

Letter From England

by Derrick Turner

Television's Taste Terrorists



British television, like television almost everywhere, is dominated by left-wingers masquerading as liberals. As a consequence, British television often denigrates those traditions and institutions held in most affection by the indigenous inhabitants of this country. In the interstices, it finds time to celebrate and promote everything that is not British, or at any rate not integrally British, such as "documentaries" vindicating various bad things. To take two particularly bad examples, there was a famously biased BBC program called *Death on the Rock*, which criticized British security forces for defending themselves against IRA terrorists, and thereby earned the BBC the undying disrespect of all Unionists. In a part-mawkish, part-splenetic program called *Justice for Joy*, leftists attacked Britain's already overgentle deportation procedures and hinted that there should be no immigration controls, by using Joy Gardiner—a Jamaican who overstayed her visa by eight years, ignored three requests to leave the country, and then died inopportunely while she was biting a policeman—as an exemplar of saint-like womanhood, and as a symbol of outraged "human dignity" and inalienable immigrant "rights."

Although there are many worthy television programs, too much broadcasting time is taken up by films legitimizing violence or sexual perversion, by chat and game shows, deliberately multicultural children's programs, social-realist soap operas gritty with typical working-class lesbian intellectuals with mathematics degrees, confessional and sermonizing programs of different kinds, trashy comedies, emotive depictions and impertinent examinations of what should be private, doctored news bulletins and excitable talking heads who jump to conclusions and would like to involve

Britain in every war, every movement of refugees, every famine, every plague, every earthquake, every human rights abuse, every political or religious controversy in the world. I am sure this description will sound familiar to civilized Americans.

These tendencies are especially noticeable on Channel 4, one of Britain's independent channels. Some examples of recent programs give the general flavor—*Dyke TV*, for the gratification of militant lesbians (the programmer concerned is herself one of the sorority); *Drugs R Us*; *Hookers*, *Hustlers*, *Pimps and Their Johns*; *Dusky Sapphros*; *Silent Porn*. Although Channel 4 was set up to cater to minority tastes, and although they also show many fine programs and avant-garde films that would not be shown elsewhere, Channel 4's programmers seem overly concerned with those seamy and sordid things that should either not be discussed at all, or only with great care.

This process has been going on since Channel 4's inception. Its previous program director was once editrix of the left-wing newspaper, the *Guardian*. She is now managing director of BBC Radio, which shows that "Auntie" is not far behind. To take just one example, BBC 2 television has just begun *~aytime TV*, which, editor Neil Crombie promises, will "be so glamorous and exciting that straight people will love it too." The BBC has always been regarded as "Red," and it seems to be still true (although the BBC is always outraged whenever anybody points it out). But some enthusiasts do not think the BBC is left-wing enough; the ghastly Janet Street-Porter, former director of youth programming at the BBC, recently said that television executives were all "male, middle-class and mediocre," and asked why "those with 'willies'" predominated in the industry.

All in all, conservatives should not, and most do not, expect much from the television screen. But a recent episode of *The Word*, a "yoof" program on Channel 4, must have surprised even many blasé right-wingers. *The Word* (possibly inadvertently) fosters everything that tends toward social dissolution. It glorifies minority aspirations (at any rate, the ones which conflict with majority aspirations), even to the extent of deliberately

hiring presenters with strong regional accents or unusual tastes. One presenter was a bald lesbian from Newcastle with a strong Geordie accent. The less standard or middle English, the better, so far as *The Word* is concerned.

Previous episodes of *The Word* have featured a performer named "Mr. Power-tool," who pulls people across the room by means of a rope attached to his genitalia, and "Santa Claus" vomiting over a child. Encouraged by the ratings occasioned by "Mr. Powertool" and Co., *The Word's* writers decided to introduce an even better viewer attraction. Although the program's audience is a generally "right-on" group, this did not protect them from the contempt of the producers who deliberately released the contents of a colostomy bag all over them while they were laughing.

This occasioned much hostile press coverage, even from normally bland newspapers like the *Times*, none of which, however, had any effect on Michael Grade, the chief executive of Channel 4. "I am in no way answerable to the public," he said when challenged. He feels only contempt for the Broadcasting Standards Council, whom he has described as "highly unrepresentative, middle-aged, middle-class busybody dogooders"—a description reminiscent of Street-Porter and which might, with equal justice, be applied to Grade himself (except, of course, that he is instinctively lower-class). Only the *Guardian* stood up for Grade and Channel 4, and said that it didn't matter if older people were offended, as they were not one of the minorities being catered for. Only certain groups deserve consideration, after all, and society at large deserves none whatever.

What next for television's schlock-and sleaze-merchants? Every descent into baseness must be succeeded by another, even lower descent in order for momentum to be maintained. After condoms, vomit, and bags of excrement have fully penetrated popular culture, we are almost inevitably bound for guts. We already have horror films full of gore, and programs showing hospital operations; we are really getting too close to the "snuff movie." In a world where truth has been inverted, where evil has become good, where male has become fe-

male and female male, where the beautiful has been deliberately uglified, where perversion is presented as normality, where there is no respect for anything but the disreputable, where the estimable is no longer esteemed, where values are relative and not worth anything in themselves in any case, what more logical next step than that life and death become conflated and so lose their meaning?

