

Taking Pride



by Theodore Dalrymple

They (whoever “they” are) will not leave us alone. They will badger us on the seas and oceans, they will badger us on the beaches, they will badger us on the landing grounds. They will never give up, until we surrender.

I took an Avanti train recently painted in all the colours of the rainbow and others beside. On the side of the train, more than once, in huge capital letters was painted the word “Pride”. Apparently, the train company had run a train with a staff exclusively of LGBTQ+ personnel.

Pride in what, exactly? If sexual orientation is not a choice and therefore nothing to be ashamed of, then it can be nothing to be proud of either. Taking pride in what is not an achievement is stupid, self-congratulatory and arrogant. It is an invitation to poor behaviour, insofar as it exculpates in advance in the name of being proud ex officio.

On the train, the reservation system did not work, and the shop on board could not take credit cards because of "technical problems". At one station there was an announcement that the rest of the train's journey had been cancelled, though it had not been, leading to the impression that we, the passengers, were not in fully competent hands.

Personally, I want trains to run on time, to coin a phrase. I want them to be clean and not overcrowded. I do not want to have to stand in the corridor squeezed like a sardine in a tin. I do not much care what the sexual orientation and spare time activities of the staff are, so long as they are competent and polite.

I do not want to be subjected to the moral hectoring of managers who cannot keep lavatories clean or to be indoctrinated with Avanti-thought. I do not want propaganda trains à la Soviet Union.

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