There is something deliciously ironic about academic and media elites rethinking Woodrow Wilson, the president they have probably lionized most until the current occupant of the White House took office.

It is an irony that Mr. Wilson himself would most likely not appreciate, and not just because he didn’t appreciate many ironies. My predecessor at Accuracy in Academia, Dan Flynn, summed up the turnaround nicely in an article he wrote for the American Spectator recently.

“The New York Times calls America’s 28th president ‘an unapologetic racist whose administration rolled back the gains that African-Americans achieved just after the Civil War, purged black workers from influential jobs and transformed the government into an instrument of white supremacy,’” Flynn wrote. “The editorialists are not wrong, just late.”

“The first and vital object to be accomplished today is the election of Woodrow Wilson,” the newspaper of record editorialized on Election Day in 1912. Four years later, the Times again endorsed the man insulted by the Times this week as an ‘unrepentant racist’ and an ‘unapologetic racist.’ Times change.”

It should be noted that not everyone in the press corps was taken in by Wilson. The sage of Baltimore, H. L. Mencken, for example, turned out to be singularly unmoved by the father of the League of Nations, the Federal Reserve Board, and the federal income tax.

“The important thing is not that a popular orator should have uttered such vaporous and preposterous phrases, but that they should have been gravely

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Dear Reader,

It has been said that newspapers are “the rough draft of history.” Unfortunately, that is usually true.

Perhaps for that reason, only now are both the media and academia starting to realize what a mistake it was to lionize America’s 28th president. One wonders if it will take another century to come to such an epiphany about our current chief executive.

Ironically, Presidents Wilson and Obama have much in common:

- Both had a high sense of self-esteem;
- Neither “let a crisis go to waste.” Wilson imposed massive censorship and pumped out copious amounts of propaganda in name of “making the world safe for democracy.” President Obama responded to America’s health care crisis by, in effect, nationalizing it.
- Both were actively hostile to the U. S. Constitution. Wilson may actually may have been more vocal in his disdain, affixing his name to books assailing America’s founding document. President Obama usually makes veiled references to “having a phone and a pen” to sign executive orders with, when Congress shows any sign of not complying with his wishes.
- Both played the race card, albeit from different arcs on the color spectrum. President Obama rarely hesitates to inject himself into local controversies in which race may be even tangentially involved in and way whatsoever. President Wilson actively worked to resegregate the government and the nation’s capitol a half century after both had been desegregated in the wake of the Civil War.

We point out all of the above because setting the record straight is what we do, for you.

All the best,

Mal Kline,
Executive Director
received, for weary years, by a whole race of men, some of them intelligent,” Mencken wrote in The Smart Set, the magazine he edited, in January 1921, just as President Wilson was leaving office, and a year before the founder of Accuracy in Academia, Reed Irvine, was born. “Here is a matter that deserves the sober inquiry of competent psychologists.”

“The boobs took fire first, but after a while even college presidents—who certainly ought to be cynical men, if ladies of joy are cynical women—were sending up sparks, and for a long while anyone who laughed was in danger of the calaboose.”

What a pity Mencken never got to interview Wilson, or better yet, debate him. “The Woodrovian style, at the height of the Wilson hallucination, was much praised by cornfed connoissuers,” Mencken averred. “I read editorials, in those days, comparing it to the style of the Biblical prophets, and arguing that it vastly exceeded the manner of any living literatus.”

“Looking backward, it is not difficult to see how that doctrine arose. Its chief sponsors, first and last, were not men who actually knew anything about writing English, but simply editorial writers on party newspapers, i.e., men who related themselves to literary artists in much the same way that an Episcopal bishop relates himself to Paul of Tarsus.”

It should be noted that the party line trap was one Mencken himself studiously avoided. He was not that enamored of Wilson’s Republican successors either.

“Counting out Harding as a cipher only, Dr. Coolidge was preceded by one World Saver, and followed by two more,” Mencken wrote in his essay on President Coolidge. “What enlightened American, having to choose between any of them and another Coolidge, would hesitate for an instant?”

“There were no thrills while he reigned, but neither were there any headaches. He had no ideas, and he was not a nuisance.”

Artistic Freedom Well Spent

We have spared no shortage of blog space on our problems with George Washington University over the past three decades. Nonetheless, we found something worthwhile on their Foggy Bottom campus—an art exhibit at the Textile Museum there.

Indeed, the late Lily Spandorf (1914-2000) may have been one of the finest artists you never heard of. The Austrian-born Holocaust survivor worked as an illustrator for decades for The Washington Star and The Washington Post as well as The Christian Science Monitor and National Geographic. You may have seen her work in one of those publications or you might have hung it on your Christmas tree.

Soon after arriving in the United States, she settled in Washington, D. C., where she spent
SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE?

