

REMARKS TO THE MADISON CENTER CONFERENCE

"ALONE, ALL ALONE? THE AMERICAN CAMPUS
IN A WORLD OF WESTERN RESURGENCE"

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THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

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Oscar Wilde once pointed out the risks of following the latest fad. "Nothing," he observed, "is so dangerous as being too modern; one is apt to grow old-fashioned quite suddenly." I want to say what a pleasure it is this evening to be with people who have resisted intellectual trendiness, to be with people who--dare I say it?--have been willing to be "politically incorrect."

So much of what has happened in the world in the past few years has demonstrated the long-term wisdom of being what is called "politically incorrect." One of the tenets of that position, I think we would all agree, is an affirmation of the importance of Western civilization. Now, of course, the history of the West is not a narrative of unbroken progress. We have monumental failures to our credit; and, indeed, bringing those failures to light, holding them up and looking at them this way and that, is one of our finest traditions. The West is not perfect, but we do have on our record some glorious accomplishments. In 1989, before Tiananmen Square, Fang Lizhi, scientist and dissident, spoke of the aims of China's democracy movement. "What we are calling for is extremely basic," he said, "namely, freedom of speech, press, assembly and travel. Concepts of human rights and democracy," he went on, "although the founding principles of the U.S.

government, should not be viewed as something exclusively Western. Actually, they are a legacy to the world."

These ideas are no small gift to have brought to humankind. They are gifts of such worth that people go into exile for them and into prison. They are gifts of such great worth that people die for them, as they did less than two years ago in Tiananmen Square, as they did in the last few days in Vilnius and Riga. Concepts of human rights and democracy, though they embody longings buried deep in every soul, can be suppressed.

As Charles Krauthammer has observed, the will to freedom is a constant of human nature, but so is the will to power. Tyrants have risen up before and they will again, ruthless despots bent on substituting their ambitions for the rule of law. Today brave Americans in the Persian Gulf, joined by courageous men and women from more than two dozen nations, are engaged in battle with such a despot, demonstrating to history and the world that while freedom may not be inevitable, free societies can organize themselves to turn back tyranny.

We live in remarkable times, times that our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will ask us about. Surely they will want to know about Eastern Europe, about the men and women who gathered by the hundreds of thousands in the Lenin Shipyard in

Gdansk, at the Berlin Wall, in Wenceslas Square; and when we explain what motivated these people to come together and defy dictatorship, we shall have to speak not only of the horrors of communist oppression, but of the promise offered by freedom, of the alternative vision offered by countries where elections and economies are free.

Our grandchildren will ask us about the Soviet Union, too, and who can say how the story will end that we tell them? I was in the Soviet Union three months ago, and it was a place amazingly changed from the last time I had been there, seven years before. St. Basil's, the onion-domed cathedral on Red Square, had been consecrated. Danilov Monastery, in ruins when I visited before, had been restored. Masses were being held there every day, and Sunday school every Sunday--and Saturdays as well. On the Arbat, a pedestrian mall near the Kremlin, arts and crafts were being sold, not all of them as respectful of Soviet leadership as they might be. You could buy a Gorbachev matrioshka. Matrioshki are the dolls within dolls within dolls that Russia is famous for. Usually they are female figures, but now you can also buy a Gorbachev, and inside him is a Brezhnev, and inside him a Krushchev, and inside him a Stalin, and inside all of them, a tiny Lenin. In some ways that tiny figure of Lenin is symbolic of Lenin's diminished presence in everyday life. There used to be big banners of him everywhere, and while there are still some,

there are not so many. And there are fewer statues. I was told that a television announcer was, for a time, providing a daily round-up of statues of Lenin that had been attacked.

Perhaps the most welcome change I found was the possibility for frank conversations with Soviet citizens. When I visited Leningrad and Moscow seven years ago, I seldom had the sense that anyone was speaking candidly. Only those who had bravely set themselves against the state--refuseniks who were intent on emigrating, for example--were willing to talk openly. One man I remember particularly well was a mathematician. He was Jewish and had applied for a visa to go to Israel, and as a consequence had lost his job as a mathematician and was put to work shoveling coal. He was stoical enough talking about the consequences for himself of his action, but it was another matter when he talked about his son. Because of the father's defiance of the state, the son--a brilliant boy his father said--was not permitted to attend university. And when the father told that story, he cried.

But now it's not just refuseniks who candidly assess life in the USSR. Soviets young and old are willing to talk about their troubles, particularly about the difficulties of purchasing food. Another topic that came up again and again as I talked to scholars and students had to do with depoliticizing--or deideologizing--teaching. For generations,

for example, history has been taught exclusively from a Marxist viewpoint. Many events were left out and others deliberately distorted. As one education official I met put it, "The political climate took precedence over documents." On my most recent visit, I found people holding up an objective, scholarly approach as the ideal, but one extraordinarily hard to realize in a society where teaching has so long been equated with indoctrination.

New textbooks are being produced, but they can scarcely keep up with the newspapers. The daily press will frequently write about events of the past--such as the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939--that still haven't made it into the newest textbooks. Many archives are still closed, and even those newly opened haven't been open long enough for scholars to write about the periods they cover. School textbook writers frequently find themselves in the business of having to do original research--a task, which is, of course, enormously complicated by the fact that so much history has been falsified and so many documents are suspect.

And, not surprisingly, not everyone is comfortable with the new approach to knowledge. There are people who think the old way was better, that young people not indoctrinated in Marxist-Leninism are likely to go astray, that historians allowed to explore freely are a danger to social order.

Teachers who have taught the old way sometimes find it difficult to teach the new. Indeed, they lack the knowledge to teach the new. Scholars who have spent a lifetime producing the multivolume series that the Soviets are famous for--the series of tomes that make an art form out of saying nothing--realize that all of that energy, all of that work, years and years of it, is useless. And they know that everyone knows it.

Many scholars are embarrassed by the situation they find themselves in. "Ten years ago," one scholar told me, "I attended a conference on Roosevelt, and my colleagues and I talked about FDR and we had never read any documents about him. Can you imagine that?" he asked me. He knew my doctorate was in literature. "Can you imagine evaluating Defoe or Dryden without evaluating their works?" Although it is possible now to read books written in the West, they are hard to obtain, expensive for one thing. I talked to historians at one institute who were lucky enough to have a subscription to the American journal, Foreign Affairs. But there were dozens of them, one journal, and no copying machines. "Why can't you get a Xerox?" I said, without giving my question as much thought as I should have. A reporter had told me that in the USSR a VCR costs almost as much as a middle-class family earns in a year, so what would a Xerox cost? And if you had only one, imagine the pressure on it. It would break. Of course, it would.

And if it broke, how would you get it fixed? There's a joke in Moscow about the man who finally gets on the list to get a car. He can pick it up in ten years, he is told, at 1:00 in the afternoon. "No, no," he says, "I can't do that." "Why not?" he is asked. "Because," he explains, "that's when the plumber is coming to fix my toilet."

The process of depoliticizing, deideologizing the study of the past is no easy thing, but finding that people were determined to do it struck me as entirely positive. Societies benefit when people in them are free to seek information and draw conclusions from it. Societies benefit when people can investigate ideas and events without paying heed to what is "politically correct." Individuals benefit. And a corollary to this truth is that societies and individuals benefit when students are taught that seeking knowledge in this way is a good thing.

I met some really marvelous young people in Moscow, so full of life and ambition. I think of a small class, entirely female, at school number 45 in the Sevastopol District of Moscow. It was an English class, and the students spoke excellent English. They were reading and discussing Sue Townsend's The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole in English and trying to decide if it had the makings of a "classic," a work that would endure. I asked them what classics in English they

were familiar with. The list was long and included some writers you might suspect: Dickens, Hemingway, and Dreiser, for example. Margaret Mitchell was one of the more surprising answers, perhaps accounted for by the fact that Gone With the Wind had just opened in Moscow. People were standing in line for hours to get in, even though tickets cost roughly the equivalent of \$25. Another surprising entry in the canon of school number 45 in the Sevastopol District of Moscow is Sidney Sheldon. Everyone in the class was remarkably fond of Sidney Sheldon's books, a fact for which I cannot account.

I also spent two hours one afternoon visiting with students at MGU--Moscow State University. They were history students for the most part and very good at asking provocative questions. One wanted to know what I thought of socialism. I told him that I didn't think recent years had given me or anyone else much reason to have a very high opinion of it. Free-market economies had shown themselves to be far more vital and dynamic. I added that I didn't want to be oversimple, and that, as I was sure he knew, there were very few pure systems; and that, in fact, was a good thing. It's important for capitalist societies to have community concern about those who do not thrive. It's important that there be social safety nets to help people along when nothing else is working for them. When I finished, the student stood up again and in very good English declared that I had described his way of thinking.

"That's how I think of myself," he said, "as a capitalist with compassion."

Now I must explain to you exactly where we were--on the nineteenth floor of one of those gargantuan examples of Stalinist architecture that dominate the skyline of the city that is the capital of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In that setting, it was quite amazing to hear this young man proclaim allegiance to capitalism. His fondest dream is to come to the United States. Indeed, I would say that is the hope and dream of most of the young people in that room. They know about us. They know the bad as well as the good. They know about drugs and crime and the homeless, but they also know what a dynamic and vibrant society we are. They know how free we are; and they want to come here. Abacarov Suleiman, Vyatkina Inna, Yuri Ammasov, Catherine Suyititzka. They pressed their names on me as I left. If there are any representatives here this evening of organizations that want to sponsor a Soviet exchange student, I have plenty of contacts for you.

Wherever I talked to people about teaching and learning, the subject of depoliticizing, deideologizing intellectual life came up. Perhaps the most reticent group with which I met, at least initially, were historians at the Military History Institute in Moscow. You have to understand that I bring a

little baggage with me to a meeting like that. No one is unaware of my spouse's occupation.

So there was some reticence. And when the subject of depoliticizing the study of history came up, the first statement was very cautious. "We can never completely remove politics from the study of history," one colonel said, "because we cannot remove ourselves from politics." "True enough," I agreed, "but shouldn't we try to minimize the effect of politics on our scholarship?" There were some careful nods around the table. "If we don't work to minimize it," I asked, "don't we become horses wearing blinders?"

This was not a particularly imaginative metaphor, but it had astonishing cross-cultural resonance. It changed the tone of the meeting. Hardly was it translated when it elicited the most positive response, not just careful nods, but enthusiastic stories about projects it was now possible to work on that it hadn't been possible to pursue before. One colonel--one scholar, I should say--was working on the question of how many people were killed in the Bolshevik Revolution--hardly a politically correct problem to pursue. Another scholar, the head of the Institute, is writing a biography of Trotsky and using Trotsky's papers to do so--a project that would have been unheard of a few years ago.

There is no neat conclusion to these stories, no nice happy ending to them. In fact, one has to wonder, to worry about the course of events in the Soviet Union. How long can the effort to deideologize scholarship continue when President Gorbachev is seeking to limit freedom of the press? Still, what I observed in the Soviet Union does prompt some important questions. Shouldn't the goal of scholars everywhere be to make art and inquiry as free as possible of political bias and influence? Of course, we are political creatures, but understanding that, shouldn't we try to raise ourselves up and acquire a broader perspective? If we insist that all literature, all art, be run through any single political prism, whether it be Marxist or capitalist or feminist or European or Third World, aren't we creatures of diminished vision? Indeed, if we insist, as has become fashionable in some quarters, that culture and all its creations are everywhere congruent with political struggle, isn't that the most diminished and diminishing perspective of all?

There was an inescapable irony about being in the Soviet Union and hearing again and again about the importance of depoliticizing and deideologizing the study of culture when so often in the United States I read or hear about the importance of using the arts and the humanities as instruments of politics. I understand that the people advocating this view believe fervently that the political agendas they want to

advance are good ones; but, however well-intentioned, using the arts and the humanities in this way limits vision. It is putting on blinders, and what a tragedy for us to do that as intellectuals in other parts of the world are struggling to take them off.

I'd like to thank all of you for your hospitality, and particularly to thank the Madison Center for organizing a conference on this important topic.

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YORK COLLEGE CONVOCATION

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Among those who know what the humanities are, there has been much wailing and gnashing of teeth in the last several decades. One scholar, a fellow not inclined to understatement, declared the humanities to be "lying at death's door." But, in fact, it is possible if one looks across the nation and focuses on programs for the general public to find abundant evidence that the humanities are alive and well.

- o A recent survey right here in Washington, D.C., showed museum going to be the most popular leisure-time activity.
- o A survey in Boston (home of the Celtics, Bruins, and Red Sox) showed events by nonprofit cultural groups drawing more than twice as many people as professional sports events.
- o Across the country, museum attendance now surpasses 600 million every year.
- o 1.2 million acres have been added to museum space in the U.S. in the last ten years--an area almost the size of Delaware.

I could cite many other examples, not just from museums, but from libraries, historical societies, and state humanities councils. Even television--the bete noire of culture--is showing its potential. Recently millions of Americans--record numbers of them--watched Ken Burns's remarkable documentary, The Civil War--a film for which I am very proud to note that the National Endowment for the Humanities provided major funding.

So there is good news about the humanities, but the pessimists have a point, an important one. While the humanities are thriving in programs for the general public, they are deeply troubled in our schools, in our colleges, and in our universities.

A survey conducted of high school history students in Alabama where I visited recently showed two-thirds unable to define capitalism and three-fourths unable to define a constitutional democracy. Three-fourths couldn't identify the Cold War. Many of the students thought it had to do with battles that occurred in the wintertime. Nor is it just high school students who don't know as much as they should. A recent nationwide survey sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities showed one-fourth of the nation's college seniors could not distinguish Churchill's words from Stalin's or Karl Marx's thoughts from the ideas of the U.S. Constitution.

How is it that the humanities can be doing so well in the public sphere and languishing in our schools? I think we have to begin any explanation by acknowledging that our schools have a great challenge. Their job is--and properly should be--to educate everyone--and partly because this task is so important, when we have a good idea about it, we try to set it in concrete. We institutionalize it, sometimes by giving it the force of law.

Take the way we prepare teachers, for example. There was a time in the 19th century when almost anyone could teach--even people without high school diplomas. Liberal arts faculties weren't interested in offering preparation to this group and so separate training developed for them in normal schools, which gradually evolved into colleges and departments of education. In the beginning, separate study offered teachers opportunities for schooling that were otherwise unavailable--and thus separate study was seen to be a good idea, so good that we institutionalized it. By the 1930s prospective teachers were required by law to take separate courses in education--and so they are to this day, though there is widespread doubt about whether this remains a wise course.

Now that our teachers are all college graduates, what benefit is there in offering them a segregated preparation? Is there some advantage, not readily apparent, in studying the

psychology of children in the education college rather than the psychology department? Is there some advantage gained by studying how to teach social studies apart from the study of history?

Teachers themselves don't think so. Ask them about classes they have taken in education, and you will hear them talk repeatedly about time wasted, time spent with education textbooks, for example, that take what is simple and make it complicated. Suppose a teacher wants to show children how to use the directory that is on the front page of most newspapers. According to an education textbook I have in my office, there are twelve different steps involved in teaching and applying such a skill.

I must confess that I find it difficult to read these textbooks without becoming indignant. They tell future teachers that there are exactly four types of thinking, exactly three ways of developing concepts. These textbooks take ideas that are subtle and reduce them to simplicities. They take ideas that are controversial or even incorrect and present them as if there were no debate. Setting a good example, one textbook declares, is not an effective way to teach values.

So teachers complain about time wasted. And they also complain about opportunities wasted, because time spent taking

courses in education is, after all, time that can't be spent studying the subject one will teach, whether it's history or physics. Prospective high school teachers in Massachusetts, for example, spend one-quarter of their undergraduate careers in departments or colleges of education--which means considerably less time than their peers for studying history or physics. We have arrived at the peculiar position in this country where those who intend to teach a subject study it less than those who do not.

What was once a good idea isn't a good idea any longer; and people have been saying this for a long time. But having adopted certain ways of doing things on a large scale, we find them enormously difficult to change. Philosopher William James described such phenomena in the early 20th century as "tyrannical machines." Practices that begin by filling needs, James wrote, can become detached from their original purposes, even counterproductive to them; but once they are institutionalized, once expectations, organizations and even professions have grown up around them, these practices can become immune to even the most enlightened criticism.

The Scholastic Aptitude Test is an almost perfect example of the phenomenon James described. In the 1920s, it seemed like a pretty good idea to come up with a test that didn't depend on a student's having studied any specific curriculum.

But as the SAT became more and more powerful, it began to send a message throughout our educational system that what schools teach about subjects like history and what students learn doesn't really matter. When the most important examination that most students ever take doesn't care whether they know about capitalism or the Constitution or the Cold War, these subjects can come to seem not worth caring about.

As you are aware, the College Board recently announced that the SAT is going to be different in the future--but not, unfortunately, different enough to make a difference. There will be an optional test of writing. Students who choose to do so will write an essay on such topics as "the more things change, the more they remain the same." Let me just observe that students in Spain have to write--on topics like the process of European integration and unity. Students in France have to write--on topics like the foreign policy of American presidents from Harry Truman through George Bush. In Germany students have to write. On a state exam there students were asked to discuss democracy in the Weimar Republic. In Japan students who wish to attend that country's prestigious national universities have to write. Prospective entrants to Tokyo University were recently asked to describe Afghanistan's role in international relations.

The United States alone among industrialized nations has at the center of its educational system an exam that tries to avoid assessing what students have learned about the subjects they have studied. The costs of this approach have been obvious for a very long time, but the SAT machine--as tyrannical machines do--rolls on.

A last example of a tyrannical machine: the way we all too often reward faculty members in our colleges and universities. At the end of the 19th century, a number of educational leaders realized it would be valuable to encourage the expansion of knowledge: that is, to encourage research. This good idea was institutionalized. It was made the heart of the tenure and promotion process and gradually became so powerful that the idea of the dissemination of knowledge--the idea of teaching--became a poor and attenuated thing.

To be sure, there are many faculty members who consider teaching their primary responsibility. There are many institutions--and I suspect I am at one now--that consider teaching their primary responsibility. But in a system that has made research central to status, these teachers and institutions usually are not in the limelight. The ones that are often get to be there by rewarding their faculty members with ever-reduced teaching loads. That is the path to prestige in a research-dominated world, and institutions that want

prestige lure academic stars to their faculties with promises that they will never have to see an undergraduate.

This flight from teaching has financial consequences. It means that college costs more. And it has educational consequences as well. At many universities undergraduates find few senior faculty in their classrooms, few full-time faculty members of any kind willing to guide their education, and few meaningful formal guidelines--that is, requirements--to help them on their way to a liberal education. Broadly conceived, coherent requirements need faculty to shape them, faculty to teach them, and a system that primarily rewards research provides little incentive for any of this.

It is possible today to graduate from 38 percent of the nation's colleges and universities without studying history; from 45 percent without studying American or English literature; and even at schools where these subjects are required, students can often fulfill them in ways that seem to reflect faculty research interests more than students' needs. At Harvard one can fulfill core requirements by studying tuberculosis from 1842 to 1952 or pictorial and literary representations of New York and Berlin from 1880 to 1940. At Dartmouth one can fulfill distributive requirements with "Sexuality and Writing" which analyzes "the use of sexuality and its ramifications as symbols for the process of literary

creativity, with particular reference to . . . potency and creative fertility; marriage or adultery and literary sterility; deviation and/or solitude and autobiography; prostitution and history; chastity and literary self-referentiality."

What may well be an interesting research topic may well not be a sensible undergraduate requirement; but in a system where research is valued so highly, the discrepancy tends to be overlooked. We end up with college seniors who haven't the least idea what Plato wrote or who Stalin and Churchill were.

In our colleges and universities, as in our schools, we have taken admirable ideas and institutionalized them in ways that have given them astonishing power--indeed, power sufficient for them to prevail even after they have become counterproductive. The error of our ways has been apparent for a very long time, but simply realizing what we are doing wrong isn't sufficient to set it right. That, I think, is one of the lessons we learned in the 1980s. Naming our problems doesn't correct them. Bad practices will not go away simply because we demonstrate how counterproductive they are. Tyrannical machines will not dismantle themselves. We have to set alternatives to them into place, optional ways of preparing teachers and testing students and rewarding college and university faculty. We have to identify promising alternatives that are in place, nurture them and talk about them so that

people are aware of these other ways, so that every state or school district that wants to move ahead with reform doesn't have to reinvent the wheel.

A case in point are alternative certification programs in states like New Jersey and Texas, ways of preparing teachers that compress the time spent in education classes and emphasize classroom experience. These alternative plans prepare prospective teachers by allowing them to work with people who have mastered the art, the craft of teaching. That's the way one becomes an excellent teacher--by seeing good teaching in action. In New Jersey, alternatively certified teachers have done better on the National Teachers Examination than teacher education graduates, and they are staying in the profession longer. Not only are alternative certification programs successful, they allow comparisons about the most effective ways of preparing teachers and give colleges and universities reason to improve their programs so they can compete.

People should know about alternative certification programs. Prospective teachers should be able to choose them. Similarly, we need to move beyond the SAT by encouraging alternative ways of assessing students' progress and evaluating schools. Among the promising options are the exams of the National Assessment of Educational Progress which focus very much on what students know. A blue-ribbon commission

recommended three years ago that National Assessment be expanded--and it should be expanded.

Perhaps the most promising of all reforms allows parents to choose the school their children attend. A school that can be chosen can develop a specialty. Among the junior high schools in New York's District 4--one of the most famous examples in the country of the success of choice--are the Academy of Environmental Science, the East Harlem Performing Arts School, the Isaac Newton School for Math and Science, and the School of Science and the Humanities. In Prince George's County, Maryland, a student might choose an elementary school that specializes in the arts, a middle school that stresses humanities, a high school oriented toward sciences.

Alternatives do not necessarily have to be innovative in order to be attractive. The Bay Haven School of Basics Plus, an elementary school in Sarasota, Florida, emphasizes traditional values and skills--and has a waiting list of more than 1200 students.

A school that can be chosen can develop a specialty--and it will be powerfully motivated to develop it well. Choice, like alternative certification, brings the dynamic of competition into education, and by doing so encourages improvements in all areas, from teachers and textbooks to standards and expectations.

Now I know there are some people suspicious of choice. They tend not to be poor people, let me observe. They tend not to be people of limited means who feel themselves trapped in inadequate school systems. These people, polls show, overwhelmingly support the idea of choice. They want to have some say over their children's education. People with more financial power can move if they find the local school unacceptable. They can, perhaps, pay tuition at a private school. Poor parents want to be able to choose too. They want what many other parents already have.

Still, there are people suspicious of choice. Isn't it possible, they ask, that some parents will make bad choices? And I admit the answer is yes. Some people will choose the school with the best football team rather than the school with the best academic program. But I'm willing to trust that this won't happen often, not if you give people the information they need to make good choices. Successful choice plans, like the one in District 4 in New York or the one in Cambridge, Massachusetts, are distinguished by the emphasis they place on providing students and parents with the information they need to choose wisely.

Indeed, one of the most important factors in making a system in which there is choice operate efficiently is information. This is true in elementary and secondary

education. And it is true for our colleges and universities as well.

I can think of nothing that would so effectively counter the tyrannical machine that dominates American higher education as having parents and students more aware of what constitutes instructional quality. If parents and students were to begin to choose colleges and universities on the basis of how well they teach, colleges and universities would begin to honor those who teach well. Research would not be the only path to a distinguished academic career.

We at the National Endowment for the Humanities want to be useful to parents and students as they try to understand whether particular colleges or universities sufficiently value teaching, and so, in our new report we make suggestions about questions they ought to ask. Parents and students ought to read--really read--college catalogs, moving beyond the rhetoric of the opening pages to see what is actually required. Has this institution sought ways to provide a broad-based liberal arts education? parents ought to ask. Or is it possible to graduate from this college or university without studying major areas of human knowledge? I sometimes find it useful in evaluating a curriculum to make the worst case scenario. If it's possible to earn credit for graduation by studying the sociology of parties, as one can at Vassar, or the "discourse"

of heavy metal concerts, as one can at the University of Minnesota, then you and I can count on some of our offspring doing it, and is that why we are investing \$50,000 to \$100,000? In higher education, we have choices; our task is to exercise them intelligently.

