

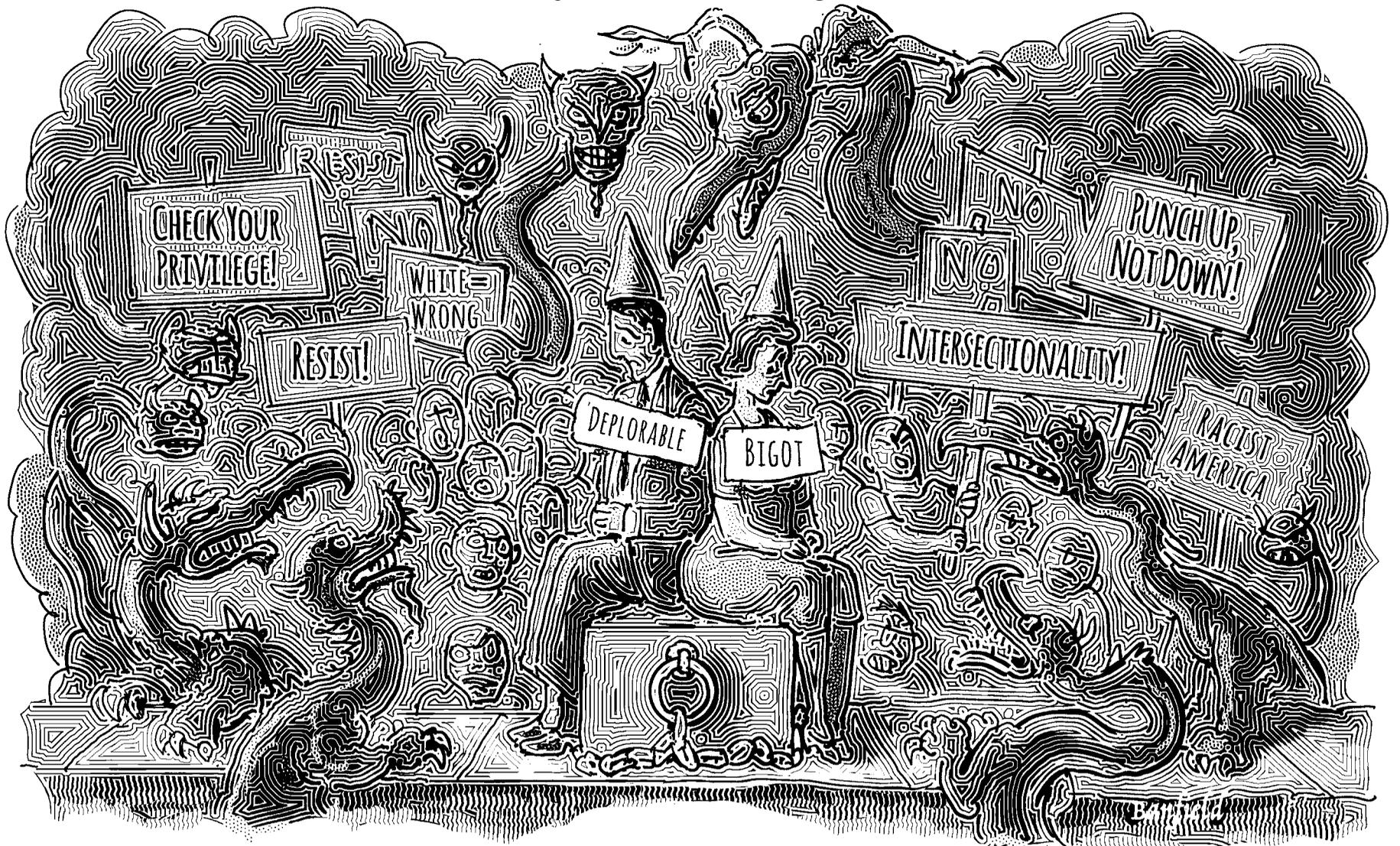
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REVIEW OF BOOKS

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The Way We Hate Now by William Voegeli



Andrew C. McCarthy:
Impeachment

James W. Ceaser:
Jonah Goldberg

Joseph Epstein:
**The American
Language**

Michael Anton:
**Trump &
the Philosophers**

John M. Ellis:
The Diversity Delusion

Amy L. Wax:
Gender Police

Christopher Caldwell:
What is Populism?

