

April 24, 2014

Mark Steyn on the slow death of free speech.

These days, pretty much every story is really the same story:

- *In Galway, at the National University of Ireland, a speaker who attempts to argue against the BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) programme against Israel is shouted down with cries of 'F**king Zionist, f**king pricks... Get the f**k off our campus.'*
- *In California, Mozilla's chief executive is forced to resign because he once made a political donation in support of the pre-revisionist definition of marriage.*
- *At Westminster, the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee declares that the BBC should seek 'special clearance' before it interviews climate sceptics, such as fringe wacko extremists like former Chancellor Nigel Lawson.*
- *In Massachusetts, Brandeis University withdraws its offer of an honorary degree to a black feminist atheist human rights campaigner from Somalia.*
- *In London, a multitude of liberal journalists and artists responsible for everything from Monty Python to Downton Abbey sign an open letter in favour of the first state restraints on the British press in three and a quarter centuries.*
- *And in Canberra the government is planning to repeal Section 18C — whoa, don't worry, not all of it, just three or four adjectives; or maybe only two, or whatever it's down to by now, after what Gay Alcorn in the Age described as the ongoing debate about 'where to strike the balance between free speech in a democracy and protection against racial abuse in a multicultural society'.*

I heard a lot of that kind of talk during my battles with the Canadian 'human rights' commissions a few years ago: of course, we all believe in free speech, but it's a question of how you 'strike the balance', where you 'draw the line'... which all sounds terribly reasonable and Canadian, and apparently Australian, too. But in reality the point of free speech is for the stuff that's over the line, and strikingly unbalanced. If free speech is only for polite persons of mild temperament within government-policed parameters, it isn't free at all. So screw that. ...

... I'm opposed to the notion of official ideology — not just fascism, Communism and Baathism, but the fluffier ones, too, like 'multiculturalism' and 'climate change' and 'marriage equality'. Because the more topics you rule out of discussion — immigration, Islam, 'gender fluidity' — the more you delegitimise the political system. As your cynical political consultant sees it, a commitment to abolish Section 18C is more trouble than it's worth: you'll just spend weeks getting damned as cobwebbed racists seeking to impose a bigots' charter when you could be moving the meter with swing voters by announcing a federal programme of transgendered bathroom construction. But, beyond the shrunken horizons of spinmeisters, the inability to roll back something like 18C says something profound about where we're headed: a world where real, primal, universal rights — like freedom of expression — come a distant second to the new tribalism of identity-group rights. ...

Peter Wehner posts on the affirmative action decision.

For some of us, one of the great intellectual delights is reading the opinions of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. That's because he's not only a brilliant legal mind; he's also a fantastic writer.

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The Court, in a 6-2 ruling (with Justice Kagan recusing herself), declared Michigan voters had the right to change their state constitution in 2006 to prohibit public colleges and universities from taking account of race in admissions decisions. (The justices said that a lower federal court was wrong to set aside the change as discriminatory.)

Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote for the majority. But it was Scalia who, as usual, put things best. Here's how he begins his opinion:

*It has come to this. Called upon to explore the jurisprudential twilight zone between two errant lines of precedent, we confront a frighteningly bizarre question: Does the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment forbid what its text plainly requires? Needless to say (except that this case obliges us to say it), the question answers itself. "The Constitution proscribes government discrimination on the basis of race, and state-provided education is no exception." *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539 U. S. 306, 349 (2003) (SCALIA, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part). It is precisely this understanding—the correct understanding—of the federal Equal Protection Clause that the people of the State of Michigan have adopted for their own fundamental law. By adopting it, they did not simultaneously offend it. [italics in original] ...*

Joel Gehrke of the Examiner posts on Justice Scalia's thinly veiled criticism of Sotomayor's comparing Michigan voters to the Democrats who sponsored and tolerated Jim Crow laws in the South. .

Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia faulted Justice Sonia Sotomayor for making what he regards as a "shameful" suggestion that the Michigan voters who decided to ban affirmative action in college admissions were motivated by racism.

Scalia wrote a concurring opinion upholding a 2006 ballot initiative that amended Michigan's constitution to ban affirmative action.

*"As Justice Harlan observed over a century ago, '[o]ur Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens,'" Scalia concluded, quoting the dissent in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. "The people of Michigan wish the same for their governing charter. It would be shameful for us to stand in their way."*

And then, the Parthian shot: "And doubly shameful to equate 'the majority' behind [the constitutional amendment] with 'the majority' responsible for Jim Crow," he added in a final footnote, citing the first two pages of Sotomayor's dissent. ...

Mark Perry uses the occasion of Earth Day to celebrate the benefits of fossil fuels.