What I hope our new report does is suggest an approach to education reform in the 90s. The time has passed for lament. Complaining is good for raising consciousness, but it won't dismantle education's tyrannical machines. It won't change entrenched practices in the way that offering alternatives and nurturing alternatives to those entrenched practices will. All of the things that I and others have complained about--whether it's how we train teachers or how we choose textbooks, whether it's how we evaluate our students' schools or how we reward faculty members in colleges and universities--all of these practices will benefit from the dynamic of competition. The appropriate strategy for reform in the 1990s, then, is to make alternatives available--and to make available as well information about those alternatives so that people can choose wisely among them.

I want to thank York College for giving me an opportunity to talk about our schools and colleges. Your president has distinguished himself--and this school--by encouraging debate on important topics, and, President Iosue, let me conclude by thanking you for inviting me to be here today.

REMARKS

BY

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CHAIRMAN

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

AT THE

18TH ANNUAL

CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL ACTION CONFERENCE

OMNI SHOREHAM HOTEL

WASHINGTON, DC

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Vic, I want to thank you for that kind introduction. You know, I've known Vic for a very long time. It started when we were both writers at the same magazine. As I'm sure you're aware, there aren't too many Republicans in the magazine-writing business, so the decision was made by editorial higher-ups to put us in an office together. Now, we never for a minute thought of ourselves as having been put in quarantine. Never for a minute. In fact, sharing an office with Vic was a great opportunity to learn more than I ever knew there was to know about Bear Bryant and the Crimson Tide. And it was also a great chance to tell political stories--stories that eventually turned into the novel we co-authored.

So, Vic, it's a pleasure to be introduced by you. And, indeed, it is a pleasure and an honor to be asked to speak on this occasion. I am not exactly a disinterested participant to proceedings meant to honor Dick. I have been very, very proud of him for a long time, but never more so than in the past few months.

And I have been very proud, and Dick has--and I know all of you have--been very proud of the fine men and women of this country's military who have performed so admirably. We have all seen them on television: the courageous young people flying

our planes and running our Patriot batteries; the remarkably competent men with the stars on their collars briefing us from Washington and Riyadh. I watch men like Colin Powell, Norman Schwarzkopf, Walter Boomer, Robert Johnson, Charles Horner--and I think how lucky we are in this country. Somehow these fine people stayed with the military. Somehow they chose to make it their careers through all those long, grim years when the military was so often dismissed and demeaned in this country--though not by conservatives, let me be clear.

So we are extremely fortunate in our leaders, and it starts at the top. We are extremely fortunate that Ronald Reagan was President of this country for eight years, and we are extremely fortunate that George Bush is our President now. In the earliest days of this crisis, President Bush declared that "this aggression will not stand," and he has been unwavering in his determination to turn back tyranny.

There is a passage from Corinthians that has always been a favorite of Dick's and mine. "If the trumpet gives an uncertain sound," the scripture asks, "who shall prepare himself for the battle?" The President has struck a chord of absolute clarity, and more than two dozen nations have responded. This is not a war of Iraq against the United States. This is a war of Saddam Hussein against the world, and our President has made it that.

He has struck a chord of absolute clarity, and we have seen our countrymen respond. Seventy-five, eighty percent and more support our course in the Gulf. Across this country there has been a remarkable groundswell of patriotism. Flags are flying from homes in my neighborhood, and I know they are in yours, too. Last weekend alone there were demonstrations in support of the war from Rochester, New York, to Dallas, Texas, from Virginia Beach, Virginia, to Washington state. As Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz might have observed, "Toto, we're not in the 1960s anymore."

Even our campuses are different now. I had a chance earlier this week to speak to students and faculty at York College in Pennsylvania, and I began by talking about the war and expressing my gratitude and admiration for our President and for our men and women in the Persian Gulf--and only one person walked out--a fellow described to me as the campus Trotskyite. Administrators that I talk to in various parts of the country are worrying a little about campus demonstrations, but the demonstrations that are happening are not of a predictable sort. At Kent State University, a place that became an icon of anti-war protest during Vietnam, a demonstration was held a few weeks ago in favor of our policy and our troops in the Persian Gulf. No, we're not in the 1960s anymore.

Now it has taken some people a little time to realize this. In Arcata, California, for example, as soon as the war began, the city council voted to make Arcata a sanctuary for opponents of the war. This action outraged thousands of Arcata citizens, who were so effective at making their feelings known that the council had to meet in emergency session to rescind the sanctuary resolution--and apologize for it.

There was a similar pattern of events not far from here at the University of Maryland. There university officials asked students to remove American flags that they hung from their dormitories when the war in the Gulf began. An administrator explained the request by saying, "This is a very diverse community, and what may be innocent to one person may be insulting to another." Now frankly I had a little trouble believing this when I read about it in the newspaper. American students discouraged from displaying the American flag on an American college campus because it might offend somebody? Students at the University of Maryland, I am happy to report, did not find the administration's argument in the least convincing either. They complained about their first amendment rights being suppressed until finally this week the administration came around and allowed that flag flying was all right.

This change of heart, let me note, occurred shortly after student government leaders decided to get involved in the fracas. To show what they thought of the administration's policy of discouraging flag display, officers of the student government association got together and put the stars and stripes up outside their office window. It was a telling moment--students protesting by raising the flag, not burning the flag. We are not in the 1960s anymore.

The course ahead may, nevertheless, be a difficult one. We face a ruthless tyrant, a brutal dictator who has been cynically willing to fire missiles into civilian areas of Israel to try to expand the war. We face an enemy who has been willing to commit the largest act of environmental terrorism that history has known. But such acts, even as they tell us that this war may well be hard, tell us also that it is just. Such ruthlessness and lawlessness cannot be allowed to succeed. And they will not be.

Let me thank you again for saluting Dick tonight. Your support means a great deal to him. This is a time of heavy responsibility, and he feels that deeply. He also knows that it is an enormous honor to be given such responsibility, to be made the instrument of this nation's large and noble purposes. Let me conclude with a quotation that both of us like very much. It's from George Bernard Shaw, who wrote, "This is the

true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one." Shaw concluded his thought this way: "I am of the opinion," he wrote, "that my life belongs to the whole community and, as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can."

STATEMENT
OF
LYNNE V. CHENEY
CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES
AND
CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE HUMANITIES
before the
APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE DEPARTMENT OF THE
INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES
of the
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 26, 1991

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear for the fifth time before this distinguished Committee to speak on behalf of an appropriations request for the National Endowment for the Humanities. Over the years, I have valued my conversations with the Committee about the important mission we share--the advancement of education, scholarship, preservation, and public understanding of the humanities throughout the United States.

The FY 1992 request we have submitted for Congress's consideration totals \$178.2 million, an increase of \$8.2 million or about 5 percent over the agency's current funding. These funds will allow the Endowment to continue and expand its support for projects in history, literature, foreign languages, and other humanities disciplines.

We at the Endowment are pleased that the President is requesting a significant increase in our budget for the coming fiscal year. We believe that there is great value to the nation in the projects we support, such as last fall's extraordinary television program, The Civil War, a series that captivated the nation and rekindled our historical memory of that tragic and momentous event; such as the authoritative editions of the writings and papers of such important historical figures as George Washington, Charles Darwin, Marcel Proust, Jane Addams, and Martin Luther King, Jr.; such as the humanities institutes and summer seminars that provide opportunities for teachers in our schools, colleges, and universities to enrich their teaching; and projects such as the microfilming of important brittle books and documents held by our libraries, archives, and other repositories. These and other NEH projects are sound investments for the federal government to make, even during this era of fiscal constraints, for they enable all of us to learn more about the nation's past and the history and thought of other cultures.

The 2,195 awards we made in FY 1990 to individuals and institutions in every state plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, carry on this tradition of sustaining and enlarging our citizens' knowledge of history and culture. Here are just a few illustrations of significant projects that received funding from NEH during the past year:

- The Chicago Historical Society received \$32,000 from the Endowment in FY 1990 to sponsor a major scholarly conference on "American City History." Two hundred scholars gathered at the conference last October to discuss the history of scholarship relating to American cities and to pose questions about future research into this important subject. The conference's proceedings will be published by the University of Chicago Press;

summer institute each year for three years that will bring together thirty school teachers from around the state for concentrated studies of Shakespeare's plays. In addition to exploring major themes of the texts, participants will add to their understanding of the material by attending performances and acting out scenes from the plays;

- Eve Kornfeld, a professor of history at San Diego State University, was awarded an NEH Fellowship in FY 1990 to continue research on her study of the role of intellectuals in the shaping of American culture during the period of the revolution and early republic. She is researching the idea that the intellectual elite self-consciously set out to create a unified republican culture for the new nation. When completed, Professor Kornfeld's study should provide us with new insights into this critical era of American history;
- Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania received \$200,000 in FY 1990 to support an endowment for faculty development, classroom renovation, equipment and materials, library acquisitions, and computer storage for its humanities collections; and
- The University of Chicago received \$1.4 million through the Endowment's Office of Preservation to preserve on microfilm the content of more than 10,000 brittle books housed in the university library's Crerar History of Technology Collection, one of the nation's most comprehensive resources for research into the history of technology. Like other major NEH preservation microfilming projects, funding also supports the recording of these titles into national data bases such as the National Register of Microform Masters to facilitate bibliographic access and to prevent wasteful duplication of effort by future microfilming projects.

The Endowment will continue in FY 1992 to support humanities projects of national significance and importance such as these fine projects.

Our plans and priorities for FY 1992 are described in detail in the budget justification we submitted to Congress. However, I would like to take a moment to bring to your attention a few of the major features of our FY 1992 plans.

If there is one overall emphasis reflected in this budget request, and indeed in those of the last four years, it is education. It is important that we as a nation continue the work of improving our schools, colleges and universities. As the Endowment reported in a study we released last November, Tyrannical Machines: A Report on Educational Practices Gone Wrong and Our Best Hopes for Setting Them Right, deeply flawed practices

Advancing scholarly research in the humanities is another important goal of the NEH budget request. For FY 1992, we are proposing a significant expansion in our support for humanities research by raising the budget allocation for the Division of Research Programs by \$1.4 million over the FY 1991 appropriation. These funds will be used primarily to make additional awards and to provide more adequate support to funded projects. Some funding also would be used for grants concerned with Eastern European history and culture, a subject area where we expect to see more scholarly interest as a result of the immense changes that have taken place in that region of the world.

The FY 1992 budget request also will permit us to continue to implement our ambitious effort to preserve the knowledge and information contained in deteriorating humanities research materials that are in danger of being lost because of age, high-acid content, or improper storage and handling. In addition to the Endowment's support for projects to microfilm brittle books, the FY 1992 budget will allow us to support other essential activities that undergird the national preservation effort, such as the education and training of preservation administrators, and to continue our support for projects to preserve the content of other endangered humanities research materials such as newspapers and periodicals. Also to be continued in FY 1992 is the new National Heritage Preservation program. This program offers funds to repositories of cultural artifacts such as museums, libraries, archives, and universities to take the steps necessary to protect their collections of material culture.

During the current year and in FY 1992, we are intensifying and expanding our efforts to insure that opportunities to study and learn about the humanities are available to Americans from all backgrounds and regions of the country. To characterize the focus of the agency's extensive outreach efforts more accurately, we recently changed the name of our Access to Excellence program, which had been in operation since November 1986, to the Office of Outreach. We also enlarged the staff and the scope of the Office: In addition to continuing its primary focus on making the Endowment's grant opportunities more widely known among rural, inner-city, tribal, and minority communities, the Office will be pursuing other goals such as working to expand both the pool of applicants for employment and the pool of qualified evaluators for the review of NEH funding proposals. The Outreach Office also will develop strategies for increasing the number of minority students majoring in the humanities. It will work with the Fellowships division, for example, to encourage more grant applications to the Younger Scholars program from inner-city high school students in an effort to encourage more of these students to study the humanities.

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- About \$4,000 in NEH funds granted to the Ohio Humanities Council were regranted to the Canton, Ohio public library system to support a series of four public lectures by scholars on "Landscapes of the Mind: Literary Visions in Contemporary Perspectives." This lecture series was one of the thousands of excellent projects funded by the nation's state humanities councils in FY 1990 that complement the Endowment's own efforts to foster lifelong learning outside of the traditional classroom setting;
- The Concord Museum in Concord, Massachusetts received a grant of \$235,716 to help build an endowment fund that the museum will draw on to enhance its humanities programming, build its library holdings in the humanities, begin a historical research and publication project, and underwrite the renovation and construction costs of enlarging its space. The Concord Museum contains a rich collection of materials relating to the social, political, and cultural history of New England;
- Two FY 1990 grants made in our Humanities Projects in Museums and Historical Organizations program are concerned with the history and heritage of the Pacific Northwest. The Oregon Historical Society used \$125,000 to support a traveling exhibition and related educational programming on Spain's eighteenth-century explorations of the region; and the Washington State Historical Society, in conjunction with the Anchorage (Alaska) Museum of History and Art, received \$300,000 from the Endowment for an exhibition on the history of Russia's eastern expansion into the North Pacific in the period ca. 1740-1867;
- The Endowment provided \$116,517 to The National Faculty, a national organization dedicated to improving the quality of precollegiate humanities teaching headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, to support a two-year project to improve the teaching of world history in the East Grand Rapids and Grand Rapids, Michigan school systems. NEH funding is being used to underwrite a summer institute for forty middle and high school history and social studies teachers and periodic consultative visits by eminent scholars. Through extensive reading and discussion of major texts in the field, teachers will enrich their knowledge of world history and become more adept at integrating this material into their classroom instruction. This project is one of the many grants we support that seek to strengthen the teaching of history in elementary and secondary schools;
- A grant of \$504,000 was awarded to "Shakespeare and Company" of Lenox, Massachusetts, in FY 1990 for a collaborative project with the University of Massachusetts at Boston that is enriching the teaching of Shakespeare in the state's school system. The project will sponsor a

summer institute each year for three years that will bring together thirty school teachers from around the state for concentrated studies of Shakespeare's plays. In addition to exploring major themes of the texts, participants will add to their understanding of the material by attending performances and acting out scenes from the plays;

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persist at the heart of the U.S. educational system. And so, for FY 1992, we plan to introduce, improve, or expand several key programs that run counter to most failed practices and offer hope for the future. Our budget includes:

- A significant increase in NEH's Summer Seminars for School Teachers program, which offers teachers of grades K-12 the opportunity to spend a summer studying basic humanities texts under the guidance of eminent teachers and scholars. The funding increase, which began in the current fiscal year (FY 1991), will expand this program by approximately 30 percent over the FY 1990 level;
- An experimental program of Study Grants for College Teachers, to be administered by NEH's Division of Fellowships and Seminars, that will provide awards to college faculty to enable them to spend a short, concentrated period of time engaged in individual study of the humanities. The budget request allocates \$200,000 for this program in FY 1992;
- A continuation and expansion of the NEH's new Special Opportunity for Foreign Language Education, which supports projects such as teacher institutes to strengthen the teaching of foreign languages at colleges and universities and precollegiate institutions. Funding would increase by \$700,000 in FY 1992;
- An increase of nearly \$1 million in funding for NEH's programs to improve humanities curricula and instruction at the higher education and elementary and secondary education levels; and
- A continuation of the Distinguished Teaching Professorships awards that enable colleges and universities to reward excellence in undergraduate teaching. The FY 1992 request contains an additional \$1 million for the Challenge Grants program to fund these special awards.

The Endowment also is requesting sufficient funding in FY 1992 to continue to make progress toward the goal of expanding opportunities for public education and lifelong learning. Our Division of Public Programs (formerly the Division of General Programs) and Division of State Programs will again support activities to reach citizens in all parts of the country with informative and intellectually challenging humanities programming, such as reading and discussion groups, film and radio productions, museum exhibitions, and public lecturers. These out-of-school learning experiences constitute a "parallel school" that contribute enormously to the educational and cultural fabric of the nation.

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Grants program is needed to help support the grants we have made in our Distinguished Teaching Professorships initiative. The total appropriation of \$16.05 million requested for the Challenge program in FY 1992 will stimulate a minimum of about \$50 million in third-party contributions to the humanities institutions who receive awards. Likewise, the \$2.5 million increase we are requesting in our Treasury funds budget line will add to our ability to respond to the remarkable success our grantees have had in recent years in raising donations to their humanities projects. Demand is up across the Endowment's programs for more allocations to match these gifts. A Treasury funds budget of \$14.4 million in FY 1992 would enable the Endowment to leverage at least \$14.4 million in private donations for individual humanities projects.

Thank you for this opportunity once again to talk about the programs and plans of the National Endowment for the Humanities. I would be happy now to respond to any questions you may have.

TAB C (new)

STATEMENT
OF
LYNNE V. CHENEY
CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES
before the
APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE DEPARTMENT OF THE
INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES
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UNITED STATES SENATE

March 20, 1991

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

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- The Huntington Museum of Art in Huntington, West Virginia, was awarded \$39,515 in FY 1990 to plan a major traveling exhibition exploring the impact of railroads on the history and culture of West Virginia. The exhibition will focus on how the development of railroads influenced the growth of towns, the rise of new industries, and the shape of the state's politics;

- The Nevada Humanities Committee received \$60,000 from the Endowment to support a year-long special project organized on the theme "A River Too Far: The Past and Future of Civilization in the Desert." Through a coordinated series of statewide lectures, reading and discussion groups, seminars, and exhibits, this project is helping teachers, school children, and the general public expand their knowledge and understanding of the historical, literary, and cultural roots of desert civilizations like Nevada's;
- The University of Alaska Museum in Fairbanks received \$59,516 through the Endowment's new National Heritage Preservation program to support the installation of improved climate control systems and the renovation of the building's structure to correct drainage problems. The museum's collections contain important archaeological, ethnographic, anthropological, and historic artifacts that document the history and culture of this arctic and subarctic region;
- The American Library Association in Chicago, received \$400,000 in FY 1990 funds to mount a multi-year traveling exhibition and educational programs examining the impact of the voyages of Columbus on Old World and New World cultures. The project, "Seeds of Change," will travel to sixty public libraries and other institutions across the nation including the Anchorage Municipal Libraries in Alaska; the Phoenix Public Library in Arizona; the Salt Lake City Public Library in Utah; Washoe County Library in Nevada; the Albuquerque Public Library in New Mexico; the State Historical Society in Bismarck, North Dakota; the State Capitol Building in Little Rock, Arkansas; the Metropolitan Library System of Oklahoma in Oklahoma City; the New Orleans Public Library; the Vermont Department of Libraries in Montpelier; and the Derry Public Library in Derry, New Hampshire;
- Another major project supported in FY 1990 that is bringing quality humanities programming to rural communities in the nation's less populous states is the "American Renaissance" project of the Great Plains Chautauqua Society in Bismarck, North Dakota. Funds of \$155,200 from the Endowment will help to support the Society's two-year program of summer presentations featuring scholarly dramatic dialogues on the lives and works of seven important nineteenth-century American writers--Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, Louisa May Alcott, Frederick Douglass, Walt Whitman, Margaret Fuller, and Herman Melville. The Chautauqua will present workshops, lectures, and discussions on these figures for children and adults and will travel to twenty communities scattered across the Great Plains states of Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota;

- With \$72,324 from NEH, the University of Southern Mississippi this summer will be hosting a seminar for school teachers on "Selected Works of William Faulkner." The fifteen teachers from around the country who will participate in the seminar under the guidance of Professor Noel Polk of the university's English department will read and study in depth four of Faulkner's novels and a number of his short stories. This project is one of the many grants we support that seek to strengthen the teaching of the humanities in our elementary and secondary schools;
- The University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, received a grant of \$291,195 from NEH in FY 1990 to support Arkansas's participation in the U.S. Newspapers Program, which is funded out of our Office of Preservation. This grant is helping project staff to catalogue and microfilm approximately 2,100 historically important newspaper titles held at repositories throughout the state;
- The Arizona State Museum at the University of Arizona in Tucson received \$250,000 in FY 1990 to support an exhibition called "Paths of Life: Native Peoples of the Southwest." The exhibition, which explores the history and cultures of ten tribal groupings of native peoples of Arizona, is supplemented by an illustrated catalog and auxiliary educational programs for the area's schools;
- The Endowment awarded \$75,000 to the Oklahoma Foundation on the Humanities to support the development of educational materials for use by elementary school students on Oklahoma history at three state museums--the Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, the National Cowboy Hall of Fame, and the State Museum of History. These materials will later be adapted for use at smaller museums around the state; and
- Two FY 1990 grants made in our Humanities Projects in Museums and Historical Organizations program are concerned with the history and heritage of the Pacific Northwest. The Oregon Historical Society used \$125,000 to support a traveling exhibition and related educational programming on Spain's eighteenth-century explorations of the region; and the Washington State Historical Society, in conjunction with the Anchorage (Alaska) Museum of History and Art, received \$300,000 from the Endowment for an exhibition on the history of Russia's eastern expansion into the North Pacific in the period ca. 1740-1867.

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opportunities for public education and lifelong learning. Our Division of Public Programs (formerly the Division of General Programs) and Division of State Programs will again support activities to reach citizens in all parts of the country with informative and intellectually challenging humanities programming such as reading and discussion groups, film and radio productions, museum exhibitions, and public lecturers. These out-of-school learning experiences constitute a "parallel school" that contribute enormously to the educational and cultural fabric of the nation.

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The FY 1992 budget request also will permit us to continue to implement our ambitious effort to preserve the knowledge and information contained in deteriorating humanities research materials that are in danger of being lost because of age, high-acid content, or improper storage and handling. In addition to the Endowment's support for projects to microfilm brittle books, the FY 1992 budget will allow us to support other essential activities that undergird the national preservation effort, such as the education and training of preservation administrators, and to continue our support for projects to preserve the content of other endangered humanities research materials such as newspapers and periodicals. Also to be continued in FY 1992 is the new National Heritage Preservation program. This program offers funds to repositories of cultural artifacts such as museums, libraries, archives, and universities to take the steps necessary to protect their collections of material culture.

During the current year and in FY 1992, we are intensifying and expanding our efforts to insure that opportunities to study and learn about the humanities are available to Americans from all backgrounds and regions of the country. To characterize the focus of the agency's extensive outreach efforts more accurately, we recently changed the name of our Access to Excellence program, which had been in operation since November 1986, to the Office of Outreach. We also enlarged the staff and the scope of the Office: In addition to continuing its primary focus on making the Endowment's grant opportunities more widely known among rural, inner-city, tribal, and minority communities, the Office will be pursuing other goals such as working to expand both the pool of applicants for employment and the pool of qualified evaluators for the review of NEH funding proposals. The Outreach Office also

will develop strategies for increasing the number of minority students majoring in the humanities. It will work with the Fellowships division, for example, to encourage more grant applications to the Younger Scholars program from inner-city high school students in an effort to encourage more of these students to study the humanities.

Finally, for FY 1992, the Endowment requests a significant increase of over \$3.4 million in our capability to leverage nonfederal contributions to humanities projects and institutions. As stated previously, a \$1 million increase in the Challenge Grants program is needed to help support the grants we have made in our Distinguished Teaching Professorships initiative. The total appropriation of \$16.05 million requested for the Challenge program in FY 1992 will stimulate a minimum of about \$50 million in third-party contributions to the humanities institutions who receive awards. Likewise, the \$2.5 million increase we are requesting in our Treasury funds budget line will add to our ability to respond to the remarkable success our grantees have had in recent years in raising donations to their humanities projects. Demand is up across the Endowment's programs for more allocations to match these gifts. A Treasury funds budget of \$14.4 million in FY 1992 would enable the Endowment to leverage at least \$14.4 million in private donations for individual humanities projects.

Thank you for this opportunity once again to talk about the programs and plans of the National Endowment for the Humanities. I would be happy now to respond to any questions you may have.

REMARKS BY

LYNNE V. CHENEY

CHAIRMAN

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

TO THE

16TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON

BLACKS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

MARCH 22, 1991

WASHINGTON-HILTON HOTEL

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At Fisk and Spelman and Tougaloo, NEH-supported faculty members are working to organize and preserve papers and documents that will enable future scholars to explore such important subjects as the civil rights movement. A number of historically black universities--Dillard, Prairie View A&M, Xavier, and Jackson State--have been awarded Challenge Grants by the NEH that will allow them to build endowments to support a range of activities, from establishing a chair in Asian studies, to building library collections in the humanities, to renovating a site for humanities research. The project

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Like the faculty members on your campuses, those of us who work at NEH have a wide range of concerns. We worry about schools, as well as about colleges and universities. We worry about museums and historical societies and state humanities councils, as well as about the state of scholarship. From time to time we issue a report on some or all of these matters, and I thought today I'd spend a few minutes talking about our latest report. The title of it is Tyrannical Machines: A Report on Educational Priorities Gone Wrong and Our Best Hopes for Setting Them Right. We took the title from William James who observed in the early part of this century that Americans have a fine habit of coming up with good ideas and loving them so much that they try to give them eternal life. They come up with good ideas and find ways to lock them in concrete, to institutionalize them so powerfully that even when they aren't

good ideas anymore, even when they become counterproductive, we can't get rid of them. We transform good ideas into tyrannical machines and find ourselves helpless in the face of them.

