

## Can We Talk? Life under Frankfurt Rules

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### J. Scott Kenney

Tolerance is having an identity crisis. Today, the western canon is increasingly being purged from universities by faculty in favor of a trendy identity-based curriculum. Meanwhile, classical liberalism has been relabeled conservatism, liberalism shape-shifted into "progressivism," "anti-fascism" has donned jackboots of its own, and a poorly defined yet virulent identity politics has virtually replaced citizenship, its language permeating the public sphere and officially respectable discourse. Simultaneous with this rising tide of divisive racial, sexual, and gender politics, free speech and inquiry have come under attack by the very institutions that should protect them. Speakers are disinvited by universities or shouted down by virulent "social justice" radicals, angry mobs deface or seek to tear down statues of notable historical figures, political leaders oscillate between politically correct appeasement and authoritarianism, and mere allegations foment public outrage together with dire personal and occupational consequences for those who run afoul of such dynamics. Watching this, I

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find myself feeling a deep, increasing sense of unease about the fate of the once familiar world around me. Yet in questioning this state of affairs, I feel like a medieval heretic already tossed down an oubliette to be forgotten.

Yet I can no longer morally afford to scream silently. If I just sit, ruminate, and do nothing as western civilization crumbles before me, I simply won't be able to live with myself. I really need to articulate things more fully, to find my voice, to leave a record—at least—of the lived experience of someone navigating this rotting dystopia as our civilization totters and lurches toward its apparently dismal future. Moreover, I must struggle to make sense of this sorry social and existential situation, to articulate my thoughts, and, most importantly, go beyond mere description, beyond simply venting my feelings, and try to understand.

Of course, there are many explanations for the current blight, many rooted in sociological and political theories, historic social movements, economic developments and the like. I certainly won't be able to exhaust them here, but it is worth noting a few of the most salient factors that I believe have led us to the place we find ourselves today: The twentieth century intellectual collapse of positivism and traditional authority, along with increasing secularization—while intellectually defensible in many ways—opened the door to the dangers of relativism and postmodernism. Meanwhile, as historical injustices came to the fore, the media grew and a new generation, rooted in radical, New Left, and Frankfurt School ideologies increasingly colonized the intellectual and institutional lives of the West. As this was occurring, birth control and women's participation in the dominant service and information economy set up a long term population problem that growth oriented capitalists and neoliberals sought to address by increasing immigration from once neglected parts of the globe. The new superstructural ideology of multiculturalism emerged as an explanation, a worldview, and an ideological legitimation of this state of affairs. Yet, while progressive government elites and student radicals in effect cooperated to push policies further down this road (and eventually reaped the emerging voters and service careers that followed), free trade and neoliberal globalization enabled multinational corporations to benefit by access to cheap overseas labor and low-skilled immigration. Into this dynamic—which is a far cry from Durkheim's ideal of "organic solidarity"—media specialization and market fragmentation increasingly separated citizens from one another, balkanizing them both geographically and mentally, social capital and public trust plummeted, and individuals criticizing this state of affairs too loudly or publicly were increasingly labelled and stigmatized as "deplorable." This hollowing out of the economy, population, and culture, this decimation of traditional ways and habits in a changing economy has devastated some communities while greatly expanding

the ranks of the elite. The resulting polarization has led to the emergence of a new populist Right, and the very toxic state of affairs we find ourselves today.

