

NOTES

PREFACE

1. Lauter was chief editor of the *Heath Anthology of American Literature*, the foremost model of canon revision in textbooks, which—contrary to conservative travesties—did not “throw out” or diss the classic authors, but put them in dynamic juxtaposition with noncanonical ones. His article “Retrenchment: What the Managers Are Doing,” in the first issue of *Radical Teacher* in 1975, uncannily foresaw the destructive effects on higher education of economic globalization and the corporate managerial model; it is reprinted in *Canons and Contexts*, a wide-ranging collection of Lauter’s judiciously formulated views on literary scholarship and the politics of education. Ohmann’s books include *English in America: A Radical View of the Profession* and *Politics of Letters*, whose erudition, analytic lucidity, and modesty of tone defy conservative caricatures of Marxist theory. For a good short sample of Ohmann, see “Doublespeak and Ideology in Advertising,” in my *American Media and Mass Culture*, a witty survey of tropes of rhetorical deception in corporate issue advertising, including “Nobody Here but Us Chickens,” the erasure of corporate power and malfeasance that I pick up on in chapter 1 here. Also see Kampf and Lauter’s anthology *Politics of Literature* and Kampf, “The Scandal of Literary Scholarship,” one of the opening salvos in the canon wars, in Theodor Roszak’s definitive collection of New Left scholarship, *The Dissenting Academy*. Three other representative books by the RT group are *Left Politics and the Literary Profession*, edited by Lennard Davis and Bella Mirabella; *Politics of Education: Essays from Radical Teacher*, edited by Susan Gush O’Malley, Robert C. Rosen, and Leonard Vogt; and the textbook reader *Literature and Society*, by Pamela Annas and Robert Rosen. I have had friendly disagreements with Ohmann and others in the Radical Caucus, in which I take a somewhat more conservative position. Some of these are discussed in passing throughout this book, though they are not central here, as they are in *The Retreat*.

1 CONSERVATISM AS THE UNMARKED NORM

1. In an interview with Matthew Continetti in the *Weekly Standard*, billionaire David Koch is quoted on Obama:
He’s the most radical president we’ve ever had as a nation, he said, “and has done more damage to the free enterprise system and long-term prosperity than any president we’ve ever had.” David suggested the president’s

radicalism was tied to his upbringing. “His father was a hard core economic socialist in Kenya,” he said. “Obama didn’t really interact with his father face-to-face very much, but was apparently from what I read a great admirer of his father’s points of view. So he had sort of anti-business, anti-free enterprise influences affecting him almost all his life.”

2. When I recently asked the Greek-born owner of a restaurant in Knoxville, in his sixties, what he thought about the economic crisis in Greece, he started ranting that the communists and socialists have been destroying the country for the last 40 years, and that the last government that knew what it was doing was the fascistic military dictatorship of the sixties. Few conservatives in American public life want to acknowledge this perennial tendency in conservative thought.

2 RESTRICTED-CODE CONSERVATISM

1. I delineated components of critical-thinking instruction and incorporated them into critical pedagogy in “Postmodern Pluralism” and *Reading and Writing for Civic Literacy* (54–77).
2. I would also be remiss not to affirm that East Tennessee has a rich tradition of progressive activism for civil rights, labor, world peace, environmentalism, women’s, gay, and immigrant rights. For an excellent recent survey, see *Transforming Places: Lessons from Appalachia*, edited by Stephen L Fisher and Barbara Ellen Smith. Much of this activism has been connected to the Highlander Research and Education Center, near Knoxville, which since 1932 has been a national beacon for the best of left populism (and which was long subjected to red-baiting harassment from the right). Highlander was a major staging area for the civil rights movement in the fifties and sixties. See John M. Glen, *Highlander: No Ordinary School*.
3. The following section needs to be qualified by acknowledging that TV’s constant degeneration toward infantalization and shortening of attention span has been partially countered by the invention in the past decade of elaborated-code, “long-form” serial dramas, uninterrupted by commercials, mainly on subscription channels. HBO began the trend with *The Sopranos*, followed by *The Wire*, *Deadwood*, and *Game of Thrones*. Their success trickled down, first to AMC, a cable channel with commercials (but otherwise respecting artistic quality in these dramas), in *Mad Men* and – best of all – *Breaking Bad*, then eventually to some network dramas, again with commercials. Many viewers by now have learned to evade the commercials by watching these programs on DVD, On Demand, or DVRs. This new genre thumbed its nose at commercial TV’s restricted-code conventions by deliberately cultivating extended plot lines and character development, along with thematic, narrative, visual, or oral complexities (e.g., the cryptic black street argot in *The Wire*, the dialogue in *Deadwood* combining nonstop obscenity with elevated diction and Shakespearean poetic meter). These features demanded multiple viewings – all to the good cognitively. (At the extreme, *Game of Thrones*