Take the way we prepare teachers. There was a time in the nineteenth century when almost anyone could teach--even people without high school diplomas. Liberal arts faculties weren't interested in offering preparation to this group and so separate training developed for them in normal schools. In the beginning, this separate study offered teachers opportunities for schooling that were otherwise unavailable--and so it was a good idea, so good that we institutionalized it. By the 1930s prospective teachers were required by law to spend substantial time in a separate course of study--and so they are to this day, though there is widespread doubt about the wisdom of this course.

Now that our teachers are all college graduates, what benefit is there in offering them a preparation isolated from the rest of the college or university? Why have them study psychology outside the psychology department? Why have them study how to teach social studies apart from the study of history?

Teachers themselves ask these questions. They know that all too often their classes in pedagogy aren't sufficiently rigorous. One has only to look at textbooks commonly used to teach these courses to see what teachers mean. Suppose, for example, a teacher wants to show children how to use the directory that is on the front page of most newspapers. According to an education methods textbook I have in my office, there are twelve different steps involved in teaching and applying such a skill.

I must confess that I find it difficult to read these textbooks without becoming indignant. They tell future teachers that there are exactly four types of thinking, exactly three ways of developing concepts. These textbooks take ideas that are subtle and reduce them to simplicities. They take ideas that are controversial or even incorrect and present them as if there were no debate. Setting a good example, one textbook declares, is not an effective way to teach values.

So teachers complain about time wasted. And they also complain about opportunities wasted, because time spent with textbooks such as these is time that can't be spent studying the subject one will teach, whether it's history or physics. We have arrived at the peculiar position in this country where those who intend to teach a subject usually study it less than those who do not.

What was once a good idea isn't a good idea any longer; and people both inside and outside our colleges and departments of education have been saying this for a long time. But having adopted certain ways of doing things on a large scale, we find them enormously difficult to change.

Another example of a tyrannical machine: the way we reward faculty members in our colleges and universities. At the end of the nineteenth century, a number of educational leaders realized it would be valuable to encourage the expansion of knowledge: that is, to encourage research. This good idea was institutionalized. It was made the heart of the tenure and promotion process and gradually became so powerful that the idea of the dissemination of knowledge--the idea of teaching--became a poor and attenuated thing.

To be sure, there are faculty members who consider teaching their primary responsibility--and I know many are in this room. There are also many institutions that consider teaching their primary responsibility--and I know they are represented in this room; but in a system that has made research central to status, it is difficult for these teachers and institutions to gain the prestige they deserve. Institutions that rank high in prestige reward their faculty members with ever-reduced teaching loads, and prestigious faculty members expect to be rewarded that way. Institutions

that want prestige lure academic stars to their faculties with promises that they will never have to see an undergraduate.

This flight from teaching has financial consequences. It means that college costs more. And it has educational consequences as well. At many universities, undergraduates find few senior faculty in their classrooms, few full-time faculty members of any kind willing to guide their education, and few meaningful formal guidelines--that is, requirements--to help them on their way to a liberal education. Broadly conceived, coherent requirements need faculty to shape them, faculty to teach them, and a system that primarily rewards research provides little incentive for any of this.

It is possible today to graduate from 38 per cent of the nation's colleges and universities without studying history; from 45 per cent without studying literature; and, even at schools where these subjects are required, students can often fulfill them in ways that seem to reflect faculty research interests more than students' needs. At Harvard one can fulfill core requirements by studying tuberculosis from 1842 to 1952 or pictorial and literary representations of New York and Berlin from 1880 to 1940.

What may well be an interesting research topic may well not be a sensible undergraduate requirement; but in a system

where research is valued so highly, the discrepancy tends to be overlooked. We end up with college seniors who haven't the least idea what Plato wrote or who Stalin and Churchill were.

In our colleges and universities, as in our schools, we have taken admirable ideas and institutionalized them in ways that have given them astonishing power--indeed, power sufficient for them to prevail even after they have become counterproductive. The error of our ways has been apparent for a very long time, but simply realizing what we are doing wrong isn't sufficient to set it right. That, I think, is one of the lessons we learned in the 1980s. Naming our problems doesn't correct them. Bad practices will not go away simply because we demonstrate how counterproductive they are. Tyrannical machines will not dismantle themselves. We have to set alternatives to them into place, optional ways of preparing teachers and rewarding college and university faculty. We have to identify promising alternatives that are in place, nurture them and talk about them so that people are aware of these other ways, so that every school district or college that wants to move ahead with reform doesn't have to reinvent the wheel.

A case in point are alternative certification programs in states like New Jersey and Texas, ways of preparing teachers that emphasize classroom experience. These alternative plans prepare prospective teachers by allowing them to work with

people who have mastered the art, the craft of teaching. That's the way one becomes an excellent teacher--by seeing good teaching in action. In New Jersey, alternatively certified teachers have done better on the National Teachers Examination than teacher education graduates, and they are staying in the profession longer. Moreover, alternative certification programs have been more successful at enrolling and graduating minority teachers than traditional programs have.

Not only are alternative certification programs proving themselves successful, they are giving colleges and universities reason to improve their programs. There are many thoughtful people in our departments and colleges of education, and they gain moral force for changes they want to bring about from the existence of another way of preparing teachers. Faced with competition, faculty members and administrators who turned a deaf ear before can become very willing to listen.

Just as we need alternative ways of certifying teachers, we need alternative reward systems for college and university faculty--systems that give teaching an appropriately important place. We at the National Endowment for the Humanities are trying to help change the usual practice in a number of ways. We have, for one thing, put in place a program to help colleges and universities establish distinguished teaching professorships. Now all of you know that typically

distinguished professorships go to those who've made outstanding contributions to research. We think they ought to go to those who've made outstanding contributions to teaching as well, and so our program encourages colleges and universities to apply for up to \$300,000 in matching funds to establish chairs for distinguished teachers. We want these people to be honored and recognized just as their peers in research are.

We are also just about to begin a program of what we call "study grants." Since the NEH's earliest days, we've been awarding fellowships to scholars to do the kind of research that will lead to publication. I think we ought also to help scholars who want to spend time doing the kind of reading and research that will revitalize their teaching. And our study grants program will do that: provide a stipend to people whose professional career is largely defined by teaching so that they can take up to 6 weeks to explore topics that will enrich their teaching. Assuming the Congress of the United States appropriates the money we need for this program, we will be making the first study grants awards in 1992.

I tell you about these programs because I know that historically black colleges and universities have run against the grain, have continued to pride themselves on teaching even as other institutions have made research the be-all and

end-all. We at the Endowment salute you for that because we think an emphasis on teaching is especially important in the humanities. It has long been observed that the model upon which our universities are built is a scientific one. It is based on the idea that knowledge is cumulative, that individual scholars should be engaged in the tasks of producing bricks to be laid one on top of another until the temple of knowledge emerges, shining and whole.

The way in which many humanists have accepted the scientific paradigm is impressive. The authors of a recent report issued by the American Council of Learned Societies justify the arcane language that characterizes some research in the humanities by saying, "We do not expect physicists to work within their disciplines only in language that nonphysicists might comprehend." Annette Kolodny, dean of the humanities faculty at the University of Arizona, uses the scientific model to argue that faculty members who do not publish should not be allowed to participate in tenure and promotion decisions. "We must assure that those teaching in the classroom keep up with the field," she says, and "know . . . the latest debates and theoretical problems . . . and teach their students about that In the sciences, nobody argues that physics should be taught in 1990 the way it was in 1950."

There are some dissenting voices. Frank Manley, a humanities scholar and teacher at Emory University, says, "I don't think the scientific model that we run throughout the university is a meaningful one. The idea that we are all making contributions by the learned articles we write and that these are piling up in heaven somewhere and that someone in the future will come along and make a grand scheme out of them is just ridiculous." One recent study that supports Manley's notion was done by a scientist to show how many scholarly articles are never cited again, how many bricks are never built upon. Within 4 years of their publications 37 per cent of papers published in physics remained uncited and almost 47 per cent of the papers published in medicine. In the social sciences, the rate of uncitedness rose to 75 per cent. And in the arts and the humanities to 98 per cent.

It may be that we need another vision of ourselves; need to think of ourselves less as those who build new temples and more as those who tend and keep lovely old gardens. Surely we do valuable work when we care for the poetry and history that are the venerable maples and pines that anchor the garden. Surely we do valuable work when we explore all the wonders of the garden with new generations, appreciating with them the beauty their forebears saw and encouraging them to look for new beauty--as well as for old beauty that has been hidden but needs to be brought to view. Part of our work, too, is

bringing our students to understand that there are other gardens, lovely in their way and life-enhancing to know. Perhaps this is our role--or perhaps another metaphor better suits those of us in the humanities. We know for certain that our role is crucial in education. We know for certain our role is crucial in life. But it is, I think, time for us to create new visions for ourselves of the way in which that role is special and not simply a pale imitation of the sciences.

It has been a great pleasure to be with you. I know that many of you will be coming to the Endowment this afternoon, and I think we will have a splendid time. Our speaker will be a man who has spent much of his life exploring the humanities, finding hidden beauty and bringing it to light. Henry Louis Gates will be talking this afternoon about works of African-American literature that he and his researchers have recovered. He is one of the many outstanding scholars whose efforts we have helped make possible, and I invite you to join us in hearing from him.

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BEFORE THE

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF LEARNED SOCIETIES

ANNUAL MEETING

ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

APRIL 26, 1991

As you know, the Endowment is required from time to time to report on the state of the humanities to the Congress of the United States, and I thought I'd spend a few minutes talking about our latest effort. It was issued last fall and entitled Tyrannical Machines: A Report on Educational Practices Gone Wrong and Our Best Hopes for Setting Them Right. The approach we took had its origin in frustration. There were so many failed practices in American education, so many instances where there was consensus about what was wrong. And yet even where there is widespread agreement, there has been little success in instituting reform. How is it that we can know what's wrong and find ourselves unable to change it?

About the time we were pondering this question, I happened to be reading William James and came across his observations about the fine habit that we Americans have of coming up with good ideas and loving them so much that we try to give them eternal life. We come up with good ideas and find ways to lock them in concrete, to institutionalize them so powerfully that even when they aren't good ideas anymore, even when they become counterproductive, we can't get rid of them. We transform good ideas into what James called "tyrannical machines," and we frequently find ourselves helpless in the face of them.

James's metaphor offers a powerful explanation for many of the practices we have long lamented in our schools. Take the way we prepare teachers. There was a time in the 19th century when almost anyone could teach--even people without high school diplomas. Liberal arts faculties weren't interested in offering preparation to this group and so separate training developed for them in normal schools. In the beginning, this separate study offered teachers opportunities for schooling that were otherwise unavailable--and so it was a good idea, so good that we institutionalized it. By the 1930s prospective teachers were required by law to spend substantial time in a separate course of study--and so they are to this day, though there is widespread doubt about the wisdom of this course.

Now that our teachers are all college graduates, what benefit is there in offering them a preparation isolated from the rest of the college or university? Why have them study psychology outside the psychology department? Why have them study how to teach social studies apart from the study of history?

Teachers themselves ask these questions. They know that all too often their classes in pedagogy aren't sufficiently rigorous. One has only to look at textbooks commonly used to teach these courses to see what teachers mean. Suppose, for

example, a teacher wants to show children how to use the directory that is on the front page of most newspapers. According to an education methods textbook I have in my office, there are twelve different steps involved in teaching and applying such a skill.

I must confess that I find it difficult to read these textbooks without becoming indignant. They tell future teachers that there are exactly four types of thinking, exactly three ways of developing concepts. These textbooks take ideas that are subtle and reduce them to simplicities. They take ideas that are controversial or even incorrect and present them as if there were no debate. Setting a good example, one textbook confidently declares, is not an effective way to teach values.

So teachers complain about time wasted. And they also complain about opportunities wasted, because time spent with textbooks such as these is time that can't be spent studying the subject one will teach, whether it's history or physics. We have arrived at the peculiar position in this country where those who intend to teach a subject usually study it less than those who do not.

What was once a good idea isn't a good idea any longer; and people both inside and outside our colleges and departments

of education have been saying this for a long time. But having adopted certain ways of doing things on a large scale, we find them enormously difficult to change.

The other example of a tyrannical machine that I'd like to take up today is the way we reward faculty members in our colleges and universities. At the end of the 19th century, a number of educational leaders realized it would be valuable to encourage the expansion of knowledge: that is, to encourage research. This good idea--and it was a good idea--was institutionalized. It was made the heart of the tenure and promotion process and gradually became so powerful that the idea of the dissemination of knowledge--the idea of teaching--became, in many instances, quite secondary.

We all know that there are faculty members who consider teaching their primary responsibility, and we know as well that there are also many institutions that consider teaching their primary responsibility--but in a system that has made research central to status, it is difficult for these teachers and institutions to gain the prestige they deserve. Indeed, they must often act against their self-interest to place as much emphasis on teaching as they think is right. As Sylvia Grider noted during the panel earlier today, they must take a path that is "personally expensive."

There are costs to faculty and costs to students. At many universities, undergraduates find few senior faculty in their classrooms, few full-time faculty members of any kind willing to guide their education, and few meaningful formal guidelines--that is, requirements--to help them on their way to a liberal education. Broadly conceived, coherent requirements need faculty to shape them, faculty to teach them, and a system that primarily rewards research provides little incentive for any of this.

It is possible today to graduate from 38 per cent of the nation's colleges and universities without studying history; from 45 per cent without studying literature; and, even at schools where these subjects are required, students can often fulfill them in ways that seem to reflect faculty research interests more than students' needs. At Harvard one can fulfill core requirements by studying tuberculosis from 1842 to 1952 or pictorial and literary representations of New York and Berlin from 1880 to 1940.

What may well be an interesting research topic may well not be a sensible undergraduate requirement; but in a system where research is valued so highly, the discrepancy tends to be overlooked. We end up with college seniors who haven't the least idea what Plato wrote or who Stalin and Churchill were. In our colleges and universities, as in our schools, we have

taken admirable ideas and institutionalized them in ways that have given them astonishing power--indeed, power sufficient for them to prevail even after they have become counterproductive.

Now, I know that it causes many of you concern when I speak on this topic. You would prefer for me not to be critical of practices in higher education, but only to praise them. You are kind enough to tell me that from time to time. I suspect, however, that many of you are also aware of the success I have had in achieving increases in the budget of the National Endowment for the Humanities in the time I have been chairman. I'd like to suggest that the critique and the budget success are not unrelated.

No field of human endeavor is perfect and that certainly includes our own. If we are completely honest about it, we must admit that the overemphasis on research has--in the humanities as in other fields--meant a lot of useless activity, a lot of publishing that serves no purpose beyond expanding the authors' c.v.s. Indeed, the situation in the humanities may be worse than in other fields. A faculty member in the sciences recently compiled what he called an index of uncitedness. His purpose was to show how many scholarly articles are never cited again. And he found it to be the case that within 4 years of their publication, 37 percent of the papers published in physics remain uncited and 47 percent of the papers published

in medicine. In the social sciences, the rate of uncitedness rose to 75 percent. And in the arts and humanities, to 98 percent.

I do not point to this study in order to call the entire research enterprise in the humanities into question. We at the NEH put increasing numbers of dollars into humanities research each year; in the past 2 years alone, I have managed to bring the research budget up by 20 percent. And when I think of projects such as the papers and writings of George Washington, Frederick Douglass, Mark Twain, Jane Addams, and Martin Luther King, Jr., or of research tools such as The Encyclopedia of Islam or The Great Dictionary of the Yiddish Language, I know that we are funding scholarly work that will be referred to again and again. When I think of Henry Louis Gates's black periodical literature project or Richard Peaver and Larissa Volokhonsky's translation of The Brothers Karamazov, I know that we are making possible work of enduring value.

But putting so much pressure on so many people to produce scholarly publications, as the academic world is doing now, does mean that many publications will mainly serve to gather dust on library shelves. Moreover, there has been a tendency of late for scholars in the humanities to try to shock and astonish with their work. "The Detective as Pervert." "The Dialectics of Cannibalism." "The Pathetic Politics of

Mutilation." Is anyone surprised that the New York Times pays attention when these are the papers presented at the Modern Language Association? I don't know whether this attention causes anyone actually to read these papers, but it certainly makes it difficult for there to be any secret about what's going on.

Given these circumstances, it seems to me crucial to acknowledge that while there are fine and important things happening in the humanities, there are foolish and insignificant ones as well. And if we aren't willing to try to discern the difference, why should anyone trust us with the public's money?

We should probably ask the same question about private philanthropy. I note that the ACLS recently asked two researchers to conduct a study about support for international exchange. After interviewing private foundation staff members, the researchers noted in dismay how skeptical many staff members were about American higher education. "They expressed to us repeatedly," the researchers wrote, "a sense that American scholars have 'drifted away from reality' and 'talk only to themselves.'" Not much support is provided for international exchange, the researchers noted, and "what support is provided is often grudgingly given and with a heavy heart." Observing a scholarly penchant for, and I quote,

"self-indulgent concentration on irrelevancies," foundation staff members expressed interest in operating future exchanges more through nonacademic organizations than through colleges and universities.

Such findings, it seems to me, underscore that a critical approach is both healthy and useful. A critical approach is necessary--which is not to say that it is sufficient. We should seek ways to remedy the flaws we discover, to restore balance when we see it is lacking. One way we have tried to do this at the Endowment is with our program of Distinguished Teaching Professorships. Typically, of course, chairs are awarded to those who have made outstanding contributions to research. In order that they might go as well to those who have made outstanding contributions to teaching, we have begun a program that encourages colleges and universities to apply for up to \$300,000 to be matched three to one to establish professorships for distinguished teachers. We want to these people to be honored and recognized just as their peers in research are. We are also about to put in place in our Fellowships Division a program of study grants that will support faculty members who want to undertake a short-term course of study aimed at improving teaching.

The American Council of Learned Societies can make contribution to this cause as well. You do that through

gatherings such as this one in which you take up the subject of improving teaching, and it occurs to me there is another topic you might address as well. The whole question of teaching and research in the humanities is, as the expression goes today, "undertheorized." Most of us, most of the time, simply accept the idea that knowledge grows and develops in the humanities in basically the same way it does in the sciences. The authors of a recent report issued by the American Council of Learned Societies justified the arcane language that characterizes some research in the humanities by saying, "We do not expect physicists to work within their disciplines only in language that nonphysicists might comprehend." Annette Kolodny, dean of the humanities faculty at the University of Arizona, uses the scientific model to argue that faculty members who do not publish should not be allowed to participate in tenure and promotion decisions. "We must assure that those teaching in the classroom keep up with the field," she says, and "know . . . the latest debates and theoretical problems . . . and teach their students about that In the sciences, nobody argues that physics should be taught in 1990 the way it was in 1950."

It's not always clear exactly which scientific model lies behind such statements. Sometimes it seems to be the model laid out at the end of the 19th century by scholars like Daniel Coit Gilman and G. Stanley Hall. They conceived of knowledge

These are only preliminary thoughts, and I offer them humbly; but the topic, let me suggest, is an important one. I can think of few organizations better suited than this one to take up the matter of how knowledge grows and develops in the humanities, of how what we as humanists do is unique.

I thank the ACLS for providing me this forum in which to speak today and for the many contributions you have made to the life of the mind.

91st

SECRETS OF SUCCESS

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

Saint Anselm College

Manchester, New Hampshire

May 18, 1991

Graduates, parents, faculty members, and guests--it's a great pleasure for me to be here today and to join with you in celebrating this occasion. My own daughter graduated last weekend, so I feel as though I have a great deal in common with the parents in this audience.

And I also feel I have something in common with the graduates. I know that young people today often look for role models, people who have succeeded in ways they want to succeed. Well, let me just say that people in their forties look for role models, too; and I'd like to tell you I have found mine. You all know who she is: Her name is Sandra Day O'Connor. What you don't know is why she's my role model. It has nothing to do with her being a Supreme Court Justice. It doesn't even have anything to do with her being a thoroughly nice person. No, the reason Sandra Day O'Connor is my role model--and this is going to make all of you very happy--the reason she is my role model is that she has perfected the art of giving short commencement speeches.

Not long ago, Justice O'Connor gave a commencement speech that lasted just five minutes. I'm not sure I can tie that record, but in an attempt to live up to it, I'm going to make just five points today. I'm going to talk about five traits

that are pretty widely shared among successful people that I've observed--and offer them to you as you head off into new worlds and new lives.

One secret of success, I have observed, is to act as if you know what you're doing. Now, I suspect this point doesn't need much elaboration. I have found college seniors to be pretty well-practiced at acting as if they know what they're about. They have a remarkably high degree of self-confidence--which in the case of my own children I have felt an absolute motherly obligation to lower from time to time--but not too much. Watching Douglas MacArthur operate, Franklin Roosevelt observed that you should "never underestimate a man who overestimates himself." There's wisdom there--as well as a jab at MacArthur--and all of this coming from a President who demonstrated a thing or two in his time about acting confidently.

Take your self-confidence with you as you move to the next stage of your life. It will help you, even though you're a beginner, to behave with assuredness, to act as if you know what you're doing. And that is a key to success. But there's a second secret--one that goes right along with the first--and that is to know what you're doing. Sooner or later, you'll be tested. You'll have to make decisions and live with results that will show how hard you've worked, how much you've learned,

how much you are to be respected. True expertise, orchestra conductor Victoria Bond observed not long ago in the New York Times, "is the most potent form of authority." Those are words worth remembering. When your chance comes along to make the music, you will find it a very good thing, indeed, to know the notes.

A third rule for success I would offer you is this: Have a place to stand. Archimedes theorized he could move the world with a big enough lever--but he needed a firm place to stand the fulcrum. We all need that firm place--that base of conviction from which to act. I know that college has been a time when you've been encouraged to ask a lot of questions, and that is a crucial part of the examined life which Socrates thought the only kind worth living. But having questioned and doubted, it is also important to arrive at some answers and beliefs.

Find that base of conviction that will give you direction, that place to stand from which you try to move the world. That's the third secret of success I would offer you, and the fourth is to be aware--and respectful--of where other people are standing. Let me tell you a story I heard not long ago. It was about a British naval commander, Roger Wilson, let's call him, who was sailing her majesty's yacht with the Prince and Princess of Wales on board. Commander Wilson, so

the story goes, saw lights ahead, bearing straight down on the yacht. So he signalled: "Please yield." But the lights kept coming. "No, you please yield," they signalled back. The commander tried again: "Please yield." And again, the negative answer: "No, you please yield," So the commander decided to pull rank. "I am commander Roger Wilson of her majesty's yacht, I have the Prince and Princess of Wales on board, and by royal decree, I order you to yield."

And back flashed the answer: "I am John Smith, and I have been in charge of this lighthouse for fifteen years."

You will encounter some immovable objects in your lifetime. Some movable ones, too, of course. The crucial thing--no matter how exalted you might become--is to be clear-sighted about the difference. Having a healthy estimate of yourself can be a fine thing--unless it keeps you from a realistic estimate of others. I mentioned Douglas MacArthur at the beginning of this speech, and if you've studied history as much as I hope you have during your time at this fine college, you'll remember that his career ended when he tried sailing into a lighthouse named Harry Truman.

The last secret of success I'd offer--and the most important one--is this: Know what success is. It may be connected with fame and fortune, but it well may not be. It

almost certainly will be connected with work that you love, work that involves you deeply quite apart from whatever rewards it may bring.

How do you discover what that work is for you? With intensity of effort, I would suggest, because knowledge of what that work is will grow out of learning what you do well. And there is no way to be sure of your capacities except by testing yourself, pushing yourself. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy whole might," wrote Thomas Carlyle, a man who thought long and deeply on the subject of meaningful work.

