



Excuse Us for Living

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Did you ever wonder how the Trojans could have been so unwary as to let that giant wooden horse pass through their gates and into the heart of their city without careful inspection? Warnings arise from different sources, but something always prevents the Trojans from heeding them. The Greeks had sailed away, of course, or so they made the Trojans think, and Helen, the original trophy wife, remained in Troy. It must have seemed to the Trojans that a kind of victory had been secured, that they had endured the worst a city could endure and yet were still standing after ten years of siege, albeit with significant losses to themselves.

I've heard it said, too, that Troy may have had a special relationship to horses; their selfless hero Hector, now dead, his body mutilated, at the hands of the self-centered Greek champion Achilles, was known by the epithet "tamer of horses" (actually the last, heartbreaking words of the *Iliad*). Was the wooden horse not a kind of homage to their city, perhaps in the way the image of the Statue of Liberty in Tiananmen Square honored the United States?

Come to think of it, what about the Trojan Horses the academic world has incautiously allowed inside its gates over the past half century or so—women's studies, black studies, gay studies, queer studies, ethnic studies, postcolonial studies, environmental studies, and so on in an expanding list, encompassing diversity, multiculturalism, sustainability, and more. It could be argued that these things were advanced at first according to our values—equity, fairness, tolerance, openness, justice, generosity. Once inside, however, their treacherous nature unfolded, undercutting genuine scholarship and the traditional Western heritage of great works, and eventually stifling academic freedom and healthy debate. Well, didn't President Reagan warn, quoting a wise unknown person who prophesied that if fascism ever comes to America, it will come in the name of liberalism?

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As recently as 2004, at the Democratic National Convention, Illinois State Senator Barack Obama lit up the country with his rousing keynote address, a colorful rendition of Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream. "Well, I say to them tonight," Obama challenged those who saw America as divided, "there is not a liberal America and a conservative America—there is the United States of America. There is not a black America and a white America and Latino America and Asian America—there's the United States of America." The audience and the country responded with cheers and put the unknown state senator into the White House four years later.

Of course, during that same period, Obama was absorbing the anti-Semitic and anti-American diatribes of the Reverend Jeremiah Wright during his Sunday worship, so perhaps 2004 was a kind of cusp point, in which two modes of seeing and experiencing America were rubbing against each other, like tectonic plates.

Recent events show just how far from that earlier declaration of unity we've come. A Duke professor got in trouble for suggesting that Chinese students take the opportunity of being on an American campus to practice their English instead of conversing among themselves in Chinese, excluding others around them. The professor had to resign and Duke issued a fulsome apology—to the students. Longtime NBC anchorman Tom Brokaw was roundly vilified for daring to recommend that Hispanics seek to assimilate. Starbucks founder Howard Schultz's sunny recollection of having friends of different races while growing up was greeted with a stormfront of hostility. And while Amy Wax was punished for the crime of advancing bourgeois values as the key to a successful life, George Bridges, president of Evergreen College, was bullied by protesting students for mere hand gestures that appeared too authoritative.

(Speaking of Starbucks, remember First Mate Starbuck of the Pequod, of quintessential liberal New England temperament, totally flummoxed by the belligerent obsessiveness of Captain Ahab?)

So far from being one America, it seems one part thinks the other part should agree to a position of subservience, surrendering its "white male privilege" and devoting itself to perpetual penance for "white supremacy" in the form of ongoing deference to non-whites, and in the case of men, to women.

One scholar is explicitly calling for Classics journals to stop publishing the scholarly work of white men in favor of non-whites and women. Princeton professor Dan-el Padilla Peralta wants "reparative epistemic justice," as Roger Kimball explains in the March 2019 *New Criterion*, "i.e., the expulsion of whites from the discipline and . . . the end to colorblind assessment of merit." At the

Society for Classical Study conference in San Diego in January of this year, Padilla demanded that “holders of privilege will need to surrender their privilege. In practical terms, this means that . . . white men will have to surrender the privilege they have of seeing their words printed and disseminated; they will have to take a backseat so that people of color—and women and gender-nonconforming scholars of color—benefit from the privilege of seeing their words on the page.”

Kimball describes this as par for the course in latter day academia; for me, things are moving fast and I advise being on alert.

But our cause, it is just, and in some areas of our polity circumstances *have* improved. Vigorous discussion of the merits of mass immigration, both legal and illegal, is at least out in the open, instead of being crushed with cries of racism and bigotry and suffocated with worn out clichés about pulling up the gangplank. I remember when “culture” was a forbidden word in evaluating the causes of social dysfunction. Now culture is readily utilized in diagnosing current ills, a result, perhaps, of the previous lack of deference to its explanatory power in supporting a free society. In more specific ways, too, there are good signs. The activist conservative student movement, Turning Point USA, is moving along impressively in its efforts to add balance to our politically monochrome campuses, with exceptional young leaders such as white male Charlie Kirk and black female Candace Owens. A number of states have enacted campus free speech laws—Virginia, Missouri, Arizona, Kentucky, Colorado, North Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Wisconsin, and Florida—and President Trump has indicated that he will issue an executive order tying the protection of campus free speech to federal funding.

Those of us committed to reasserting the principled pursuit of knowledge are not about to be fooled into premature declarations of victory by any wooden horses, though, and there are none on the horizon anyway. But we thought it time for a special feature assessing our progress, at least to some extent, “Reforming Higher Education: Victories, Advances, and Setbacks.”

