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The Education of Alan Gribben

Thank you very much, Reed. Good afternoon, everyone. It is good to be here today, but also highly unlikely, given my political attitudes of a few years ago.

Indeed, seven years ago, when I first heard about Accuracy in Academia and its founder, Reed Irvine, I was mildly scandalized.

Sure, maybe certain aspects of campus life deserved some scrutiny, but the idea of encouraging students to report on the wilder antics of their teachers--surely this was extremist, inflammatory, even bad taste! I was glad that I had nothing to do with such an undertaking.

By a coincidence, I was approached shortly thereafter by a student working for an alternative press conservative newspaper on campus. He wanted my assistance. I was horrified.

I knew the price of being viewed as a conservative in a university English department. After all, I had graduated from U. C. Berkeley. I told the student to leave me alone.

Today, on the other hand, I generally read The Campus Report from front to back, and virtually everything in it sounds plausible and useful to know. The difference you might call a result of The Education of Alan Gribben.

As a matter of fact, I make a pretty interesting case study of various academic trends and contradictions, and perhaps also of one cause for qualified optimism.

Today I and a growing number of faculty, students, alumni, and taxpayers are recognizing that we are confronted by probably the first widespread academic movement in United States history to be so fearful that its ulterior goals of division--hate-mongering, sexual politics, and cultural disorientation--might somehow be discovered and exposed that it denies its very existence and hides its network and operations.

This concern, along with a lust for a monopoly of power in academic circles, makes these people ruthlessly vicious in disagreements that they interpret as ideological.

I know this first-hand, because I believe that I was ostracized in such a systematic and cruel manner that I was eventually compelled to leave a tenured full professorship in English at the University of Texas at Austin where I had taught for seventeen years.

Thanks to a recent article about my ordeal written by Peter Collier in a new journal called Heterodoxy, the events that unraveled for me after what would now be termed a "politically incorrect" departmental vote in 1987 have received national publicity and have

given me more mail to answer than I am prepared for. Mr. Collier had to cajole me into those interviews, because every such account seems to bring with it a fresh series of retaliating reprisals from my former colleagues or their allies.

But I am a literary historian. These things happened, and they deserve to be on the record. My opponents, by contrast, seem to be very anti-historical. But then, anti-U.S. activists detest and fear history for extremely good reasons.

Our version: A few English professors across the country have broken ranks to notify the students and the public of their colleagues' abdication of the academic responsibility of ensuring curricular balance and disciplinary integrity.

Our opponents' version: A few reactionary racists, sexists, and homophobes have unfortunately survived the 1960's and need to be rooted out from the campus faculties.

Now, which version is more plausible? That is the question the press and the public must soon decide.

The main program of the academic dogmatists revolves around five "D's":

1. Deny--the existence of any radical presence on campus. Deny the possibility of "facts," "proof," and "objective truth."
2. Discredit--people of good will who want to make the present structure work fairly and effectively. Isolate each resister and attack his/her character.
3. Disinform--allege "misrepresentation" at every juncture.
4. Divide--students and faculty, faculty and citizens, blacks and whites, Hispanics and Anglos, women and men.
5. Discard--truth, collegiality, standards.

Unfortunately, many of us are just beginning to understand exactly what we are opposing here. In fact, I only read the journal Radical Teacher and books like Schooling in Capitalist America and Pedagogy of the Oppressed after my departmental opponents cited and referred to them.

But these Academic Marxists--who often coyly say, "Don't call me a Marxist; just say that I employ foundational Marxist methodology"--could step back into mainstream America tomorrow, leaving behind their "oppositional" publications, which only English and American Studies professors and their graduate students probably ever read, anyway. Like the hippies who played at poverty and anti-establishment dress, these Marxists sense that their trendy intellectual poses can be re-packaged or scrapped at any time--here, then, is a low-risk splurge with lots of enrichment potential in the present situation.

Culling common experiences from Texas and across the nation, I can outline a few techniques and tactics that seem to be in use:

1. "Who's he?" (Also known as "You're Invisible"): In my case, four years of watching everyone be nice to others in the faculty mailroom.
2. "Handlers"--a national tactic? Someone who takes your temperature and checks your pulse on a regular basis, assuring you of his or her sympathy, but who actually runs with the persecuting crowd.
3. "You're okay--he's not." A revolving game. Intimidates the others, who then worry that the same fate might befall them.
4. "Hey, I feel sexually harassed." One innocent U.T. Professor. LSU--political charges.

