

mine research, since one of the ostensive justifications for the Factories is that they allow their faculties time to do research and publish. But only a small number of the highly paid, tenured faculty at American universities publish anything. In the vast majority of Factories the unwritten rule for the highest paid faculty is "Don't publish and get rich." Since they also teach less and less, getting paid more and more in real terms for less and less work of any kind, they actually constitute monopolists happy to continue milking the public.

The search for truth and wisdom is the highest and most noble human pursuit, and there are many of us who continue in the quest. But most students and faculty members have been so demoralized by the bureaucratization of education that they laugh in derision at the very idea of pursuing knowledge. The great mass of college students now long only to "escape to the real world."

In his last article, the late A. Bartlett Giamatti, former president of Yale, noted, "I have never met a parent who has said to me, 'I'm really delighted with the quality of teaching, the sense of values, the direction the students get.'" I rest my case. Vouchers and tax credits will not usher in the promised land, nor will they transform the quad at State U. into the Lyceum. But they surely will bring an end to the Education Factories.

—Jack D. Douglas

THE NEA'S FUTURE has now been decided, the decision is by consensus, and the conservative position has prevailed. Chairman John Frohn-

mayer said so in a little-noticed appearance at the Newsmakers Breakfast at the National Press Club last September 17. Here is what he said: First, "I have argued all along that internal management reform and sensitivity to taxpayers will be the remedy of our problems." Translation: the artists' panels will no longer dictate who gets what. Taxpayers' opinion (read: people revolted by taxpayers' subsidies to political or obscene or bigoted or blasphemous art) will now make a difference.

Second, "Peer panel review system: a lay person now sits on each panel, that is, someone with a profound interest in the arts who does not make their [*sic*] living through the arts. We also recognized that the panels of citizen-experts had become, in their own eyes and in the eyes of many artists, infallible judges whose recommendations should not be questioned by either the National Council or the Chairperson [of the NEA]. That had to change, and the new attitude is a foundation for accountability in the future." Translation: the same thing again. The artists' panels will no longer dictate who gets what. Taxpayers' opinion will now make a difference.

Third, the "Endowment must reaffirm that it is for all the American people, rather than looking solely to the arts community. It is a question of finding a balance between the need for freedom of artistic expression and public accountability." Translation: the same thing a third time.

So much for a now-repudiated past. What about the future? Here the chairman defines an Endowment that will simply keep out of the public eye. It will "emphasize arts education," "emphasize delivery of arts to our

multicultural and rural communities," "emphasize the international activities of this agency," and "maintain, strengthen, and enhance our core institutions which are both the repositories of our past artistic genius and in many ways the hope for our future. Here I mean our museums, symphonies, theaters, operas, and all other major artistic groups." Translation: grants will mostly go to institutions, *e.g.*, schools, community organizations, international exhibitions, museums, and theaters, which can be trusted not to blow up Pittsburgh, and not so much to individual artists, who cannot be trusted.

The chairman's reiteration of the magic words conservatives have heard so little of in the past 18 months — "accountability," "taxpayer," "no longer solely for the arts community" — tells us that the NEA has finally capitulated to what I regard as good sense. It aims at a long future as a federal agency devoted to building audiences for the arts and institutions for the arts — but not financing the careers of artists. So no more politics in the guise of "art"; no more thousands of dollars of grants for bottles of urine; no more performance art that replaces Shakespeare with chocolate-covered shriekers; no more hysteria about censorship; and no more federal subsidies to the sectarian left.

The radicals of the art world get sizzle: no restrictive language governing the content of art supported by tax money. The great center position gets the steak: an Endowment that will not spend federal funds for left-wing propaganda masquerading as "art." The other side has lost, and lost big.

—Jacob Neusner

Principalities & Powers

by Samuel Francis

After centuries of delusion that white people ever accomplished anything worth doing, Euro-Americans are finally learning to grapple with just how worthless they really are. Last November, a conference of the Brahmins of "Afrocentrism" in Atlanta devoted all of a weekend to expounding the much-trumpeted insights that it was really

Africans who built the pyramids, invented philosophy and mathematics, discovered America, and founded Judaism and Christianity (both Moses and Jesus were "African-Americans," you see).

Not only the first human beings but also the first languages were African, too, and so were Egyptians Nefertiti and King Tut, the largely Macedonian Cleopatra, and even the Greek slave Aesop, who, as far as I know, has never

before been claimed by much of anyone except Walt Disney.

The world gapes in wonder at these revelations, before which the technology of space travel and TV dinners shrinks (both of these also were probably African in origin). Meanwhile, African-American civilization continues to outpace the brutish Euros. Last October 2 Live Crew won vindication in the courts for its garbage-box rap lyrics when its white lawyers argued that the

group's "music" derived from the black culture of the ghetto. In November an even greater African-American peak was scaled with the news that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. pilfered significant portions of his doctoral dissertation.

The latter discovery might seem to cast a shadow over the thriving industry of discrediting Euro-American history and culture and weaving a new mythology of racial consciousness that Alfred Rosenberg would have envied. But the rationalizations for King's academic shenanigans with the typewriter were ready to hand.