On Earth Day, according to various advocates, "events are held worldwide to increase awareness and appreciation of the Earth's natural environment." As we observe the event Tuesday, it might be a good time to appreciate the fact that Americans get most of their plentiful, affordable energy

directly from the Earth's "natural environment" in the form of fossil fuels (coal, natural gas, and petroleum).

It's largely those energy sources that fuel our vehicles and airplanes; heat, cool and light our homes and businesses; power our nation's factories; and in the process significantly raise our standard of living.

Shouldn't that be part of "increasing our awareness and appreciation of Earth's natural environment" — to celebrate Mother Earth's bountiful natural resources in the form of abundant, low-cost fossil fuels?

Fuel Of The Future

From 1949 to 2040, fossil fuels have provided, and will continue to provide, the vast majority of our energy by far, according to President Obama's Department of Energy. Last year, fossil fuels provided almost 84% of America's energy consumption, nearly unchanged from the 85% fossil-fuel share in the early 1990s. ...

In Forbes, Henry Miller says when Earth Day is celebrated. science and technology should be at the party.

A few years ago seventh graders at a tony private school near San Francisco were given an unusual Earth Day assignment: Make a list of environmental projects that could be accomplished with Bill Gates' fortune. This approach to environmental awareness fits in well with the Obama-Pelosi-Reid worldview that the right to private property is subsidiary to undertakings that others think are worthwhile – the redistributive theory of society. And how interesting that the resources made "available" for the students' thought-experiment were not, say, the aggregate net worth of the members of Congress but the wealth of one of the nation's most successful, innovative entrepreneurs.

Another Earth Day assignment for those same students was to read Rachel Carson's best-selling 1962 book, "Silent Spring," an emotionally charged but deeply flawed excoriation of the widespread spraying of chemical pesticides for the control of insects. As described by Roger Meiners and Andy Morriss in their scholarly yet eminently readable 2012 analysis, "Silent Spring at 50: Reflections on an Environmental Classic," Carson exploited her reputation as a well-known nature writer to advocate and legitimize "positions linked to a darker tradition in American environmental thinking: neo-Malthusian population control and anti-technology efforts."

Carson's proselytizing and advocacy led to the virtual banning of DDT and to restrictions on other chemical pesticides in spite of the fact that "Silent Spring" was replete with gross misrepresentations and scholarship so atrocious that if Carson were an academic, she would be guilty of egregious academic misconduct. Carson's observations about DDT were meticulously rebutted point by point by Dr. J. Gordon Edwards, Professor of Entomology at San Jose State University, a long-time member of the Sierra Club and the Audubon Society, and a fellow of the California Academy of Sciences. In his stunning 1992 essay, "The Lies of Rachel Carson," Edwards demolished her arguments and assertions and called attention to critical omissions, faulty assumptions, and outright fabrications.

Consider this quote from Edwards: “This implication that DDT is horribly deadly is completely false. Human volunteers have ingested as much as 35 milligrams of it a day for nearly two years and suffered no adverse effects. Millions of people have lived with DDT intimately during the mosquito spray programs and nobody even got sick as a result. The National Academy of Sciences concluded in 1965 that ‘in a little more than two decades, DDT has prevented 500 million [human] deaths that would otherwise have been inevitable.’ The World Health Organization stated that DDT had ‘killed more insects and saved more people than any other substance.’” ...

Now for the important stuff. **The Economist** says beer makes charcoal grilling safer. Is there anything that beer can't do? If there is, bacon can do it.

GRILLING meat gives it great flavour. This taste, though, comes at a price, since the process creates molecules called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) which damage DNA and thus increase the eater's chances of developing colon cancer. For those who think barbecues one of summer's great delights, that is a shame. But a group of researchers led by Isabel Ferreira of the University of Porto, in Portugal, think they have found a way around the problem. When barbecuing meat, they suggest, you should add beer.

This welcome advice was the result of some serious experiments, as Dr Ferreira explains in a paper in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry. The PAHs created by grilling form from molecules called free radicals which, in turn, form from fat and protein in the intense heat of this type of cooking. One way of stopping PAH-formation, then, might be to apply chemicals called antioxidants that mop up free radicals. And beer is rich in these, in the shape of melanoidins, which form when barley is roasted. So Dr Ferreira and her colleagues prepared some beer marinades, bought some steaks and headed for the griddle. ...

Spectator, UK

The slow death of free speech

How the Left, here and abroad, is trying to shut down debate — from Islam and Israel to global warming and gay marriage

by Mark Steyn

These days, pretty much every story is really the same story:

- In Galway, at the National University of Ireland, a speaker who attempts to argue against the BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) programme against Israel is shouted down with cries of ‘Fucking Zionist, fucking pricks... Get the fuck off our campus.’
- In California, Mozilla's chief executive is forced to resign because he once made a political donation in support of the pre-revisionist definition of marriage.
- At Westminster, the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee declares that the BBC should seek ‘special clearance’ before it interviews climate sceptics, such as fringe wacko extremists like former Chancellor Nigel Lawson.

