

Pioneer mentality

Here on the UO campus, the Bible holding Pioneer Mother statue embodies the educational tradition of the U.S. and UO's own administrative policy attitude toward American Indians. Pioneer is derived from the French word "ponier," meaning foot soldier. Moreover, on the back of the statue an inscription ending in "... but to us there lives that spirit of conquering peace which I wish posterity to remember." Please recall, that it is Indian people Europeans have systematically attempted to conquer on these lands.

The inscription on the Pioneer Mother statue, indicates that this country's traditional university policy towards living Indian cultures may be more deeply rooted than most of us are led to examine. In fact, an example of the origins of pioneer thinking is not only founded in Western European values and historical interpretations of the world, but also is based on the ground rules of previous Christian doctrines.

In 1493 Pope Alexander VI made the Inter Cetera Bull proclamation which has become a customary attitude towards the "New World" and native people. In part, the proclamation reads "... this assuredly ranks highest, that in our times especially the Catholic faith and the Christian religion be exalted and everywhere increased and spread, that the health of souls be cared for and that barbarous nations be overthrown and brought to the faith itself." This statement was merely a pious go-ahead for the attempted annihilation of traditional native cultures. Pioneers and missionaries, we find, were often the footsoldiers of this and many other examples of Western European superiority attitudes.

When the new colonies built universities, these attitudes of destined conquest were unavoidably institutionalized. The Christian perception equated Western European social forms and values as integral to the conversion of "barbarous nations." Thus, European Christians tried to force Indians being "brought to the faith" to adopt white ways and attitudes. Indians were to go to universities and learn to be Western Europeans, or so it was hoped. This conversion equation is inherent in UO's policies denying Indians a right to equal but different cultural-academic education. Why?

Today in 1976, the facts of Indian needs are glaringly revealed in Indian country. American Indians rank lowest in this country by every possible poverty measurement. Since Wounded Knee 1973, almost two dozen Indians have been murdered on Pine Ridge Reservation. The government, however, refuses to investigate these and other charges of brutality. Indian children are being taken from their homes by self-righteous Mormons and supposedly well-intentioned Christians. These Indian children are then raised contrary to the cultural birthright given to them by the Creator.

Also true of Indian needs today, is the fact that too often Indian programs have become public relations firms for white bureaucracies without actual changes occurring in the Indian communities.

The above situations are a direct result of the aftermath of Western European conquest moves. So that Indians themselves may rebuild the tribal communities, the Western Europeans in the United States must come to terms with the reality of American Indian legal and moral rights; not as whites wish them to be, but as those rights truly stand. Accordingly, it is now time for American Indian tribes and peoples to be allowed and encouraged to use U.S. universities to develop self-determined and culturally different academic programs, which supplement and enrich the present process of education.

This University's curriculum has only a Western European and Christian context, which is fine for Western Europeans and Christians. However, in light of present Indian needs, and previous conquest attitudes now known to be immoral for many reasons, are not Indians accorded an equal right to education within our own cultural and religious context? If not, then why?

The UO must recognize the legal and moral responsibility it has, to finally break from the tradition of the Inter Cetera Bull and encourage Indians to determine their own academic program on this campus, responsive to Indian communities and cultural needs.

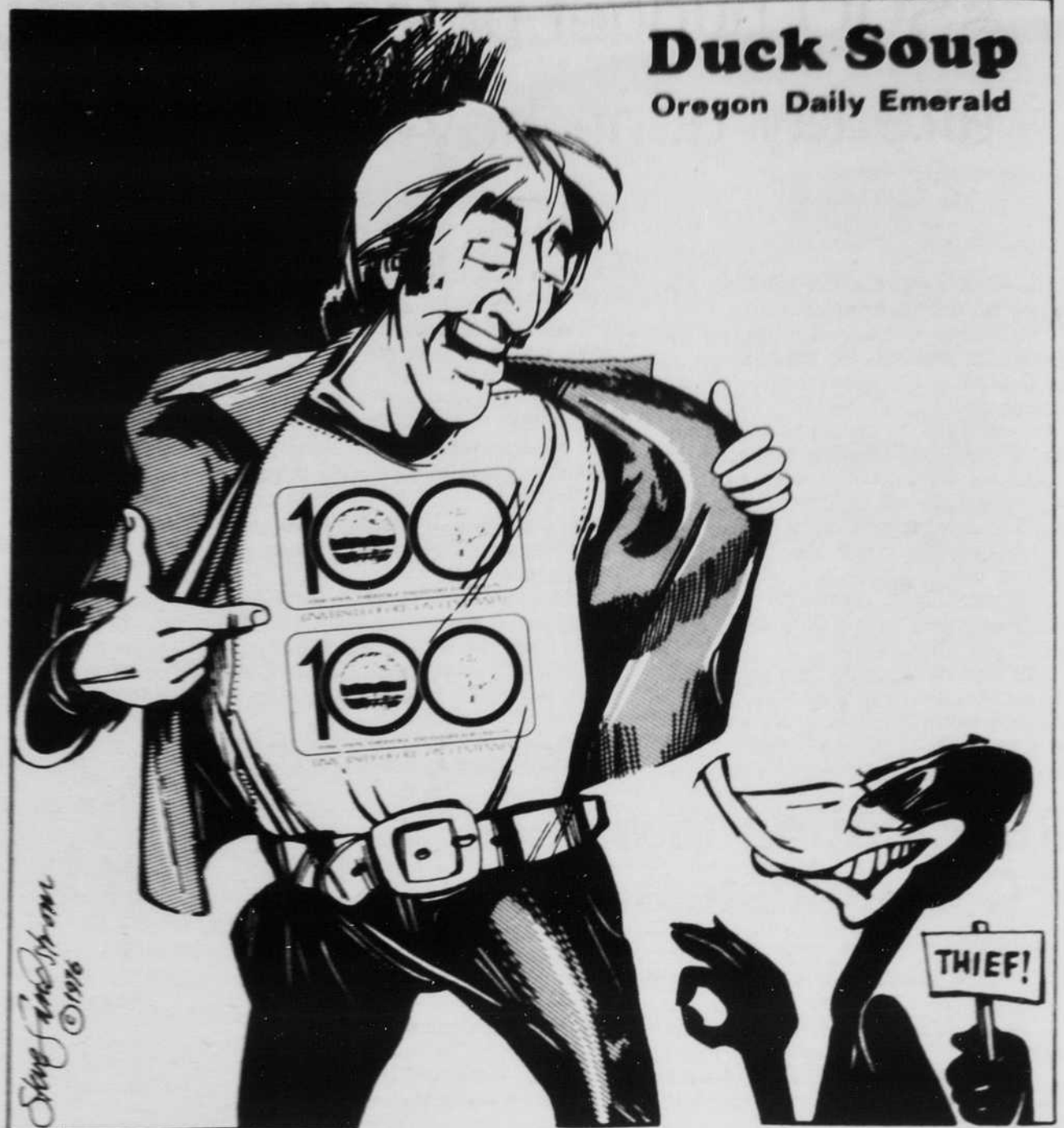
What we don't often realize, is that both the Pioneer Mother and Explorer statues are monuments to the lack of conscience historically indicated towards Indian needs in this country. The UO has not positively responded to what continues to be denied to Indians by the Western European social and religious attitudes of "Manifest Destiny" and of Indian cultural inferiority. We can no longer ignore the need for Indian cultural education in this University and continue to perpetuate the Western European domination of Indian tribes and peoples in this country.