Given the general thrust of what I have written, I have increasingly come to the view that, theoretically at least, Herbert Marcuse's influential concept of "repressive tolerance" is critical to understanding the ideological terrain that has emerged through these developments.<sup>1</sup> A significant figure in the "New Left" prominent among academics and student radicals in the 1960's, and whose theoretical writings have had significant influence in many areas since, Marcuse criticized traditional forms of western liberal tolerance as false, or merely a token actually serving to perpetuate an unequal, unjust state of affairs. He claimed that this is due to dominant institutions, including education and the increasingly sophisticated media, fostering technological and mental coordination to favor dominant interests and perpetuate the status quo. In particular, via language, Marcuse asserted that "mental attitudes are formed that tend to obliterate the difference between true and false, information and indoctrination, right and wrong." As such, he claimed that westerners in traditional liberal societies have essentially been brainwashed, systematically divested of their ability to think rationally, and are thereby unable to create a just and humane society. According to Marcuse, to truly weigh truth and falsity, this subtly hoodwinked populace must be "freed from the prevailing indoctrination," and false consciousness must be counteracted by "stopping the words and images" that feed it. Affirmative, partisan information slanted to the left is necessary to liberate people and restore their ability to reason. Hence, Marcuse favors the dissemination of "information slanted in the opposite direction," coupled with the withdrawal of tolerance for ideas, groups, and movements that contradict it. Meanwhile, in this new practice of "liberating tolerance," he argued that the distinction between what are ultimately repressive and liberating, human and inhuman teachings and practices can be decided empirically by a small vanguard "who have learned to think rationally and autonomously," and "not necessarily that of the elected representatives of the people."

Marcuse's program is an obvious attack on traditional western ideals of free speech, free inquiry, and democracy. Asserting that revolutionary minorities hold the truth, it is essentially a call for propaganda, intolerance, and repression by these proto-elites to enable the majority to be "liberated" by being "re-educated" by the minority, which is itself entitled to censor what it views as competing and hurtful opinions. Marcuse's celebrated work can be obviously criticized in relation to his tendency to conflate facts and theory,

<sup>1</sup>Herbert Marcuse, "Repressive Tolerance" in Robert Paul Wolff, Barrington Moore, Jr., and Herbert Marcuse, *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), 95-137.

for his sheer presumption that the Left is able to discern "truth" while other viewpoints are characterized by "false consciousness," and for the empirical fact that a major realignment of values and the social order since the 1960's has largely undermined his idea that traditional forms of liberal pluralism necessarily favor the dominant group.<sup>2</sup> Yet, I would like to take this further, and, analogous to what has been said about Marx's treatment of Hegel, to "Turn Marcuse on his head."

First, the increasingly hegemonic globalist elite that has effectively emerged—at least in part—from radical "New Left" movements since the 1960's—has come to involve an ironic and rarely mentioned coincidence of interests between progressives on the Left and economic conservatives on the right. The former celebrate the fact that they not only get to increase the "diversity" and number of their supporters, but they also reap appreciative blocs of voters and jobs for human rights advocates, social service workers, immigration lawyers, civil servants, and other often well paid work. In turn, the latter enjoy the fact that diversity becomes both a marketing and public relations strategy, while additional immigration increases the number of unemployed, boosts the supply of labor, keeping wages relatively low or reducing them, thus bolstering their bottom lines. The fallout from both further divides the population, particularly over the widespread promotion of identity issues, rendering effective opposition more difficult and grist for elites' emergent institutions of social control. This is hardly altruism, but often cynical self-interest masquerading as virtue.

Secondly, this convenient, increasingly hegemonic intersectionality effectively occurring between multinational corporate profit maximizers and government funded diversicrats, NGO's, and service professionals quickly brings to mind Robert Michels's "iron law of oligarchy," whereby newly ascendant groups seeking to foster more openness, equality, and fairness are either coopted or more generally mutate into an organized caricature of what they once were: a "leadership class."<sup>3</sup> This has been seen in modern times, for example, in the Chinese Communist Party that parrots Marxist ideas while ruling as an elite class overseeing a deeply unequal capitalist economy. Much the same lesson applies to the state of governance in the West today. Symbolic rhetoric and virtue signaling ideologies of equality often conceal token, underfunded programs that fail to address many of the inequalities they so disdain (e.g. racism and the plight of inner cities remain problems despite decades of

<sup>2</sup>Nathan Glazer, "A Critique of Pure Tolerance (Book)," *American Sociological Review* 31, no. 3 (1966).

