

## Nihilism

The doctrine that a government shall not force any one religion or ideology on its people, that various faiths, creeds, beliefs, and worldviews can coexist under civil law, is one of the great contributions of the American system...

Yet our modern universities have interpreted this principle of tolerance and openness to mean that the great questions do not matter. They have adopted a policy of indifference toward religion, culture, and tradition and, with it, a policy of social disdain and contempt for those who defend them... It is a far cry from saying we ought to allow free inquiry into truth to saying that everyone's opinions are by nature equally true. This kind of pluralism is nothing less than relativism, which easily becomes nihilism.

Nihilism is an ugly idea that brings horrendous consequences. As a doctrine, it denies meaning to everything... What this nihilism has wrought, especially among our youth, is the growing presumption that all things are theirs by right, that no laws, restrictions, or prohibitions can curtail their instant gratification. No stern command from a priestly authority, or even an elected senate, can still their urgent hedonism.

It may be argued that the twilight of authority has contributed to teenage suicide, sexual promiscuity and perversions, rampant and deadly venereal diseases, gross abuses of illegal drugs, disrespect for marriage and family, and an overall boredom and ennui in the midst of frenzied pleasure seeking. Today more and more teenagers are committing suicide; yet of those who seek to aid and counsel against such fatal narcissism, not one dares suggest that the strongest antidote is the simple charge that suicide is morally wrong. That reminder will never be said over a hot line or during a university counseling session. It will never be said because since it is an absolute claim; it does not allow an equal claim on the other side of the question.

(Excerpt from *Why Johnny Can't Think: In the Name of "Openness" American Minds Have Been Closed* by Michael Gelven, *The World & I Online*, Kindle, Location 29 of 256)