

# Memorandum



DATE:

September 17, 1990

TO: Gordon DiRenzo, Chair  
Faculty Welfare and Privileges  
Committee

FROM: Linda S. Gottfredson *lg*  
Educational Studies

RE: Complaint Regarding My Promotion Application

I hereby file a complaint against Victor Martuza, Chair of the Department of Educational Studies, and the members of the Educational Studies 1989-90 Promotion and Tenure Committee (Ralph Ferretti [chair], Robert Hampel, David Kaplan, and Richard Venezky). The Department Chair and the Promotion Committee both treated my application for promotion to full professor last fall in a biased, unfair, and unprofessional manner. They also violated my academic freedom by clearly suggesting that I would not be promoted until I changed the content of my research.

The specific nature of and evidence for their misconduct is detailed in the attached September 17 request for a Step 3 Grievance Hearing (with its accompanying attachments). The relief I seek is also described in that request.

This complaint may be joined with Jan Blits' own September 17 complaint about bias, unfairness, and unprofessionalism in the promotion process ("Complaint regarding the promotion process"). His complaint is an attachment to mine.

This complaint may also be joined with my two other September 17 complaints, if your committee so wishes: "Complaint Regarding Sociology's Withdrawal of the Cross-Listing for EDS258" and "Complaint Regarding the Ban on Pioneer Monies." The three issues are linked by a common thread of disapproval for the content of my research. The disapproval erupted in the form of a controversy over my funding source, which then led directly to both my promotion problems and the withdrawal of the cross-listing for a course I teach. For example:

1. Materials hostile to my funding source were circulated in the Department of Educational Studies while the Promotion Committee was drafting its recommendation and the faculty were reviewing my dossier. There is evidence that both members of the Committee and members of the faculty were prejudiced against my application for promotion as a result of that emerging controversy. For



example, the senior member of the Promotion Committee illustrated his bias against me when, a month after the Committee drafted its recommendation, he sent an intemperate letter about me and my funding source to the University administration and to all Department faculty. (His letter and my reply are attached.)

2. The Sociology Department's withdrawal of the cross-listing of EDS258 followed directly from discussions of my work and my funding source within that department (as is documented in my complaint about the cross-listing).

cc: Maxine Colm  
Frank Murray  
Vic Martuza  
George Cicala

Attachments:

September 17, 1990 request for a Step 3 Grievance Hearing  
(with attachments)  
December 6, 1989 memo from Richard Venezky to Ron Whittington  
("Pioneer Fund/Mankind Quarterly")  
December 15, 1989 memo from me to Ron Whittington ("Dick  
Venezky's December 6 Memo on the Pioneer Fund")



# University of Delaware

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES  
WILLARD HALL EDUCATION BUILDING, ROOM 211  
NEWARK, DELAWARE 19716

(302) 451-8126

December 6, 1989

TO: Mr. Ron Wittington  
FROM: Richard L. Venezky, Ed. Studies <sup>REV.</sup>  
SUBJECT: Pioneer Fund/Mankind Quarterly

While I am reluctant to contribute to the deluge of memos concerning the Pioneer Fund, I feel obligated to respond to one extremely misleading argument made in Professor Gottfredson's November 22 memo to you. To imply that eminent scholars cannot be bigots, as Professor Gottfredson does in relation to the *Mankind Quarterly* editorial board, is to deny the lessons of the Holocaust and of America's black experience. Many professors in Nazi Germany joined willingly in the movement for racial purity there as did many of their counterparts in the American South.

Joseph Campbell, Linda's first-named "internationally eminent scholar," was renowned for his bigotry, as an article in the September 28 issue of the *New York Review of Books* points out. Further testimony on Campbell's bigotry can be found in the two attached letters to the *New York Times*. (It should also be noted that contrary to Professor Gottfredson's memo, Professor Campbell is no longer on the Mankind Quarterly editorial board. He died in 1987.)

It appears that each attempt to defend the Pioneer Fund reveals yet another one of their associations with bigotry and right-wing anti-humanitarianism. If nothing else is gained from these defenses, at least we are learning to identify the major threats to civil liberties in America.

cc: E. A. Trabant, President  
Richard Murray, Acting Provost  
Robert Varrin, Associate Provost for Research  
EDS Faculty

# Joseph Campbell Mixed Bigotry and Inspiratio

To the Editor:

Brendan Gill's attack on Joseph Campbell's views and popularity in the Sept. 28 New York Review of Books, which you report (Nov. 6), is partly right, but partly wrong and even preposterous.

Campbell was an anti-Semite, as not just his stray comments to friends but also his published writings make clear. In them, he invariably disparaged Judaism as literalistic, chauvinistic and parochial — stock anti-Semitic epithets. At the same time, he was at least as virulent toward his own boyhood Roman Catholicism and, after having visited India, toward the East. His crude, stereotyped characterizations of Judaism, Catholicism and the Orient make one blush as much as grimace.

Yet Campbell's political views are so mixed, if not outright inconsistent, that they scarcely offer the justification for Reaganesque greed that Mr. Gill detects. On the one hand, Campbell's superpatriotism goes back to "The Symbol Without Myth," a 1957 cold war essay, and is voiced most fully in his 1968 "Masks of God: Crea-

tive Mythology." On the other hand, Campbell's world ecumenism, first voiced in his 1949 "Hero With a Thousand Faces," never ceased. In his 1989 "Power of Myth," the book from the Bill Moyers interviews, he still declares that all myths are one because all peoples are: "We need myths that will identify the individual not with his local group but with the planet."

In any case, those who are most attracted to Campbell are idealistic seekers after wisdom. Not coincidentally, the popularity of "The Hero With a Thousand Faces" peaked during the 1960's. Campbell's open-ended message may be simplistic, but he appeals to the best, not the worst, in people.

ROBERT A. SEGAL

Baton Rouge, La., Nov. 8, 1989

The writer, professor of philosophy at Louisiana State University, is the author of "Joseph Campbell: An Introduction" (1988).

