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Ruminations on the Two Faces of Friendly Fascism in the Academy**

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ABSTRACT

Racism and sexism are not, as many would assume, about outright hatred or domination. Though such sentiments exist, discrimination in the academy functions on a subtler, more passive, unthinking, sometimes even “friendly” level. Nonetheless, we must expose such friendly-fascism not just to redress individual cases of injustice but also to realize democracy in its deepest, noblest sense. For academic fascism does not spring from a vacuum nor does it simply exercise power for power’s sake. Rather, the academy has a history of aiding and abetting the highest form of public power: i.e., the state. This is precisely why all of us, not just “women” or “minorities,” must confront and defeat academic fascism. When the academy’s High Priests work in tandem with the Leviathan’s Generals, we Heathens risk losing not just our lives on the battlefield or our livelihoods to the internal exile of unemployment/underemployment but also our souls to the state’s single-minded power machine.

OF HEATHENS, HIGH PRIESTS, AND ACOLYTES: Ruminations on the Two Faces of Friendly Fascism in the Academy

L. H. M. Ling

INTRODUCTION

We all know about “friendly fascism” in the academy.¹ And we know it on an intimate, routine basis.² Bertram Gross (1980) first coined the term “friendly fascism” to refer to the pacifying effects of corporate capitalism, although this concept of institutional duality could apply more generally. That is, any regime of power, whether fuelled by corporate capitalism or not, would aim to disguise its exercise of authority and sometimes violence with a “friendly” face to make it more palatable to rulers and ruled alike. The academy differs slightly. It doubles this institutional duality with *two* “faces” of friendly-fascism: the first one systematically undermines one set of identities (i.e., “Heathens”); the second one overprivileges another (i.e., “High Priests” and “Acolytes”). Heathens are those whom the academy deems to need “conversion.” The single characteristic that marks Heathenness is a critical attitude towards the academy’s priesthood *especially* from a race, gender, class, or cultural perspective. High Priests and Acolytes are anointed to do the “converting.” White males, in contrast to all others,³ are assumed to qualify for academic priesthood unless and until they prove otherwise. Men of color, white women, and women of color could also make it (Condoleeza Rice is a good example) if they excel at enforcing the academy’s ruling regime. However, only a few exceptions from this latter category are allowed into the academy’s inner sanctum. Usually, they occupy the middle or *comprador* ranks, mediating between those Heathens who think they could win acceptance and rise higher in the academic hierarchy and the High Priests who’d like to keep them at a distance. Let me stress here that I do not think that all those who have standing in the academic hierarchy, including white males, are unthinking, unquestioning fascists who have compromised their way to get “in,” then scramble to the “top.” My point is that we need greater clarity on how power structures social relations in the academy. It makes *asymmetrical* demands on different subjects with uneven rewards and consequences for all. That’s why the academy needs its two “friendly” faces to keep us all going.

For “uppity” Heathens, we often think we’re going crazy with anger, confusion, fatigue, and the sheer audacity of it all. Many of us rightly believe that we, too, qualify as Acolytes to become, eventually, the academy’s High Priests. But we never, ever seem

¹ Many thanks to the following for their timely and insightful comments: Anna M. Agathangelou, Bertha Amisi, Gavan Duffy, Payal Banerjee, Tim Emmert, Tracy Harbin, and Yumiko Mikanagi.

² Historically black or women’s colleges have a different set of High Priests, Acolytes, and Heathens with their own rules for friendly-fascism. This essay only covers the typical institution of higher learning in what is considered “the West” (North America, Europe, and the United Kingdom): that is, one run by elite white males.

³ Race in the Anglo-American-European context always trumps all other markers like sexuality or ideology.

to make it no matter how hard we try. I suggest that such meritocracy cannot occur for two, simple reasons of power: (a) the price of admission is compliance more often than brilliance,⁴ and (b) the academic priesthood must remain exclusive to sustain its hierarchy and appeal. Otherwise, why would anyone bother to beat down the gates of academe to enter its hallowed halls? To redress this discriminatory regime, we must pay equal attention to those the academy favors as much as it marginalizes. Only then could we break down the lock of friendly-fascism in the academy.