As the new president, Dr. Boyd's moral position on these points and questions formally answered in this paper would be appreciated. We as the academic community must begin a freshly clarified and articulate response to Indian needs in this University.

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Duck Soup

Oregon Daily Emerald



Like it?...An' I got curtains at home to match!

Letters —

No laughing

Satire is for laughs, of course, and Robert Liberty's modest proposal for secession (ODE, Jan. 9th) was as successful as most. The object of his satire was, I suppose, the James G. Blainers, and they probably had it coming. It would be unfortunate though if some of the satirical reductionism rubbed off on separatist causes in general. Many of those are very serious matters indeed.

The question of a peculiarly Oregonian "culture" is at the very least debatable but the cultures of Brittany and Occitania (southern France) were linguistically distinct and artistically rich centuries before Lewis and Clark—or Christopher Columbus, for that matter. I mention these because I happen to have some acquaintance with them, but other such movements must be similarly well-founded. Tyranny that has been around long enough becomes the standard of normality and those who question it may appear comical as well as subversive. Ridicule is not a bad weapon against non-conformity. Dialectical speech or even a regional accent is still good for an easy laugh. But it isn't funny when Basques, French Canadians, Bretons or Occitans are given short shift economically because of their origins or find their traditions submerged under slickly packaged and vacuous industrialized life-styles.

The bourgeois, capitalist and later industrial Paris-centered society has done its best to homogenize French culture by military force, religious persecution, "education" and television. Breton separatists and others like them are not "folklore" freaks gone wild; many are looking to their own traditions as a resource for humanizing consumer civilization. Seen from this angle

separatism can be a fruitful subversion. In any case, it is no laughing matter.

Louis Olivier
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Naive no more

In regard to the tabling of the McArthur Court Board proposal at Wednesday's University faculty meeting, I must apologize for my naivete. I actually expected that after four years as a student at Oregon and two years as a member of the Incidental Fee Committee, I might be granted the privilege of speaking at a faculty meeting. I should have known (as was later explained to me) that it was "bending the rules too far" to allow an ordinary student to speak.

I have only spent 13 months researching and working on the Mac Court Board proposal, which I co-sponsored. Oh, yes, I'm naive or maybe it is that student participation at this University is a farce. Can it be that the University president and his administration are afraid of what students have to say? Can it be that they aren't really here for the students' good at all?

Well, I'm not naive anymore. Pres. Boyd's accusations during the faculty meeting that my history of Mac Court was distorted was nothing short of a distortion. It takes a lot of courage to attack someone and not even allow him to speak in response. The president further accused the ASUO of "mischief." I would think his actions at the meeting went far beyond mischief to malice.

I find it totally unacceptable that I should pay tuition, part of which would eventually find its way to this man's salary. So, although it had been my intent to attend University classes this term, I have decided against it. In addition, I resign my position as vice-chair of the Incidental Fee Committee. This will give me more time to assist the ASUO in its campaign to

make the athletic department more representative of the students and the University community.

I wish to thank the students and faculty who supported our effort and those that voted to let us speak in response to our opponents' misrepresentations. I also wish to thank Prof. Tattersall and Dr. Ray Hawk for their friendliness and advice. I especially wish to thank co-sponsor Don Chalmers for all he has taught me while we have worked together.

Dave Donley
IFC vice-chair

Stifled

After reading of the Mac Court board proposal's defeat, I could not help but remember this passage from Jerry Farber's book, "The Student as Nigger": "If students and teachers ran their own schools, it would do more for democracy than all the government classes ever taught. But it would have to be just that: true participation in running the schools. Not those little make-believe student governments which govern in about the same way that baby's toy steering wheel drives daddy's car. Not even anything like those 'faculty senates,' which retain the right to create college policy as long as they don't abuse that right by exercising it."

I can understand why the vast majority of students here are so apathetic about student government. Student government has very little significance when the administration has the ultimate power to pass or eliminate a student government proposal. In this sense, student government at the UO has been exempt from making "major and meaningful" decisions affecting this institution. It is stifled by the administration.

David Widling
Business