

Snowflake Jacobins: Black Rage on Campus

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For many outside observers the angry black protests that began last year on college campuses were baffling. The grievances protesters sought to bring attention to hardly seemed of a kind to evoke the hostility and rage clearly on display during campus demonstrations at such schools as Yale, Princeton, and the University of Missouri. Politically incorrect Halloween costumes, a building and an institute named after an early twentieth-century U.S. president who shared the white Southern view of race relations typical of his time, and two instances of young men using racial slurs hardly seemed to be sufficient grist for generating the impassioned reactions caught on video and in the media. What is going on?

I think I can provide an answer to this question, though the answer is not simple. It requires, I believe, consideration of at least six contemporary interacting developments, three of which apply specifically to blacks, one of which applies specifically to whites, and the remaining two of which apply to a more racially diverse segment of the American population. Here's my six-factor explanation.

(1) Hope and Change Frustration: The Tocqueville Effect

To begin, we must recognize that the anger and rage we see on college campuses today is, to some extent at least, an extension of a more general

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frustration and disappointment among blacks that has been festering for some time in the closing years of the Obama presidency. We can see this beyond the college campus in the heightened focus in many black communities on police misconduct—real or imagined—and in the general sense among many blacks that America is not a nice place for black people to live. The popular writings of journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates reflect this general attitude.

I believe that much of this recent frustration can be explained—and the perplexing question “Why now?” answered—by a phenomenon long known to historians and social scientists that might be termed the “Tocqueville Effect,” after its first extensive description by Alexis de Tocqueville in *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (1856). In this work Tocqueville explains why extreme anger and hostility are often the result, not of the most objectively oppressive conditions under which people may live, but of what has been called a “revolution of rising expectations” in which people come to entertain exaggerated hopes of a better future that the actual conditions of life inevitably disappoint. Unfulfilled social expectations lead to painful frustration, frustration leads to bitterness and anger, which, in turn, lead to social and political unrest—up to and including riots and revolution.¹

This was the explanation social scientists gave for the seeming paradox that occurred during the years of Lyndon Johnson’s presidency—that the extensive urban riots in dozens of black neighborhoods happened at the very time when things never looked more favorable for black advancement. The economy was booming, many blacks were assuming previously off-limits middle-class jobs, and there was a president more committed to furthering the rights and interests of black people—and making up for past injustices against them—than anyone else who had ever held that office.

Within a span of just four years three important federal civil rights acts were passed: the 1964 Civil Rights Act (which outlawed discrimination in public accommodations, employment, and educational institutions receiving government aid), the 1965 Voting Rights Act (which guaranteed blacks the right to vote in the South, a right denied them since the 1890s), and the 1968 Fair Housing Act (which outlawed racial discrimination in the sale or rental of

¹“It was precisely in those parts of France where there had been most improvements that popular discontent ran highest. This may seem illogical—but history is full of such paradoxes....Patiently endured so long as it seemed beyond redress, a grievance comes to appear intolerable once the possibility of removing it crosses men’s minds. For the mere fact that certain abuses have been remedied draws attention to the others and they now appear more galling; people may suffer less, but their sensibility is exacerbated....In the reign of Louis XVI the most trivial pinpricks of arbitrary power caused more resentment than the thoroughgoing despotism of Louis XIV.” Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (1856; Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1955), 176–77.

private housing). Even as rapid progress was being made in improving the legal and economic conditions of black Americans, black anger and riotous behavior peaked, with over a hundred U.S. cities experiencing violent disturbances between 1964 and 1969. The riots of the late sixties were a textbook case of the Tocqueville Effect.

