

THE CHRONICLE

of Higher Education

Commentary

[Home](#) [Opinion & Ideas](#) [Commentary](#)

March 27, 2011

From Students, a Misplaced Sense of Entitlement

By Elayne Clift

It was the semester from hell. In my 20 years as an adjunct faculty member, I had taught in the Ivy League and at community colleges, in Brattleboro and Bangkok, in undergraduate and graduate schools. Never had I seen such extraordinarily bad behavior in my students.

It began the first night of the graduate class, spring semester 2010, when the students attacked the syllabus for being too demanding (although it was premised on previous syllabi for the same course at the same institution). The evening went steadily downhill. I'll spare you the gruesome details, but the next day I got a call from an administrator asking me to deal with the complaints that some students had registered about me and the course. The charges they'd made were ludicrous and easily explained, but I was stunned.

The situation seemed to improve somewhat after I invited students to write down anonymous feedback, positive or negative, about anything they wished to share with me. A student collected the notes in an envelope. We set up class norms, agreeing that we would listen respectfully and give culturally sensitive feedback. I also suggested that anyone who found the course too onerous should drop it. Enrollment fell significantly.

The bad behavior did not. Sometimes it was passive-aggressive, but much of it was just plain aggressive. It got so bad that a few students apologized to me on behalf of their colleagues. "I've never seen such disrespect for a teacher," they said. I could have hugged them for their kindness. Instead I thanked them, went home, and had a good cry.

As the semester continued, I slipped further into despair. How

could it be that graduate students delivered such appallingly poor papers and presentations? They'd gotten undergraduate degrees; why couldn't they write in sentences? Why were they devoid of originality, analytical ability, intellectual curiosity? Why were they accosting me with hostile e-mails when I pointed out unsubstantiated generalizations, hyperbolic assumptions, ungrounded polemics, sourcing omissions, and possible plagiarism?

The sad thing is, I'm not alone. Every college teacher I know is bemoaning the same kind of thing. Whether it's rude behavior, lack of intellectual rigor, or both, we are all struggling with the same frightening decline in student performance and academic standards at institutions of higher learning. A sense of entitlement now pervades the academy, excellence be damned.

Increasingly, students seem not to realize what a college degree, especially a graduate degree, tells the world about one's abilities and competence. They have no clue what is expected of them at the higher levels of academic discourse and what will be expected of them in the workplace. Having passed through a deeply flawed education system in which no one is paying attention to critical thinking and writing skills, they just want to know what they have to do to make their teachers tick the box that says "pass." After all, that's what all their other teachers have done. (Let the next guy worry about it.)

When teachers refuse to lower standards, those students seem to resort to a new code of conduct that includes acted-out rage, lack of respect, and blame. That behavior is fueled by the absence of clear standards from the administration, and of administrators who care about learning, not just financial ledgers.

Too often the balance sheet, educator apathy, and a fear of resolving difficult situations lead to irresponsible practices such as encouraging grade inflation and ignoring violations of academic integrity. Thus, both students and faculty members are set up for failure.

I'm not sure how these problems should be tackled, but this much I do know: If they aren't dealt with at individual institutions as well as through universal reform, the familiar claim that American

college students are "the best and the brightest" will become even more laughable.

I also know this: No student who speaks to me the way some did last year will be permitted to remain in my class. My syllabi are non-negotiable. Cellphones, side conversations, open computers, and other distractions, along with plagiarism, will not be tolerated. All papers will require complete sentences, clear writing, cogent arguments, and proper citation.

It's a start, and my wary contribution to desperately needed education reform.

Elayne Clift is an adjunct faculty member at several colleges in New England. She writes about women, politics, and social issues.


