

Opinions

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Sex and equality

In the title of my column today are two subjects about which in America we seem to have forgotten a great deal. Both have become strategic weapons in the culture war that has roiled our national unity, such as it is.

Concerning the former of the two, sex, there are really only two things one should know and those are male and female. That a relatively small number of tortured individuals have been encouraged to believe that, despite all material evidence to the contrary, they are in fact a sex (now "gender") other than that which some politically backward physician, with only a decade of medical training and many years in practice, "assigned" to them at birth, is one of the great crimes of our time. All that, however, may be small potatoes next to the criminal misinterpretation of the term "equality" and what it properly implies.

I say "criminal misinterpretation" because it has been employed as a device literally to steal not only wealth but opportunity, dignity, and the honest labor of others.

Coupled with gender (the ideological substitute for "sex"), equality has been employed as a Trojan horse to slip in a demand not merely for equal treatment and opportunity but equal

outcomes. The presupposition is that if equal opportunity exists for every population or subgroup, then every population or subgroup will be proportionately represented in whatever outcomes are in view.

This presupposition about outcomes makes it politically awkward to explain why Asians and Ashkenazi (Eastern European) Jews outperform, for example, Western Caucasians on I.Q. tests and college admission exams.

So, there is no explanation. The problem is resolved by the force of law and other "qualifications" such as "life experience" are added to the evaluation.

Make no mistake, though, this isn't about racial or sexual equality of opportunity. Nominally it has always been framed that way and legitimate concerns have existed, though I think those concerns have been effectively addressed over the last fifty years or so.

But the latest round of political combat has been predicated on the manufactured grievance of "systemic" injustice. That's right, the whole system has to come down. It's a veiled invitation to the universal equality of socialism.

In the December, 2020, issue of First Things magazine, Bruno Chaouat discusses the culture

war dodge of "intersectionality". This is the contention that discrimination is not primarily institutional. It's structural. You may integrate an institution, say, a university or a government body, but the structures of society, for example Western classical music or literature, are "structurally" problematic. The only solution to the problem is their abolition. Integrating minority groups (who do quite well) into them or offering the equal opportunity to do so won't solve the structural problem. The structures themselves still have to be destroyed.

The alleged enemy is discrimination. However, Chaouat points out, "Culture and education demand discrimination...It is the basis of critical thinking." It is also how we tell the excellent from the mediocre, the necessary from the trivial, the morally right from the morally failed.

The standards created in Christianized Western civilization are indeed judgmental. If they were not, they would be of no use. That necessarily implies there will be winners and losers. The answer is not to take away the scoreboard but to train better players. The difficulty of that task doesn't justify a cultural revolution designed to destroy the highest achievements of that culture.



JEB Tales

On my birthday in 2006 my middle daughter Jodie gave me a book of blank pages as a gift and wrote this on the inside cover: "Happy birthday Daddy, my fondest memories growing up are all the wonderful stories you told about your life. I remember going to sale barns to buy baby calves, going to build fences or just for a ride and hearing about the haunted house, the rooster that attacked you, you stealing Uncle George's fudge and I would always imagine you on your boyhood adventures. I always wanted to hear more. I want my children and grandchildren to have a written log of your stories so we can always read them.

Love always and thanks for the memories, Jodie" Here are three of the stories.

The Haunted House

Dad (John Ed Bartmess Sr) was wounded in one of the last battles of WWII and there were days when he could not walk behind his pair of mules to plow. So, it was a happy day when a truck from Babin Ford Tractor delivered the very first tractor to Jug Bend, Louisiana. Why it could even plow two rows at a time!

When Dad had finished plowing his own field, Mr. Don Alexander asked him to come and plow his field. Mr. Don lived a few miles up the river, so Mom sent George, Sherry, and me to take Dad a jug of water and something to eat. About two thirds of the way to the Alexander place was an old, abandoned house on the Huff property. Even though Dad had been plowing for several hours we could not make ourselves go past the old house without going inside to investigate. The windows were boarded up, so it was quite dark in the old house. I went into one of the back rooms and found where an old door was nailed crossways to cover-up something. George and Sherry came into the room and I said, "Maybe the pirates hid the treasure behind this old door."

Then I heard it! "What are y'all doing in my house? I whispered, "Did y'all hear that?" No answer. I turned around and George and Sherry were gone! I took off just in time to see Sherry jump from the high porch and pass George up. Sherry was some athlete. The ghost was Dad who had run out of fuel in the tractor and had started walking home.

The Big Bad Rooster

When my oldest sister Sherry was about four years old and I was eight, she was out near the chicken house playing. It was getting late one summer afternoon, the shadows were long, and the grass was tall. I loved playing tricks on her, so I decided to get on my hands and knees and crawl up behind her and scare her.

However, I made one gigantic mistake. I failed to locate "Devil Red" the biggest, meanest red rooster that ever lived. Just before I got close enough behind Sherry to jump up and scare her, old Devil Red flew up out of the tall grass and landed on my bare back. He put his claws in me to hold on and went to beating me with his wings and pecking me with his beak.

Thank goodness Mom came running with a broom and beat him off me! Now I had to worry because I knew Mom would tell Dad what had happened. However, when Mom started telling Dad she could not stop laughing and Dad had to sit down because he laughed so hard.

George's Fudge

Mom taught my brother George how to make the best chocolate fudge I have ever eaten. One day when Mom and Dad had gone to Swampers in Franklin Parish to visit Aunt George gene and Uncle Sylvester Stanford, George made a pan of fudge. However, he would not let me have any. When he sat in a chair with his back to me cutting the fudge with a Bowie knife and smacking his lips, I snuck up behind him, reached in and got a handful of fudge.

As I ran out the back door, the Bowie knife flew by my head and stuck in the door facing. I knew I had to get the heck out of there until George cooled off.

I looked back and saw George coming out with a gun! I dove behind a pile of brush and stayed out of sight. I peeped through a hole in the brush pile and saw George climbing up into a wagon with the gun. There was nothing around that pile of brush but open pasture. I had seen George shoot flying ducks out of the air, so I knew better than to make a run for it, so I stayed there being very still. Every time I looked through a hole in the brush, I could see that big old gun barrel pointed at me.

After many agonizing hours Mom and Dad finally came home. I ran into the house to tell Dad that George was in the wagon waiting to shoot me.

By John Ed Bartmess, Jr.

To my surprise I saw George sitting in a big old chair.

I took Dad to show him the gun that George had planned to shoot me with. It was an old 25-20 rifle that George had propped up and pointed towards the brush pile. It had not worked for fifty years. I never tried to steal any of George's fudge again.

Correction on last week's article: where I stated that the Enterprise team of 1957 won 50 games in one year, I had left out the word over. I have since found out that they won 62 games that year. Also, on the team was Pill Pool, David Ainsworth, and Don McGuffee.

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