5. "Welcome to Coventry": committee assignments, graduate courses, University grants mysteriously vanish. I used to pass the time at department meetings by counting the seats between me and anyone else, no matter where I sat. The minimum was nine chairs, laterally; two rows, vertically.

6. Coercion by consensus at departmental meetings--every vote on every decision was voted and re-voted until unanimous or near-unanimous. Then we were reminded at the end of each meeting: "Remember, we all think alike on this matter. There is no disagreement, no division."

7. "We face a committed enemy." Usually me. Later someone else, often a dean or a provost. Always this was supposedly the person who was endeavoring to ruin the "progressive" record of the department--a reactionary, a "conservative." We must overcome his strategies. (Select a target and demonize him.)

In 1988 Herbert London and Stephen Balch visited campuses, talking about a new organization they were founding--the National Association of Scholars. Psychology professor Joseph Horn (who addressed you last year, I believe) was present. A brave man of resolve. Was smeared in Z magazine.

I remember speaking from personal experience at the meeting, saying that it was too late to reintroduce moderation and reason into the humanities. Slogans and demagogues were already in ascendancy.

I hesitated, not wanting to be labeled a conservative.

But I finally joined the NAS after a year of departmental ostracism.

I had a few early brushes with "PC," after 1987. One year I wrote to the recruitment chair, suggesting that the routine elimination of most white male applicants was unconscionable and potentially actionable.

I also wrote a letter defending a dean's decision to terminate one part of the search process because of a lack of pedagogical balance. (Consequently, I was falsely accused of being a "sexist.")

In December 1988 I raised the 1987 motion in another meeting of the same graduate faculty in order to make an appeal to my colleagues. I recounted my life events and my beliefs, and asked for respect and tolerance. Only one person indicated some understanding, to my amazement. At the holiday buffet afterward I was completely shunned.

I had kept thinking that my colleagues would see that this was a case of mistaken identity.

Now it began to remind me of the Salem witch hunts (or maybe the even worse Scottish ones).

The actuality is: I don't have a racist bone in my body, however you want to define that ugly term.

And I have advocated the promotion and retention of qualified women since long before it became "PC" to do so--and far in advance of a number of my suddenly converted and finger-pointing former colleagues.

I began to be the recipient of late night calls of conscience--(as Irene used to term them)--colleagues telephoning to see how I was, offer apologies for their behavior, recommend that I leave. Their personal circumstances frequently did not permit public support of my position, but I found myself admiring them for their tenacity in staying on

there, at whatever cost.

As the press quoted me more and more, people around the campus and the city began to shrink from me. I sounded, through the megaphone of the newspapers, angrily mad, maybe even MAD mad. I didn't seem to be the Alan they had known.

How do you communicate with a vast number--thousands--of people who have received an impression of irrationality through the print media, which sells newspapers mainly by reporting conflict? I didn't have the time or money to write a book. I couldn't afford to buy a half hour of TV for an in-depth interview to defend my character.

I just had to wait and hope.

And then the nightmare of my opponents commenced. They were named by a label from one of the Left's own Berkeley conferences--"Politically Correct." The general public took notice now, but it was too late for me to stay.

Let me assure you, many Texas people wanted me to stay, and I made the decision to leave very reluctantly. But no one would make the kinds of arrangements that could enable a dissident to stay on with dignity:

--a permanent academic office away from the PC crowd and its graduate student enforcers;

--separate mail drop facilities;

--a non-departmental budget salary line;

--membership on University committees and Liberal Arts committees;

--Faculty Senate eligibility outside the English Department voting mechanisms;

--access to secretarial support beyond the Chairman's jurisdiction.

An academically legal divorce, in other words.

But let's turn the tables for a minute, and psychoanalyze the English department that harasses its dissidents.

1. Radicals--hard-core true believers--socialists, radical feminists, Marxists, radical literary theorists.

2. Middle faculty--good liberals--look the other way, intimidated, not really interested in sacrificing much (if anything) to uphold basic educational principles. Most academics are careerists who just want salary raises and want to be left alone. They are relieved that the political pack has targeted someone else. They want to please those who seem to be dominating developments.

3. Resisters--now mostly gone or broken or converted.

What happens in this situation when someone like me reveals to the press his shabby, despicable treatment? The middle begins to identify with those who control the department, and to repudiate the person who has refused to pretend that he elected to leave. A sad but understandable reaction--one that I would probably have shared myself only a few years ago. The profession as a whole worries about the image it is conveying to the public (Serpico). A whistleblower takes on the aspect of a common enemy.

