



## The Devil Advocates ~

UNEASY TRUTH FROM DR. SETH C. HAWKINS

### CONNECTIONS

That's the title of a show that you may have encountered when there is no baseball on television and you flip to one of those artsy cable channels. What you find is an aggressively genial Brit who looks and sounds like a file clerk in the Ministry of Expostulation and who goes bird-watching on weekends. He tells you how, because the Gamahuche tribesmen in Papua New Guinea almost overhunted the russet tapir to extinction, Leonardo da Vinci had a bright idea that led to the designated hitter rule. Of course, since it is a half-hour show, there are about twenty other connections, and you get to meet the inventor of the marine chronometer, and find out why he arranged a secret conference between Henry Chadwick and Disraeli off the coast of Labrador.

Well, even if you bought all the tapes of this show, you may not immediately see the connections among (between is only for two) Andrew Cunanan, the Kansas City Royals' manager of the month, and Italian-American bimbos in South Philadelphia. The intrepid St. Paul Pioneer Press recently ran a headline that suffered from ambiguositas:

#### CUNANAN TIPS SWAMP AUTHORITIES

Wishing to know what misleading information he gave them, I made the Soucheravian move of phoning the Florida Swamp Authority. As soon as the Marlins' game was over, a fellow by the improbable name of Harvey Feinberg returned my call, and allowed as how no one at the Swamp Authority believed that Cunanan was hiding in any of their swamps, because he was a snazzy dresser and a fastidious kind of guy. Since they had just played a softball game in the State Bureaucrats' League against the Art Deco Commission, they got some expert advice from a cross-dressing double-play combination that you would not want to see what brackish water would do to a Versace gown.

However, that is not even the headline of the month. Now, you know that a muser is someone who muses, and when he does so without beforehandly propitiating his muse, confusion may result. So, when Tony Muser was musing in the manner of Sparky Anderson, out loud in front of journalists, he revealed his fantasy that greenhorn third baseman Shane Halter might become one of the best at his position some day. The Kansas City Star felt the need to produce an article on these ravings, with the headline shown here, at right, for your semiotic edification . . .

MUSER SEES  
HALTER TOPS  
IN HIS DREAMS

As which of us has not? The second headline, that is. It also brings us to the event voted by the students of Sports Broadcasting (one of the finest courses ever taught at the swamp-adjacent Southern Connecticut State University) as the Best MLB Promotion of All Time. Now, those with shortened memories will have difficulty associating the word "Best" with the phrase "The Philadelphia Phillies," but they outdid even the brilliancies of Veck pare with Halter Top Night, a

confection of the Travolta Disco Era in which each female-type person entering Veterans' Stadium that night was given a bright yellow halter top emblazoned with the slogan of long-

time team sponsor Tastykake (those fake Twinkies mistakenly studied by geologists as natural phenomena): "All the Good Things Wrapped Up in One." The report from the COM 355 field trip was that, given the behavioral nature of South Philly Broads (a technical term, so you feminists can either calm down right now, or go home and do the dishes), and the shortage of restroom facilities, not all of the beneficiaries changed clothes in private, causing Richie Ashburn to drop his pipe whilst reaching for binoculars, and Harry Kalas to exclaim the then-inexplicable prophetic phrase: "Mickey Mor-an-dini!!"

Coming soon: the link between Hank Greenberg and Mongolian yurts, and how it affected cartoonist Bo Grace.

### CORRECTIONS

Your Satanic Columnist regrets to report a case of tampering. It seems that a mysterious notice was appended to Dr. Hawkins' column last month. Since, in its fewer than 25 words, it managed to contain almost as many factual errors as half an inning with Harry Caray, since we are a research organization striving for accuracy, and since it appears to be a calumnious attempt to discredit the Esteemed Editor by making him seem petty and vindictive, we are compelled to print the following numerous corrections [as Goldilocks' telegram said, "BEAR WITH US"]:

1. Dr. Hawkins is a satirist (such as Alexander Pope, H.L. Mencken, Johnathan Swift), not a mere "humorist" (such as Erma Bombeck, Dave Barry, Art Buchwald). Note from the examples that satirists are much higher in the evolutionary order, as in the difference between John Montgomery Ward and Oil Can Boyd.

2. Anyone labelling Dr. Hawkins as "right-wing" has clearly failed to do the most elemental biographical research in readily available sources on such a nationally famous public policy figure. Dr. Hawkins favors expansive First Amendment rights, abortion, gun control, pornography, reduced defense spending, legalization of prostitution, government funding for historic preservation, and consumer protection legislation. He opposes school prayer, flag-burning laws, and other attempts to legislate morality. He has done political work for Mario Cuomo and Andy Dawkins. His two favorite U.S. senators are liberal Democrats Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Joe Lieberman. Boy, that's a real right-winger, eh? Granted, he does find environmentalists, social engineering, political correctness, Ted Kennedy, Dr. Wellstone, and chicken-little cries of "racism" to be absurd, but so would anyone with common sense.

3. Using the Rev. Dr. Falwell as the example in that lame "joke" shows how out of touch its perpetrator is with current reality. Anyone who has watched Bill Maher's excellently balanced satirical talk show has seen Falwell in the 1990s as a benign, genial, responsible panelist. In fact, the only terroristic bully (who would not let other panelists even speak) on that show was President Bubba's campaign hack, James Carville. If one is looking for an example of an unintentional right-wing humorist, the obvious choice is columnist Cal Thomas, fool at large.

4. Finally, as William F. Buckley Jr. said: "Dr. Hawkins only appears to march alone, and for a short time. That is because he is at the forefront of right reasoning, and others must hasten to keep up with him." Thanks, Bill, and I hope you still have pleasant memories of our rhetorically sesquipedalian chats. As someone said: don't mess with rhetoricians.

### CONVECTIONS

As in, convection of hot air. Those who have seen recent episodes of This Week in Baseball will note the comfortable emergence of Ozzie Smith as host, and that he differs from Mel Allen in being sober, agile, and alive. As for Warner Fussell, he was an android, you know, and perhaps a virtual-reality one. Ozzie, however, has made himself the enemy of rhetoricians and other sensible thinkers everywhere with his tag phrase: "well done is better than well said." Now, he's not as guilty as a mime (which rhetoricians are allowed to kill on sight, using a gun with a silencer, of course), the absolute zero of enemies of rhetoric. And we know that Ozzie meant well, in that he probably had in mind braggarts who do not produce on the field. But in many situations, well done isn't better than well said. The Holocaust was a very efficiently carried out action. The correct combination of well-said speeches might have prevented it. To prefer well-done over well-said is to prefer nicely crafted violence of the FLO and the IRA over the careful words of diplomacy, to prefer bullies over peacemakers, to prefer the banality of modern architecture over the theories of John Ruskin, and to prefer the actions of Albert Belle over the poetry of John Milton . . . and so on. Ozzie, you're a nice guy and a future Hall of Famer, but shut up until you can know what you're talking about and can say it as well as you did what you did at shortstop.