I think what we witnessed in 2014 and 2015 was a replay of the late-sixties scene, where the catalyst to the current “revolution of rising expectations” among black Americans was the election of Barack Obama and the “hope and change” rhetoric that characterized his presidential campaign. His election amplified the pervasive sense that major improvements in the lives of black Americans would soon be underway. The euphoria and sense of promise many blacks experienced when Obama became president is captured in the memoir of a family friend, who describes the scene in 2008:

The night Obama was elected for the first time I stood in Harlem in the Adam Clayton Powell State Office Building Square with thousands of Harlemites watching the huge television screen mounted above our heads....I was awed at the many black men who wept openly. Parents lifted small children in the air and told them to remember this day in history. Some people knelt in prayer. I just felt I finally had personally gotten back at all those who had violated, abused or hated my existence because of the color of my skin. A European media group...approached me because I obviously was an older woman who had experienced more racism than those younger celebrating around me....Though I tried I could not speak an intelligible sentence, I was too overcome with emotion....It was a glorious, victorious night! I had lived to see a needed change in this country. My hopes were high for change.

But alas, as happened in the late sixties, reality inevitably failed to fulfill exaggerated expectations, and great frustration and anger followed. The “hope and change” rhetoric proved to be an illusion. For most black people, life in the Obama years continued pretty much as it had in the past. There was the same up-and-down pattern that existed during the Bush years, when significant portions of the black population made it into the respectable middle and working classes, while a substantial portion—perhaps as much as a quarter—remained in an underclass characterized by all the social ills and individual pathologies Kenneth Clark and Daniel Patrick Moynihan described fifty years ago. And just like the late sixties, black anger and rage were often discharged on what

otherwise would have been endurable irritants—like insensitive policemen—or on the rare and hardly typical case of a genuine killer cop.

The 2014 Ferguson riots, triggered over claims (later found to be erroneous) that a white policeman had brutally shot an innocent, nonthreatening, unarmed black teenager were almost a replay of the causes and conditions of the 1965 Los Angeles riot and similar disturbances in many other American cities of that period. The psychological causes and general background conditions were nearly identical. Tocqueville would have understood it all very well.

(2) Mismatching, or How to Generate Feelings of Inferiority and “Not Belonging”

The Tocqueville Effect in the Obama years explains the rise in *general* frustration among many black Americans. It does not, however, explain why college campuses, home of many of America’s more privileged youth, have been the particular scene of so much anger. This was certainly not the case in the late 1960s, when rioting occurred largely among impoverished ghetto dwellers. To draw closer to an understanding of this “campus difference” we must, I believe, supplement the Tocqueville Effect with several other factors, including what might be called the “Mismatching Effect” and the nagging feelings of intellectual inferiority among blacks that it so powerfully reinforces.

No one has written more cogently on this matter than the black essayist Shelby Steele and the legal journalist Stuart Taylor Jr., so I will draw extensively upon their writings. Steele was an early opponent of racial preference policies, and understood from the outset how they reinforce in a most powerful way the notion that black college students are less intelligent than white and Asian students, and how this perception inevitably poisons race relations. “They see me as an affirmative action case,” a black UCLA student told Steele. A black Berkeley student said he felt defensive every time he walked into a class with white people “because I know they’re all racists; they think blacks are stupid.”² Regardless of the actual behavior of other people, blacks will come to see themselves as being looked down upon by whites and Asians, Steele believes, whenever highly selective colleges apply what are in effect dual admission

²This was before passage of Proposition 209 in 1996, which outlawed racial preferences in all state institutions of higher learning in California, including UCLA and Berkeley. Shelby Steele, “Standards and Double Standards,” in *Second Thoughts about Race in America*, ed. Peter Collier and David Horowitz (Lanham, MD: Madison Books, 1991), 87, 89.

standards for blacks and for whites and Asians.³ Virtually all black critics of racial preference policies have expressed similar views.

