



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on October 15, 2016

Snowflake Nation: How Panderly Parenting Is Creating a Generation of Tyrants

When you treat your son like the sun and orbit around him as if he's his own little solar system's center, don't be surprised when he supernovas at every imagined slight. So says a Michigan college professor, in so many words, in a new book examining the origins of the "snowflake" college-student phenomenon.



The book is *Political Correctness and the Destruction of Social Order: Chronicling the Rise of the Pristine Self*, by Oakland University professor emeritus Howard Schwartz. After years of studying the psychology animating political correctness, Schwartz says that modern society is breeding large numbers of quasi-narcissists who cannot tolerate any questioning of their delusion-born self-image. Writes the [College Fix](#):

Schwartz, who taught classes in social and behavioral science within its [Oakland U's] business school, said the term stems from what he calls "the rise of the pristine self."

Schwartz writes in the book that "this is a self that is touched by nothing but love. The problem is that nobody is touched by nothing but love, and so if a person has this as an expectation, if they have built their sense of themselves around this premise, the inevitable appearance of the something other than love blows this structure apart."

He added in his interview that "the oversensitivity of individuals today, including political correctness and microaggressions, all stem from this idea that people operating under the notion of the pristine self view you as evil because you are showing them something other than love."

Schwartz points to the rise of helicopter parents and capitulating campus administrations as contributing to this phenomenon.

"People now experience the entire world as a form of bullying. The helicopter parent protects the children from real dangers but also fantasy dangers. These precious snowflakes are the children of political correctness, their parents and schools lead them to believe that the world is perfectly moralistic — they don't live in the real world, it is a fantasy," he said.

Prof. Schwartz says that universities exacerbate this problem by becoming "matriarchal institutions" that pander to and coddle already callow undergraduates. As a very timely example, the *Washington Free Beacon* has just [reported](#) that the University of Florida is "providing around-the-clock counseling services to students who are offended by Halloween costumes." And this now reflects the norm. Word



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[has it](#) that students today are flooding college mental-health centers; this, of course, is encouraged by the psychological profession, as a growing snowflake mentality grows its market and coffers.

This coddling is what has given us demands for, as Schwartz [wrote](#) in February, “safe spaces,” trigger warnings, and protection from microaggressions” from students who “work upon the assumption that they deserve a ‘pristine self’ unchallenged by invalidating ideas or opinions.” What is a microaggression? Schwartz explained that “Derald Wing Sue, godfather of the concept, defined ‘microaggression’ as ‘the brief and everyday slights, insults, indignities and denigrating messages sent to people of color by well-intentioned White people who are unaware of the hidden messages being communicated’” (video below of Professor Sue discussing the destructive concept).

This all sounds like the musings and concerns of people with too much time on their hands. And that “an idle mind is the Devil’s playground” is a factor. Yet there’s more to it. Let’s examine Prof. Schwartz’ thesis.

The Little Prince Phenomenon

Children are born self-centered, mainly because, as philosopher G.K. Chesterton put it, they have “a self.” And just as languages are learned best when young, so is morality and tolerance for criticism and for the denial of desires. Yet “As the twig is bent, so grows the tree”; a child whose natural petulance and tyrannical instincts aren’t tamed may never “grow out of it.”

Now, we all know that stereotype of the coddled and spoiled ancient royal who from childhood is surrounded by luxury and fawning servants and is treated as a demigod whose every whim is satisfied. How common such an individual was, even among royalty, is not the point; it is, rather, that we wouldn’t be surprised if such a person grew up a narcissist, intolerant of the slightest criticism and demanding continual validation of his deific self-image.

In a way, this is precisely the upbringing many children have today. In fact, contemporary civilization — with supermarkets stocked with “wedding food,” modern conveniences, abounding recreational and entertainment opportunities, and lots of free time — offers a lifestyle of which ancient royals couldn’t even dream. This is combined with permissive, Dr. Spock-disgorged parenting. Children may be treated as if their flatulence is floral aroma, rarely receiving criticism and being lavished with praise for doing what is merely obligatory. And it may not be that just spanking is anathema, but that “punishment” is a dirty word and that every strong word may be avoided for fear of damaging “self-esteem,” which has become a euphemism for the sin of pride. The result? Spoiled, self-entitled brats and rampant “ADHD,” which psychologist Dr. John Rosemond has called “the extending of toddlerhood indefinitely.”

This stunted moral, emotional, and spiritual development can beget young adults who seem to have the maturity of 10-year-olds. And they often demand from their college professors and others the kind of homage, deference, and kid-gloves treatment their dysfunctional upbringing has conditioned them to expect. As Prof. Schwartz put it, such individuals “see themselves as being microaggressed against when an interaction does not support their feelings of goodness and importance, *in the terms they use to define their own goodness and importance*. The basis upon which they feel validated is never defended, or even openly stated — but it is assumed to be understood and its validity self-evident.” Sure. Their parents understood how to buttress their egos. Why shouldn’t everyone else?

Love ... or Something Else?

Yet does this mentality really reflect a “self that is touched by nothing but love”? After all, love doesn’t



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mean being an enabler. It doesn't mean giving an alcoholic a bottle of gin or a heroin addict his fix — or a child his ego fix — merely because he demands such. Love means not always giving a person what he wants, but what he *needs*.

In contrast, pandering parents may be exhibiting not love but *emotional dependence*, at least to a great degree. Someone emotionally dependent upon another will deliver that gin or fix, whatever is necessary to gain or maintain the affection he wants. So where love is selfless, emotional dependence is selfish — and it's easy to confuse the two. This isn't to say such parents have no love for their children. But all human love is imperfect, and, in the least, whatever love they do have isn't guided by wisdom.

Yet there's an even deeper issue here. Prof. Schwartz quotes an observation by columnist Megan McArdle, who [wrote](#), "Today's students don't couch their demands in the language of morality, but in the jargon of safety. They don't want you to stop teaching books on difficult themes because those books are wrong, but because they're dangerous, and should not be approached without a trigger warning. They don't want to silence speakers because their ideas are evil, but because they represent a clear and present danger to the university community." There's a simple reason for this:

These students don't actually believe in morality.

As I often point out, 2002 Barna Group research [found](#) that only six percent of teenagers believe in Truth, properly defined as something absolute and existing apart from man; almost all are moral relativists and are most likely to make "moral" decisions based on *feelings*.

And there you have it. Stating the obvious, a Truth-oriented person's main question always is "Is it true?" When people don't believe in Truth, however, they can no longer use it as a yardstick for making decisions and then fall back on that guide that feels oh-so right: their own feelings. Moreover, in this relativistic universe, there can be no right or wrong, good or evil. Then the matter of whether something is one or the other is subordinated to "Is it liberal or conservative?" "Is it healthful or not so?" or "Is it safe or dangerous?" — with emotion being the ultimate arbiter.

Of course, this can also be a tactic by the more Machiavellian sorts. You appear a tyrant if you persecute someone merely because he's (supposedly) wrong. If he's "dangerous," however? Then you're a savior administering justice.

Regardless, as the overgrown children and demagogues they enable "macroaggress" upon morality and its daughter freedom, they make all of America a very unsafe space for everyone.



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