David P. Goldman:
Woodrow Wilson

Allen C. Guelzo
Charles R. Kesler:
Harry V. Jaffa at 100

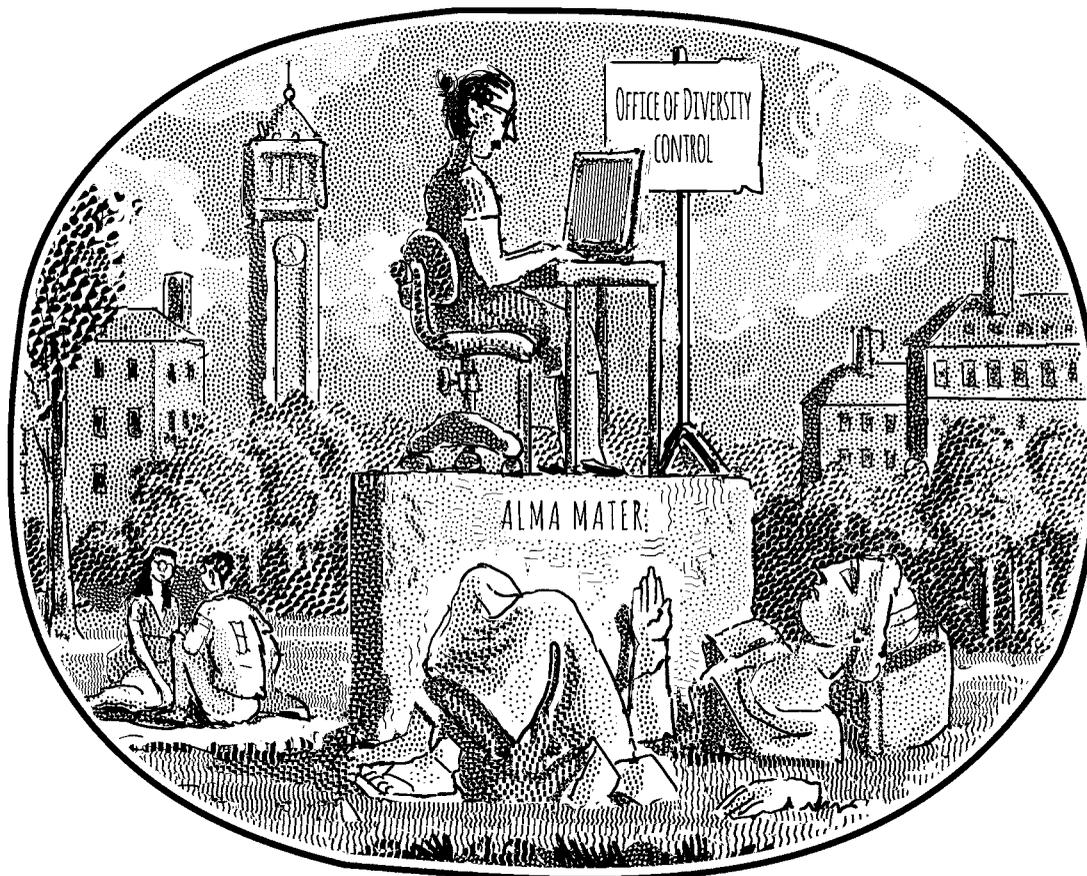


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CAMPUS HYSTERIA

The Diversity Delusion: How Race and Gender Pandering Corrupt the University and Undermine Our Culture, by Heather Mac Donald.
St. Martin's Press, 278 pages, \$28.99



JUSTICE LEWIS POWELL EVIDENTLY THOUGHT that his opinion in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978) struck a compromise that offered something to both sides in the debate over racial preferences in college admissions: one side got a ban on quotas and explicit racial preferences, while the other got individual admission decisions that could take into account the desirability of a diverse incoming class. When academia immediately began to use Powell's concept of diversity as a cover for the racial quotas he thought he had banned, it was clear that he had badly miscalculated. But it took somewhat longer for a much more dangerous consequence of his ruling to emerge. While the argument over college admissions was conducted using the language of racial quotas and preferences, the pro-quota side was at a disadvantage: those words were unpopular and obviously clashed with the language of the Constitution. But Powell had unwittingly made it possible to replace those rather squalid words with an attractive concept that was to become much more than a convenient euphemism: it came to serve as the proud banner for

what could now be portrayed as a noble crusade. "Diversity" in effect allowed identity politics to seize the moral high ground.