<sup>3</sup>Robert Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, trans. by Eden Paul and Cedar Paul (New York: The Free Press, 1915).

progressive policies, self-serving research and governance, and administratively top heavy programs). Indeed, inequalities may actually be hardened by the rigid labels inherent to identity politics, trapping minorities in stereotypes and expectations while benefiting and perpetuating the careers of comparatively well-funded staff, essentially becoming mere raw material for the identity mill. Meanwhile, stressing these self-same same ideologies and policies can create resentment by fostering new forms of inequality throughout society, ones that involve leftover identities that remain beyond the officially sanctioned categories of preference (such as the growing, yet frequently ignored plight of the traditional American working class in recent years). Indeed, much of this obscures rapidly growing class inequality in the West resulting from economic globalization.

Thirdly, an important aspect of the dominant "diversity" meme is loudly proclaimed by both economic conservatives and progressive multiculturalists in the service of their own, effectively intersecting interests (i.e. profit and careers). If "diversity" is the official, moral position and goal of such elites, then a variety of policies must be employed to this end in various areas (e.g. immigration, hiring, education, etc.). Regardless of whether these ideological programs are sincere or merely a diversionary form of virtue signaling, those in the existing population who are faced with the potential downside of such approaches logically serve as the foil, the binary opposite of what elites are seeking to achieve. As such they find themselves often left out, ignored, disparaged, and in despair. As those marginalized by such approaches cannot help but be aware of them, their dangerous situated insights must be kept from interfering with the elites' intersectional, often profitable business of diversity. As such, they must be handled through a range of educational, health, and social control practices, all of which have repressive aspects. Thus, "diversity education" is portrayed as moral and enlightened compared to the past, medicalization is utilized to portray those on the losing end as sick, and those who hold outdated views or who object to the hollowing out of the traditional American working class are portrayed as racist "deplorables" that can be dealt with through repressive legal measures.

What we are seeing here, in effect, is an illiberal ideology once meant to be "liberating" having the opposite effect, morphing into a repressive legitimating frame justifying the "new and improved" status quo. This is a framing of our problems that not only has failed to provide the bulk of protected groups the liberation promised by the New Left, but that has now led to the additional neglect and repression of segments of the majority population. Meanwhile, in this divide and conquer dynamic, the more division, the more controversy that

occurs over tribal identity issues, the harder it will be for people to unite to address this elite. Indeed, this goes beyond the idea that liberating tolerance for some is simultaneously repressive tolerance for the other, and vice versa. We have been effectively handed the rhetorical weapons with which we fight. Ultimately, the overall situation has become much more—not less—widely repressive.

In the end, Marcuse's virtue of "liberating" tolerance has effectively been inverted to become a tool of elite oppression that in effect serves to marginalize more rather than less. It has flipped on its head and not only done a widespread disservice to minorities, it has failed in its mission and become a new form of repressive tolerance for the majority. Meanwhile, our increasing inability even to consider each other's positions, and actively to seek to repress rather than constructively engage them, simply helps perpetuate this situation, effectively favoring the interests of an intersectionally hegemonic globalist elite. An unnatural entity and oxymoron I term "progressive intolerance" has emerged and remains at the heart of the bitter tribal conflicts in western societies today. The suffering of those on the receiving end, meanwhile, is misunderstood, ignored, even disparaged or stigmatized, but it is still there. It is not going away. For the majority, at least, it is reflected in phenomena such as the opioid crisis that has disproportionately devastated the traditional American working class in "flyover country," along with the increased, disproportionate suicide rate among American men. Such dynamics were also witnessed in the 2016 American election and its aftermath, where the suffering of this demographic devastated by globalization is still widely disparaged and neglected by the elites' ongoing wrangling over identity. It also does a deep disservice to the underrepresented groups that it purports to help through its sheer inability to take off the identity group blinkers and consider alternative ways to address problems. All of this strikingly reveals how out of touch and problematic elites have become. The illegitimate pain created—whether among the working class, traditional citizens, minorities, or among academics experiencing its effects—is real, widespread, and needs to be addressed.

In perhaps the greatest irony here, in much of the above I have consciously employed the literature and language of the Left to undermine it, as well as elements of classical sociology to critique its contemporary ideologues. Yet the big question here remains whether all of this is a zero sum game. Marcuse's line of thinking, and the ideological and institutional developments that have emerged in its wake, certainly would suggest that this is how many parties see it, despite all the hegemonic rhetoric claiming that "progressive" policies benefit us all. Such contradictions and current events rooted in our ever widening

ideological polarization suggest that, at the end of the day, western societies cannot go on this way or their survival as such is in doubt.