And how will you know when you have found work you love? One symptom is that you will lose track of time. You'll look at your watch and wonder where the hours have gone, at your calendar and wonder what happened to the week. And that loss of time sense is symbol as well as symptom. We are time-bound creatures, but meaningful work can make us forget our mortal limitation--because it helps us transcend it.

Whether we create sonnets or families, make machines or harvest crops, work takes on meaning for us when we feel it to be a part of something that endures. Whether we undertake the business of business or scholarship or nations, work becomes beloved when it joins us with something larger than ourselves, something worthy that extends beyond us. Willa Cather put it

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There are many things that those of us on the podium wish for you as you set forth from this fine school. Indeed, you have many blessings already--this joyous occasion, proud parents, good friends, teachers who have cared for you and will continue to.

To all of these, let me add my blessing. May you find success. May you discover the work you love--and prosper in it.

9. R

SECRETS OF SUCCESS

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

Georgetown University

School of Languages and Linguistics

Washington, DC

May 25, 1991

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91C

SECRETS OF SUCCESS

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS
Utah State University
Logan, Utah

June 8, 1991

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9-0

REMARKS BY

LYNNE V. CHENEY

CHAIRMAN

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

TO THE

OFFICE OF WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON

HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

FALL CONFERENCE

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HYATT REGENCY HOTEL

WASHINGTON, DC

It's a pleasure to be here today, to address a group that has done so much to enrich our national life. Historically black colleges and universities have long been a wellspring of leadership for our country. You have provided undergraduate training for the vast majority of African-American dentists, doctors, and Ph.D.'s. You have provided undergraduate training for the vast majority of African-American officers in our armed forces and judges on our federal bench. We at the National Endowment for the Humanities are immensely proud of our long association with you.

In the four years since I have been chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, we have funded many fine projects on your campuses. At Clark University in Atlanta, the NEH funded a program to bring faculty members together to discuss African-American, Caribbean, and African works that could be added to world literature courses. At Hampton University, we sponsored faculty development seminars to enhance teaching in a course on Western & non-Western Epics.

You have conceived and we have sponsored so many outstanding projects. I think of an institute for Chicago school teachers directed by Chicago State University and called "Extending the Great Conversation: Mesopotamia, Egypt, Ancient

Greece, and the Origins of the Western Tradition." With NEH funding, Lincoln University in Pennsylvania will be organizing a conference and a lecture-discussion series on Langston Hughes--his life and his work.

On your campuses are many fine scholars determined to heighten the awareness of all Americans to the richness of African-American culture. At Fisk University, we are supporting these scholars as they plan a series of programs for the public that will compare the Chicago Renaissance to the Harlem Renaissance. At Medgar Evers University, scholars are organizing a conference on the evolution of black literary achievements.

At Fisk and Spelman and Tougaloo, NEH-supported faculty members are working to organize and preserve papers and documents that will enable future scholars to explore such important subjects as the civil rights movement. A number of historically black universities--Dillard, Prairie View A&M, Xavier, and Jackson State--have been awarded Challenge Grants by the NEH that will allow them to build endowments to support a range of activities, from establishing a chair in Asian studies, to building library collections in the humanities, to renovating a site for humanities research. The project director for the Jackson State Challenge Grant is, I am proud to say, working at the National Endowment for the Humanities

this year on an Intergovernmental Personnel Assignment. I'd like to recognize Dr. Alferdteen Harrison and thank her for her fine work. I'd like to recognize as well Dr. Carole Watson, who directs one of the divisions at NEH and supervises our outreach efforts.

Like the faculty members on your campuses, those of us who work at NEH have a wide range of concerns. We worry about schools, as well as about colleges and universities. We worry about museums and historical societies and state humanities councils, as well as about the state of scholarship. From time to time we issue a report on some or all of these matters, and I thought today I'd spend a few minutes talking about a recent report. The title of it is Tyrannical Machines: A Report on Educational Priorities Gone Wrong and Our Best Hopes for Setting Them Right. We took the title from William James who observed in the early part of this century that Americans have a fine habit of coming up with good ideas and loving them so much that they try to give them eternal life. They come up with good ideas and find ways to lock them in concrete, to institutionalize them so powerfully that even when they aren't good ideas anymore, even when they become counterproductive, we can't get rid of them. We transform good ideas into tyrannical machines and find ourselves helpless in the face of them.

Take the way we prepare teachers. There was a time in the nineteenth century when almost anyone could teach--even people without high school diplomas. Liberal arts faculties weren't interested in offering preparation to this group and so separate training developed for them in normal schools. In the beginning, this separate study offered teachers opportunities for schooling that were otherwise unavailable--and so it was a good idea, so good that we institutionalized it. By the 1930s prospective teachers were required by law to spend substantial time in a separate course of study--and so they are to this day, though there is widespread doubt about the wisdom of this course.

Now that our teachers are all college graduates, what benefit is there in offering them a preparation isolated from the rest of the college or university? Why have them study psychology outside the psychology department? Why have them study how to teach social studies apart from the study of history?

Teachers themselves ask these questions. They know that all too often their classes in pedagogy aren't sufficiently rigorous. One has only to look at textbooks commonly used to teach these courses to see what teachers mean. Suppose, for example, a teacher wants to show children how to use the directory that is on the front page of most newspapers.

According to an education methods textbook I have in my office, there are twelve different steps involved in teaching and applying such a skill.

I must confess that I find it difficult to read these textbooks without becoming indignant. They tell future teachers that there are exactly four types of thinking, exactly three ways of developing concepts. These textbooks take ideas that are subtle and reduce them to simplicities. They take ideas that are controversial or even incorrect and present them as if there were no debate. Setting a good example, one textbook declares, is not an effective way to teach values.

So teachers complain about time wasted. And they also complain about opportunities wasted, because time spent with textbooks such as these is time that can't be spent studying the subject one will teach, whether it's history or physics. We have arrived at the peculiar position in this country where those who intend to teach a subject usually study it less than those who do not.

What was once a good idea isn't a good idea any longer; and people both inside and outside our colleges and departments of education have been saying this for a long time. But having adopted certain ways of doing things on a large scale, we find them enormously difficult to change.

Another example of a tyrannical machine: the way we reward faculty members in our colleges and universities. At the end of the nineteenth century, a number of educational leaders realized it would be valuable to encourage the expansion of knowledge: that is, to encourage research. This good idea was institutionalized. It was made the heart of the tenure and promotion process and gradually became so powerful that the idea of the dissemination of knowledge--the idea of teaching--became a poor and attenuated thing.

To be sure, there are faculty members who consider teaching their primary responsibility--and those of you from HBCUs know many of them. There are also many institutions that consider teaching their primary responsibility--and I know they are represented in this room; but in a system that has made research central to status, it is difficult for these teachers and institutions to gain the prestige they deserve. Institutions that rank high in prestige reward their faculty members with ever-reduced teaching loads, and prestigious faculty members expect to be rewarded that way. Institutions that want prestige lure academic stars to their faculties with promises that they will never have to see an undergraduate.

This flight from teaching has financial consequences. It means that college costs more. And it has educational consequences as well. At many universities, undergraduates

find few senior faculty in their classrooms, few full-time faculty members of any kind willing to guide their education, and few meaningful formal guidelines--that is, requirements--to help them on their way to a liberal education. Broadly conceived, coherent requirements need faculty to shape them, faculty to teach them, and a system that primarily rewards research provides little incentive for any of this.

It is possible today to graduate from 38 per cent of the nation's colleges and universities without studying history; from 45 per cent without studying literature; and, even at schools where these subjects are required, students can often fulfill them in ways that seem to reflect faculty research interests more than students' needs. At Harvard one can fulfill core requirements by studying tuberculosis from 1842 to 1952 or pictorial and literary representations of New York and Berlin from 1880 to 1940.

What may well be an interesting research topic may well not be a sensible undergraduate requirement; but in a system where research is valued so highly, the discrepancy tends to be overlooked. We end up with college seniors who haven't the least idea what Plato wrote or who Stalin and Churchill were.

In our colleges and universities, as in our schools, we have taken admirable ideas and institutionalized them in ways

that have given them astonishing power--indeed, power sufficient for them to prevail even after they have become counterproductive. The error of our ways has been apparent for a very long time, but simply realizing what we are doing wrong isn't sufficient to set it right. That, I think, is one of the lessons we learned in the 1980s. Naming our problems doesn't correct them. Bad practices will not go away simply because we demonstrate how counterproductive they are. Tyrannical machines will not dismantle themselves. We have to set alternatives to them into place, optional ways of preparing teachers and rewarding college and university faculty. We have to identify promising alternatives that are in place, nurture them and talk about them so that people are aware of these other ways, so that every school district or college that wants to move ahead with reform doesn't have to reinvent the wheel.

A case in point are alternative certification programs in states like New Jersey and Texas, ways of preparing teachers that emphasize classroom experience. These alternative plans prepare prospective teachers by allowing them to work with people who have mastered the art, the craft of teaching. That's the way one becomes an excellent teacher--by seeing good teaching in action. In New Jersey, alternatively certified teachers have done better on the National Teachers Examination than teacher education graduates, and they are staying in the profession longer. Moreover, alternative certification

programs have been more successful at enrolling and graduating minority teachers than traditional programs have.

Not only are alternative certification programs proving themselves successful, they are giving colleges and universities reason to improve their programs. There are many thoughtful people in our departments and colleges of education, and they gain moral force for changes they want to bring about from the existence of another way of preparing teachers. Faced with competition, faculty members and administrators who turned a deaf ear before can become very willing to listen.

Just as we need alternative ways of certifying teachers, we need alternative reward systems for college and university faculty--systems that give teaching an appropriately important place. We at the National Endowment for the Humanities are trying to help change the usual practice in a number of ways. We have, for one thing, put in place a program to help colleges and universities establish distinguished teaching professorships. Now all of you know that typically distinguished professorships go to those who've made outstanding contributions to research. We think they ought to go to those who've made outstanding contributions to teaching as well, and so our program encourages colleges and universities to apply for up to \$300,000 in matching funds to establish chairs for distinguished teachers. We want these

people to be honored and recognized just as their peers in research are.

We are also just about to begin a program of what we call "study grants." Since the NEH's earliest days, we've been awarding fellowships to scholars to do the kind of research that will lead to publication. I think we ought also to help scholars who want to spend time doing the kind of reading and research that will revitalize their teaching. And our study grants program will do that: provide a stipend to people whose professional career is largely defined by teaching so that they can take up to 6 weeks to explore topics that will enrich their teaching. Assuming the Congress of the United States appropriates the money we need for this program, we will be making the first study grants awards in 1992.

I tell you about these programs because I know that historically black colleges and universities have run against the grain, have continued to pride themselves on teaching even as other institutions have made research the be-all and end-all. We at the Endowment salute you for that because we think an emphasis on teaching is especially important in the humanities. It has long been observed that the model upon which our universities are built is a scientific one. It is based on the idea that knowledge is cumulative, that individual scholars should be engaged in the tasks of producing bricks to

be laid one on top of another until the temple of knowledge emerges, shining and whole.

The way in which many humanists have accepted the scientific paradigm is impressive. The authors of a recent report issued by the American Council of Learned Societies justify the arcane language that characterizes some research in the humanities by saying, "We do not expect physicists to work within their disciplines only in language that nonphysicists might comprehend." Annette Kolodny, dean of the humanities faculty at the University of Arizona, uses the scientific model to argue that faculty members who do not publish should not be allowed to participate in tenure and promotion decisions. "We must assure that those teaching in the classroom keep up with the field," she says, and "know . . . the latest debates and theoretical problems . . . and teach their students about that In the sciences, nobody argues that physics should be taught in 1990 the way it was in 1950."

There are some dissenting voices. Frank Manley, a humanities scholar and teacher at Emory University, says, "I don't think the scientific model that we run throughout the university is a meaningful one. The idea that we are all making contributions by the learned articles we write and that these are piling up in heaven somewhere and that someone in the future will come along and make a grand scheme out of them is

just ridiculous." One recent study that supports Manley's notion was done by a scientist to show how many scholarly articles are never cited again, how many bricks are never built upon. Within 4 years of their publications 37 per cent of papers published in physics remained uncited and almost 47 per cent of the papers published in medicine. In the social sciences, the rate of uncitedness rose to 75 per cent. And in the arts and the humanities to 98 per cent.

It may be that we need another vision of ourselves; need to think of ourselves less as those who build new temples and more as those who tend and keep lovely old gardens. Surely we do valuable work when we care for the poetry and history that are the venerable maples and pines that anchor the garden. Surely we do valuable work when we explore all the wonders of the garden with new generations, appreciating with them the beauty their forebears saw and encouraging them to look for new beauty--as well as for old beauty that has been hidden but needs to be brought to view, and here I think particularly of the black periodical literature project headed by Henry Louis Gates--and sponsored by the NEH--that is recovering so many works of African-American literature.

We need new metaphors in the humanities. We know for certain that our role is crucial in education. We know for certain our role is crucial in life. And it is, I think, time

for us to create new visions for ourselves of the way in which that role is special and not simply a pale imitation of the sciences.

It has been a great pleasure to be with you, and I know you will enjoy hearing from the other members of my NEH staff who are here this morning.

Thank you--I have greatly enjoyed being with you.

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Remarks by

Lynne V. Cheney

Chairman

National Endowment for the Humanities

Town Hall of California

Biltmore Hotel

Los Angeles, California

September 17, 1991

It's a great pleasure to be here with you today. I know that with a group as knowledgeable as this one I do not have to begin in the way I often do: that is, by explaining what the humanities are. There is confusion on this point, as my mail frequently makes clear. I received a letter not long ago addressed to the Natural Endowment for the Humanities--a mistake that has a certain woodsy charm about it. My favorite misaddressed piece of mail, though, was a card sent to me recently at the National Endowment for the Amenities.

That is an interesting slip, partly because of the truth it reveals. There is pleasure connected with the humanities. Through the ages, history, literature, and philosophy have been sources of immense satisfaction. Long ago, St. Augustine observed that the only reason to philosophize was in order to be happy.

But the humanities, particularly in Western civilization, have also been contentious; and that has certainly been the case in recent years. Today I want to talk about some of the reasons for this contentiousness, focusing particularly on "political correctness," or "p.c.," as it's sometimes called.

Political correctness typically involves faculty members trying to impose their views on others, and the results can be funny--particularly when the forces of political correctness try to identify ever new forms of offense. At a recent conference at Yale, for example, a distinguished professor of literature suggested that limiting the humanities to the study of humankind was a form of "speciesism." Now, we all know a speciesist or two, I suspect. They are the people who refer to their dogs and cats as "pets"--a term much too condescending to be politically correct. Or the speciesist is the person who talks about "wild" animals, when the proper description is "free-roaming."

Smith College did its part to add to the English language when it recently warned the incoming class to beware not only of classism and ethnocentrism, but also of "lookism," a form of oppression that involves putting too much stock in personal appearance. John Leo, a wonderful columnist for U.S. News and World Report, suggested not long ago that this new vocabulary--and the sensibility it reflects--is going to require us to rename some of the old classics. Beauty and the Beast, for example, is hopelessly incorrect, with part of the title too concerned with female appearance and the other part putting animals in a negative light. A politically correct

title for Beauty and the Beast, Leo suggests, might be something like . . . A Lookism Survivor and a Free-roaming Fellow Mammal.

I'm not sure it will sell.

Political correctness does invite parody, but there is a serious aspect to it as well, and I thought I'd begin talking about that today by telling a story. It begins in the spring of 1990 when the English Department at the University of Texas at Austin decided to revise its freshman composition program. Henceforth English 306, the required composition course taken by some 3000 freshmen, would focus on race and gender; and all classes would use the same text, an anthology called Racism and Sexism.

This book--the central required text for every section of freshman English--begins by defining racism as something only white people can be guilty of, and it tells students that sexism is unique to men. It goes on to portray the United States as a society so profoundly racist and sexist as to make a mockery of all our notions of liberty and justice. There are no comparisons with other cultures offered, no context to show how American ideals and practices actually stand up against those of the rest of the world--or the rest of history. The overwhelming impression that this textbook leaves is that every

injustice of race or gender that human beings ever visited upon one another happened first and worst in this country. And the only way we can redeem ourselves, the textbook tells us, is to change fundamentally the way we produce and distribute wealth. Abandon capitalism, in other words.

Now, one might well think that the decision to focus English 306 on Racism and Sexism would cause some debate. For one thing, English 306 is a course intended to teach students how to write. Will they be better writers when they have stopped referring to poor people and instead speak of the "economically exploited," as one essay in the book instructs them to do? Will they become better writers from reading sentences such as the following?

Demagogic conservative imagery is built on the loss associated with the decline in family life.

There's a clear political inclination here, but not much by way of clear meaning--and shouldn't textbooks used in composition classes provide, above all, examples of clear expression?

Some people in the English Department did object to the plans to revise course 306, but they had little effect, until finally, Alan Gribben, a noted scholar of American literature,

decided to go public. He sent letters to newspapers around the state, and citizens began to express their opinions about the English 306 revision. Fifty-six faculty members from across the university signed a "Statement of Academic Concern." The revised course was revised again so that English 306 would include a broader array of subjects, a diversity of viewpoints, and extensive instruction on how to analyze, argue, and write.

But Alan Gribben was unable to take much pleasure in this victory. He found himself vilified at campus rallies. He was the victim of hate mail, rumors, and anonymous late-night phone calls denouncing him as racist. Most members of the English Department stopped speaking to him, and they certainly didn't send graduate students his way or put him on departmental committees. Finally, in the spring of this year, he announced his intention to leave Texas, where he had been for seventeen years, and move to Montgomery, Alabama, where he will teach at a branch of Auburn University. "If I continued to live here," he told a newspaper in Texas, "I'd have to live under siege."

Several aspects of this story make it an almost classic example of what is happening on many campuses today. There is, first of all, the idea underlying the English 306 reform that it is perfectly all right--even desirable--to use the classroom and the curriculum for political purpose. This would once have been regarded as unethical. It was once thought that teachers

who used the classroom to advance a political agenda were betraying their professional responsibilities. But on many campuses now faculty members have taken the political transformation of their students as a mission. They believe deeply in the radical critique offered by books like Racism and Sexism and see themselves furthering the cause of social justice by using the classroom to advance their views.

This approach to the classroom and the curriculum is one of the sources of controversy in the humanities today. There are people, myself among them, who object to making teaching and learning into the handmaidens of politics. And there are also people, myself among them, who object to the politics that teaching and learning are being made the handmaidens of. Not everyone agrees that the story of our society is an unending tale of oppression. Certainly we have our faults, but we also have many virtues. The history of the United States and Western civilization is marked by the discovery and blossoming of remarkable concepts: individual rights, democracy, the rule of law. In 1989, before Tiananmen Square, the distinguished Chinese dissident Fang Li Zhi put it this way: "What we are calling for is extremely basic," he said, "namely, freedom of speech, press, assembly and travel. Concepts of human rights and democracy," he went on, "the founding principles of the U.S. government, are a legacy [of the West] to the world."

These ideas are no small gift to have brought to humankind. They are gifts of such worth that people go into exile for them and into prison. They are gifts of such great worth that people die for them, as they did in Tiananmen Square, as they have done in Vilnius and Riga--and Moscow.

I think of it as my great good fortune that I have opportunities to speak for the freedoms we enjoy. The case for them is so strong that it is immensely gratifying to make. It is not only my right but my pleasure to dissent from university officials who decide, as officials at the University of Maryland did during the Persian Gulf War, that students cannot display the American flag. It might offend someone, they said; and they relented only after students called in the media. It is not only my right but my pleasure to dissent from university officials who decide, as administrators at Rice University in Texas did, that students could not tie yellow ribbons to trees in the main academic quadrangle.

But I also recognize that I am able to express myself so freely because I am neither part of a university nor do I long for a university career. The kind of views I hold represent dissent from the orthodoxies that reign on our campuses, and dissent is not very well tolerated there. That's the most significant part of Alan Gribben's story. He disagreed, and he was driven from the university.

About the time Gribben was resigning, I received in the mail a copy of the minutes of a University of Texas English department faculty meeting. The person who sent them to me was appalled at talk that had gone on in the meeting of "flushing out" other opponents of the revised English 306 syllabus. This student recognized the signs of the new McCarthyism, and he was afraid of becoming himself a victim of it. "Please let me remain anonymous," he wrote. "If it came out that I had written to you--or to someone else similarly disreputable--I wouldn't be [here] for long."

The new McCarthyism--like the old--often works its way by name-calling. People aren't labeled "communist" now, but "racist." Harvard professor Stephen Thernstrom found himself denounced that way. His offenses included using the word Oriental to describe the religion of 19th century Asian immigrants and assigning students to read an article that questioned affirmative action. New York University professor Carol Iannone found herself called racist for writing an article in which she said that certain literary prizes have been awarded on the basis of race rather than literary merit. She was not the first to make such an assertion. Two of the five judges on the National Book Award fiction panel had said the same thing. Nevertheless, Carol Iannone was said to be racist.

Using this word so loosely and carelessly hurts the people who are smeared by it. And in the end it hurts all of us by cheapening the concept of racism. A word that can mean almost anything, eventually comes to mean almost nothing, and we are encouraged to overlook how reprehensible true racism really is.

Sexual harassment is a phrase that has been similarly abused. In the politically correct world of the post-modern campus, it can mean almost anything. At the University of Minnesota not long ago six members of the Scandinavian Studies Department were charged with sexual harassment by a group of graduate students. The complaint provided a long list of the professorial activities that had led to the charge: not greeting a student in a friendly enough manner, for example. Not teaching in a sensitive enough way. Not having read a certain novel. The charges against the professors were finally dropped, but not until the faculty members had incurred considerable expense and suffered deep, personal pain. One professor reported that it cost him \$2,000 to have a lawyer draft a response to the complaint. Another confessed that he wept when the charges were finally dropped.

Yale's Benno Schmidt, one of the few university presidents to speak out forcefully about what is happening in so many colleges and universities today, has declared: "The most

serious problems of freedom of expression in our society . . . exist on our campuses." And one of the most important consequences of this freedom's being suppressed is the chilling effect that results, the silencing of discussion about important issues. Stephen Thernstrom, the Harvard professor I told you about earlier, decided to quit teaching the course about American immigrants that had resulted in his being called racist. In order to protect himself, he decided, he would have to record all his classes, record conversations with students, too, perhaps, so that no one could take his remarks out of context. Better, he concluded, to discontinue the course. Reynolds Farley, a distinguished scholar of race relations, made a similar decision when students in a course he was teaching at the University of Michigan accused him of racial insensitivity. If reading from Malcolm X's autobiography that portion in which Malcolm X describes himself as a pimp and thief--if reading from that was enough to bring charges of racism down upon himself, Farley decided, there was simply no way he could continue to teach the course.

On crucial issues, faculty members are silent. Perhaps apathy plays some part, but concern for reputation, concern for professional well-being--these, I suspect, play a role as well. The University of California at Berkeley has adopted an ethnic studies requirement to go into effect this fall. Now, this requirement was a major step for the university. There

are no other required courses, and so instituting one represents a sharp break with practice. But on this crucial matter, only one-fifth of the eligible faculty members voted. The measure passed narrowly and it seems reasonable to suspect that among the 1,500 or so faculty members who didn't vote were some who had doubts. What is the purpose of the ethnic studies requirement? Is it a response to political pressure? Are curricular requirements now to be set by interest groups who lobby for them? If, on the other hand, the aim is educational, then aren't there other courses that should be required? Perhaps a course in American history, one that would stress the democratic values we share and thus provide balance to the ethnic studies approach, which emphasizes differences that set us apart. Perhaps a course in world history that would prepare students for the decades ahead in which people of all countries and continents are going to be increasingly interdependent. Shouldn't a foreign language be required? If the goal is really to understand people different from ourselves, isn't foreign language study the most effective route? Surely among the 80 percent of faculty who didn't vote were some who had such questions, but the atmosphere on our campuses today doesn't encourage questions. And expressing doubts can be costly.

This is true not only of large universities, but of some smaller institutions too. Professor Christina Sommers of Clark

University has been interviewing faculty and students across the country, and she has particularly striking interviews from Wooster College in Wooster, Ohio, a school near Cleveland that enrolls 1800 students. At Wooster, the textbook Racism and Sexism--the textbook that the University of Texas finally rejected--is required reading for all freshmen. Or freshpersons, I should say. The term freshman is forbidden at Wooster. If you use it, one student warned professor Sommers, you could be taken before the Judiciary Board.

