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AUTHOR Smith, Ted J., III
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ABSTRACT

This paper examines some of the relationships among honor, race and Southern culture from the perspective of the late Richard M. Weaver. His work is noted for its breadth and unity of focus, but its breadth invites fragmentation, a tendency reinforced by Weaver's style of writing self-contained essays. Weaver's foundational analysis, "The Southern Tradition at Bay," a revised version of his doctoral dissertation, was published in 1968, 5 years after his death. The work is a study of the mind and culture of the South as articulated in Southern letters--essays, military memoirs, fiction, diaries and reminiscences--in the postbellum period of 1865-1910. Although sympathetic, Weaver is no mere apologist for the South. The remainder of Weaver's writings extend and refine the position developed in his thesis, as in the case of "The Ethics of Rhetoric and Composition: A Course in Writing and Rhetoric," which gives substance to his ideas on rhetoric and education. Weaver's perspective can be applied to such matters as the "massive resistance" movement (opposing forced integration of the South) and the student honor code at the University of Virginia. Weaver viewed diversity and multiculturalism as important differences among races and cultures that should be preserved rather than eliminated. He also found the endorsement of a code of chivalry and personal honor to be an important and desirable feature of Southern culture. (Contains 19 references.) (RS)

HONOR AND DEFIANCE :

RICHARD M. WEAVER AND THE RHETORIC OF SOUTHERN CULTURE

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by

Ted J. Smith III

The Heritage Foundation
214 Massachusetts Avenue NE
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 546-4400

My purpose today is to examine some of the relationships among honor, race and Southern culture from the perspective of the late Richard M. Weaver. This is, by any measure, a daunting task. The issues involved are not only weighty and complex, but touch on matters of great sensitivity. Perhaps less obvious, but more serious, are the problems involved in bringing Richard Weaver's ideas to bear on these issues. It is always difficult to take the perspective of a profound and subtle thinker, and any attempt to do so will present, at best, only a plausible interpretation of his view. In Weaver's case, several factors serve to intensify these difficulties.

Nearly all of Weaver's scholarly writing is contained in a group of eight books. Of these, only three were published in his lifetime: *Ideas Have Consequences* (1948), *The Ethics of Rhetoric* (1953), and a text entitled *Composition: A Course in Writing and Rhetoric* (first published in 1957, with a revised edition in 1967). The remaining five books appeared after his death on April 3, 1963. They are: *Visions of Order*, (1964), *Life Without Prejudice*, a collection of essays edited (anonymously) by Harvey Plotnick and published in 1965, *The Southern Tradition at Bay*, a slightly revised version of his 1943 doctoral dissertation that appeared in 1968 in an edition edited by George Core and M.E. Bradford, *Language Is Sermonic*, a 1970 collection of essays edited by Richard Johannesen, Rennard Strickland and Ralph Eubanks, and *The Southern Essays of Richard M Weaver*, a 1987 collection edited by George Curtis and James Thompson.

Considered as a whole, Weaver's work is remarkable both for its breadth and unity of focus. But his work is seldom considered as a whole. One reason is that its breadth invites fragmentation, a tendency that is reinforced by certain accidents of publication and characteristics of style.

In terms of writing style, Weaver was primarily an essayist. Of the four books he authored, only *The Southern Tradition at Bay* exhibits a conventional narrative format; the others are best described as collections of self-contained essays used as component pieces in building a larger argument. Because of this characteristic, many of his book chapters have been reprinted without editing as free-standing essays.