Comments
Powered by DISQUS

Add a comment

Log in to post
with your Chronicle account:

C Chronicle


Don't have an account? [Create one now.](#)
Or log in using one of these alternatives:



Showing 40 of 532 comments

Sort by Oldest first Follow comments: [✉ by e-mail](#) [📡 by RSS](#)

Real-time updating is **enabled**. [\(Pause\)](#)



richardtaborgreene 1 month ago

I like filtering out the kind of louses you describe above. Life is short and I am old and do not want my last years wasted on people without motivation. In Asia I find people of HUGE motivation, but without chances and tools. It is a pleasure to convert their motives into accomplishments. Why waste time in rich nations of flabby populations drenched in lazy self regard and degenerate media and self imagery. There is an ENTIRE WORLD out there hungrier, more respectful, used to and still willing to work hard, and aspiring for the forefront of historic accomplishment. Let the lazy rich slobs drown in their own self esteem.

To be sure, I did my stints in America's poorest neighborhoods (Weston, Mass. druggies and all, Munjoy Hill, Portland Maine, Garfield Park Chicago, Kwang Jung II Korea, and dozens of others). I gave U of Michigan first graduate AI course homework to Lotus 1-2-3 students of mine at Cleary College, and when they solved U of Michigan exam questions faster than U of Michigan students, they could not believe it! They were culturally unprepared to beat elites in their own nation (not surprising to any anthropologist, or sociologist). I did my stint NOT filtering. But a stint is all that is called for. Civilization needs care and decency and competence and leadership (of democratic non-Western sorts), so filtering has a valid role in civilization's future (and I double filter, not accepting the Harvard types who lust for Wall Street and self enrichment mainly).

Truth be told, the US has experienced a power change as a few operatives got the South to turn Republican (it had been nominally Democrat for decades hence without voice). The result is coastal elites were denigrated and mocked and ignored---with relish---and rural bigotries and historic shoulder chips became policies. We are witnessing a great nation brought low by democracy---when elites have lost their grip on voters, due to chasing personal riches, leaving poor people without parents, schooling, and healthcare, and empowerment of people historically contemptuous of elite anything and elite everything. A nation brought low by lack of hierarchic respects. Interesting but ultimately sad and painful. Asia is fun, now, however! That is why I have been there for the better part of 2.5 decades.

191 people liked this. **occidentalir** 1 month ago in reply to richardtaborgreene

"I did my stints in America's poorest neighborhoods (Weston, Mass. druggies and all"

My comment is unrelated to your main point, but I'm confused by this passage. Weston MA may indeed have "druggies", but describing it as one of "America's poorest neighborhoods" is bizarre. I lived in Boston over 20 years ago, and Weston was constantly noted as having the highest per capita income of any city or town in Massachusetts. According to wikipedia, it still does.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M...>

Even a high-income municipality can have low-income neighborhoods (Washington DC is a prominent example), but I wasn't aware of any such neighborhoods in Weston.

25 people liked this. **richardtaborgreene** 1 month ago in reply to occidentalir

I was being perhaps a bit too indirect---Weston had mostly MIT and Harvard faculty kids when I did practice teaching there and what amazed me was the emotional isolation, filled with massive amounts of drugs and pitiful amounts of sex. As Mother Teresa said, rich nations and their richest neighborhoods have a spiritual poverty beyond the world's poorest villages in some respects (but with choices possible that are much easier ones than poor families face). The irony of Weston named as poor was what I sought to use to make my point---sorry it ended up being too indirect.

23 people liked this. **Max Hartshorne** 1 month ago in reply to occidentalir

I had the same thought! Weston??? Is that as bad ass as say, that drug addict town known as Dover? I live here in MA and that sounds just plain silly!

3 people liked this. **katisumas** 1 month ago in reply to richardtaborgreene

My impression is that financial elites (most of them having started their trek with inherited money) have indeed their grip on society. What you call "coastal elites" v. "rural elites" has nothing to do with it. Has globalization passed you by?

I hate to be rude, but if you blame democracy for the situation in the US, including our Great Recession, well, you're pretty much out of touch with reality.

