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A journal for restless minds

Colloquī *: to discuss*

Gargoyling with Gargoyles

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Saint Augustine, in his *Confessions*, acknowledged a restless heart, a questioning spirit, and an insatiable appetite which could never find peace nor fulfillment in worldly things. He wrote, "Thou has made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee." Catholic apologist Tim Staples writes, "The human intellect is ordered toward knowing the ultimate truth, which is God. Our wills are ordered toward choosing the ultimate good, which is God. If we do not choose to worship God, we will worship someone or something. It may be money, sex, power, prestige, or a hundred other things. But, ultimately, whatever we worship that is not God becomes a sacramental sign of the fact that we have been reduced to tomfoolery."¹

Nowhere are restless hearts more evident than in the riots, looting, and mayhem now occurring in major metropolitan cities across this country. Anger, hatred, and evil are everywhere; among the mob there are no saints, no better angels, only damnable demons grotesquely gargoyling with gargoyles. Bitterness blinds the eyes to beauty; in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king. We have allowed ourselves to be hoodwinked, bamboozled by the devil and his host of one-eyed demons and gargoyles spewing hate. The *past* has become an ugly four-letter word; there can be no glory, no beauty, no heroes, no courageous deeds or magnificent accomplishments to relish or remember. What philosopher George Santayana once observed, that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it, though a rather benign aphorism seems dreadfully naïve for it presumes the will to know what has gone before and to learn from it. In George Orwell's dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, government workers at the Ministry of Truth use the "memory hole" to edit history and incinerate all evidence of their misdeeds: "Every record has been destroyed or falsified,

every book rewritten, every picture has been repainted, every statue and street building has been renamed, every date has been altered. And the process is continuing day by day and minute by minute. History has stopped. Nothing exists except an endless present in which the Party is always right."

In another insightful book, *Letters on Liturgy*, Father Dwight Longenecker writes, "one of the forms of Jewish sacrifice was the sin offering or the sacrifice of atonement. Twin goats were offered. One was killed as an atonement for sin. The priest then laid his hands on the head of the other goat projecting the actual sins of the people onto the goat. The goat was then driven into the wilderness to "take away the sins of the world." This goat was, not surprisingly, called the "scapegoat." The French philosopher René Girard was renown for his contributions to philosophy in the field of epistemological and ethical systems of

desire. According to Girard, conflict, competition and rivalry all originate in mimetic² desire (mimetic rivalry, a form of envy one might call "imitating desire"), which eventually reaches destructive stages of conflict both between individuals and social groups that requires them to blame someone or something in order to defuse conflict through the scapegoat mechanism. Unable to assume responsibility or engage in self-reflection to recognize their own part in the conflict, humans individually and cross-tribally unite, to defuse conflict, by murdering the king or whoever appears to have the least

support in the conflict, and then recognizing when the person has died how much less stress they have, and the unification leads to them eventually thinking of the deposed dead king as a god, i.e. deification or sanctification. Or, guilt is ascribed to an innocent third-party, whose murder permits the creation of a common unifying mythological underlay necessary for the foundation of human culture. Father Dwight Longenecker goes even further, adding his own unique Catholic reasoning to that of Girard.



We not only desire what somebody else has—we want their power. We want to be like them. This essential flaw in our nature is shown right there in the old tale of the Garden of Eden. Eve wants more than the knowledge of good and evil. Satan tempts her by saying, “You will be like God!” In other words, she not only wants the knowledge that God has; she wants to be God.

This was Satan’s own downfall, and it is the root of all evil. We want to be God. We want to be the author of our own destiny. We want to be in control. The problem grows, however, because we are not God. We therefore experience an inner restlessness and emptiness which causes us to look elsewhere with a constantly aching and searching desire, and when that desire is not satisfied we look around for someone to blame for our unhappiness. Again, we see this in the Garden of Eden. When God asked Adam why he had eaten the fruit, he blamed Eve, and when God asked Eve about it she blamed Satan. In fact, it’s even worse than that—Adam actually blamed God for the problem. He said, “The woman YOU gave me gave me the fruit to eat.”

This is a devastating insight. When we realize we cannot be that person we want to be like, we turn the tables and blame him for our unhappiness. As we do this we try to justify ourselves. We believe we are good, and since we are good, our problems can never be our fault; and if the problems are not our fault, someone else must be to blame. The one we blame is the one who has what we want, and when we can’t have what he has we blame him for the problem and kill him.