We need more, not fewer perspectives. We especially need viewpoint diversity that moves beyond the unproductive tunnel vision of what is currently fashionable and sanctioned. Are we really so much wiser and sophisticated than those who came before us, or just as susceptible to folly, to demagoguery, to ideological fanaticism? To move forward, we need to break the current framing, to remove the blinkers, to get away from "presentism," to hear from more concerned, frequently silenced voices, to draw on what has come before, and to consider historical examples suggesting possible directions forward. We must not be manipulated into ignoring each other as identity enemies. We cannot afford to effectively marginalize a large part of our population from the political process. Neither can we afford to silence or marginalize academics rooted in our civilizational traditions that may have something to contribute. Instead, our society needs to reconnect with its source, to honestly and creatively re-engage historic debates about tolerance, freedom of expression, freedom of inquiry, and what is actually entailed by equality to avoid this zero sum logic we are currently playing out to the detriment of many citizens of the West. Ultimately, we need to find ways to construct real, not repressive, not symbolic tolerance. It must be both broad and deep. We need to be liberated from these fake liberators, these self-interested purveyors of false tolerance before it is too late, the center does not hold, and our fragmented civilization loses all coherence, all claim to still be called such. To do that, we must not simply condemn, stigmatize, dispose, and forget about the western intellectual tradition, we need to free it and its proponents from their oubliettes and get down to work.

I'm going to put my real name on this. Would you?

### **Robert Paquette**

Canadian sociologist J. Scott Kenney finds himself within the academic tower confined, marginalized, and desperate. The social justice warriors have him under lock and key, but before the dungeon is completely sealed off, he breaks free and rushes to lift the trapdoor. Hoping for liberation for himself and others, he shouts to the outside world about his keepers' true intent to spread darkness over the land. Jefferson-like, he justifies his declaration by recounting "a long train of abuses and usurpations." Lenin-like, he asks, "What is to be done?" The stakes have become so high, he says, he intends to die hard. In the immortal words of Bruce Willis, "Welcome to the party, pal."

Kenney discusses a score of causes that have fostered the current cultural and educational rot. Much of the list should look familiar to readers of this journal and, frankly, to any serious critical observer of higher education over the last quarter century. Having quickly submitted this information to a candid world, he turns, however, to train his fire on one target in particular: Herbert Marcuse, doyen of the Frankfurt School of Cultural Marxism and in his heyday in the United States, the mentor to Angela Davis, and the alleged intellectual godfather of the Weather Underground. A student of Marx and Heidegger, Marcuse was indelibly shaped as a young Jewish intellectual by the swirling political and intellectual currents that eventually toppled the Weimar Republic. He immigrated to the United States before the outbreak of World War II, and for several years, worked as a postwar analyst for U.S. intelligence services, helping them decipher the Germanic culture that had produced Hitler and Nazism. The psychological work of Marcuse and others of the Frankfurt School, their partisan explorations into the authoritarian personality, have had a significant impact in the United States and beyond in the recurring smears by the Left of political and philosophical conservatism as a pathology.

Although harboring a never ending disdain for bourgeois society and culture, the elitist Marcuse who had published penetrating analyses of Hegel early in his career differed from the elitist Marcuse who tried to wed Freud and Marx. In *Eros and Civilization* (1955), Marcuse imagined a future fantasyland in which happy workers under benign supervision could, with the fall of capitalism, have both their material needs and polymorphous sexual preferences satiated. Kenney stands with several other recent writers—*National Review's* David French, for example—in seeing the thuggish behavior of left-wing campus radicals as the legacy of Marcuse's influential writings on "repressive tolerance." By the 1960s, Marcuse was despairing of generating transformative change from within advanced capitalist societies. He indicted the practice of liberal tolerance for being a clever, disguised form of partisan oppression that was blocking the realization of his preferred utopia. "[W]hat is proclaimed and practiced as tolerance today," Marcuse declared, "is in many of its most effective manifestations serving the cause of oppression." Under modern capitalism, "[t]olerance is extended to policies, conditions, and modes of behavior which should not be tolerated because they are impeding, if not destroying, the chances of creating an existence without fear and misery." In denouncing capitalism, Marcuse was trying to have it both ways: On the one hand, oppressive capitalism was in crisis; on the other hand, capitalist abundance attended by liberal tolerance was indoctrinating with a false consciousness those who should be mobilizing to spearhead the revolution.