Sometimes I tried to imagine the academic world from my opponents' point of view, attempted to see why they need to be so ruthless, but it was always hard for me to grasp. They already had so much.

The Spoils System--the rumor is that my former department divided up my salary among the faculty. If that is true, then it was another way to take the edge off my departure.

The Chair reportedly reassigned my office to one of my long-time friends.

There was no farewell reception from the department I had served so long--merely a request from the Chair's office that if possible I vacate my office early.

However, a new dean gave Irene and me a farewell sendoff at his house, with drinks and food and hugs and well wishes and speeches. And then it was over. Suddenly we were ex-Texans.

But my ties with Texas didn't stop there. Gradually I have realized that the Academic Left, aided by what I call the New Age Left, has resolved that it simply must discredit me, whatever the cost to truth and academic integrity.

FICTIONS employed by my detractors:

1. Mentally deranged--

--A dozen private letters to the Austin American-Statesman, some mentioning my "well known" mental illness, after a halfway sympathetic story about my departure.

--Daily Texan editorial inviting people to one of my public lectures, repeated the charge that I am a victim of "paranoid delusions."

--Chairman--referred to my "take-home reality" on British TV.

--Chairman--to Chicago Tribune: "PC," yes--"personal confusion."

--Newspaper interview with former colleague: "Captain Queg rolling his steel balls" (after four years of such isolation!)

2. Nothing happened to him--

--One English professor from U. T. addressed an audience at Southwestern University about me--his main point: Alan Gribben was well-paid. But that contention omits the 1 1/2% salary total raise recommended for two productive years.

3. He's just jumping on this anti-Political Correctness bandwagon that the right-wing American press has started rolling.

--What about my 1987-91 ostracism, and my 1989 letter to my dean, groping for words in describing the programmatic shunning?

--How about my twelve messages to my EC, my Chair, my Dean, my administrators?

--My pleas to be moved to another department, or even to another campus?

--The magazine and newspaper editorials about my plight in Spring 1990? (Before the "PC" term was popularized. Before E 306.)

"PC" was practiced without a name until the Fall of 1990. (And I was mentioned in the first national article employing the term--by Richard Berstein, NY Times.)

4. National organizations have investigated and dismissed his claims.

--The MLA Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities in effect censured us E 306 dissenters in the Spring 1991 MLA Newsletter--but without allowing us to present our case.

--A particular AAUP national officer has denounced me--but without checking with me about the details of my ordeal, though he said he was "familiar with [my] case."

5. A related view: "He brought it on himself."

--They want to start the clock with my opposition to English 306 in mid-1990, rather than my vote in 1987 and my letters of appeal from 1989 onwards.

--A senior professor whom I admired exceedingly has reportedly dismissed me as someone who "degraded himself" by mentioning to the press the Marxist philosophy behind

the actions of numerous English professors. This is the unpardonable academic sin in American universities.

6. He couldn't take the heat of a mild little internal departmental debate.

--Recently a former colleague's letter to the editor in Austin compared me to a "jilted Hollywood starlet." (Does this metaphor signal some new campaign against my masculinity? The enmity is simply appalling.)

--Quote Measure (May 1992), which reports the words of a former U. T. English department member at the recent NYC meeting of radicals: Multiculturalism must promote the "politicizing [of] the entire curriculum." "Curriculum reform means resource diversion, and . . . the new theoretical approaches are inherently ideological! . . . Who gets to teach what courses, and who gets to teach at all." Does this sound harmless and amateurish? Remember, E 306 would have affected half of the new students at U. T.

I endured four years of mistreatment and political harassment, hoping for change, before I left. Five years of ostracism from that department, now. A teacher less dedicated would have left sooner or tried to withdraw completely from the department.

7. He likes the notoriety:

--Recent letter in Daily Texan from a U.T. English professor: he's just a "publicity hound" (meaning: stop looking into his case, please!).

A student replied to him in another letter: thanks to you people, Alan could have stayed here and gotten free publicity, every week, if that is was what he wanted.

Only at the very beginning did my wife and I approach a few influential people, pleading for help. (They didn't believe how bad it was.) Since then, the advent of the term "political correctness" has made reporters and the general public curious and concerned about this frighteningly rigid political orthodoxy. They have sought me out, as you did today, to try to understand how ordinary mild-mannered academics could come to be ruled by hardline leftists.

