

reduced to their politics, and formulation of simple categories; victim and guilty, oppressed and oppressor.

Because of the incessant targeting and advocacy of this sensibility, too many people remain silent for fear of intemperate abuse for any challenge. Indeed, people may accept agreeable lies or misstatements and cling to them rather than cause difficulties. Jonathan Swift's aphorism is still valid: falsehood flies, especially now online, and the truth comes limping after it.

The need for self-questioning is urgent, as is the attitude, often uncomfortable, of listening to different opinions, theories or moral stances.

It takes courage to counter this position of what can be considered wokery or cancel culture. One such exhibition of courage is the challenge in April 2021 coming from a middle aged math teacher in an expensive private school Grace Church high school in lower Manhattan, a school to which celebrities send their children, costing \$57,000 a year. The teacher, Paul Rossi publicly accused the school of indoctrinating students with antiracism ideology that is offensive to white students, he criticized the school policy of wanting teachers to embrace antiracism training, and to treat students differently on the basis of race. He argued that this policy makes students identify with their race before individual identities are formed. He considered this as indoctrination and ideological conformity, and resulted in students being afraid to speak up.

Rossi was reprimanded for airing his differences in a public forum but, at least at present, has not lost his job. The principal, George Davison, responded that every facet of the work of the school was enhanced by the diversity of the community, by equity and inclusion which were virtues essential to sound learning. But these were not enough. Even more important was commitment to the work of anti-racism and

to the cause of justice. From Grace School, he said, students would hear the call to serve the common good and the dignity of humanity. However, Davison failed to address any of the claims and criticisms made by Rossi.

Race and color has become a subject of contention in Britain, even in indiscrete fashion. The host of British Channel 5 TV chat show, the 55 year old Jeremy Vine, on the program on April 15, 2021 asked a guest whether she thought it was a problem that all 30 attendees at the funeral of Prince Philip at Windsor castle would be white: "I'm just trying to think whether there's anyone of color in there." To her credit the guest, herself a radio star, responded somewhat curiously that she did not think it was a problem "because the Royal Family are a family." Interestingly, and probably because of the boorish remark of Vine, the BBC received over 110,000 complaints from listeners many of whom, among other criticisms, regarded the remark as race baiting.

Entertainers have become overly alert to and bothered by alleged issues of racial or social discrimination and injustice. Hollywood, where conservatives are an endangered species, has made this apparent by its recent offerings. Now we have the humble apology given to "every single Indian person" by the actor Hank Azaria for his performance in the sitcom *The Simpsons* for voicing the amusing Indian-American character, Apu. The character, he now realized, was created with good intentions, but it had contributed to "structural racism." Azaria now 56 explained he was a white kid from Queens and he had not known any better that there could be negative consequences in the nearly thirty years he played the character.

The acute answer to wokery is laughter. John Cleese, 81 year old well known acerbic satirist, not wanting to be left behind by Azaria immediately commented on the confession. He mockingly offered his own apologies on behalf of Monty Python for all the many sketches they did making fun of white English

people: "We're sorry for the distress we may have caused." Cleese was caustic that the once beloved Azaria comic character had suddenly become politically incorrect. Cleese was also serious and to be taken seriously. The call to be nice to people finished up as humorless, censorious, literal minded, posturing ideology.

The impact wokery is pervasive. Apologies have also come from the Rowntree Society, a small charity and its associates, which promotes the history of the Rowntree chocolate company founded in 1822, apologies for the fact that the wealth of the company may have come from the practices of indenture and slavery. It issued a rallying call to renew its focus on racial justice. Besides the business of manufacturing confectionary, Rowntree, a Quaker family, has also been involved in social reforms, philanthropy, and charities. The research of the Rowntree Society, in response to the BLM movement, is reviewing the company's supply chains and any history relating to slavery and colonialism.

Sugar is sweet but its history is murky. The Rowntree company may have profited from the slave trade, yet there is no evidence that the company directly owned or traded in enslaved people, but there is concern that some goods traded through the original grocery business were likely to have been produced by enslaved workers. Rowntree may have used indentured labor when people from India and south-east Asia were recruited into bonded labor on plantations in the Caribbean and West Africa. The company also purchased cocoa from Portuguese colonies in West Africa where slavery was still permitted into the early 20th century. Most recently, there seemed to be racial discrimination and antiunion tactics at a south African subsidy, involving summary dismissal or forced unemployment. Rowntree, together with other companies, sold commodities likely to have been produced by enslaved workers. It bought plantations in British West Indies.

From chocolate to the skies. United Airlines has announced a new recruitment policy for its pilots, the flight deck will reflect the diversity of its passengers. It plans for 50% of its future 5,000 pilots training in the next decade will be women or people of color, compared to the present situation where just over 7% of the more than 12,000 pilots are women, and 13% are people of color.

The latest controversial decision concerns critical actions to the new Georgian voting law and alleged restrictions of voting access to people of color. As a result of the controversy the MLB Commissioner Robert Manfred decided to move the 2021 All Star Game from Atlanta, Georgia to Denver, Colorado. The decision was approved by some companies, Delta, Coca Cola, J.P Morgan, which were critical of the voting law, though not by other companies. The controversy is open. Should business, sports leagues and others, boycott dealing with and censuring governmental bodies because of political differences? Will wokery and its companion cancel culture dominate political and economic behavior?