To be sure, with the spread of what Kenney calls virulent identity politics, a trained ear might hear echoes of Marcuse and the Frankfurt School in the slogans and manifestos of today's campus radicals. Most of them, however, I dare say, have never heard of Marcuse, much less have read him. For one thing, reading Marcuse's prose is definitely not a pleasurable experience for today's anxiety ridden undergraduate sybarite whose insatiable consumer desires have led to unconscionable administrative pandering. For another, identity politics would seem to reflect, to the extent it has any serious intellectual undergirding, choices from an ever widening array of critical theorists, with individual students picking the one on race, class, gender, and sexuality that comports most with his, her, transgender, cisgender, non-binary, gender-queer, gender-fluid autobiographical needs.

No, a more satisfactory explanation for the current malaise, both on and off campus, lies, it seems to me, elsewhere, not in Marcuse's prophecies, but in the dynamic between incumbents and insurgents. In understanding the course of any complicated political movement, one must not only understand what the dissidents are doing, but also what the powers that be have done or failed to do in responding to them. In this respect, Marcuse's contemporary Joseph Schumpeter offered genuine anti-Marcusian wisdom as to the nature of the remarkable dynamic at work. "Perhaps the most striking feature of the [political] picture," Schumpeter wrote in 1942, "is the extent to which the bourgeoisie, besides educating its own enemies, allows itself in turn to be educated by them . . . It absorbs the slogans of current radicalism and seems quite willing to undergo a process of conversion to a creed hostile to its very existence . . . Haltingly and grudgingly it concedes in part the implications of that creed."

What has been playing out on campus for decades has now surfaced much more visibly in the business world and on Wall Street. The superordinate is now doing the bidding of the subordinate. Hence, as I write this, corporate advertisers flee Laura Ingraham's show for daring to criticize a whiny, antagonistic teenage front man of an anti-gun movement. Roger Goodell announces that the NFL will pour millions of dollars into social justice initiatives. Basketball's Sacramento Kings announce that they will finance programming approved by Black Lives Matter. The boards of elite colleges and universities, Wall Street banks, leading philanthropic organizations, and the majority of the most important consumer goods corporations in the United States have lost faith in Western values and lack the courage to defend them. They fear the left; they have no reason (yet?) to fear the right. One reason why Middle America elected Donald Trump to the presidency was in the hope, a desperate hope, that unlike the Republican establishment leadership, he would fight back to defend the tattered remnant of

those traditions they hold dear. Ideas have consequences; and in understanding those ideas that have become regnant on campus, one must investigate how and why elites forsook the intergenerational social compact and became the true revolutionaries or, at the very least, their indispensable accomplices.

### **Elizabeth Corey**

Scott Kenney offers fresh insight into our contemporary cultural ills. His diagnosis itself is not new and will be familiar to most readers. Each of the items in his list of ills could be (and is) the subject of multiple books and articles. As a whole, the list reads as a jeremiad of the sort we often see from cultural critics on both left and right. Modern day Marxists will emphasize the ills of neoliberal globalization and cheap overseas labor while end-of-liberalism conservatives are more likely to criticize the loss of traditional ways of life and the balkanization of identity groups. Kenney has been fairly ecumenical in his criticisms. But everyone can find something to agree with here.

Combined with the language of Kenney's opening paragraphs ("rotting dystopia," "current blight"), his targets might make a reader think that the remainder of the piece will be merely a lament about the decline of culture. Instead, Kenney makes an interesting turn, citing Herbert Marcuse's concept of "repressive tolerance" as a lens for understanding current public opinion about a host of topics. He also makes a case that left and right elites have joined in the name of promoting diversity against the "leftover identity" groups like white, male deplorables.

