

# DEI's Demise

By Theodore Dalrymple



Most people are inclined to suppose that if there were justice in the world, they would be better off. This, of course, is the merest prejudice. Hamlet was, perhaps, nearer the mark

when he said, "Use every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping?" If this is itself an exaggeration of the truth, I can at least think of many people to whom it would apply. Luckily for them, justice is not the only desideratum in human affairs: Mercy, humanity, understanding, decency, kindness, and compassion all have (within limits) their claims, limits that are always a matter of judgment. We are rightly horrified by the title of an 18th-century pamphlet, *Hanging Not Punishment Enough*: There must be a limit to the severity of the punishments that we are prepared to inflict, whatever the deserts of the punished.

From the point of view of justice, though, dismissal of persons employed in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is not enough. If justice were done them, they would have to disgorge all that they had been paid (not earned) during their employment and furthermore compensate their companies, institutions, public services, etc., for all the harm that they had inflicted upon them and upon society in general.

No doubt at some time in the distant past—what counts as the

distant past these days is a shorter and shorter time ago—some of these persons meant well, or thought that they did. That history is full of the most terrible injustices can hardly be denied, though those who concentrate on them are apt to overlook the achievements of the past, which are taken for granted in a way in which injustices are not.

But the goodness of good intentions tends to disappear when they, the good intentions, are turned into career opportunities by bureaucratic alchemists; and I think that malignity always lay lurking in the minds of those who wanted to right the wrongs of the past. They saw an opportunity and seized it.

The very term “DEI” is one of the most perfect examples of newspeak in current usage, in which words are made to connote the very opposite of what, in practice, they mean. Alas, connotation often triumphs today over denotation. Perhaps it always has triumphed but seems to do so with ever greater frequency in the information, or misinformation, age.

Diversity means uniformity, in precisely the same way as freedom meant slavery in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*; if, that is, the only diversity worthy of a university’s consideration, in a country in which citizens are equal before the law, is diversity of thought. It is perfectly obvious that there cannot be positive discrimination without the negative variety, and if the grounds for positive and negative discrimination are racial, say, then the discriminators are at least racialist if not racist.

There is in theory a difference between a racialist and a racist. The latter thinks that there are inherent differences between human races that place the races on a hierarchy of desirable and undesirable qualities or characteristics, and that, as a consequence, individuals of races ought to be treated as representatives of those races, not as individuals. The former, the racialist, need not place races in a hierarchy

but believes that racial categories should play a role in determining proper policy. This, perhaps, is a slender difference, but it exists.

I think that DEI is, in practice, racist, and not merely racialist. He or she suspects or fears in the recesses of his or her mind that there is a race, or there are races, that without their supposedly benevolent intervention would remain underrepresented in the higher ranks of society for inherent reasons. This is precisely what the racists think, though more openly.

Such people do not rejoice to learn that many formerly impoverished groups prosper when legal obstacles to their advancement are abolished, even when a degree of social disdain or prejudice against them persists, at least for a time, and is not reinforced by legal disabilities. This suggests to them the dangerous thought, which they must instantly repress, that differences in outcome between groups in an open society cannot be explained simply by the kind of discrimination that it is their ostensible goal to eliminate. Of course, they do not really want to eliminate it, for to do so would do them out of their jobs, their income, and their power, so they find it everywhere in the way that a paranoid person finds evidence of persecution everywhere he looks. The parallel with the witch-finders of old is close.

The DEI discriminators mean by *equity* not fairness but the kind of cosmic justice that Thomas Sowell has so acutely analyzed. This cosmic justice is inherently totalitarian, for it would not require only the fair treatment of every person, but that every person should have an identical genetic endowment and past starting point, for all differences not derived from, or by, his own effort would be inherently unfair. The equity of DEI could not be achieved until all humans are clones of the same embryo and raised in identical hatcheries. In other words, it is a job for as long as mankind survives.

*Inclusion* in the DEI sense would be destructive of all human association whatsoever, for associations, by definition, both include and exclude. If they have no power to exclude, they have no power to exist and are not associations at all. I presume that even those most in favor of sexual inclusivity would not wish Jeffrey Dahmer or Dennis Nilsen—who found sexual release or pleasure in serial murder—to join them. There is no inclusion without exclusion.

It does not require much reflection to understand the obvious deficiencies of DEI as a social philosophy. They are so obvious that even recent university graduates should be able to see them. I suspect that, at some level of their minds, those employed in departments of DEI know that they are engaged in a kind of elaborate fraud, one that is far from harmless or victimless. In the circumstances, suspension of full pay such as Mr. Trump has decreed for federal officialdom engaged upon it, presumably as a prelude to dismissal, is singularly lenient.

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