## His Anti-Semitism

To the Editor:

I am deeply grateful to Brendan Gill for detailing in public what many of us at Sarah Lawrence College pri-

vately knew all along about Jose Campbell. Because Campbell had been proposed as a sage for our time it is particularly important for those of us who have a different estimate of the man and his work to speak up. A Gill's account of Campbell's scholarship, his politics and his views seem to me accurate. I offer a single anecdote from my experience by way of verifying his anti-Semitism.

I joined the literature faculty at Sarah Lawrence in 1968. With other younger faculty members, I was strongly opposed to the war in Vietnam, and I considered myself — as do today — to be on the left. Campbell tended to keep his distance from the group, whose values he more or less correctly perceived — and disliked.

It was my good or ill fortune, however, to find that Campbell was disposed to be friendly to me. One reason for this was that I had, in 1967, completed a doctoral dissertation that, if had been told, made substantial use (I am embarrassed to confess it) of his book "The Hero With a Thousand Faces." But I think Campbell was also disposed to be friendly to me because in those days, I usually wore a coat and tie to teach, and this was not the costume he associated with leftists and war protesters; and because, when we happened to meet at some faculty function, I usually had a drink in my hand, and he had the notion that leftists and war protesters had sworn off alcohol for the relentless consumption of marijuana.

At one faculty function, in 1969 or '70, I found myself drinking with Campbell and another, older, equally right-wing teacher. At some point in the evening, Campbell, responding to a remark I can't recall, said something to the effect that he could always spot a Jew. I, a Jew, said, "Oh?" Whereupon Campbell went into a description of how the New York Athletic Club had ingeniously managed for years to keep Jews out. He went on and on, telling his story in the most charming and amiable fashion, without any self-consciousness about the views he was expressing and, indeed, without any overt animus — for all that he obviously relished the notion of keeping Jews out of anywhere any time, forever. As soon as I could, I said good-night, and Campbell and I never had much to do with each other again.

Subsequently, in my many years at Sarah Lawrence, I heard over and over again that Campbell was contemptuous of women and that he missed few opportunities to disparage black people.

As in the similar case of Ezra Pound — an infinitely more talented man than Joseph Campbell — we cannot entirely separate the views of the individual from the views expressed in his texts. And some of Joseph Campbell's views were decidedly repugnant.

ARNOLD KRUPAT

Bronxville, N.Y., Nov. 8, 1989

# Memorandum



December 15, 1989

TO: Ron Whittington

FROM: Linda Gottfredson *lg*

RE: Dick Venezky's December 6 Memo on the Pioneer Fund

Dick Venezky seems to have been confused by my November 22 memo. I'm certainly not so foolish as to suggest that "eminent scholars cannot be bigots." I was explicitly answering Frawley's charge that Mankind Quarterly, whose publisher has received support from the Pioneer Fund, is "an 'academic' journal with expressly racist, anti-Semitic, and pro-Apartheid concerns." Dick's outrage was provoked by the fact that one of the scholars of the journal's editorial board, Joseph Campbell, has been publicly accused since his death (by a former friend) of having been an anti-Semite.

The accusations against Campbell appeared in the New York Review of Books. One can make of them what one wants. The subsequent exchange of letters appearing in the NYRB (see attachment) suggests a mixed picture.

The question, though, is not whether Campbell was anti-Semitic. The question is, What is one to do about the charge if it is true? And what, in particular, has the matter to do with the Pioneer Fund?

Dick claims that Campbell's presence on the board "reveals yet another one of [the Pioneer Fund's] associations with bigotry and right-wing anti-humanitarianism." Leaving aside what he means by "yet another" (so far, all of the evidence refutes the alleged "associations"), I should point out that Bill Moyers last year had a six-hour PBS television series devoted to Campbell ("Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth with Bill Moyers"). What, then, is one to say about Moyers? Is he also now guilty of "association with bigotry and right-wing anti-humanitarianism"? If not, why the double standard? Why should Moyer's association be innocent but the Pioneer Fund's guilty, especially since Moyer's connection is considerable and direct while the Fund's is, at most, peripheral?

Far from implying that eminent scholars cannot be bigots, I am all too well aware of anti-semitism among major scholars. The names of T.S. Elliot, H.L. Mencken, G.K. Chesterton immediately come to mind. Again, the question is, What is one to do about their anti-Semitism? Are we to consider any scholarly association with them as anathema? Are we to brand as anti-Semitic any journal that publishes their work or on whose

editorial board they may have sat, or any scholar who studies their work or any foundation that funds such scholarship? If not, again, why the double standard? Why Campbell, but not Elliot or Mencken--to say nothing of Spinoza, Dostoyevsky, Nietzsche, or Heidegger?

There is another double standard here as well. Dick speaks of "right-wing" anti-Semitism. What about anti-Semitism on the left? Dick can't be unaware of Karl Marx's infamous The Jewish Question or, still worse, his Herr Vogt. The latter is a vicious 300-page attack on a Jewish newspaper publisher (Joseph Moses Levy), which Marx's biographer Saul K. Padover describes as "reach[ing] depths of...anti-Semitism unprecedented even for Marx." (See attached copy.) Dick must know that there is bigotry on the left as well as on the right.

Once again, the question is not whether someone was an anti-Semite, but rather, what is one to do about it? Are we to brand as "bigoted and anti-humanitarian" any foundation that supports Marxist studies, any scholar who studies Marx, any person who considers himself a Marxist? And are we to remove Marx from the University's New Student Reading List because he was an anti-Semite?

Dick is usually a sensible person. I value him as a colleague because of this. When it comes to the Pioneer Fund, however, something seems to have gotten the better of his judgment, as the intolerant tenor and intemperate tone of his memo plainly demonstrate. Dick says, "If nothing else is gained from these defenses [of the Pioneer Fund], we are at least learning to identify the major threat to civil liberties in America." It is hard to know what Dick means, but, given his uncharacteristic intolerance and intemperateness when it comes to the Pioneer Fund, one must hope that he is indeed able to recognize that threat in the handling of this case.

cc: E. A. Trabant, President  
Richard Murray, Acting Provost  
Frank Murray, Dean, College of Education  
Robert Varrin, Associate Provost for Research

## KARL MARX

named Weber. To induce Weber to take the case, he wrote him that he himself was the son of a highly respected lawyer, the late Heinrich Marx, who had been the leader of the Trier bar. Marx sent Weber documents, which were inexpensive, and fees, which he could not afford. The retainer was 15 Taler, mailed to Weber on April 24. At the end of July, he sent Weber another 32 Taler and promised more. It was in vain. In October 1860, the *Obertribunal* in Berlin threw out the case, declaring in its final decision that it did not find in the Vogt article "either an objective injury to the honor of the plaintiff" or any intention to injure him.