Repressive tolerance is the idea that traditional notions of tolerance actually harm the individuals and groups being "tolerated." In a move that has been echoed by progressives of many stripes, Marcuse argues that the major institutions of society have an interest in perpetuating the mostly conservative status quo. They are engaged in a project of indoctrination, where tolerance does not sincerely take alternative views into account but allows them only as a means of domesticating dissent. Marcuse's solution to this problem is a systematic program of reeducation and liberation. He puts it as bluntly as possible in the following statement: "Liberating tolerance, then, would mean intolerance against movements from the Right and toleration of movements from the Left." The aim is to release the energies of the Left and to remake society in its image.

But in a strange turn of events, asserts Kenney, the progressive diversity Left has found common ground with the economic conservative Right. The "multinational corporate profit maximizers" have joined forces with the

“government funded diversicrats, NGO’s, and service professionals” to form a new leadership class. This has led to a new and even more powerful form of repression, in which people are simultaneously pacified (through the new and improved products that they can acquire ever more cheaply) and flattered (through the ideology of celebrating increasingly fine-grained markers of identity).

The problems that result from this are twofold. First, the expanding tally of identity categories pushes not toward solidarity but toward increasing fragmentation in political and social life. As in the most extreme forms of intersectionality, fewer and fewer people share interests in common because every added category of identity (gender, race, sexual orientation, disability status) makes a given group smaller and its interests more esoteric. As a result, a hierarchy of voices emerges whereby the most marginalized gain the ability to speak in inverse proportion to the most powerful. But this does not make for political friendship; it makes political enemies. And “fragmenting” groups, as Yuval Levin has observed, cannot engage in shared political causes. Ironically, this makes resistance to the new oligarchy of elites even more difficult than it was in 1965, when Marcuse wrote.

Second, the focus on identities includes only certain favored ones. Groups that are not minority but “majority,” like low-status white men, are often considered contemptible by elites. But they are not going away. Instead, they have become increasingly disaffected and are now afflicted by pathologies like increasing suicide rates and drug and alcohol abuse. This group is resentful of the identity politics game altogether—that is, until it adopts such tactics for itself. Some of the more savvy white males, like Richard Spencer and his rather detestable compadres, have seized on the opportunity to create a white European identity group, with its own set of grievances and complaints. If others can play this game, they reason, why can’t we do it too?

All of these problems are real, and they lead Kenney both to despair “as our civilization totters and lurches toward its apparently dismal future” and to a modest hope. “We need more, not fewer perspectives,” he writes. “We especially need *viewpoint diversity*. . . that moves beyond . . . what is currently fashionable and sanctioned.” I agree. It may be a rather tired observation by now that universities are almost monolithically progressive (at least in the ways they present themselves to the world) but it is also true. This is a problem for anyone who believes that J.S. Mill was onto something in his essay, “Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion.” Divergent viewpoints may not always lead to truth, as Mill hoped, but they certainly lead to learning if a person is willing to engage views that are not his own.

Still, there may be a more practical, if more difficult, way of advancing the good in our modern, polarized environment. Viewpoint diversity matters; but even more important are the conversations that take place among actual human beings who hold those different views. It is easy enough to write essays that express one's own ideas and to publish them for audiences who will approve of them. I often do this. But to find oneself in a room with people whose worldviews you find foreign, whose commitments are not yours, whose ideas are the kind you have mocked in the past—this is a different ballgame. It requires putting down the guns and witty replies and entering sympathetically into the consciousness of someone who, speaking frankly, may be threatening.

Conversations like these are nearly always uncomfortable. They often do not yield resolution or action plans. Yet what they can produce is a respect for the person. No longer must we consider a person simply equivalent to his ideas; we have to allow that (perhaps) we still can't stand the ideas but the person is charming, or humble, or someone who could even be a friend. Or perhaps we must moderate our own views on the basis of something someone has said to us. In the best case, and even in the normal case, this interaction can soften our own rough edges. It surely makes us better political citizens. And it can pull us back from the brinkmanship in which many of us now seem so eager to engage.

