from Phyllis Sch1afly

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Who is the Cultural Elite?

Vice President Dan Quayle has upset a lot of people by his criticisms of the “cultural elite.” I watched a television interviewer hammering him last week. “You were born into a wealthy family,” she said; "you yourself must be part of the elite.”

Quayle smiled and said, no, he was just a midwestern boy with ordinary midwestern values. The TV reporter persisted: “who are the cultural elite? Name them!” Quayle responded, “They know who they are.”

Quayle was right not to name names. The inquiring reporter was laying a trap for him, and he refused to fall into it.

The “cultura1 elite” is not synonymous with the social elite, the financial elite, or the political elite, or the academic elite. The cultural elite that Quayle criticized consists of the influential leftists in our society who presume to tell us what to think, what to admire, what to spend our money on, and how to act.

The targets of Quayle's attacks are particularly piqued because he fingered them with a phrase of praise rather than scorn. “Cultural elite" is not a pejorative. The yelping by the targets of his criticism, however, has turned it into an epithet.

Quayle could have called then “nattering nabobs of negativism,” or “pointy-headed intellectuals,” or “power-hungry purveyors of permissiveness and playboy lifestyles,” or just plain leftwing radicals in the media and the movies, the arts and academia.

But he didn't. E1ite is a nice word -- not exactly friendly, but, on the other hand, not unfriendly. It sounds important. It evokes respect, even envy.

My dictionary gives two relevant definitions for elite: “the choice or best of a group or class of persons” and “a group of persons exercising the major share of authority or influence within a larger organization.” That doesn’t sound derogatory, does it?

The term “cultural” is more nuanced. Again, looking to the dictionary we read: “that which is excellent in the arts, manners, etc.” or “what is generally regarded as excellent in arts, letters, manners, scholarly pursuits, etc.”

The cultural elite are angry at Quayle because they don’t want to be known as a “group or class of persons,” they don’t want Americans to realize that they “exercise influence,” they do want to be “generally regarded as excellent,” and they don't want us to know that they are using their influence to undermine and change our morals and manners, arts and academic pursuits.

The cultural elite consists of the television networks, the newspapers with national pretensions, the movie industry, the rock music empires, the tenured radicals on university campuses, wealthy leftwing foundations, those chic sources that pompously presume to tell us what is “art” and which immoral lifestyles we must tolerate, plus those who pander to the above and pick our pockets to finance them with our tax dollars.

The most influential segment of the cultural elite was identified as the “media elite” ten years ago when pollsters S. Robert Lichter and Stanley Rothman published an extraordinary in-depth survey in the respected journal Public Opinion. Their findings were based on hour- long interviews with 240 journalists and broadcasters at the most influential media outlets: CBS, NBC, ABC, PBS, the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, Time, and Newsweek.

The survey showed that the media elite are strong supporters of sexual permissiveness: 90 percent agree that abortion should be legal, 54 percent believe that adultery is not wrong, 76 percent believe that homosexuality is not wrong, and 85 percent believe that homosexuals should be permitted to teach in public schools.

The secular or anti-religious outlook of the media elite is their most striking characteristic. The survey showed that 50 percent say they have no religious affiliation whatsoever, 86 percent admit that they seldom or never attend religious services, and only 8 percent go to church or synagogue weekly

Politically, the media elite always, by a large margin, support the most liberal presidential candidate. They even voted 81 percent for George McGovern in 1972. So, the cultural elite tell us that serial marriages and illegitimate births are in, two-parent families are out. we must tolerate ACT-UP, but destroy Operation Rescue with RICO and police brutality.

We must enjoy tax-funded blasphemous depictions of Christ, but express outrage at a privately-financed creche on the city square. Silent prayer must be banned from the classroom, but parents who object to their young children being subjected to classroom discussions of sexual acts, complete with pictures, videos, and plastic models, must be branded as “censors.”

Thanks to Dan Quayle, the cultural elite, with all its pomposities and peculiarities, has become a topic of controversy. That’s the first step toward repudiating their influence on the real American culture.