In terms of content, Weaver's scholarly writings divide easily into four broad subject categories: 1) American politics and culture, comprised of *Ideas Have Consequences, Visions of Order*, and essays in various conservative political journals such as *National Review* and *Modern Age*; 2) Southern history, literature and culture, comprised of *The Southern Tradition at Bay* and essays and reviews published primarily in Southern literary journals such as *The Sewanee Review* and *The Georgia Review*; rhetorical theory, comprised of *The Ethics of Rhetoric* and a relatively small number of essays, chapters and speeches published in a diversity of sources; and 4) various articles and pamphlets dealing with issues of scholarship, pedagogy and educational philosophy. These subject groupings are clearly reflected in the three posthumous collections of his works. *Life Without Prejudice* and *The Southern Essays of Richard M. Weaver* offer reprints of his periodical essays on politics and the South, respectively. Similarly, *Language Is Sermonic* reprints a handful of items from a diversity of books and periodicals, but it also includes four chapters from Weaver's earlier books, two from *The Ethics of Rhetoric* and the sole chapters on rhetoric from *Ideas Have Consequences* and *Visions of Order*.

The easy compartmentalization of Weaver's works has tended to encourage scholars to restrict their focus primarily to that grouping of most immediate interest to them. This is especially true in rhetoric, where all of Weaver's most important writings on the subject have been gathered conveniently into only two sources, *The Ethics of Rhetoric* and *Language Is Sermonic*, and where only three of his eight books--these two plus *The Southern Essays*--have been reviewed by journals in the field. In particular, there has been relatively little interest among rhetorical scholars in Weaver's Southern writings. For example, of all of the articles devoted to Weaver's work published in rhetoric and communication journals since 1968, only three (Johannesen, 1978; 1987; Sproule, 1979) make any reference to *The Southern Tradition at Bay*. Similarly, only two such articles (Bliese, 1989; Medhurst, 1982) have cited *The Southern Essays* or any of its components.[1]

These observations are not meant as an indictment of the quality of rhetorical scholarship on Weaver. To the contrary, a number of highly detailed and perceptive studies have been published to date. They are meant to suggest that that scholarship is incomplete, particularly in the area examined in this paper. Further, as will be argued more fully below, Weaver's view of the South as developed in *The Southern Tradition at Bay* is the basis for the holistic philosophical vision expressed by the totality of his work. Thus it is not possible to discuss Weaver's larger "perspective," and the role of rhetoric within it, without full consideration of its Southern roots.

It is an unfortunate circumstance that Weaver's foundational analysis, *The Southern Tradition at Bay*, appeared so late in the chronology of his works. The responsibility for this lies with some unknown editor at the University of North Carolina Press. Shortly after completing his doctorate at Louisiana State University in May of 1943, Weaver revised his dissertation, entitled "The Confederate South, 1865-1910, A Study in the Survival of a Mind and a Culture," and submitted it to the Press for publication. Sometime after he accepted a position at the University of Chicago in September 1944, the manuscript was returned to him. He tossed the package, unopened, into a corner of his office, where it rested undisturbed under a growing accumulation of papers until 1963.

The credit for its preservation and eventual publication is due largely to the efforts of Louis H. T. Dehmlow, a Chicago businessman and conservative activist who was a friend of both Weaver and Kendall Beaton, Weaver's brother-in-law and executor. Shortly after Weaver's death, Beaton invited Dehmlow to accompany him to the University of Chicago to arrange the disposition of the contents of Weaver's office. In the course of that visit, Dehmlow intervened to prevent the disposal of the pile of papers and the sale of several hundred books from Weaver's personal library. Among the papers, he discovered the package containing the only known manuscript of *The Southern Tradition at Bay*. This was forwarded to Beaton who, responding to requests from a number of prominent historians of the South, eventually authorized its publication.[2]

But problems of fragmentation and chronological sequence are not the only barriers to a full understanding of Weaver's perspective. For example, Weaver's reliance on an essay format, coupled with an almost complete absence of narrative discussions of his ideas, has meant that certain crucial points in his evolving views are open to widely varying interpretations. This problem is intensified by the fact that so little is known about Weaver's personal life and character. A quiet, solitary and private individual, Weaver never married, and divided his time between a single rented room in a residential hotel in Chicago and a small farm he bought for his mother in Weaverville, North Carolina. Nearly all that has been known about him derives from only three published sources: a brief autobiographical essay (Weaver, 1958-59) and two fairly recent reminiscences (Amyx, 1987; Regnery, 1988).