- In Massachusetts, Brandeis University withdraws its offer of an honorary degree to a black feminist atheist human rights campaigner from Somalia.
- In London, a multitude of liberal journalists and artists responsible for everything from *Monty Python* to *Downton Abbey* sign an open letter in favour of the first state restraints on the British press in three and a quarter centuries.
- And in Canberra the government is planning to repeal Section 18C — whoa, don't worry, not all of it, just three or four adjectives; or maybe only two, or whatever it's down to by now, after what Gay Alcorn in the *Age* described as the ongoing debate about 'where to strike the balance between free speech in a democracy and protection against racial abuse in a multicultural society'.

I heard a lot of that kind of talk during my battles with the Canadian 'human rights' commissions a few years ago: of course, we all believe in free speech, but it's a question of how you 'strike the balance', where you 'draw the line'... which all sounds terribly reasonable and Canadian, and apparently Australian, too. But in reality the point of free speech is for the stuff that's over the line, and strikingly unbalanced. If free speech is only for polite persons of mild temperament within government-policed parameters, it isn't free at all. So screw that.

But I don't really think that many people these days are genuinely interested in 'striking the balance'; they've drawn the line and they're increasingly unashamed about which side of it they stand. What all the above stories have in common, whether nominally about Israel, gay marriage, climate change, Islam, or even freedom of the press, is that one side has cheerfully swapped that apocryphal Voltaire quote about disagreeing with what you say but defending to the death your right to say it for the pithier Ring Lardner line: "Shut up," he explained.'

A generation ago, progressive opinion at least felt obliged to pay lip service to the Voltaire shtick. These days, nobody's asking you to defend yourself to the death: a mildly supportive retweet would do. But even that's further than most of those in the academy, the arts, the media are prepared to go. As Erin Ching, a student at 60-grand-a-year Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, put it in her college newspaper the other day: 'What really bothered me is the whole idea that at a liberal arts college we need to be hearing a diversity of opinion.' Yeah, who needs that? There speaks the voice of a generation: celebrate diversity by enforcing conformity.

The examples above are ever-shrinking Dantean circles of Tolerance: At Galway, the dissenting opinion was silenced by grunting thugs screaming four-letter words. At Mozilla, the chairwoman is far more housetrained: she issued a nice press release all about (per Miss Alcorn) striking a balance between freedom of speech and 'equality', and how the best way to 'support' a 'culture' of 'diversity' and 'inclusiveness' is by firing anyone who dissents from the mandatory groupthink. At the House of Commons they're moving to the next stage: in an 'inclusive culture' ever more comfortable with narrower bounds of public discourse, it seems entirely natural that the next step should be for dissenting voices to require state permission to speak.

At Brandeis University, we are learning the hierarchy of the new multiculti caste system. In theory, Ayaan Hirsi Ali is everything the identity-group fetishists dig: female, atheist, black, immigrant. If conservative white males were to silence a secular women's rights campaigner from Somalia, it would be proof of the Republican party's 'war on women', or the encroaching Christian fundamentalist theocracy, or just plain old Andrew Boltian racism breaking free of its redoubt at the *Herald Sun* to rampage as far as the eye can see. But when the snivelling white male who purports to be president of Brandeis (one Frederick Lawrence) does it out of deference to Islam, Miss Hirsi Ali's blackness washes off her like a bad dye job on a telly news anchor. White feminist Germaine

Greer can speak at Brandeis because, in one of the more whimsical ideological evolutions even by dear old Germaine's standards, Ms Greer feels that clitoridectomies add to the rich tapestry of 'cultural identity': 'One man's beautification is another man's mutilation,' as she puts it. But black feminist Hirsi Ali, who was on the receiving end of 'one man's mutilation' and lives under death threats because she was boorish enough to complain about it, is too 'hateful' to be permitted to speak. In the internal contradictions of multiculturalism, Islam trumps all: race, gender, secularism, everything. So, in the interests of multiculti sensitivity, pampered upper-middle-class trusty-fundy children of entitlement are pronouncing a Somali refugee beyond the pale and signing up to Islamic strictures on the role of women.

That's another reason why Gay Alcorn's fretting over 'striking the balance' is so irrelevant. No matter where you strike it, the last unread nonagenarian white supremacist Xeroxing flyers in a shack off the Tanami Track will be way over the line, while, say, Sheikh Sharif Hussein's lively sermon to an enthusiastic crowd at the Islamic Da'wah Centre of South Australia, calling on Allah to kill every last Buddhist and Hindu, will be safely inside it. One man's decapitation is another man's cultural validation, as Germaine would say.

