

Threnody for the Humanities



Figure in a Night Landscape, Matthew Wong, 2017

Dearly beloved: We gather here this day
to bewail and lament the passing from this world
of a once mighty bough of the oak of learning
whose decease, unnatural and premature, eventuated
due to premeditated misfeasance on the part of
doctrinaire ideologues united in rebellion against God
while believing in communism with the zealotry of religious
fanatics,
still longing and laboring for the dictatorship of the
proletariat,
still mistaking Marx (to whom they nightly prayed) for Moses.

Who knew Humanities departments would be reduced
to warehouses of frauds, ivory towers of Babel
populated by vacuous nihilists prating inanities, constant
nonsense,

meaningless gibberish precipitating the decline of
civilization
vitiating from within by a tendentious cadre of tenured
radicals
incubating and inculcating cohorts of grievance mongers,
sissified solipsists enwombed in echo chambers
and infected with identity politics, the new opiate of the
elite now
reflexively predisposed to dudgeon, as if feelings trumped
facts?

Thus were the Humanities warped, hijacked, disfigured,
distorted into a melodramatic pageant of grudges;
who will ever pardon this cynical, generations-long
manipulation of matriculating youth
expecting education but experiencing indoctrination,
deserving a growth zone but granted a safe space,
unwittingly victims of a shell game producing
instead of individuals mere figurants in a mob?

Centuries hence none will comprehend in the least
the valorizing of all things subversive and transgressive,
the prevalence of relativism, the timidity in the halting
words of cowards careful to qualify everything to death,
the linguistic gymnastics of obscurantists whose sole aim
was ambiguity (fog as a goal)—that dense academic mist
designed to exclude outsiders and self-satisfy insiders,
a pathetic affectation of non-physician “doctors”
who in their credentialed obtuseness proved unlearned
in elementary algebra: obscurity profundity.

Surely none will fathom how for decades (!)
completely impenetrable drivel passed for sagacity,
or why academe sought to complicate
when the real world strove to simplify;
all will simply overflow with relief and gratitude
for the restoration of the original trivium:

common sense, clarity, sanity.

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