A further difficulty arises from the polished compactness of Weaver's writing. Although one of the great strengths of his work, this makes it very difficult to summarize his ideas, and attempts to do so often reduce to little more than lists of aphoristic quotations.[3] This may be one reason why no detailed, book-length explication of the full range of his work has yet been published.[4]

Finally, it must be noted that the character of Weaver's ideas may offer an impediment to their full understanding. At the core of his work is a fundamental and uncompromising opposition to virtually every major tenet of modernity. For those whose thinking has been formed by such tenets, and that presumably includes the great majority of academic scholars, almost every paragraph of his writings acquires the character of a rebuke; at a minimum, his values and assumptions must often seem alien, even fantastic, and hopelessly anachronistic. All of this makes understanding his perspective difficult, and unconscious misinterpretation easy.

In light of these concerns, the remainder of the paper will be divided into two sections. The first will provide a brief preliminary outline of Weaver's more general perspective. This outline will be grounded in his view of Southern culture as developed in *The Southern*

Tradition at Bay and will use several recently discovered letters and other unpublished materials for purposes of clarification.[5] The second section will apply this perspective in a discussion of the issues of honor, race and Southern culture.

Outline of Weaver's Perspective

It has long been common to characterize Weaver as a Platonist or, in Johannesen's (1987, 313) more accurate term, a "Platonic-Christian idealist." But such general characterizations are of only limited value. The more important question centers on which aspects of Platonism are central to Weaver's views. Fortunately, a very clear answer is provided in an exchange of letters between Weaver and Dean Terrill, a Chicago attorney active in the Midwestern conservative movement with whom he was acquainted.

Terrill initiated the exchange with a five-page, single-spaced letter dated August 23, 1960. In it, he develops a detailed and perceptive critique of the *Ethics of Rhetoric*, centered on Weaver's treatment of Edmund Burke. In an extremely important letter dated September 3, 1960, Weaver responds to Terrill's criticisms. After proposing a change in the interpretation of his ordered typology of arguments, he indicates the central concept on which the book and, quite arguably, his entire perspective is founded:

> The whole value of the theory propounded in my book, however, depends upon one's being a dualist in philosophy. The dualist I am thinking of believes in a realm of essence and a realm of accident. As a religionist or a moralist he is duty bound to prefer the realm of essence, to keep putting it forward where he can, to encourage people to see basic verities. This is his major impulse. But as a human being talking to others who are in the human condition, he cannot be a pure essentialist. He will many times have to refer to things that are of the accidents of this world (causes, circumstances, etc.) I can conceive of a situation where I would myself make an argument based on circumstance. But I insist on the point that the definition of the nature of the thing is the ultimate goal; we get to that as best we can, sometimes with many makeshifts and delays. But once we admit definitions can emerge only from our experience with actual circumstances, the gate is all the way open for Deweyite pragmatism and the relativism which must follow it. The idea of a metaphysical certitude not subject to daily revision because of changing accidents is necessary to

keep one out of that quicksand. This is why arguments from definition, expressive of the realm of essence, are higher in the ontological scale.

It is in this conception of philosophical dualism, commonplace throughout much of the history of Western civilization, that Weaver grounds his views.

He began to develop those views in his doctoral dissertation, completed under the direction of Cleanth Brooks in 1943 and published a quarter-century later, of course, as *The Southern Tradition at Bay*. It is, in many respects, a very original and rather peculiar work for a graduate student in English to undertake. As indicated by its original subtitle, it is a study of the mind and culture of the South as articulated in Southern letters--essays, military memoirs, fiction, diaries and reminiscences--in the postbellum period of 1865-1910, what now might be described as a study in constitutive rhetoric.