This step is clear from the next story in Genesis, in which Cain kills his brother Abel. God asked for a particular form of sacrifice, but Cain decided to do things his own way. In disobeying God Cain puts himself above his maker. So God rejected Cain’s disobedient offering and accepted Abel’s. Then Cain—who was in the wrong—projects his sin onto his brother and blames Abel. He sees Abel as the problem and kills him. The conclusion is frightening: take God’s place through disobedience and bloodshed is the result.

We blame others on an individual level, but we also blame others on the corporate level. A horrible dynamic emerges in which the group—suffering from some misfortune—blames someone else. That someone is invariably the outsider, the cripple, the foreigner, or the misfit. That person takes all the blame and they are first persecuted, then excluded. Then, when that doesn’t work and they are still seen as the source of the problem, they are eventually killed. Now we can see what the two goats stood for in the Old Testament. They represent the two ways we constantly deal with our own sin. We project it on to someone else, and expel that

person from our presence. We blame that person and, in effect, we “kill” him.

After the violence takes place, the group or the individual feels a sense of elation. They think the problem has been solved at last and there can be peace. The sting in the tail is that before long another problem arises. Another crisis pops up. What must they do? They find another victim and a pattern of persecution, exclusion, and finally murder takes place.

After a while this pattern of tribal behavior becomes ritualized, and the community finds release through ritual sacrifice.

What can anyone do about this violence? Nothing. The person or group who blames others is invulnerable to criticism. They truly believe they are right. By the very nature of this insidious pride, the person or group blaming the scapegoat is self-righteous. Their pride prevents them from seeing that they have a problem. They cannot see that they are persecuting an innocent victim. They really believe they are good, and the person they are blaming is the problem. Furthermore, if you criticize a self-righteous person or a group like that you will end up being one of the problems that needs to be eliminated!¹³ (*emphasis added*)

But for the fact that Shakespeare has been now dead and interred with his bones these past four-hundred and more years, notwithstanding all available evidence to his Anglo-Saxon Caucasian Catholic masculinity, what more is there to say of him than he was undeniably an evil, misogynistic racist with a vile and wicked tongue. The proof is there for all to see; just listen to Mark Antony upon the brutal murder of his friend, *Julius Caesar*, “I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him. The evil that men do lives after them; The good is oft interred with their bones.” What more is there to say than to admit old William was an evil man bent on the dastardliest of deed doing? Of his overt misogyny there is further undeniable evidence for he was forever depicting women as shrews, hags, crones, and witches as in Act 4, Scene 1 of the murderous tragedy, *Macbeth*. And then there is the worst of the lot, that racist slur against people of color, *Othello*, a Moor⁴, a man of dark complexion, a general in the Venetian army, betrayed by the treacherous and racist Iago. Clearly, proof positive of Shakespeare’s white privilege, racism, religious bigotry, and unremitting hatred of the fairest sex. Burn his works, erase all trace or memory of this irredeemable man and his offensive iamb.

Now, should we not be asking ourselves of what are we afraid, in whom do we fear? Understanding history—rather than denying, destroying, or altering it to support a cause or the ideology of a cult—enables us; it allows us to learn from the good, the bad and the ugliness that has preceded us. When we listen to the voices of history, listen to our ancestors we as individuals and as a society benefit by a greater understanding of their triumphs and their failures.

We are living in a strange folly, a “cancel” cultural revolution, where the now places an adamant judgment on history, forcing questionable human moral standards upon our ancestors from the centuries and millennia past. It is utter nonsense to believe our ancestors can learn from our present or must be judged by it, just as it is absurd foolishness to believe the present can learn from a distorted or deleted history. The past cannot be altered or abolished; it cannot be erased like chalk on a chalkboard or internet browser history. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn understood this from personal experience after staring Soviet totalitarianism in the face. “If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being.” As Kurt Mahlburg suggests: “We may make all sorts of progress. But prejudice is a difficult weed to eradicate from the human heart—as the cancellers themselves remind us. Because of this, all of us desperately need the past. We need it, at the very least, to hold ourselves accountable.”⁵

What should be obvious, but then the obvious never is to fools, is this obvious fact: in erasing the past the grievance cult is effectively erasing any validating evidence that might have supported their cause. By destroying monuments and statues, burning flags and books that offend, renaming buildings dedicated to fallible human beings, rewriting history and dropping all traces of the past down the “memory hole” so as to prove their narrative, the cancel culture and the grievance cult are quite efficiently and effectively “cancelling” the argument they are so desperate to win. If there is no past, then where is the veggie burger?