I begin with the academy's first face of friendly-fascism (converting the Heathens) then move on to its second (valorizing the High Priests and Acolytes). For each "face," I cite several representative scenarios. These serve as illustrations only for two reasons. One, generalization is not always the end-goal of social science inquiry. Sometimes, it is just as important to understand why certain outcomes, rather than others, result from a particular situation.⁵ Secondly, there are no "hard" data or systematic studies of power relations in the academy. Studies that have been conducted – the latest report from the American Political Science Association (APSA) on the status of women in the profession, for example⁶ – tend to accept the established "rules of the game" as unproblematic and immutable; accordingly, they recommend better socialization for women and minorities if they seek to advance in the profession. This approach, I submit, is problematic. It may benefit some individuals who specialize in genuflection but it will not help the majority of us who seek critical and innovative ways to improve our worlds. The "rules of the game," I argue, are set up to privilege a minority of usual suspects at the expense of the majority. "So what?" some aspiring Acolyte might shrug. "To the victor go the spoils." I disagree. The academy, more than any other sector of contemporary capitalist life, proclaims itself a citadel of knowledge for the betterment of all, not just a few. It should and must practice what it preaches. I conclude with some preliminary thoughts on transforming friendly-fascism in the academy.

FRIENDLY FASCISM I: Converting the Heathens

Academic fascism stems from an institutional *noblesse oblige* that is also religious, colonial, and patriarchal in character (Agathangelou and Ling, 2004; Agathangelou and Ling, 2002). That is, certain subjects see themselves as endowed, by God or Nature, with "superior" intellect, morality, or institutional status – which happens to adhere to a white, missionary, colonial, and patriarchal order. The recipient is considered a "poor," "misguided," or "unsocialized" Heathen – who happens to be a woman of color in the scenarios mentioned here but could refer to any identity designated by the academy as needing "conversion": e.g., those from a working class or underclass background, immigrants, foreigners, non-whites, non-mainstream thinkers, transgendered individuals, and so on. Such designations, I emphasize, do not reflect a conscious,

⁴ Of course, if one could comply brilliantly that would be best.

⁵ I thank Gavan Duffy for this methodological reminder, drawn from Max Weber's notion of causality.

⁶ <http://www.apsanet.org/imgtest/womeninpoliticalscience.pdf>

deliberate conspiracy. The academy's High Priests do not convene in the dark of night, plotting away to exploit and oppress others. Rather, governance in the academy, as with any institution of historical standing, reflects a legacy of power relations. These configure along lines of race, gender, class, and culture framed by, most recently, almost five centuries of state and economy building under Western capitalism.

Here's how power relations play out, in some instances, for the woman of color in the academy:

Scenario 1: Educating the Heathen ("Professor Young"). A young woman of color, an assistant professor, is attending a panel at an international studies conference. During the discussion, she queries a panellist on his methodology. A middle-aged, white male sitting one row in front of her turns around and repeats the panellist's answer but v-e-r-y s-l-o-w-l-y, as though Professor Young were hard of hearing, ignorant, or a two-year-old. She leaves the conference demoralized.

Scenario 2: Rejecting Education *from* the Heathen ("Professor Guest"). A woman of color gives a guest lecture on racism and sexism in the media to a graduate class of advertising students. The majority are white, with slightly more females than males.⁷ Professor Guest shows current ads from popular magazines and prime-time commercials, but she senses an increasing discomfort from the class. Three white students (2 females, 1 male) strongly dispute her interpretation of the ads as perpetuating racist and sexist stereotypes. "I'm color-blind," one white-male student proclaims. Only the black students support Professor Guest's critiques but they can't push it too far; otherwise, they'd be labelled "radical" or "difficult." The Asian students say not one word. The woman from the Middle East calls for cultural relativism in deciding such matters: "What works in one culture may not work in another." At the end of the two-hour class, the three vocal white students accuse Professor Guest of being racist and sexist for bringing up such topics in the first place. Professor Guest leaves the class shaken and bewildered. "What happened?"

