

Room For Improvement

Mr Dean of the Democratic Party may sometimes be unable to compose coherent sentences but, as Andrew Sullivan points out, that is as nothing compared with his substantive unsuitability for Presidential office.

Frank of IMAO may have the worst spelling in the blogosphere. But that is utterly unimportant given his subtle grasp of his subject and, of course, his gift of expressing ideas humorously and concisely:

Think about it: how many good ideas are there about politics and social interaction? It's finite. But how many utterly idiotic ideas are there? Infinitely many. So if someone comes up with a new idea, i.e., draws from the infinity of ideas out there, what's the chance of its being one of the finite number of good ideas? Nearly zero. Thus, by being a conservative and just opposing any new idea out there, you'll be right 99% of the time or more. Just do the math.

Here's the rub, though: if a "liberal" idea actually survives the rigors of conservative scrutiny (the beatings, the shootings, etc.), it, being an accepted idea, is now a conservative one. Yes, the dark secret of conservatism is that once, long ago, all their ideas were liberal. But, by being a conservative, not only do you get to be right almost all the time by opposing new ideas, you also automatically gain ownership of all the liberal ideas that are worth keeping. As the scientific community would characterize that, it is totally sweet!

We are not Conservatives. But the above [here, and in the passage below, we could not resist correcting the spelling and other errors] is a very good summary of why we have **a lot in common** with them. Frank also goes on, in his jocular way, to endorse the fundamental error of Conservatism:

Inevitably, as time has passed, the finite number of good ideas out there have been discovered, and thus there is less and less chance that any liberal will have anything worth saying. Ergo, the ideas they do propose now are

increasingly idiotic. And, now facing only the weapons of derision, they survive by sealing themselves off from outside input, huddling together in small enclaves protected from the light of reason. They're like cockroaches, hiding in the walls, and occasionally emerging from the shadows to wreak havoc.

That there is, and always will be, infinite room for improvement, is one of the great liberal truths.

Tue, 12/02/2003 - 22:49 | [digg](#) | [del.icio.us](#) | [permalink](#)

But surely if liberals genera...

But surely if liberals generate new ideas that conservatives adopt once they've been scrutinised, then liberals are creative new-ideas inventors that conservatives couldn't do without?

Seems a bit mean to steal ideas from the other side while constantly dissing them. Isn't that just the kind of badness liberals observe and despise in conservatives? "Keep homosexuality criminal! Down with liberals and their evil ideas!" (20 years of gay rights campaigning later) "Vote for us, gay people!" Ahem.

Alice Bachini <http://www.alicebachini.com/>

by a reader on Wed, 12/03/2003 - 23:13 | [reply](#)

"stealing" ideas

the idea of stealing ideas about how to live is, aside from exceptional circumstances (copying and selling someone's book on the subject, say) an absurd notion. we should be happy if people like our ideas enough to adopt them. we should not be resentful that they didn't always agree with us; rather we should be glad they've seen the light now.

all stealing really means in this context is being persuaded. which is good.

- Elliot

by a reader on Wed, 12/03/2003 - 23:20 | [reply](#)

Thomas Sowell...

...said (almost exactly) the same thing in his book "A Conflict of Visions". It's a gem that sheds much light on the never ending struggle between left and right.

by a reader on Thu, 12/04/2003 - 04:30 | [reply](#)