But then, where is *Argument*? What happened to *Debate*? Apparently, the twins born out of Logic and Reason have gone extinct, set upon by the angry mob, their final words “I can’t breathe.” In an essay written for *Intellectual Takeout*, Anders Koskinen writes of the deliberate murders of *Argument* and *Debate* as he experienced it firsthand.

In college I took a course on debating and argument. Well, to say I took the course may be a stretch; I dropped it after a few days after pushing back against the politics of my classmates and receiving this assertion from my instructor in response: “*Institutional racism is a fact whether or not I can prove it.*”

If that was the standard of debate in the class, I figured I was not going to be learning very much that semester, and my time and money would be better spent ... well in *almost* any other class at the University of Minnesota.

Unfortunately, this seems to be the standard of most, if not all, of America’s political discourse at the present moment. Kids far too young to understand politics are taken to protests by overeager parents; college grads pledge allegiance to Black Lives Matter without understanding what the group pledges itself to; and politicians argue that any and all aspects of COVID-19 social engineering are worth it “if it saves just one life,” regardless of the effect those policies have in their own right.

In all of these arguments, from institutional racism to the need of the government to enforce pandemic lockdowns, one key item is utterly and transparently missing from the philosophies of journalists, politicians, broadcasters, and the so-called experts who dictate how their fellow citizens ought to behave.

America has lost its grasp on the concept of personal agency.

People are no longer rational actors—or even irrational ones—to policy makers and activists. They are mere statistics. Although written in 1962, Frank Meyer’s words from *In Defense of Freedom* have come to a head once again in 2020:

“[I]n the prevailing intellectual atmosphere the very concept of a theoretical enquiry into political and social matters which is based upon a moral or philosophical value system and developed in terms of the nature of man is the subject of scorn. By a misleading analogy with physical science—where the objects of study are but objects, without subjectivity, will, conscious self-direction—social theory becomes ‘the social sciences’ and political theory becomes ‘political science,’ disciplines conceived in

slavish imitation of the natural sciences.”

This is how we end up with “white privilege” and “systemic racism.”

There is no individual, only groups and the nebulous “system” which supposedly raises one group up while oppressing the other.

There is no such thing as a racist person, only a racist people.

It is unthinkable to assume individuals will act with personal responsibility and make safe decisions for themselves and their loved ones in the midst of the pandemic. No, the government knows best. After all, the data and the experts reside at the federal level. What does it matter what an individual’s “moral or philosophical value system” says that might inform their decision-making process?

Meyer goes on to argue that the learned authorities of politics “are in agreement that political science is limited to an analysis of what is, that it has no relationship to moral or philosophical enquiry.” He also notes that this attitude has also deeply influenced journalists, broadcasters, and politicians. Is it any wonder then that our discourse is so absolutist and toxic?

This situation leaves individuals with little, if any, free will on which to make informed and reasonable choices. Yet, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church states:

“Freedom is the power, rooted in reason and will, to act or not to act, to do this or that, and so to perform deliberate actions on one’s own responsibility. By free will one shapes one’s own life. Human freedom is a force for growth and maturity in truth and goodness; it attains its perfection when directed toward God, our beatitude.”⁶

When we tell people there is no choice but to pursue one policy over another, when we tell them that their situation is the fault of an oppressive class (be that the billionaires, the whites, or any other group) we rob people of agency. There are always choices to be made. To argue otherwise is dishonest and intellectually lazy.

Meyer wrote that man “lives between good and evil” and that he “fulfills his destiny in the choices he makes.” “The power to make choices, this innate freedom lies at the center of the drama of human existence.”

We must resist the urge to strip human agency and free will from our public life, for only tyranny lies down that road. History has already seen far too often the atrocities that a godless society based on group warfare perpetuates.⁷

If you skimmed or skipped over Koskinen’s essay just now, I urge you to reread it, it is that important. Freedom is never easy to obtain; once lost, it is doubly difficult, if not impossible, to regain. Meyer was correct back then and his words ring just as true today. I must add to Koskinen’s reference to the Catechism of the Catholic Church by bookending it with these words, again from the Catechism:

God created man a rational being, conferring on him the dignity of a person who can initiate and control his own actions. “God willed that man should be ‘left in the hand of his own counsel,’ so that he might of his own accord seek his Creator and freely attain his full and blessed perfection by cleaving to him.

Man is rational and therefore like God; he is created with free will and is master over his acts.⁸

As long as freedom has not bound itself definitively to its ultimate good which is God, there is the possibility of choosing between good and evil, and thus of growing in perfection or of failing and sinning. This freedom characterizes properly human acts. It is the basis of praise or blame, merit or reproach.