Could it be that students have this sense of entitlement because they see that the "elite" is robbing society blind without being held to account and certainly without busting their butts? They want to join them. That's the values inculcated by the "elite" propaganda machine (being in Asia, you might not be familiar with Fox News. It's the most widely watched news media in the US, and yes, a number of their commentators would certainly agree with you on the evil of democracy.)

What we need in the US is actual democracy, not "respect for hierarchy" enforced by events such as Tiannanmen Square.

46 people liked this.



claytoncramer 1 month ago in reply to katisumas

Actual democracy? You mean like states banning elective abortion and homosexuality? You want *Roe v. Wade* (1973) and *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003) to go away and allow majorities to make decisions again?

35 people liked this.



richardtaborgreene 1 month ago in reply to katisumas

OKAY,

- 1) I agree with your point that students see elites robbing society for their own boats in the bahamas (Harvard culture and MIT culture, physics majors in Wall Street).
- 2) I agree with your point that I and my ideas are totally wrong and off base (they ALWAYS are)
- 3) I disagree that students are PRIMARILY doing this crap because of globalization and the example of social elites being Harvard-like BECAUSE:

The students being talked about above are too young too lazy too unsophisticated too unlearned to do what you attribute to them---they are merely copying behaviors from homes, that is, parents, that is, contempt at home for all elites and enjoyment of the "play" with ideas that happens when ideas are detached from realities of effects on other people's lives. Casual narcissism, as others have pointed out, are now so much the norm of Americans and their fat bodies and souls and potato sack forms of fashion, that the new DSM is proposing eliminating narcissism as a psychic dysfunction. That is just a form of collective giving up typical of civilizations in their death throes (whatever a throe is).

I know I am being a bit unfair to you in saying this, but truth be told, being in EAST ASIA for decades exposes one to youth so utterly different---powerful in motivation, masters real masters of path integrals (over volumetric paths on sphere surfaces for example), masters of linear correlations and their compoundings into multiple, path, and SEQ hierarchies (all from average high school math scores)---they sit quietly in class and you think, nothing is going on, but an exam or project later and you realize they were listening intelligently. Read the seminar reading list (posted in Box at LinkedIn and in my independent.adacemia.edu site) for my last Japanese undergraduate seminar---116 graduate level English books read (2 main chapters in each having their top 50 points diagrammed in Structural Reading Diagrams). I challenge anyone at Chronicle to find ANY seminar anywhere in the non East Asian world that does as much high quality reading with MEASURES of the quality of the reading done monthly (in the form of detailed macro-structure--Kintsch, van Dijk, Meyer---diagrams)! I am not trying to blow my horn (I am an old man nearly dead) but I am saying that there are hundreds of millions of asian students I have sampled who blow past the U of Chicago MBAs I taught in verbal skill, math skill, motivation, ambition, drive, discipline, courtesy and you can do things in class with them beyond the imagination of Harvard professors (I mean Harvard literally here). You can run rings around Harvard undergrads with my present classes. Big rings--and they do not LUST for Wall Street and boats and chasing trysts in bushes with celebrity females. Indeed if recent survey data are to be believed they lack both lust in general for sex and knowledge of why and how to do it.

34 people liked this.



mimir 1 month ago in reply to richardtaborgreene

You live among Asians and don't bother to get to know them. I am married into an Asian family, and because my children are successful far beyond what any of my Asian friends' and relatives' children are able to do, I am often brought into not only educational but child-rearing conversations as a parenting/teaching expert.

Asians believe and teach their children that excellence comes from hard work and perseverance. If you succeed, it is because you worked hard. If you fail, it is because you did not work hard enough. Many Asian cultures also value academic positions far out of proportion to any real value that they have.

The upside? Most children achieve far more than they would have otherwise.