The television taste terrorists who are always trampling at the outermost limits of the tolerable will never stop until they come up against some ultimate taboo, some innermost steeliness against which they will shatter themselves into a million opaque fragments. What would John Logie Baird have thought, if he had foreseen in 1936 the brown-foamed flood of dross bearing down on Britain? If he had known what was coming, would he not have pulled the plug out, and smashed the first fitfully flickering apparatus?

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Letter From Boston

by Eugene Narrett

Latin Quotas



The fall of 1995 may be remembered as the time when the miscast and overheated melting pot cracked and spat its singed ingredients all over us. O.J. Simpson was freed, Mark Fuhrman convicted, and Louis Farrakhan lectured us “on the idea that undergirds the Western world, white supremacy.” But while O.J. walked, Colin Powell posed, and Louis the Charmer indicted white folks for “poisoning religion,” a less spectacular event in Boston exposed the quotidian bias and official lies through which the state now enforces its power.

Late in 1994, then 16-year-old Julia McLaughlin took the admission tests for Boston Latin, the city’s most prestigious high school. Julia did quite well, placing

in the third quartile in her attempt to win one of the 432 spots in the school’s class of ’99. But, alas, Julia is white and had to step aside while Boston Latin filled its quota of 35 percent “minority” (black and Hispanic) students. One hundred and three of them who scored lower than Julia were admitted while she was turned away.

Such events have been a familiar feature of the last 20 years. Usually they disappear without a trace. But in this case there was a difference: Julia McLaughlin’s father, Michael, was an attorney with Lane, Altman & Owens. When he filed a discrimination suit against the city, veins started to bulge in the elite’s public face.

First up to the plate was the mayor, Tom Menino, who has blamed violence in Roxbury, Boston’s blackest section, on racism. Menino is adroit at pitching to the p.c. majorettes at the *Boston Globe*, the nation’s most militant enforcer of quota-state pieties. True to form, he tried to sweep the Boston Latin case under the carpet, offering to find an alternate place for Julia if McLaughlin *père* would drop the suit. For reasons which remain obscure, the compromise broke down, and everything was out in the open.

It’s an especially messy case for the liberal establishment because it confounds the usual categories of victims and villains. Julia is female, which puts her in the right, but she’s white, which is wrong. Worse still, her father, a white man and thus doubly bad, was challenging the quota plan that in 1976 had imposed busing on Boston after several years of bitter racial struggle. That, of course, was very good in the liberal catechism, even though it led to the depopulation and decay of many neighborhoods and the wrecking of most Boston schools. (Indeed, four years ago a large group of black parents petitioned the city to end busing.)

As usual, a p.c. rationale was offered by a *Globe* columnist who speculated that McLaughlin’s problem was bias against girls. It turns out that in order to assist minority youths, Boston Latin weights math scores on admission tests a tad more than verbal, at which most girls do marginally better. Therefore, said the *Globe*, we should not abolish but adjust the quotas to favor girls. To the chagrin of feminists, this theory was shot down by the legal counsel for Boston’s public schools, who admitted that “math scores

would not have affected McLaughlin’s chances. The focus for this case,” he said, “is race-conscious assignment.” In English, that means quotas.

Not to be deterred, another *Globe* stalwart suggested choosing students via a racially based “group lottery.” Mercifully, no details were offered to indicate how such a plan would both avoid and retain quotas. Perhaps group lotteries will become part of Mr. Clinton’s plan to “mend, not end affirmative action.”

In the meantime, U.S. First District Judge Arthur Garrity, who handed down the busing and quota plans 20 years ago and then actively administered the schools until 1990, was appointed to hear McLaughlin’s suit. He astonished all parties by declaring, incorrectly, that his ruling did not mandate a fixed number of minority students, but only that Boston’s schools “not be resegregated.” That, of course, was precisely what happened in the aftermath of his busing command, which condemned the city to the nightmare of “controlled choice,” in which families and students, competent and otherwise, scramble for places in the handful of decent schools, all of them ruled by Garrity’s 35 percent quota. Every spring, Boston’s families play a bizarre game of musical chairs as students turned away by quota limits dash for the next best opening. Meanwhile, having demonstrated his moral superiority, Garrity relaxes in the leafy tranquility of suburban Weston, the wealthiest community in the state.

But stammering in city hall and apologetics in the press were only the initial reactions to Michael McLaughlin’s effort to get justice for his daughter. A preliminary hearing last September 10 turned into a love feast between Garrity, liberal media, and activists who turned out to hear him praise Michael Alves and Charles Willie, the “marvelous masters” who had administered his quota plan. He acknowledged that “students of all races had suffered denial of preference” but nevertheless asserted that “the consequences of controlled choice have been excellent.” Still more astonishing was Garrity’s claim that “the School Department has more power in these matters than a federal court.” “These remarks,” a reporter deadpanned, “came as a surprise to parents and School Committee officials who fought him for more than a decade.”

But for all his self-serving revisions of history, Garrity didn’t entirely forget the