The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. There is no true freedom except in the service of what is good and just. The choice to disobey and do evil is an abuse of freedom and leads to “the slavery of sin.”

Freedom makes man responsible for his acts to the extent that they are voluntary. Progress in virtue, knowledge of the good, and asceticism⁹ enhance the mastery of the will over its acts.

Imputability and responsibility for an action can be diminished or even nullified by ignorance, inadvertence, duress, fear, habit, inordinate attachments, and other psychological or social factors.¹⁰

In his commentary on the *Dignity of the Human Person*, Msgr. Ángel Rodríguez Luño of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross writes, “Freedom is a supreme mark of the dignity of man, who was created in the image of God. Men are free, like their Creator is free.”

Human freedom is a true freedom, although it is finite and fallible. It is the power to act or not to act, or to do this or that. In general, it is being the true author who sets the direction of one’s life. God respects freedom, which gives human beings a deep dignity, in a serious way and allows for all the consequences of free actions to unfold, regardless of how grave these may be. Human freedom is not a circus show that takes place above

a safety net. If man slips, he truly falls, and he gets hurt. God never abandons us, but he always respects our freedom. People who know how to make good use of this freedom, binding themselves to what they recognize to be good, become ever more free. People who use it poorly become slaves to their vices."

God's respect demonstrates that freedom is inseparably joined to responsibility. Given that we have true freedom and we can all freely plan our own actions and our own lives, we can and must answer for our actions and their consequences. Naturally, the scope of our responsibility coincides with that of our freedom. Freedom that has atrophied due to ignorance, inadvertence, fear, violence, etc., corresponds to a similarly diminished responsibility. Moreover, only things that one wished would happen are imputable. This is the reason that certain negative collateral effects that are inseparable from necessary actions are not imputable. These are the effects that we are obligated to tolerate but which we do not desire. "For a bad effect to be imputable it must be foreseeable and the agent must have the possibility of avoiding it, as in the case of manslaughter caused by drunken driver (§1737).

Human freedom, which is an essential part of human dignity, must be recognized by civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Its exercise can be legitimately limited only to the point required for the common good in order to render coexistence and collaboration between free citizens of the State or members of the Church possible. The convictions of the conscience in religious matters must be immune from civil coercion. "This right must be recognized and protected by civil authority within the limits of the common good and public order" (§1738).

The dignity of the human person is the foundational moral principle upon which our nation is founded. It is a religious principle but first and foremost a human principle. The most often repeated statement of our nation's founding document, *The Declaration of Independence*, leaves us breathless for it acknowledges the dignity of *every human person*, it enshrines it into our nation's ethos, its soul. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." No matter how you interpret these words—add words or distort their meaning—an honest reading must admit to their rightness. We are *all created equal*—black, white, yellow, short, tall, thin, thick, or anywhere in-between—it is what we do as individuals using our unalienable rights that makes us fully human. Each

and every human person is created equal in the image and likeness of God but no one is as God.

There is another statement, though repeated far less often which is as important—if not more so. "*That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, ...*" No one is *created* with power over any other human person or persons; such power is derived from the free consent and the will of those who choose to empower them. Many of those in power, whether by convenience or purpose, have ignored or forgotten that; worse, we, the governed, have by our stoic silence tacitly given our consent, granting them such illicit power over our individual lives.

Silence is golden. Only, however, if it is the right kind of silence. Silence in the face of personal attacks or public crusades may be wise. Our collective guppy-like span of attention means that for many causes *du jour* or even *du moment* it is often best to simply say nothing and wait it out. Many of them are silly and will be revealed to be so immediately.

But silence in the face of many of the persistent causes of our time is not wise nor good for the body politic. For many years now people of good will have been content to remain silent in the face of many causes they find destructive, thinking that they will be able to simply wait out the ideological fevers.

We do not speak out when people say that sexual behavior depends only upon consent for morality. We do not speak out when people say that sex itself is merely a biological detail that has nothing to do with being a man or woman. We do not speak out when people say that the history of the United States is simply one of racism from beginning to end or that the only way to explain racial disparities is to accept the diagnosis of critical race theory and blame "systemic racism" for everything that ails our country.