Scenario 3: High-Priest Wannabe I ("The Chair"). A senior white woman chairs the department's tenure committee for its only woman of color candidate, a recent immigrant from Asia. The committee has voted negatively. The chair assures Professor Candidate that every rule, every procedure, was followed "strictly." The committee was "rational" and "fair." The chair admits to losing a lot of sleep over this decision. "When I first got into the big tent," she confides, "I vowed I would do everything possible to bring in other women. But (she sighs heavily), I just couldn't do it in this case. You seemed so Westernized and smart that I thought you were fine. I thought you knew what the rules were. It wasn't until recently that I discovered how unfine you were." Apparently, Professor Candidate isn't "Westernized" or "smart" enough. She failed to follow "the rules."

⁷ Of about 17 students, 11 are white (5 males, 6 females). The rest are a mix of African-Americans (1 female, 2 males), Asians (2 females), and 1 "international" (female).

Scenario 4: High-Priest Wannabe II (“The Administrator”). An African-American woman who is a high-level administrator at her university invites a woman of color faculty to participate in a panel for an ethnic film festival. The woman-of-color faculty is happy to do so even though the event would take up a Saturday afternoon. She’d been friendly with the Administrator, often bonding over common experiences with discrimination at their university. They’ve even attended a couple of seminars together on racism and sexism in everyday life. Professor Unaware thinks the panel went well. They had a lively debate. At the reception afterwards, she and two other panellists, also women of color faculty, celebrate. The following Monday, the Administrator lambasts Professor Unaware in a public email for behaving “inappropriately” at the panel. The Administrator charges that Professor Unaware’s “aggressive” style “intimidated” the young minority female students in the audience. She was also “rude,” alleges the Administrator, to a fellow panellist, a man of color invited from another institution, for contesting his interpretation of a particular film. In contrast, the Administrator praises this man of color for his “sensitive” and “thoughtful” comments. The Administrator is very “disappointed” in Professor Unaware.

The Scenarios above show an ascending order of complexity in academic fascism. The first one is quite obvious and commonplace: the guy was simply clueless. He presumed that Professor Young didn’t understand the subject under discussion. Had he listened carefully, he would have detected from the sophisticated nature of her question that she had understood only too well. Yet he felt entitled to “educate” her. At the same time, Professor Young felt at a loss as to how to handle the situation. After all, she was an audience member, not a panellist. She didn’t feel she had the forum to respond to the man’s intrusive, insulting behavior. Moreover, there were no rules of thumb that she could draw on for help. She didn’t want to come off like an amateur – and a minority one at that.

The second incident is more complicated. Professor Guest didn’t expect a graduate class of advertising students to disavow any knowledge of racism and sexism in their industry – one that is well-known to exploit stereotypes to sell products. Indeed, it is only logical according to the rules of capitalism to do so: give the consumer what s/he wants. The white students, in particular, cloaked their wilful ignorance with claims of color-blindness. In so doing, they self-righteously accused Professor Guest, a woman of color, of being racist and sexist for bringing up such topics in the first place. Professor Guest could not salvage the situation given the adversarial atmosphere that had developed in the classroom: it became her *versus* the class (the few supportive black students notwithstanding). No common understanding or platform for action seemed possible.

The third and fourth scenarios reveal the careful self-delusions that some marginalized subjects, whatever their race, take on to protect their positions in the academy. Their usual rationale is that they are preserving the academy’s “integrity.” They feel an extra responsibility to “standardize” other marginalized subjects so they – and the ensconced ones – wouldn’t look bad. In this way, these High-Priest Wannabes benefit on several counts: (1) they curry favor from the academy’s authentic High Priests,

(2) they secure loyalty from *their* underlings, the new recruits, and (3) they ensure that no “riff-raff” would mess up the institution. In Scenario 3, the senior white woman who blamed Professor Candidate for not knowing “the rules” was really chastising her for not being compliant enough. And we can all imagine what she meant by *that*.