Of most present importance, Weaver begins his study (1968, 31-95)[6] with an analysis of the Southern "heritage," which he reduces to four principal components. The first is a feudal system of society, derived from Europe but an authentic product of organic growth and, characteristically, stable, agrarian, harmonious (as opposed to unified) and hierarchical. One consequence of this organic hierarchy is the existence of a self-conscious aristocratic class. The second component is a code of chivalry, "a romantic idealism closely related to Christianity, which makes honor the guiding principle of conduct" (1968, 31), at least among members of the aristocratic class. Third, and closely related to the second, is a system of instruction designed for the education of gentlemen. Designed ultimately to foster the growth of virtue, that education is "moral in the sense that it would give the youth a system of values" (1968, 62), and "humanistic" in the sense that it is "so framed as to instill the classic qualities of magnificence, magnanimity, and liberality (1968, 61). Above all, it avoids specialized training, providing instead a "well-rounded regimen" designed to prepare the graduate "to perform all general duties, both public and private, of peace and of war" (1968, 63). Last is a particular approach to religion, which Weaver calls "the older religiousness," characterized by the simple,

unquestioning acceptance of, and willing submission to, a body of religious doctrines. In this view, and in direct contrast to the dominant tradition in New England, religion is less a "reasoned belief" than a "satisfying dogma. (1968, 82-83).

From this heritage have sprung a number of enduring features of the Southern mind and culture. The first is a complex, holistic and nuanced view of reality, marked by a sense of the inscrutable, of the existence supernatural power, where life is a profound mystery and, because absolutes exist, tragedy is possible. The second is an intellectual posture marked by an appreciation of intuitive, poetic and mythic insight and a corresponding distrust of mere rational intellect and the reductive simplifications of abstract theory and ideology. The third feature is a disdain, even a contempt, for materialism, commercialism and the empty blandishments of an unreflected "progress." Fourth is a natural attitude of piety, which Weaver defines (1968, 82) as "the submissiveness of the will, and [a] general respect for order, natural and institutional." From piety derive such other features as humility, which involves the recognition and acceptance of proper restraints, and a respect for personality which, almost paradoxically, permits the exaggerated individualism so characteristic of the South.

Although clearly sympathetic to its people and culture, Weaver is no mere apologist for the South. Throughout his analysis he points repeatedly to its faults and excesses, especially a tendency to indulge in an extravagant and sentimental romanticism. And in the epilogue to *The Southern Tradition at Bay* he identifies two "great errors in its struggle against the modern world;" a failure to study its position with enough care to discover the philosophical foundation on which its defense could be based, and a progressive loss or "surrender" of initiative (1968, 373-74).

But with all its faults and failures, the South is redeemed by its unique status as (1968, 375):

> . . . *the last non-materialist civilization in the Western World* [emphasis in original]. It is this refuge of sentiments and values, of spiritual congeniality, of belief in the word, of reverence for symbolism, whose existence haunts the nation.

And because of this status, the South can serve a unique and vital function:

> Looking at the whole of the South's promise and achievement, I would be unwilling to say that it offers a foundation, or, because of some accidents of history, even an example. The most that it offers is a challenge. And the challenge is to save the human spirit by re-creating a non-materialist society. Only this can rescue us from a future of nihilism, urged on by the demoniacal force of technology and by our own moral defeatism.

This quotation, like much of the discussion presented in the introduction and epilogue to *The Southern Tradition at Bay*, effectively foreshadows the analysis developed in *Ideas Have Consequences*. For Weaver, the South was a living example of a strong and admirable culture grounded in philosophical dualism. Given this basis, he then turned his attention to a foundational critique of its principal adversary, the larger American culture with its roots in the mind and culture of the North.

The arguments presented in *Ideas Have Consequences* are sufficiently simple and familiar as to require only brief discussion. In essence, the first six chapters of the book trace the course and consequences of the graduai replacement of a dualistic worldview with a monistic modern view focused entirely on the "realm of accident," grounded in materialism, pragmatism and scientism, and leading inevitably to fragmentation, moral and intellectual relativism and, ultimately, nihilism. Among its many agents are an unbridled technology, "progressive" education, the arts and the media (which Weaver dubbed "The Great Stereopticon"); among its most conspicuous products is a society increasingly dominated by a "spoiled child psychology" in which effort and distinction are divorced from reward. In effect, Weaver describes a modern American culture that is almost

precisely antithetical to the positive features of the South as described in *The Southern Tradition at Bay*.