Stuart Taylor Jr. has developed what might be described as an “anger displacement” theory of current black grievances on college campuses, which draws upon insights similar to those of Steele. Many black college students, Taylor believes, have developed a sense of anger and alienation, a feeling of “we are not welcome here” because of the perverse mismatching effect of racial preference policies—and these students falsely treat what would otherwise be mere annoyances as both the source of their extreme discomfort and the means by which that discomfort can be discharged and partially overcome. Our selective universities, Taylor writes, “have cynically misled [many black students] into thinking they are well qualified to compete with classmates who are, in fact, far stronger academically.” These students struggle, and are frustrated that even with great effort they receive low grades that often put them in the bottom 10 percent of the class. This is not a good formula for healthy race relations on campus, Taylor notes.⁴

Viewed from the perspective of Taylor and Steele, we can say that when angry black students demand the creation of “safe spaces” where they can be alone together, shielded from the condescending gaze of better prepared whites and Asians; when they demand mandatory “sensitivity training” for all university faculty and staff, and mandatory courses for fellow students on the history and travails of “marginalized people”; and when they demand the hiring of more black faculty and administrators, what they are actually doing is giving voice to the very real pain, alienation, and sense of “not belonging” they experience (but do not fully understand) that is a result of academic mismatching.⁵ When so many black students are placed in academic settings too competitive for their individual needs, they band together on campus, commiserate, and form protest groups that allow them to focus their anger

³“The accusation that black Americans have always lived with,” Steele writes, “is that they are inferior...and this accusation has been...too enforced by law, custom, and every form of power not to have left a mark.” He continues: “So when today’s young black students find themselves on white campuses...they are...surrounded by the myth of their inferiority....And today this myth is sadly reinforced by affirmative action programs.” Steele, “Standards,” 87.

⁴Stuart Taylor Jr., “A Little-Understood Engine of Campus Unrest: Racial Admissions Preferences,” *American Spectator*, November 23, 2015, <http://spectator.org/articles/64739/little-understood-engine-campus-unrest-racial-admissions-preferences>.

⁵The written demands of black protesters at the University of Missouri in 2015 may be seen as typical. See “List of Demands from Concerned Student 1950 Group,” at http://www.columbiatribune.com/list-of-demands-from-concerned-student-group/pdf_345ad844-9f05-5479-9b64-e4b362b4e155.html. Similar demands were made by students at Dartmouth, Williams, Yale, Ithaca, Oberlin, Claremont McKenna, Princeton, and elsewhere.

and blame their alienation on conditions that are easy to attack and within their ability to change through the time-honored strategy of protest marches and threats of civil disobedience. That they may be unaware of the real source of their rage is an additional tragedy caused by mismatching and by the elaborate stratagems college administrators use to cover it up and keep students in the dark about what is really going on.⁶ Bad policy combined with bad faith has helped to produce the current dilemma.

(3) Sharptonism: Black Blame-Casting and Excuse-Making

That many black students are unaware of how preference policies may contribute to their sense of alienation on college campuses is a result not simply of college administrators and other outsiders deliberately confusing everyone but also of powerful forces of denial within certain segments of the black community itself. These forces have become particularly salient since the late 1960s in the wake of the near hysterical response by certain black activists and white leftists to Daniel Moynihan's famous report on the rapidly disintegrating black family. Moynihan himself would later describe this denial, within the context of the sixties-era war on poverty, as "a near-obsessive concern to locate the 'blame' for poverty, especially Negro poverty, on forces and institutions outside the community concerned."⁷

We might describe this response as "Sharptonism"—after the Rev. Al Sharpton, the protest march impresario whose focus in assessing current black problems is almost exclusively on white malevolence and white misdeeds but never on any shortcomings or lack of vision within the black community. While such an attitude is understandable, given the extreme mistreatment of blacks in the past, it greatly distorts current reality and robs blacks of the crucial sense of self-efficacy and internal locus-of-control that is so necessary for any kind of personal improvement or group advancement.

⁶Reporting on the black protests at Princeton, *New York Times* reporter Andy Newman writes: "Black Justice League members said they had often felt excluded and continually if subtly called on to justify their presence at one of the nation's top schools." Newman does not mention the possibility that current racial preference policy may figure in such feelings. "At Princeton, Woodrow Wilson, a Heralded Alum, Is Recast as an Intolerant One," *New York Times*, November 22, 2015, <http://nyti.ms/1SdHA8x>.