Ms Greer has reached that Circle of Tolerance wherein the turkeys line up to volunteer for an early Eid. The Leveson Inquiry declaration of support signed by all those London luvvies like Emma Thompson, Tom Stoppard, Maggie Smith, Bob Geldof and Ian McKellen is the stage that comes after that House of Commons Science and Technology Committee — when the most creative spirits in our society all suddenly say: 'Ooh, yes, please, state regulation, bring it on!' Many of the eminent thespians who signed this letter started their careers in an era when every play performed in the West End had to be approved by the Queen's Lord Chamberlain. Presented with a script that contained three 'fucks' and an explicit reference to anal sex, he'd inform the producer that he would be permitted two 'crikeys' and a hint of heavy petting. In 1968, he lost his censorship powers, and the previously banned *Hair*, of all anodyne trifles, could finally be seen on the London stage: this is the dawning of the age of Aquarius. Only four and a half decades after the censor's departure, British liberals are panting for the reimposition of censorship under a new 'Royal Charter'.

This is the aging of the dawn of Aquarius: new blasphemy laws for progressive pieties. In the *New Statesman*, Sarah Ditum seemed befuddled that the 'No Platform' movement — a vigorous effort to deny public platforms to the British National party and the English Defence League — has mysteriously advanced from silencing 'violent fascists' to silencing all kinds of other people, like a *Guardian* feminist who ventured some insufficiently affirming observations about trans-women and is now unfit for polite society. But, once you get a taste for shutting people up, it's hard to stop. Why bother winning the debate when it's easier to close it down?

Nick Lowles defined the 'No Platform' philosophy as 'the position where we refuse to allow fascists an opportunity to act like normal political parties'. But free speech is essential to a free society because, when you deny people 'an opportunity to act like normal political parties', there's nothing left for them to do but punch your lights out. Free speech, wrote the *Washington Post's* Robert Samuelson last week, 'buttresses the political system's legitimacy. It helps losers, in the struggle for public opinion and electoral success, to accept their fates. It helps keep them loyal to the system, even though it has disappointed them. They will accept the outcomes, because they believe they've had a fair opportunity to express and advance their views. There's always the next election. Free speech underpins our larger concept of freedom.'

Just so. A fortnight ago I was in Quebec for a provincial election in which the ruling separatist party went down to its worst defeat in almost half a century. This was a democratic contest fought between parties that don't even agree on what country they're in. In Ottawa for most of the 1990s the leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition was a chap who barely acknowledged either the head of state or the state she's head of. Which is as it should be. Because, if a Quebec separatist or an Australian republican can't challenge the constitutional order through public advocacy, the only alternative is to put on a black ski-mask and skulk around after dark blowing stuff up.

I'm opposed to the notion of official ideology — not just fascism, Communism and Baathism, but the fluffier ones, too, like 'multiculturalism' and 'climate change' and 'marriage equality'. Because the more topics you rule out of discussion — immigration, Islam, 'gender fluidity' — the more you delegitimise the political system. As your cynical political consultant sees it, a commitment to abolish Section 18C is more trouble than it's worth: you'll just spend weeks getting damned as cobwebbed racists seeking to impose a bigots' charter when you could be moving the meter with swing voters by announcing a federal programme of transgendered bathroom construction. But, beyond the shrunken horizons of spinmeisters, the inability to roll back something like 18C says something profound about where we're headed: a world where real, primal, universal rights — like freedom of expression — come a distant second to the new tribalism of identity-group rights.

Oh, don't worry. There'll still be plenty of 'offending, insulting or humiliating' in such a world, as Ayaan Hirsi Ali and the Mozilla CEO and Zionists and climate deniers and feminist 'cis-women' not quite *au courant* with transphobia can all tell you. And then comes the final, eerie silence. Young Erin Ching at Swarthmore College has grasped the essential idea: it is not merely that, as the Big Climate enforcers say, 'the science is settled', but so is everything else, from abortion to gay marriage. So what's to talk about? Universities are no longer institutions of inquiry but 'safe spaces' where delicate flowers of diversity of race, sex, orientation, 'gender fluidity' and everything else except diversity of thought have to be protected from exposure to any unsafe ideas.

As it happens, the biggest 'safe space' on the planet is the Muslim world. For a millennium, Islamic scholars have insisted, as firmly as a climate scientist or an American sophomore, that there's nothing to debate. And what happened? As the United Nations Human Development Programme's famous 2002 report blandly noted, more books are translated in Spain in a single year than have been translated into Arabic in the last 1,000 years. Free speech and a dynamic, innovative society are intimately connected: a culture that can't bear a dissenting word on race or religion or gender fluidity or carbon offsets is a society that will cease to innovate, and then stagnate, and then decline, very fast.

