

## Doxing the Orthodox

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What constitutes orthodox and unorthodox today? We know that one generation's innovations may become simple givens in the next, like women bobbing their hair in the 1920s, and things that look good in one era may look bad in another, as with buildings erected in some bold new style only to appear tiresome some decades later. But in a time of constant change, rupture, and transition like our own, we may have to navigate the two tracks at once, like characters in a Philip K. Dick novel traveling between parallel universes.

To the mainstream media and the diversity establishment, for example, Brandeis University professor Dorothy Kim may seem boldly unorthodox in her challenge to medieval studies as “white supremacist.” But to those who know recent academic history, University of Chicago professor Rachel Fulton Brown's refusal to accept that designation of her cherished discipline is the truly unorthodox position today.

Sometimes, the two tracks seem to merge confusingly. That men and women are exactly the same may have begun as a radical left-wing feminist idea a few short years ago, but now constitutes an orthodoxy one rejects at his own risk, as James Damore discovered when he transgressed it by invoking biological and temperamental differences between the sexes to account for uneven outcomes in the Google workplace. Then, even as Google hierarchs fired the software engineer for his daring declaration, they lauded themselves on their eagerness to welcome “alternative” ideas: “Part of building an open, inclusive environment,” they intoned in their response to the Damore incident, “means fostering a culture in which those with alternative views, including different political views, feel safe sharing their opinions.” According to one report, however, Damore still

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feels vulnerable enough to further reprisals from the Silicon Valley sentinels as to keep his new employment a secret, kind of like Tyndale hiding on the continent from the English crown.

In addition, change can occur so rapidly that some people wind up walled off in one of the parallel universes, the threads to the former orthodoxy shredded and its address no longer discernible. Take the recent Senate hearings on Brett Kavanaugh's nomination to the Supreme Court. Every principle of fairness—not only legal bedrocks such as presumption of innocence and due process, but plain, elemental, face-to-face, fair-play, scouts' honor, thumbs-up, good-faith humanity—was abrogated in an unprecedented assault on the nominee. The weapon of choice was a thirty-five year old uncorroborated allegation of teenage sexual misbehavior used as a cudgel with the intent to destroy him, his family, and his career. Under the #MeToo dispensation, it was speedily advanced that not only should he be rejected for the Supreme Court, but he should also be removed from his position on the Court of Appeals, and, further, no longer be allowed to coach girls in sports.

I suspect that Senator Chuck Schumer knows on some level what a disgrace he helped perpetrate. He justifies it in Leninist fashion, perhaps, as the end justifies the means, as serving the cause of equity as he defines it, as advancing the never to be attained perfect group equality he tells himself he's working for. But Schumer entered congress when decorum and bipartisanship were more highly valued. Schumer's boss, House Speaker "Tip" O'Neill, opposed President Reagan's policies tooth and nail, but enjoyed Reagan's company "after 6:00 p.m." It is highly unlikely that Schumer doesn't know that what the Democrats on the Judiciary Committee did to Kavanaugh was thoroughly indecent and not the way things ought to be. But the mostly younger individuals who screamed at the hearings, who harassed Senators in elevators and restaurants, who clawed on the doors of the Supreme Court building like zombies hungry for human flesh, may really *not* know. They may in effect be metaphysically stranded in one of the parallel universes.

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In a sideshow insight, atheists always assure us that we don't need God for good behavior, that evolution has managed to sow enough comity and cooperativeness and fellow feeling in human nature (survival of the sweetest?), that we don't require even the Ten Commandments, let alone the more detailed Sermon on the Mount and Golden Rule, as guides and measurements. But the exceedingly low quality of homo sapiens being exposed in current events is quite alarming—at the level it seems of those who would laugh at an enemy being stretched out on the rack. “Whatever happens, I'm just glad we ruined Brett Kavanaugh's life,” tweeted one social justice-thirsting lover of humanity.

Well, all this has been by way of introduction to our special feature for this issue, “Unorthodox Ideas,” in which we present a clutch of disparate ideas and viewpoints that are for the most part forbidden in the scaly strictures of today's campus, in order to make a point about intellectual freedom; that it requires a willingness to put before the public ideas that may strike many people as wrong-headed. *Academic Questions* has long provided a forum for ideas and criticism about higher education that reflect our commitment to liberal arts education, intellectual freedom, the search for truth, and virtuous citizenship. By publishing these particular articles, the National Association of Scholars does not endorse their substance. We publish them as examples of reasoned opinions backed to varying degrees by good use of evidence. This does not make the articles necessarily accurate or persuasive. That is up to readers to decide for themselves. Our view is that our readers are fully capable of exercising their own critical judgment for or against the theses argued in these essays.

Certainly, the ominous resistance to intellectual freedom in the academy today was shown most graphically by the crowd that mobbed Charles Murray at Middlebury College in March of last year. In “The De-rehabilitation of Charles Murray,” John Derbyshire explains how the uproar over Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein's *The Bell Curve* (1994), establishing connections among socioeconomic status, intelligence, and, briefly (but fatally), race, had long seemed dormant while Murray pursued other interests, only to spring to life again at Middlebury, like Glenn Close rising from the bathtub at the end of *Fatal Attraction*. Even so, research on group differences has achieved discreet scholarly acceptance, as Derbyshire notes, and Murray's own work in progress will advance it further.