Marx called the decision of the Berlin tribunal a "Prussian joke."

The libel suit cost him at least £100. The money had come mostly from Engels who, upon the death of his father in the spring of 1860, became a partner in the Manchester business and could thus afford to help Marx with larger sums. He sent Marx £100 to pay the most urgent debts—to landlords, doctors, grocers and other pressing creditors. The money was soon dissipated and, as usual, Marx kept asking Engels for more.

Marx also pursued Vogt in a book-sized polemic of about 300 pages, entitled *Herr Vogt*. Since no respectable publisher in Germany would touch it, he had it printed by a German book-dealer in London,<sup>2</sup> at an initial cost of £25, which he could not, of course, afford.

*Herr Vogt*, a mixture of documents, quotations and accusations against a whole range of pet enemies, contained paragraphs of exceptional crudeness. A case in point is Marx's attack on Joseph Moses Levy, the publisher of the London *Daily Telegraph*, a more or less innocent bystander in the whole embroilment. The assault on Levy reached depths of vulgarity and anti-Semitism unprecedented even for Marx. Even Levy's "Jewish nose" was not spared:

All London toilets discharge their physical ordure into the Thames through an ingenious system of underground sewer

<sup>2</sup>A. Petch & Co., 78 Fenchurch St., London, E. C. (December, 1860).

## HERR VOGT

pipes. In the same way, through a system of goose quills, the world metropolis daily spits all its social ordure into a big paper-made central-sewer—*The Daily Telegraph*. . . . After he [Levy] has transformed the social ordure into newspaper articles, he transforms the newspaper articles into copper, and finally copper into gold. On the gate leading into the paper-made central-sewer are inscribed the words . . . : "hic . . . *quisquam faxit oletum* [here a stink is made]," or, as Byron has translated into fine poetry: "Wanderer, stop and—piss!" . . .

Levy wants to be an Anglo-Saxon. Hence at least once a month he attacks the un-British policies of Disraeli. . . . But of what use is it for Levy to attack Mr. Disraeli, . . . so long as Mother Nature has inscribed, with the wildest black letters, his family tree in the middle of his face. . . . Levy's nose constitutes a year's talk in the City of London. . . . The great art of Levy's nose in reality consists of cozing up to foul odor, to smell it out hundreds of miles away and to bring it forth. Thus Levy's nose serves *The Daily Telegraph* as an elephant snout, insect palp, lighthouse and telegraph. One can therefore say without exaggeration that Levy writes his newspaper with his nose.<sup>3</sup>

Marx's friend, the poet Ferdinand Freiligrath who worked for a Swiss bank in London, told him that he found *Herr Vogt* to be what he expected: "full of spirit and full of malice." But, he added, he still deplored the whole conflict with Vogt and would have nothing to do with it. Marx never forgave Freiligrath, the "fat philistine." The two men and their families finally stopped being on speaking terms.

*Herr Vogt* was ignored by the press in Germany and a French translation "disappeared on the *ukase* of the Imperial All-Highest" in France.<sup>4</sup> Jenny wrote bitterly to a friend in the United States that *Herr Vogt* was "being passed over in deathly silence by the cowardly and venal press" in Germany.<sup>5</sup> Marx, panting for attention in his native country, saw there the usual

<sup>3</sup>*Herr Vogt*, Ch. X.

<sup>4</sup>Marx to Johann Philipp Becker, February 26, 1862.

<sup>5</sup>Jenny Marx to Louise Weydemeyer, March 11, 1861.

## Joseph Campbell: An Exchange

To the Editors:

The posthumous battle that was engaged by Brendan Gill against his deceased Centurion friend and intellectual sparring partner, Joseph Campbell [NYR, September 28], is easy to account for. In the banter of the bar "in the art gallery off the landing of our grand marble stairway," perhaps Brendan Gill was the verbal match of Joseph Campbell. In death Joseph Campbell won, and it is easy to see why. It is the triumph of ideas and insight over style, of originality over reaction.

As one of the executive producers of the series "Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth with Bill Moyers," and, incidentally, a new member of the Century Club, I'd like to join the give and take of what, unfortunately, Joe is no longer here to make into a vigorous discussion.

First, Mr. Gill advances an interpretation of one of Campbell's most frequently quoted phrases, "Follow your bliss," that I believe is hardly vigorous and, in fact, off-base. He



writes that the meaning of Joe's message is to do only that which makes one happy, and, as such, that it sanctions the selfishness that has become deplorably familiar to us in the Reagan years. With that interpretation, he likens Campbell's philosophy to that of Ayn Rand, one of the absolutists for the value system of materialism.

After years of working with this material, I would suggest that this interpretation is the opposite of what Campbell meant. Campbell says: "We are so busy doing things of outer value that we no longer know what we intend," and he says this in many different ways. What Joe meant—and continues to mean in this period of infant mortality that so irks Mr. Gill—is that the impositions of our culture, have caused us to lose touch with our inner selves and our own inner sense of being that directs us toward those things that are most meaningful in our lives.

Further, he said: Follow your bliss no matter what the cost, though society may revile you, though you may live as an outcast and in poverty. This is the philosophy he followed in his own life in pursuing his intellectual passion—mythology. It is the message he gave to his students, young and old, and it is the reason he drew their admiration and love.

I have been asked many times by those who admired the series why I think it was so successful. My answer, uncertain though I am, is that in this society, which is competitive and materialistic, there is little outlet for our spiritual selves. We are so engaged in activities of outer value—the pursuit of financial security and social gain—and our sense of reality, our sense of ourselves, is so dominated by a popular culture that admits only what is tangible, quantifiable, and measurable that we have little validation of our inner life, our souls, if you will. It used to be that there were institutions and other forums that were a home for the expression of what we call the soul—houses of religious worship, the corner bar, the community, the family. All of these have changed, and many have ceased to serve as sanctuaries for spiritual concerns. Most are operating at a deficit and have less time for the spirit than for their own survival.