In his last three chapters, Weaver briefly outlines the "means of restoration" (1948, 129). He begins by searching for a place, secure from the attacks of modernity, on which it is possible to take a stand; he finds it in the notion of private property, the "last metaphysical right." Equally opposed to both monopoly capitalism and socialism, the property Weaver has in mind is that of the farmer or small businessman; the right of property is central because it allows the owner the possibility of choice, and therefore of virtue.

Having secured a place to stand, Weaver next looks for a means of carrying the battle to the enemy; he finds it in the resources of language and "the power of the word" as deployed by an effective rhetoric. But language itself is under attack from general semantics, an "extreme outgrowth of nominalism" (1948, 151) which seeks to emasculate language by stripping it of form and inclination, the sources of its power. The chapter concludes (1948, 165) with an outline of the kind of education implied by his analysis: "Since man necessarily uses both the poetical and the logical resources of speech, he needs a twofold training. The first part must be devoted to literature and rhetoric, the second to logic and dialectic."

The final chapter of *Ideas Have Consequences* focuses on the principal goals of the restoration. Because the central sin of modern man is impiety, the most pressing need is to recover the ancient virtue of piety, which respects the natural order, the substance of other beings and the past, and is the basis of justice, which requires that each thing be treated as it should.

To a large degree, the remainder of Weaver's work consists of extending and refining the position developed in *The Southern Tradition at Bay* and *Ideas Have Consequences*. This is clearly true in the case of *The Ethics of Rhetoric* and *Composition: A Course in Writing and Rhetoric*, which give substance to the ideas on rhetoric and education outlined in the

penultimate chapter of *Ideas Have Consequences*. It is also true of *Visions of Order*, but the precise relation of this book to his earlier work has been obscured by several common misconceptions.

Visions of Order, published more than a year after Weaver's death, has always suffered from a degree of neglect. Never strongly promoted by the Louisiana State University Press, it has been out of print for many years and is almost impossible to acquire in the used book market.[7] One reason for this neglect may be the widespread belief that the book is only a late draft of a work in progress at the time of Weaver's death. In fact, Weaver received a grant from the Volker Fund in 1955-56 to begin work on the manuscript; in 1957 he reported that it was "virtually completed" and listed chapter titles almost identical to those in the version published in 1964.[8] Sometime between 1957 and 1961 (most likely in 1958 or 1959), Weaver submitted the finished manuscript to the Henry Regnery Company for publication, but it was returned with requests for modifications.[9] Apparently unwilling to make those changes, Weaver then submitted it to the Louisiana State University Press, probably in the first half of 1961.[10] There it languished until his death.

Three important points follow from this chronology. First, *Visions of Order* is a work of finished scholarship, completed no later than 1960 and most likely in 1958 or 1959. Second, the book reflects Weaver's views in the middle to late 1950s, and may be in part a response to events of that period. This could account for the somewhat shrill tone of the book that has troubled some readers. As discussed more fully below, Weaver was deeply disturbed by events in that period, and his close association at that time with the conservative political magazine *National Review* may have sharpened the polemical tone of his writing. Third, Weaver was clearly convinced of the importance of the book as a refinement of his views, and a number of letters from 1960 until his death express increasing exasperation with the delay in its publication.