As American universities, British playwrights and Australian judges once understood, the 'safe space' is where cultures go to die.

Mark Steyn is a Canadian commentator and author of several books, including America Alone: The End of the World As We Know It, a New York Times bestseller.

Contentions

A Good Day for Justice

by Peter Wehner

For some of us, one of the great intellectual delights is reading the opinions of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. That's because he's not only a brilliant legal mind; he's also a fantastic writer.

I was reminded of this in reading Justice Scalia's [concurring opinion](#) (joined by Justice Thomas) in *Schuette v. Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action*, in which the Supreme Court upheld Michigan's ban on using race as a factor in college admissions.

The Court, in a 6-2 ruling (with Justice Kagan recusing herself), declared Michigan voters had the right to change their state constitution in 2006 to prohibit public colleges and universities from taking account of race in admissions decisions. (The justices said that a lower federal court was wrong to set aside the change as discriminatory.)

Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote for the majority. But it was Scalia who, as usual, put things best. Here's how he begins his opinion:

It has come to this. Called upon to explore the jurisprudential twilight zone between two errant lines of precedent, we confront a frighteningly bizarre question: Does the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment *forbid* what its text plainly *requires*? Needless to say (except that this case obliges us to say it), the question answers itself. "The Constitution proscribes government discrimination on the basis of race, and state-provided education is no exception." *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539 U. S. 306, 349 (2003) (SCALIA, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part). It is precisely this understanding—the correct understanding—of the federal Equal Protection Clause that the people of the State of Michigan have adopted for their own fundamental law. By adopting it, they did not simultaneously *offend* it. [italics in original]

Justice Scalia ended his 18-page dissent this way:

As Justice Harlan observed over a century ago, "[o]ur Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens." The people of Michigan wish the same for their governing charter. It would be shameful for us to stand in their way.

In citing Justice Harlan, I'm reminded of President Kennedy's [1963 civil right speech](#) in which he, too, quoted Harlan:

It ought to be possible, in short, for every American to enjoy the privileges of being American without regard to his race or his color...

As I have said before, not every child has an equal talent or an equal ability or an equal motivation, but they should have the equal right to develop their talent and their ability and their motivation, to make something of themselves.

We have a right to expect that the Negro community will be responsible, will uphold the law, but they have a right to expect that the law will be fair, that the Constitution will be color blind, as Justice Harlan said at the turn of the century.

I cite the Kennedy speech both because of its moral force and because it reminds us what liberalism once stood for: justice and equality before the law, judging people by the content of their character and not the color of their skin, and refusing to count by race.

Today liberalism is not just different than this; it's the *antithesis* of it. You need only read Justice Sotomayor's 58-page dissent, where she piles one bad and misleading argument on another, to understand that. Liberalism is now in a position of insisting that subverting equal protection of the law is actually upholding it.

There are probably better examples of the corruption of language; of using words to "give an appearance of solidity to pure wind," to quote [a line from Orwell](#). But none come immediately to mind.

Examiner

[Antonin Scalia faults Sonia Sotomayor for 'doubly shameful' suggestion that Michigan voters are racist](#)

By Joel Gehrke

Supreme Court Justice [Antonin Scalia](#) faulted Justice [Sonia Sotomayor](#) for making what he regards as a "shameful" suggestion that the Michigan voters who decided to ban affirmative action in college admissions were motivated by racism.

Scalia [wrote a concurring opinion](#) upholding a 2006 ballot initiative that amended Michigan's constitution to ban affirmative action.

"As Justice Harlan observed over a century ago, '[o]ur Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens,'" Scalia concluded, quoting the dissent in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. "The people of Michigan wish the same for their governing charter. It would be shameful for us to stand in their way."

And then, the Parthian shot: "And doubly shameful to equate 'the majority' behind [the constitutional amendment] with 'the majority' responsible for Jim Crow," he added in a final footnote, citing the first two pages of Sotomayor's dissent.

Sotomayor, in her dissent, opened by describing three stages of "the majority" discriminating against racial minorities in the political process, beginning with the Jim Crow laws that flouted the 15th Amendment.

"This time, although it allowed the minority access to the political process, the majority changed the ground rules of the process so as to make it more difficult for the minority, and the minority alone, to obtain policies designed to foster racial integration," she wrote. "Although these political restructurings may not have been discriminatory in purpose, the Court reaffirmed the right of minority members of our society to participate meaningfully and equally in the political process. This case involves this last chapter of discrimination."