The downside? Too often, a child's total worth is tied to grades. The child's job is to make excellent grades and be at the top of the class. Leisure time is often viewed with deep suspicion for fear that it is not sufficiently edifying. Many children labor under the feeling that their parents do not love them if they are not the best, period. Parents will enroll their children in extra classes until almost all their waking hours, even in summer, are full of organized educational activities. Many Asian children reach college never even having cleaned their own rooms, run laundry, taken a car to get an oil change, or cooked a dinner because their sole job in the family is to learn while their mothers fuss over them and wait on them hand and foot. They often literally did not have the time growing up to learn to care for themselves. The result is a strange combination of academic ability and utter helplessness with the most basic self-care. There is also a level of imperiousness among these "little emperors" (as they are called in China, but I have seen it as often in both genders from places as distant as Vietnam and Sri Lanka) that is astounding. The average level of hideous disrespect for their parents is many times higher than that of the average American child--the level of demand that the child puts onto the parents seems equal to that the parents put on the child, at times. Children who are unable to perform up to expectations--that is, who are not the best--are usually the worst because they feel that there is no pleasing their parents anyway, so why even try? Asian cultures as a whole are poor at expressing approval, but disapproval is voluminous and unceasing.

Another downside is that many of the culturally Asian students--East and South, both--too often pursue academic paths they do not have the intelligence to be successful in. While perseverance can get you far, it can only get you SO far, and after that, intelligence has to kick in. This is especially evident in STEM graduate programs. My Asian husband was regarded with suspicion by any group to which he was assigned for projects until he proved himself because of the sheer volume of frankly incompetent grad students who shared his ethnicity. They tried very hard, but often, they were just not equal to the task they had chosen for themselves. Computer science is just too hard for a lot of people, especially at the graduate level. Of those who graduate, MOST are bad. The majority of good work in any organization is done by a tiny minority of computer scientists and software engineers.

By the way, Asian children are also taught explicitly to do what Westerners would consider sucking up to the teacher. (Obviously, it's not considered that in an Asian cultural context.)

Americans used to believe that results came from personal effort, too. Now, this thought is taboo. One must now believe that all people are really just exactly the same, and there is no excellence at all--except there are precious few who are foolish enough to believe that, and so has arisen the theory that actually dominates the modern American point of view: That smart people are just born that way. Period. It wasn't the far right that sold people the message that their bootstraps were broken and that some people are just born privileged. Does it sound familiar to you? It should. This is the progressive line for generations.

Now, while it is true that some people are born smarter than others, most people grossly underperform in relation to their abilities. Far more rational would be a view somewhere between the two. Yes, intelligence matters, but what you do with whatever you have trumps all. You should be realistic about your goals, but you should also set them as high as you are able to succeed. Work very hard to be good--then choose something you're now good at, not something that's more prestigious that you can just barely handle.

If you think these kids are brilliant.... Well, they certainly ARE working a lot harder. And what you're asking them to do is probably not very intellectually demanding--simply demanding on their time.

As for physics majors in Wall Street... I'm actually ashamed that you're an academic if you're using that as an example of someone scorning the life of the mind for some lesser fruit. The opportunities for physics majors are laughably paltry, especially if you have no desire to become an astrophysicist. It is not an expanding field--nor should it be. We don't need any more physics faculty than we have. If majoring in physics is interesting and makes a person more mentally nimble for Wall Street, then more power to them. It's also a good major before med school.

120 people liked this.



Guest 1 month ago in reply to richardtaborgreene

I am still with you The sense of entitlement crosses socioeconomic boundaries. Whether you are a for profit Westwood College or a UCLA you are dealing with the same genre of students.

9 people liked this. [Like](#)



Guest 1 month ago in reply to richardtaborgreene

It's not that complex. All they learned is there is no loyalty. They've watched every older family member get laid off, downsized, and outsourced. The only thing they believe in is building relationships on trust and credibility. to the extent that you don't tell the truth to them 100% of the time and follow through on every commitment they won't listen to you. What makes you different from anyone else? The relationship, the relationship.