Until about 1980, speeches by university presidents harped obsessively on "excellence." Powell's concept changed that. "Excellence" was replaced by "diversity," now the new guiding light of the academy. The newer concept's altruistic aura allowed dissent of any kind to be stigmatized as moral failure, a mean-spirited refusal to join the great crusade. Meanwhile this appearance of high moral purpose helpfully deflected attention from the ruthless elimination of real diversity—diversity of opinion—that was happening at the same time. Because it was the means by which identity politics was placed at the center of the campus agenda, smoothly and even with aplomb, "diversity" was probably the single most important factor in the radical Left's takeover of academia.

HEATHER MAC DONALD'S SPLENDID new book is the first comprehensive look at how "diversity" has thoroughly corrupted the campuses since *Bakke*.

The first two of the book's four sections look at the impact of the two major aspects of identity politics: race and gender. The third deals with the damage done by the huge diversity bureaucracies that have developed, and the last with the corruption of campus curricula that "diversity" has brought about.

Mac Donald, a fellow at the Manhattan Institute and contributing editor of *City Journal*, combines two strengths that don't often go together: the meticulous, in-depth research of a hard-headed investigator, and the fluency and lucidity of a skilled journalist. The effect is one of a generally engaging and easygoing argument that can suddenly deploy an overwhelming firepower of facts and statistics whenever a critical juncture is reached where a key point needs to be settled once and for all. If you wondered whether police target black men more than whites, Mac Donald removes any doubt: they don't. If you wondered whether Proposition 209, a 1996 effort to end affirmative action by amending the California state constitution, stopped the University of California from admitting minority students with test scores



hugely below those of white students, she nails the point down conclusively: no, it didn't. And if you thought the question of whether preferentially admitted students are helped or damaged thereby was still unclear, you won't after you look at the evidence assembled here: indeed, they are badly damaged.

The heart of the book is its first two sections, in which Mac Donald shows how the obsession with race and gender has reduced the academy to a caricature of what it once was. Some of this is so bizarre as to be almost unbelievable. I was recently at a neighborhood watch meeting at which a local sheriff's deputy gave us the good news that local crime statistics are way down. The audience was delighted. Compare this normal, sane reaction to what Mac Donald tells us of a Yale vice president's reaction to the news that Harvard has a higher rate of sexual assaults than Yale. Good news for Yale? No, the reverse. The Yale official groused that Harvard must have been double counting some incidents. Imagine: Yale jealous because Harvard has a higher rate of sexual assaults. What explains this insanity? It's simply that campus radical orthodoxy has it that our society is racist and sexist to the core. High sexual assault rates confirm campus orthodoxy, low ones don't, so Yale must not be pulling its weight.

BUT AS MAC DONALD REMINDS US, THE American campus is the most politically correct place on earth, and thus racism and sexism are much harder to find there than anywhere else. Being a campus rape hotline operator is a lonely and frustrating business because nobody calls. And so rape must be found in such things as morning-after regrets, or drunken stupors that neither side remembers very well. It's about 30 years since the infamous "one in five women will be raped" figure was debunked as the product of crude statistical manipulation, but it's back on the campuses now. It's hard to believe that those who use it don't know that it has long since been shown to be false, but they evidently don't care. Mac Donald has a devastating answer to all of this: when a *real* forcible rape takes place on a campus, that campus instantly goes into "emergency mode," showing that it knows perfectly well the difference between its make-believe and reality.

The desperation to prove that there is a rape culture on campus does real damage: accused males are often convicted on evidence that can be quite absurd. The damage done by the obsession with race is even greater: the educational progress of a whole generation of black students is disrupted by the "mismatch" effect, described by Richard Sander and Stuart Taylor, Jr., in their book *Mismatch* (2012)—that is, too many black students are being placed in academic environments for which they are

not ready. And there is broader damage too: under "diversity" the campus climate has become one of lies and deceit, which damages everyone, not just minorities.