Peter Bonilla, vice president of programs at the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, suggests that the hardest won victories may be those accomplished through litigation. In “Two Victories for Academic Freedom,” he tells in fascinating and instructive detail of the successful outcomes of lawsuits filed by Mike Adams at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, and by John McAdams at Marquette, in which the National Association of Scholars filed an amicus brief.

In “The Confucius Institutes,” NAS director of research Rachelle Peterson explains how efforts at exposing the fraudulence of the China-backed Confucius Institutes have resulted in legislative and university actions to close them down on fifteen campuses so far. Peterson’s own NAS report *Outsourced to China: Confucius Institutes and Soft Power in American Higher Education* was a major contribution to these efforts.

In the manner of “our flag was still there,” NAS public affairs director Glenn M. Ricketts is able to detail the number of academic enclaves that continue to offer a solid curriculum in Western Civilization, some longstanding and some more recently founded by NAS members, in “Saving Remnants: Where Western Civ Thrives.”

In the Advances category, once again, we have to acknowledge the continuing strength of the justice system in resisting the onslaught of campus fascism. In “Due Process, DeVos, and the Courts,” KC Johnson sees two factors in the improvement of the atmosphere surrounding sexual misconduct allegations on campus. One is the wave of successful lawsuits confronting the injustices of the Title IX guidelines that were instigated by the Obama Department of Education. The other is current Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos herself, for rescinding the “Dear Colleague” letter from the Obama DOE that, in effect, denied due process and virtually instituted #MeToo standards in sexual misconduct procedures, and for advancing improved guidelines. NAS president Peter Wood has written a letter to DeVos, available at the NAS website, generally approving of her proposals and making further suggestions.

In “Harvard Hoist on Its Own Petard,” John S. Rosenberg describes how the lawsuits against Harvard’s admissions policies, slanted against Asians, are usefully revealing the flaws and injustices in affirmative action in general.

We could add to these Advances the rollbacks in hurtful sustainability regulations. And although the results are far from satisfactory, NAS was able to command the attention of the testmakers and secure some improvements in the Advanced Placement history tests.

Now to the Setbacks, and we must admit they are considerable. NAS director of communication David Randall outlines how the last outpost of objectivity in scholarship is being compromised in “Politicized Science.”

In “Diversity Discontent,” Charles Gesheker deplores the multicultural diversity pledge now operative throughout the California State University system in which faculty members must “pledge fealty to diversity through what amounts to a loyalty oath,” as he describes it. The new requirements are unsurprising to longtime NAS member Gesheker. Both California’s university

systems “have spent twenty years trying to circumvent Proposition 209 (now Article 1, Section 31 of the California Constitution),” he writes,

which prohibits any consideration of race in public employment, public contracting, and public education. Nevertheless, in defiance of this statute in 2018, the San Diego State President and the Academic Senate approved new plans to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion. The plans establish released time opportunities for current faculty to receive “hands-on training” concerning implicit bias, racial/gender microaggressions, cultural competency, teaching practices for underserved students, and something called “collective sense making.”

Gesheker marshals his decades of experience as a professor of African history at California State University, Chico to deflate any pedagogical or scholarly justification used to adduce the efficacy of such training.

Millions of taxpayer dollars are going to locate Russian “collusion” in the 2016 election, but if you want to find Russian-Soviet-Marxist influence in the academy, just take one step and it will fall on your head. Aside from the Marxist paradigm of oppressor and oppressed infecting and inflaming every discipline, Mike Adams’s contribution to the Setbacks section of our feature, “Queer Criminology: New Directions in Academic Irrelevance,” tells of an entire new and totally specious subdiscipline emerging from Marxist principles.

Moving to our Articles section in this issue, readers interested in Russian influence will find Jon K. Chang’s “On Ethnic Cleansing and Revisionist Russian History,” showing the lengths to which Western scholars went to preserve the leftist fantasy that the Soviet Union was devoid of racial animus. And for that matter, Marxist inflected “scholarship” is impinging on higher education in, of all places, Eastern Europe. See “Academic Freedom and the Central European University,” by Stephen Baskerville.

We’ve all heard by now of the “irreproducibility crisis,” the discovery that many—perhaps most—scientific studies do not yield similar results upon repetition. That’s just one problem, writes John Staddon, Professor Emeritus, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, Duke University, and one that is being addressed. Staddon explains “Object of Inquiry: Psychology’s Other (Non-replication) Problem,” that is, “drawing conclusions about the psychology or physiology of individuals from group averages.”

AQ advisor Paul Hollander was practically born to show how wrong Jason Stanley’s new book, *How Fascism Works: The Politics of Us and*

Them, is on the subject of fascism. Stanley is the Jacob Urowsky Professor of Philosophy at Yale.

Williams College professor Darel E. Paul talks with Peter Wood on Episode #12 of *Curriculum Vitae*, a new series of weekly one hour podcasts at the NAS website. Paul discusses his book, *From Tolerance to Equality: How Elites Brought America to Same Sex Marriage*, reviewed in this issue by Robert Maranto. In addition, Barry Latzer's Short Take, "The Futility of Gun Control as Crime Control," arose from his podcast, Episode #6, in which he discusses "Race, Crime, and Culture," his contribution to our winter 2018 special feature on Unorthodox Ideas. A second Short Take in this issue is John Agresto's evocation of "The Liberal Arts as Magic and as Paradox."

Three poems polish off the issue, two by David Randall in his third appearance, and the second by a new contributor, Michael Lurie. And Peter Wood has some surprises in this issue's Books, Articles, and Items of Academic Interest.