This silence has been destructive. Failure to speak encourages those pushing causes one finds destructive to continue to think that their ideas are simply unanswerable. I have no illusions that we live in an era in which rational argument holds much weight with the mob. We would all love to imagine that a solid argument breaking down the foolishness of our age would have power to convince others. Alas, as Christopher Dawson observed more than a half-century ago, we live in an unphilosophical age. And even that part of it that is philosophical is sufficiently imbued with the clouded intellect accompanying original and actual sin to be confused in the face of clarity and, all too often, angry

when the light is seen through the clouds. Yet despite all that, all of our action is done both under the gaze of eternity and with the awareness that our actions may only bear fruit in a future conspicuous for our long absence. We speak out not merely for our own minute but for possible ages to come. For the enemies of reason will always be shouting out to the crowd that no one can think a certain way. When you argue for your side you indicate that not only can one think thus but that you have done so yourself.

By breaking silence, you do not merely give others reasons for thinking in reasonable ways. More importantly, you give others courage to speak out themselves. Those who shout out that no one can think this way are not really giving an argument so much as a warning: You will be alone if you think this way. You will be even more isolated if you dare to raise your head up and say no.

It is easy to see why many of us are silent. Silence has heretofore been a kind of safety. The old dictum that “in silence is consent” persuades us to think that maybe we can “pass” if we simply remain silent. The older practice of regarding as bullies people who force others to say “uncle” even when they did not want to wrestle in the first place makes us think that we can win by not entering the ring, by staying above the fray.

Alas, people today do not know much about old dictums. Nor do they believe that anyone should be allowed to give way gently in the public sphere while still keeping to his or her conscience. The reality today is that the old-fashioned notion of a conscience is simply not accepted. Conscience relates to what ought to be done here and now according to one’s understanding of the still, small voice that is nevertheless the echo of the Divine Voice. Without that understanding of the Divine Voice, there is no tolerance even if the watchword is “tolerance.” The revolutionary spirit is among us, and silence is treated as “violence.” One cannot simply not join in the conversations of the day and expect to be left alone. One must repeat the phrases. One must offer the pinch of incense—and a healthy pinch at that—or face the prospect of “being canceled.”

You may not be interested in radical politics. Alas, the practitioners of radical politics are interested in you.

No, there is no safety in silence today. This is a blessing in a way. If you know you cannot stay silent, you now are faced with a choice. Will I speak the truth as best I can see it or simply join in the shouting of the crowd? The latter way is the loss of your soul and a greater triumph of the violence of noise in the society in which you have been placed. The crowd always loves to shout, “Crucify, crucify.”

So do not stay silent. Do not shout. Calmly speak the truth about the issues of the day, whether they be about race or sex or—what I think is the most important one for our present moment—class. You can acknowledge the difficulties in race relations without resorting to strange theories about the evils of “whiteness.” You can accept that there are still problems in modern policing without speaking nonsensically about “defunding the police.” You can have sympathy for the difficulties of those with gender dysphoria without accepting the notion that being a man or a woman is simply a matter of what one feels. You may well lose people you thought were friends. You may find that your mobility is no longer upward as it once was. Your public voice may even be canceled.

The still, small voice of conscience will never be canceled. And the silence that follows acting upon it is truly golden.¹¹

Earlier in this essay Anders Koskinen noted that those we elected to *represent* us and the bureaucrats that do their bidding no longer see human beings, individual citizens to whom they owe their office and their duty, but statistics, numbers to be manipulated, analyzed, used to their political advantage, then discarded when no longer useful. I find that deeply and profoundly disturbing. The propagandizing media call those elected by the will of the citizenry: leaders. Whether good or bad, honest or dishonest, wise or foolish, the one thing they are not and ought not be called are leaders. We did not choose them to lead us to the promised land. We chose them to *represent* us and our interests, to be a voice, to do the will of we the people. They are our servants, not our masters and it is long past time for them to be reminded of that.

One thing that is conspicuously absent from this “Cancel Cultural Revolution” is *Beauty*. Along with the twins *Debate* and *Argument*, their parents *Logic* and *Reason*, *Beauty* has suffered a tortured, untimely death by crucifixion. No sane person can deny we are in a second *Reign of Terror*. The first *Reign of Terror*, or *The Terror* (French: *la Terreur*), followed the French Révolution with a series of massacres and numerous public executions in response to revolutionary fervor, anticlerical sentiment, and spurious accusations of treason by Maximilien Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety. There are far too many similarities to ignore, yet the current desecrations and destruction of monuments and churches, art and music are some

of the most distressing of mortal sins so far committed throughout this second *Reign of Terror*. And in this, academia and ecclesia are complicit far above their pointy-headed eyebrows. As Joseph Pearce write:

