

Deceptively Irrational

With its cheery **daily briefing** today saying, *inter alia*, “we remain resolutely committed to our vision of building an America where freedom, opportunity, prosperity, and civil society flourish”, you might be forgiven for concluding that the **Heritage Foundation's** web site could be worth visiting on a regular basis, but you'd be a bit of a gudgeon.

OK, so we agree with them that moral and cultural relativism are egregious errors. They know the problem is one of right and wrong. They know that it is urgent and integral to the current crisis. They seem at first glance to understand key concepts such as objective morality and moral progress...

But appearances are deceptive.

They assume that moral relativism is also the cause of unrelated problems such as cheating in schools and colleges, corporate scandals and political corruption. They lament the lack of patriotism exhibited by a survey showing that 37% of college students would try to evade a draft. Heritage has been a “champion of the importance of marriage, parental rights, and traditional values – standing up against the liberal line that all lifestyles are morally equal”.

Their proposed cure is brutal: a mandatory politically incorrect American History course for first year college students. This coercion will supposedly “inoculate them against the lies and distortions of the anti-war left”.

D'oh!

So it turns out that the Heritage Foundation has little inkling of true morality. Their agenda is conservatism in the literal sense, that is, to conserve traditional institutions and practices by protecting them from criticism. In evaluating institutions and practices, they look to history rather than moral content. Their dogma – in effect, ‘our traditions are good, true, and infallible’ – is no better than the idiotarian one of ‘all our traditions are wicked, false, and must be replaced’. Thus the Heritage Foundation is hardly less of a threat to our society than the radical leftists. Their apparent grasp of the issues in regard to the war and its morality was little more than a coincidence.

The rational libertarian view is that there is valuable knowledge

contained in our traditions, but that all of them are fallible and can be improved through argument and debate in the absence of coercion. Dangerous ideas will not be defeated through the propagation of authorised truth to captive audiences. They will be defeated through argument, as will the Heritage Foundation.

Fri, 05/02/2003 - 00:09 | [permalink](#)

Fishy

"Gudgeon" = gullible person, I assume? The fishy definitions look ... fishy.

by a reader on Fri, 05/02/2003 - 01:56 | [reply](#)

Gudgeon

<http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=gudgeon>

"Slang: One who is easily duped."

"A person easily duped or cheated. --Swift."

by a reader on Fri, 05/02/2003 - 02:29 | [reply](#)

your bias is showing

I thought information was power?

Why are you not railing against all the brutal forced re-education that Politically Correct thought disciplins are enforcing on the first year college students?

Would it not make sense that if we cannot stop all forced education, we should insert forced education that refutes what authoritarians are pumping as the "correct" way to think?

This is what disgusts me about Libertarians, thier adherance is as fanatical as a wahabbist muslim, they would blow themselves up figuratively, or politically (literally) to adhere to some pure ideal they think trumps reality.

What makes the Constitution great is its ability to survive hypocrisy, and still give the society attempting to adhere to it, progress. There are miss-steps, but with all the checks and balances, and competing interests, we can evolve progressively. We can only evolve progressively if we have a true history, so that we as a society dont get caught in some negative feedback loop spanning centuries, or millenia.

by a reader on Sat, 05/03/2003 - 18:22 | [reply](#)

Not against all coercion?

Why are you not railing against all the brutal forced re-

education that Politically Correct thought disciplines are enforcing on the first year college students?

We most certainly do!

Would it not make sense that if we cannot stop all forced education, we should insert forced education that refutes what authoritarians are pumping as the "correct" way to think?

No. We should never take such a defeatist and immoral attitude. We should resist all coercive education, not substitute one lot of coercion for another. And that is what **TCS (Taking Children Seriously)** is doing.

by **Sarah** on Sun, 05/04/2003 - 13:45 | [reply](#)