Nevertheless, there is something inside—call it the soul—that needs expression, and what I think the Campbell series did is to give it an

outlet, to acknowledge and address it through an exploration of the literature of the spirit. The electronic hearth became for six hours a sacred place for the human tribe which, throughout history, has asked the same questions: Who am I? Why am I here? What does my life mean? Why must we kill? How can there be evil if God is good? How can I forgive and be forgiven? Is there a God? And more.

Ironically, the series is now called a "cash cow" by public television stations which originally questioned the whole production. Stations are using it, successfully, for fundraising, and so our culture confirms the existence of the soul in its very own terms—in ratings that can be quantified and contributions that can be counted.

Some additional observations:

Yes, Joe said "Yes" to life, the good and the evil, the paradox, the suffering. One person told me that she believed the series was successful because Joe expressed the difficulty of everyone's life so well and yet he was so affirming. "Is this a private fight," Joe would paraphrase an old Irish saying, "or can anyone get in?" And: "It's a wonderful opera, only it hurts." That's an accurate reflection of the experience of being alive and accepting it as it is. It says we all share the suffering, and the sharing without pretense is comforting.

Yes, Joe loved the German culture. And the Japanese culture, and the war years were painful and puzzling for him.

And yes, Joe viewed the Jewish God, Yahweh, and the Old Testament, as a mythology (like all religions) that was the expression of a war-like, punitive culture, as he says in the series, and many would agree. None of that means that Joe was anti-Semitic, which, in fact, as an alumna of Sarah Lawrence and, possibly, because I am Jewish, I have been told many times. I will not dispute it. I can only say that none of it emerged during the twenty-four hours of interview.

I have heard other things about Joe Campbell, in particular, about his conservative politics, not only during the war years but throughout his life, not exactly a sin. And I have heard about his intolerance on several fronts. That he was opinionated I certainly came to see in daily drives to the location for taping. But that is just more of life's mysteries, how one so learned can be, in some ways, so limited; and one so seeing can be so blind. Those, too, are questions that are hardly new, and the series was not intended to be a biography of Joe, nor an exploration of his character, nor was it intended to make him a hero. Joe Campbell was a teacher, passionate about his work and ideas, dedicated to the illumination of the spiritual traditions, a broker, an interpreter, and, to some, a sage.

Joe would be delighted at the final achievement of his life's ambition, which was to spark a wider interest in the riches of spiritual traditions, to release the enormous energy and power that they contain, and to direct attention to their insights and wisdom. He would be excited about the discussion and dialogue about his ideas. He would be amazed, and, I think, dismayed to find the dialogue deformed into a debate, for or against, the glorification of Joe. How sad it is that Joe's posthumous acceptance by the public has caused a friend in life to turn against him in death.

Joan Konner

Graduate School of Journalism  
Columbia University  
New York City

To the Editors:

As Joseph Campbell never hid his politics and prejudices, I wonder why Brendan Gill befriended him in the first place, waiting until he died to target him as his enemy.

The reason he gives is that Campbell's posthumous *Power of Myth* series was a siren song to selfishness. For evidence, he cites Campbell's counsel to "Follow your bliss" and five short nondescript glosses appended thereto.

There is no question but that "follow your bliss" is the six-hour series' most seductive line, but like every aspect of myth it is more multi-valent than the reading Gill allows it. Gill hears it as pointing to Ayn Rand, Ronald



Reagan, and Wall Street yuppies, but if Aristotle was right in arguing that we experience *eudaimonia* (happiness) when we are excelling at what we do best, then "following your bliss" could mean discovering what you are good at doing, and then giving it your all. Plotinus agreed with Aristotle in considering "felicity" the condition of persons who have attained the fullness of their development, and St. Thomas considered joy the noblest human act. Blake exhorted his readers to "arise, and drink your bliss; for everything that lives is holy," and those among Campbell's listeners who were acquainted with Asian thought would have heard in "follow your bliss" an echo of the Vedantic teaching that life's object is to discover the *ananda* (bliss) that is our deepest unconscious.

There is an alternative to Gill's explanation for the success of this series which accords more respect, not only to Moyers and Campbell, but to their audience. (The people I have heard speak of the program have impressed me as being generally intelligent, liberal, and not the sort that is easily lulled into narcissism.) Some consider Rebecca West the best reporter of our century, and when, on his *Journal* back in 1981, Bill Moyers asked her to identify the mood of our times, she answered, "A desperate search for a pattern." Myth provides that pattern. As Joe Campbell never tired of explaining, it is the human way of pouring the hodge-podge of life's experiences into molds—ultimately a single mold—that renders it intelligible and meaningful. To overlook that as the program's appeal—or to downplay it in favor of a doctrinaire political explanation—is to abet the "politicizing of the humanities" which last year's NEH report cited as one of the problems the humanities now face.

This does not excuse the side of Joseph Campbell that I (with Gill) consider shadow. If Gill has light to shed on how we should balance our accounts on people like Wagner, Picasso, Heidegger, and now in ways Joseph Campbell, who bless us with their genius but disillusion us in other ways, it would be good to hear his views.

Huston Smith

Philosophy and Religion  
Syracuse University

#### To the Editors:

Brendan Gill, as an outsider writing about Joseph Campbell, could not have been expected to know what happened at Sarah Lawrence. The truth is that Joe Campbell ran afoul of a strong clique of pro-Stalinist Marxists who exercised marked influence at Sarah Lawrence in those years. (People have forgotten Mary McCarthy's brilliant satire of that in her *Groves of Academe*.) Even during the Hungarian Revolution there were faculty members who were still ideological Stalinists. Joe Campbell's romantic fascism was a function of his political naivete, but also of his violent anti-Communism, aggravated by the

politically repressive atmosphere at Sarah Lawrence, and under-pinned by ancient Hindu orthodoxies revived by Rene Guenon, Marco Pallis and others and also by Spengler's *Decline of the West*, a book by which he, like Henry Kissinger, set much store.