Once upon a rational time, colleges and universities in the United States prided themselves in what was known as “academic freedom.” The idea was that differing opinions could clash catalytically in a constructive conversation. Such conversations were seen as a healthy sign of the intellectual life of the academy, a sign that people cared about what was true and sought to bring such truth to light. This healthy exchange of minds included the refutation of error so that the truth of things could emerge from the shadows cast by pride and prejudice. This is no longer the case. Far from it. In today’s secular fundamentalist and philosophically materialist academy there is no room for dissident voices. There is no tolerance for those who depart from the party line. Any suggestion that a faculty member has deviated from the dogmatic assertions of radical relativism results in his persecution by students as well as the institution, and, if he doesn’t repent and recant, his summary dismissal as a heretic whose opinions cannot be tolerated. The forced resignation last week of the Catholic chaplain at M.I.T. for daring to suggest that we needed a reasoned debate on the circumstances surrounding the death of George Floyd is a case in point.

In the new totalitarian academy, dissident faculty members are reduced to whispering amongst themselves, out of earshot of the Orwellian Big Brother who is ever-watchful for signs of heresy on campus. In such an inquisitorial environment, these dissidents dare not bring their dissenting and non-orthodox views into the classroom. They are terrorized into silence, stifling any genuine objectivity in the courses they’re teaching.

In this draconian environment, it is difficult for academics to speak of the brainwashing that has replaced education in the modern academy. Should they have the courage to do so, it is necessary that they do so under the cover of anonymity. This being so, I am forced to keep the identity of a professor of music who contacted me about the ideological conditioning which his students are undergoing at the eminent university at which he teaches. He quoted to me one of his students who, regurgitating what she’d been taught, told him that “classical music itself is a critical part of the creation myth of European exceptionalism which was obsessed with re-creating and re-invoking the past. And not just any past: the primordial, mythical past, in which Bach and Beethoven are glorified as the pinnacle of human genius.”

Professor X, as we shall call him, lamented that such

views were a direct consequence of the cultural Marxism which has become the non-negotiable dogma in the humanities departments in almost every secular college and university. “What you will find here is evidence of the real disdain that my colleagues are teaching to music students for *European exceptionalism* while at the same time not actually teaching them European music. The students, who really know very little of the musical canon, can be heard clearly regurgitating the pet phrases of my colleagues.” In this ideologically-charged environment, students are not educated or instructed but are programmed. They cease to be free-thinking souls in pursuit of goodness, truth, and beauty but become mere parrots, echoing the party line. “It is worth noting,” laments Professor X, “that these colleagues themselves came from the ranks of failed music performance majors who switched to a music history major because they were denied junior level class rank as performers due to poor performance juries.” He told me that nobody begins as a freshman music history major. “Had they switched to another major outside of music, they would have had to stay at college an extra year. So many of them enter the music history profession with a chip on their shoulder that their own music history professors (with the same story) quickly exploit in order to indoctrinate them into the hatred of Western culture.” This is the self-perpetuating process, animated by sour grapes, by which Europhobic cultural Marxism is taught to succeeding generations of music majors, prejudicing each generation against the canon of great music that Europe has produced, not because it is bad or lacking in beauty but simply because it is deemed politically incorrect for no other reason but that anything European must be bad.

“These students, lacking a personal encounter with the greatness of great music itself and not really having emotionally experienced what makes it great, have been taught to see the classical canon only as an example of a culture that is no better than any other, which has been imposed upon other peoples through cultural imperialism.” Thus, beauty is not seen as something that transcends the sordidness of power or politics but is seen as being subject to it, or even as a product of it. “This plugs into the self-hatred they are being taught for Western civilization in every liberal arts class on campus,” laments Professor X. “These particular students major in musicology and composition, in which this problem is worse. At least the violin majors get to play great music in the orchestra and know better from that experience that it is great, even if they are not having to listen to it in their coursework.”

Professor X offers an example of the political brainwashing of his students in the words of one of them who told him condescendingly that, “as the current

classical music profession stands, there really is no way to avoid this elitism, racism, and chauvinism, no matter how well intentioned we are." So there we have it. The new religion. There's no such thing as Original Sin of which we are all guilty, irrespective of skin colour, but there is the "one sin to rule them all and in the darkness bind them" and that is elitism, racism, and chauvinism, a sin with which only those unfortunate enough to be born with the wrong colour "European" skin are tainted. We're all racists because we're white, and there's nothing we can do about it, except, as an act of self-loathing, to cast into the fire all that's good and beautiful and European. Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms need to be put against the wall and shot for the crime of being European, and we are the ones who need to pull the trigger as proof that we do not share their guilt.