Another student described the seminar required of all first year students. "Difference, Power, and Discrimination," it is called, with the subtitle "Perspectives on Race, Gender, Class, and Culture." According to the student, the seminar resembled "a reeducation camp" more than a "university program." "Now we know," he said, "that when we read the Declaration of Independence that it's not about equality and inalienable rights--but it is a sexist document written by white male elites."

Faculty, who are evaluated on their "gender sensitivity," said they are afraid to speak out. According to one, to do so would be "suicidal." Another said, "I am getting old and tired and I do not want to get fired. Until there is an atmosphere of tolerance, I do not want to go on the record." Promised anonymity, he noted, "What you have here, on the one hand, are

a lot of students and faculty who are very skeptical, but they are afraid to voice their reservations."

When political correctness steps off campus, the results can be instructive. In Washington, D.C., the Smithsonian Institution recently put together a show called "The West as America." Its purpose was to show that westward expansion in this country was not an heroic effort, worthy of our awe, but that it was instead one more tale--in a long, sad string of such tales--of white, male, capitalist oppression. The exhibit deconstructed paintings by Bingham and Farney and Stanley and Remington so that viewers could perceive the race and class conflict and the economic exploitation that they are really about. Frederick Remington's "Fight for the Water Hole," the exhibit explained, is, despite the fact that it shows five cowboys defending a water hole in the middle of the desert, not really about anything so simple as a battle over a desert water hole. Instead, it is really about the anxieties of Eastern industrialists who found themselves challenged by the foreign laborers they had imported to work in their mills and factories.

So heavy-handedly p.c. was "The West as America" that it created a firestorm. Historian Daniel Boorstin declared it "a perverse, historically inaccurate, destructive exhibit." A critic for the Washington Post said "it effectively trashes not

only the integrity of the art it presents, but most of our national history as well." The Smithsonian, to its credit, organized forums on the exhibit where its main tenets could continue to be challenged.

Which is exactly as it should be. The point of opposing political correctness is not to silence those who advance it, but to open their views to challenge and debate. This often happens when p.c. enters the larger world, but it will not happen on our campuses, I fear, unless those of us who live in the larger world help it to happen. People who care about higher education in this country ought to inform themselves about what is happening on campuses and to work whenever it is in their power to nurture free expression there. When it is time for us to help our children choose a college, we should ask hard questions about which campuses not only allow but encourage a diversity of opinion. When it comes time for us to make contributions as alumni, we should ask how well the college we attended is doing at making sure all sides are heard. Those who serve on boards of trustees should encourage discussion of free speech, itself. Does political correctness reign on this campus? That's a topic that should provide lively debate--though not if it's done as the University of Michigan plans to do it. A conference is being held there called "The PC Frame-Up: What's Behind the Attack?"--which doesn't seem to leave a whole lot of room for disagreement.

Similarly, the University of Chicago recently held a debate on political correctness between two professors who both declared p.c. to be the product of overheated conservative imaginations.

Fortunately that view is getting harder and harder to maintain. People from across the political spectrum are coming together now to defend free speech on our campuses: people like Duke University's James David Barber, a former president of Amnesty International; Emory's Elizabeth Fox Genovese who heads the Women's Institute there; Berkeley's John Searle; Harvard's David Riesman; Yale's Benno Schmidt--none of whom do I suspect of being registered Republicans.

All of them know the stakes are high. All of them know the issue here is whether the rising generation of Americans will come to understand what free inquiry is--and how it can sometimes be hard--and how it is always necessary if truth and justice are to have a chance.

These are no small matters--and I greatly appreciate your interest in them.

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Remarks by

Lynne V. Cheney

Chairman

National Endowment for the Humanities

Art Institute of Southern California

Laguna Beach, California

September 17, 1991

General overview of NEH activities. Civil War Series. Reports.

One of our recent reports was inspired by the state of curricula on our college and university campuses today. We conducted a survey that showed it was possible to earn a bachelor's degree from:

38 percent of the nation's colleges and universities without taking a course in history;

45 percent without taking a course in American or English literature;

77 percent without studying a foreign language.

41 percent without studying mathematics

33 percent without studying science.

Entering students on our college campuses find few requirements in place and a plethora of offerings. There are hundreds of courses to choose from, a multitude of ways to combine them to earn a bachelor's degree, and a minimum of direction. Luck or accident or uninformed intuition often determines what students do and do not learn.

We decided it would be useful to hold up some models of how the fifty or so hours that are typically devoted to general education could be organized in a coherent way. We set forth one model ourselves--and even more important, we held up as examples those colleges and universities that have developed rigorous and coherent cores of learning for undergraduates, places like the University of Dallas and the University of Denver; Saint Anselm in New Hampshire and the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga; Dixie College in Saint George, Utah, and Thomas Aquinas in Santa Paula, California; Brooklyn College and Queens College and Columbia University, in New York. Faculty at institutions like these have devoted enormous time and effort to the question of what all undergraduates should know, and we were glad to be able to recognize their efforts.

The response to 50 Hours amazed us. It is our experience at the Endowment that postsecondary education is not of as much general interest as elementary and secondary education, but 50 Hours was an exception. We received thousands of requests for it in the first days of its publication.

Now, to be honest, a few people frankly admitted they wanted the report for its reading lists; and there are some fine ones in 50 Hours, from St. John's College's junior year

Western civilization syllabus to Columbia University's "Oriental Civilizations" reading list. The curious reader can find African epics, Asian poetry and Middle Eastern and Latin American novels recommended for study.

But the majority of people requesting 50 Hours seem to be those with interests in matters curricular. Many were faculty members undertaking the hard, seldom-recognized work of gaining consensus on what should be taught and organizing courses and programs for faculty development. We have heard from colleges in every part of the nation that are working to make sense out of undergraduate education.

We have also heard from parents trying to help their children make wise choices about colleges and universities. And we have heard from students who feel frustrated with the programs of study they find in place.

Many people also wrote us to ask for copies of the Gallup survey that NEH released at the same time as 50 Hours. This is a poll showing that one out of four college seniors does not know in which half century Columbus first landed in the Western hemisphere, that one out of four has Churchill's and Stalin's words hopelessly confused, that one out of four can't tell Karl Marx's thoughts from the ideas of the United States Constitution.

When people hear about the poll, they are, of course, appalled that students about to be awarded bachelor's degrees don't know these things; but after they think about it for a minute or two they usually ask whether this kind of information shouldn't have been learned in elementary and secondary school. And the answer is yes, of course. Students should have done projects on Columbus's voyage in the early grades, perhaps read a biography later on. And then in college in a course in world or Western history, they should have opportunities to explore what it meant for people around the globe to have Magellan and Columbus and Vasco da Gama sailing the seas, what it meant for Europeans to encounter "brave new worlds" and be encountered by them. There are events and epochs that one can profitably study more than once, at increasing levels of sophistication, and that one should study more than once. If this were happening, people about to graduate from college would not only know when Columbus sailed but have understanding of the import of such events--which is, as 50 Hours notes, the ultimate goal of education.

Still, the point needs to be emphasized that the responses to the Gallup survey reflect sixteen years of education, not just the last four; and it is the first twelve years I want to focus on for a few minutes today, partly because we are now, for the first time, taking up solutions to the problems of our schools that are sufficiently radical to meet those problems.

We are, for example, profoundly revising our concept of what it means to be a teacher. We used to accept as a truism that the activity of teaching in our schools was greatly different from the activity of being a faculty member at a college or university. "Schoolteachers teach students," the conventional wisdom went, "and faculty members teach subjects." This meant that schoolteachers should study how to teach and leave it to their colleagues in higher education to become knowledgeable about the subjects being taught. The way to sustain teachers professionally, it was widely believed, was to offer them more and more courses in how to teach, to make it very easy for them to take courses with titles like "Creative Teaching Strategies" and to make it hard--and expensive--for them to study the modern novel or ancient history or quantum mechanics.

What a shift in thinking we are undergoing about this. Seminars and institutes funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities are giving teachers in every part of the country opportunities to read history and literature and to discuss them with some of the nation's most distinguished faculty members. This past summer, just to give a few examples, schoolteachers studied African-American women's literature in an NEH seminar at Old Dominion University in Virginia, Pascal's Pensees at Notre Dame in Indiana, Melville's Moby Dick at the University of California at Santa Barbara. The NEH/UCLA Center

for History in the Schools is another project that I point to with pride. The Center is providing teachers with the kinds of materials they and their students deserve: substantive materials; the original documents and texts that are the life of the humanities.

A second area of radical rethinking concerns the matter of who decides what school a child attends. Across the country in different localities and states, plans are being implemented that allow parents and students to choose. The idea of choice is gaining converts partly because it makes sense. Institutions do not spontaneously improve. They need motivation to improve, and that is what choice provides. Inserting the dynamic of competition into education gives schools powerful reason to get better. If a school wants to be chosen, it has to strive for excellence.

Most choice plans mean choice among public schools, but even more venturesome thinking is going on. In Wisconsin, the Republican Governor, Tommy Thomson, joined forces with Polly Williams, a Democratic legislator; and the two of them got through the legislature a bill to allow poor children in inner-city Milwaukee to choose between private and public schools. It's a small effort. Only a few hundred children are involved right now, but it is significant, nonetheless, partly because it shows the non-partisan nature of the radical reforms

that are taking place. Both the Governor and Mrs. Williams have made clear a vital point about choice: it results in a sense of ownership. It makes parents feel involved with schools. I have had the good fortune to talk to Mrs. Williams, and she explains it this way: "If we can empower poor people to decide for themselves, that's going to involve them in the schools in a whole new way." Mrs. Williams' words take on special force, since she was once on welfare herself.

The last point I want to make today is a related one, and I'd like to make it by telling a story. I had an opportunity a year or so ago to visit Asia and talk to educators and visit classrooms there. At one school, Kyungbok High School in Seoul, Korea, I visited Mr. Hong's 3 p.m. English class; and at the end of the hour, I was asked if I would like to say a few words. I used the time to ask the seventeen-year-olds in Mr. Hong's class a question from a survey that the Endowment funded a few years ago to find out what seventeen-year-olds in the United States know about history and literature. The question was: When did the American Civil War occur? Given fifty-year blocks of time to choose from, more than two-thirds of the American seventeen-year olds could not say when the Civil War occurred. There were fifty-one students in Mr. Hong's English class, and fifty got the answer right.

Now this is a breathtaking difference, and there are many explanations for it: a longer school year in Korea, a national curriculum, a national examination that expects students to have mastered such knowledge! But perhaps the most crucial element in the Korean students' success can be found in a gift I was given as I left the school: a wooden pencil holder with four Chinese characters on it. The first said, "Be loyal to your country;" the second, "Honor your parents;" the third, "Work hard in the daytime;" and the fourth, "Read at night." These words--the work of a nineteenth-century calligrapher--are Kyungbok High School's motto. They are part of the environment within which learning takes place.

An ethos that so nurtures learning cannot be created by classroom teachers alone. It's up to parents--it's up to all of us--to emphasize the importance of hard work and the inestimable value of education through our words and our example. Indeed, it may be that the most profound rethinking that we are doing about education has to do with a steadily growing realization that we are all teachers, no matter what our occupation. If ours is a society in which young people are eager to learn, we can all take credit; and if it is not, we can all take blame.

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS AND BEYOND

Remarks by

Lynne V. Cheney

Chairman

National Endowment for the Humanities

Before the

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

Washington, DC

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It's a great pleasure to be here with you today. I know that with a group as knowledgeable as this one I do not have to begin in the way I often do: that is, by explaining what the humanities are. There is confusion on this point, as my mail frequently makes clear. I received a letter not long ago addressed to the Natural Endowment for the Humanities--a mistake that has a certain woodsy charm about it. My favorite misaddressed piece of mail, though, was a card sent to me recently at the National Endowment for the Amenities.

That is an interesting slip, partly because of the truth it reveals. There is pleasure connected with the humanities. Through the ages, history, literature, and philosophy have been sources of immense satisfaction. Long ago, St. Augustine observed that the only reason to philosophize was in order to be happy.

But the humanities, particularly in Western civilization, have also been contentious; and that has certainly been the case in recent years. Today I want to talk about some of the reasons for this contentiousness, focusing particularly on "political correctness," or "p.c.," as it's sometimes called.

Political correctness typically involves faculty members trying to impose their views on others, and the results can be funny--particularly when the forces of political correctness try to identify ever new forms of offense. At a recent conference at Yale, for example, a distinguished professor of literature suggested that limiting the humanities to the study of humankind was a form of "speciesism." Now, this concept attracted my attention, and so I tried to find other examples of it. Speciesists, I have learned, are people who refer to their dogs and cats as "pets"--a term much too condescending to be politically correct. Or the speciesist is the person who talks about "wild" animals, when the proper description is "free-roaming."

Smith College did its part to add to the English language when it recently warned the incoming class to beware not only of classism and ethnocentrism, but also of "lookism," a form of oppression that involves putting too much stock in personal appearance. John Leo, a wonderful columnist for U.S. News and World Report, suggested not long ago that this new vocabulary--and the sensibility it reflects--is going to require us to rename some of the old classics. Beauty and the Beast, for example, is hopelessly incorrect, with part of the title too concerned with female appearance and the other part putting animals in a negative light. A politically correct

title for Beauty and the Beast, Leo suggests, might be something like . . . A Lookism Survivor and a Free-roaming Fellow Mammal.

I'm not sure it will sell.

Political correctness does invite parody, but there is a serious aspect to it as well, and I thought I'd begin talking about that today by telling a story. It begins in the spring of 1990 when the English Department at the University of Texas at Austin decided to revise its freshman composition program. Henceforth English 306, the required composition course taken by some 3000 freshmen, would focus on race and gender; and all classes would use the same text, an anthology called Racism and Sexism.

This book--the central required text for every section of freshman English--begins by defining racism as something only white people can be guilty of, and it tells students that sexism is unique to men. It goes on to portray the United States as a society so profoundly racist and sexist as to make a mockery of all our notions of liberty and justice. There are no comparisons with other cultures offered, no context to show how American ideals and practices actually stand up against those of the rest of the world--or the rest of history. The overwhelming impression that this textbook leaves is that every

injustice of race or gender that human beings ever visited upon one another happened first and worst in this country. And the only way we can redeem ourselves, the textbook tells us, is to change fundamentally the way we produce and distribute wealth. Abandon capitalism, in other words.

Now, one might well think that the decision to focus English 306 on Racism and Sexism would cause some debate. For one thing, English 306 is a course intended to teach students how to write. Will they be better writers when they have stopped referring to poor people and instead speak of the "economically exploited," as one essay in the book instructs them to do? Will they become better writers from reading sentences such as the following?

Demagogic conservative imagery is built on the loss associated with the decline in family life.

When you see demagogic and conservative lined up together like this, you sense a certain political inclination; but there's not much here by way of clear meaning--and shouldn't textbooks used in composition classes provide, above all, examples of clear expression?

Some people in the English Department did object to the plans to revise course 306, but they had little effect, until

finally, Alan Gribben, a noted scholar of American literature, decided to go public. He sent letters to newspapers around the state, and citizens began to express their opinions about the English 306 revision. Fifty-six faculty members from across the university signed a "Statement of Academic Concern." The revised course was revised again so that English 306 would include a broader array of subjects, a diversity of viewpoints, and extensive instruction on how to analyze, argue, and write.

But Alan Gribben was unable to take much pleasure in this victory. He found himself vilified at campus rallies. He was the victim of hate mail, rumors, and anonymous late-night phone calls denouncing him as racist. Most members of the English Department stopped speaking to him, and they certainly didn't send graduate students his way or put him on departmental committees. Finally, in the spring of this year, he announced his intention to leave Texas, where he had been for seventeen years, and move to Montgomery, Alabama, where he will teach at a branch of Auburn University. "If I continued to live here," he told a newspaper in Texas, "I'd have to live under siege."

Several aspects of this story make it an almost classic example of what is happening on many campuses today. There is, first of all, the idea underlying the English 306 reform that it is perfectly all right--even desirable--to use the classroom and the curriculum for political purpose. This would once have

been regarded as unethical. It was once thought that teachers who used the classroom to advance a political agenda were betraying their professional responsibilities. But on many campuses now faculty members have taken the political transformation of their students as a mission. They believe deeply in the radical critique offered by books like Racism and Sexism and see themselves furthering the cause of social justice by using the classroom and the curriculum to advance their views, and they go about their mission openly--indeed, proudly. "I teach in the Ivy League," a Princeton professor recently told the New York Times, "in order to have direct access to the minds of the children of the ruling classes."

This approach to the classroom and the curriculum is one of the sources of controversy in the humanities today. There are people, myself among them, who object to making teaching and learning into the handmaidens of politics. Students ought to hear the good as well as the bad about our society, know about our triumphs as well as our failures. There ought to be an attempt to get at the complex truth of our experience rather than imposing a singleminded, political interpretation on it. Yes, there has been oppression, but the history of Western civilization in the United States is also marked by the discovery and blossoming of remarkable concepts: individual rights, democracy, the rule of law. In 1989, before Tiananmen Square, the distinguished Chinese dissident Fang Li Zhi put it

this way: "What we are calling for is extremely basic," he said, "namely, freedom of speech, press, assembly and travel. Concepts of human rights and democracy," he went on, "the founding principles of the U.S. government, are a legacy [of the West] to the world."

These ideas are no small gift to have brought to humankind. They are gifts of such worth that people go into exile for them and into prison. They are gifts of such great worth that people die for them, as they did in Tiananmen Square, as they have done in Vilnius and Riga--and Moscow.

I think of it as my great good fortune that I have opportunities to speak for the freedoms we enjoy. The case for them is so strong that it is immensely gratifying to make. It is not only my right but my pleasure to dissent from university officials who decide, as officials at the University of Maryland did during the Persian Gulf War, that students cannot display the American flag. It might offend someone, they said; and they relented only after students called in the media. It is not only my right but my pleasure to dissent from university officials who decide, as administrators at Rice University in Texas did, that students could not tie yellow ribbons to trees in the main academic quadrangle.

But I also recognize that I am able to express myself so freely because I am neither part of a university nor do I long for a university career. The views I hold represent dissent from the orthodoxy that reigns on our campuses, and such dissent is not very well tolerated there. That's the most significant part of Alan Gribben's story. He disagreed, and he was driven from the university.

About the time Gribben was resigning, I received in the mail a copy of the minutes of a University of Texas English department faculty meeting. The person who sent them to me was appalled at talk that had gone on in the meeting of "flushing out" other opponents of the revised English 306 syllabus. This student recognized the signs of the new McCarthyism, and he was afraid of becoming himself a victim of it. "Please let me remain anonymous," he wrote. "If it came out that I had written to you--or to someone else similarly disreputable--I wouldn't be [here] for long."

The new McCarthyism--like the old--often works its way by name-calling. People aren't labeled "communist" now, but "racist." Harvard professor Stephen Thernstrom found himself denounced that way. His offenses included using the word Oriental to describe the religion of 19th century Asian immigrants and assigning students to read an article that questioned affirmative action. New York University professor

Carol Iannone found herself called racist for writing an article in which she said that certain literary prizes have been awarded on the basis of race rather than literary merit. She was not the first to make such an assertion. Two of the five judges on the National Book Award fiction panel had said the same thing. Nevertheless, Carol Iannone was said to be racist.

Using this word so loosely and carelessly hurts the people who are smeared by it. And in the end it hurts all of us by cheapening the concept of racism. A word that can mean almost anything, eventually comes to mean almost nothing, and we are encouraged to overlook how reprehensible true racism really is.

Sexual harassment is a phrase that has been similarly misused. In the politically correct world of the post-modern campus, it can, apparently, mean almost anything. At the University of Minnesota not long ago six members of the Scandinavian Studies Department were charged with sexual harassment by a group of graduate students. The complaint provided a long list of the professorial activities that had led to the charge: not greeting a student in a friendly enough manner, for example. Not teaching in a sensitive enough way. Not having read a certain novel. The charges against the professors were finally dropped, but not until the faculty

members had incurred considerable expense and suffered deep, personal pain. One professor reported that it cost him \$2,000 to have a lawyer draft a response to the complaint. Another confessed that he wept when the charges were finally dropped.

Yale's Benno Schmidt, one of the few university presidents to speak out forcefully about what is happening in so many colleges and universities today, has declared: "The most serious problems of freedom of expression in our society . . . exist on our campuses." And one of the most important consequences of this freedom's being suppressed is the chilling effect that results, the silencing of discussion about important issues. Stephen Thernstrom, the Harvard professor I told you about earlier, decided to quit teaching the course about American immigrants that had resulted in his being called racist. In order to protect himself, he decided, he would have to record all his classes, record conversations with students, too, perhaps, so that no one could take his remarks out of context. Better, he concluded, to discontinue the course. Reynolds Farley, a distinguished demographer and scholar of race relations, made a similar decision when students in a course he was teaching at the University of Michigan accused him of racial insensitivity. If reading from Malcolm X's autobiography that portion in which Malcolm X describes himself as a pimp and thief--if reading from that was enough to bring

charges of racism down upon himself, Farley decided, there was simply no way he could continue to teach the course.

On crucial issues, faculty members are silent. Perhaps apathy plays some part, but concern for reputation, concern for professional well-being--these, I suspect, play a role as well. The University of California at Berkeley has adopted an ethnic studies requirement to go into effect this fall. Now, this requirement was a major step for the university. There are no other required courses, and so instituting one represents a sharp break with practice. But on this crucial matter, only one-fifth of the eligible faculty members voted. The measure passed narrowly and it seems reasonable to suspect that among the 1,500 or so faculty members who didn't vote were some who had doubts. What is the purpose of the ethnic studies requirement? Is it a response to political pressure? Are curricular requirements now to be set by interest groups who lobby for them? If, on the other hand, the aim is educational, then aren't there other courses that should be required? Perhaps a course in American history, one that would stress the democratic values we share and thus provide balance to the ethnic studies approach, which emphasizes differences that set us apart. Perhaps a course in world history that would prepare students for the decades ahead in which people of all countries and continents are going to be increasingly interdependent. Shouldn't a foreign language be required? If the goal is

really to understand people different from ourselves, isn't foreign language study the most effective route? Surely among the 80 percent of faculty who didn't vote were some who had such questions, but the atmosphere on our campuses today doesn't encourage questions. And expressing doubts can be costly.

This is true not only of large universities, but of some smaller institutions too. Professor Christina Sommers of Clark University has been interviewing faculty and students across the country, and she has particularly striking interviews from Wooster College in Wooster, Ohio, a school near Cleveland that enrolls 1800 students. At Wooster, the textbook Racism and Sexism--the textbook that the University of Texas finally rejected--is required reading for all freshmen. Or freshpersons, I should say. The term freshman is forbidden at Wooster. If you use it, one student warned professor Sommers, you could be taken before the Judiciary Board.

Another student described the seminar required of all first year students. "Difference, Power, and Discrimination," it is called, with the subtitle "Perspectives on Race, Gender, Class, and Culture." According to the student, the seminar resembled "a reeducation camp" more than a "university program." "Now we know," he said, "that when we read the Declaration of Independence that it's not about equality and

inalienable rights--but it is a sexist document written by white male elites."

Faculty, who are evaluated on their "gender sensitivity," said they are afraid to speak out. According to one, to do so would be "suicidal." Another said, "I am getting old and tired and I do not want to get fired. Until there is an atmosphere of tolerance, I do not want to go on the record." Promised anonymity, he noted, "What you have here, on the one hand, are a lot of students and faculty who are very skeptical, but they are afraid to voice their reservations."

When political correctness steps off campus, the results can be instructive. In Washington, D.C., the Smithsonian Institution recently put together a show called "The West as America." Its purpose was to show that westward expansion in this country was not an heroic effort, worthy of our awe, but that it was instead one more tale--in a long, sad string of such tales--of white, male, capitalist oppression. The exhibit deconstructed paintings by Bingham and Farney and Stanley and Remington so that viewers could perceive the race and class conflict and the economic exploitation that they are really about. Frederick Remington's "Fight for the Water Hole," the exhibit explained, is, despite the fact that it shows five cowboys defending a water hole in the middle of the desert, not really about anything so simple as a battle over a desert water

hole. Instead, it is really about the anxieties of Eastern industrialists who found themselves challenged by the foreign laborers they had imported to work in their mills and factories.

