**From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life, 1500 to the Present,** by Jacques Barzun. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2000, 896 pp., $36.00 hardbound.

*David Foster*

*From Dawn to Decadence* is a grand and engaging narrative of the evolution of Western cultural life from the dawn of the Protestant Reformation to the decadence of the late twentieth century. Animated by an historian's sympathy and a lively curiosity, Mr. Barzun's leisurely tour of 500 years of Western culture is descriptive and conversational in character rather than explanatory and scholarly. The book is full of strong themes and fresh judgments. Its main—and mostly convincing—argument is that the ideas that once gave to Western culture its vitality, variety, and complexity are now becoming exhausted.

Mr. Barzun believes that the historian's primary task is to tell a good story rather than to construct explanations, develop theories, or trace grand social movements. Accordingly, his chronicle focuses on particular men and women and the results of their creative energies. The core of the book is a multitude of brief biographies of cultural leaders and substantial mini-essays on their accomplishments in such fields as music, art, theology, manners, philosophy, economics, architecture, morals, literature, and science. Although most of Mr. Barzun's subjects are well known, some are relatively obscure: he is as interested in Le Chevalier Gluck, Saint-Evremond, James Agate, and Dorothy Sayers as in Erasmus, Descartes, Rousseau, or Shakespeare; Bach's fugues are analyzed, but so are Cubist painting, the murder mystery, and the shift from comfort to convenience in the technology of the late nineteenth century. This is therefore not a work of narrow specialization. Nor, on the other hand, does it seek to reduce the rich diversity of Western cultural phenomena to a single overarching explanation or cause. Mr. Barzun revels in the mixed heritage of the West, the "mongrel civilization par excellence," freely noting the tensions and contradictory tendencies within it. Western culture is, he suggests, nothing so much as an "endless series of opposites."

As is suggested by the variety of topics, the emphasis on description, and the conversational style, this is not a conventional scholarly history. It differs from such histories also in having almost no footnotes or endnotes. Among several innovations of form, perhaps the most important is a freestanding essay that Mr. Barzun calls a "Cross Section." There are six of these, each of which views the Western world from the vantage point of a particular city and time (for example, London around 1715 or Chicago in 1895). This useful device helps to organize the material and provides a place to discuss many new subjects (for example, the reasons for the location of Madrid).

The first contribution of the book is simply the sheer variety of subjects examined. Mr. Barzun also makes a valuable contribution in occasional remarks and longer more formal digressions on the meaning of such words as "culture," "experimental," "Man," and "esprit." He believes that "to live amid lax words and dim thoughts . . . depletes energy and deadens the joy of life"; consequently, he regards the contemporary tendencies to vague generalizations, cant, and carelessness in language to be important signs of decadence. His gentle impatience with these vices and his insistence on precise usage is refreshing. But perhaps the best

thing about the book are the fresh insights and thought-provoking judgments with which it is peppered. For example, Mr. Barzun argues that it was not more careful observation that distinguished modern from medieval science, but rather a specific change in the "pre-conceptions and pre-perceptions" that inform observation. Modern scientific observation consists "in overlooking visible details, in *neglecting* observation . . . and in viewing objects in geometrical fashion . . . . It is the method used in Picasso's bull: in the series of sketches he starts lifelike—massive, glossy, beautifully drawn . . . . Then, in a dozen or so of gradual reductions, he loses one characteristic after another until, at the last, he is the bare outline of what he was at first. He is the abstract bull, the bull, so to speak, of science."

Pointing out many such links in a great variety of fields, Mr. Barzun successfully describes the "web" (to use his metaphor) of interrelated ideas that is Western culture. All in all the work establishes in convincing detail that the West has been a most variegated and dynamic civilization. It is an effective rejoinder to the notion, put abroad by some of its enemies, that Western civilization is a monolithic block created by a cabal of (now) dead white males.