The African-American Administrator in Scenario 4 was more insidious. She did not respect racial and gender solidarity to convey her misgivings, justified or not, directly to Professor Unaware, especially given conversations they’d had about the need for solidarity in white-male institutions of power like a university. Instead, she opted to humiliate another woman of color publicly. Why? Again, for the crime of being “uppity.”

These scenarios stimulate some preliminary thoughts for strategy:

Scenario 1: Professional Cluelessness. (a) Build on Your Strengths. Women of color are used to exhibiting grace under fire. They have to; otherwise, they’d be hounded out a long time ago. In this case, Professor Young could draw on this strength, turn to her clueless colleague and smile: “Thank you. I heard what the panellist said. It’s just that I disagree.” Then she should expound upon why and at length. **(b) Assume the Right and the Authority to Speak Up.** Professor Young is just as entitled to “educate” this colleague as he feels toward her. This sense of entitlement, moreover, comes not from any institutionalized rules but Professor Young *herself*. Until she assumes the right and the authority to speak up, she will continue to feel demoralized. **(c) Apply Humor.** Too often, we become mired in our own anger and frustration such that we become further incapacitated. In the case of professional cluelessness, humor may be our best option. Humor typically invigorates without wounding either the humorist or her object of aggravation; at the same time, it accomplishes the task of addressing incorrigible cluelessness. Elsewhere, I have suggested the importance of humor, specifically *jiujitsu* humor, for women leaders:

Humor deals effectively, if unexpectedly, with the aggression and violence that women leaders invariably provoke. Humor also avoids an overt sexualization of the humorist while conveying an appealing sensuality: one is relaxed, merry, and open. A woman leader’s humor, moreover, cannot descend into sarcasm that can bite all-too painfully. Instead, she should conceive of humor as a *jiujitsu* exercise. In overturning, deflecting, exposing, and sometimes self-deprecating, *jiujitsu* humor hits its mark without involving head-on collisions. *Jiujitsu* humor may not come as second-nature to many but it can be developed over time and through practice. Indeed, nonviolence advocates have long drawn on *jiujitsu* as a concept and method for resolving conflicts (Holzner and Ling, 2001).

Scenario 2: Classroom Tensions. (a) Prepare Your Audience. We Heathens cannot parachute into a class and expect it to accept without anxiety such highly-charged topics as racism and sexism, especially if these implicate the students in any way. Women of color faculty face a double-whammy in the classroom: they are seen as a minority’s minority. If an imposing man of color stood before the class, the students might have

reacted differently. But, more likely than not, a man of color would emphasize racism over sexism, thereby letting off the hook some members of the majority – e.g., white women, gays and lesbians (“we’re oppressed, too!”) – and they would have allied with him naturally. **(b) Consider the Politics of the Classroom.** Race solidarity eludes, also, because students of color have to consider the politics of the classroom. The minority students in the advertising class, for instance, may have agreed with Professor Guest, even thanked her silently for raising subjects of race and gender, but they could not risk upsetting the power balance in the classroom for a moment of revolutionary fervor. Not only were their white classmates cohorts in the academy but also they could become colleagues or bosses some day. The same applied to international students. **(c) Guide, Not Preach.** For this reason, women of color faculty, especially if they guest lecture, must help students reach their own conclusions about discriminatory practices along lines of race and gender, rather than present them with a foregone conclusion. In this way, white students would gain a sense of empowerment, rather than react to what they perceive as an indictment, through their analyses of race and gender; minority students would not feel as though the instructor is forcing them to take risks they hadn’t agreed to; and international students would be encouraged to leave the safety of cultural relativism to share insights on race and gender from their own countries/societies.