⁷Daniel P. Moynihan, "The Professors and the Poor," in Daniel P. Moynihan, ed., *On Understanding Poverty: Perspectives from the Social Sciences* (New York: Basic Books, 1969), 31.

Sharptonism was clearly on display in the Ferguson riots and in the continued penchant by many blacks to believe the “hands up, don’t shoot” version of the killing of Michael Brown long after the facts of the case—including extensive forensic evidence—were readily available. Those facts corroborated the version of the shooting told by the police officer, Darren Wilson, while undermining the claims that Wilson had cruelly killed a helpless, non-threatening black teenager who was in the process of surrendering to him.⁸ Sharpton’s followers desperately *want* to believe that blacks live in a pervasively racist society where whites continually try to do them in, and they desperately crave explanations of their current predicament that place the blame for all their problems on outside forces over which they have little control and for which they need take little responsibility. They do not want to believe that white racism has diminished very much since the Jim Crow era, or that occupational and educational opportunities for blacks have greatly expanded since that time. Some of this Sharptonism has infected a number of college campuses today.

Many blacks, of course, reject Sharptonism as a one-sided distortion of the situation, and are probably more sympathetic to the kind of self-help-with-God-help-and-church-help message broadcast by such outstanding black preachers as Tony Evans and Eugene Rivers than to Sharpton’s understanding of the black predicament. We might call this latter group the “Sowell blacks,” after Thomas Sowell, the most outstanding black conservative of the late twentieth century. But it is the Sharpton blacks who are the darlings of the mainstream media, who are most politically active, and who constitute significant portions of the black student population on many college campuses, especially among campus activists. The Sharpton blacks hold blacks back by forgetting that indispensable element of folk wisdom, so well-articulated by UCLA’s legendary basketball coach John Wooden, that “you are never a failure until you start blaming others for your mistakes.” Sharptonism greatly influences contemporary black protest on and off campus, and it has poisoned the ability of its adherents to assess what has gone wrong and what needs to be done within the black community. Sharptonism has been particularly harmful in drawing attention away from the pitiful performance of so many black youngsters in our nation’s public school system and the pressing need to rectify the situation.

⁸An excellent and detailed account of the extensive evidence, both physical and eyewitness, is given in the *Wikipedia* entry “Shooting of Michael Brown,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shooting_of_Michael_Brown.

(4) White Excuse-Making: The Wages of Liberal Pity and Guilt

Sharpton blacks are not the only people who try to shift blame or view the situation of blacks in America primarily through the lens of white racism. Many upper-middle-class white leftists—“limousine liberals,” as they are sometimes labeled—are even more inclined to embrace this viewpoint, and in so doing play the role of powerful enablers. They often combine elements of white pity and white guilt over the circumstances of the black poor in America in a manner that leads to excuse-making and blame-casting that is virtually identical to Sharptonism.

Policy analyst Charles Murray dates the beginning of this behavior of white elites to the failure of the Johnson-era anti-poverty programs in the late 1960s. It was at this time, Murray argues, that white elites in the federal bureaucracy and elsewhere began treating blacks “in ways that they would never consider treating people they respected.” Whites, he says, “began to tolerate and make excuses for behavior among blacks that whites would disdain in themselves or their children”: “Is the black crime rate skyrocketing? Look at the black criminal’s many grievances against society. Are black illegitimate birth rates five times those of whites? We must remember that blacks have a much broader view of the family than we do....Is black labor force participation among the young plummeting? We can hardly blame someone for having too much pride to work at a job sweeping floors.”⁹

White pity and guilt, as well as white fear of being called racially insensitive or racist, was surely a major factor in the recent capitulation to the demands of black protesters at such schools as the University of Missouri, Claremont McKenna, and Princeton. These protesters were well aware that they could gain their ends by manipulating such attitudes and fears. Less self-evident, perhaps, is that it was just this sense of power over craven white administrators and college presidents that added to the heightened anger and unendurable pain that many black protesters felt over what might otherwise have been experienced as minor annoyances. As Tocqueville wrote, “a grievance comes to appear intolerable once the possibility of removing it crosses men’s minds.” A politically incorrect Halloween costume or the occasional racial slur uttered by a drunken college student might not normally be thought the kind of situation that would trigger widespread outrage, campus-wide demonstrations, and a host of non-negotiable demands for protection targeted at college presidents. But we do not live in normal times, at least not on college campuses.

