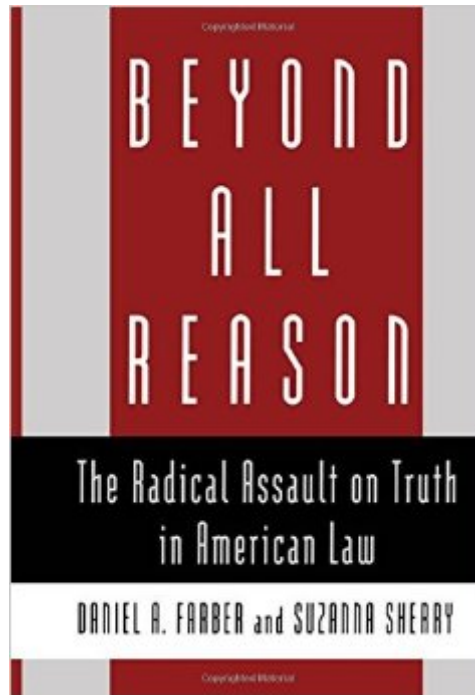


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Beyond All Reason: The Radical Assault On Truth In American Law



Synopsis

Would you want to be operated on by a surgeon trained at a medical school that did not evaluate its students? Would you want to fly in a plane designed by people convinced that the laws of physics are socially constructed? Would you want to be tried by a legal system indifferent to the distinction between fact and fiction? These questions may seem absurd, but these are theories being seriously advanced by radical multiculturalists that force us to ask them. These scholars assert that such concepts as truth and merit are inextricably racist and sexist, that reason and objectivity are merely sophisticated masks for ideological bias, and that reality itself is nothing more than a socially constructed mechanism for preserving the power of the ruling elite. In *Beyond All Reason*, liberal legal scholars Daniel A. Farber and Suzanna Sherry mount the first systematic critique of radical multiculturalism as a form of legal scholarship. Beginning with an incisive overview of the origins and basic tenets of radical multiculturalism, the authors critically examine the work of Derrick Bell, Catherine MacKinnon, Patricia Williams, and Richard Delgado, and explore the alarming implications of their theories. Farber and Sherry push these theories to their logical conclusions and show that radical multiculturalism is destructive of the very goals it wishes to affirm. If, for example, the concept of advancement based on merit is fraudulent, as the multiculturalists claim, the disproportionate success of Jews and Asians in our culture becomes difficult to explain without opening the door to age-old anti-Semitic and racist stereotypes. If historical and scientific truths are entirely relative social constructs, then Holocaust denial becomes merely a matter of perspective, and Creationism has as much "validity" as evolution. The authors go on to show that rather than promoting more dialogue, the radical multiculturalist preferences for legal storytelling and identity politics over reasoned argument produces an insular set of positions that resist open debate. Indeed, radical multiculturalists cannot critically examine each others' ideas without incurring vehement accusations of racism and sexism, much less engage in fruitful discussion with a mainstream that does not share their assumptions. Here again, Farber and Sherry show that the end result of such thinking is not freedom but a kind of totalitarianism where dissent cannot be tolerated and only the naked will to power remains to settle differences. Sharply written and brilliantly argued, this book is itself a model of the kind of clarity, civility, and dispassionate critical thinking which the authors seek to preserve from the attacks of the radical multiculturalists. With far-reaching implications for such issues as government control of hate speech and pornography, affirmative action, legal reform, and the fate of all minorities, *Beyond All Reason* is a provocative contribution to one of the most important controversies of our time.

Book Information

Hardcover: 208 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (October 30, 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0195107179

ISBN-13: 978-0195107173

Product Dimensions: 8.2 x 0.9 x 5.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (11 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,012,876 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #71 in [Books > Law > Legal Theory & Systems > Natural Law](#) #143 in [Books > Law > Law Practice > Research](#) #284 in [Books > Law > Ethics & Professional Responsibility](#)

Customer Reviews

For the last few years, I've been intrigued by educated people, not trendy 19 year olds from whom you'd expect such behavior but older people, with as many letters after their names as in them, being enamored by the "New Age." Tarot cards, I Ching, UFOs, you name it. This "age" is not really "new." Nor is it, obviously, the abode of the less educated. Psycho pioneer Carl Jung was a true believer, and, as I've indicated, there seems to be more of the educated than less educated who subscribe to the practices today. But in the late 20th century, a time in which our intellectual know-how has brought about some remarkable achievements, one would hope that asking "What is your sign?" might be a mere reminiscence. Well, after reading volumes to try to understand what attracts people to such foolishness, I've run across a few volumes that expose where this New Age anti-intellectualism has crossed paths with politics and law. This is one of those volumes. No, I'm not suggesting that the "radical multiculturalists" are advocating astrology. ("You are a Virgo, so less inclined to misogyny or racism.") But they are--and quite rabidly--anti-intellectual, or, as the authors call them, anti-Enlightenment. You see, reason and objectivity, these "radicals" say, are the patterns--or hangups?--of us white, male oppressors. The authors, law professors, introduce the book well. For example, they start by saying they're not claiming that, "We're bigger victims than you are." They set a base for their arguments, which are many and powerful. They examine a history of radical multiculturalists whom they distinguish from their predecessors, e.g., Michel Foucault and, later, the Critical Legal Studies (CLS) "scholars."

I like the last two sentences of the authors' Conclusion on pg.143: "In short, we must always be

open to dialogue. But even pragmatists . . . must sometimes stand on principle." This seems fair to me. Too many I fear, believe that negotiation means to meet somewhere in the middle. I don't. However I believe that my side can listen to and consider the other side's arguments to see if anything has changed before saying No. According to radical multiculturalists stand fact and reason on their heads in their efforts to remake the world into their version of a better place. They put idealism forward and then insist that anything that does not accomplish it in society must be overturned no matter that such bending goes against truth and reason. Example: It doesn't matter that Twana Brawley (sp?) was proven to have cooked up her claim of maltreatment by whites. I suppose that her defenders would say that her claimed injustices COULD HAVE happened and therefore she should not be punished for her devious conduct of lying. Instead people should consider her claims to have merit. I find nothing to yield to when confronting radical multiculturalism as set out in this book. I know that my fellow octogenarians usually resist change. I believe this resistance is because we usually find no good reason for it. But in the case of American law taking notice of faddish, modern concepts that go against nature as does most or all of radical multiculturalism, all reasonable adults should heed and benefit from the wisdom of experienced old persons who are not in our dotage. Some say that it is unfair to exclude or downgrade certain favored concepts advanced by minorities (into which I place women for purposes of this opinion).

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