Scenarios 3 and 4: Intra-Gender and Intra-Racial Betrayal. There are no simple ways to deal with people’s self-delusions. We cannot take on giving therapy to our colleagues along with all our other duties. I cite these scenarios simply to underscore that betrayals among women, generally, and women of color, specifically, exist. Acknowledging them is the first step to stop perpetrating or enabling them in the first place or to stock up on counter-strategies when they do occur.

Elsewhere, Anna Agathangelou and I (2002) have suggested other, more broad-based strategies to transform friendly-fascism in the academy. These include: i.e., (a) rehauling standard definitions and pedagogical practices to bring in more voices in the construction of knowledge, thereby opening up discursive and conceptual space to contest power’s hegemony over knowledge, (b) communicating *across* methods, subjects, activities, and sites to check the dominance of one over the others, and, (c) building coalitions among the marginalized for collective action. These strategies are based on an analysis of certain power plays in the academy: i.e., (a) the liberal paradox of proclaiming *impartial* and *rational* rules and procedures when, in fact, they are highly *subjective* and *culturally-defined*, (b) the double-double standard of publicly denying the Other’s otherness (“we are all individuals”), especially at tenure and promotion time, while privately assuming such when hiring the person (“she’s good for diversity”), (c) the collapsing of all difference (gender, class, sexuality, ideology) into race to retain a traditional diversity discourse of majorities *versus* minorities that invariably translates into a competitive, cutting-of-the-pie metaphor (“they want what we have”), and (d) the colonization of knowledge and difference as an enterprise *about* the Heathen *for* capitalist, colonial patriarchy rather than knowledge *from* the Heathen *for* purposes altogether beyond those assigned by the academy’s High Priests.

These analyses help but they are not enough. The woman of color in each scenario cited above is made to heel, not because every club has its rules and non-members need not apply, but because the academy needs to keep its Heathens down. In effect, the academy's High Priests agree: "We may advertise ourselves as a "marketplace of ideas" but, really, we must have order and that requires hierarchy." A paradox thus confronts the woman of color: the more she complies, the more she condemns herself to servitude. But this paradox seems ephemeral for she sees others flourishing under the same rules. Am I *insane*?, many women of color have asked themselves. Here we encounter the other face of friendly-fascism in the academy.

FRIENDLY FASCISM II: In Praise of High Priests and their Acolytes

The academy's High Priests and Acolytes could inhabit any kind of body (male/female, white/non-white, heterosexual/homosexual, native/foreigner). Their *behavior*, though, must adhere to standards set by the heteronormative, mainstream, middle-class, North American-Western European, Christian white male.⁸ This means, for instance, changing the rules when it suits the High Priests, accepting specious arguments when the rules cannot be changed, tolerating budgetary and sexual improprieties if they are committed "discreetly," and touting the *status quo* in public even if sceptical in private.

Note the following scenarios:

Scenario 5: Cutting Slack I ("Professor Incomplete"). An African-American male lecturer fails to finish his dissertation as stipulated in his contract when hired to an assistant professor position. He had one year to complete his degree or he's terminated. The department, however, finds that Professor Incomplete is a popular teacher with undergraduates. The department cuts him a deal: he continues to teach but is now shifted to an "administrative" track. Professor Incomplete no longer needs to finish his dissertation. His salary, in fact, increases due to the new administrative post. And the department, as well as the university, can boast of "diverse" representation in its faculty *and* staff.

Scenario 6: Cutting Slack II ("Professor Experimental"). A white-male assistant professor is up for tenure. He has received terrible teaching evaluations in the previous two years. He claims that these reflect the "experimental" approach of his teaching. Everyone knows Professor Experimental has been preoccupied with finishing his book in preparation for tenure; consequently, he has neglected his teaching to the point of having students formulate the syllabus and lead discussions in class. But the department accepts his explanation and votes unanimously to grant him tenure and promotion. The

⁸ Of course, not all middle-class, heterosexual white males from a Christian background would qualify automatically for Acolyte or High Priest status. They, too, must tow the party line to rise in the ranks.

university's tenure committee congratulates the department for having such a "promising" teacher and scholar.