The cornucopia of topics discussed in the work is organized into a narrative in two main ways. First, Mr. Barzun divides his story into four broad historical periods (1500-1660, 1661-1789, 1790-1920, and 1921 to the present). Each begins from and elaborates the consequences of a revolution, by which Mr. Barzun means a "violent transfer of power and property in the name of an idea," the result of which transfer is to "give culture a new face." Thus, the book begins with Martin Luther's attempt to reform the Catholic Church, in the aftermath of which authority was destroyed and the West was first "torn apart" politically and spiritually. This part moves from questions regarding religious belief to Newton and the emergence of modern science. In the next period, that of the seventeenth-century monarchical revolution, the West was reconstructed in a new way through the emergence of monarchy and the nation state. The third period centers on the Romantic reactions to the forces of liberalism, individualism, and rationalism unleashed by the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. The fourth revolution is the twentieth-century social and collectivist revolution, the aims of which are said to be revealed most clearly in the Russian Revolution of 1917. The most important result of this revolution for the West is the welfare state and the "demotic" or popular culture that flourishes in it, though nearly equal space is given to the moral, social, and cultural consequences of the Great War and the revolution in science initiated by Einstein.

A second organizing principle cuts across the breaks and fresh starts suggested by the idea of revolution. Beginning with the Protestant Reformation, Mr. Barzun weaves into his account several recurrent themes, such as individualism, scientism (the fallacious belief that the scientific method ought to be applied to all spheres of life, where it will, eventually, solve all problems), abstraction, analysis, self-consciousness, and primitivism. Equality or egalitarianism is not a separate theme, but it is hard to argue with Mr. Barzun's suggestion that emancipation is the dominant theme of the West. As an example of how the themes are treated, in narrating the events of the Reformation, Luther's view that the individual has a direct relation to God emerges as an instance of emancipation (from priestly authority), but his seeking inspiration in an earlier and therefore

purer or more genuine Christianity is an instance of primitivism. These themes are noted as they occur in the narrative and one never feels that events and personalities are being forced into some Procrustean bed of theory. Over the course of the work we gradually observe the working out of their implications in different areas of culture. Thus, by the time we reach the twentieth century, in which painters reject form and men and women natural and conventional restraints of all sorts, the theme of emancipation has acquired a variegated meaning and a kind of trajectory of its own.

It is important to appreciate Mr. Barzun's use of his themes. They are not causes or forces, much less an attempt to elaborate a grand theory of history. The emphasis in the narrative is always on the particular and he suggests at one point that the themes are merely mnemonic devices, convenient ways of keeping track of a great variety of people, places, and events. The relative denigration of the universal in favor of the particular that is reflected in this suggestion is linked to Mr. Barzun's view of history and appears in many of his judgments. For example, he approves Pascal's view that the "body and its feelings are primary, not mind and reason," and he is much more critical of opposition to relativism than of relativism itself (which he seems to misunderstand as a form of pluralism), even though relativism has done much damage to language, education, and culture. But if there were nothing universal or permanent to be learned from the study of history, one might well wonder how much effort that study was worth. Accordingly, Mr. Barzun also describes his themes as names for the characteristic "desires, attitudes, purposes behind the events or movements," names whose purpose it is to show the persistence of meanings within a great diversity of human characters and experience. Indeed, in pointing out the similarities indicated by the themes, Mr. Barzun seeks an appreciation of the common motives or needs that animate human beings despite their differences. This is an eminently worthy enterprise, and while not everyone will agree with his view of the relation between the particular and the universal (or reason), Mr. Barzun helps us to think about this fundamental question.

Despite a view of history that values the particular over the general, it is the general themes that are at the heart of the evolutionary thesis revealed in the book's title. Mr. Barzun argues that these characteristic themes of Western culture have now been carried to extremes, thereby bringing about a condition of decadence and indeed the "end" of the West. Naturalism in late nineteenth-century literature, for example, carried forward the theme of emancipation by destroying the "conventions of the respectable" regarding the family. This emancipation from authority was amplified and extended in the sexual revolution of the 1960s, and we are now approaching a condition in which it is hard to imagine what further developments in this direction are possible. Mr. Barzun believes we have now reached a situation in which there "are no clear lines of advance" and where the "forms of art as of life seem exhausted." This process of ever more extreme development is traced for all the main themes, so that contemporary decadence is a complex matter with many sources and facets.

