

Brains, Minds and Lost Philosophies

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Theme: [Intelligence](#)

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Global Research Note

It is worth noting that both Aristotle and Plato were supportive of slavery.

Greek democracy was limited to a relatively small section of the population.

In the dim white-shrouded mists of my illusions about our illustrious past, I imagined the Greeks at the time of Socrates, milling about Agora in view of the Parthenon, discussing what is most essential about humanity. They argued, debated, confronted one another, quarrelled and settled disputes, or departed the site with ambiguities hanging overhead. These men, freed momentarily from the immediate wants necessary to survival, could use their energies to engage with each other about those pressing metaphysical and philosophical concepts that retain their resonance into our current era.

What made us human, what could make us immortal? Which kind of society was optimal? How truly free was an individual? To what did an enlightened man aspire?

Fascinated by philosophy and the Ancient Greeks - whose temporary and albeit very limited democracy called out to me across the centuries into the Philadelphia of my birth and the American Founders' tolling bell for freedom - I decided to enrol in a course at my small liberal arts college on Ancient Philosophy. The class met every Tuesday evening for three hours, and was co-taught by two professors. I was eager, with my developing mind, to trace the trajectories of Hesiod, Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle as I struggled to make some sense of my enveloping world.

Instead I found myself in a seminar whose weekly meetings became a kind of Hyde Park podium for one of the professors who overshadowed his colleague and harangued his young

students with diatribes about Marx and the Communist Party and workers' rights and revolutionary world-views - without bothering to link any of his forays to anything from Ancient Greece.

I learned, therefore, in this course, virtually nothing about the philosophers who provided the foundation for Western thought, and even less about the confusing amalgam of socialist and communist ideologies presented with menacing energy.

How much better it would have been, I thought even at that time, to have immersed ourselves in dialogues and debates about the essence of thought and human interrelationship, about the structure of Plato's *Republic* with its infamously and justly famous allegory of the cave, and about the prevailing societies of the city-states that strove to co-exist, co-opt or annihilate one another even as a greater military threat loomed over the peninsula.

I passed the course, if anything more ignorant than when I had begun it, because of one man's mission to turn a classroom into a political lecture that brooked nothing but silent assent.

At the time college tuition was something that could be earned and paid for from the proceeds of a student's summertime job. I did my own reading and passed on to other courses and didn't give much more thought to a big chunk of a wasted semester - until now, in fact.

What kind of institution would let a professor like this one - his co-teaching partner did nothing to assert himself, by the way - hold sway and deviate so criminally from his subject? How the hell did he get away with it?

Now, I suppose, I see, in the news I read about the once estimable Ivy League campuses, which have abdicated responsibility to impart learning in favour of charging massive fees for what amounts to indoctrination rather than catalysis of thinking in humanities and social sciences curricula. I was never easy with the fuzzy and highly subjective approaches of the professors in these areas, but I can understand what all of this woolly ratiocination has led to: a student army of dummies who have embraced a 'wokeness' that is as flaccid as it is, ultimately, material.

We are apparently eminently free to choose our genders and to aspire to transcending human constraints - but we are forbidden to speak our minds.

Speaking of which - the mind, that is - I am fresh off reading an article that extolled the benefits of classical music and its marvellous ability to alter the brain.

It's the brain, you see, that clinches the deal. Once we are told how grey matter is increased, or how the hippocampus or locus ceruleus or amygdala are tickled, we MUST be convinced of the great goodness of the thing that has such an effect.

It's a very clever way - this appeal to the tissue of the brain - to obliterate the mind. To some degree or other we all seem to fall for this pseudoscientific appeal to ostensibly hard neuroanatomical science: mention the temporal lobe and we may all gasp in appreciation!

Mention the last four years of covid-mania and we will hear oodles about the spike protein

whose effect on the tissue of the brain would seem to explain mood-altering mass-formation engendering zombie states of submission.

From a perspective of mind, however, there is abundant evidence for psychological and emotional trauma, deliberately engineered and relentlessly inflicted, to describe the new social terrain that has come into being.

Biology is important, and physical insults to the organism should not be overlooked; but neither should the massive assaults on our individual and collective minds – not brains – be relegated to a subordinate place.

It is, I suppose, human nature to seek for explanations in the stars or in our cells, that we are underlings, when faults lie very much within ourselves, within our minds and hearts, bludgeoned and battered into weakness or irrational ferocity by the very deviously human and manipulative powers above. No wonder so many have cracked under the coordinated and ubiquitous pressure of governing institutions and their Big Media accomplices.

But how wondrous that so many of us did not – and will never – let our minds succumb!

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