So heavy-handedly p.c. was "The West as America" that it created a firestorm. Historian Daniel Boorstin declared it "a perverse, historically inaccurate, destructive exhibit." A critic for the Washington Post said "it effectively trashes not only the integrity of the art it presents, but most of our national history as well." The Smithsonian, to its credit, organized forums on the exhibit where its main tenets could continue to be challenged.

Which is exactly as it should be. The point of opposing political correctness is not to silence those who advance it, but to open their views to challenge and debate. This often happens when p.c. enters the larger world, but it will not happen on our campuses, I fear, unless those of us who live in the larger world help it to happen. People who care about higher education in this country ought to inform themselves about what is happening on campuses and to work whenever it is in their power to nurture free expression there. When it is time for us to help our children choose a college, we should ask hard questions about which campuses not only allow but encourage a diversity of opinion. When it comes time for us to

make contributions as alumni, we should ask how well the college we attended is doing at making sure all sides are heard. Those who serve on boards of trustees should encourage discussion of free speech itself. Does political correctness reign on this campus? That's a topic that should provide lively debate--though not if it's done as the University of Michigan plans to do it. A conference is being held there called "The PC Frame-Up: What's Behind the Attack?"--which hardly seems a formulation likely to encourage debate. And let me add an ironic footnote here. I couldn't help but notice that on the same page of the Chronicle of Higher Education which announced the Michigan conference--the conference that will prove that p.c. does not exist--on the same page there was a story about Reagan appointee Linda Chavez being disinvited from a speech she was scheduled to make at Arizona State University. It seems that minority students there had decided her views were politically unacceptable.

The New York Times today reports on its front page about a group, mostly English professors, who are uniting to prove that political correctness is nothing more than the product of overheated conservative imaginations. But they are going to have a very hard time maintaining that view. There are too many examples of p.c. at work, powerful examples like that of Alan Gribben. And there are people from across the political spectrum--not just conservatives but liberals as well--coming

together now to defend free speech on our campuses: people like Duke University's James David Barber, a former president of Amnesty International; Emory's Elizabeth Fox Genovese who heads the Women's Institute there; Berkeley's John Searle; Harvard's David Riesman; Yale's Benno Schmidt--none of whom do I suspect of being registered Republicans.

All of these people know the stakes are high. All of them know the issue here is whether the rising generation of Americans will come to understand what free inquiry is--and how it can sometimes be hard--and how it is always necessary if truth and justice are to have a chance.

These are no small matters--and I greatly appreciate your interest in them.

-End-

"The Future of the Present"

Remarks by

Lynne V. Cheney

Chairman

National Endowment for the Humanities

at the

1991 National Humanities Conference

Federation of State Humanities Councils

Providence, Rhode Island

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I've been at the Endowment for five years now, a long enough time to gain a certain perspective on events. I've been able to see how debates have worked themselves out, how questions have been resolved. In my early months at the NEH, for example, I was part of a rather raucous discussion about whether balanced television, television that explored all sides of a matter, could possibly be interesting. Faced with "The Africans," a television series that NEH had funded which definitely promoted a thesis--and a highly controversial one at that--I argued that balance was not only possible, but definitely desirable in programs sponsored by the government. The opposing view was that balance could only be boring, that "on the one hand, on the other hand" television was television no one would want to watch.

Since I've chosen to tell you about this debate, I'm sure you won't be surprised to learn that it's taken rather a happy turn of late--or at least a turn that makes me happy. The argument for balance gained some mighty support from Ken Burns's "The Civil War," a series that doesn't offer a single explanation of the war or of war in general, but an exploration of how traumatic events can call forth heroism and cowardice, wisdom and foolishness, from men and women of diverse races and classes. In the film, we hear the voices of black and white, North and South, abolitionist and slaveholder. We hear

different historians, people with perspectives as varied as Barbara Fields's and Shelby Foote's. Similarly, "LBJ," a more recent television program funded by the Endowment--and one that received high critical praise last month when it first aired--does not show LBJ as either hero or villain. The figure that emerged was rounded, a character of both shadow and light. "Here is Lyndon Johnson," wrote one reviewer, "with all his complexities and contradictions: great and gross, confident and insecure, immensely able and curiously strumbling, noble and petty, an American Macbeth and American Calser all rolled into one."

Even more recently, "Columbus and the Age of Discovery," a film project we are proud to have funded, portrayed Columbus's 499-year-old journey and the amazing historical period that gave rise to it with all the complexity they deserve. Yes, there was something about Columbus's voyage that we can properly celebrate, the film tells us; but at the same time, we need to acknowledge that voyage's tragic consequences for the people who were living on the American continents when the Europeans came. And we can do that without ascribing murderous intent to all Europeans. In fact, as we recognize the tragedy that ensued from the contact of cultures and peoples, we should also recognize that the attention of the world was first called to that tragedy by a Spanish priest, a man who acted out of a long tradition in the West that places values on revealing error and condemning wrong. It is as misguided to denounce all deeds by all Europeans, this film

tells us, as it is to offer up unstinting praise for their actions.

Now, I don't want to make this point about funding media projects seem overly simple. There is still debate about whether government agencies should fund projects that advocate a point of view. But we have resolved a part of the argument that was going on in very lively form when I came to the NEH five years ago. It is possible, by encouraging balanced presentations, to fund some very good television. In fact, I'd go so far as to say that the NEH, with its requirements for balance, has helped to provide PBS with the very best of its fall season.

So, debates evolve and change, and resolve themselves in part or whole. I've seen that happen and feel fairly certain that you and I will continue to see such a pattern in the years ahead. When I try to think where NEH has been and where it is going, I often speculate on what course the debates we are currently having might take--what the future of the present is, so to speak--and I thought I'd set out some of my thoughts for you this afternoon.

Many of the matters being discussed with some liveliness today fall under the heading of "multiculturalism." We have been debating--sometimes quite passionately--what we should teach our children, and we shall continue to talk about this, I am sure; but I suspect the axis of our discussions will shift.

Instead of battling over mutually exclusive options--whether to teach the West or "the rest," as Skip Gates puts it--we are going to be looking for ways to do both. This is going to mean expanding time in the curriculum for history, which is all to the good; and it is going to mean wrestling with a whole new set of questions, ones that concern how we can best teach our children about the diverse men and women who make up this nation and the world.

Whether we have multicultural curricula is not, in my opinion, going to be the issue. How we can have good multicultural curricula is going to be the question that absorbs us, and when we consider what we have been through, I think certain guidelines emerge: rules, if you will, for how we can best move ahead from where we are now.

First, it is crucial that our children learn about what they share as well as about what makes them different from one another. For this country, for example, we might talk about the immigrant experience. Some of us walked across the Bering land bridge to get here. Some of us came in slave ships and some in Spanish caravels. And still others started their journey in tiny boats from off the cost of Southeast Asia or Cuba. The stories of our coming here, different as they are, have a common theme our children should explore.

And they should, above all, learn about the democratic heritage we all share, know how it has evolved--indeed, how it

has been shaped and changed by people like Susan B. Anthony and Rosa Parks who have insisted that this heritage belongs fully to them. The whole collection of ideas, institutions, and practices that Gunnar Myrdal once called "the American creed" should be familiar to all our children. No matter who their grandparents and parents were, all the students in our schools should learn about equality of opportunity, about individual freedom, and about the rule of law: should learn, that is, about the democratic society that brings them together as well as about differences that set them apart.

As we discuss how to teach our children about sameness and difference, we have to move beyond race--and beyond gender and class, as well. This is a second guideline I would suggest. There are many other ways in which people are alike and different and they should all be part of education. Religion, for example, whatever its form, whether Christianity or Islam or Confucianism, is a search for meaning, a way that different people try differently to understand this life we live. This is no less contentious territory than race and gender--but it is territory we have left relatively untouched, and we must begin to explore it. And we should also include such matters as regionalism. People who grow up in the Rocky Mountains, for example, grow up in a culture that has differences as well as similarities to the culture of New York, and multiculturalism taught well and fully will make that clear.

A third point: Whether we are teaching about race or religion or national origins, we must have objectivity--disinterestedness, Matthew Arnold would have called it--as a goal. I fear we have not yet left behind the notion that we ought to calibrate the history we teach in order to achieve certain psychological effects. One version of the recent report on New York state's curriculum, for example, tells us that we should teach history so that it increases the self esteem of African, Asian, and Latino youngsters while lessening the self esteem of white students. The Portland Baseline Essays--used by almost every school developing an Afrocentric curriculum--advance myth, half-truth, and sometimes downright untruth in the name of racial pride. Arthur Schlessinger, Jr., has succinctly described the intellectual folly of such an approach. "History as a weapon," he writes, "is an abuse of history. The high purpose of history is not the presentation of self nor the vindication of identity, but the recognition of complexity and the search for knowledge." In many ways, we are now very well situated to do exactly what Schlessinger recommends. Thanks to scholars whose work in recent years has enabled us to have a fuller understanding of African-Americans and Asian-Americans and Latinos in American history we can do a better job now of teaching our children to recognize complexity and to search honestly and thoroughly for truth. What a tragedy were we to waste this opportunity by choosing instead to teach invention and exaggeration in our schools.

A fourth guideline for how to do multiculturalism well is related to the third. An important part of being as objective as we can in the history we teach--as disinterested as possible--is being evenhanded. We must be equally generous, equally critical with every culture. A few years ago, the National Commission for Social Studies issued guidelines for history teaching that captured rather neatly a very different and troubling tendency. The goal of social studies, said the report, was "understanding" of other peoples, traditions, and values, but "critical understanding" of our own. That's not what we should be about in our schools. The goal of education should not be an unmatched skepticism about our own society. The good as well as the bad should be recognized--about our culture--and about other cultures as well.

A last point about multiculturalism. While I think we can see the argument turning from whether curricula should be multicultural to how we can best make them that way, this concept still makes many people uneasy, and part of what troubles them is the emphasis it places on groups. Yes, we all do belong to groups of one kind or another, but that doesn't fully explain us. All members of a group are not necessarily the same. People are individuals as well as Asian or white or female and they do not necessarily ascribe to any single set of ideas. Black people do not all have the same view on affirmative action. There are Catholics who argue that women should be ordained, and women--feminists, even--who feel uncomfortable with abortion and comparable worth. Karl Marx

and Adam Smith did not think alike even though both were white European males. Our children ought to understand the variety that individuals bring to groups and know that such diversity is sanctioned, even celebrated in our society.

Even as we teach them about multiculturalism, we should teach our children about individualism. They ought to know that no matter what groups they may be born into, they are free to choose their own beliefs, their own actions, their own associations.

The idea of individual freedom brings us to another issue that has been the subject of lively debate of late, and that is political correctness. It seems to me that this discussion is beginning to evolve and change just as the debate over multiculturalism is. Part of the reason is that the courts have decided some of what has been in dispute. At the University of Michigan, George Mason University, and most recently and most significantly, at the University of Wisconsin, the courts have strongly supported the First Amendment rights of students and rejected administration attempts to restrict them.

It's not hard to understand how colleges and universities got into the business of promulgating penalties for certain speech. Some students are given to startling offensiveness. I wouldn't want them displaying it in my neighborhood, and I can see why universities don't want it in theirs. But a pleasant

neighborhood or a harmonious university, does not represent the highest values. Freedom of expression is even higher. Freedom of expression, Benjamin Cardozo once reminded us, is the necessary condition of all our liberties.

The courts, finding against speech codes, are making a legal point. But there's an educational point here, too. The kind of ignorance that leads to racial and sexual slurs is not best dealt with by suppression. Ignorance is best dealt with when it is answered.

Some powerful voices have been saying these things. Yale's President Benno Schmidt has been particularly eloquent. And that part of the political correctness syndrome that concerns student speech outside the classroom is being resolved. While private universities are not legally affected by rulings on public universities, I doubt that private schools are going to be very enthusiastic about enforcing codes that have been found unconstitutional in the public domain.

The debate over political correctness will, I think, now begin to focus more on the classroom and the curriculum. The debate over political correctness will, I think, become a debate over what the Germans call Lernfreiheit and Lehrfreiheit, the freedom to learn and the freedom to teach--ideas that we in this country have incorporated into the single concept of academic freedom. Too often we forget that the two ideas are interwoven and that faculty members--indeed,

all of us--should be as concerned with the freedom of students to learn as with the freedom of professors to teach. At the very first meeting of the American Association of University Professors in 1915, John Dewey proclaimed that an association priority would be the development of "professional standards . . . which will be quite as scrupulous regarding the obligations imposed by freedom as jealous of the freedom itself," and as the idea of what those obligations are has been set forth and refined over the years, the freedom of students to learn has been repeatedly emphasized. "As teachers," declares the AAUP's current Statement on Professional Ethics, "professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students . . . They protect their academic freedom."

In the months ahead, I suspect that many of the topics we have been talking about under the rubric of political correctness will begin to be discussed as issues of academic freedom. Isn't academic freedom at stake when a professor at Kenyon College declares at the outset of her class that men should not participate in discussion? Isn't academic freedom at stake when a feminist professor at Boston College refuses to call upon male students who raise their hands?

And what should we call it when a professor at the University of Wisconsin declares that her intent--and the intent of other teachers who are part of the critical pedagogy movement--is, and I quote, "to appropriate public resources . . . [such as classrooms and professor's salaries] to further

'progressive' political agendas [believed] to be for the public good." It seems to me that a very precise way to label such activity is to call it a violation of the student's academic freedom.

On our campuses are many people who understand that the freedom of students to learn is threatened when the curriculum and the classroom are made part of a political agenda. Alan Gribben, until recently at the University of Texas at Austin, is one. When a decision was made at UT/Austin to turn English 306, the required composition course taken by some 3,000 students, into a class on racism and sexism, he objected; and he kept objecting until people outside the English department began to pay attention.

Professors on other parts of the campus as well as people off-campus were dismayed when they saw that the central required textbook for the course began by defining racism as something only white people can be guilty of and sexism as unique to men. The textbook goes on to portray the United States as a society so profoundly racist and sexist as to make a mockery of all our notions of liberty and justice. It offers no comparisons with other cultures, no context to show how American ideals and practices actually stand up against those of the rest of the world--or the rest of history. The overwhelming impression the textbook leaves is that every injustice of race or gender that human beings ever visited upon one another happened first and worst in this country. And the

only way we can redeem ourselves, the textbook says, is to change fundamentally the way we produce and distribute wealth: abandon capitalism, in other words.

Alan Gribben sent letters to newspapers around the state about the English 306 revision, and citizens began to express their opinions about it. Fifty-six faculty members from across the university signed a "Statement of Academic Concern." And the revised course was revised again so that English 306 would include a broader array of subjects, a diversity of viewpoints, and extensive instruction on how to analyze, argue, and write.

But Alan Gribben was unable to take much pleasure in this outcome. He found himself vilified at campus rallies. He was the victim of hate mail, rumors, and anonymous late-night phone calls denouncing him as racist. Most members of the English department stopped speaking to him, and they certainly didn't send graduate students his way or put him on departmental committees. Finally, in the spring of this year, he announced his intention to leave Texas, where he had been for seventeen years, and move to Montgomery, Alabama, where he will teach at a branch of Auburn University. "If I continued to live here," he told a newspaper in Texas, "I'd have to live under siege."

Now, it should be quite possible for other members of the English department to disagree with Alan Gribben without persecuting him. In fact, I would say that academic freedom demands that that happen. The American Association of

University Professors Statement of Professional Ethics is quite clear on this point: "As colleagues," it reads, "professors do not . . . harass colleagues. They respect and defend the free inquiry of associates . . . [They] show due respect for the opinions of others."

Just last month there was another troubling incident at the University of Texas. In a faculty meeting, Professor James Duban spoke out against an ethnic studies requirement. The next day--the very next day--he was called into the English department chairman's office and removed as head of the English honors program.

Such incidents could be discussed as examples of ways in which the forces of political correctness work, but I think we may have a more useful discussion when we consider them with academic freedom in mind. Such a discussion will remind us of how deeply serious such issues are. There has been very little of this so far. In fact, the only scholarly organization to comment on the Texas situation has been the Modern Language Association and instead of expressing concern for the academic freedom of students at the University of Texas at Austin or the academic freedom of dissenters in the English department there, the MLA has chosen to defend the English department establishment.

As this and other debates evolve and change, I look forward to working with state humanities councils. If issues

such as academic freedom are discussed by broad audiences, as they should be, it will be, in important part, because of your efforts.

Thank you for having me here today.

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS AND BEYOND

Remarks by

Lynne V. Cheney

Chairman

National Endowment for the Humanities

Before the

Wisconsin Association of Scholars

Madison, Wisconsin

November 4, 1991

It's a great pleasure to be here with you today. I know that with a group as knowledgeable as this one I do not have to begin in the way I often do: that is, by explaining what the humanities are. There is confusion on this point, as my mail frequently makes clear. I received a letter not long ago addressed to the Natural Endowment for the Humanities--a mistake that has a certain woodsy charm about it. My favorite misaddressed piece of mail, though, was a card sent to me recently at the National Endowment for the Amenities.

That is an interesting slip, partly because of the truth it reveals. There is pleasure connected with the humanities. Through the ages, history, literature, and philosophy have been sources of immense satisfaction. Long ago, St. Augustine observed that the only reason to philosophize was in order to be happy.

But the humanities, particularly in Western civilization, have also been contentious; and that has certainly been the case in recent years. Today I want to talk about some of the

reasons for this contentiousness, focusing particularly on "political correctness," or "p.c.," as it's sometimes called.

Political correctness typically involves faculty members trying to impose their views on others, and the results can be funny--particularly when the forces of political correctness try to identify ever new forms of offense. At a recent conference at Yale, for example, a distinguished professor of literature suggested that limiting the humanities to the study of humankind was a form of "speciesism." Now, this concept attracted my attention, and so I tried to find other examples of it. Speciesists, I have learned, are people who refer to their dogs and cats as "pets"--a term much too condescending to be politically correct. Or the speciesist is the person who talks about "wild" animals, when the proper description is "free-roaming."

Smith College did its part to add to the English language when it recently warned the incoming class to beware not only of classism and ethnocentrism, but also of "lookism," a form of oppression that involves putting too much stock in personal appearance. John Leo, a wonderful columnist for U.S. News and World Report, suggested not long ago that this new vocabulary--and the sensibility it reflects--is going to require us to rename some of the old classics. Beauty and the

Beast, for example, is hopelessly incorrect, with part of the title too concerned with female appearance and the other part putting animals in a negative light. A politically correct title for Beauty and the Beast, Leo suggests, might be something like . . . A Lookism Survivor and a Free-roaming Fellow Mammal.

I'm not sure it will sell.

Political correctness does invite parody, but there is a serious aspect to it as well, and I thought I'd begin talking about that today by telling a story. It begins in the spring of 1990 when the English Department at the University of Texas at Austin decided to revise its freshman composition program. Henceforth English 306, the required composition course taken by some 3000 freshmen, would focus on race and gender; and all classes would use the same text, an anthology called Racism and Sexism.

This book--the central required text for every section of freshman English--begins by defining racism as something only white people can be guilty of, and it tells students that sexism is unique to men. It goes on to portray the United States as a society so profoundly racist and sexist as to make a mockery of all our notions of liberty and justice. There are

no comparisons with other cultures offered, no context to show how American ideals and practices actually stand up against those of the rest of the world--or the rest of history. The overwhelming impression that this textbook leaves is that every injustice of race or gender that human beings ever visited upon one another happened first and worst in this country. And the only way we can redeem ourselves, the textbook tells us, is to change fundamentally the way we produce and distribute wealth. Abandon capitalism, in other words.

Now, one might well think that the decision to focus English 306 on Racism and Sexism would cause some debate. For one thing, English 306 is a course intended to teach students how to write. Will they be better writers when they have stopped referring to poor people and instead speak of the "economically exploited," as one essay in the book instructs them to do? Will they become better writers from reading sentences such as the following?

Demagogic conservative imagery is built on the loss associated with the decline in family life.

When you see demagogic and conservative lined up together like this, you sense a certain political inclination; but there's not much here by way of clear meaning--and shouldn't

textbooks used in composition classes provide, above all, examples of clear expression?

Some people in the English Department did object to the plans to revise course 306, but they had little effect, until finally, Alan Gribben, a noted scholar of American literature, decided to go public. He sent letters to newspapers around the state, and citizens began to express their opinions about the English 306 revision. Fifty-six faculty members from across the university signed a "Statement of Academic Concern." The revised course was revised again so that English 306 would include a broader array of subjects, a diversity of viewpoints, and extensive instruction on how to analyze, argue, and write.

But Alan Gribben was unable to take much pleasure in this victory. He found himself vilified at campus rallies. He was the victim of hate mail, rumors, and anonymous late-night phone calls denouncing him as racist. Most members of the English Department stopped speaking to him, and they certainly didn't send graduate students his way or put him on departmental committees. Finally, in the spring of this year, he announced his intention to leave Texas, where he had been for seventeen years, and move to Montgomery, Alabama, where he will teach at a branch of Auburn University. "If I continued to live here," he told a newspaper in Texas, "I'd have to live under siege."

Several aspects of this story make it an almost classic example of what is happening on many campuses today. There is, first of all, the idea underlying the English 306 reform that it is perfectly all right--even desirable--to use the classroom and the curriculum for political purpose. This would once have been regarded as unethical. It was once thought that teachers who used the classroom to advance a political agenda were betraying their professional responsibilities. But on many campuses now faculty members have taken the political transformation of their students as a mission. They believe deeply in the radical critique offered by books like Racism and Sexism, they see themselves furthering the cause of social justice by using the classroom and the curriculum to advance their views, and they go about their mission openly--indeed, proudly. A faculty member here at the University of Wisconsin declares that the purpose of the course is "political intervention." Teachers such as herself, she writes in the Harvard Educational Review, seek "to appropriate public resources [such as classrooms and professor's salaries] to further various 'progressive' political agendas [believed] to be for the public good."

The particular course this professor wrote about in the Harvard Educational Review probably deserves some comment. Officially titled "Curriculum and Instruction 607," the course

had as its main purpose the conducting of "actions on campus," including one called "Scrawl on the Mall," in which graffiti were projected onto the walls of the main campus library. Students in the course gave it the informal title "Coalition 607," but they might better have called it "Demonstrating for Credit"--which is a new twist to me. Students demonstrated when I was here in the late 60s. They demonstrated quite a lot. But they never expected credit for it.

The use of the classroom and the curriculum for political purpose is one of the main sources of controversy in the humanities today. There are people, myself among them, who object to making teaching and learning into the handmaidens of politics. Students ought to hear the good as well as the bad about our society, know about our triumphs as well as our failures. There ought to be an attempt to get at the complex truth of our experience rather than imposing a singleminded, political interpretation on it. Yes, there has been oppression, but the history of Western civilization in the United States is also marked by the discovery and blossoming of remarkable concepts: individual rights, democracy, the rule of law. In 1989, before Tiananmen Square, the distinguished Chinese dissident Fang Li Zhi put it this way: "What we are calling for is extremely basic," he said, "namely, freedom of speech, press, assembly and travel. Concepts of human rights

and democracy," he went on, "the founding principles of the U.S. government, are a legacy [of the West] to the world."

These ideas are no small gift to have brought to humankind. They are gifts of such worth that people go into exile for them and into prison. They are gifts of such great worth that people die for them, as they did in Tiananmen Square, as they have done in Vilnius and Riga--and Moscow.

I think of it as my great good fortune that I have opportunities to speak for the freedoms we enjoy. The case for them is so strong that it is immensely gratifying to make. It is not only my right but my pleasure to dissent from university officials who decide, as officials at the University of Maryland did during the Persian Gulf War, that students cannot display the American flag. It might offend someone, they said; and they relented only after students called in the media. It is not only my right but my pleasure to dissent from university officials who decide, as administrators at Rice University in Texas did, that students could not tie yellow ribbons to trees in the main academic quadrangle.

But I also recognize that I am able to express myself so freely because I am neither part of a university nor do I long for a university career. The views I hold represent dissent

from the orthodoxy that reigns on our campuses, and such dissent is not very well tolerated there. That's the most significant part of Alan Gribben's story. He disagreed, and he was driven from the university.

About the time Gribben was resigning, I received in the mail a copy of the minutes of a University of Texas English department faculty meeting. The person who sent them to me was appalled at talk that had gone on in the meeting of "flushing out" other opponents of the revised English 306 syllabus. This student recognized the signs of the new McCarthyism, and he was afraid of becoming himself a victim of it. "Please let me remain anonymous," he wrote. "If it came out that I had written to you--or to someone else similarly disreputable--I wouldn't be [here] for long."

