



One such lucky story is of “Yoel Inbar, a noted psychology professor at the University of Toronto” who served as a human face in recent [New York Times’ critique](#) of a plague that lately infected some American universities – the demand that applicants swear to their commitment to diversity as a prerequisite for being hired. Without expressing this commitment in a written essay followed by an oral profession of diverse faith before “a faculty diversity committee” in an in-person interview, forget about landing a job! Professor Inbar professed it profusely, both in writing and orally – but unfortunately for him, “on his podcast years earlier, he had opposed diversity statements – like the one he had just written,” so he got turned down. Goodbye the coveted job at U.C.L.A.!

My initial reaction was undiluted green envy at his success at getting the story told – here was a guy with the hand inside the *New York Times* who managed to get his story out, while I can’t! But then, I thought of the story itself, and the question it poses: is diversity of value?

To be sure, this is not how the *New York Times* framed it – it was focusing only on the career-saving mechanical recitation of adherence to the diversity creed that became the prime article of faith in today’s academic catechism. No one interviewed for the article dared to question the relevance of diversity itself, but only its “performative dishonesty,” as one of the many interviewed professors, Daniel Sargent, put it (though “Erwin Chemerinsky, the dean of Berkeley’s law school and a free-speech scholar” expressed suspicions that this heresy indeed lurks underneath – he “describes much of the criticism as an attack on diversity”).

So, let’s take the bull by the horns and ask the question that the *New York Times* dared not ask – is diversity *per se* of value? Should it be pursued as an end in itself, as is apparently the case at those universities which instituted diversity committees, and even hired diversity-enforcing

staff?

The question naturally boils down to, what is a university for? What is its purpose and function?

The opponents of Professor Inbar argued that “his hiring would threaten ongoing efforts to protect and uplift individuals of marginalized backgrounds” – from which it seems to follow that, in their view, the purpose of a university is “to protect and uplift” such individuals.

Clearly, this is nonsense. At times, universities indeed do so – as happened when Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany arrived at American shores. But protecting them was not the purpose of the universities. They hired the pick of German academia because they saw it as an opportunity to enrich their institutions with brilliant faculty. It was the academic excellence they sought, not the chance to showcase their charity. They would have as happily hired bona fide “Aryan” Germans too – like Werner Heisenberg, a Nobel laureate and super-star of theoretical physics who was on a lecture tour in the US in 1940 and could have easily gotten a top job at any American university if he wanted to – but who chose to go back to Nazi Germany instead.

It seems to me that the functions of a university are simple: generate new knowledge, and pass the accumulated store of knowledge to the next generation. The prerequisites for participation in this project are equally simple: inquiring minds, talent, and aptitude. Being of particular height, or race, or background is plainly irrelevant to the task. Diversity may, and often does, happen (Chien-Shiung Wu, an elegant Chinese lady and a first-rate experimental physicist, worked on equal terms with the greatest scientists of the time on making the atom bomb), but not necessarily. To paraphrase Bill Clinton, “its the brainpower, stupid!” The physical characteristics of a vessel that contains this brainpower is immaterial; and no amount of effort will put the needed

brainpower into a body that does not have it to begin with, no matter how that body is shaped or colored – because “talent” that is the synonym for “brainpower” is inborn.

To put it simply, academics demands uniformity – of talent. And the talent being an innate inner quality, focusing on external “diversity” – like “marginalized backgrounds” – is, for academic purposes, useless.

This is not to say that diversity is of no value at all. Academia is the life of the mind – but there is a life of the body, too. And bodily appetites do often thrive on diverse appearance. In her superb book *“Harem,”* Alev Lytle Croutier mentions a 17-century Ottoman Sultan Ibrahim who “searched his empire for its fattest woman. She was an Armenian, with whom he became madly infatuated, declaring her the Governor General of Damascus.” There is no accounting for below-the-waist tastes (and the ways of pleasing them), and an institution that is a near-relative of a harem – a bordello – got developed to professionally cater to those tastes. That’s where diversity is indeed a must, given the diversity of customer needs. I am sure that the world literature is full of details, since many authors touched on this titillating subject: Zola and Maupassant, Remarque and Marquez. Even a Russian, Kuprin, wrote a novel about it that was a sensation in its time. And famously, the Koran depicts the paradise as a vast bordello, and many a zestful Moslem youths who were full of life and lust blew themselves up in suicide bombings to enter and enjoy it – in whatever diverse ways they imagined it would happen.

So yes, diversity can be of value. There are places where it could even be called a virtue (though ironically, most would consider those to be places of vice) – or at least, a necessity. Universities are most definitely not such places. They should abolish not only the diversity-affirming statements, but abandon the very notion that diversity is end in itself.

And what to do with all the diversity officers universities already hired? Well, they can move on to taking jobs in bordellos – though there, they would be preaching to a choir (if one may say so about such a place). No matter how you dice it and slice it, it is hard to find a use for an occupation that what is by nature useless.

And speaking of use and uselessness – how about doing a useful thing, the *New York Times*, and investigating judicial fraud with a skepticism and thoroughness you put into your investigation of diversity statements? I do not have Professor Inbar's connections to prod the editors – but on the other hand, it is a far more important story. Why not take a deep breath, and go for it, the *New York Times*?

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