This third point is especially important for scholars of rhetoric. *Visions of Order* contains one chapter on rhetoric, "The Cultural Role of Rhetoric," which was reprinted in *Language Is Sermonic*. In his letter of September 16, 1960, to Dean Terrill, Weaver emphasizes the importance of this essay and makes clear that it was intended to refine and soften the Platonic emphasis of *The Ethics of Rhetoric* in favor of a more Christian view that takes the "the urgency of concrete situations" more fully into account:[11]

> Having delivered my broadside against Burke, I am going to backwater - a little bit. In those two essays [in *The Ethics of Rhetoric*] I feel that I have been a little too hard on Burke and a little too easy on Lincoln. I have been perhaps too strict a Platonist in both. In a new book which I hope to see published sometime [emphases in original], I have a chapter which could be read as making partial amends, though it does not deal directly with either. It is called "The Cultural Role of Rhetoric." There I make provision for what you dwell on in your letter, and what I think of as the urgency of concrete situations. I do not call this 'circumstance' but 'history,' and I try to show that the force of history does enter persuasively into rhetorical situations. It seems to me now that the realization of this is something that came in with Christianity; it is a kind of Christian supplement to Hellenic rationalism. It takes the rigor out of absolute abstractions and allows for the way in which people feel about particular and concrete orderings of facts. Christianity is, I think, a bridge between our reverence for the absolute and our sympathy for the condition of man. And Christianity is, of course, in addition to a theology, a powerful rhetoric.

This is not the occasion to explore the implications of this interpretation of Weaver's view of rhetoric. But it is important to note that, in the middle to late 1950s, Weaver had softened his Platonic view of rhetoric and was acutely aware of the destructive tendency of pure dialectic.

Honor, Race and Culture

Given even this very brief and superficial outline of Weaver's work, it should be clear that his perspective owes much to the influence and example of Southern culture. It is therefore useful to apply this perspective in an examination of bodies of Southern rhetoric

concerning such matters as the "massive resistance" movement and the student honor code at the University of Virginia, both ably analyzed by my colleagues on this panel.

"Massive resistance" was a sustained outburst of defiance occasioned by the federal government's efforts to force the racial integration of schools and other public facilities in the South. It has been common to attribute this outburst to racial fear and hatred among whites. But Weaver's analysis of Southern culture suggests that this view, while undoubtedly true in part, is far too simple. If his analysis is correct, forced integration constituted a foundational assault on the organic, hierarchical social structure of the South. Worse, it was an assault grounded in precisely the kind of abstract ideology long distrusted by Southerners.

Weaver's personal response to integration is similar but more complex. Perhaps surprisingly for one so interested in the South, Weaver wrote very little on matters of race. What he did write (e.g., the section entitled "The Theory of Race" in *The Southern Tradition at Bay*, 1968, 151-60) shows a clear dislike of racial prejudice. Nevertheless, Weaver, like his friend and mentor Donald Davidson, expressed strong opposition to forced integration.

Weaver's views on the subject are expressed most clearly in two brief articles written for *National Review*. The first, a review essay entitled "Integration Is Communization," was published in the issue dated July 13, 1957. Harsh and polemical in tone, it attacks integration not only as an exercise in communist subversion but also as a direct assault on private property, the "last metaphysical right" that less than a decade before had seemed to provide a secure haven from which to pursue the restoration of American culture. In his words (1957b, 67):

> We can observe in a number of areas how "racial collectivism" [a term suggested by one of the books he was reviewing] is being used as a crowbar to pry loose rights over private property. There was a time when ownership of property gave the owner the right to say to whom he would

> and would not sell and rent . . . . There was a time when owners had complete discretion as to whom they would and would not hire to work in their private businesses . . . . There was a time when private educational institutions had the right to set up any standards they chose for the admission of students . . . .

Weaver ends with an appeal for proponents of integration to recognize (1957b, 68):

> . . . the truth of three propositions. 1) Integration is not an end in itself. 2) Forcible integration would ignore the truth that equals are not identicals. 3) In a free society, associations for educational, cultural, social, and business purposes have a right to protect their integrity against political fanaticism. The alternative to this is the destruction of free society and the replacement of its functions by government, which is the Marxist dream.