The new McCarthyism--like the old--often works its way by name-calling. People aren't labeled "communist" now, but "racist." Harvard professor Stephen Thernstrom found himself denounced that way. His offenses included using the word Oriental to describe the religion of 19th century Asian immigrants and assigning students to read an article that questioned affirmative action. New York University professor Carol Iannone found herself called racist for writing an article in which she said that certain literary prizes have

been awarded on the basis of race rather than literary merit. She was not the first to make such an assertion. Two of the five judges on the National Book Award fiction panel had said the same thing. Nevertheless, Carol Iannone was said to be racist.

Using this word so loosely and carelessly hurts the people who are smeared by it. And in the end it hurts all of us by cheapening the concept of racism. A word that can mean almost anything, eventually comes to mean almost nothing, and we are encouraged to overlook how reprehensible true racism really is.

Sexual harassment is a phrase that has been similarly misused. In the politically correct world of the post-modern campus, it can, apparently, mean almost anything. At the University of Minnesota not long ago six members of the Scandinavian Studies Department were charged with sexual harassment by a group of graduate students. The complaint provided a long list of the professorial activities that had led to the charge: not greeting a student in a friendly enough manner, for example. Not teaching in a sensitive enough way. Not having read a certain novel. The charges against the professors were finally dropped, but not until the faculty members had incurred considerable expense and suffered deep,

personal pain. One professor reported that it cost him \$2,000 to have a lawyer draft a response to the complaint. Another confessed that he wept when the charges were finally dropped.

Yale's Benno Schmidt, one of the few university presidents to speak out forcefully about what is happening in so many colleges and universities today, has declared: "The most serious problems of freedom of expression in our society . . . exist on our campuses." And one of the most important consequences of this freedom's being suppressed is the chilling effect that results, the silencing of discussion about important issues. Stephen Thernstrom, the Harvard professor I told you about earlier, decided to quit teaching the course about American immigrants that had resulted in his being called racist. In order to protect himself, he decided, he would have to record all his classes, record conversations with students, too, perhaps, so that no one could take his remarks out of context. Better, he concluded, to discontinue the course. Reynolds Farley, a distinguished demographer and scholar of race relations, made a similar decision when students in a course he was teaching at the University of Michigan accused him of racial insensitivity. If reading from Malcolm X's autobiography that portion in which Malcolm X describes himself as a pimp and thief--if reading from that was enough to bring charges of racism down upon himself, Farley decided, there was simply no way he could continue to teach the course.

On crucial issues, faculty members are silent. Perhaps apathy plays some part, but concern for reputation, concern for professional well-being--these, I suspect, play a role as well. The University of California at Berkeley has adopted an ethnic studies requirement to go into effect this fall. Now, this requirement was a major step for the university. There are no other required courses, and so instituting one represents a sharp break with practice. But on this crucial matter, only one-fifth of the eligible faculty members voted. The measure passed narrowly and it seems reasonable to suspect that among the 1,500 or so faculty members who didn't vote were some who had doubts. What is the purpose of the ethnic studies requirement? Is it a response to political pressure? Are curricular requirements now to be set by interest groups who lobby for them? If, on the other hand, the aim is educational, then aren't there other courses that should be required? Perhaps a course in American history, one that would stress the democratic values we share and thus provide balance to the ethnic studies approach, which emphasizes differences that set us apart. Perhaps a course in world history that would prepare students for the decades ahead in which people of all countries and continents are going to be increasingly interdependent. Shouldn't a foreign language be required? If the goal is really to understand people different from ourselves, isn't foreign language study the most effective route? Surely among

the 80 percent of faculty who didn't vote were some who had such questions, but the atmosphere on our campuses today doesn't encourage questions. And expressing doubts can be costly.

Just last month another professor at the University of Texas found that out. It is a source of complete amazement to me that the p.c. virus could be so strong in Austin. Texas has not had the reputation of being a bastion of the radical left. Nevertheless, on September 23 James Duban of the English department spoke against proposed ethic studies and Third-World requirements at the University of Texas at Austin. That was September 23. On September 24, he was relieved of his duties as director of the English department's honors program.

The p.c. phenomenon can be found at smaller institutions as well as large ones. Professor Christina Sommers of Clark University has been interviewing faculty and students across the country, and she has particularly striking interviews from Wooster College in Wooster, Ohio, a school near Cleveland that enrolls 1800 students. At Wooster, the textbook Racism and Sexism--the textbook that the University of Texas finally rejected--is required reading for all freshmen. Or freshpersons, I should say. The term freshman, seen as sexist, is not supposed to be used at Wooster.

Another student described the seminar required of all first year students. "Difference, Power, and Discrimination," it is called, with the subtitle "Perspectives on Race, Gender, Class, and Culture." According to the student, the seminar resembled "a reeducation camp" more than a "university program." "Now we know," he said, "that when we read the Declaration of Independence that it's not about equality and inalienable rights--but it is a sexist document written by white male elites."

Faculty, who are evaluated on their "gender sensitivity," said they are afraid to speak out. According to one, to do so would be "suicidal." Another said, "I am getting old and tired and I do not want to get fired. Until there is an atmosphere of tolerance, I do not want to go on the record." Promised anonymity, he noted, "What you have here, on the one hand, are a lot of students and faculty who are very skeptical, but they are afraid to voice their reservations."

When political correctness steps off campus, the results can be instructive. In Washington, D.C., the Smithsonian Institution recently put together a show called "The West as America." Its purpose was to show that westward expansion in this country was not an heroic effort, worthy of our awe, but that it was instead one more tale--in a long, sad string of

such tales--of white, male, capitalist oppression. The exhibit deconstructed paintings by Bingham and Farney and Stanley and Remington so that viewers could perceive the race and class conflict and the economic exploitation that they are really about. Frederick Remington's "Fight for the Water Hole," the exhibit explained, is, despite the fact that it shows five cowboys defending a water hole in the middle of the desert, not really about anything so simple as a battle over a desert water hole. Instead, it is really about the anxieties of Eastern industrialists who found themselves challenged by the foreign laborers they had imported to work in their mills and factories.

So heavy-handedly p.c. was "The West as America" that it created a firestorm. Historian Daniel Boorstin declared it "a perverse, historically inaccurate, destructive exhibit." A critic for the Washington Post said "it effectively trashes not only the integrity of the art it presents, but most of our national history as well." The Smithsonian, to its credit, organized forums on the exhibit where its main tenets could continue to be challenged.

Which is exactly as it should be. The point of opposing political correctness is not to silence those who advance it, but to open their views to challenge and debate. This often

happens when p.c. enters the larger world, but it will not happen on our campuses, I fear, unless those of us who live in the larger world help it to happen. People who care about higher education in this country ought to inform themselves about what is happening on campuses and to work whenever it is in their power to nurture free expression there. When it is time for us to help our children choose a college, we should ask hard questions about which campuses not only allow but encourage a diversity of opinion. When it comes time for us to make contributions as alumni, we should ask how well the college we attended is doing at making sure all sides are heard. Those who serve on boards of trustees should encourage discussion of free speech itself. Does political correctness reign on this campus? That's a topic that should provide lively debate--though not if it's done as the University of Michigan plans to do it. A conference is being held there called "The PC Frame-Up: What's Behind the Attack?"--which hardly seems a formulation likely to encourage debate. And let me add an ironic footnote here. I couldn't help but notice that on the same page of the Chronicle of Higher Education announcing the Michigan conference--the conference that will prove that p.c. does not exist--on the same page there was a story about Reagan appointee Linda Chavez being disinvited from a speech she was scheduled to make at Arizona State

University. It seems that minority students there had decided her views were politically unacceptable.

The New York Times recently reported on its front page about a group, mostly English professors, who are uniting to prove that political correctness is nothing more than the product of overheated conservative imaginations. But they are going to have a very hard time maintaining that view. There are too many examples of p.c. at work, powerful examples like that of Alan Gribben. And there are people from across the political spectrum--not just conservatives but liberals as well--coming together now to defend free speech on our campuses: people like Duke University's James David Barber, a former president of Amnesty International; Emory's Elizabeth Fox Genovese who heads the Women's Institute there; Berkeley's John Searle; Harvard's David Riesman; Yale's Benno Schmidt--none of whom do I suspect of being registered Republicans.

All of these people know the stakes are high. All of them know the issue here is whether the rising generation of Americans will come to understand what free inquiry is--and how it can sometimes be hard--and how it is always necessary if truth and justice are to have a chance.

These are no small matters--and I greatly appreciate your interest in them.

-End-

Address to the
National Congress on Catholic Schools
for the Twenty-First Century

by
Lynne V. Cheney
Chairman
National Endowment for the Humanities

November 9, 1991

Washington, D.C.

It's a pleasure to be here, to speak before a group of educators. It's a pleasure, in part, because I know that I do not have to explain to such a group what the humanities are. I do have to explain that term rather often. It is a mystery to many people--as I know from looking at my mail. Several months ago, I received a letter addressed to the the NATURAL Endowment for the Humanities, a title that has a nice woodsy air about it. Recently I got a card addressed to the National Endowment for the AMENITIES--and that may well become my all-time favorite, because there's something appropriate about the mistake. History, literature, and the other subjects of the humanities do give us pleasure.

But they also give something far more important: a connection to the past that is anchor for us in the present. When we reach into the past, we cannot encompass the totality of other lives and times. We strip away the thousand details of existence and come face-to-face with the age-old questions: How do we know our duty? How do we deal with our fate? How do we give our lives meaning and dignity? Pondering such questions, we realize that others have pondered them. We realize that we are not the first to know joy and sadness, not the first to set out on the human journey.

The past also offers lessons; and although we shall surely dispute what they are, even as we do so we enlarge our perspective on the present. What does it mean that the Roman republic failed? That Athens fell? What does it mean for us? What conditions and commitments in the past have allowed democracy to flourish? How can we nurture democratic institutions today?

There are many reasons why the study of subjects like history and literature should be encouraged--and much evidence that it is not being encouraged as much as it should be. A 1986 survey funded by the Endowment showed, for example, that more than 30 percent of the nation's seventeen-year-olds think that Columbus sailed sometime after 1750. More than 40 percent of those seventeen-year-olds could not locate World War I within the correct half-century. More than two-thirds could not place the Civil War. Magna Carta was a mystery to most of the students tested, and so were the great names of literature: Dante, Chaucer, Dostoevsky, Whitman, Faulkner, Austen, Hawthorne.

The failures we noted in the humanities have been noted in other fields. One survey shows that only 42 percent of the nation's 13-year-olds are able to answer questions that require

them to know such things as whether plants turn toward or away from the light.

In a report issued by the Endowment in 1987, we cited some of the reasons American students do not do as well as they should in the humanities. The curriculum is one problem. In most states, we noted, only a single year of history was required for high school graduation. Students in academic tracks typically take more, but seldom enough to learn the history of the United States and Western civilization, much less to do something we in this society are increasingly understanding is important, and that is to learn about the world's other great cultural traditions. Moreover, an increasing number of students in our schools are moving from the academic track to "general education" and "vocational education" programs. More than 60 percent of the students enrolled in our schools now are in these nonacademic tracks where requirements for subjects like history are almost always fewer.

There are problems, as well, with the way we have prepared and sustained teachers. All too often we have required prospective teachers to spend time taking education courses that are not useful: "cheap hoops," one teacher I talked to called them, through which one must jump in order to

enter the classroom. At some universities, future teachers have been allowed to take up to half the hours necessary for a bachelor's degree in education, leaving them knowing less than they should about the subjects they teach.

Once we get teachers into the classroom, we give them too few opportunities to learn more about their subjects. We encourage them to take more courses in education, instead; and in case there are some who might wish to take up study of their subjects on their own, we burden them with a sufficient number of nonteaching duties so as to be sure to stifle such a dangerous impulse. We put more money into education, but it too seldom benefits the the teacher or the classroom. Between 1960 and 1984, while the number of teachers grew by 57 percent, administrative personnel grew by 500 percent.

Now this is in our public schools, of course, and I know you are wondering when I'm going to get to Catholic schools. But I have deliberately set out a picture of public education in order to make an important point. Many of the most hopeful changes in American public education, many of the reforms most likely to improve our public schools, are bringing those schools closer to the private model that you represent.

There are at least three areas in which this is true, and the first is in the curriculum. Where education reform is most vital, requirements in history, literature, and foreign languages are increasing--and this is true in math and science as well. In California, to cite a spectacular example for the humanities, the new Framework for History and the Social Sciences requires that history be studied almost every year, in an ordered, sequential progression. And values are emphasized in this new history curriculum: it aims at ethical as well as cultural literacy.

Such efforts will make public schools more like private schools, where requirements have typically been higher. Statistics have shown Catholic school students, for example, completing more semesters of course work in history, literature, foreign languages, mathematics, and science than students in public schools--more, in fact, than students in other private schools. Your students--more than 72 percent of them--are overwhelmingly in the academic track; and those who are in general and vocational programs find that much is expected of them. In foreign languages, for example, they complete twice as many semesters of coursework as do general and vocational students in public schools.

You have also long recognized the importance of moral education. Joanne Blaney, principal of Our Lady of Perpetual Help High School in Washington, D.C., told a reporter, "As a Catholic school, we believe we are here to teach the child to grow spiritually and academically." It is hard to find a more concise statement of ethical and cultural literacy. "Children . . . need a firm moral base for making decisions later in life," Blaney observed; and increasing numbers of public educators are realizing that the schools have a role to play in building that base.

A second way in which school reform efforts are bringing public schools closer to the private model has to do with teacher education. States and localities that want to improve schools are trying to make sure that prospective teachers are able to devote sufficient time in college to studying the subjects they will teach. In Texas, for example, the legislature has mandated an upper limit on the number of hours that can be required in departments of education. There has been trench warfare going on in Texas about this new law, but it is in place; and the determined legislators who passed it remain steadfast. In dozens of localities and states, alternative certification programs have been put in place that allow men and women with bachelor's degrees in subject areas to

teach in our schools without going through regular programs of teacher training.

And, again, this follows the model of many of your schools. Often, your teachers are not required to train in colleges of education. In fact, I suspect that many of your best lay teachers choose to teach in your schools precisely because you have not had such a requirement.

One last example of the way in which you have served as a model: It is becoming almost universally recognized that administrative structures that grow too large strangle our schools. It is almost universally recognized, in fact, that the larger the administrative bureaucracy, the worse schools are likely to be.

Several years ago, I visited the administrative headquarters of the Chicago school system and was amazed. Row after row of desks in room after room on floor after floor in building after building. My tour guide told me that Japanese officials who had visited the administrative headquarters had been stunned into disbelief. No, they said. This couldn't be the headquarters for a single city. This must at least be the Department of Education for the entire United States. I was reminded of pictures I've seen of the bureaucracy that

burgeoned in Washington during World War II--row after row of desks in open spaces, hundreds upon hundreds of people.

But, to their credit, those wartime bureaucrats in Washington helped win a war. The Chicago public schools--with a dropout rate of 45 percent, with the average score on college entrance exams in half the city's high schools in the bottom one percent of the nation--were in danger of being lost. One of the most significant school reform efforts in the country has been the one in Chicago to reduce the size of the administrative apparatus. Every step taken in this reform program makes Chicago's public schools there like Chicago's Catholic schools--which have been, with about half as many students, operating for years with a bureaucracy about one/one hundredth the size.

In New York City, there has long been a similar comparison to be made. There, with about a million students in the public schools, there are six thousand people in the central office bureaucracy, about one administrator, in other words, for every 165 students. In New York City's Catholic school system, which enrolls about 200,000 students, there are 67 administrators--or about one for every 3,000 students: one for every 165 students in public schools; one for every 3,000 students in Catholic schools. That is a remarkable

difference. You have kept the administrative bureaucracy small, put your dollars into the classroom; and education reformers have seen the wisdom of your ways.

In the inner cities, you have provided an alternative, schools with tuition much lower than the typical private school's, education that provides many students an oasis of order and excellence. In New York, to cite just one example, Cardinal Hayes High School graduates 98 percent of its students. The students there are young men from East Harlem and the South Bronx. They are from some of our nation's poorest families, and 90 percent of them are going on to college.

There are dozens of impressive statistics about Catholic education, but surely among the most dramatic is the rapid increase in minority enrollments--up 25 percent since 1970. And particularly in the cities, many of your students are not Catholic. Thirty-four percent of the students in the Archdiocese of Chicago are Baptist, I read recently. In New York, at St. Augustine's School of the Arts in the South Bronx, almost 80 percent of the students are non-Catholic. There are waiting lines for some of your inner-city schools, and the parents who want their children in those schools are Muslim and Hindu, Presbyterian and Baptist. They are well aware that you

provide Catholic education. As they see it, your emphasis on what is moral and spiritual--your emphasis on values--is among the most important reasons for having their children in your schools.

But many Catholic schools are in financial trouble. Many of the Catholic church's most prosperous parishioners have left the city; increasingly, the schools must be supported through tuition; and as tuition goes up, fewer and fewer in our inner cities can afford Catholic education. It needs to be emphasized how reasonable the cost of Catholic education is compared to public education: You manage to educate your students for one-third to one-half as much. But even a \$2,000 tuition can be more than a poor parent can afford, and so enrollments decline and Catholic schools are closed. We read in our papers about schools like Notre Dame Academy in Washington, D.C., closing, and it is impossible to read such stories without feeling a wrench. Students at Notre Dame wept as they talked about their school closing, and we wept with them. Here was a school providing disadvantaged youngsters with exactly the education and values they needed to overcome their circumstances, exactly the training they needed to become leaders and role models for others, exactly what we want all schools to provide.

I know that you are troubled by this, and that you are seeking solutions. Some believe that the answer is to have private schools, including parochial ones, included in "choice." As you know, "choice" among public schools is fast becoming a reality. States and localities across the country are giving parents "choice," partly because the argument for it is powerful: Schools, just like businesses, do better when they have competitive reasons to do better. Some people believe that the more competition the better, and they argue for a voucher system that would allow all private schools to enter the education marketplace. But there are also private educators, Catholic and non-Catholic, who oppose the idea of government aid, believing that when it comes, regulation cannot be far behind. And there are others in the debate--powerful groups--who contend that if states and localities broaden "choice" to include private schools, public schools will be harmed.

The debate is an intense one, and that is not necessarily a bad thing. The clash of ideas can generate light as well as heat and can produce creative thinking. In those inner-city areas where public schooling has virtually collapsed, some are asking, what do we have to lose by experimenting with a system of "choice" that would include all private schools? Those asking this question point to survey research data showing that

those who are poor--those who would be most affected by such a decision--are overwhelmingly in favor of it. And, of course, they would be. Many parents in this country already have choice. They can change neighborhoods to go after the best public schools. They can afford private school tuition. Why shouldn't poor parents have choice, too?

While this debate goes on, one view seems irrefutable: People need to become more aware of what outstanding Catholic schools accomplish in our inner cities. We need to hear more about the superior test scores in these schools, about the colleges their graduates attend. This information will be of aid in raising private funds to support these schools. And it will also strengthen the case of those of you who want to argue in your states and localities for the inclusion of all schools in "choice."

Let me assure you that I will do what I can to help raise awareness of the accomplishments of outstanding Catholic schools. And let me say, too, that the National Endowment for the Humanities is ready to help private schools of all kinds, as well as our nation's public schools, raise their level of excellence. More of your teachers should be applying, for example, to our Teacher/Scholar Program, which provides opportunities for outstanding teachers to become even more

knowledgeable about what they teach. This program, jointly funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Reader's Digest, does exactly what President Bush has emphasized again and again is so important: It recognizes and rewards good teaching. You have many fine teachers in your schools. Encourage them to apply to become teacher/scholars, encourage them to apply to the Endowment's institutes and summer seminars, encourage them to take advantage of the wide range of opportunities the NEH offers.

You are an important part of the diverse undertaking by which we educate children in America. Be assured that it is not just with Catholic audiences that I sing your praises. And know as well that we encourage your applications to the Endowment, that just as we support the efforts of a wide range of colleges and universities, so, too, do we support the efforts of all kinds of schools.

It is our mission to foster excellence--and you have, time and again, demonstrated that Catholic education possesses much that is excellent to foster.

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Remarks by
Lynne V. Cheney
Chairman
National Endowment for the Humanities

to
Business and Education Leaders

Stardust Hotel
Las Vegas, Nevada

November 11, 1991

TYRANNICAL MACHINES

Educational Priorities Gone Wrong and Our Best Hopes for Setting Them Right

Among those who know what the humanities are, there has been much wailing and gnashing of teeth in the last several decades. One scholar, a fellow not inclined to understatement, declared the humanities to be "lying at death's door." But, in fact, it is possible if one looks across the nation and focuses on programs for the general public to find abundant evidence that the humanities are alive and well.

- o People are going to museums: In each of the years from 1986 through 1988, a survey conducted by the American Association of Museums shows, attendance surpassed 600 million.
- o According to the AAM survey, 1.2 million acres have been added to museum space in the U.S. in the last ten years--an area almost the size of Delaware.
- o A survey in Washington, D.C., showed museum going to be the most popular leisure-time activity.

- o A survey in Boston (home of the Celtics, Bruins, and Red Sox) showed events by nonprofit cultural groups drawing more than twice as many people as professional sports events.

- o The Utah Shakespeare Festival, which started twenty-five years ago with an attendance of 3,000, sold 100,000 tickets for its 1990 season. The Alabama Shakespeare Festival, which is a little younger, has recorded annual attendance of over 300,000 in recent years.

- o Even television--the bete noire of culture--is showing its potential. Recently millions upon millions of Americans--record numbers of them--watched Ken Burns's remarkable documentary, The Civil War--a film for which I am very proud to note that the National Endowment for the Humanities provided major funding.

- o And then there is the story of books and bookstores. In just the past five years publishers' total revenue from book sales has gone from \$10.7 billion to \$16.6 billion. It wasn't so long ago that we were hearing that

chain bookstores with limited selections were what the American people wanted and deserved. They would read what the chains told them to read, because they hadn't the interest or capacity to make other demands. But now the biggest phenomenon in bookselling is the superstore--retail outlets stocking 50,000, 75,000, 100,000 titles. Even the chains are opening them in recognition of the diverse and sophisticated interests of the reading public.

Still, the pessimists have a point, a very good one. While the humanities are thriving in programs for the general public, they are deeply troubled in our schools, in our colleges, and in our universities.

Profound changes in the world have helped bring this home to us in recent months. The events in Eastern Europe, in particular, have led to a spate of news stories about how little high school students understand of what is happening. Said one teacher quoted in the Washington Post, "[students] don't understand what communism is in the first place, so when you say it's the death of communism, they don't know what you're talking about."

A survey conducted of high school history students in Alabama where I visited recently showed two-thirds unable to define capitalism and three-fourths unable to define a constitutional democracy. Three-fourths couldn't identify the Cold War. Many of the students thought it had to do with battles that occurred in the wintertime. Nor is it just high school students who don't know as much as they should. A recent nationwide survey sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities showed one-fourth of the nation's college seniors could not distinguish Churchill's words from Stalin's or Karl Marx's thoughts from the ideas of the U.S. Constitution.

How is it that the humanities can be doing so well in the public sphere and languishing in our schools? I think we have to begin any explanation by acknowledging that our schools have a great challenge. Their job is--and properly should be--to educate everyone--and partly because this task is so important, when we have a good idea about it, we try to set it in concrete. We institutionalize it, sometimes by giving it the force of law.

Take the way we prepare teachers, for example. There was a time in the 19th century when almost anyone could teach--even people without high school diplomas. Liberal arts faculties weren't interested in offering preparation to this group and so separate training developed for them in normal schools, which

gradually evolved into colleges and departments of education. In the beginning, separate study offered teachers opportunities for schooling that were otherwise unavailable--and thus separate study was seen to be a good idea, so good that we institutionalized it. By the 1930s prospective teachers were required by law to take separate courses in education--and so they are to this day, though there is widespread doubt about whether this remains a wise course.

Now that our teachers are all college graduates, what benefit is there in offering them a segregated preparation? Is there some advantage, not readily apparent, in studying the psychology of children in the education college rather than the psychology department? Is there some advantage gained by studying how to teach social studies apart from the study of history?