On one level, "Decadence" is intended to be a term of art, an objective description of our condition. But, as the concluding chapters on "Embracing the Absurd" and "Demotic Life and Times" suggest, Mr. Barzun also regards this development as a cultural and moral disaster of the first

order. What other judgment could one make of a civilization whose forms of life and art seem exhausted? The disaster is all the more profound in that the decadence of the West is not due to fortuitous events, mistakes, or external pressures, but rather to the working out of the great Western themes themselves. Mr. Barzun thus suggests that the West's fundamental problem may be a lack of moderation in pursuing its own characteristic desires and purposes.

In a work of this scope and ambition there is much to think about and also much with which to disagree. Regarding the latter, even readers (like this one) sympathetic to Mr. Barzun's argument may not find his evidence altogether persuasive. He maintains that the fiercest battle of the day concerns "the deep division over the idea of the state, and the place of religion." That sounds right, but the point about religion is treated obscurely through a brief commentary on the "Grand Inquisitor" section of Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamozov.* As for the state, Mr. Barzun argues that the "strongest tendency" of the later twentieth century was "separatism," or the demand by every group with a grievance and a plausible claim to have a state of its own. It is true that the twentieth century witnessed a proliferation of states, but Mr. Barzun's evidence is drawn overwhelmingly from the non-Western world and does not establish that the West is decadent on this account. More importantly, he catalogs many problems with the welfare state—its extraordinary cost and stultifying bureaucracy, the proliferation of interest groups, distrust of politicians, and so on. But these are all problems of administration or implementation; they do not establish a fundamental dissatisfaction with the basic goals of the welfare state, which would be a real crisis.

Although this book culminates in the argument that the West is now decadent, it would be wrong to leave the impression that it is a gloomy jeremiad. The dominant tone throughout is Mr. Barzun's delight in all the amazing things this "mongrel civilization" has produced. The book may even suggest some ground for cautious optimism, for it contains at least one example of decadence or exhaustion followed by a revival of new energies. This could happen again, which is of course not to say that it will or even that it is likely. In the last chapter, Mr. Barzun himself reflects briefly on the future. Things can get worse, he suggests, but it is also possible that the cultural richness of the past will inspire young people in whom the creative urge survives to fresh efforts of their own. If such young people do arise, we can imagine that sympathetic accounts of past cultural achievements, such as this one, will encourage their efforts.

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## **Gender Equity in Higher Education: Are Male Students at a Disadvantage?** by Jacqueline E. King. Washington, D.C.: The American Council on Education, 2000, 19 pp., $15.00 paperback.

*Patricia Hausman*

These are not the best of times for the Underrepresentation Industry—particularly its feminist subsidiary. Its long-running campaign as defender of the

underdog has collided with a harsh reality: numbers that no longer support its tale of second-class citizenship. Whatever its situation a half century ago, today, the gender equity movement is quite simply a victim of its own success.

This reversal of fortune is especially striking in higher education. Women now take home the majority of associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees—and are approaching parity with males at the doctoral level. They also earn the majority of professional degrees in the once male-dominated fields of optometry, pharmacy, and veterinary medicine. This past year, for the first time, females even outnumbered males among first-year law students.

Facts such as these have justifiably prompted questions about whether females truly need the cradle-to-grave handholding contemplated by a movement that has morphed into a veritable industry. Among those posing hard questions has been NAS member Christina Hoff Sommers, whose recent book, the *War Against Boys,* exposes the gender equity movement for what it has become: a shameless purveyor of intellectual snake oil.

