever I heard such a phrase, I felt obliged to rush to the nearest EO/AA Office to report the culprit? What sort of person might I have become if I'd been drilled, coached, trained to be ever on the alert and to feel insulted by such idioms?

Football coaches are permitted to tell student-athletes that learning to discipline themselves under physical stress is good for them because it builds character. Why can't we tell *all* students that learning to discipline themselves in the face of bad manners by others helps them to build their individual characters and to learn about the diversity of human behavior?

Babies are entirely dependent on how others treat them. Growing up means realizing that you *don't* depend entirely on others. To be adult, to be self-reliant, you have to know that your emotions are under your own control, not at the mercy of what anyone happens to say to you or how anyone happens to look at you. By indoctrinating women and blacks to believe that their emotional states are at the mercy of what others say to them, the sensitivity propagandists train them to feel perpetually helpless, to be perpetually reacting, to be *voluntarily* dependent on others.

People who talk insensitively are not necessarily bigots. I have a friend who tells me Jewish jokes, and he tells our mutual friend Corio Italian jokes, and our friend Huang he tells Chinese jokes; to our faces, not behind our backs. He's no bigot. The best criteria I've so far found to identify bigots is their total lack of humor and their taboo against seeing that their emperor isn't wearing any clothes.

We've all heard many times about how often, in this modern scientific age, people are going to have to retrain to new jobs and adjust to new technologies; but what about having to learn a new language every few years? When I first came to the States, "Negroes" was a word that could be used in polite, mixed company, though "colored people" was perhaps preferred. Then it had to be "black", that soon became "Afro-American", and now apparently it must be "African-American". And why is it now very chic to talk about "people of color" but insulting to talk of "colored people"? Must we make the English

language ever more illogical?

I have a modest proposal to make. When philosophers argue, they distinguish "Theory 1", "Theory 2", and so on. Why don't we just call different groups of people "Humans-1", "Humans-2", and so on? To be quite fair, we could use a lottery to determine which group gets to be number 1 and we could rotate that distinction every year or so.

This obsession with words isn't appropriate to what we like to call a scientific age. It harks back to the times when people believed in magic, that saying the right words somehow causes the right things to happen (*ABRACADABRA!*); whereas the use of taboo words brings disaster (*Yah Weh!*). But it's not that easy or simple to improve society. It requires a bit more effort than just using the right words; and we shouldn't let ourselves get distracted by word games from what actually needs to get done.

In California there grows a tree commonly called the Digger Pine. How many of you recognize that as a term that demeans Native Americans? I discovered it recently through the newspaper *The Scientist*, in an article entitled "Racist relics: an ugly blight on our botanical nomenclature". It also mentions some more obvious transgressions, like "Coonties," "Coon-ties." A

follow-up letter pointed out, though, that such searches for offensiveness in language are not for everyone to carry out; a little learning can be a dangerous thing. "Coonties", it turns out, doesn't come from "coons" or from any other English-American word; it's the anglicism of a Seminole word that carries no derogatory connotations at all.

Especially when I lived in Kentucky, I often used to see little black-faced statues, typically in jockey's clothes, with a hand out-stretched as a hitching post. Early last year, there was a great furor in Roanoke when such a statue was discovered at the shooting range used by the city police. The statue was removed forthwith, amid much declaiming against insensitivity and racism. A little while later, a black woman wrote that she herself has such a figure in her front yard because the first one had been created for George Washington, at his request, *in honor* of

Scholars, not propagandists: that is the difference felt by those who join this national association. It is perfectly true that no mind is wholly free of bias, but again, there is a difference between promoting the bias and trying to check it by reason and fact. "Scholar" is the name for those who make this effort, and scholars can think of others as colleagues only when these others do the same.

Jacques Barzun

The New Mexico Scholar, #6, Winter-Spring 1994

Jocko, a black teenager who had frozen to death in the line of duty while holding the cavalry's horses.

So maybe the quest for sensitivity will lead people to learn some history and something about languages and linguistics, and about literature. For the moment, though, too many people are being allowed to get away with saying, like Humpty Dumpty, "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean".

The theme for your conference this year is "New Realities in the Liberal Arts". Fine. But don't jettison other realities just because they happen to be old, or timeless, or unwelcome. Some things have *not* changed. The theme of the conjoint meeting of the AAC is "The Discipline(s) We Need Now". Let me suggest that among them, as always, is the *self-discipline* to put thought ahead of action and evidence ahead of beliefs.

What are colleges for? Surely not for capitulating to poor logic and bad evidence. And they're not for doing social engineering, either. As Richard Mitchell makes plain in his book *The Graves of Academe*, elementary and secondary schools deteriorated when social goals were substituted for academic ones. Are we now going to ruin our universities in the same fashion?

Colleges must be first and foremost, in Barzun's phrase, "houses of intellect" – places of learning and scholarship – because those things are necessary to a civilized society and there's no other place where they can thrive. Learning and scholarship require academic freedom, and they require freedom of speech. The only way to keep those freedoms is to

exercise them; we must not stay silent under the ranting of the fanatics.

Some people *are* speaking up, and I commend them to you as role models. I offer you Shelby Steele, as honest a writer as you'll find, as courageous as you'll find, saying things that neither pole of extremists wants to hear. I offer you Stephen Carter, whose book *Reflections of an Affirmative Action Baby* exemplifies what it means to be an intellectual.

Recall the confirmation hearing for Judge Clarence Thomas. I offer you as role models the people who were the silver lining in that mess: the men and women who came – on both sides – to give public testimony as character witnesses; people so clearly determined simply to tell the truth as they saw it, even as they knew they'd be publicly attacked for it. I offer you as role model Clarence Thomas's secretary, with whom the senators were so visibly afraid to cross swords. I offer you John Doggett, who challenged and defied the senators and everyone else to treat him as other than the unique individual person that he is.

If you want diversity, take these black women and men as role models. If you want diversity, follow the teaching of Confucius: treat others as you would that they treat you, namely according to your individual identity, not according to one of your stereotypes.

We will have fairness and justice for all only when fairness and justice are defined not in terms of groups but in terms of individuals, persons, human beings.

POSTSCRIPT

An alien space-traveler might imagine that a plea to treat individuals as individuals would not be controversial. Those who live in our times know better. By the end of my third paragraph, a tangible hush had settled on the room, and the remainder of my remarks were interrupted only by an occasional nervous, solitary half-laugh. I received quite good applause, though. The session closed with these remarks from the chair:

Thank you for your provocative comments. I think that whether

we disagree entirely or in part with them, or whether we agree entirely or in part with them, we would all agree that it took courage to state them and we thank you for having had the courage to state them to us today.

In private, I was congratulated that no one had walked out!

Those who deny that Political Correctitude exists, and historians of the future, might take note of this evidence that in American Academe of the late 20th century, it was supposedly courageous to urge that individuals be treated as individuals.

After the talk, the Editor of *Perspectives* (Journal of the Association for General & Liberal Studies) asked to publish it, and I had agreed and submitted both written and electronic versions. Eventually, however, the Editorial Board decided that it was not, after all, suitable for the Journal.

(However, a transcript of the talk was published in the Proceedings of the Meeting. Audio cassettes of this and other sessions were available from Recorded Resources Corp., Crofton MD; this was Tape # 31.)

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

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