Scenario 7: Cutting Slack III ("Professor Underpublished"). A white-male associate professor without tenure goes up for tenure. Seventeen years after obtaining his degree, he has published 11 articles with not even a book proposal in sight. His friend, the department chair, notes that Professor Underpublished has reviewed "a large number" of articles for journals. This should count as part of his scholarly output, the chair argues. The department votes in the majority (1 negative vote, 1 abstention) to grant tenure. The university does not question the department's vote.

Scenario 8: Cutting Slack IV ("Professor Philanderer"). A white-male professor is caught "mishandling" the budget of the program that he heads. Instead of censuring him, the Dean puts him in charge of another program, now located in Asia. Professor Philanderer takes so many business-class trips overseas that he misses his classes, abandons his students, and stops publishing. He also neglects his wife and family. In fact, an anonymous source has sent pictures to the wife of her husband with various women in various positions. The Dean resists firing Professor Philanderer until two years later, when student complaints about no-show classes could no longer be ignored. Professor Philanderer disappears from the university and his wife.

Scenario 9: High-Priest-in-the-Making ("Professor Golden Boy"). A white-male associate professor, a "golden boy" in every sense, gives a lecture on the Iraq war at a high-profile forum. He concludes: "The war in Iraq may have many problems but at least it's teaching the Iraqi people all about democracy and human rights." A woman of color faculty member, sitting in the audience, disputes his argument. "You claim to be critical," she challenges, "but really uphold the *status quo*." She makes the analogy that the US in Iraq is like a man who rapes a woman simply because he could and legitimizes this brutality by marrying her; then he tells the rape-victim-now-wife that she should be grateful she's learning all about the great institution of marriage. Professor Golden Boy disagrees strongly, calling her at points "naïve" and "idealistic." Those in the audience, a mix of academics and the general public, mostly white and middle-class, nod in agreement. The woman of color faculty feels alienated by the exchange and the audience reception to it. But, compelled by a sense of professional courtesy (Professor Golden Boy is invited from another university), she approaches him afterwards to thank him for the talk. "You know," he says to her privately, "you may be right, after all."

Scenarios 5, 6, and 7 show that any argument could be made – more importantly, *persuade* – if the candidate in question is already accepted as a member of the priesthood. It matters little if the candidate has no degree, receives terrible teaching evaluations, or exhibits a paltry scholarly record as long as he satisfies the institution's minimum requirement: i.e., he does not upset or threaten or seek to change power relations in the academy. The academy's High Priests, by the way, are unerringly accurate in this regard. Professor Experimental, for example, preaches leftist, revolutionary politics but since getting tenure, has had little to do with his department or university politics. He

concentrates on teaching his classes and writing his books. Then he goes home. Professor Incomplete stays quietly in his corner given his compromised position. The same applies to Professor Underpublished. He knows he got tenure through the back door.

Scenario 8 indicates the extent to which the academy's High Priests would protect one of their own. They tolerate not just Professor Philanderer's misuse of public funds but also his abuse of office, along with the university resources that support it, to engage in lascivious personal activities overseas. Such tolerance suggests an unspoken "gentlemen's agreement," a long-held and precious tradition in the academy: i.e., "It's OK to philander as long as you're discreet about it and allow us, the other High Priests, to enjoy it vicariously." This is one reason why the academy's High Priests have protected sexual liaisons between professors and students for so long and, in many cases, still do. Some High Priests even claim, for instance, that having sexual relations with students is part of the latter's education.⁹

