

The Issue at a Glance



Francis Fukuyama’s God That Failed (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12129-020-09879-6>)

Mytheos Holt, Institute for Liberty and the Claremont Institute

Rendering verdicts on intellectuals still active in their fields, as the authors for our special feature in this issue attempt to do, is risky business. Reputations wax and wane throughout a writer’s career, and often posthumously as well. But some thinkers have been so influential that they demand immediate judgment. Francis Fukuyama is one of them. Fukuyama brazenly declared an “End of History” in the 1990s only to be trounced on September 11, 2001 when civilizations clashed and it looked as though he had lost his non-sanctioned bout with historian Samuel Huntington over the future of humanity. But Mytheos Holt reports that Fukuyama is a deserving and penetrating thinker, and if not for a stubbornly flawed view of the limits that human nature puts on politics, it might have been Fukuyama with his hand raised in the middle of the ring.

Judith Butler’s Deific Damage (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12129-020-09885-8>)

David Clemens, Monterey Peninsula College

Known widely for the opacity of her prose, Judith Butler is a “four-star general” in the nation’s fifty year culture war. We see her influence every day, writes David Clemens, “when we struggle with prosecutable pronoun use, proliferating genders, social constructionist *cul de sac*,

subjectivism, and with the abandonment of biology, logic, reason, and ultimately reality.”

“Racist and Proud”: The Awful Legacy of Ta-Nehisi Coates (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12129-020-09868-9>)

Mark Zunac, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

Ta-Nehisi Coates received a MacArthur Fellowship in 2008 for “[i]nterpreting complex and challenging issues around race and racism through . . . nuanced historical analysis.” But nuance has very little to do with his writing. For Coates, “Black is beautiful,” whiteness “murders black people,” and nothing will change until whites’ “own vulnerability becomes real.”

The Metamorphosis of Carlos Eire (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12129-020-09881-y>)

Michael Gonzalez, Heritage Foundation

It took a devout Catholic and Cuban exile in the U.S. to explain the profound importance of the Protestant Reformation to the success of the West, in the last of this issue's verdicts.

The Case for Carbon Dioxide (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12129-020-09871-0>)

John Staddon and Peter Morcombe

The case that carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere are largely determined by human activity, contribute heavily to the earth’s warming, and that this warming portends catastrophic consequences for humans is, according to John Staddon and Peter Morcombe, “astonishingly weak.”

How to Respond to Obscure Writing (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12129-020-09878-7>)

C.E. Larson, Virginia Commonwealth University

Academic writing can be a tough slog even when done well. But there is no reason for it to be as obscure as it often is. C.E. Larson tells us that it wouldn’t be if more academic disciplines adopted the refereeing conventions of mathematics.

Down the Memory Hole: Evidence on Educational Testing (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12129-020-09876-9>)

Richard P. Phelps, Nonpartisan Education Review

If you assumed that research evidence in all scientific fields is preserved, you'd be wrong. When the existence of previously conducted research makes funding harder to come by and favored policy goals less salient, it can disappear.

In Humans, Sex is Binary and Immutable (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12129-020-09877-8>)

Georgi K. Marinov, Stanford University School of Medicine

The idea that there are more than two sexes in human beings is a rejection of everything biological science has taught us. Unbelievably, this idea is coming directly from within the highest ranks of academia, where it appears to have significant institutional support.

Truth in Life . . . and in American Academe (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12129-020-09875-w>)

Michael Platt, author of *Mighty Opposites: Machiavelli and Shakespeare Converse on the Histories* (forthcoming)

Academia has always had its share of backbiting, cattiness, and calumny, and today is no different. But where in the world did the idea that students are qualified to evaluate their teachers, and that this would be good for their education, come from?

The 1619 Project: Believe Your Lying Eyes (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12129-020-09882-x>)

Seth Forman, National Association of Scholars

While content-related problems with the *New York Times*'s 1619 Project appear to be getting aired, the obviously tendentious timing of it has received little attention. Make no mistake. Like the "Russian collusion" narrative that preceded it, the Project is driven by presidential politics.

Our Dangerous Obsession With STEM (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12129-020-09883-w>)

Milton Ezrati, Center for the Study of Human Capital at the University at Buffalo (SUNY)

The current push for STEM education in our schools may not be sufficient to achieve the breakthroughs in science and technology that are hoped for. Teaching to navigate existing technology is not the same as cultivating the ingenuity required to attain new heights.

The Games That Academics Play (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12129-020-09872-z>)

David Lewis Schaefer, College of the Holy Cross

The field of “game studies” is beginning to infiltrate the pedagogy of even the most rigorous STEM subjects. That is troubling not only because it promotes game playing over the difficult responsibilities of adulthood, but also because it disguises a radical political agenda with the jargon of scholarly seriousness.