seemed perversely designed to overwhelm viewers with an excess of characters and plot lines and the thwarting of dramatic expectations, as when a whole family who were the most sympathetic characters were abruptly killed off in mid-plot.) The only, predictable, downside of these dramas was that their audience was mainly limited to an upscale, college-educated one acclimated to cognitive complexity.

4. When Sinatra became an idol of the “bobby-soxers” in 1944, he was already close to 30, a veteran of the great swing bands, and a singer of extraordinary skill and taste (qualities that got dissipated in his later career) who appealed equally to musically sophisticated adults. In a signal event of postwar culture, Mitch Miller, a classical oboist who played in the New York Philharmonic under Toscanini and contributed memorable solos to Sinatra’s best records at Columbia, became Columbia’s artistic director in the fifties, when as recounted by Sinatra biographer Roy Hemming, “the average age of record buyers dropped to the increasingly affluent postwar teens and sub-teens” (“Sinatra Standards” 36). Miller’s introduction of the era of pop schlock novelty tunes and “Sing Along With Mitch” provoked Sinatra to lead a walkout of leading artists from Columbia to the newly formed Capitol Records.

3 SOCIALISM AS A COGNITIVE ALTERNATIVE

1. In saying that even social democracy is excluded from the American agenda, I do not mean to dismiss varieties of socialism farther to the left, including Marxism and communism, which also deserve a place on the agenda if only in the interest of free speech. Terry Eagleton’s *Why Marx Was Right* cogently updates Marxist critiques of social democracy, in the course of a nuanced contemporary defense of Marxist history, political economy, and cultural studies against all the common lines of argument claiming to refute them. Eagleton also responds to recent claims that Marxism has been superseded by postmodernist theory, identity politics, or the neoliberal, “world is flat” celebrations of the global economy by the likes of Thomas Friedman. Several mainstream journalists have made a similar case that globalization has largely confirmed Marx’s prediction of nation-states being eclipsed by the worldwide concentration of capital.
2. Other post-2008 reaffirmations of democratic socialism or social democracy include Geoghegan, Wolff, Lundberg, and Alperovitz.

4 THE CONSERVATIVE ATTACK MACHINE: “ADMIT NOTHING, DENY EVERYTHING, LAUNCH COUNTERATTACK”

1. David Horowitz wrote a review of Lind’s book, predictably dismissing it as a “mean-spirited little tract,” “the kind of crackpot conspiracy theory

- [Lind] ostentatiously derides,” “a pathetic rant,” and a “reprehensible, gutter-sniping book” (*Left Illusions* 282–87). Thus do conservatives uphold restraint and civility against leftist abusers of them. Still, Horowitz does make some substantive arguments suggesting that Lind overgeneralizes and exaggerates about the conservative intelligentsia. Now, if Horowitz would only apply the same standard to his own and other conservatives’ sweeping generalizations and exaggerations about leftists. This is a good illustration of a corollary to “A Semantic Calculator” and the ESBYODS Principle, that each side tends to perceive the other as monolithic while emphasizing the internal diversity in its own ranks.
2. On the other hand, Abramoff’s book might be studied in comparison with *Lynched!: The Shocking Story of How the Political Establishment Manufactured a Scandal to Have Republican Super-Lobbyist Jack Abramoff Removed from Power*, self-published by Susan Bradford, a Fox News producer, which appeared in 2010 before Abramoff’s own book and that exonerates him of charges that he admits guilt to in his book.
 3. In his book Abramoff seems to have only momentary misgivings about how his professions of orthodox Jewish piety square with his involvements in the gambling industry, involvements that have become a motif among other pious Republicans like William J. Bennett (a VIP high roller in Vegas and Atlantic City) and Newt Gingrich, who was bankrolled in his 2012 presidential bid by billionaire casino magnate Sheldon Adelson; Adelson later that year also contributed heavily to Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan. Gingrich was silent about Adelson’s lucrative concession with Communist China to extend his Las Vegas empire to Macao. In 2013, the *New York Times* reported that Adelson’s company “has informed the Securities and Exchange Commission that it likely violated a federal law against bribing foreign officials. . . . The former president of Adelson’s Macao operations . . . also accused the company of turning a blind eye toward Chinese organized crime figures operating in its casinos” (Schwartz). Bennett, Gingrich, and Adelson likewise were silent on the association of Las Vegas and Atlantic City casinos with prostitution, nude shows (Lenny Bruce proposed that the marquees for all the Vegas pseudo-high-class spectacles should simply read, “Tits and Ass”), and, at least in earlier periods, organized crime. One of Abramoff’s partners in a fraudulent gambling-ship business was bumped off gangland-style in 2001.