There has not been a single article written about me that my wife and I have not agonized over, knowing that it would only intensify the efforts to discredit and vilify me.

8. He's a closet right-winger, a tool of ultra-conservative think tanks and foundations.

--Hey, I go where I am invited, if concern and sympathy are evident.

I would have been perfectly content to have stayed in the bosom of my department at U.T., if that career had not been wrecked for me.

9. He was a founding member, or an officer of, NAS, which has funded his efforts to defeat E 306.

My wife and I received not a dime from NAS to tackle the E 306 proposal. We drew on our savings to make copies of articles, as the public grew interested and made inquiries. (Almost nobody thought to send us postage or money). Not a dime related to that controversy came to me from NAS.

But where did the money come from to promote E 306 and to demonize me in the community, we have often wondered? The press was never interested in that.

My opponents won't concede that they created me--by falsely slandering me, and by publicizing me as a warning to other professors. They have to insist that I was created by a right-wing conspiracy. Otherwise, I become a real symbol of their heartlessness and deceit.

10. He hates U.T. and Texas--(I call this the "we sell silence" technique). "We are the real friends of the University." Nothing could be further from the truth. I loved that school, and felt abandoned by it. However, I don't think most of its humanities programs deserve support in their present form, in view of the lack of leadership in that area.

The present administration there apparently just wants quiet, so that those donations will keep rolling in. If the price for that is the exodus of some professors of conscience and the complete domination of certain departments, why so be it.

It was the politicized faculty and graduate students, after all, who held that "Bring Something Texan to Burn Bonfire" in 1988! It might as well have been a bonfire of the humanities.

11. Notice that he went to a city in the Deep South, a region with a racist past. A director of a major academic center near Austin recently told various people this, as though my choice of locales sealed my guilt.

The fact is that I had numerous other offers from small schools in the Rocky Mountains, the Plains, and other regions. The faculty in my new department is from everywhere, including Princeton and Berkeley. They were a fascinating group, and they wanted both me and my wife so much. It felt great to be back in an English department again.

For I discovered in my job search a tier of small state universities where the emphasis is still on teaching literature, language, and writing, and yet where the research is still impressive.

On my job search I made other related discoveries--

People at these smaller public universities are not torn by the same strong currents of conformity. They are apt to be individuals.

To my surprise, I found that scores of women and minorities, including African-American faculty members, languish at marginal universities, teaching for low pay, not benefiting from the princely salaries of their ideological counterparts at Stanford, Princeton, and other so-called "status" schools. These professors and instructors, you see, just teach about authors, literature, language, and composition. They teach English. Where is the justice of these women and minorities' being left out of the salary bonanza?

12. New charges, added quite recently by a former colleague I was always friendly to:

--His scholarship was "unsophisticated." In actuality, however, I had kept myself informed of the many unappealing developments of Marxism, deconstructionism, radical feminism.

--He was "schoolmarmish"--a code-word, meaning that I believed in including style and grammar in E 306.

13. Another professor has been telling people that I was "anti-social." If memory serves, this disparaging person was among the ten colleagues who did not attend, and didn't notify Irene and me in advance, when we made our last stab at entertaining for the department. (And he personally helped spread the rumor in 1990 that I would sue the department and depose everyone.)

The holiday buffet in December 1988, for example--who was "anti-social" at that event?

14. Alcoholism--not even worth refuting, to those who know my boringly sedate habits.

15. He's not even a conservative, he's a right-wing extremist kook.

--One of my valued former English colleagues, whom I had treated most kindly, telephoned Austin business people who expressed support for my views to my department, assuring them that, whereas he was a Republican who had voted for George Bush, I was well-known to be beyond the pale, alarming even my most conservative colleagues. He hinted that I was not exactly mentally stable, but that gets us back to another category of discrediting.

16. He's got a "martyr complex" (a charge recently made in print by a professor who still lives in Austin).

A martyr is easy to demartyr, however--give him his reputation back. Stop the character assassination. Invite him to return to The University of Texas. (Neither the Chairman or the department ever did.)

And there was a price for my acts of conscience. People get very attached to Austin and Texas, even when the lovely city of Montgomery awaits them. Our children are adjusting to a fine new school, but still mourn their forced eviction from Doss Elementary, where people were generally good to them, though their father's mounting notoriety occasionally troubled them.