First, the plagiarism was minimized by those who discovered it. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that at the Martin Luther King Papers Project at Stanford University, director Clayborne Carson asked that staff members not use the word "plagiarism" when talking about what they had found. This led to wiseacre code about "the P word," but it didn't prevent one of the project's interns, who had not yet been brainwashed in the labyrinthine reasoning of Afrocentrists, from collapsing into tears.

Then there's the "so-what" response, articulated by, among others, journalist Clarence Page, who is usually above such extenuations. "As one who exalts Dr. King for the wisdom and courage he showed long after his student days," wrote Mr. Page, "I reacted to this latest flap with a shrug of the shoulders and a hearty 'So what?'" But the shoulder-shrug defense seemed a little premature when hardly a soul had yet suggested any negative implications of King's loose-fingered scholarship.

By far the most fascinating excuse, however, was the elaborate syllogism constructed by the hard-core Afrocentrists and those who toddle after them. Scholar Keith Miller, who is writing a monograph that reportedly will show that King also lifted lots of other people's writing for his books *Stride Toward Freedom* and *Strength to Love* as well as for his *Letter From the Birmingham Jail*, says that King was a past master at what Mr. Miller calls "voice merging."

"Voice merging," says the *Journal*, is the art of "blending other people's words" with one's own, an art form that truly seems to be a genuine African-American invention. When white

boys merge voices, it's just plain plagiarism, and they lose their jobs, get the boot from graduate school, and wind up chairing Senate committees.

In an article published last year, Mr. Miller expands on this novel concept of the merged voice while evaluating King's habit of "borrowing" language from other people without giving proper credit. "With respect to King's language during his public career, he did absolutely nothing wrong," says Mr. Miller. "He was trained in the black folk pulpit, which is an oral tradition: In this tradition, language was seen as a common treasure, not private property. His sense of language comes out of that tradition, not out of his academic training."

That's all very well, but it still means, even if it's true, that the language commonly attributed to King may not have been his and that insofar as we evaluate his achievements on the basis of his command of language and his oratory, those achievements are now diminished. Moreover, the idea of "borrowing" language is itself interesting. Did King plan to give the language back later on?

But what is most intriguing about the "voice merging" defense is that it strides directly out of the "different cultural standards" line of reasoning that underlies the whole concept of Afrocentrism. One of the hidden purposes of Afrocentrism as an ideology, and of the whole racism racket by which traditional values are challenged as racially biased, is to concoct justifications for the lackluster performance of blacks in the United States. Plagiarism is OK, this reasoning holds, because it's part of African-American culture.

Similarly, last year at the University of Virginia, black students questioned the legitimacy of the school's traditional honor code by claiming it was inherently racist. Though blacks constitute only 9 percent of the student body at U.Va., 27 percent of the honor code cases investigated in 1988 and 1989 involved blacks, and 75 percent of the black students tried for honor violations were convicted, as opposed to 30 percent of the whites who went to trial. The Afrocentrist argument is that not only are the trials biased but also that the code itself imposes white standards by which blacks can't be fairly judged.

The logical implication of that argu-

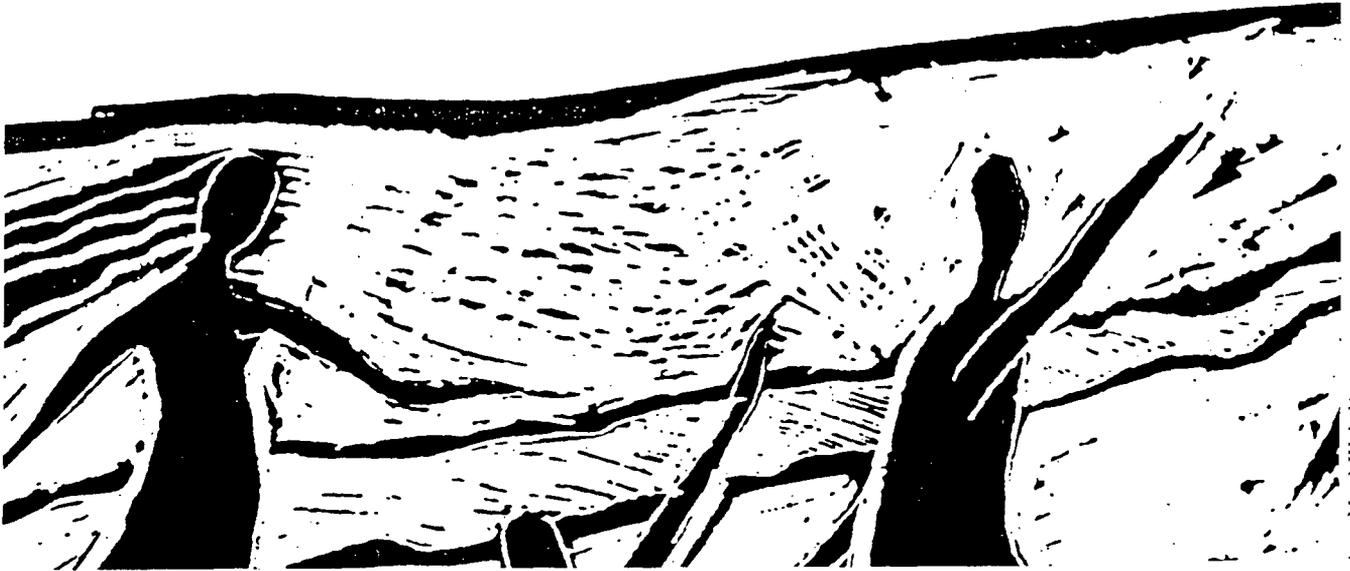
ment is in fact racial separatism such as both Louis Farrakhan and Tom Metzger support, and the *New York Times* reports that persistent poor black performance in schools is instigating calls for separate educational facilities for black students. "Today," says the *Times*, "the impetus for more equal but separate education is largely from blacks themselves," a plan that Dr. Kenneth Clark, who spent his life trying to end school segregation, says is "outrageous . . . a continuation of the whole segregation nonsense." The ultimate rationalization, of course, is the motto, "It's a black thing. You wouldn't understand"—a slogan that paralyzes serious discussion and helps lock blacks into a plantation mentality that docilely accepts the pornographic bullwhip of 2 Live Crew and the shackles of plagiarism dressed up as real scholarship.

