

Incapable of Sustaining Their Tender Egos

After I was graduated from high school in 1961 and went off to the Coast Guard Academy and then to a series of civilian colleges and universities, I had the idea — which was common in those days — that I was an adult. That is, college was for adults, not kids. I worked 25-30 hours a week as an undergrad and carried a full academic load. Many others did the same thing. In grad school I enjoyed fellowship support — whoo hoo, \$333 per month during the academic year — and I worked as a TA or an RA on the side while completing the work for my Ph.D. degree. Again, I considered myself, and my teachers considered me, an adult. Same for many others in those days.

At some point during the subsequent years, the prevailing view of college students obviously changed. They are no longer considered adults, with corresponding obligations. Indeed, they are barely considered kids. They are now considered large infants, incapable of sustaining even their tender egos in the face of — horrors! — an offensive opinion or personal slight, much less able to conduct themselves as adults in other dimensions. This transformation of the nature of college students strikes me as entirely for the worse. I realize that old geezers often think that things are going to hell, but this case seems quite clear cut to me.