The interesting comparison is with Ezra Pound, who also in the light of his predilection for ancient heroism, so amazingly misunderstood Mussolini. (We should remember, however, that it was people of both the Right and Left who were deceived by the nature of modern totalitarianism. It is hard to think now who was the more foolish—crypto-fascists like Joe Campbell or the Stalinist sympathizers who were his enemies at Sarah Lawrence.)

It is not true that Joe Campbell disliked Freud merely because Freud was Jewish and liked Jung merely because Jung was not Jewish. Joe was politically naive, but he was a thorough student, and he studied both Freud and Jung carefully. He opted for the latter's pro-femalism and integrationism, as against Freud's severer rationalism because it seemed to him that it gave a more coherent understanding of myth. Like many people of strong opinions, Joe could be reckless in expressing his views, but they were not blind prejudices.

As a faculty member at Sarah Lawrence, I often found myself in strong disagreement with Joe Campbell because I had been a conscientious objector in World War II and disliked both Right and Left. But Joe was not the kind of person you could argue with. He preferred the *obiter dicta*, but always with good humor and without personal rancor. The reason he had little sympathy with the Old Testament was because it seemed to him intolerant. But this is just what he objected to in Catholicism too. His vast erudition about Eastern thought and world mythologies (even here he was academically a rebel) gave him an entirely different perspective which simply could not be brought into harmony with the daily newspapers. It was the lack of universality that he deplored in Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

I ran into him by accident in Paris one afternoon sitting at a table at a sidewalk café (he was on edge because that night he and his talented wife Jeanne Erdman were opening their dance play *The Coach With the Six Insides* and the scenery and costumes had not arrived from Switzerland) and he told me that, as a young man when he first came to Paris, he had spent his whole time in the Library and had had no fun at all, and he regretted that now. Paris, he thought, was a place where you should have fun.

Brendan Gill has it wrong about *Follow your bliss*. This was the late Joe Campbell, loosening up, being friendly with hippies, visiting Esalen, doubtless even putting up with



guitar music (nothing to do with Ayn Rand and selfishness—quite the opposite: Rand is all for law and order). *Follow your bliss* was his sentimental side, the romantic idealism, the scholar coming out of the Library, one is tempted to say, like all heroism, perpetually adolescent. And, of course, Americans love it. As for Reagan, I can't remember Joe ever going to the movies.

Roy Finch

Professor Emeritus  
City University/Hunter College  
New York City

#### To the Editors:

My reaction to Brendan Gill's "The Faces of Joseph Campbell" was: So, I'm not the only one who saw the chinks in the hero's armor.

In the early 1970s, I worked with Joe Campbell on his *Mythic Image* at Princeton University Press. It was amazing to me that this man of cosmic vision could harbor such mean-spirited and seemingly unexamined biases against much of humankind. In addition to anti-Semitism, I remember in particular his vexation over blacks' being admitted to Sarah Lawrence.

That Joe Campbell has become a public hero is astonishing. His glibness and his charisma were a mask that concealed a narrow mind.

Carol Wallace Orr

Director  
The University of Tennessee Press  
Knoxville, Tennessee

#### To the Editors:

As long-time subscribers to and appreciators of *The New York Review of Books* as well as friends—both personally and intellectually—of the late Joseph Campbell, we were dismayed and angered by Brendan Gill's vicious attack on Campbell's character and on his work. We were angry because that attack was unfounded. The man Gill describes was not the man whose character and ideas we knew. And we were dismayed because this piece of character assassination was essentially unsupported by any evidence; amazingly, not even anecdotal evidence was offered to support the charges of bigotry.

We came to know Joe quite well over the past twenty years, much better, we suspect, than did Gill. He stayed in our home on numerous occasions when he was lecturing in our end of the world and had several days free

between engagements. During those times we had ample time to share our common interests in mythology, art, James Joyce, and Thomas Mann (Roberta wrote her PhD dissertation on Mann, and didn't always agree with Joe, so the discussions were often vigorous—Joe did speak his mind to defend his positions, but occasionally Roberta convinced him to change his mind). And Joe also shared with us, often in great detail, the problems and fascinations of the book he was currently working on—first *The Mythic Image*, then the multi-volume *Historical Atlas of World Mythology*, and finally that gem of a book, *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space: Metaphor as Myth and as Religion*. And we talked of our own work in Mesoamerican myth and ritual which fascinated him and which he generously encouraged, finally writing, despite the press of his own work, the Introduction to our *Masks of the Spirit: Image and Metaphor in Mesoamerica* which will be released by University of California Press in early November.

On the basis of this extensive experience of the man, we can say unequivocally that the charges levelled against Joseph Campbell are utterly false. Strangely, Gill's article itself seems to bear witness to their falsity since he offers no real support for his accusations, support which one would surely expect to be forthcoming if it existed. The charge of anti-semitism provides an apt example of Gill's *modus operandi*. First he makes the accusation:

Campbell's bigotry had another distressing aspect, which was a seemingly ineradicable anti-Semitism. By the time I came to know him, he had learned to conceal its grosser manifestations, but there can be no doubt that it existed

Then, hard on the heels of this accusation, comes another:

and that it tainted not only the man himself but the quality of his scholarship.

After the double accusation, Gill presents his "evidence." But note how it is done. That evidence relates only to the second charge—that Joe's work was "tainted" by his supposed anti-semitism. By this sleight-of-hand Gill evidently hopes to evade the necessity of demonstrating the truth of the primary accusation. But how does he know Joe was anti-semitic? How does he know that that "taint" was manifested more grossly before he even knew him? It is clear that emotionally loaded language substitutes here for evidence in the classic mode of the character assassin, presumably because the charge of anti-semitism is unupportable.

And Gill's evidence for the second half of the charge? Simply that Joe preferred Jung to Freud. Even the slightest knowledge of Joe's work makes obvious two things. First, Joe did not "despise" Freud; he uses his ideas frequently. Second, his reasons for preferring Jung are rooted in the similarity between his own fundamental assumptions about mythology and those of Jung. In fact, had Gill

been listening more carefully he would have heard this explained quite simply in the second of the Moyers interviews. Joe was discussing the most fundamental idea underlying his work on mythology—that the same motifs appear over and over again throughout the mythology of the world. "How do you explain these similarities?" Moyers asked.