Sotomayor offered her own footnote, cutting against Scalia's charge. "I of course do not mean to suggest that Michigan's voters acted with anything like the invidious intent of those who historically

stymied the rights of racial minorities," she countered. "But like earlier chapters of political restructuring, the Michigan amendment at issue in this case changed the rules of the political process to the disadvantage of minority members of our society."

Justice Stephen Breyer disagreed with his liberal colleague. "This case, in contrast, does not involve a reordering of the political process; it does not in fact involve the movement of decisionmaking from one political level to another," Breyer wrote in a concurring opinion that upheld the constitutional amendment.

"[U]nelected faculty members and administrators, not voters or their elected representatives, adopted the race-conscious admissions programs affected by Michigan's constitutional amendment. The amendment took decisionmaking authority away from these unelected actors and placed it in the hands of the voters."

Investor's Business Daily

Earth Day: Hail Fossil Fuels, Energy Of The Future

by Mark J. Perry

On Earth Day, according to various advocates, "events are held worldwide to increase awareness and appreciation of the Earth's natural environment." As we observe the event Tuesday, it might be a good time to appreciate the fact that Americans get most of their plentiful, affordable energy directly from the Earth's "natural environment" in the form of fossil fuels (coal, natural gas, and petroleum).

It's largely those energy sources that fuel our vehicles and airplanes; heat, cool and light our homes and businesses; power our nation's factories; and in the process significantly raise our standard of living.

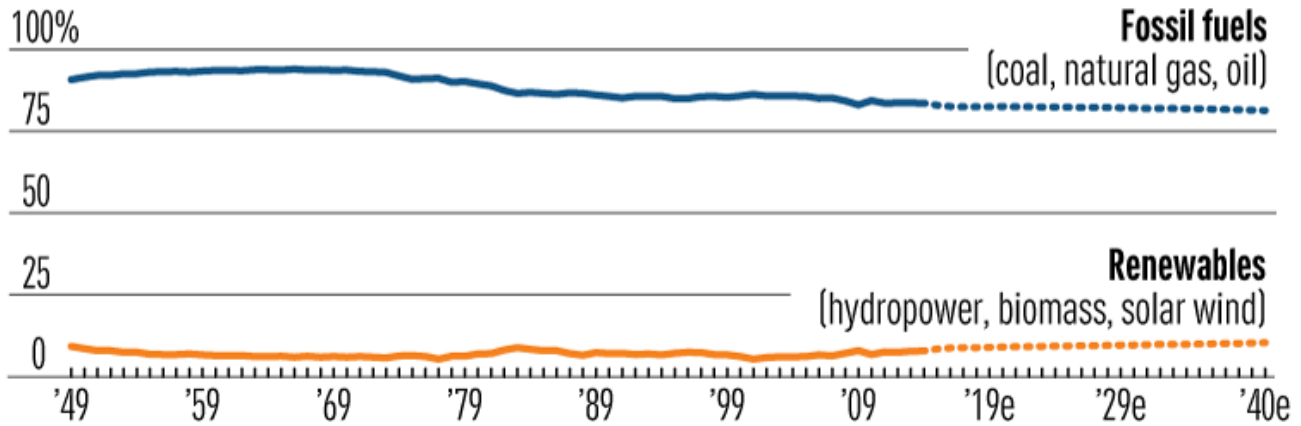
Shouldn't that be part of "increasing our awareness and appreciation of Earth's natural environment" — to celebrate Mother Earth's bountiful natural resources in the form of abundant, low-cost fossil fuels?

Fuel Of The Future

From 1949 to 2040, fossil fuels have provided, and will continue to provide, the vast majority of our energy by far, according to President Obama's Department of Energy. Last year, fossil fuels provided almost 84% of America's energy consumption, nearly unchanged from the 85% fossil-fuel share in the early 1990s

Wind, Solar Energy Won't Replace Fossil Fuels

Renewable energy will only provide a fraction of U.S. energy needs a quarter-century from now, while oil, natural gas and coal will remain dominant



Source: Energy Department

Despite Obama's dismissal of oil and other fossil fuels as "energy sources of the past," his own DOE forecasts that they will still be the dominant energy source in 2040, providing more than 80% of our needs. They will continue to serve as the dominant energy source to power our vehicles, heat and light our homes, and fuel the U.S. economy.

Solar, Wind Marginal

Further, Obama's energy policy has been primarily to force taxpayers to "invest" in "energy sources of the future" — renewables like solar and wind — instead of expanding production of oil, natural gas and coal. But again, DOE data tell a much different story.

Even after billions of dollars in taxpayer subsidies for renewable energy, renewables last year provided only 7.8% of America's energy, which was actually less than the 9.3% share that renewables provided in 1949. That's not a lot of progress for the politically popular, and very expensive, renewables.