The second article, published in the March 14, 1959, issue of *National Review* under the title "The Regime of the South," addresses integration in the context of an aggressive defense of the South against the persistent attacks of "Liberals." Decrying those "who would attack a regime in the name of some deduced and doctrinaire theory" (1959, 588), Weaver offers an eloquent defense of the kind of organic, hierarchical social structure found in the South and threatened by integration (1959, 587):

> In actual fact a regime is a system of sustaining forms, and everyone who has been in contact with a regime recognizes its capacity to give every man, the high and the low, some sense of being at home. It tends, moreover, to diminish the sense of being "low" by sustaining the sense of belonging.
>
> . . . [T]his sense of inclusive ordering makes the individual feel that his presence is acknowledged in more than a perfunctory way. A regime is thus a powerful check against the sense of lostness, the restlessness, and the aimless competition which plague the modern masses and provoke the fantastic social eruptions of our era.

Weaver also offers a more or less explicit defense of the South's handling of racial affairs (1959, 588):

> The effect of a regime is to conserve and stabilize. No one has to believe that every particular thing conserved by them is valuable. No society has met that standard, and it certainly has to be granted that societies, like people, are properly subject to correction through appeals to logic and ethics. The South has had the enormously difficult problem of accommodating a large minority distinct in race and culture.

Three features of this brief passage are noteworthy. First, Weaver's reference to the need of societies for "correction," a point repeated elsewhere in the article, shows once again that Weaver is no mere apologist for the South. Taken in context, it implies that the South would benefit from such corrections in its handling of racial affairs. Second, the defense of the South offered in the last sentence of the passage seems to come very close to being an argument from "history" or circumstance; certainly it shows an acute sensitivity to the "urgency of concrete situations" discussed in Weaver's letter to Terrill the following year. Third, and most important, the final sentence provides a clear insight into Weaver's views on race: If blacks are "*distinct* in race and culture," it seems reasonable to assume that Weaver believed blacks and whites are different in some deep-rooted, perhaps even essential, way.

Given this analysis, it could be argued that Weaver was a racist and thus his opposition to integration may well have derived, at root, from racism. Certainly integration is based on the contrary view that there are no important or essential differences between blacks and whites. But because it turns on issues of definition and interpretation, the question of Weaver's racism can never be finally resolved. The more important question is whether he was factually mistaken in his beliefs.

While there is no doubt that integration has been successful in some areas of society, most notably employment and commerce, in others it has not. For example, the effort to integrate public schools through forced busing is now widely regarded as a costly failure. As white children moved to private schools or, more often, the suburbs, blacks and other minorities remained, and now many urban public school systems are *less*

integrated than they were when those programs began. Further, the movement of more affluent whites (and, increasingly, middle-class blacks) to the suburbs has stripped many urban centers of the jobs and revenue they need to prosper. Not surprisingly, many of these urban centers are now showing clear signs of social dissolution.

It is also worth noting that, while integration is still the law of the land, it has been largely abandoned by society as a whole. The emphasis now, especially among spokesmen for minority communities, is on the benefits of "diversity" and "multiculturalism." In higher education, these have emerged as primary ideals. Whatever the merits of these notions, it is crucial to note that they are based fundamentally on the view that there *are* important differences among races and cultures, and that these differences should be preserved rather than eliminated. But this, of course, is exactly Weaver's view. And if he was right on this most fundamental issue, it is important to ask how much more of his Southern perspective might be true, especially in light of the manifest failures of integration in some important areas.

Consider next the student honor codes at the University of Virginia and other Southern universities. It is clear from his discussion in *The Southern Tradition at Bay* that Weaver found the endorsement of a code of chivalry with its attendant emphasis on personal honor to be one of the most important and desirable features of Southern culture. It is even possible that Weaver's views on honor were influenced by the University of Virginia code--the "Vita" included in his doctoral dissertation (1943, 517) states that he "attended summer sessions at the Sorbonne, Harvard University, and the University of Virginia."