5 RIGHT-WING DECONSTRUCTION: MIMICRY AND FALSE EQUIVALENCIES

1. Neither Frank (who twice refers to “the Koch-backed FreedomWorks”), Continetti, nor Jane Mayer in her article discussed here, is clear on the relation of the Kochs to FreedomWorks, whose codirectors Dick Armev and Matt Kibbe, published *Give Us Liberty: A Tea Party Manifesto* in 2010. Apparently FreedomWorks was created in 2004 as a result of an

internal split in the Kochs' Citizens for a Sound Economy, which Arney had cochaired and Kibbe worked for. According to *Wikipedia*, in 2004 the Kochs started Americans for Prosperity, while "Citizens for a Sound Economy merged with Empower America in 2004 and was renamed FreedomWorks, with Dick Arney, Jack Kemp and C. Boyden Gray serving as co-chairmen, Bill Bennett focusing on school choice as a Senior Fellow, and Matt Kibbe as President and CEO." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empower_America – cite_note-3. So the Kochs appear to have no direct connection to FreedomWorks, although its funders include Verizon, AT&T, Philip Morris, and the Scaife foundations (*Wikipedia*). Arney is a former corporate lobbyist and Kibbe edited a free market economics journal at George Mason, as well as being an analyst for the US Chamber of Commerce and the Republican National Committee.

2. In a farcical episode, a liberal prankster called Walker's office claiming to be David Koch. Walker not only took the call but spent some 20 minutes chatting about their common union-busting agenda with the imposter, who recorded the conversation. As Continetti reports, the Kochs reacted with outrage against this fraud while failing to acknowledge Walker's inadvertent confirmation of complicity with Koch. Conservatives might say that liberals have a double standard in laughing off this episode while getting outraged over Andrew Breitbart's pranks, but no harm was done to anyone here, while Breitbart single-handedly brought about the demise of ACORN and the firing of Shirley Sherrod and two instructors at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.
3. Michael Tomasky's "Something New On the Mall" in October 2009 reported on further instances of "astroturf" organizing of Tea Party activities by Citizens for Prosperity and FreedomWorks.
4. This asymmetry of forces and motives on the left and right has been most prominent in scientific issues. See *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming*, by Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, as well as Banning's "When Poststructural Theory," which documents Frank Luntz's role in global warming denial through right-wing deconstruction of scientific research, and the financing of the usual think tank suspects by lobbies like those of the Kochs, the Petroleum Institute, and Exxon-Mobil.

6 FROM *PARTISAN REVIEW* TO *FOX NEWS*: NEOCONSERVATIVES AS DEFENDERS OF INTELLECTUAL STANDARDS

1. For histories of the New York Intellectuals, see Dorman; Howe; Wald.
2. In Horowitz's scholarly mode, he gave a speech at the 2009 MLA convention (with a bodyguard at his side), at the invitation of President Gerald Graff in the interests of teaching the political conflicts. During the question period, I asked Horowitz to comment on his failure to correct

Robertson's ravings in their appearances as a team. He only shrugged his shoulders and said, "I was promoting my book."