And what's an equicrat to do when confronted with challenges from credible sources citing numbers that have people thinking twice? A scholarly-sounding rebuttal is an obvious tack. This appears to be what the American Council of Education intended when it released this monograph a few months after publication of Sommers' work.

Author Jacqueline King seems almost annoyed that she had to bother. She points out that the overrepresentation of females in higher education has been with us for some time. "Why are we paying attention to the academic success of males now?" she asks plaintively. The answer, she ventures, "may be that the public has come to believe that academic underachievement is shifting from a problem that only affects poor and nonwhite males to a more widespread issue that also affects white-middle class males."

This line of argument—that society generally ignores problems until the white middle-class is affected—is a familiar one. But even if I shared this view, I would doubt that it is the answer in this case. More likely, what has brought the issue to the table is the sheer magnitude of female overrepresentation among today's college students.

ACE, however, appears convinced that the arguments of Sommers and others are best defused by demonstrating that the putative beneficiaries of "white male privilege" are still doing fine. Clearly, it believes that its report does precisely this. "The data presented in this report," it asserts, "refute this thesis [that white middle-class males are losing ground to their female counterparts]. There is little evidence to suggest that white, middle-class males are falling behind their female peers."

A more accurate assertion would be that "there is little evidence in this report—period." Of its dozen figures and graphs, only three contain data relevant to evaluating ACE's contention that no educational gender gap exists among whites from middle-class families.

These few tables do bring some interesting findings to light. For example, one lists the percentage of 1992 high school graduates who completed the "new basics" college preparatory curriculum. The sexes were equally represented among white students from households with family incomes of $75,000 or more. White females from low- and middle-income families did outnumber their male counterparts, but only by two to three percentage points.

The next table shows the percentage of each sex entering post-secondary edu-

cation immediately after high school—by race and socioeconomic status (SES). The latter is not defined but typically reflects family income as well as parental education and occupation. Strangely, however, figures are provided for only two SES groups—low and high. The fate of those in the middle of the SES spectrum is left to the reader's imagination.

An innocent explanation for this may exist. But in the context of the report's insistence that all is well for white males of the middle class, it is difficult to imagine what it would be. Moreover, the data for high SES students contradict ACE's claim that the gender gap favoring females is limited to the poor and nonwhite. Among high SES whites who entered higher education immediately after high school, the chart shows a female advantage of 6 percentage points. This is smaller than the gap of 9 percentage points among low SES whites, but hardly a trivial difference.

The report also shows the distribution of undergraduate enrollment among students aged 24 or younger, by both sex and race. At first glance, these numbers appear to offer the most compelling support for ACE's argument. White and Asian males from high-income families show a slight advantage over their female counterparts, and in the middle income group, white males and females are equally represented. However, it seems likely that these data are biased by their failure to take into consideration those in this age group who have already finished college. Elsewhere, the report indicates that females have a five percentage point advantage among those who finish a baccalaureate degree within five years of beginning their studies. Accordingly, these data need to be adjusted before firm conclusions can be drawn.

Unfortunately, this is the extent of evidence provided to document the conclusion that no gender gap exists among the white middle class. The report provides no data broken down by both sex and income group for completion rates, nor for advancement to graduate or professional school. Absent such data—and considering the gap favoring females among high SES whites who went directly from high school to postsecondary education—ACE's sweeping conclusion hardly seems justified.

In addition, ACE's enthusiasm for dismissing what it considers unwarranted fears about white middle-class males is not matched by a corresponding concern with the degree of disadvantage faced by their low-income counterparts. Its analysis reveals the following percentage of low-income males entering postsecondary education immediately after high school: Asian, 59 percent; Hispanic, 45 percent; African-American, 32 percent; and white, 25 percent. In the context of its primary theme—as well as its professed concern with equal outcomes—one might expect ACE to call attention to these striking differences in enrollment rates. Yet, neither its conclusions nor its promotional materials call attention to these gaps, nor recommend measures to understand their causes.