⁹Charles Murray, *Losing Ground: American Social Policy 1950–1980* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 222–23.

While pity, condescension, and fear of being branded a racist are major motivating factors that explain the behavior of many college presidents and deans in confrontation with black protesters, there are some white students supportive of the protesters' demands who have a different mindset. We might call it "victim-status romanticism." There is a tradition in Western society going back at least as far as the Gospel of Luke ("Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God")¹⁰ that sees victims of poverty and injustice not simply as sufferers for whom pity and compassion are the appropriate response but as morally and spiritually superior human beings. As such the things they say and the demands they make are viewed with a special kind of deference and respect that precludes all rational assessment of their justice or moral soundness. The philosopher Bertrand Russell called this "the myth of the moral superiority of the poor and oppressed." Its most extreme form can be found in the early writings of Karl Marx, where the masses of poor and oppressed factory workers were seen as nothing less than the moral and spiritual saviors of mankind. Attributed with a kind of secular holiness, they were viewed with near reverential awe.

But such thinking is bogus. Poor and oppressed people are exactly that—they are poor and oppressed. They are not necessarily good people or wise people or noble people or tolerant people. Indeed, the effects of poverty and oppression often fill people with hatred and bitterness, which they frequently take out on fellow sufferers and innocent third parties who have done them no wrong. But many Westerners influenced by victim-status romanticism lose their capacity for sound moral judgment and support whatever claims poor and oppressed people make. And in the case of middle-class black students, victim status is often extended to them despite their many privileges because of the injustices done to their ancestors. However dubious their victim-status claims may be, such claims serve to insulate their campus demands from all critical judgment. This is why white leftists often vigorously support their campus protests. (Such "victim-status romanticism" in my experience is almost exclusively the province of socio-economically privileged whites and is almost never found among the many East Asians on campus, especially those from working-class and Confucian backgrounds.)

¹⁰Luke 6:20. This idea of the moral superiority of the poor is also reflected in Luke's Gospel in the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31), whereby Lazarus, by virtue of nothing more than that he is an involuntary sufferer, impoverished and ridden with body sores, is carried away by angels after his death to live in glory with Abraham.

(5) Helicopter Parenting and the Coddling of American Youth

Students at Princeton sometimes tell me that they call home daily—sometimes multiple times—to discuss the day’s events with their parents. When I explain that in my student days I telephoned home once a month, they wonder if I was estranged from my family or if telephoning was technically difficult. While it was not as easy to use a dormitory public phone in previous times as cell phones today, if one wanted to call home daily, I explain, it would not have been difficult, especially since “reversing the charges” meant that one’s parents would pay the bill. But any male student who called home more than a few times each month would surely have been considered a “mama’s boy” or suffering from “separation anxiety” by other students. Female students might be cut a bit more slack, but I knew of no one of either sex who called home daily or multiple times each week.

Going away to college, I explain to students, was supposed to be a time to sever the umbilical chord and learn to live on one’s own, physically and psychologically detached from one’s parental home. Indeed, the big push among students in the late 1960s was to dismantle lingering vestiges of *in loco parentis*, whereby colleges assumed the role of substitute parents. Independence from the supervision and control of parents and adult authority figures was the ultimate goal of many of those student protesters.

