

THE SOUTHERN CROSS, Sunday 9, 2000  
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## USA badly misjudged

**From Professor DAVID BROKENSHA, Cape Town:**

I ALWAYS look forward to Owen Williams' sage comments but I was disappointed to note (March 19) that he quoted, apparently approvingly, "a distinguished professor" saying "that everything bad in contemporary life had its origin in the United States."

Having lived in the US for more than a quarter of a century, I know that this statement is grossly inaccurate. The US is notable for its diversity. I know that my own field, higher education, displays some of the best universities in the world, alongside some at the bottom of the league. This diversity is also found in the Catholic Church,

American literature-and Owen Williams was writing about standards in English-similarly offers examples from both ends of the scale.

Owen Williams hails the- French Academy as helping to "ensure the relative purity and stability of the language," yet the French are constantly bemoaning the anglicisation of their language. I doubt any academy can effectively control linguistic changes.