3. I have analyzed Bloom at length in "Political Correctness Left and Right" and "Thumbs Up."
4. Bloom's account of this episode at Cornell claims that the faculty and administrators gave in to them cravenly. He says the provost showed "a mixture of cowardice and moralism because he did not want trouble"—from the protestors. "His president had frequently cited Kerr's dismissal at the University of California as the great danger. Kerr had not known how to conciliate the students" (*Closing* 316) Bloom's account here stood the truth on its head. Campus protestors in the sixties at Berkeley and elsewhere were stunned when they found out how quickly administrators like Clark Kerr and professors like Nathan Glazer with liberal reputations lurched to the right when their business as usual and personal authority were challenged. In 1964 Kerr first refused to negotiate the Free Speech Movement's demands and suspended its student leaders, then when some thousand students staged a nonviolent sit-in at the administration building, he set the precedent for calling the riot squad onto a campus to make mass arrests, many violently conducted—a precedent that would culminate in 1971 with police killing students at Kent State and Jackson State universities. Yet when Reagan ran for governor in 1966 on a platform of cracking down on "the Berkeley riots," which sold well in Reagan's Southern California base, he made Kerr a scapegoat precisely as a liberal "conciliator" and as soon as he was elected, pressured the corporate-conservative Board of Regents to fire Kerr for being too soft on protest. My experiences at the time indicated that presidents and faculty administrators caved in less often to students than to conservative officials like Reagan and later President Nixon and the FBI (with their covert campaign against antiwar protestors and Nixon's "these bums on campus," which led to Watergate). Mark Kitchell's great documentary *Berkeley in the Sixties* vividly recaptured these events. Mario Savio's brilliant speeches as a leader of the Free Speech Movement framed it as a reaction against the conservative bureaucratization of American society, in which educational administrators had become integrated as technocrats dedicated to serving "the Utopia of sterilized, automated contentment" (332 in Savio's speeches collected by Robert Cohen in *Freedom's Orator*). Glazer's *Remembering the Answers* presented a generally evenhanded case for his disagreements with the Berkeley movement, in the wake of which he left there for Harvard.

7 CONSERVATIVE SCHOLARSHIP: SEEING THE OBJECT AS IT REALLY ISN'T

1. See Aufderheide; Diamond (*Facing, Roads*); Newfield and Strickland, Wiener ("Dollars"); Wilson (*Myth, Patriotic*).
2. Horowitz was equally equivocal in making frequent allegations of shoddy scholarship against left academics (albeit sometimes accurately) while not even making a pretense to scholarly accuracy in his own work, claiming that

he was just a popular journalist; most of his recent books have no or skimpy documentation, and he admitted that he didn't even take responsibility for the accuracy of information posted by his employees or contributors in his multiple websites. (Jaschik, "Retractions from David Horowitz.") Ironically, his most-fully documented books were two of them that he wrote when he was a leftist in the sixties, *Empire and Revolution* and *The Free World Colossus*. His chapter "The Intellectual Class War" in *The Art of Political War* was one of the more cogent attempts I have seen to refute liberal and left lines of arguments like those I present here, though it too lacked documentation; I included it in *Reading and Writing for Civic Literacy*, juxtaposed to a leftist counterpart, with study guides aimed to discern their strong and weak points (389–90). Horowitz's website, Discover the Networks, does attempt extensively to document bias on the left on about the same scale as my book does, although with uneven accuracy as noted above.

3. For a critique of *Defending Civilization*, see Wilson's *Patriotic Correctness*, 9–10.
4. I am grateful to the staff of the SAT guide for helping to locate these passages in their voluminous, unindexed book.

10 THE RADICAL HUMANISTIC CANON

1. For example, Barton includes deism in a list of Christian denominations on page 24, with specific reference to Franklin, without defining the term or quoting what Franklin says about it in the *Autobiography* or his other expressions of skepticism toward Christianity. Barton also argues that the "founding fathers" intended the First Amendment only to protect the practice of religion from government, not also to protect individuals from government imposition of religion. (The main object of his criticism is the 1962 Supreme Court decision declaring officially sponsored and organized prayer in public schools unconstitutional.) Barton quotes Jefferson's 1802 letter to the Danville Baptist Association, the best-known statement of the notion of a wall of separation between church and state, as saying, "I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should "make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," thus building a wall of separation between church and state" (*Myth* 41). However, Barton leaves out the first part of the same sentence: "Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legislative powers of government reach actions only, and not opinions" (Jefferson, *Writings* 510).
2. *Finian's Rainbow* was one of the last gasps of Popular Front culture, with some foreshadowing of impending McCarthyism in lines like, "If this isn't love, it's Red propaganda."

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