The reason that research touching on group differences is so vigorously resisted nowadays is that it suggests there may be factors other than unfair discrimination at work to account for different group outcomes. This would deprive the progressive left of the lion's share of their *raison d'être*. Since they can't refute such research through logic, argument, and evidence, they must stamp it out and seal it off from discussion. If the country really isn't as racist and

sexist as they say, there is less need for their activist exertions, and there is no excuse for what they have done to campus life, to humanistic education, and to several generations of young people, so they must supply ever fresh urgency to ideas that are proving fallacious and even harmful. They may say with Macbeth, “I am in blood stepped in so far that should I wade no more/Returning were as tedious as go o’er.”

Similarly, Barry Latzer’s book on the connections among race, crime, and culture was accepted by Columbia University Press, highly praised in peer reviews for its careful, conscientious, and compelling scholarship, only to be rejected when a nervous Columbia Press called in reviews from “pre-eminent African American scholars.” This provides yet another sorry example of the sullyng of scholarship with a political agenda. Latzer tells the story and explains his thesis in “Race, Crime, and Culture.”

To empty out a mall full of noisy, disruptive adolescents, play Mozart, I’ve heard. Dan Asia sweeps aside the aesthetic relativism implicit in the trendy term “musics” to argue for the superiority of the Western classical tradition in “Front and Center: The Place for Western Classical Music in the Curriculum.”

It’s long past the time we rejected tired, old-time clichés and discussed the effects of continuous mass Third World immigration honestly. In “Low Skilled Immigration and the Balkanized Campus,” Jason Richwine does so. Ironically, as Nathan Glazer pointed out in a recent interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, our combined commitment to color-blindness and equality has resulted in affirmative action, originally meant as redress to African Americans, becoming group rights for all minorities. Thus, writes Richwine, citing data on Hispanic Americans from first generation to third plus, “Because low-skilled immigrants do not assimilate within the several generations for which we have data, affirmative action for multiple groups now appears to be a more or less permanent feature of university admissions.”

At times it may have seemed that the only reason to defend monuments of the defeated Confederacy is not to be on the side of the foaming-at-the-mouth mobs viciously and destructively tearing them down. But Aaron D. Wolf gives good reasons to support their continuance in “Southern Symbols: Not in Memoriam, but (Once Again) in Defense.” Wolf explains that the Southern conception of nationhood differed from Lincoln’s spare Euclidean “proposition,” carries ideals that all those not foaming at the mouth can embrace, and invites Americans to see these monuments as a base of resistance to the homogenized one size fits all globalized identity being promulgated today.

In “The True Author of *Frankenstein*,” we take a literary turn and acknowledge the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of the gothic classic with John Lauritsen’s

argument that it was written by . . . Percy Bysshe Shelley, not his wife Mary, as is widely believed.

Judging from what unadulterated egalitarianism has done to the comportment of our fellow humans in recent days, Chilton Williamson, Jr.'s argument that higher models of behavior and achievement are needed to lift up and leaven the tenor of democracy is most timely, and he explains it in "Aristocracy and Civilization."

While the progressive Left would like to abolish the Second Amendment altogether, Timothy Hsiao argues that concealed carry is an extension of the apodictical right of self-defense in "The Moral Case for Concealed Carry on Campus."

The last entry in "Unorthodox Ideas" is a little off the academic path, whether beaten or unbeaten. In "Long Live King William," I recommend that the British monarchy skip a generation.

"In Memoriam" features two articles on the marvelous Tom Wolfe, who passed away in May of this year: Wight Martindale, Jr.'s "Tom Wolfe and the Rise of Donald Trump: A Review of Wolfe's Writings," and my "Appreciating Tom Wolfe (1930-2018)." And a hopeful and reassuring article is "A Renaissance for the Humanities," by Milton Ezrati, who reminds us of the humanity in the humanities.

In her review essay, "Education Reform: Does Anything Work?," Sandra Stotsky is pleased to find two new books that criticize the top-down model of progressive education reform prevalent today, *After the Education Wars: How Smart Schools Upend the Business of Reform*, by Andrea Gabor, and *Common Core: National Education Standards and the Threat to Democracy*, by Nicholas Tampio.

Reviews include Daniel A. Bonevac's take on *The Case Against Education: Why the Education System Is a Waste of Time and Money*, by latter day Mr. Gradgrind, Bryan Caplan. Although a musician, *AQ* advisor Dan Asia comes from a long and continuing line of lawyers, thus his enjoyment, in his second appearance in this issue, of *Scalia Speaks: Reflections on Law, Faith, and Life Well Lived*, a collection of Antonin Scalia's writings, collected by his son Christopher J. Scalia and his former law clerk Edward Whalen.

In a new *AQ* feature, "Short Takes," Bradley C.S. Watson, "Why Everything Failed," briefly rebuts Patrick Deneen's widely discussed and nerve-hitting recent book, *Why Liberalism Failed*; and Harry Greenfield, "On Rationality (or Lack Thereof) in Economics," responds succinctly to Nobel Laureate in Economics Richard Thaler's theory of the limits of rationality.

"Still Life Art" is a poem by previous poetry contributor, Donald M. Hassler, and Peter Wood tackles another stack of Books, Articles, and Items of Academic Interest.