In this woke on campus takedown article MacDonald does a vivid job of unmasking the narrative process.  Such a process is one of declarations, not logical concepts interwoven into a sensible reality.  It is as though we are living in an imaginary world of woke full of good and evil that makes no sense.

**The True Purpose of the University**

Students would scorn free speech less if colleges honored their mission to transmit knowledge.

[Heather Mac Donald](https://www.city-journal.org/contributor/heather-mac-donald_122)

[Spring 2017](https://www.city-journal.org/magazine?issue=311)

Education

[The True Purpose of the University | Yale University Education News (city-journal.org)](https://www.city-journal.org/html/true-purpose-university-15134.html) – excerpts below.

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In the 1970s, a fantastical idea took hold throughout the humanities—that the goal of criticism was to unmask the alleged deceptions afflicting, and perpetrated by, “texts.” The assumption was that all language carried hidden meanings that either subverted alleged power structures or reinforced them. The French philosopher Paul Ricoeur labeled this outlook the “hermeneutics of suspicion.” Ricoeur traced its roots to Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche, who advanced the view that humans live in a tissue of lies and illusions about the world, whether with regard to economic relations, the rational self, or philosophical truth.

A less precious antecedent to Salovey’s “false narratives” paradigm is the progressive-education mantra from the late 1990s that “critical thinking” should be the goal of education. The Internet has made the allegedly mindless transmission of facts obsolete, the educrats proclaimed, since students can always look up such boring things as facts on the Web. Instead, schools should cultivate in their students the capacity to “think critically.” A typical exercise was to have students “deconstruct” an advertisement to expose all the ways that big bad corporations were trying to dupe consumers. The “critical thinking” idea conveniently let teachers off the hook for failing to teach their students anything, by declaring that there was nothing substantive that needed teaching anyway.

But the “false narratives” idea really came into its own with the rise of academic identity politics. To the modern academic, the quintessential “false narrative” facilitates the oppression of victim groups by white heterosexual males. Salovey hits all the requisite notes in his final example of a Yale professor debunking a “false narrative.” “Professor Hazel Carby [a black feminist theorist] wrote a telling remark in her foreword to a book called *Silencing the Past*,” Salovey says, “highlighting the power of challenging false or incomplete narratives about the marginalized: ‘We learn how scanty evidence can be repositioned to generate new narratives, how silences can be made to speak for themselves,’ ” Carby wrote. Predictably, the book that Carby was introducing blames the West for distortions regarding a Caribbean slave revolt, the Holocaust, the Alamo, and Christopher Columbus.

In the realm of daily politics, it may be fair to say that we are awash in false narratives. But the past is filled with accomplishments that are not “narratives” or not “false” in the sense intended by the phrase “false narratives.” These accomplishments should be approached with humility and reverence. The task of both scholar and student should be to understand them on their own terms.

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The free-speech model of education tends toward a focus on the present. The issues about which students are going to have the strongest opinions concern current political and policy matters: Is Donald Trump a fascist? Is immigration enforcement racist? Does the criminal-justice system discriminate against blacks? Which bathrooms should “trans” individuals use? The fact that only one answer to these questions is acceptable on college campuses is indisputably a problem. But they are not the questions that undergraduate education should focus on; there will be time enough after students graduate to debate current affairs. While defenders of the open university rightly fight for free speech, they should not lose sight of the knowledge that is the university’s core mission to transmit. If students had been more deeply immersed in acquiring that knowledge and less taken with challenging “false narratives about the marginalized,” we might not have seen the narcissistic campus meltdowns after the last presidential election.