“A Virginia school district recently had to defend a classroom assignment that required students in geography class to practice calligraphy by writing the Muslim statement of faith, saying that ‘There is no god but Allah – Muhammad is the messenger of Allah,’” according to Fox News. So much for the separation of church and state that bans religious instruction in public schools.

When news of this assignment went public, including an invitation to female students at Riverheads High School in Staunton, Virginia to wear Muslim clothing, the school district met with outraged parents to discuss the situation, which eventually led to a temporary shutdown of all the schools in Augusta County, Virginia. As it stands now, “Neither these lessons, nor any other lesson in the world geography course, are an attempt at indoctrination to Islam or any other religion, or a request for students to renounce their own faith or profess any belief,” the school district said in a statement provided to Fox News.”

PLACEMATS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

In a story that has become known as “the Harvard placemat debacle, the Freshman Dean’s Office and the Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion prepare a ‘Holiday Placemat for Social Justice’ for use in certain campus dining halls.”

On each placemat was a list of questions that the administration thought that students might hear from “unenlightened parents over the holidays. For example, concerning the recent protests at Yale: “Why are black students complaining? Shouldn’t they be happy to be in college?”

Proposed responses included: “I don’t hear complaining. Instead I hear young people uplift ing a situation that I may not experience.”

Unfortunately, it wasn’t until after the placemat project had been completed and the actual products appeared in some of the dining halls that the Harvard administrators realized how misguided the idea was. For one thing,
the “placemat guide for holiday discussions on race and justice with loved ones” presumed that college students would agree with the diversity office’s “take on current events, and that their relatives back home in flyover country were more or less barbarians.” Apologies for the unfortunate incident were handed out wherever they were appropriate.

DUMB LIKE A FOX?

Presidential candidates’ speeches usually sound pretty much alike, but not this time around. Billionaire and political neophyte Donald Trump not only climbed to the top of the heap but is also the only one to address his audience at a 4th grade level, an unheard of phenomenon even in this era of dumbed down Americans.

“Trump is talking about things that are emotional, simple and angry,” noted Rick Wilson, a Florida-based GOP consultant. Dismissing his competition with “snippy sound bites” may appear to be a bit childish, but Wilson explained that tagging the others as “low energy,” as Trump did with Jeb Bush, is a way to get through to the public that is “devastatingly effective.” And let’s face it – by saying something like “Let’s take their oil,” he can simply dive in and out of any conversations about the international economy in a Twitterized minute.

Today’s straight talk is a far cry from the complexity that used to reign supreme among the political class. The College Fix reported that George Washington’s “Farewell Address” in 1796 was written to appeal to Grade 17.9, i.e. those with graduate degrees. Abraham Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address” in 1863 was written at an 11th grade level.

Other stats: John F. Kennedy’s State of the Union speech in 1961 was written at a 13.9 grade level while Obama’s speeches have been aimed at those with an eighth grade comprehension level.

Eric Ostermeier, a University of Minnesota professor who heads up the Smart Politics website, noted that in testing the effectiveness of candidates over the years, he’s never seen anyone who spoke at the 4th grade level before. However, “if he’d been speaking more like a politician, would he be doing as well in the polls? I don’t think so.”

Former Obama speechwriter Jon Favreau noted that “speaking in words that are easily accessible to the broadest possible audience” can be nothing but good for a political campaigner. For example, one of the most potent phrases that has galvanized public attention recently was “Yes we can.”

HOW POLITICAL CORRECTNESS CORRUPTED COLLEGES

Daphne Patai, a professor at U. Mass, Amherst, recently revealed why political correctness, which has defined the dynamics of college campuses for decades, has emerged as such a potent force. But how could American students “who have been raised with a degree of freedom and autonomy unknown in any other part of the world, agitate for restrictions on their own campuses, demand rules, restrictions and regulations in the name of their versions of justice?”

A major reason that this phenomenon has taken hold is that “limp administrators have let the angry few take over.”

The recent situation at Yale, where more than 50 students signed a petition to get rid of the First Amendment, was just one of the results of this laissez faire attitude in
During the past two decades, political correctness has gone mainstream. A concept that used to apply only to certain parts of university life such as “identity” in Women’s Studies courses, has emerged as one which now demands an obligatory and sincere acceptance of the term in academia, and has required a massive redefinition of higher education.

These days, the students who actively and openly oppose the First Amendment, make exceptions for the things they say, believing that only the speech they approve of should be protected.

What has emerged is a kind of “oppression sweepstakes” where accusing someone of being racist may automatically mean that the accused is “simply in denial and trying to protect one’s privilege.” As for “privilege,” it in itself has become a slur, “another tool in the arsenal designed to impede opposing, or even just differing, points of view.”

FORMER IVY LEAGUE SCHOLAR TURNS WHISTLEBLOWER

After 16 years in academia, former Yale and Harvard scholar Rani Neutill finally had enough. Writing in Slate magazine, she explained that “the Ivy League professoriate is filled with pretentious snobs who only like to talk about themselves and their esoteric little worlds.”