When it comes to solar and wind, those two energy sources provided less than 2.3% of America's energy in 2013. Even in 2040, more than a quarter century from now, solar and wind together will account for only 3.9% of America's energy, according to government forecasts, and all renewables together (including hydropower) will provide only 10.4% of our nation's energy.

To further appreciate the Earth's natural environment on Earth Day, we should celebrate the revolutionary technologies of hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling that have allowed us to access previously inaccessible, natural energy treasures trapped in tight shale rock miles below the Earth's surface.

It's an important point that those shale resources have been part of the Earth's "natural environment" for many thousands of years but have become usable natural resources only in the last six years, because of the human resourcefulness that led to breakthroughs in drilling and extraction technologies.

As Thomas Sowell pointed out in his book, "Knowledge and Decisions":

"The cavemen had the same natural resources at their disposal as we have today, and the difference between their standard of living and ours is a difference between the knowledge they could bring to bear on those resources and the knowledge used today. Although we speak loosely of 'production,' man neither creates nor destroys matter, but only transforms it — and the knowledge of how to make these transformations is a key economic factor."

The full awareness and appreciation of Earth's natural environment really makes sense only as a greater appreciation of the human resourcefulness and human ingenuity that have transformed natural resources like sand into computer chips, and oil and gas trapped in shale formations miles below the ground into usable energy.

Instruction Manuals

Mother Nature provides us with an almost infinite abundance of natural resources but without any "instruction manuals" that tell us how to process them into useable products that improve our lives and raise our standard of living.

On Earth Day, let's not forget to celebrate and appreciate the human resources — knowledge, ingenuity, know-how, creativity, entrepreneurship, and imagination, i.e. the "instruction manuals" — that transform otherwise unusable resources like shale hydrocarbons into energy treasures that will power our economy for generations to come.

Perry is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and professor of finance and business economics at University of Michigan-Flint School of Management.

Forbes

[Celebrating Earth Day: Science And Technology Must Join The Party](#)

by Henry Miller

A few years ago seventh graders at a tony private school near San Francisco were given an unusual Earth Day assignment: Make a list of environmental projects that could be accomplished with Bill Gates' fortune. This approach to environmental awareness fits in well with the Obama-Pelosi-Reid worldview that the right to private property is subsidiary to undertakings that others think are worthwhile – the redistributive theory of society. And how interesting that the resources made "available" for the students' thought-experiment were not, say, the aggregate net worth of the members of Congress but the wealth of one of the nation's most successful, innovative entrepreneurs.

Another Earth Day assignment for those same students was to read Rachel Carson's best-selling 1962 book, "Silent Spring," an emotionally charged but deeply flawed excoriation of the

widespread spraying of chemical pesticides for the control of insects. As described by Roger Meiners and Andy Morriss in their scholarly yet eminently readable 2012 [analysis](#), “Silent Spring at 50: Reflections on an Environmental Classic,” Carson exploited her reputation as a well-known nature writer to advocate and legitimize “positions linked to a darker tradition in American environmental thinking: neo-Malthusian population control and anti-technology efforts.”

Carson’s proselytizing and advocacy led to the virtual banning of DDT and to restrictions on other chemical pesticides in spite of the fact that “Silent Spring” was replete with gross misrepresentations and scholarship so atrocious that if Carson were an academic, she would be guilty of egregious academic misconduct. Carson’s observations about DDT were meticulously rebutted point by point by Dr. J. Gordon Edwards, Professor of Entomology at San Jose State University, a long-time member of the Sierra Club and the Audubon Society, and a fellow of the California Academy of Sciences. In his stunning 1992 [essay](#), “The Lies of Rachel Carson,” Edwards demolished her arguments and assertions and called attention to critical omissions, faulty assumptions, and outright fabrications.

Consider this quote from Edwards: “This implication that DDT is horribly deadly is completely false. Human volunteers have ingested as much as 35 milligrams of it a day for nearly two years and suffered no adverse effects. Millions of people have lived with DDT intimately during the mosquito spray programs and nobody even got sick as a result. The National Academy of Sciences concluded in 1965 that ‘in a little more than two decades, DDT has prevented 500 million [human] deaths that would otherwise have been inevitable.’ The World Health Organization stated that DDT had ‘killed more insects and saved more people than any other substance.’”