There is a grim irony here because Professor X has an impeccable record in promoting genuine diversity, as distinct from the ideologically-conditioned conformity of his students. "I have been promoting musical diversity and inclusion, and the fact that black lives matter, from long before any of my students were born," he said, adding that "I am not quite as unenlightened as my students seem to suppose." He showed me a plaque which was presented to him at a dinner in his honor to acknowledge his twenty-five years of work in promoting and administering music scholarships and grants in the black community. He told me that he was usually the only white person on the board of directors of some of these groups promoting racial justice. He was the one who thought of, proposed, lobbied for, and accomplished having an all-black a cappella choir give the gala concert at the opening of a new large concert hall on campus. He was active in promoting practical efforts to bring diversity to the university's music department when no one else was talking about it.

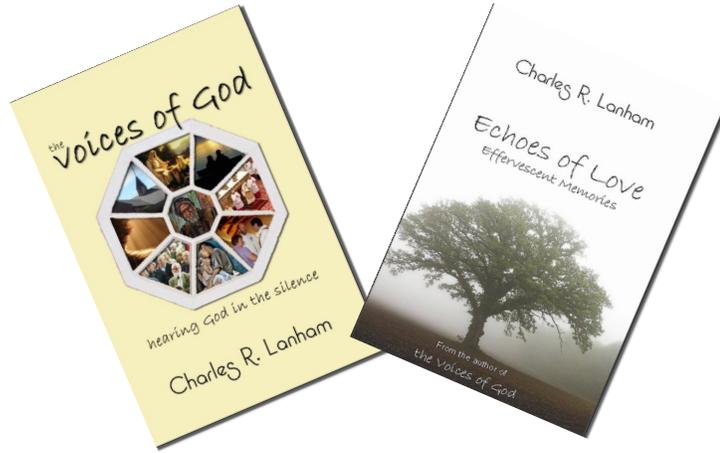
None of this matters because Professor X does not bend the knee to the new compulsory orthodoxy of ethnomasochistic self-loathing. He is still a pariah who is forced to speak to me under cover of anonymity for fear of reprisals from Big Brother and his minions. He does, however, lay down the gauntlet to those ideologically brainwashed students to put their anti-racism into practice as he has done over the years. "I would challenge young people to get involved in non-musical activities and making friendships across whatever their personal boundaries are. Deliver Thanksgiving dinners to the disadvantaged, volunteer for habitat for humanity building homes for immigrants; host dinners with people of varied backgrounds in your home. These and other things have helped me over the years to love people of every kind and to try to be inclusive musically, too. I see so much anger now, and of course people are frustrated, but love is the only way to accomplish au-

thentic justice."

The Cancel Cultural Reign of Terror that is upon us now will end, though how soon and at what cost are open questions. Our nation may never recover. Our churches may never recover. Our lives may never be the same. Our freedoms may be permanently erased along with our glorious history. In the end, it is for each of us, every human person, men and women, all equal in the eyes of God to rise up and speak out, unafraid for the cause of freedom and justice for all.

God bless America. God bless us all.

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1. Tim Staples, "Transgenderism: How Did We Get Here?", Catholic Answers Magazine, July-August 2020, 35-37.
 2. *Memetics* is the study of information and culture based on an analogy with Darwinian evolution. Proponents describe memetics as an approach to evolutionary models of cultural information transfer. Memetics describes how an idea can propagate successfully but does not necessarily imply a concept is factual. The term meme was coined in Richard Dawkins' 1976 book *The Selfish Gene*, but Dawkins later distanced himself from the resulting field of study. Analogous to a gene, the meme was conceived as a "unit of culture" (an idea, belief, pattern of behavior, etc.) which is "hosted" in the minds of one or more individuals, and which can reproduce itself in the sense of jumping from the mind of one person to the mind of another. Thus, what would otherwise be regarded as one individual influencing another to adopt a belief is seen as an idea-replicator reproducing itself in a new host. As with genetics, particularly under a Dawkinsian interpretation, a meme's success may be due to its contribution to the effectiveness of its host.
 3. Father Dwight Longenecker, *Letters on Liturgy*, Foreword by Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone (Kettering, OH: Angelico Press, 2020), 36-39.
 4. A Moroccan or, formerly, a member of the Muslim population of what is now Spain and Portugal. Of mixed Arab, Spanish, and Amazigh (Berber) origins, the Moors created the Arab Andalusian civilization and subsequently settled in North Africa between the 11th and 17th centuries.
 5. Kurt Mahlborg, "You Can't Learn From a History That's Been Deleted", Intellectual Takeout, June 19, 2020.
 6. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §1731.
 7. Anders Koskinen, "The Systemic Racism Argument Ignores Free Will", Intellectual Takeout, June 23, 2020.
 8. CCC §1730, *Gaudium et Spes* 17; *Sir* 15:14; Irenaeus, *Adv. Haeres*, 4, 4, 3: PG 7/1, 983.
 9. *Ascesis*: the practice of severe self-discipline, typically for religious reasons.
 10. CCC §1732 - §1735.
 11. David Deavel, "No Safety in Silence", The Imaginative Conservative, June 21, 2020.
 12. Joseph Pearce, "Music in a Time of Terror", The Imaginative Conservative, June 21, 2020.