Mac Donald describes a number of campus incidents that became full-scale (though fraudulent) racial crises, but their essential shape doesn't vary much. They generally start out with an incident that no fair-minded person could call racist: at Evergreen State College, Professor Bret Weinstein's saying that it's not a good idea for black students to tell all whites to stay away from campus for a day; or at Yale, Erika Christakis saying that, as Mac Donald puts it, the Yale multicultural bureaucracy didn't need to oversee Halloween costumes. In the next stage, campus radical activists, always desperate to find an opportunity to cry "racism," eagerly seize on these non-events and treat them as if they were nothing less than a massive KKK march. The campus goes to full racial hysteria, with much lamenting about the racial humiliation that minorities must live through every minute of every day, with even their very lives in danger. In the next stage, campus administrators tell them to grow up and stop being stupid—wait, no, that would certainly be the only intelligent response but it *never* happens. What really happens is that campus presidents all seem to read from the same script. They announce their solidarity with this absurd self-dramatizing; they apologize on behalf of their campuses for the pain they have inflicted; they praise the students and tell them how much they have learned from them; and finally they announce huge expenditures on new diversity offices and other sops to the student activists. Whether the campus is a minor one like Evergreen State College, or a major one like Yale University, the script is much the same. It's probably written by the same high-priced diversity consultant.

MAC DONALD PUNCTURES ALL OF THIS silliness by pointing out how safe and how privileged these students are to be on an American campus. Senior administrators seem never to think about the lessons that students are learning from these incidents, and the perverse incentives that result. Surely, it must be great fun for minority students to have the president of Yale grovel before them whenever they feel like staging a racial incident. For mismatched students, classes are probably depressing: who can blame them if they much prefer making senior administrators humiliate themselves? Reliable recent research has shown that minority students are putting in fewer hours of study than others, and so the large gap in test scores that they start with only widens at college instead of narrowing. Yet to save themselves, cowardly college presidents are re-

inforcing and rewarding this destructive misdirection of effort. Could the most ill-intentioned racists have done more damage to minorities?

Mac Donald's section on the sheer size of the diversity bureaucracy will astonish her readers. After noting that in 2012 U.C. San Diego hired its first vice chancellor for equity, diversity and inclusion, she gives a long list of already existing campus diversity offices to which it adds: "the Chancellor's Diversity Office; the associate vice chancellor for faculty equity; the assistant vice chancellor for diversity; the faculty equity advisers; the graduate diversity coordinators." This goes on for half a page—for just one campus. Small wonder that "From 1998 to 2009, as the [U.C.] student population grew 33% and tenure track faculty grew 25%, the number of senior administrators grew by 125%." There were twice as many professors as senior managers when this period began, but their numbers were equal by the end of it—all in one decade!

One has to wonder: as tuition soars well beyond the rate of inflation and students take on ever more crippling debt, doesn't it ever occur to them (or anyone else) that their skyrocketing tuition and debt pays for all of these useless diversity bureaucrats that they themselves keep demanding more of?

MAC DONALD'S THIRD SECTION LOOKS at the gutting of the curriculum as our civilization's great literature and thought are replaced by shallow race- and gender-obsessed nonentities. Here she covers ground gone over by others before her, but she states the case with great force and eloquence, and I must say that you could not find a more compelling account of the simply enormous loss to students that results.

Having shown how badly "diversity" has damaged academia, Mac Donald bluntly recommends "[t]he most necessary reform: axing the diversity infrastructure....every vice chancellor, assistant dean, and associate provost for equity, inclusion, and multicultural awareness should be fired and his staff sent home. Faculty committees dedicated to ameliorating the effects of phantom racism, sexism, and homophobia should be disbanded." She's absolutely right about this, but it leads us to the problem of the faculty, now almost universally left and mostly radical left at that. The vast diversity infrastructure is safe while they want it to stay in place. Reform will have to begin by breaking the radical faculty's stranglehold on the campuses.

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