Campbell: There are two explanations. One explanation is that the human psyche is essentially the same all over the world. The psyche is the inward experience of the human body, which is essentially the same in all human beings, with the same organs, the same instincts, the same impulses, the same conflicts, the same fears. Out of this common ground have come what Jung has called the archetypes, which are the common ideas of myths.

Moyers: What are archetypes?

Campbell: They are elementary ideas, what could be called "ground" ideas. These ideas Jung spoke of as archetypes of the unconscious. "Archetype" is the better term because "elementary idea" suggests headwork. Archetype of the unconscious means it comes from below. The difference between the Jungian archetypes of the unconscious are manifestations of the organs of the body and their powers. Archetypes are biologically grounded, whereas the Freudian unconscious is a collection of repressed traumatic experiences from the individual's lifetime. The Freudian unconscious is a personal unconscious, it is biographical. The Jungian archetypes of the unconscious are biological. The biographical is secondary to that.

This is obviously not the place to argue the relative merits of Freud and Jung, but that passage makes clear the incontrovertible fact that Joe's attraction to Jung was based on an attraction to his ideas, not on "bigotry." That this is true should be obvious to anyone even casually familiar with Joe's whole body of work; there is no thinker to whom he is indebted more clearly and admittedly than Jung. And this attraction Joe felt is common on the part of artists and those who work with art who often find Jung's formulations more meaningful than those of Freud. Thus the one shred of "evidence" Gill adduces to support his obviously wild charges is not really evidence for them at all.

But, interestingly, Gill doesn't stop there. He follows this Freud/Jung "example" with the fact that Campbell opposed generally the involvement of artists in urging American entry into the developing war in Europe and that he sought Thomas Mann's approval of his ideas, an approval which was not forthcoming. What are we to make of the placement of this anecdote? Is Gill insinuating that these actions were also rooted in Joe's unproven "bigotry"? Are we to gather that that

"bigotry" led him to a tolerance of "the menace of Hitler and the Nazis" and to the evils resulting in the holocaust? These are terribly serious charges; they cry out for evidence, and Gill provides none. Knowing Joe as we did, we know why that evidence is not presented. *It does not exist.*

Having assailed Joe's character, Gill turns to his work with the same viciousness and lack of principle. All of Joe's ideas, lengthily discussed and supported in his lifetime of writing and speaking are to be dismissed with a wave of the hand. Did he prefer Jung to Freud? Anti-semitism! Did he think Mann's later novels inferior to his earlier ones? Personal pique! Was a substantial part of the nation stimulated intellectually and spiritually by Joe's insights as they poured forth in the Moyers interviews as the unprecedented popularity of those interviews would seem to indicate? Not really! Gill, and Gill alone presumably, has discovered the "covert message that most of his listeners may have been responding to," presumably without knowing it. (It is fascinating in this regard that Gill later in the article castigates Frank Lloyd Wright for lacking respect for the masses, saying that he "wrote sneeringly of the common herd." Perhaps this is where Gill learned his own clear disrespect for the intelligence of the American people, at least that portion of them who watch public television.)

That "covert message" is hidden within Campbell's admonition to "follow your bliss." And the "message," according to Gill, is this: following one's bliss "as Campbell has defined it" means doing "whatever makes one happy" and Campbell thereby "sanctions selfishness on a colossal scale." Rubbish. If Gill had listened to the Moyers interviews or read Joe's works, especially *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* and *Creative Mythology* he would know what Campbell meant by that admonition and what, we believe on the basis of numerous conversations with students, colleagues, and acquaintances, his audience by and large knew Campbell meant. Joe explains it clearly the first time it is brought up in the interviews, about midway through the series (just imagine, all of those millions of viewers had to sit idly and helplessly through all of that preliminary stuff for the first three hours waiting for their "message"!):

Campbell: Remember the last line [of *Babbalanza*]? "I have never done the thing that I wanted to in all my life." That is a man who never followed his bliss. Well, I actually heard that line when I was teaching at Sarah Lawrence. Before I was married, I used to eat out in the restaurants of town for my lunch and dinners. Thursday night was the maid's night off in Bronxville, so that many of the families were out in restaurants. One fine evening, I was in my favorite restaurant there, and at the next table there was a father, a mother, and a scrawny boy about twelve years old. The father said to the boy, "Drink your tomato juice."

And the boy said, "I don't want to."

Then the father, with a louder voice, said, "Drink your tomato juice."

And the mother said, "Don't make him do what he doesn't want to do."

The father looked at her and said, "He can't go through life doing what he wants to do. If he only does what he wants to do, he'll be dead. Look at me. I've never done a thing I wanted to in all my life."

And I thought, "There's Babbitt incarnate."

That's the man who never followed his bliss. You may have a success in life, but then just think of it—what kind of life was it? What good was it—you've never done the thing you wanted to do in all your life. I always tell my students, go where your body and soul want to go. When you have the feeling, then stay with it, and don't let anyone throw you off.

—Moyers: What happens when you follow your bliss?

Campbell: You come to bliss. In the Middle Ages a favorite image that occurs in many, many contexts is the wheel of fortune. There's the hub of the wheel, and there is the revolving rim of the wheel. For example, if you are attached to the rim of the wheel of fortune, you will be either above going down or at the bottom coming up. But if you are at the hub, you are at the same place all the time. That is the sense of the marriage vow—I take you in health or sickness, in wealth or poverty; going up or going down. But I take you as my center, and you are my bliss, not the wealth that you might bring me, not the social prestige, but you. That is following your bliss.

It would be hard to imagine a more direct answer to Gill's accusations than this. No, Joe does *not* mean material success or selfishness by "bliss," and we find it impossible to believe that any significant number of his viewers or readers think he did. Nor did he mean to endorse the right-wing individualism of Reagan and Rand as Gill charges. Rather, he was speaking to the widespread malaise in this country and in the other developed nations. Many today surely feel that beneath our undoubted prosperity, unequally divided as it certainly is, lies a vast gulf of despair, anguish, and meaningless in the lives of even the most successful. While the solution to the unequal division of prosperity may be political, the solution to this other problem, if there is to be a solution, cannot be found in either left or right wing programs. Thus the malaise; thus the recurrent disillusionment with politics; thus the fascination with Joe's ideas. We do not write here to argue the workability of those ideas or the solubility of that complex problem, but rather to suggest that no "covert meaning" is needed to explain the fascination with Joe's ideas.