6 people liked this. [Like](#)



Bonnie Winfield-Fitzhugh 1 month ago in reply to katisumas

Katisumas said: being in Asia, you might not be familiar with Fox News. It's the most widely watched news media in the US, and yes, a number of their commentators would certainly agree with you on the evil of democracy.

I say: You should give a better example than a news station that has been sited a number of times for embellishing and lying in reports. It's like telling someone everything in the national enquirer is correct and true...

20 people liked this. [Like](#)



Matthew Bedford 1 month ago in reply to Bonnie Winfield-Fitzhugh

In measurements of balance in sides presented and represented, Fox News has won hands down over the more established (read: failing) media outlets. It is also watched by increasing majorities and is ranked more trustworthy by all demographics and political stripes.

While you complain about embellishments and lying, may I point out Rathergate? Almost anything an MSNBC host has said (except the mid afternoon host whose name I cannot recall at this moment who is an amazing interviewer, the one who grew up Muslim)?

7 people liked this. [Like](#)



amosje 1 month ago in reply to Bonnie Winfield-Fitzhugh

I think you mean "cited", no?

[Like](#)



Guest 1 month ago in reply to katisumas

No. The sense of entitlement is a learned behavior in K-12. We, educators, have to connect

with students so that we can help them learn. That has mistakenly been translated by most administrators in K-12 into being their friends, rather than discipline teaching mentors. As I explained to Elayne in my post, I do not accept the "attitude". My expectation is they came to learn something. The first thing the student learns is I am their mentor, not their enabler. Like Patrick Swayze in "Roadhouse": Be nice and respectful to them all the way out the door.

23 people liked this. [Like](#)



Guest 1 month ago in reply to Guest

Sorry, forgot to mention my retention rate at its highest 97.73% is the best in the University system.

6 people liked this. [Like](#)



claytoncramer 1 month ago in reply to richardtaborgreene

"Truth be told, the US has experienced a power change as a few operatives got the South to turn Republican (it had been nominally Democrat for decades hence without voice)."

You mean the operatives that turned the Democratic Party into the party of abortion, casual sex, and homosexuality? That did a great job of pushing a largely evangelical section of America into the Republican Party. Congratulations!

42 people liked this. [Like](#)



richardtaborgreene 1 month ago in reply to claytoncramer

I like your point---but in general

Newt Gingrich, led by B. W., aimed at that conversion and brilliantly succeeded in turning the South Republican, bringing actual representation to Southerners that they had lacked in a Democratic party whose values, as you illustrate, never fit them. We ARE seeing the true South's values ruining the USA due to a kind of temporary joy of having a voice for the first time in 100 years. It is natural, democratic, but it is destroying the nation. THAT is the paradox I am after---I do NOT subscribe to the sport teams model of nation management---my team is better than your team and my team is always right (both the democrat and the republican form of that disgusts me and is, in my terms, uneducated indeed, anti-educated behavior, barbarism).

21 people liked this. [Like](#)



claytoncramer 1 month ago in reply to richardtaborgreene

The Northern Democratic Party was actually a free love, homosexual, abortion-supportive party in 1960? Wow, I never knew!

8 people liked this. [Like](#)



ivorytower54 1 month ago in reply to richardtaborgreene

Wow. I'm pretty sure that those democrats were alienated by JFK and LBJ. I'm pretty sure that the term Reagan democrat presaged Mr. Gingrich's "turning the South Republican". I hope you don't teach this subject to impressionable minds. This southern-frying of American politics has been happening for decades now.

6 people liked this. [Like](#)



JWF85 1 month ago in reply to claytoncramer

Democrats are in the wrong for not bullying gay people, nor exerting theocratic ideals? Huh?

32 people liked this. [Like](#)



claytoncramer 1 month ago in reply to JWF85

My point was that it was not just Southerners who believed in exerting "theocratic" ideals as you call them. It was the whole country, including northern Democrats. As late as 1976, Maryland's legislature passed a revised law that made oral sex a crime.

