

*Patti Davis writes about the impact of the dearth of polite discourse.*

1. I lost a job the other day. The people who had hired me figured out that I support stem-cell research (I don't know what took them so long) and pulled the plug on a lecture engagement for which they had vigorously pursued me. The group, which opposes such research, had booked a date with me in November to speak on the same topics I have been dealing with in lectures for years now – losing a loved one to Alzheimer's, navigating the treacherous waters of grief – without any explicit mention of stem-cell research or, in fact, any kind of medical treatment. The lecture was to coincide with the publication of my next book, 'The Long Goodbye'. 5
2. Getting the news that I was cancelled was one of those moments when one realises that the personal really is political. I certainly support anyone's prerogative to hire or not hire whomever they choose, and I definitely don't want to work for someone who doesn't want me. But when people aren't permitted to speak because their opinions are considered inappropriate, it's a sign that something is amiss beneath the surface, particularly in this case, when those opinions have nothing to do with the job itself. 10
3. Coincidentally, I had already been thinking a great deal about the vitriol that has become so pervasive in this country. In years past, there used to be civilized discourse; there are probably children now who don't even know what that is. Wasn't that the practice of men in powdered wigs and wooden teeth? It seems a terribly antiquated notion. We are now a modern, progressive, impatient society; we seem to not have time for discourse, or even tolerance. We'd rather lash out harshly and dismiss those who disagree with us. It saves time and is easier on the brain. 15 20
4. Performers like Linda Ronstandt are fired from gigs because of an opinion expressed on the stage; people who are angry at Bruce Springsteen's political views want to boycott his music. We all know how much criticism the Dixie Chicks suffered when Natalie Maines, a member of the band, spoke against George Bush's invasion of Iraq. What became of calm, civilized disagreements, acceptance of the fact that we don't always agree with each other? When did things turn so ugly, and when did anger reach this kind of crescendo? 25
5. Even all the nastiness over John Kerry's war record can be put into this messy category. Whatever you believe about what Kerry did or did not do in Vietnam, one thing is clear: the men who are denouncing his record, his wounds, his medals, are angry about the very public anti-war stance he took 33 years ago. It's not just currently expressed opinions that can put you on the firing line; in this new climate of vengeance, there is no statute of limitations. 30
6. Such attacks on seemingly unpopular opinions skid across a thin ice surface because they bring us to the subject of free speech. If you look around, the cherished idea of free speech is starting to look a bit endangered – it has practically become a punishable offence. The Federal Communications Commission has decided that the airwaves are going to be severely monitored and regulated, and violators will be fined into bankruptcy. Political demonstrators are herded like cattle into pens and anti-Bush picketers are being questioned by police and Secret Service agents if they dare show up at one of the president's speeches. There is a pattern here, and it should frighten us. We can speak freely, but it might cost us our life savings, and it might get us questioned by the authorities. 35 40
7. Remember when we were kids and one of the most common comebacks was, "Hey, it's a free country!" I haven't done a survey of schoolyards, but I doubt kids say that as much now. They probably know that it might not be entirely true. 45

8. Weeks ago, I pulled from my bookshelf my tattered high-school copy of George Orwell's novel '1984'. I started looking through it again, reacquainting myself with the country of Oceania, the Thought Police, Big Brother and the slogan of the Party: "War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength". Published in 1949, the book has always stood as a chilling glimpse into a future stripped bare of every freedom, including one's thoughts. "Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past," Orwell wrote. 50
9. I remember a long time ago, crouching at the end of a hallway, eavesdropping on the cocktail hour of my parents' dinner parties. I wanted to know what grown-ups talked about, what their world was like. Among the sounds of ice clinking in glasses and the trill of occasional laughter, I could always find my father's voice. Often, he would be discussing politics and issues of the day with others. It was clear to me, even though I didn't understand the substance of what they were discussing, that not everyone agreed with everyone else. But there were no raised voices, no angry words. This was apparently how adults talked about very important things – in civil, understated tones. And then they went into the dining room and had dinner. 55 60
10. I also remember believing that the bad people in the world were ultimately neutralised by the good people. It might take a while, but it was the way life worked. 'To Kill a Mockingbird' was my favourite book, as well as my favourite film, and I believed that there were men like Atticus Finch around, who would always take the higher road. I don't know where that little girl in me went, who had such a hopeful view of things. Sadly, I guess she grew up into a woman who has figured out that too often the loudest, angriest people triumph. I think we're tired – collectively – we've been worn down by fear, by grief. Our country was attacked, and we keep being warned of more attacks. We see all this anger churning around us, and we feel helpless to stop it. I think most of us long for civilised discourse, an easy exchange of opinions; we're just too tired to dig in and insist upon it. How are we going to explain to future generations that our freedom to express ourselves without impunity got lost along the way because we didn't have the energy to defend it? 65 70 75
11. I had one moment of hope recently. When I went to Barnes & Noble Bookstore to replace my worn copy of '1984', the book was sold out. It's required reading for students, and there had been a run on Orwell's novel. Maybe a new generation of readers will be so frightened by the book that they'll work harder to make sure it doesn't become a reality. 80

*Adapted from Newsweek*

Read the passage and then answer all the questions which follow below. Note that up to fifteen marks will be given for the quality and accuracy of your use of English throughout this paper.

For  
Examiner's  
Use

**Note:** When a question asks for an answer **IN YOUR OWN WORDS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE** and you select the appropriate material from the passage for your answer, you must still use your own words to express it. Little credit can be given to answers which only copy words or phrases from the passage.

1. What does the author imply by her comment in the brackets (line 2)?

---

---

---

[2]

2. In the second paragraph, how did the author react to losing her job? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

---

---

---

---

[2]

3. What is the author expressing in the rhetorical questions (lines 26-28)?

---

---

---

---

[2]

4. Explain the author's use of the metaphor in line 35.

---

---

---

---

[2]

5. What aspect of the book offers 'a chilling glimpse into the future' (line 52)? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

---

---

---

[1]

6. What is the author's purpose in providing an account of the cocktail hour of her parents' dinner party in paragraph 9?

---

---

---

---

[2]

7. Explain the change in the hopeful little girl's 'view of things' (line 69). **Use your own words as far as possible.**

---

---

---

---

---

[2]

8. What two reasons does the author give for losing our 'freedom to express ourselves without impunity' (line 75)? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

---

---

---

---

---

[2]

9. Explain why the writer felt hopeful when the book '1984' was sold out (line 78). **Use your own words as far as possible.**

---

---

---

---

---

[2]

**10.** Using material from paragraphs 3–6 of the passage, summarise what the author has to say about discourse and its effects.

Discourse is characterised by a few distinct features. Firstly,

[8]

11. In this article, Patti Davis writes about the dearth of polite discourse and its impact on society. How far would you agree with her observations? Relate your opinions to your own society.

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

For  
Examiner's  
Use

[10]