Scenario 9 highlights another payoff for friendly-fascism in the academy: i.e., power. By power, I do not mean just the academy's High Priesthood. I extend this notion of power, as Foucault does, to a regime of rule that governs our daily lives. And the highest form of public power, of course, is the state. Herein lies the academy's deepest-held *raison d'être*: that is, to provide the *raison d'état*. Professor Golden Boy knows it well. He must publicly validate the submission of knowledge to power, and that this relationship is beneficial to and legitimate for us all – even if he himself does not believe it entirely. For this act of loyalty, he is well-rewarded. Not only is he invited to speak at high-profile forums but his clever intellectual feints ("I start out by seeming critical but end up with *status quo* conclusions") lands him that much-sought-after cash-cow of intellectual life: exposure to the media. Indeed, Professor Golden Boy is often cited in and pens commentaries for major newspapers like the *New York Times*, gives interviews on radio and television, and enjoys best-seller sales for his latest book. Naturally, the academy valorizes Professor Golden Boy because the media promote him endlessly because he echoes the state without sounding like a toady or sycophant. In turn, the state supports the complicit media that glamorize intellectual golden boys who carry with them the mantle of respectability and legitimacy from the academy. And the circle is complete.

WHAT'S A WOMAN OF COLOR TO DO?

We Heathens could cope well in the academy by devising specific strategies to deal with individual cases of discrimination and despair. But we cannot flourish in the academy without taking into consideration the larger picture: that is, the first face of friendly-fascism in the academy – "converting the Heathens" – is undertaken *in order to* sustain its second – "anointing the High Priests and Acolytes." Accordingly, merely addressing the first face without simultaneously doing the same for the second would be self-defeating in more ways than one. Equally dangerous, we may even delude ourselves

⁹ Private communication.

into believing that we are actually improving our status and rank in the academy, if only we tried harder, learned more astutely, and gained greater access to the “rules of the game.”¹⁰

Our first step toward emancipation must be to recognize that power relations in the academy, as they are currently constructed, could not and will not benefit us Heathens. A second would be to realize that the academy’s High Priests and Acolytes need us in our places as much as we think we want to be in theirs. Both realizations would help decolonize our minds from always ceding power to the High Priests and Acolytes while overlooking our own. From this basis, we could finally draw from within our own histories and experiences and endless occasions of “grace under fire” to appreciate the enduring, rich, resilience that women, generally, and women of color, specifically, have always relied on to not just survive but triumph.

“All this is nice,” a sceptic might ask, “but why should the academy care? The definition and privilege of power, after all, is to not listen.” The sceptic is only partially right. While transforming institutions necessarily takes generations, and we Heathens are understandably tired, there is still another maxim of power that works in our favor: rulers need subjects to rule. Once subjects no longer accept their subordination, then rulers face a crisis of obsolescence. Just ask the British when Gandhi galvanized a subcontinent to rise against 200 years of foreign invasion and occupation; or the Chinese Nationalists, when Mao and the Communist Party stole a quarter of the world’s population from under their noses; or any regime that suddenly faced revolution against seemingly impossible odds. Our revolution, however, need not necessarily come from us *per se*. It is already in the making, as the attacks on 9/11 make painfully clear. The academy’s High Priests and Acolytes, then, have a vested interest to ally with the future. One concrete way for APSA to do so, for instance, would be to sponsor an in-depth study of power relations in the academy and how they affect different subjectivities within it.

More generally, I submit, it is in *all* of our interests, not just “women” and “people of color,” to change the *status quo*. The last scenario demonstrates, more directly than the others, the *real* danger of academic friendly-fascism. It is not simply a set of discriminatory practices that requires redress. Nor is it just a case of bias in favor of certain subjects over others. Rather, friendly-fascism in the academy allows tyranny to pass for enlightenment, chicanery for tolerance, and the utmost cynicism for institutional integrity. The academy serves not as a citadel of knowledge, in this case, but a bastion of blatant power. In these difficult times, when bombs explode at a moment’s notice, whether they are dropped from the sky by a fighter jet or burst forth from the body of a self-proclaimed martyr, we cannot afford to allow the academy to pursue “business as usual.” We as a society and community must demand more accountability from the one institution that produces knowledge for the collective good. Let us make good on our promise and our mandate.

¹⁰ APSA reports, for example, that women “stall” in their professional development despite an increase in degrees received and measures taken by the profession to recruit women at all levels. Today, women comprise only 24% of all full-time faculty in the profession, an almost negligible increase of 6% since 1991.

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