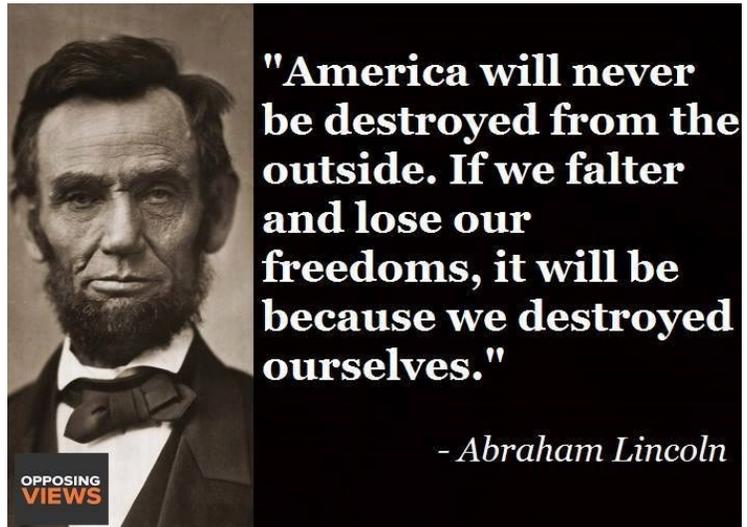
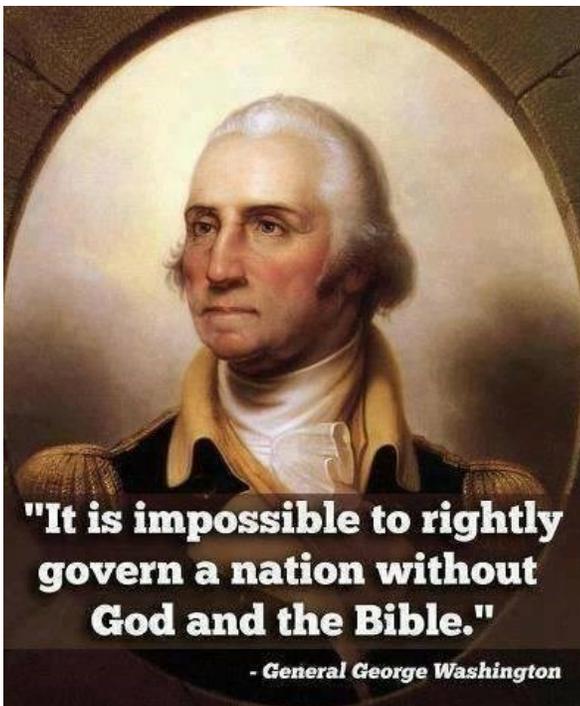
Books are available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) or from the author's web site at:

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Deacon Chuck Lanham is a Catholic author, columnist, speaker, theologian and philosopher, a jack-of-all-trades like his father (though far from a master of anything) and a servant of God. He is the author of **The Voices of God: Hearing God in the Silence**, **Echoes of Love: Effervescent Memories** and has written over 400 essays on religion, faith, morality, theology, and philosophy.

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Colloquī, the present infinitive of *colloquor* (Latin: *to talk, to discuss or to converse*) is a Deacon's Corner weekly journal. Its mission and purpose to encourage serious discussion, to promote reasoned debate, and to provide serious content for those who hope to find their own pathway to God. Each week **Colloquī** will contain articles on theology, philosophy, faith, religion, Catholicism, and much more. Be forewarned! Essays may and often will contain fuel for controversy, but always with the expressed intent to seek the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth, so help us God.

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