

24 August 1998

Dear Sam -

You raise an interesting point about high definition TV. They say that with time HDTV's will become more affordable. Will they also become smaller? Or will poor people be able to buy an HDTV with a 5 foot screen for the same price that they pay for a current TV with a $1\frac{1}{2}$ foot screen now? Because the way things are going, poor people will be a lot poorer by 2006.

I have often criticized people, including yourself, for misuse of terms in philosophical discourse. There it is important. But the history of language is full of colloquialisms. Even the greatest classical Greek + Roman writers often used colloquialisms. There's nothing wrong with it. Poetic imprecision is quite all right in poetry + most daily discourse. I remember a time when auto mechanics used to call a car engine a motor, + they were no worse mechanics than they are now. I always thought that black eyed peas were beans. They look like beans. Peanuts are beans, not nuts. But I still call them peanuts, not peabeans (or beanbeans, since they're not peas either, as far as I know). The fact is, *Vigna unguiculata* is a precise scientific term, but pea, bean, + nut are not. People say

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"ladybug" rather than "Our Lady's beetle", but does it really matter? Lightning bug? Nuclear bomb, atom bomb, or the Bomb? Biological warfare or germ warfare? Chemical warfare or gas? It is part of the conservative mentality to insist upon verbal precision just when poetic looseness is appropriate, but to become fuzzy just when trying to defend irrational, illogical political theories.

There is an intentional irony in the use of the term "ethnic cleansing." It has been used mostly (+ first) to describe the actions of Milosevic, who is supposed to be a communist + not believe in the nazi racist idea of ethnic cleansing. Sometimes the meaning is there, but you miss it, + then condemn what you don't understand.

You are expecting teachers to do much more work than they are doing now. Under the current system, teachers don't know their specialty. You would have them teach everything, on the theory that they will learn all subjects better than they now know one. You would have students remain with the same bad teacher throughout their school lives. Even more would go crazy than do now. As I thought you knew, the whole society has to be changed before education can be substantially improved.

for lack of will on the part of the population to make desirable adaptations. Such is evolution.

Sincerely, Erziot

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Natives, on the land where they now live, + are acknowledged to own. Also, the dumping of the toxic waste of non-Native society on Native lands should stop. Also, enough money could be given to the Natives to build their societies according to their own will, as partial restitution, since the loggers + the cattlemen will probably continue to get a free ride on federal lands until, once again, the whole non-Native society has been changed. It will have to be quite a revolutionary change, if we are to see the stone carvings at Mt Rushmore destroyed.

You describe a right as something which is customarily tolerated. Actually, this is the definition of the word "kosher," its opposite being "taboo." Liberals accept tradition, when it is just, rational, and/or aesthetic. Otherwise, they seek to influence what is customary, what is kosher or taboo, in the direction of justice, reason, + aesthetics. We do it primarily by propaganda, sometimes by means of art or propaganda. Sometimes we think it is worth going to war over. Laws tend to change, when liberals have succeeded in convincing the majority that a change in custom is a good idea. Unless of course the population is too passive to demand the change. Then we wait for things to fall apart,