## **J. Scott Kenney Responds**

I would like to thank Robert Paquette and Elizabeth Corey for taking the time to pen responses to my article. It is gratifying to see one's ideas being engaged by scholars who struggle with similar concerns. I reply first to Paquette, then Corey.

Paquette begins with a cheeky characterization of my metaphor of the oubliette, suggesting that somehow I have overcome the SJWs, burst from my dungeon, and now seek to breathlessly reveal to the hoodwinked masses, in effect, that "the sky is falling," like some mutant amalgam of Chicken Little and Captain Obvious. It may be that some of what I have written has a dramatic tone of urgency, as is the thought that parts of what I have written should look familiar "to any serious critical observer of higher education over the last quarter century." Nevertheless, I find it interesting that Paquette neither disagrees with the causes I identify nor fails to note that there are indeed problems with the virulent identity politics characterizing not only higher education, but much of the West today.

But the meat of Paquette's criticism centers on my choice of Herbert Marcuse's work on repressive tolerance as a key theoretical foundation for what, upon careful reading, clearly concerns us both. He writes:

"To be sure, with the spread of what Kenney calls virulent identity politics, a trained ear might hear echoes of Marcuse and the Frankfurt School in the slogans and manifestos of today's campus radicals. Most of them, however, dare I say, have never heard of Marcuse, much less have read him."

It may be true, given fallen educational standards, that many SJW radicals today may not have heard of Marcuse, nor wrestled with his turgid, unappetizing prose. But this is both rather disingenuous and mischaracterizes what I am saying. In the broadest sense, like countless others, I am merely pointing to the significant intellectual influence of Marcuse's work (and, by implication, the Frankfurt School) on not only the radicalism of the 1960's, but, via the "New Left's" subsequent "long march through the institutions," the vast social, institutional, cultural, and intellectual changes since. Paquette himself admits "their significant impact in the United States and beyond." It is no secret that an entire generation of academics were broadly exposed to Marcuse or closely related theoretical currents in the decades to follow. I should know, I was one of them. Indeed, I have seen how many western academics in the past half century have taken these ideas, digested, manipulated, and repackaged them, yet the core remains in terms of which sorts of ideas should be promoted and which repressed in relation to idealized, utopian notions of equality. In short, I am not saying that, in every case, today's SJWs are inspired directly by Marcuse's 1965 work on repressive tolerance. Rather, the influence of his seminal ideas, and those of the Frankfurt School in general, have had a broader genealogical influence, on the tenor, topics, and tactics of the "progressive" left today. Just because there are various links in the chain of causation does not mean that cause and effect don't occur. Influence can operate directly, indirectly, or both. In short, Paquette, by mischaracterizing my comments as considering but one possible pathway, has demolished a strawman.

But Paquette then makes an important contribution. While I would argue, based on the above, that Marcuse's ideas play a larger role than he thinks, he suggests that the matters I discuss can be analyzed via Joseph Schumpeter's work on the political dynamic between incumbents and insurgents, particularly how it is important to "not only understand what the dissidents are doing, but also what the powers that be have done or failed to do in responding to them." In

particular, Paquette stresses Schumpeter's observation that the elite often learn from their enemies, absorb their slogans, and seem "quite willing to undergo a process of conversion to a creed hostile to its very existence."

While I feel that I have covered at least some of this ground in my observations on "the long march through the institutions" and the coincidence of interests between "progressives" and economic conservatives that has emerged with globalization, Paquette's nod to Schumpeter usefully suggests that a complete analysis should go further. I agree. It is necessary to look beyond mere infiltration by insurgents and the emergence of common interests to consider additional political processes: specifically, how historically, in variously confronting or seeking to symbolically pacify radicals, powers that be find themselves inadvertently exposed to, co-opted, even socialized into positions they once would have opposed. Indeed, it is hardly a new observation that adversaries often end up being more alike than they think. Yet, unlike Paquette who comes close to dismissing Marcuse in favor of Schumpeter, I would argue that it is necessary to consider how all these processes have operated simultaneously in various contexts to add up to the intolerantly ideological world of today. In short, I feel that this is not an either/or situation, but a call for synthesis in any comprehensive historical analysis.