Meiners and Morriss conclude correctly that the influence of “Silent Spring” on modern environmentalism “encourages some of the most destructive strains within environmentalism: alarmism, technophobia, failure to consider the costs and benefits of alternatives, and the discounting of human well-being around the world.” Sounds like a description of the mindset of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The first Earth Day celebration was conceived by then-U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson and held in 1970 as a “symbol of environmental responsibility and stewardship.” In the spirit of the time, it was a touchy-feely, consciousness-raising, New Age experience, and most activities were organized at the grass roots level. In recent years, Earth Day has provided an opportunity for environmental Cassandras to prophesy apocalypse, dish anti-technology dirt and proselytize. Passion and zeal routinely trump science, and provability takes a back seat to plausibility.

One of the U.K.’s great thinkers, Dick Taverne, aka Lord Taverne of Pimlico, discusses many of the shortcomings of New Age philosophy in his excellent book, “The March of Unreason.” Taverne deplores the “new kind of fundamentalism” that has infiltrated many environmentalist campaigns — an indiscriminating Back-To-Nature movement that views science and technology as the enemy and as a manifestation of an exploitative, rapacious and reductionist attitude toward nature. It is no coincidence, he believes, that eco-fundamentalists are strongly represented in anti-globalization and anti-capitalism demonstrations around the world.

In this, Taverne echoes the late physician and novelist Michael Crichton, who argued in his much-acclaimed novel “State of Fear” that eco-fundamentalists have reinterpreted traditional Judeo-Christian beliefs and myths and made a religion of environmentalism, a religion with its own Eden and paradise where mankind lived in a state of grace and unity with nature until mankind’s fall — which came not from eating an apple, but after eating from the forbidden tree of knowledge (that is,

science). This religion also has a judgment day to come for us all in this polluted world — all of us, that is, except for true environmentalists, who will be saved by achieving sustainability. One of Crichton's characters argues that since the end of the Cold War, environmental alarmism in Western nations has filled the void left by the disappearance of the terror of communism and nuclear holocaust, and that social control is now maintained by highly exaggerated fears about pollution, global warming, chemicals, genetic engineering and the like. With the military-industrial complex no longer the primary driver of society, the politico-legal-media complex has replaced it.

This politico-legal-media complex peddles fear in the guise of promoting safety. French writer and philosopher Pascal Bruckner captured its tone nicely: "You'll get what you've got coming! That is the death wish that our misanthropes address to us. These are not great souls who alert us to troubles but tiny minds who wish us suffering if we have the presumption to refuse to listen to them. Catastrophe is not their fear but their joy."

The tiny-minded misanthropes have enjoyed some dubious "successes." They have effectively banished agricultural biotechnology from Europe, have the chemical industry on the run and the pharmaceutical industry in their crosshairs.

Lord Taverne believes these are ominous trends that are contrary to the principles of the Enlightenment, returning us to an era in which inherited dogma and superstition took precedence over experimental data. Not only do the practices of eco-fundamentalism retard technologies and the availability of products which, used responsibly, could dramatically improve and extend many lives and protect the environment, but they strangle scientific creativity and technological innovation.

By limiting citizens' and businesses' ability to engage in voluntary transactions, irrational practices born of eco-fundamentalism undermine the health of civilized society and of democracy. Defend science and reason, argues Taverne, and you defend democracy itself. Well said, Milord, and Happy Earth Day to you.

The Economist

[Beer and barbecues - A marriage made in heaven](#)

To reduce the health risk of barbecuing meat, just add beer



GRILLING meat gives it great flavour. This taste, though, comes at a price, since the process creates molecules called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) which damage DNA and thus increase the eater's chances of developing colon cancer. For those who think barbecues one of summer's great delights, that is a shame. But a group of researchers led by Isabel Ferreira of the University of Porto, in Portugal, think they have found a way around the problem. When barbecuing meat, they suggest, you should add beer.

This welcome advice was the result of some serious experiments, as Dr Ferreira explains in a paper in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*. The PAHs created by grilling form from molecules called free radicals which, in turn, form from fat and protein in the intense heat of this type of cooking. One way of stopping PAH-formation, then, might be to apply chemicals called antioxidants that mop up free radicals. And beer is rich in these, in the shape of melanoidins, which form when barley is roasted. So Dr Ferreira and her colleagues prepared some beer marinades, bought some steaks and headed for the griddle.

One of their marinades was based on Pilsner, a pale lager. A second was based on a black beer (type unstated). Since black beers have more melanoidins than light beers—as the name suggests, they give it colour—Dr Ferreira's hypothesis was that steaks steeped in the black-beer marinade would form fewer PAHs than those steeped in the light-beer marinade, which would, in turn, form fewer than control steaks left unmarinated.

And so it proved. When cooked, unmarinated steaks had an average of 21 nanograms (billionths of a gram) of PAHs per gram of grilled meat. Those marinated in Pilsner averaged 18 nanograms. Those marinated in black beer averaged only 10 nanograms. Tasty and healthy too, then. Just what the doctor ordered.





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