We sold our house on a terrible Austin market under great pressure.

The move itself set us back around \$8,000 outright, and \$12,000 all in all.

My wife and I are still recovering from the stress of the past five years. We realize, for all this, that many families have faced much worse fates. (We heard from people whose experiences certainly put our trials into perspective.)

I have a challenging new job, pleasant students, and we live in a scenic and historic city--birthplace of the modern Civil Rights movement.

On that subject I am reminded that, when I was an adolescent, a housewife who lived near my junior high school once taught me a lesson about racism and courage that has guided my conduct ever since the 1950's.

My Midwestern hometown of 12,000 was a junction point on the MK&T railroad with a railroad depot and locomotive shops. It was hit hard by the post-WWII trends in transportation. The railroad laid off workers. The town was bypassed by the federal interstate highway system, and has struggled ever since. We children carried those economic tensions from our homelife to school, one may presume.

When I was in the seventh grade, the word went out that a boy named Henry, a hulking tenth grader, had called Cletus, a muscular large ninth grader, a "nigger." Both fathers worked for the railroad, as I recall. We were already integrated in those days, and thought nothing of it.

(Blood--fists flying--punches landing--wrestling on the ground--gasps for breath.) I have always remembered the image of a small woman leaving her front porch and suddenly hurrying across the athletic field with a broom. She determinedly broke up the fight, shoving us aside. Then she turned on us.

"And none of you backed that boy down, and you let him say that, and then you came out here to watch the blood flow and talk about it. You are all responsible for each other,

and for your school." (A sentiment expressed less pithily, I would later realize, in Stephen Crane's "The Blue Hotel" and other literary works.)

My inspirations--

1. Irene Wong and her parents, whose friends in China tasted the heavy hand of totalitarianism.

2. The valiant few in the Department of English at U. T. Austin who stood at my shoulder and were tested sorely in the E 306 controversy.

3. My parents and brother, who agonized with me and celebrated my escape from that vile situation.

4. Friends within the University of Texas, who must necessarily remain nameless, who have given aid and comfort.

5. Texans throughout the Austin and state communities, who have written and telephoned to apologize on behalf of that school, its faculty, and its administrators.

6. James Coleman, who endured a horrible browbeating several decades ago when his sociological research did not turn up the proper findings. Today he is president of his professional organization.

Acts of bravery--

1. A week before we left, an untenured professor took me and my children to lunch at the U.T. Faculty Club, during the busiest hour, and seated us next to the table where certain English professors usually gather. It was her "statement" in support of academic freedom and collegiality, she said.

2. A professor in another department, who had befriended us during our final years at U.T., dedicated his recent book to Alan Gribben and Irene Wong, and to their courage. That will be a compensating legacy for our children, and a heritage for his, I like to think.

3. Several churches and prayer groups invited me to their discussions and included me in their prayers--a wonderful sensation of group support.

What has happened since I have left?

1. One professor left--after enduring much the same treatment, I hear.

2. Chairman--same.

3. Assistant to the President--is now himself President of another U.T. campus. (I described my situation to him to no avail.)

4. President--apparently in line to become Chancellor of the U. T. System.

5. Graduate Studies Vice-President and Dean--same.

6. Donations to College of Liberal Arts have reportedly slowed down.

7. A University-wide "Multiculturalism" proposal has been defeated by a united faculty.

8. An "open" English graduate program at the University of North Texas increasingly offers Texas students a choice in instruction.

9. I finally yielded to repeated invitations to address the local Montgomery Rotary Club, remembering my lack of local ties in Austin and the price I paid for not being better known, and spoke on the topic of academic freedom and political correctness on the national scene. But the local newspaper inadvertently mentioned (and subheadlined) my Texas troubles in such a way as to suggest again that I was driven from U.T. by wholesale charges of racism, rather than by a tightly organized political faction of one department and by leftist

extremists across the campus and the city.

So now I do not know if I can stay and be helpful to a small, growing, but underfunded commuter school. Again there is the uncomfortable sense that I am controversial, possibly even (far worse yet) an academic conservative, and so my travels and my effort to regain my good name may not be over yet.

What would be the worst nightmare of the Academic Leftists?

1. The press doesn't tire of the "political correctness" issue, begins to understand that it involves much more insidious aspects than the "PC" words and phrases that are sweeping the campuses, or even the "forbidden speech" controversies. My situation, for instance, consisted merely of a single vote and my association with certain academic people and ideas and groups that were being targeted.