4 people liked this. [Like](#)



K 1 month ago in reply to JWF85

clay - so often it's not reciprocated, and I think that is a crime!

12 people liked this. [Like](#)



Elizabeth 1 month ago in reply to claytoncramer

The party of super casual sex, homosexuality, and along with the casual sex, abortion, but only for the wealthy???... well, that sir would be to be the republican party.

14 people liked this. [Like](#)



claytoncramer 1 month ago in reply to Elizabeth

I must have missed the net worth requirement in the laws against abortion, fornication, and sodomy. Where were those in the statutes?

If you mean that wealthy people often find ways around laws, yes, no question about it. But that would include at least as many Democrats as Republicans both then and now.

7 people liked this. [Like](#)



DonM 1 month ago in reply to richardtorgreene

Racial bigotries and historical shoulder ships were the rule when Democrats ran the south. That is why federal laws against lynching were routinely proposed by Republicans and voted down by Democrats.

Davis Bacon was put in place to keep southern blacks from competing with whiter than white unions. Thank goodness, lynching is no longer common, but Davis Bacon still protects racism disguised as Unionism.

Unions exist to threaten workers who compete with them. That is their only function. Managers are not called scabs, only other workers. The Teamsters joined with the Mafia to enhance their ability to

coerce to prevent immigrants from competing. Union corruption was not a byproduct of a particular union leader's wealth, it was the sole intent of the union managers, and its enablers from the very start. The rest, the "to better the lives of the workers" crap was for the rubes.

33 people liked this. [Like](#)



richardtaborgreene 1 month ago in reply to DonM

counterexamples, whenever one talks about groups having 3 or more people in them, do not disprove a generalization---valid survey data is what disproves generalizations, not lobs across the net! Basis Logic 101

9 people liked this. [Like](#)



mimir 1 month ago in reply to richardtaborgreene

Have you actually worked in the real world with unions? EVER?

I've had four close encounters. Husband worked a skill-less job in high school and money was extorted against his will by the union he did not want to belong to. I worked in a closed shop as an engineering intern and was told repeatedly to stop working so hard because I was making the union people look bad. Also had to bake cookies and flirt to bribe an idiot who couldn't be fired because of the union into doing his job and not ruining \$10,000 of paper because he didn't like working. (Managers had simply been working around him for nearly a decade.) I also reviewed the books of a local fiberglass manufacturer (another engineering job) who was paying \$20-25/hr for completely unskilled labor due to a union. Solved that problem by changing the technology and moving our parts out of there. I also had a friend in construction whose car was totaled by union thugs when he refused to vote union. His best friend on the same job was blinded permanently in one eye when he was attacked for the same thing.

THIS is the real face of the unions. There's no "survey data" that disproves widespread union threats and intimidation. There's no "survey data" that shows the justice of forcing everyone to belong to a group that they don't want to be a part of and contribute part of their income to it. (This, BTW, is called extortion if anyone else does it.) There is, however, data to show that car manufacturers are opening new plants, and it isn't in Michigan or Illinois, and that's not because car manufacturers are greedy and evil.

Your combination of arrogance and ignorance is astounding.

51 people liked this. [Like](#)



K 1 month ago in reply to DonM

Unions do not exist only as means of intimidating workers. They exist to protect their rights from companies and sometimes believe their rights extend too far. I've experienced many of the same things mimir has (though luckily not the physical violence) but I still would not vote to remove someone else's union.

What is with people always polarizing every issue?