It is very easy to deride such student honor codes as mere vestiges of an aristocratic past that no longer exists. While perhaps appropriate when schools such as the University of Virginia could truly claim to be enclaves of the Southern aristocracy, times have changed, and the schools have changed with them. For example, the University of Virginia now enrolls many students from the Northeast and other areas outside the South, and social class is one of the few factors that is *not* explicitly considered in the application

process. Its faculty is neither notably aristocratic nor Southern. More important, as the student body has diversified, the honor code, especially its absolutistic provisions which strictly limit the mitigating factors that can be offered in defense of an action and specify only a single sanction--expulsion--for those convicted of an honor violation, have come under increasingly frequent attack. And it is a common view among professors that the privileges of the system are used by some students as a cover for flagrant and systematic cheating.

All this is true. But it is at least equally important to note that despite the changes in faculty and students, despite repeated efforts to modify--and weaken--the code, and despite the opportunistic actions of a few, the honor code at the University of Virginia is still in place, unchanged, as an absolute standard of personal conduct. And it is there as the result of repeated and explicit decisions by the student body as a whole.

In short, what requires explanation is the persistence of this peculiar Southern anachronism in the modern world. And here, once again, Richard Weaver points the way. In the epilogue to *The Southern Tradition at Bay*, he writes (1968, 374-75):

> One might hesitate to say that the South, with such weaknesses, has anything to offer our age. But there is something in its heritage, half lost, derided, betrayed by its own sons, which continues to fascinate the world. This is a momentous fact, for the world is seeking as perhaps never before for the thing that will lift up our hearts and restore our faith in human communities.

The South, and her most eloquent sons, still offer a challenge to our age.

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ENDNOTES

1. A few other articles (e.g., Enholm, Skaggs and Welsh (1987) have applied Weaver's Southern writings in the course of analyzing other rhetorical figures and issues.

2. Interview with Louis H. T. Dehmlow, November 1, 1992. See also the accounts given in Core and Bradford's "Preface" and Donald Davidson's "Foreword" to the 1968 edition of *The Southern Tradition at Bay*. Dehmlow eventually returned all papers found in Weaver's office to Beaton; most or all of them are now part of the Weaver collection at Vanderbilt University. Dehmlow retained possession of Weaver's books until 1989, when he donated them to Hillsdale College. Dehmlow also deserves credit for his efforts, begun within days of Weaver's death, to assemble an exhaustive collection of Weaver's published and unpublished writings. This collection was then used by Harvey Plotnick to identify essays for publication in *Life Without Prejudice*. It is now part of the Vanderbilt archive.

3. This polished compactness was the result of Weaver's habit of repeatedly revising all of his public presentations, even those of very minor significance. For example, he was asked by the University of Chicago student newspaper, the *Chicago Maroon*, to write a brief article describing the newly revised freshman English sequence (Weaver, 1962). Materials in the Vanderbilt collection show that, even for this minor task, he produced at least five complete drafts and solicited critical comments from at least two colleagues.

4. It appears, however, that at least three such books, including an intellectual biography by the present author, are now in progress.

5 This method has been used to good effect in *Language Is Sermonic*, where quotations from several letters to Ralph Eubanks were employed as chapter introductions. Although somewhat reclusive, Weaver was not unsocial, and he maintained a voluminous correspondence. It has therefore been possible to locate over two hundred items of his correspondence, about half written by Weaver and most of them substantive. It seems reasonable to expect that at least several hundred additional items can be found.

6. Because it is more readily available, all page references to *The South Tradition at Bay* are refer to the 1989 paperback edition published by Regnery Gateway.

7. This situation will be rectified in the near future when a reprint is issued by Saunders.

8. Letter from Richard M. Weaver to Kenneth S. Templeton dated October 16, 1957, in the Weaver collection at Vanderbilt University, box 4, folder 5.

9. Letter from Henry Regnery to K[endall] F. Beaton dated April 12, 1963.

10. In a letter to Eugene Davidson dated February 6, 1961, Weaver advises that negotiations with the LSU Press are in progress, that he has declared his intention to submit the manuscript to them, and that a final decision must be made "soon."

11. Letter from Richard M. Weaver to Dean Terrill dated September 3, 1960, page 2.