Nonetheless, what is most disappointing about the report is not the inadequacy of the evidence to support its conclusions. Rather, the most salient issues are ones that ACE most likely did not even anticipate that its work would raise.

The first of these is its hypocrisy. ACE is a vocal defender of sex and race preferences—and notably, does not advocate means-testing of would-be recipients. It does not argue, for example, that only females and minorities from low-income homes should be eligible for preferential treatment in admissions and hiring. Only when the possibility of white males receiv-

ing additional attention from educators crosses the radar screen does it introduce family income as an overarching consideration. This is a rather glaring inconsistency.

ACE's approach also reveals a narrowness of vision that is all too common in academe today. It is a view that sees disadvantage almost exclusively in economic terms. This conviction—that children born to financially successful parents are presumptively privileged—reveals a blindness to the multi-faceted nature of life, if not a failure of empathy from the very individuals who present themselves as exemplars of compassion. It should be obvious that disadvantage comes in many forms, of which limited financial resources are but one. Similarly, the notion that demographic characteristics such as race and socioeconomic status can magically divide the advantaged from the disadvantaged is ridiculously simplistic.

Ultimately, the most serious problem with ACE's analysis is that it ignores the most relevant criterion for evaluating educational outcomes: whether individuals are achieving consistent with their academic abilities. If males (or females) who are likely to benefit from an authentic college education are foregoing the opportunity, their reasons require careful consideration—regardless of their economic circumstances. Evidence that high school males are more likely than females to be alienated from school and to perform in class at levels well below their aptitudes suggests that the question is not purely speculative.

ACE had an opportunity to demonstrate leadership and a commitment to excellence by considering whether academically able males remain as likely as their female counterparts to pursue postsecondary education. Instead it gave us an analysis built on a timeworn obsession with race and socioeconomic status to the exclusion of all else. In doing so, it demonstrates how truly impoverished its thinking, as well as our national debate, has become.

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## **Faculty Misconduct in College Teaching,** by John M. Braxton and Alan E. Bayer. Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999, 228 pp., $34.95 hardbound.

*Henry H. Bauer*

What might one expect of a book with this title?

Perhaps a discussion of what the purpose of college teaching is: faculty misconduct would be behavior inimical to that purpose. Or perhaps consideration of practical matters: what to do about faculty misconduct, no matter how defined—what procedures could be effective in controlling or changing undesired faculty behavior?

Perhaps there might be reflections on the role played by the faculty within a system influenced also by politicians, administrators, parents, students, and others, not forgetting athletic departments, leading to a discussion of the degree of influence—or lack of influence—that faculty have on what many consider "misconduct," grade inflation for example. Thus one of my colleagues, a distinguished

scholar, was recently moved to circulate an essay proposing in all seriousness that faculty should deliberately lower standards and expectations as a rational accommodation to the nationwide initiatives by university administrations to curry favor with students and politicians by increasing retention, diversity, and graduation rates.

That last example is the plain truth, unlike the examples in this book, which are fictional vignettes; as unsubtle as, but needlessly longer than, the thought-bites on the dust-jacket, for example, "Professor W. always seems to be too busy to prepare her syllabus for her first day of class."

Real life is not so without nuance. An entirely real Assistant Professor M. quite openly told her classes that she could not assign much in the way of written work (this was in freshman English, no less) because she needed to spend her time on research in order to attain tenure. But her story must not stop there, if one is considering faculty misconduct. What were M's colleagues saying to her during her six years of probationary service? What did her department head know, and when? And if he didn't know, why not? How much had Ms. M. been influenced by the radical feminists around her? What role was played by the unspoken but universal belief that no woman would be denied tenure at that place and time? What went on in the mind of the provost who overruled college and university committees and granted M. tenure—only to boast privately half-a-dozen years later about how he had maneuvered her into resigning instead of returning from an extended leave?

This book doesn't tell such interesting and true tales. It doesn't discuss what college teaching ought to be. It just describes surveys of the beliefs of fewer than a thousand faculty as to what faculty misconduct is.