Whether all this was a good thing, a bad thing, or some combination of the two is less important in the present context than recognizing that everything has radically changed. In our age of “helicopter parenting” students often expect the protection, consolation, and moral support many students in the past would have been embarrassed to solicit from parents or parent-substitutes like college deans. Many students today expect the intense involvement in their daily lives of older adults that previous generations of students would have considered unseemly and immature. And this is found among many middle- and upper-middle-class students—particularly those from professional families—of all races. (The most extreme case of helicopter parenting I ever had to deal with as a college teacher came from a black student’s parents—not surprisingly, two lawyers.)

In conjunction with some of the factors mentioned above, helicopter parenting often produces students who are oversensitive, highly sheltered, and incapable of shifting for themselves, and who crave protection from exposure to attitudes and viewpoints they find uncomfortable or offensive. Many students have gone much farther and believe they have a *right* to such protection, a right their college deans and presidents (their substitute parents)

have a critical *obligation* to uphold.¹¹ Failing to fulfill this obligation, such students believe, requires the removal of the offending college officials and their replacement by new, more effective guardians of their tranquility and repose. Faculty, too, are sometimes drawn into this process by being required to post “trigger warnings” in assigned readings about course material students might find shocking or offensive, and they are additionally counseled to avoid lecture material that might make some students uncomfortable. Offense-taking students are seen as having a censorship right that school authorities, like parents protecting a helpless child from the bad-mouthing of older siblings, must respect and enforce.

Campus radicals from an earlier era are baffled by some of this behavior. Writing in the *New York Times*, Todd Gitlin, a sixties-era radical who became a journalism professor at Columbia, complains that blacks and other campus protesters “too often present themselves as weak [and] in need of protection. Administrators are held, like helicopter parents, wholly responsible. To a veteran of movements of the ‘60s like myself, this is strikingly strange.” Gitlin suggests an explanation for such behavior, but he does not seem entirely satisfied with it: “Too many students doubt that their [protest] community is, or can be, strong enough to stand up for itself, entertain arguments and strive to persuade opponents. The extremity of their reaction suggests that they lack confidence that reason and values are on their side.”¹² Gitlin may be onto something, but I believe that there is much more to the story, as I have outlined above.

(6) Sexual Harassment Concepts Expand to Race and Gender Talk

“The campus revolts,” Haley Sweetland Edwards recently observed in *Time*, “just keep coming as students go to ever greater lengths to defend their right not to be upset.”¹³ I have suggested that much of this attitude can be traced to helicopter parenting as coddled, hypersensitive adolescents demand college administrators and other parent-substitutes provide protection from speech and

¹¹*New York* magazine editor Jonathan Chait, who sees himself as a good, old-fashioned American left-liberal, complains that a “strange and sudden hypersensitivity among young people has produced a widespread expectation of a right to be protected from offense.” Chait decries political correctness on campus, which he defines provocatively as “a system of thought that denies the legitimacy of political pluralism on issues of race and gender.” “Can We Start Taking Political Correctness Seriously Now?” *New York*, November 10, 2015, <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2015/11/can-we-take-political-correctness-seriously-now.html>.

¹²Todd Gitlin, “Why Are Student Protesters So Fearful?” Opinion, *New York Times Sunday Review*, November 21, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/22/opinion/sunday/why-are-student-protesters-so-fearful.html>.

¹³Haley Sweetland Edwards, “The Fallacy of ‘Free Speech,’” *Time*, December 14, 2015, 33.

ideas they find offensive. Black students, I also suggest, have additional motives that make them particularly concerned with this protection's effectiveness and particularly good at extracting it from weak-willed, pity-and-guilt-driven white college administrators. There are important truths in all of these claims, but another factor is operating here that may be as important: the presence on most college campuses of elaborate sexual harassment codes, most imposed to implement Title IX, the federal law regarding gender discrimination in educational institutions receiving federal money.

