

Grasping Reality with Both Hands

The weblog of Brad DeLong. Comments (mostly) welcome, or email me at delong@hey.com with "delong-weblog" as the subject.
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Grasping Reality with Both Hands
Note to Self: Slavery Course Topics...

Archives
Grand Narrative: The 20th Century...

Highlighted
Reading Big, Difficult Books...

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Edit Posts
Coronavirus

Market Made for Man...
Why Are University of Chicago Professional Republicans so Stupid?...

JEC: 'This Maxim Is Patently, Grossly Inadequate for Governing a Blog Comment Box... Let Alone... Public Reason & a Public Sphere'—Comment of the Day

Comment of the Day: JEC: *'This Maxim Is Patently, Grossly Inadequate for Governing a Blog Comment Box... Let Alone... Public Reason & a Public Sphere'*
<https://www.bradford-delong.com/2020/07/holbo-this-maxim-is-patently-grossly-inadequate-for-governing-a-blog-comment-box-let-alone-public-reason-a-public.html>: "The question is where do you draw the line..." I agree, which is why it is irksome that the open letter refuses, point-blank, to engage with the nuances of line-drawing. The crucial sentence is this one: "Whatever the arguments around each particular incident, the result has been to steadily narrow the boundaries of what can be said without the threat of reprisal." The "arguments around the particulars" of real-world cases are the whole ballgame. Breezily dismissing mere specificities is gutless sophistry, and I think less of each individual careless enough to sign on to this shoddy piece of argumentation. (I'll note Paul Starr and David Frum, in particular.)... The open letter lacks the courage and intellectual honesty to name a single specific example of this happening. Instead, it treats us to a rather slippery series of hints and allusions which may bring to mind certain recent cases, without committing the signers to saying "This, this specific event, taking into account the totality of facts, was wrong." (And then, of course, it has the gumption to dismiss the relevance of its own pseudo-examples.) The letter is a complaint that a line—which it doesn't even attempt to define—has been crossed, on occasions it flatly refuses to name. It is, in a word, rubbish...
#comment-of-the-day #2020-07-16

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