The book's authors are sufficiently proud of their survey instrument, the College Teaching Behaviors Inventory (CBTI), that its name is garnished with the copyright symbol, ©. The Inventory has 126 questions to be answered on a 5-point scale, from 1 (appropriate/encourage) through 2 (discretionary), 3 (mildly inappropriate/ignore) and 4 (inappropriate/handle informally) to 5 (very inappropriate/requires intervention). The questions are grouped into categories A through G. A, "Pre-planning for the course", includes such matters as "The instructor does not read reviews of appropriate textbooks" (which reminded me that, at least in chemistry, textbooks are typically not the subject of reviews; to assess a textbook, one needs to look at the book itself). Group B, "First day of class," includes "The first class meeting is dismissed early," which has been standard practice in the places I've taught: "Here's the syllabus, now I'll summarize what we're going to do this semester and how and why; now go buy your textbooks and start reading." And indeed the survey respondents agree that there's nothing at all wrong with this practice, giving it a rating of 2.60 (between "discretionary" and "mildly inappropriate/ignore"). But why include this question in the first place?

Still, it is instructive to note that this 2.60 had a standard deviation of 0.93. Indeed, most of the questions garnered responses with standard deviations between 0.6 and 1.1, which would indicate that little attention—if any at all—should be paid to differences of less than a full point on the 5-point scale.

That is not the authors' view, however. The data are heavily massaged via correlation coefficients, *t*-values and the like—based on a survey, mind you, whose

response rate was between 33.1 percent (265 out of 800) and 47.8 percent (382 out of 800) in the three groups surveyed. As to the book's use of numbers: why report percentages to three significant figures when the decimal place then represents fractions of a person? Perhaps it's just because *all* numbers in the book are given to three significant figures. But what excuse is there for three significant figures given the types of questions asked and the qualitative meanings attached to the distinct categories 1, 2, 3, 4, 5? A more meaningful, accurate representation of the opinions of those asked would be histograms for those five possible responses.

On the question of "moral turpitude," the mean response from female faculty is 4.92 whereas the mean response from male faculty is 4.87. The authors rely on their heavy-duty statistical analysis to assert that this difference, because of a *t*-value of 2.66, is significant at the $p<0.01$ level (94, Table 7.1). They further assert that the difference on "Condescending negativism" between female 4.26 and male 4.14 is significant at the 0.001 level since its *t*-value is 3.29.

To this reviewer, those differences are insignificant no matter what some statistical software package might come up with. In any case, in a group of 30 or so comparisons, some will *by chance* be "significantly" different from "normal." In that cited Table 7.1, out of 28 pairs two are "significant" at the 0.05 level, two at the 0.01 and one at the 0.001. In the similar Table 7.3, out of 36 pairs nine are "significant" at the 0.05 level, one at 0.01, and one at 0.001. Both circumstances are quite consistent with the expected number of pairs that would *purely by chance* appear "significantly different." A reasonable conclusion would be that *nothing* among these comparisons is in actual fact a real difference.

The book opens quite arrestingly: "Might not faculty misconduct in teaching provoke this growing problem of student misbehavior in the classroom?" This is followed by the fictional examples of the instructor not preparing syllabi and so on. But the provocative opening question is not given the discussion it might deserve. (Which admittedly may not be all that much. I did not increase the degree of my teaching misconduct, nor did the many colleagues I know rather well, over the last decade or two, during which time student misbehavior grew by leaps and bounds.)

Literature citations pervade the book. Thus the fact is supported by three citations, that treating students condescendingly and demeaningly affects learning negatively (22). That doesn't negate the undeniable fact, however, that my math teacher in high school got me started on really learning math because he so embarrassed me with sarcasm during class one day that I resolved never again to have to suffer in that way. Not to mention all the instructors who use the Socratic method and are acknowledged as great teachers.