We could, if there were time and space, answer all of the other charges Gill makes, and we are sorely tempted to take on the cheap "guilt by association" accusation linking Joe to Ayn Rand, of all people. It would be easy to demonstrate how foolish an association that is. But there is no time, and our point is already clear. Finally, our anger at Gill gives way to a kind of sadness. It is truly a pity that a man like Gill, a fine writer and a successful and respected person, must stoop to such an attack on a "friend" as this. Along with that pity comes the sadness that an intelligent man could have watched the six hours of stimulating dialogue between two men as different and intelligent as Bill Moyers and Joseph Campbell—talk that literally stimulated a nation—and come away with only this pettiness. That is truly sad.

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Brendan Gill replies:

Ms. Konner's letter manifests the same failings that the Campbell-Moyers TV series manifests: a spongy softness of reasoning that, because it borders on the evangelical, makes it hard for me to come to grips with it. Ms. Konner reproaches me for having misinterpreted Joe's meaning of the phrase "follow your bliss." Well, Bill Moyers struggled valiantly to secure an interpretation that would not prove circular, and he failed. Joe would use words to mean whatever it pleased him to have them mean, and this practice, which caused me to become impatient with him in conversation, causes me to become impatient with him on TV. In private, his inveterate fuzziness didn't much matter; in public, it does.

I find myself reacting to Ms. Konner as I did to Joe. When she quotes him as saying, "We are so busy doing things of outer value that we no longer know what we intend," how can I keep from asking what the substance of this statement actually amounts to? For example, what does the phrase "outer value" signify? If one is earning a living in order to support one's family, is that an outer value or an inner one? Or both? Or neither? As for "intend," how does that verb relate to what has preceded it in the sentence? Ms. Konner says that Joe meant that we have lost touch not only with our "inner selves," but with that "inner sense of being" which "directs us toward those things that are most meaningful in our lives." But hold on a moment, Ms. Konner: Do you not perceive that your statement is every bit as irritatingly circular as one of Joe's? This "inner sense of being" that you say I possess, and that you imply is something separate from and dif-

ferent from my "inner self," directs me, does it? If it exists and if it does indeed direct me, in what direction am I going? You answer "Toward those things that are most meaningful" in my life. To put it coarsely, say who? What things, what meaningfulness I am left dangling in a no man's land of nonreasoning.

Ms. Konner goes on to say that we are dominated by a popular culture that leave "little validation of our inner life, our souls, you will." In rational discourse I think it is better to leave "inner life" and "our souls, if you will" on the doorstep. Ms. Konner and I probably agree on the nature of our popular culture, but I am far from agreeing that the Campbell-Moyers program gives an outlet to "something inside—call it the soul," and that what she describes as "the electronic hearth" becomes "for six hours a sacred place for the human tribe" to obtain appropriate answers to such questions as "What does my life mean? Why must we kill? How can there be evil if God is good?" It is only fair to Joe to point out that he doesn't attempt to provide answers to these questions. On the contrary, I accurately quote him as saying, "The world is great just the way it is. And you are not going to fix it up. Nobody has ever made it any better."

In the address (over which he took great pains) that Joe delivered at Sarah Lawrence College a couple of years before his death, on the occasion of his receiving an honorary doctorate of humane letters, he stated that, because he despaired of the arguments of theologians and atheists alike, "I have consequently now taken as my historic function in what remains of the twentieth century, to make it known, even to Judeo-Christian monotheists, that *all* mythologies, including their own, are metaphorical." So far, so good. To the question "Metaphorical of what?" he answers that "the connotations of the metaphors of myth are *always* to spiritual realizations potential within the human heart." Again, what have we here? Is a single word of that statement helpful to the human tribe crouched in eager anticipation of enlightenment at the electronic hearth? Ms. Konner would say yes; I would say no.

In the first paragraph of Professor Smith's letter, he wonders why I waited until Joe Campbell died before targeting him as an enemy. This is an infamous imputation, heightened rather than diminished in Professor Smith's second paragraph by his immediately furnishing a reason for my so-called targeting, to wit, that the Campbell-Moyers series was in my view "a siren song to selfishness." Now my article makes clear that, while it was Campbell's misfortune to die before the TV series went on the air, I had not been waiting for him to die; I would have launched precisely the same attack upon the embarrassing shallowness of his thinking had he been alive—indeed, I noted that I had already done so on many occasions over the years. What I deplored in my article was that, thanks to TV, this shallowness was enjoying a great and perhaps long-lasting popular success.

Joe's skittish leapfrogging among myths to substantiate a point that never remained the same point for long—artful dodging that was plainly a source of frustration to his interviewer, Bill Moyers—threatened in my view to supply millions of viewers of his program and readers of his best-selling books with an excuse for “doing their own thing” in the name of following their bliss. Professor Smith brings up the big guns (Aristotle, Plotinus, Blake, Aquinas) to justify Campbell, but the big guns prove to be firing BBs: Aristotle's definition of happiness as the experience of excelling at what we do best is morally and ethically indifferent, as is Blake's urging us to drink our bliss, because “every thing that lives is holy.” Excelling at what we do best? What if what we do best is safe-cracking? As for Blake, ho-hum; everything that lives is *not* holy, by any rational definition of the word (that is, as having attained perfection in a moral sense).

If, as Professor Smith says, Rebecca West identified the mood of our time as “a desperate search for a pattern,” I may just mention that this has been the mood of mankind from the moment we started developing our binary brain. One of our difficulties is that we cannot help finding patterns wherever we look: hence the fictions embodied in myths, in formal religions, in the breathtaking hypotheses of science. The only fictions that elude our suspicions, not to say (sooner or later) our contempt, are those to be found in the arts; embracing the inextinguishable defect of our pattern-seeking and pattern-making, artists cause the defect to become—or seem to become, in our apprehension of their handiwork—a virtue.