The College Fix reported some of her most difficult moments occurred when “her students’ demanded “trigger warnings,” and asked that negative images be evened out with positive ones. “Isn’t confronting tough subjects what learning is about?” she asked?

Neutill realized that the uncomfortable topics raised in her classes on race, gender and sexuality “forced students to think critically about their privilege and their place in the hierarchy of the world,” a difficult task in an environment filled with “coddled young radicals.” Finally, she decided to leave the academic world, concluding that “colleges are the new helicopter parents, places where the quest for emotional safety and psychic healing leads not to learning but to regression…”

As for the concept of “trigger warnings,” “Neighborhoods in America that are plagued by everyday violence aren’t given any trigger warnings. Let’s be honest: life is a trigger.”

Today, in her life as a waitress, the former professor says that she interacts with real people on a daily basis, unlike her life inside the Ivory Tower. College Fix editor Jennifer Kabbany views Neutill as one of those who has “joined the ranks of liberal and left-leaning scholars who are publicly speaking out and saying: higher ed is broken.”

decades capturing the city’s changing landscape in pen, ink and watercolor. She brought an old-world style to her work but it was a style uniquely her own.

Long-time denizens of our nation’s capital might be particularly startled to learn that this Dupont Circle resident made the rounds of the city on painting excursions while wheeling her art supplies around in a shopping cart. There’s a strong possibility that many thought she was homeless.

Malcolm A. Kline is the Executive Director of Accuracy in Academia.
If you would like to comment on this article, e-mail mal.kline@academia.org.
Arguments for and against tenure*

Here are the top ten arguments for tenure, sort of:

1. Peter Navarro of the University of California at Irvine for actually documenting that Communist China is a threat

2. David A. Prentice of Catholic University for unravelling the myths of embryonic stem cell research


4. Carol Swain of Vanderbilt and

5. Robert Oscar Lopez of California State University at Northridge for showing their students two sides of a story and paying dearly for it

6. J. Eric Dietz of Purdue for showing that there may be solutions to school shootings—either calling the cops or carrying a gun.

7. Michael Munger of Duke for keeping the university more politically balanced than the central committee in most communist countries

8. Paul Kengor of Grove City College for writing histories that may be politically incorrect, but are historically accurate. Could there be a connection between the two?

9. Wilfred McClay of the University of Oklahoma for showing us the dark side of academe

10. Paul Sullins of Catholic University for showing us that children raised by same-sex parents experience more difficulties than those who aren’t

Here are the top ten arguments against tenure, definitively:

1. The Modern Language Association

2. The American Studies Association

3. The National Women’s Studies Association

4. Jason Stanley of Yale for suggesting that the answer to crime is fewer prisons

5. Jonathan Gruber of MIT for everything Obamacare

6. University of Michigan historian Heather Ann Thompson (see Jason Stanley—this is a favorite leitmotif of people who live in essentially gated communities)

7. Garrett Epps of the University of Baltimore for his suggestion that we put a “six-month moratorium on paeans to the wisdom of the Framers.”

8. Harvard historian Naomi Oreskes for phantom primary source documents

9. Jeffrey Sachs of Columbia for his denigration of the Declaration of Independence and

10. Kathryn Edin, the Bloomberg Professor of Sociology at Johns Hopkins University, for her own solution to crime—more public housing for ex-cons

One could argue that those whose careers make the best argument for tenure would have lived lives of academic accomplishment without it. But those whose livelihoods argued against tenure have had any careers at all?

*Drawn from stories covered by Accuracy in Academia in 2015*
To show what college and university English Departments are really teaching, Accuracy in Academia compiled *The REAL MLA Stylebook*, filled with quotes from a recent convention of the Modern Language Association (MLA) where thousands of English professors gather to push their politically correct, radical agenda. Outsiders who attend this event expecting to learn more about Chaucer, Milton and Shakespeare are in for a rude awakening when they discover that panels are more likely to focus on topics such as “Marxism and Globalization;” “What’s the Matter with Whiteness,” and “Queering Faulkner.”

This book is must-reading for anyone interested in learning more about the mindset of faculty members who are tasked with teaching the great works of the English language to our nation’s students.

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You can order your copy of *The REAL MLA Stylebook* using the coupon below or order online at the AIM store: www.ShopAIM.org

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Take AIA’s women’s studies course at www.conservativeuniversity.org. See how you do on the quiz!

Kate Obenshain – Author/political pundit, frequent O’Reilly Factor guest

Hadley Heath – Director of Health Policy, Independent Women’s Forum

Mona Charen – Author and syndicated columnist

Karin Agness – President, Network of enlightened Women (NeW)

Star Parker – Founder/President, Center for Urban Renewal and Education, frequent guest on Sean Hannity

Diana Furchtgott-Roth – Director of Economic21, Manhattan Institute for Policy Research