Teachers themselves don't think so. Ask them about classes they have taken in education, and you will hear them talk repeatedly about time wasted, time spent with education textbooks, for example, that take what is simple and make it complicated. Suppose a teacher wants to show children how to use the directory that is on the front page of most newspapers. According to an education textbook I have in my office, there are twelve different steps involved in teaching and applying such a skill.

I find it difficult to read these textbooks without getting angry. They tell future teachers that there are exactly four types of thinking, exactly three ways of developing concepts. These textbooks take ideas that are subtle and reduce them to simplicities. They take ideas that are controversial or even incorrect and present them as if there were no debate. Setting a good example, one textbook declares, is not an effective way to teach values.

So teachers complain about time wasted. And they also complain about opportunities wasted, because time spent taking courses in education is, after all, time that can't be spent studying the subject one will teach, whether it's history or physics. Prospective high school teachers in Massachusetts, for example, spend one-quarter of their undergraduate careers in departments or colleges of education--which means considerably less time than their peers for studying history or physics. We have arrived at the peculiar position in this country where those who are to teach a subject study it less than those who do not.

What was once a good idea isn't a good idea any longer; and people have been saying this for a long time. In the 1950s, historian Arthur Bestor called teacher preparation "a fraud upon the teachers themselves and upon society as a whole." In the 1960s educator James Conant called

certification procedures which require teachers to complete certain courses in education "bankrupt." But having adopted a certain way of doing things on a large scale, we find it enormously difficult to change. Philosopher William James described such phenomena in the early 20th century as "tyrannical machines." Practices that begin by filling needs, James wrote, can become detached from their original purposes, even counterproductive to them; but once they are institutionalized, once expectations, organizations and even professions have grown up around them, these practices can become immune to even the most enlightened criticism.

Another example of the phenomenon Williams James described can be seen in the way we reward faculty members in our colleges and universities. At the end of the 19th century, a number of educational leaders realized it would be valuable to encourage the expansion of knowledge: that is, to encourage research. This good idea was institutionalized. It was made the heart of the tenure and promotion process and gradually became so powerful that the idea of the dissemination of knowledge--the idea of teaching--became a poor and attenuated thing.

To be sure, there are many faculty members who consider teaching their primary responsibility, many institutions that consider teaching their primary responsibility; but in a system

that has made research central to status, these tend not to be the teachers or the institutions with the most prestige. Institutions that rank high in prestige reward their faculty members with ever-reduced teaching loads, and prestigious faculty members expect to be rewarded that way. Institutions that want prestige lure academic stars to their faculties with promises that they will never have to see an undergraduate.

This flight from teaching has financial consequences. It means that college costs more. And it has educational consequences as well. At many universities undergraduates find few senior faculty in their classrooms, few full-time faculty members of any kind willing to guide their education, and few meaningful formal guidelines--that is, requirements--to help them on their way to a liberal education. Broadly conceived, coherent requirements need faculty to shape them, faculty to teach them, and a system that primarily rewards research provides little incentive for any of this.

It is possible today to graduate from 38 percent of the nation's colleges and universities without studying history; from 45 percent without studying American or English literature; and even at schools where these subjects are required, students can often fulfill them in ways that seem to reflect faculty research interests more than students' needs. At Harvard one can fulfill core requirements by studying

tuberculosis from 1842 to 1952 or pictorial and literary representations of New York and Berlin from 1880 to 1940. At Dartmouth one can fulfill distributive requirements with "Sexuality and Writing" which analyzes "the use of sexuality and its ramifications as symbols for the process of literary creativity, with particular reference to . . . potency and creative fertility; marriage or adultery and literary sterility; deviation and/or solitude and autobiography; prostitution and history; chastity and literary self-referentiality."

What may well be an interesting research topic may well not be a sensible undergraduate requirement; but in a system where research is valued so highly, the discrepancy tends to be overlooked. We end up with college seniors who haven't the least idea what Plato wrote or who Stalin and Churchill were.

~~In our colleges and universities, as in our schools, we~~ have taken admirable ideas and institutionalized them in ways that have given them astonishing power. The error of our ways has been apparent for a very long time. It was abundantly clear back in the 1960s when classicist William Arrowsmith observed that our "universities are as uncongenial to teaching as Mojave Desert [is] to a clutch of Druid priests." But simply realizing what we are doing wrong isn't sufficient to set it right. That, I think, is one of the lessons we learned in the 1980s. Naming our problems doesn't correct them. Bad

practices will not go away simply because we demonstrate how counterproductive they are. Tyrannical machines will not dismantle themselves. We have to have programs for action, and in considering what they should be, I think it is useful to look at the model of programs for the public, the thriving programs I mentioned at the beginning of this speech. What typifies education in this informal sphere of learning?

Two characteristics, I would suggest, are especially striking: one is the diversity of opportunities and the other is the ability of those for whom the programs are intended to choose freely among them. Think of the abundance of alternatives: reading and discussion programs, exhibitions, and conferences on almost every conceivable subject--offered by libraries, museums, historical societies, and state humanities councils. And whatever an organization decides to offer it has strong motivation to make that program very, very good, because otherwise nobody will come. There is diversity in the sphere of informal education, and there is choice--and these are concepts that I think we need to carry into our formal institutions of education.

We need, for example, to encourage programs that provide alternative ways for people to become teachers. There are some fine models for this--in New Jersey, in particular--plans that allow people to become teachers through programs that emphasize

classroom experience and compress the time spent studying pedagogy. These programs have proved themselves successful. In New Jersey, alternatively certified teachers have done better on the National Teachers Examination than teacher education graduates, and they are staying in the profession longer. Not only are alternative certification programs successful, they allow comparisons about the most effective ways of preparing teachers and give colleges and universities reason to improve their programs so they can compete.

Perhaps the most promising of all reforms encourages diversity in our schools by allowing parents to choose the school their children attend. A school that can be chosen can develop a specialty. Among the junior high schools in New York's District 4--one of the most famous examples in the country of the success of choice--are the Academy of Environmental Science, the East Harlem Performing Arts School, the Isaac Newton School for Math and Science, and the School of Science and the Humanities. In Prince George's County, Maryland, a student might choose an elementary school that specializes in the arts, a middle school that stresses humanities, a high school oriented toward sciences. Alternatives do not necessarily have to be innovative in order to be attractive. The Bay Haven School of Basics Plus, an elementary school in Sarasota, Florida, emphasizes traditional

values and skills--and has a waiting list of more than 1200 students.

A school that can be chosen can develop a specialty--and it will be powerfully motivated to develop it well. Choice, like alternative certification, brings the dynamic of competition into education, and by doing so encourages improvements in all areas, from teachers and textbooks to standards and expectations.

Now I know there are some people suspicious of choice. They tend not to be poor people, let me observe. They tend not to be people of limited means who feel themselves trapped in inadequate school systems. These people, polls show, overwhelmingly support the idea of choice. They want to have some say over their children's education. People with more financial power can move if they find the local school unacceptable. They can, perhaps, pay tuition at a private school. Poor parents want to be able to choose too. They want what many other parents already have.

Still, there are people suspicious of choice. Isn't it possible, they ask, that some parents will make bad choices? And probably the answer is yes. Some people will choose the school with the best football team rather than the school with the best academic program. But I'm willing to trust that this

won't happen often, not if you give people the information they need to make good choices. Successful choice plans, like the one in District 4 in New York or the one in Cambridge, Massachusetts, are distinguished by the emphasis they place on providing students and parents with the information they need to choose wisely.

Indeed, one of the most important factors in making a system in which there is diversity and choice operate efficiently is information. This is true in the world of museum exhibitions and public television and books where reviews help call attention to what is excellent and what is forgettable. This is true in elementary and secondary education. And it is true for our colleges and universities as well.

I can think of nothing that would so effectively counter the tyrannical machine that dominates American higher education as having parents and students more aware of what constitutes instructional quality. If parents and students were to begin to choose colleges and universities on the basis of how well they teach, colleges and universities would begin to honor those who teach well. Research would not be the only path to a distinguished academic career.

Remarks

by

Lynne V. Cheney
Chairman

National Endowment for the Humanities

The Blue Ribbon of the Music Center
Los Angeles, California

November 12, 1991

It's a great pleasure to be here with you today. I know that with a group as knowledgeable as this one I do not have to begin in the way I often do: that is, by explaining what the humanities are. There is confusion on this point, as my mail frequently makes clear. I received a letter not long ago addressed to the Natural Endowment for the Humanities--a mistake that has a certain woodsy charm about it. My favorite misaddressed piece of mail, though, was a card sent to me recently at the National Endowment for the Amenities.

That is an interesting slip, partly because of the truth it reveals. There is pleasure connected with the humanities. Through the ages, history, literature, and philosophy have been sources of immense satisfaction. Long ago, St. Augustine observed that the only reason to philosophize was in order to be happy.

But the humanities, particularly in Western civilization, have also been contentious; and that has certainly been the case in recent years. Today I want to talk about some of the

reasons for this contentiousness, focusing particularly on "political correctness," or "p.c.," as it's sometimes called.

Political correctness typically involves faculty members trying to impose their views on others, and the results can be funny--particularly when the forces of political correctness try to identify ever new forms of offense. At a recent conference at Yale, for example, a distinguished professor of literature suggested that limiting the humanities to the study of humankind was a form of "speciesism." Now, this concept attracted my attention, and so I tried to find other examples of it. Speciesists, I have learned, are people who refer to their dogs and cats as "pets"--a term much too condescending to be politically correct. Or the speciesist is the person who talks about "wild" animals, when the proper description is "free-roaming."

Smith College did its part to add to the English language when it recently warned the incoming class to beware not only of classism and ethnocentrism, but also of "lookism," a form of oppression that involves putting too much stock in personal appearance. John Leo, a wonderful columnist for U.S. News and World Report, suggested not long ago that this new vocabulary--and the sensibility it reflects--is going to require us to rename some of the old classics. Beauty and the

Beast, for example, is hopelessly incorrect, with part of the title too concerned with female appearance and the other part putting animals in a negative light. A politically correct title for Beauty and the Beast, Leo suggests, might be something like . . . A Lookism Survivor and a Free-roaming Fellow Mammal.

I'm not sure it will sell.

Political correctness does invite parody, but there is a serious aspect to it as well, and I thought I'd begin talking about that today by telling a story. It begins in the spring of 1990 when the English Department at the University of Texas at Austin decided to revise its freshman composition program. Henceforth English 306, the required composition course taken by some 3000 freshmen, would focus on race and gender; and all classes would use the same text, an anthology called Racism and Sexism.

This book--the central required text for every section of freshman English--begins by defining racism as something only white people can be guilty of, and it tells students that sexism is unique to men. It goes on to portray the United States as a society so profoundly racist and sexist as to make a mockery of all our notions of liberty and justice. There are

no comparisons with other cultures offered, no context to show how American ideals and practices actually stand up against those of the rest of the world--or the rest of history. The overwhelming impression that this textbook leaves is that every injustice of race or gender that human beings ever visited upon one another happened first and worst in this country. And the only way we can redeem ourselves, the textbook tells us, is to change fundamentally the way we produce and distribute wealth. Abandon capitalism, in other words.

Now, one might well think that the decision to focus English 306 on Racism and Sexism would cause some debate. For one thing, English 306 is a course intended to teach students how to write. Will they be better writers when they have stopped referring to poor people and instead speak of the "economically exploited," as one essay in the book instructs them to do? Will they become better writers from reading sentences such as the following?

Demagogic conservative imagery is built on the loss associated with the decline in family life.

When you see demagogic and conservative lined up together like this, you sense a certain political inclination; but there's not much here by way of clear meaning--and shouldn't

textbooks used in composition classes provide, above all, examples of clear expression?

Some people in the English Department did object to the plans to revise course 306, but they had little effect, until finally, Alan Gribben, a noted scholar of American literature, decided to go public. He sent letters to newspapers around the state, and citizens began to express their opinions about the English 306 revision. Fifty-six faculty members from across the university signed a "Statement of Academic Concern." The revised course was revised again so that English 306 would include a broader array of subjects, a diversity of viewpoints, and extensive instruction on how to analyze, argue, and write.

But Alan Gribben was unable to take much pleasure in this victory. He found himself vilified at campus rallies. He was the victim of hate mail, rumors, and anonymous late-night phone calls denouncing him as racist. Most members of the English Department stopped speaking to him, and they certainly didn't send graduate students his way or put him on departmental committees. Finally, in the spring of this year, he announced his intention to leave Texas, where he had been for seventeen years, and move to Montgomery, Alabama, where he will teach at a branch of Auburn University. "If I continued to live here," he told a newspaper in Texas, "I'd have to live under siege."

Several aspects of this story make it an almost classic example of what is happening on many campuses today. There is, first of all, the idea underlying the English 306 reform that it is perfectly all right--even desirable--to use the classroom and the curriculum for political purpose. This would once have been regarded as unethical. It was once thought that teachers who used the classroom to advance a political agenda were betraying their professional responsibilities. But on many campuses now faculty members have taken the political transformation of their students as a mission. They believe deeply in the radical critique offered by books like Racism and Sexism, they see themselves furthering the cause of social justice by using the classroom and the curriculum to advance their views, and they go about their mission openly--indeed, proudly. A faculty member here at the University of Wisconsin declares that the purpose of the course is "political intervention." Teachers such as herself, she writes in the Harvard Educational Review, seek "to appropriate public resources [such as classrooms and professor's salaries] to further various 'progressive' political agendas [believed] to be for the public good."

The particular course this professor wrote about in the Harvard Educational Review probably deserves some comment. Officially titled "Curriculum and Instruction 607," the course

had as its main purpose the conducting of "actions on campus," including one called "Scrawl on the Mall," in which graffiti were projected onto the walls of the main campus library. Students in the course gave it the informal title "Coalition 607," but they might better have called it "Demonstrating for Credit"--which is a new twist to me. Students demonstrated when I was here in the late 60s. They demonstrated quite a lot. But they never expected credit for it.

The use of the classroom and the curriculum for political purpose is one of the main sources of controversy in the humanities today. There are people, myself among them, who object to making teaching and learning into the handmaidens of politics. Students ought to hear the good as well as the bad about our society, know about our triumphs as well as our failures. There ought to be an attempt to get at the complex truth of our experience rather than imposing a singleminded, political interpretation on it. Yes, there has been oppression, but the history of Western civilization in the United States is also marked by the discovery and blossoming of remarkable concepts: individual rights, democracy, the rule of law. In 1989, before Tiananmen Square, the distinguished Chinese dissident Fang Li Zhi put it this way: "What we are calling for is extremely basic," he said, "namely, freedom of speech, press, assembly and travel. Concepts of human rights

and democracy," he went on, "the founding principles of the U.S. government, are a legacy [of the West] to the world."

These ideas are no small gift to have brought to humankind. They are gifts of such worth that people go into exile for them and into prison. They are gifts of such great worth that people die for them, as they did in Tiananmen Square, as they have done in Vilnius and Riga--and Moscow.

I think of it as my great good fortune that I have opportunities to speak for the freedoms we enjoy. The case for them is so strong that it is immensely gratifying to make. It is not only my right but my pleasure to dissent from university officials who decide, as officials at the University of Maryland did during the Persian Gulf War, that students cannot display the American flag. It might offend someone, they said; and they relented only after students called in the media. It is not only my right but my pleasure to dissent from university officials who decide, as administrators at Rice University in Texas did, that students could not tie yellow ribbons to trees in the main academic quadrangle.

But I also recognize that I am able to express myself so freely because I am neither part of a university nor do I long for a university career. The views I hold represent dissent

from the orthodoxy that reigns on our campuses, and such dissent is not very well tolerated there. That's the most significant part of Alan Gribben's story. He disagreed, and he was driven from the university.

About the time Gribben was resigning, I received in the mail a copy of the minutes of a University of Texas English department faculty meeting. The person who sent them to me was appalled at talk that had gone on in the meeting of "flushing out" other opponents of the revised English 306 syllabus. This student recognized the signs of the new McCarthyism, and he was afraid of becoming himself a victim of it. "Please let me remain anonymous," he wrote. "If it came out that I had written to you--or to someone else similarly disreputable--I wouldn't be [here] for long."

The new McCarthyism--like the old--often works its way by name-calling. People aren't labeled "communist" now, but "racist." Harvard professor Stephen Thernstrom found himself denounced that way. His offenses included using the word Oriental to describe the religion of 19th century Asian immigrants and assigning students to read an article that questioned affirmative action. New York University professor Carol Iannone found herself called racist for writing an article in which she said that certain literary prizes have

been awarded on the basis of race rather than literary merit. She was not the first to make such an assertion. Two of the five judges on the National Book Award fiction panel had said the same thing. Nevertheless, Carol Iannone was said to be racist.

Using this word so loosely and carelessly hurts the people who are smeared by it. And in the end it hurts all of us by cheapening the concept of racism. A word that can mean almost anything, eventually comes to mean almost nothing, and we are encouraged to overlook how reprehensible true racism really is.

Sexual harassment is a phrase that has been similarly misused. In the politically correct world of the post-modern campus, it can, apparently, mean almost anything. At the University of Minnesota not long ago six members of the Scandinavian Studies Department were charged with sexual harassment by a group of graduate students. The complaint provided a long list of the professorial activities that had led to the charge: not greeting a student in a friendly enough manner, for example. Not teaching in a sensitive enough way. Not having read a certain novel. The charges against the professors were finally dropped, but not until the faculty members had incurred considerable expense and suffered deep,

personal pain. One professor reported that it cost him \$2,000 to have a lawyer draft a response to the complaint. Another confessed that he wept when the charges were finally dropped.

Yale's Benno Schmidt, one of the few university presidents to speak out forcefully about what is happening in so many colleges and universities today, has declared: "The most serious problems of freedom of expression in our society . . . exist on our campuses." And one of the most important consequences of this freedom's being suppressed is the chilling effect that results, the silencing of discussion about important issues. Stephen Thernstrom, the Harvard professor I told you about earlier, decided to quit teaching the course about American immigrants that had resulted in his being called racist. In order to protect himself, he decided, he would have to record all his classes, record conversations with students, too, perhaps, so that no one could take his remarks out of context. Better, he concluded, to discontinue the course. Reynolds Farley, a distinguished demographer and scholar of race relations, made a similar decision when students in a course he was teaching at the University of Michigan accused him of racial insensitivity. If reading from Malcolm X's autobiography that portion in which Malcolm X describes himself as a pimp and thief--if reading from that was enough to bring charges of racism down upon himself, Farley decided, there was simply no way he could continue to teach the course.

On crucial issues, faculty members are silent. Perhaps apathy plays some part, but concern for reputation, concern for professional well-being--these, I suspect, play a role as well. The University of California at Berkeley has adopted an ethnic studies requirement to go into effect this fall. Now, this requirement was a major step for the university. There are no other required courses, and so instituting one represents a sharp break with practice. But on this crucial matter, only one-fifth of the eligible faculty members voted. The measure passed narrowly and it seems reasonable to suspect that among the 1,500 or so faculty members who didn't vote were some who had doubts. What is the purpose of the ethnic studies requirement? Is it a response to political pressure? Are curricular requirements now to be set by interest groups who lobby for them? If, on the other hand, the aim is educational, then aren't there other courses that should be required? Perhaps a course in American history, one that would stress the democratic values we share and thus provide balance to the ethnic studies approach, which emphasizes differences that set us apart. Perhaps a course in world history that would prepare students for the decades ahead in which people of all countries and continents are going to be increasingly interdependent. Shouldn't a foreign language be required? If the goal is really to understand people different from ourselves, isn't foreign language study the most effective route? Surely among

the 80 percent of faculty who didn't vote were some who had such questions, but the atmosphere on our campuses today doesn't encourage questions. And expressing doubts can be costly.

Just last month another professor at the University of Texas found that out. It is a source of complete amazement to me that the p.c. virus could be so strong in Austin. Texas has not had the reputation of being a bastion of the radical left. Nevertheless, on September 23 James Duban of the English department spoke against proposed ethic studies and Third-World requirements at the University of Texas at Austin. That was September 23. On September 24, he was relieved of his duties as director of the English department's honors program.

The p.c. phenomenon can be found at smaller institutions as well as large ones. Professor Christina Sommers of Clark University has been interviewing faculty and students across the country, and she has particularly striking interviews from Wooster College in Wooster, Ohio, a school near Cleveland that enrolls 1800 students. At Wooster, the textbook Racism and Sexism--the textbook that the University of Texas finally rejected--is required reading for all freshmen. Or freshpersons, I should say. The term freshman, seen as sexist, is not supposed to be used at Wooster.

Another student described the seminar required of all first year students. "Difference, Power, and Discrimination," it is called, with the subtitle "Perspectives on Race, Gender, Class, and Culture." According to the student, the seminar resembled "a reeducation camp" more than a "university program." "Now we know," he said, "that when we read the Declaration of Independence that it's not about equality and inalienable rights--but it is a sexist document written by white male elites."

Faculty, who are evaluated on their "gender sensitivity," said they are afraid to speak out. According to one, to do so would be "suicidal." Another said, "I am getting old and tired and I do not want to get fired. Until there is an atmosphere of tolerance, I do not want to go on the record." Promised anonymity, he noted, "What you have here, on the one hand, are a lot of students and faculty who are very skeptical, but they are afraid to voice their reservations."

When political correctness steps off campus, the results can be instructive. In Washington, D.C., the Smithsonian Institution recently put together a show called "The West as America." Its purpose was to show that westward expansion in this country was not an heroic effort, worthy of our awe, but that it was instead one more tale--in a long, sad string of

such tales--of white, male, capitalist oppression. The exhibit deconstructed paintings by Bingham and Farney and Stanley and Remington so that viewers could perceive the race and class conflict and the economic exploitation that they are really about. Frederick Remington's "Fight for the Water Hole," the exhibit explained, is, despite the fact that it shows five cowboys defending a water hole in the middle of the desert, not really about anything so simple as a battle over a desert water hole. Instead, it is really about the anxieties of Eastern industrialists who found themselves challenged by the foreign laborers they had imported to work in their mills and factories.

So heavy-handedly p.c. was "The West as America" that it created a firestorm. Historian Daniel Boorstin declared it "a perverse, historically inaccurate, destructive exhibit." A critic for the Washington Post said "it effectively trashes not only the integrity of the art it presents, but most of our national history as well." The Smithsonian, to its credit, organized forums on the exhibit where its main tenets could continue to be challenged.

Which is exactly as it should be. The point of opposing political correctness is not to silence those who advance it, but to open their views to challenge and debate. This often

happens when p.c. enters the larger world, but it will not happen on our campuses, I fear, unless those of us who live in the larger world help it to happen. People who care about higher education in this country ought to inform themselves about what is happening on campuses and to work whenever it is in their power to nurture free expression there. When it is time for us to help our children choose a college, we should ask hard questions about which campuses not only allow but encourage a diversity of opinion. When it comes time for us to make contributions as alumni, we should ask how well the college we attended is doing at making sure all sides are heard. Those who serve on boards of trustees should encourage discussion of free speech itself. Does political correctness reign on this campus? That's a topic that should provide lively debate--though not if it's done as the University of Michigan plans to do it. A conference is being held there called "The PC Frame-Up: What's Behind the Attack?"--which hardly seems a formulation likely to encourage debate. And let me add an ironic footnote here. I couldn't help but notice that on the same page of the Chronicle of Higher Education announcing the Michigan conference--the conference that will prove that p.c. does not exist--on the same page there was a story about Reagan appointee Linda Chavez being disinvited from a speech she was scheduled to make at Arizona State

University. It seems that minority students there had decided her views were politically unacceptable.

The New York Times recently reported on its front page about a group, mostly English professors, who are uniting to prove that political correctness is nothing more than the product of overheated conservative imaginations. But they are going to have a very hard time maintaining that view. There are too many examples of p.c. at work, powerful examples like that of Alan Gribben. And there are people from across the political spectrum--not just conservatives but liberals as well--coming together now to defend free speech on our campuses: people like Duke University's James David Barber, a former president of Amnesty International; Emory's Elizabeth Fox Genovese who heads the Women's Institute there; Berkeley's John Searle; Harvard's David Riesman; Yale's Benno Schmidt--none of whom do I suspect of being registered Republicans.

All of these people know the stakes are high. All of them know the issue here is whether the rising generation of Americans will come to understand what free inquiry is--and how it can sometimes be hard--and how it is always necessary if truth and justice are to have a chance.

These are no small matters--and I greatly appreciate your interest in them.

-End-