Roy Finch, like Huston Smith a professor emeritus of philosophy, is content to defend what he calls Joe's romantic fascism on the grounds of his political naivete. I consider this an unphilosophical cop-out. I have been a close observer of the administration of Sarah Lawrence for well over forty years and am therefore far from being an outsider; indeed, in the distant days of Senator Joe McCarthy, Harold Taylor, then the president of Sarah Lawrence, and I were jointly attacked in the press (by members of the local American Legion post) as Communists. Well, we weren't, and there were plenty of people who managed to criticize Stalinists and Stalinism without being “crypto-fascists like Joe Campbell,” as Mr. Finch puts it.

Mr. Finch says I have it all wrong about Joe's “follow your bliss.” Oddly enough, he then proceeds to say that Joe himself had reached the point of getting it all wrong, as a result of his loosening up in old age and becoming friendly with hippies. Moreover, because Ayn Rand stands for law and order, she couldn't possibly be linked with Joe. Here Mr. Finch has everything doubly wrong, for Joe disliked hippies and was an ardent champion of law and order, especially when the undergraduates at Sarah Lawrence were in a

rebellious state of mind. One of his former students, Jean Lawrence, now an architect practicing in Boston, tells me that Campbell admonished his students at the beginning of her senior year that if they engaged in any political activity he would fail them for the year. Miss Lawrence engaged in political activity and he failed her for the year.

How to deal with the Markmans' massive misfire? They call attention to the fact that they will soon be publishing a book about ancient Mesoamerica, to which Campbell generously supplied an introduction. That being the case, they must surely be aware of a grotesque error that Campbell stumbled into in the course of describing to Moyers the sacred games of the Mayans—a Mesoamerican error that I would have expected them to correct on his behalf. Campbell has been telling Moyers that life and death are two aspects of the same thing (one of Campbell's characteristically undemonstrable formulations); he goes on, “I know of no story in which death is rejected. The Mayan Indians had a kind of basketball game in which, at the end, the captain of the winning team was sacrificed on the field by the captain of the losing team. His head was cut off. Going to your sacrifice as the winning stroke of your life is the essence of the early sacrifice idea.” Moyers is suitably awed: “This idea of sacrifice, especially of the winner being sacrificed, is so foreign to our world. Our ruling motif today is winner take all.” But Burt Alpert of San Francisco has sent me a critical appraisal of the Moyers programs pointing out that Campbell's statement, which comes as such a surprise to Moyers, exactly reverses what Campbell himself had written in *The Mythic Image*, where he describes the losing captain as being executed—in short, just what Moyers and the rest of us would expect.

The Markmans state “unequivocally” that my charging Campbell with anti-Semitism is false. They complain that I provide no evidence of his tolerating “the menace of Hitler and the Nazis” and...the evils resulting in the holocaust,” and that the reason I do not do so is because the evidence does not exist. But the evidence does indeed exist; there are scores of witnesses (for example, Ms. Orr, in the letter printed above) to the anti-Semitic dicta that Campbell was given to uttering. When the astronauts landed on the moon, Joe made the repellent jest to a member of my family, who was a student of his at the time, that the moon would be a good place to put the Jews. The latest addition to this evidence is at hand. A correspondent, Carol Luther of San Anselmo, California, writes to say that she once attended a lecture in which Campbell recounted what he called a popular Indian fable (a favorite of Campbell's in old age), the gist of which was that we are not all mere mild grass-eating goats but, instead, are blood-thirsty, carnivorous tigers, who do well to prey upon whatever lower species of animal makes up our natural diet. When she heard Campbell

tell this story, my correspondent was so upset by its ethical implications that, she writes, “I rose shaking from my chair and shouted, ‘What about the six million who were gassed during World War II?’ In response, Mr. Campbell simply shrugged and said ‘That's your problem.’”

The Markmans evidently think they have me on the ropes when, in correcting my suggestion that “following your bliss” could—not must, but could—lead to acts of unbridled selfishness, they quote a passage in the Campbell-Moyers series that demonstrates exactly how spongy Joe's thinking was and therefore how capable it is of misleading a large TV audience. Joe cites the Wheel of Fortune as a favorite image in the Middle Ages; if you are attached to the rim of the wheel, you are constantly going up or going down but if you are at the hub you are in the same place all the time. (An inaccurate metaphor, but no matter.) This is the sense of the marriage vow, Joe says: in sickness or in health, in wealth or in poverty, I take you going up or going down. Apparently unaware that he is reversing himself, he then instantly adds, “But I take you as my center, and you are my bliss.” In life, one cannot have it both ways; in Joe's preachments, one is constantly having it both ways. In his view of the marriage vow, one is out on the revolving rim of the wheel but one is also simultaneously at the hub. If the Markmans believe that Joe has elucidated “following your bliss” in that passage, and that in doing so he has provided useful instruction to his innumerable listeners, they need not patronize me with their pity; it is they who are in trouble and not I. □

## A Jewish Audience Thrilled by Campbell

To the Editor:

In response to letters about Joseph Campbell's anti-Semitism (Dec. 2):

In December 1985, I attended a lecture Campbell gave at a Jewish center on Manhattan's West Side. The auditorium was packed, a sellout, people sitting on the floor, probably 600. The subject was Exodus and Genesis.

Campbell began by saying he was surprised to be there, and that the audience had come, since he would be telling Jews that two of their greatest books, Exodus and Genesis, were myths. Everyone laughed good-naturedly. Then he held them spellbound for two hours without pause.

I have never heard anyone express greater reverence for or understanding of his subject matter. When he was finished, everyone stood up for a long ovation. The following night he was to lecture in the same place on great Jewish women in the Old Testament. I am sorry I missed that.

Campbell was a passionate ecumenist and one-worlder. That is the work of his life. Sad to say, Brendan Gill, in attacking him, comes off the smaller of the two. I have read Mr. Gill and heard him lecture. He certainly does not share Joseph Campbell's vision for mankind. As a drama critic, I imagine Mr. Gill would be used to flaws in heroes. If heroes didn't have flaws, he would not have made his reputation or his living.

JAMES P. HEWITT

Glen Rock, N.J., Dec. 2, 1986