15 people liked this. [Like](#)



claytoncramer 1 month ago in reply to richardtaborgreene

"We are witnessing a great nation brought low by democracy---when elites have lost their grip on voters, due to chasing personal riches, leaving poor people without parents, schooling, and

healthcare"

You seem to be saying that without elites running the government, poor people suddenly became orphans? I'm old enough to remember when most people—even in the poor neighborhood in which I grew up—had two parents. Even more amazing—the mother was usually at home to raise the kids. Yet the great social transformation that means that most young people now grow up in a divorced home, and few indeed have either parent at home during the day—took place *after* the elites decided to change the old social structure of which *Leave it to Beaver* was an idealized image. Are you suggesting that sexual equality in the workplace (which drove much of the breakdown of the Mom-as-homemaker model) and easy divorce laws was the result of *conservatives* taking power?

If you want to find an explanation for how elites lost control of the political process, I would suggest that you look at how the generation that grew up *after* your wonderful elites "fixed" everything moved to the right.

28 people liked this. [Like](#)



richardtaborgreene 1 month ago in reply to claytoncramer

Technically CITI-bank memos have it right---the USA IS a PLUTOCRACY today, with rich people having effectively bought not only the demo party and the repu party but the supreme court now as well. It is banks selling debt successfully to the entire middle class--enslaving generations. The right says--it is their own fault no self responsibility---the left says--poor poor victims of evil elites. Left and right are NOT the solution, their views are predictable and petty and straight out of party headquarters, too leninist for me.

22 people liked this. [Like](#)



K 1 month ago in reply to claytoncramer

Yeah, that would be great if we actually lived in a society where it was feasible to have a 1-income household.

5 people liked this. [Like](#)



claytoncramer 1 month ago in reply to K

Oddly enough, I have seen the claim that while average worker pay has fallen to roughly 1/2 of what it was in the 1950s, average family income is about the same. What happens to wages when you double the percentage of workers competing for those jobs? Suddenly, instead of a family living on the husband's income, you now need both the husband and the wife working full-time to cover expenses. Every mother working full-time was a great idea, wasn't it?

15 people liked this. [Like](#)



K 1 month ago in reply to K

Clay - you got me. I totally fell into the trap of arguing with a "believer". Nothing I could possibly say would lead you to believe anything other than women are the root of ALL evil and should be barefoot and pregnant in the kitchen. My bad.

16 people liked this. [Like](#)



decora 1 month ago in reply to richardtaborgreene

id just like to point out that the "rural people" at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign are responsible for the web browser you are using right now... without them a little thing called Mosaic never would have become Netscape Navigator.

I found the thesis and the 'supporting arguments' of this paragraph to be lacking in intellectual rigor. Ad hominem attacks are generally not accepted as legitimate debating tools.

23 people liked this. [Like](#)



mimir 1 month ago in reply to richardtaborgreene

Please. This is not the result of "rural bigotries" but the opposite. It is the result of children who are raised on the fruits of modern intellectual scholarship, who are told that every voice is equally important, that every opinion counts, that what they have to say is valuable just because they want to say it.

This is the intersection of postmodernism, relativism, and the self-esteem movement. And it CAME from the "intellectual elites."

This is not the result of "poor people" losing respect for their betters. This is a result of middle class parents being told that making their kids feel bad is tantamount to abuse and that their job is to protect their children from every physical and emotional mishap while teachers are being trained and schoolbooks infused with the philosophy that all thoughts and efforts are equal, and to judge them is to improperly impose one's personal opinion upon someone else.

The progressives are losing the portion of the country that still has a brain because some people, at least, are realizing that living on sheer emotion, impulse, and self-righteousness is not particularly sane. And that's all the far left can peddle anymore.

If you actually visited these "backward" rural people, you'll discover towns in which children are still expected to say "Yes, ma'am," and "No, sir," and adults are, at the very least, given the honorific "Miss" or "Mister" and are still even called by their surnames in some places. There's no lack of respect there. If there's a flaw, it's that too many of the kids don't look high enough for themselves--that they are content with so little, relatively speaking.

But that doesn't sit well with your bigotry, does it? Your vision of mobs of hicks invading universities and overthrowing the order there is beyond ludicrous and paranoid. Sorry, but you'll find that the backgrounds of the self-righteous brats is overwhelmingly from the top half of household income.