Another cited fact, or formulation, "stems from Durkheim's (1951 [1897]) supposition that nonconformity is the natural human condition, whereas conformity is abnormal" (3). Then what an abnormal society this twentieth-century culture that we live in must be!

Other asserted facts are not supported by references. For instance, "Misconduct by the professoriate in all work role domains, including teaching behavior, is shown *not* to be as rare as is often popularly assumed" (10). This is supposed to be shown in Chapter 10; but it isn't, and indeed could not possibly be, given that the reported research consists of gathered opinions about what ought to be regarded

as misconduct, not a survey of actual misconduct. But further: Who is it that makes the purported "popular" assumption?

Chapter 10 begins very properly by pointing out how limited and indeed unrepresentative is the sample used in the survey. But then there are conclusions drawn from the findings, and implications for theory, and recommendations for further research, and finally "Implications for Policy and Practice":

1. Systematic records of incidents of teaching misconduct should be kept by colleges and universities.
2. A formal code of teaching conduct should be developed. [One wonders, would it need to address each of the 126 possible misconducting behaviors? Or maybe even more, since the authors say somewhere that this is not an exhaustive list?]
3. Colleges and universities, and academic departments within them, should conduct audits of the prevailing normative proscriptions at their institutions and within their individual departments.
4. Individual colleges and universities should establish a formal committee that considers reported incidents of teaching misconduct.
5. Sanctions for teaching misconduct should be formulated.
6. Colleges and universities offering graduate level degrees should attend to the role of the graduate school socialization process in inculcating prescribed and proscribed forms of the teaching normative patterns identified in this book.
7. Colleges and universities should reward faculty for their teaching integrity.
8. Normative expectations for teaching should be codified in collective bargaining agreements.
9. Formal institutional policies should be expanded to encompass more expressly a wider variety of general prescribed and proscribed teaching behaviors.

When such codes and policies are framed, who shall decide whether or not to address such behaviors as the following (from the CBTI):

> C19. The instructor practices poor personal hygiene and regularly has offensive body odor.
>
> C20. The instructor routinely wears a sloppy sweatshirt and rumpled blue jeans to class.

As to C19, much surely depends on the degree and type of odor, and might be difficult to define let alone enforce given varying ethnic preferences regarding what odors are pleasant and which unpleasant: for example, I find repulsive the powerful garlic odor quite typically exuded by members of several ethnic communities. And political correctness is not entirely absent from the CBTI: "E22. Sexist or racist comments in students' written work are not discouraged."

As to C20, the authors surely know that such attire has been for several decades almost *de rigueur* in with-it departments of sociology, cultural studies, and the like.

The CBTI deals with minutiae on many matters with respect to which, by any reasonable interpretation, different approaches are equally acceptable, or on which institutional policy trumps instructor preference:

> B1. Class roll is not taken.
>
> B8. Students are not asked to record their background, experiences and interests for reference by the instructor.
>
> C7. The instructor routinely allows one or a few students to dominate class discussion.

[Increasingly in recent years I had classes in which I was fortunate to have

*any* students willing to ask questions or enter into discussion.]

> C15. The instructor does not introduce new teaching methods or procedures.

That could be good, bad, or indifferent, depending on instructor, subject, and other circumstances. So too with

> D1. The instructor does not have students evaluate the course at the end of the term.

Perhaps the wisest comment I've heard on these evaluations came from a tour guide. At the end of a week's travel in Ireland, all members of the group were asked to complete an evaluation. Struck by the analogy with teaching, I asked our guide whether the company later shared these with her. She said, "Yes, they do. But after the first couple of times, I've stopped reading them. In every group there'll be one or two sourpusses, and their comments tended to make me wary and even resentful of the next tour group. I don't want that, so I no longer read my evaluations."

This book reminded me of the old saw, "What happens when a manuscript is rejected by a journal of sociology?" Answer: It is published as a monograph. The title of this volume is misleading; the data are not instructive; the statistical massaging is invalid. Its production by one of the most highly reputed university presses raises a question of misconduct in academic publishing.

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