All members of the university community—students, staff, faculty, and administration—are usually apprised of this code, and its dissemination is critical for educational institutions to defend themselves in case of sexual harassment lawsuits. Students who believe they have been the victim of some form of sexual harassment (which is very broadly defined) are encouraged to bring complaints to a faculty member or administrator, who is then required to notify the proper campus enforcement official. At Princeton—which has procedures similar to those of other universities—all deans, administrators, and faculty are required to take a sixty-three-page online tutorial that spells out in minute detail the words, gestures, and actions that are prohibited under the university's definition of sexual harassment and a “hostile work environment.” “As faculty with administrative responsibilities,” the tutorial explains, “you must exercise your authority to ensure that the working and learning environment is free of sexual harassment. You must take every complaint seriously and respond promptly to student and employees [seeking] help. Promptly notifying the Title IX coordinator is an appropriate response.”¹⁴

Faculty and administrators are thus compelled to become frontline protectors of students and others from a large number of actions deemed to constitute sexual harassment. Failure of those entrusted with this enforcement and protection responsibility is a very serious offense and subject to university disciplinary action. Students are told that they have protectors in the form of faculty, deans, and other administrators from words, gestures, or other actions they deem unwelcome, offensive, and of a sexual nature.

If unwelcomed, actions that can be considered harassing are spelled out in great detail. Here is just a partial list of verbal and nonverbal communications those in authority at Princeton are required to report when students or others make complaints: “sexual or gender-based jokes or teasing”; “comments about

¹⁴Princeton's sexual harassment code and the requirements the university must follow under Title IX are elaborately spelled out on the university website: “Sexual Misconduct and Title IX at Princeton University,” <https://sexualmisconduct.princeton.edu>.

clothing, personal behavior, or a person's body"; "derogatory comments of a sexual nature based on gender"; "terms of endearment, such as 'honey,' 'dear,' 'sweetheart,' 'babe'"; "references to an adult as 'girl' or 'boy,' 'doll' or 'hunk'"; "grunts, wolf-whistles, catcalls, hoots"; "giving sexually suggestive looks"; "giving someone a 'once over,' looking from head to toe"; "making facial expressions of a sexual nature, winking, licking lips."¹⁵

When students from a helicopter-parenting culture learn that college deans and faculty have a serious legal and institutional obligation to protect them from offensive sexual remarks—even overheard remarks not directed at, or intended to be heard by, the overhearing party—they naturally come to believe that at least some kinds of speech are off-limits and to expect strict enforcement of campus codes prohibiting it. Since most students are not committed civil libertarians or First Amendment lawyers, it does not require much imagination to expand the kinds of prohibited speech—and the obligation of college officials to enforce prohibitions against such speech—well beyond the area of sexual harassment and hostile work environments.

Given campus politics and the left-of-center ideology that reign in most academic institutions, it is only a short distance from (a) a right to be protected on a college campus from comments and gestures of an erotic nature that are experienced as unwelcome and offensive, to (b) a right to be protected from all manner of on-campus speech about male/female differences that may be found unwelcome and offensive (think of Larry Summers's defenestration from his Harvard presidency), to (c) a right to be shielded by college officials from all speech, gestures, and symbolic acts on campus—including Halloween costumes and fraternity theme-parties—that are perceived by blacks, Latinos, and other non-white groups as racially insensitive and offensive. A pressing need to be protected against a "hostile work environment" caused by sexual innuendo and eroticized display easily expands in the minds of the campus Left into an even more pressing need to be protected against a "hostile learning environment" caused by politically incorrect attitudes and beliefs regarding race and gender.

And that's pretty much where we stand today on many college campuses.

Summing Up

Black college students at such schools as Yale, Princeton, and Claremont McKenna are among America's most privileged youth, yet the campus protests

¹⁵Ibid.

that began after the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014 showed clearly that a significant portion of them are angry, alienated, and deeply unhappy. As Yale president Peter Salovey remarked after meeting with black students in the wake of the Halloween costume controversy on his campus, “the experiences [black students shared with me] went beyond the incidents of the last few days. Their concerns and cries for help made clear that some students find life on our campus profoundly difficult.”¹⁶ I have suggested six factors that, in combination, might help explain the anger of many black students on campus, why it has come to a head during the tenure of America’s first black president, and why it has taken the specific protest route that it has.