69 people liked this. [Like](#)



K 1 month ago in reply to mimir

I agree partially with what you're saying. I agree that this dilemma is due to some intellectuals (not all!) saying, "praise your child for everything they do!"

After teaching in a tiny rural college for a year and being slurred to my face, in front of the entire class, I have to disagree with the idea that the rural kids are in any way better.

Both groups have their own snobbery. In urban areas they mock rural folks for being backwards and unintelligent and because of this they don't think they should have to work as hard. In rural areas they mock urban individuals for being morally bankrupt and that has clouded their intellect and because of this they don't think they should have to work as hard.

I have seen the development of quite a few plans at the college which are doomed. By why were they started? "X University has this program!" X University is also in a thriving urban neighborhood with plenty of nearby firms that would take graduates from the program. We? Are a five hour drive from the *nearest* firm. Good luck with that.

5 people liked this. [Like](#)



richardtaborgreene 1 month ago in reply to mimir

Even though the particular thrust of your remark and the context you assume for me are things I cannot support—I enjoy and like your point about the UTTER MESSES OF PROGRESSIVISMS—an idea swamp of Biblical propositions. The horizontal Tower of Babel, not plural languages but plural silly cute French-like transmogrifications of value and sense and decency in use of language. Yuk and double Yuk. Barthes, Kristeva, de Mann, Fish, Yuk Yuk Yuk. I cannot defend that stench-y toilet swirl of morale draining progressive isms. Triple Yuk.

1 person liked this. [Like](#)



j_sanchez 1 month ago in reply to richardtaborgreene

I have to disagree with you on your US power-shift thesis. I had a experience similar to Ms. Cliff's at the University of Michigan, but the entitled students were Democrat-voting, liberal undergraduates. Some were elites - including the son of a film director - but many were students on scholarships based on need or under-represented minority status.

This was 88-90.

Several tenured professors commented on the rudeness and, frankly, stupid behavior of the undergraduates. This ranged from students openly mocking their instructors' "accents" (e.g. Midwestern regional accents) to missing due dates and then crying racism when the instructor wouldn't accept them weeks later (especially sad when student and instructor shared the same background). One thing I noticed in particular was that, although I shared the same cultural and social background of many of these students, I did not share the same familial history of a broken home and multi-generations of assistance programs.

"leaving poor people without parents, schooling, and healthcare"

Poor people have parents right until it becomes more sensible, economically-speaking, to rely on the state. If you will lose your pre-natal care and transportation subsidies that enable you to attend college if you marry your (also impoverished) boyfriend, you will not marry the father of your soon-to-be born child. In fact, if you're anything like my peers, your fiancé will live with you in subsidized housing (except on "inspection" dates) until your oldest child is a teenager. It simply didn't add up that by marrying a man who made less than \$20K a year, you'd lose more than \$20K of assistance and scholarships.

"empowerment of people historically contemptuous of elite anything and elite everything"

And here's the crux: "elite" has come to mean moneyed, having political and social access denied to others, and generally holding themselves above the masses; e.g., Wall Street investors and entrepreneurs. I used to hear class warfare pushed by Socialist Workers on the Diag at U-M; later I heard it in graduate classes in education where none of my instructors were Republican skills. So my feeling on it - and I'm a far cry from a conservative Republican - is that we're reaping the contention and class-conscious envy that we sowed.

14 people liked this. [Like](#)



sahara 1 month ago in reply to richardtaborgreene

richardtaborgreene, stay there.

1 person liked this. [Like](#)



mpm2x 1 month ago

I think that students should have more of a "sense of entitlement" they truly are the pe-ons and it is about time that they stood up for themselves.

4 people liked this.

Like

Load more comments

Copyright 2011. All rights reserved.

The Chronicle of Higher Education 1255 Twenty-Third St, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20037