

More Harvard Plagiarism: Free Beacon Puts Knife in the Heart of ‘Diversity’ and ‘Ph.D.’



by Roger L. Simon

When I read the latest from [The Washington Free Beacon](#)—“Not Just Claudine Gay. Harvard’s Chief Diversity Officer Plagiarized and Claimed Credit for Husband’s Work, Complaint Alleges”—one maxim came to mind from the somewhat questionable Woody Allen, who told us in “Annie Hall,” “Those who can’t do, teach. And those who can’t teach, teach gym.”

I would rewrite that as, “And those who can’t teach gym become diversity and inclusion officers.” (Apologies to gym teachers here.)

NOTE: It’s far from just academia. Just today (Jan. 31),

media company Politico has joined the “diversity’ onslaught:

“ARLINGTON, Va. – POLITICO today announced that Sonia Fernandes has been named as the global Chief Human Resources and Diversity Officer. In this new role, she will be responsible for leading, integrating, and harmonizing POLITICO’s talent functions across continents. Fernandes will drive positive change that will impact and elevate the well-being, professional growth, and experience of every POLITICO across seven newsrooms, two continents and seven time zones.”

Are we relieved?

Meanwhile, the perspicacious Free Beacon, that exposed the original plagiarism discoveries regarding Ms. Gay, now Harvard’s former president, has become a virtual nightmare for that and similar institutions. They write:

“Harvard University’s chief diversity and inclusion officer, Sherri Ann Charleston, appears to have plagiarized extensively in her academic work, lifting large portions of text without quotation marks and even taking credit for a study done by another scholar—her own husband—according to a [complaint](#) filed with the university on Monday and a *Washington Free Beacon* analysis.

“The complaint makes 40 allegations of plagiarism that span the entirety of Charleston’s thin publication record.”

You can see examples from Ms. Charleston’s 2009 University of Michigan thesis—“The Fruits of Citizenship: African Americans, Military Service, and the Cause of Cuba Libre, 1868-1920”—at the complaint. The [Daily Mail](#) also has an extensive example.

Are we surprised? I am not in the slightest. Sometimes, the whole “diversity” game seems like one big psychological operation.

But there’s more affecting the premises of academia directly.

The Ph.D. system outside the STEM subjects—Ms. Charleston is a historian—fairly *invites* such plagiarism in the writing of the thesis that is the principal qualification for the degree.

These tomes, written for the most part to punch a ticket that would allow one to teach, are rarely read by anybody beyond a few thesis advisers who are part of the same system.

They aren't keen to disrupt it. Someone might examine their thesis.

Few of said tomes make it to the public. These theses largely end up in university libraries, not to be read again, except occasionally by people writing other theses in the subject area who could well be plagiarizing and paraphrasing from them, often without notice or apprehension.

Moreover, hardly anyone likes writing these theses because they have so little real purpose beyond the diploma. It's a well-known grind of grinds, like a penance. This, too, encourages plagiarism, while tending to make supervision perfunctory.

This is the opposite of writing a book for the public where, at least supposedly, you need to have something unique to say, a reason for the market to pay attention, and a justification for why, in the final analysis, someone has gone to the effort of writing a book.

Other than some bogus academic qualification, doctoral theses have no such justification. So what finally is the Ph.D. about? Not much—outside STEM where real research can be monitored.

They also don't really tell us whether the author knows a great deal about the subject or whether he or she would be a good teacher.

This is one of the subthemes of the movie "The Holdovers," currently a finalist for this year's Best Picture Oscar. The lead character, played by Paul Giamatti, was kicked out of Harvard before he was able to graduate yet, we are led to believe, he is in many ways a very good, if highly neurotic,

teacher.

And yet so many seek this honorific of being called a doctor that should really belong to a cardiologist, not a sociologist, a subject, like so many others, that has sought to elevate itself by adding a pseudo-scientific imprimatur to its name.

In the days of the Italian commedia dell'arte, such people were ridiculed through the stock character Il Dottore, sometimes known as [Balanzone](#).

"The Doctor character is normally used in the Commedia dell'Arte plays to put a break in the action, with empty, pre-fabricated and supposedly erudite monologues."

Yes, in all of this, there is the element of farce, all the more so that the exposure has happened to a "diversity and inclusion officer," a field that also shouldn't exist, no matter what Politico or Harvard tell us.

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