Turning to Elizabeth Corey, I am grateful that she sees in the factors I identify and what I have written a "fairly ecumenical" set of criticisms, something in which both "modern day Marxists" and "end of liberalism conservatives" can "find something to agree with." As I have drawn from a range of disciplines, I feel I have largely been able to strike that tricky intellectual balance and hopefully avoid getting pegged as a right wing radical. That gives me hope in these otherwise darkening days.

I also appreciate how Corey further articulates key problems with "repressive tolerance," most notably: 1, "how the expanding list of identity categories pushes not toward solidarity but toward increasing fragmentation in political and social life"; and 2, how "the focus on identities includes only certain favored ones," setting up a hierarchy of victimhood and a group of resentful leftover identities that can well prove useful to talented, vocal ideologues seeking to get in on the game. I would like to expand, albeit briefly, on each in turn.

The first, in some respects, can ultimately be traced back to a twist on Emile Durkheim's concept of organic solidarity, originally the view that as members of society become more dissimilar and diverse, social bonds rooted in similarity will be replaced by ones based on mutual interdependence. Indeed, he suggests that the "conscience collective" (i.e. ideological element) in modern societies will, in time, come to reflect this as traditional religion declines, offsetting

the anomie resulting from rapid social changes in modernizing societies. There have evolved both optimistic and pessimistic aspects of this (the former reflected in the evolution of prevailing ideals of diversity, inclusion, "tolerance," and multiculturalism; the latter that, despite these, there is increasing fragmentation, egoism, anomie and the like, accompanied by feelings that "the world has gone to hell.") I would suggest that that there is some value in both, not only for different groups, but interrelated with hegemonic progressive ideologies. Considering not only functional but symbolic and civic definitions of religion, one might argue that, as traditional religion declines, supposedly secular master ideologies like "diversity" and "multiculturalism" have broadly emerged to fill the meaning vacuum, sheltering congruent, subsidiary ideologies like environmentalism, feminism, other political ideologies, etc. These increasingly underscore our contemporary moralities parallel to how traditional religion did (yet now specifically focused not so much on individual selfishness vs. altruism but on whether actions are ethically congruent with maintaining hegemonic ideals of group equality.) Yet this New Religion of the elites, this New Morality, along with elites' increasing attempts to ideologically proselytize, indeed colonize, public space operate more favorably for those congruent ideological and identity groups they shelter, not so well for postmodern heretics, blasphemers, apostates, or the "left behind." In other words, attempts to ideologically mitigate postmodern anomie works for some, backfires for others, while fragmentation and division go on.

As for the favoring of some victim identities over others, I not only agree, but add that I have personally witnessed the destructive effect of a "favored hierarchy of victimhood." In my fieldwork on crime victim organizations, it didn't take long to observe that a hierarchy of different kinds of victims can lead to conflicts, internecine organizational strife, and attempts by others—the non-victim "left behind" members as it were—to claim "victimhood by association" to advance their position in the hierarchy. While it is not always possible, of course, to compare organizations with society writ large, many commentators have noted how competing claims of victimhood have had an enormous impact on identity politics today—so much so that it is commonly asserted that we have become a victim society. All of this neatly intersects with Corey's comment on how divisive a hierarchy of victims is, holding the real danger of populist insurgencies wielding victim claims as rhetorical wedges of legitimacy. Talk about Hegelian irony! In the meantime, I sincerely hope the deeper irony of a hierarchy of victims in a prevailing ethos of equality isn't lost on anyone.

Finally, I applaud Corey for noting how—even in the face of these many difficulties—it is necessary for us to have "uncomfortable conversations." This

is not only for achieving results (which will take time), but to encounter others and learn through interaction to see and respect them as whole people. Increased interaction, as she rightly points out, enables us to move beyond conflating complex individuals with their ideas, with mere labels, helping people step back from the feeling of balkanization, from tribal brinkmanship, softening the rough edges and preparing people to become better citizens. Just think, for example, of the difference between how many treat others online vs. face to face. Along with finding ways to foster viewpoint diversity, finding ways to increase face to face engagement could provide hope in an otherwise bleak social landscape. Maybe more of us need to come out of our sealed cells and start talking.