Afrocentrism offers sophomorically fraudulent and bloated claims of racial greatness that tell us nothing authentic about real African and black American history and culture and in fact often trivializes them. Bragging that insignificant historical figures like Nefertiti and King Tut were black is rather like boasting that Millard Fillmore and his mother were white, and trying to fabricate a fake "Afrocentric" history is no less degrading than Jimmy the Greek's discussion of the comparative racial anatomy of thighs.

Moreover, by pretending that Africans invented everything from pyramids to the Pythagorean theorem, Afrocentrists simply engage in an act of civilizational plagiarism. Champions of a real and distinctive African civilization would hold up its own unique achievements, not merely copy off of the desks of the Europeans sitting next to them.

Like everyone else, black Americans have a history and a culture and a right to be proud of them, but they have no right to manufacture new myths that falsify and degrade their own and other peoples' pasts. When the Afrocentrist lobby learns that only the truth will make them free, they will give up their pathetic fables, forget about cooking up excuses for themselves, and let the unmerged voices of their people speak clearly and honestly and without the cant of propaganda and delusion.

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Anna Mycek-Wodecki

What Gift?

by Charles Causley

I am a Cornishman, a Celt, born in the far southwest of England. Apart from the six years of the Second World War and my time as a student at a college of education, I have lived the whole of my life not only in the small market-town of Launceston, where I was born, but also within the same parish.

Cornwall is a granite country, thrusting itself out into the Atlantic, an almost-island separated from the rest of England by the boundary line of the River Tamar. To this day, traveling across the river into Devonshire, there are those who still speak of going to England.

When the Normans arrived in Launceston soon after the great invasion of 1066, they built a tall stone castle and walled the town. Sensibly, they ventured no further into the turbulent west. As a young child, then, growing up in the 1920's, my little town of four to five thousand inhabitants was a microcosm of the whole world. For me, a child of working-class parents, nowhere else existed. London was an impossibly distant city. It might have been on the moon.

But what was sown in my mind and imagination was an almost overpowering sense of the past. Cornwall is a country rich in myth and legend. To me, every other farm and field, stream and well, every stretch of moorland with its mysterious piles of sculpted stone — sculpted by whom? — had, and has, its own history or fiction or fable. The Cornish were,

Charles Causley is the author of over thirty books of prose and poetry including, most recently, Secret Destinations: Selected Poems 1977-88 (David R. Godine). He was the 1990 recipient of The Ingersoll Foundation's T.S. Eliot Award, for which this was his acceptance speech. He lives in Launceston, Cornwall.

and are, great storytellers, and I now see that I was lucky in my teachers and in my tellers of hearthside tales.

I was an only child. My father, a young soldier-volunteer in France in the First World War, had returned a hopeless invalid and died in 1924, when I was seven. I remember little of him. But rereading my work across the years, I see that — without always being entirely conscious of what I was doing at the time — I have made various attempts to rediscover him, to recreate him. He appears, if not in the text, in the subtext of what I write. I'll give you an example.

Ten years — “ten feasts of fire” — after the end of World War II, and after my own naval service had ended, I visited for the first time Normandy, in northern France. Here some of the bitterest fighting had taken place after the D-Day landings. And here, too, were ancient fortified towns the image of my very own. At Bayeux, I came upon my first British War Cemetery. It was neatly laid out, in that then rather ragged Norman farming landscape, in the form of an English garden. Here is what I wrote.

I walked where in their talking graves
And shirts of earth five thousand lay,
When history with ten feasts of fire
Had eaten the red air away.

“I am Christ's boy,” I cried. “I bear
In iron hands the bread, the fishes.
I hang with honey and with rose
This tidy wreck of all your wishes.

“On your geometry of sleep
The chestnut and the fir-tree fly,