2. The talented young African-American and other minority students whom I and others have taught for twenty years ignore the white left, make successful careers for themselves, and merge with mainstream America. (That's why the radicals are pressing so hard--they know it's only a matter of time before things work themselves out and the exchange faculty from Eastern Europe arrive here to scoff at their airy versions of what they lovingly call "Foundation Marxism.")

3. The timid school administrators lose so many state appropriations and private donations that they are replaced with people with some genuine educational principles (along the lines of Donald Kagan, John Silber, John Agresto), and they begin to protect people like me who display the courage of their convictions.

4. The alumni organize themselves along new lines, with groups like NAS providing guidance, and insist on more than winning football teams and cathedral-like alumni centers--they refuse to settle for good vibes from personable presidents and endeavor to champion excellence and freedom in education and a role for the humanities that returns it to preserving the best that has been thought and said in our culture and as well as others.

5. The faculty leaves the students alone, and they learn to work together in creating a strong, secure campus, despite the strains produced by Affirmative Action policies and what amounts to quotas in various parts of the academic enterprise, because the problem is not with the students. (The radical Academic Left loves to capitalize on isolated fraternity incidents.)

6. The media come to realize that there are virtually no racists, sexists, homophobes, differently abled phobes, etc., among the humanities teaching faculties. This idea of needing to purge a few designated reactionaries is simply a smear against their colleagues that covers up a vicious power-grab and eliminates all opposition.

7. Our schools regain their standards, even improve upon them, and are successful in withstanding the United Europe and Pan Pacific international competition that we are shortly due for.

8. The faculty return to teaching their subject matter: One English professor at a major Midwestern university recently debated me--said he announces at the beginning of his classes that he is a Marxist and that he perceives the U. S. as the cause of most troubles in the world, but that he is fair and invites his students to differ with his opinion. Who is he kidding? And what has this got to do with "English" as a field of study?

What do we want?

1. Intellectual diversity: Traditional and non-traditional studies. In the field of English, teach British and American literature as well as radical critical theory. Marxist and capitalist thought. Women's Studies Centers that encompass the values of the nuclear family in addition to alternative gender roles. Ethnic Studies programs that are not anti-US or anti-white.

2. True academic freedom and tolerance, and administrators who understand their principles. The university as a marketplace of ideas--let the students choose. Truth-in-advertising of courses; no hidden political agendas.

3. Integrity of disciplines: English composition teaches English and not pseudo-sociology or pseudo-law. Place less emphasis on interdisciplinary studies and joint departmental appointments, which have enabled the radicals to control more than one department.

How do we get it?

1. Stop donating to schools that condone this intellectual bullying and let them know why.
2. Avoid giving to deans' discretionary funds--or even presidential ones. Be specific in your funding, if you donate at all.
3. Side with the attacked faculty: write letters in their support to university administrators and trustees.
4. Attend liberated schools and departments. Read the college catalogues to understand the perspectives of a department.
5. Don't be easily persuaded by slanderous innuendoes about resisting faculty. Look into the issue, the breaches of academic procedures, the charges of "misrepresentation."
6. Support AIA, NAS, the Center for Individual Rights, and other resisting efforts.
7. Oppose AAUP and MLA strongarming and let them know why.
8. Commend the victories of E 306, Gottfredson and Blits at Delaware, and the stand-offs at Middle Tennessee State University and Tulane.
9. Celebrate the spirit of freedom that brave students and faculty keep reintroducing, against daunting odds.
10. Plan to prevail eventually, and know what to do then.

You can't "win," my former chairman warned me. But the English 306 students at Texas are studying composition again, rather than a slanted radical social sciences reader called Racism and Sexism.

If I can retain my health and my wife hers;

if I can still be in my field of study ten years from now, and be a positive influence, then I will feel victorious.

If our opponents do not achieve their goal of moving from the humanities to the other fields, and from the universities to other societal institutions, then we should all feel jubilant.

Who knows, the worst may already be over--note Paul Lauter's and Gerald Graff's recent admonitory warnings to their "progressive" allies, for example. Maybe we are witnessing acts of desperation to shore up a crumbling movement.

In any event, the fact that I became part of the emerging conscience of the university, in spite of my battering by leftwing forces, proves that you too can find ways to carry on the academic reformation.

Thank you and good luck.