Of the factors discussed, pride of place must be given to the Mismatching Effect and the quixotic attempt to achieve a rich and harmonious “diversity” on college campuses through the use of huge racial and ethnic preferences. Put simply, affirmative action hasn’t worked and has had disastrous consequences. It has not produced the more loving, caring, and tolerant academic community that its supporters have said they desire, but an infantilizing of the college campus and its transformation into a protective cocoon where college administrators and faculty are called upon to enforce the race and gender standards of left-wing political correctness. The campus is transformed into a politicized dictatorship—not of the Left’s once honored working class, but of loud, strident, intolerant black activists and their white leftist supporters.

Lest the reader think my comparison of these activists to Jacobins, fascists and other thuggish political actors is too extreme, consider the dictatorial tone, authoritarian bullying, self-righteous enmity, demand for Maoist-style re-education, and general contempt for free speech and open debate that is reflected in the demands and ultimatums issued in November 2015 by the protest group at Amherst College calling itself the Amherst Uprising. It is typical of the kind of protest we witnessed on several college campuses last year and is worth quoting at length:

We, Students of Amherst College, refuse to accept the negative social climate created towards our peers of color and other marginalized groups. ... We as a compassionate student body have gathered to address the legacy of oppression on campus. If these goals are not initiated [*sic*] within the next 24 to 48 hours, and completed by November 18th, we will organize and respond in a radical manner, through civil disobedience. If there is a

¹⁶“President and Yale College Dean Underscore Commitment to a ‘Better Yale,’” *YaleNews*, November 6, 2015, <http://news.yale.edu/2015/11/06/president-and-yale-college-dean-underscore-commitment-better-yale>.

continued failure to meet our demands, it will result in an escalation of our response.... President Martin [and Board of Trustees Chairman Cullen Murphy] must issue a statement of apology to students, alumni and former students, faculty, administration and staff who have been victims of several injustices including but not limited to our institutional legacy of white supremacy, colonialism, anti-black racism, anti-Latinx racism, anti-Native American racism, anti-Native/indigenous racism, anti-Asian racism, anti-Middle Eastern racism, heterosexism, cis-sexism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, ableism, mental health stigma, and classism....President Martin must issue a statement of apology to faculty, staff and administrators of color as well as their allies, neither of whom were provided a safe space for them to thrive while at Amherst College....President Martin must issue a statement to the Amherst College community at large that states we do not tolerate the actions of student(s) who posted the “All Lives Matter” posters, and the “Free Speech” posters that stated that “in memoriam of the true victim of the Missouri Protests: Free Speech.” Also let the student body know that it was racially insensitive to the students of color on our college campus and beyond who are victim to racial harassment and death threats; alert them that Student Affairs may require them to go through the Disciplinary Process if a formal complaint is filed, and that they will be required to attend extensive training for racial and cultural competency....President Martin must issue a statement of support for the revision of the Honor Code to reflect a zero-tolerance policy for racial insensitivity and hate speech.¹⁷

Such recourse to dictatorial ultimatums, intimidation tactics, and outright bullying, while intolerable and appalling, is partially mitigated by the fact that so many blacks have been placed in campus environments poorly suited to their academic needs (mismatched), where white and Asian students, often better prepared and more academically gifted, silently look down on them. To a considerable extent, responsibility for this situation lies with those college administrators and presidents who shamelessly continue to implement differential racial standards for admissions long after the disastrous consequences of racial preference policies have become readily apparent. Our anger at hostile, whiny, bullying campus protesters should at least partially be offset by a recognition of this. The “snowflake Jacobins and crybaby fascists” have

¹⁷“Amherst Uprising—What We Stand For,” Amherst Soul, November 13, 2015, <http://www.amherstsoul.com/post/133122838315/amherst-uprising-what-we-stand-for>.

disgraced our college campuses and undermined the values of decency, civility, and democratic deliberation. But a good part of the blame for their mischief belongs to their elders. They are supposed to be mature adults—and they should know better.