

Woke or Woked?

The GI Bill provided federal support for the American veterans returning from the Second World War to cover the cost of college tuition so that they could gain a broader training for integrating back into the peacetime economy and be better able to drive that economy forward. However, that GI Bill also created a seismic shock to the intellectual world of the United States. With the marked expansion in both the practical and socially acceptable access to the halls of higher learning that came with the GI Bill, the *Cattle* were seen as having stampeded into the hallowed reserve of the *Best*. While, in principle, the invasion of the *Cattle* into the 'Halls of Ivy' was seen as an assault upon the intellectual class as a whole, in practical terms, the dominance of the political Left in the majority of the most prestigious universities at that time defined the perspective that was taken in the response. A major political question of the day was how could Adolf Hitler have risen to power by a seemingly democratic electoral process. From the perspective of much of the American intellectual Left, the straightforward answer was that fascism is merely populist democracy gone wild. By the 1960s, the correspondingly 'obvious' conclusion had become that the unenlightened American democracy of the 1950s was another fascist dictatorship just waiting to happen. As the children of the previous decade were by that point following their parents into college, the role of the enlightened university was to reveal to these students the errors of their parents' ways.

'Question Authority' became the standard catchphrase on the college campuses of the late 1960s. Students were to disbelieve their parents, their community and religious leaders, and their elected government officials. Indeed, they were to question all forms of authority except, of course, the professor who would assign their classroom grade. Consistent with the condescending clerical perspective which so permeates academia, the student *Cattle* could hardly be expected to comprehend the rarified knowledge being offered by the academic world. So rather than attempting to convey actual understanding, in this new political world, the function of the professor would be to convey a sense of shared intellectual self-esteem. If you think that you are an intellectual, then, by definition, you are an intellectual and should feel committed to defending the social importance which that label conveys. With this came the doctrine of 'education as organized ignorance'. By having been granted your badge of intellectual standing, anything that you don't know or don't understand is, by presumption, an issue of lesser importance. The obvious flaw in this political paradigm is that, at its core, it is little more than the standard cliché "Truth is that which makes one feel superior", a principle that can just as easily flourish outside the classrooms of the Ivory Tower.

Around the beginning of the nineteenth century, college faculty across the Western world began to increasingly embrace the concept of compartmentalized knowledge while rejecting the earlier more explicitly philosophical attempts to integrate all forms of higher knowledge into a unified grand vision. While this increased focus on intellectual specialization has yielded extraordinary successes, at the practical level, these efforts have largely been driven by the perceived need among the faculty to define and defend the boundaries of their specific academic field. This they achieved by creating particularized languages of intellectual specialization that serve to both isolate the boundaries of their field and to establish their own political standing within that field. With the coming of the GI Bill stampede, the classroom role of the professors soon transformed into the job of utilizing their field's particular language of intellectual superiority to enable the student *Cattle* to identify with that specific badge of superiority. In such a process of consciously constructing intellectual silos of Identity Politics, the professors who rise to the top are the ones who best succeed in helping legitimize the political capture of pre-existing intellectual and social silos as well as in the construction of newly created silos of condescending elitist social isolation. The ultimate success of each such social silo then comes to rest upon the interplay between those who shape the portrayed sense of legitimacy for that silo and the hands-on politicians who lay claim to the role of mouthpiece and manager for those trapped inside of each silo. This entire political scenario was self-consciously envisioned as a replay of the 'Counselor' faculty and the 'Guardian' students from Plato's *Republic* who serve to define the structural mechanism for establishing and maintaining control over the rest of the *Cattle*. Society was no longer to be envisioned as the collective expression of the common interests that are shared by the populace, 'Society' had become defined as 'The Problem' which must be deconstructed and rebuilt on more Politically Correct principles. In practical terms, the role of the elite was to prod the *Cattle* into various competing silos so as to facilitate the process of neutralizing the politically Undesirable and empowering the politically Useful.

One of the biggest early successes of this Identity Politics program was the neutralization of Martin Luther King. As is rarely discussed in recent years, soon after the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, King largely dropped off the radar of cutting edge news coverage. His fateful political sin was easily identified. Martin Luther King bluntly stated to the black community that the legal rights that they had so recently gained would only serve to open the door to the possibility of social advance. To achieve the more challenging task of

gaining concrete economic advance, blacks would have to establish common ground with the poor whites who faced similar challenges on the tilted playing field of the American marketplace. This effort would inevitably have to include whites who had earlier resisted the recent civil rights legislation. Recognizing that reality, Martin Luther King's message was straightforward. Black society as a whole would never succeed by advancing over the backs of poor whites.

That message was anathema to the intellectual Left and the political establishment more broadly. It was no accident that 'socially conscious' media coverage promptly shifted to the Black Panthers whose doomed program of violent confrontation with 'The Man' provided more exciting drama to cover without posing any long term risk to the political interests of the ruling class. Within three years of Martin Luther King's assassination, the Black Panther movement had been both tactically and politically neutralized with the party itself undergoing a debilitating internal splintering. While the zero-sum economics doctrine that blacks could only advance at the expense of whites came to form a cornerstone of Richard Nixon's 'Southern Strategy', in reality the Left had ended up playing a major role getting that political doctrine rolling. The long-term dynamics of political economics would then shift sharply to the Right during the 1970s with the dramatic changes in federal monetary policy which insured that the wage rates for industrial workers and then the working class more broadly would become economically disconnected from the accumulating wealth that had resulted from rising productivity. Increasingly, the political dynamics of the country would be defined in terms of two competing frustrations. On one side stood those who had long been actively excluded from reaping the benefits of their own labor and, despite the legal advances of the 1960s, had seen comparatively little tangible economic improvement. On the other side was found the more surprised frustrations of those who had in earlier years seen the benefits of the American Dream lift their families into a better life only to have that dream now simply vaporize into a mirage. The political success of both the Left and the Right has come to rest upon their ability to channel the frustrated anger of those two sides to be directed against each other rather than against those who orchestrated the political economic situation in which those two sides have been trapped.

For the Left, the political 'solution' to this situation appeared to be straightforward. That paradigm of the 1950s, the ignorant self-entitled white middle class industrial worker, would now be portrayed as the one who stood in the way of advancement, not only for the oppressed minorities but for American society more broadly. The quintessential expression of this political perspective was the 1970s sitcom *All in the Family* in which the American populace was invited to sit in front of their TV every week to feel smugly superior to the blue-collar worker/cultural dinosaur Archie Bunker as he helplessly bellowed against the rising tide of Progress that was flushing him down the toilet bowl of history. What earned this TV series its long lasting fame was the fact that, while many viewers responded to the call by its creator Norman Lear to pour vitriol upon this lowest form of the human species, many other viewers chose to embrace the character of Archie as representative of their own struggles against a political economic system that was systematically degrading their existence. Having already established the denigration of any positive aspects of the 1950s-style white middle class sense of social identity, Norman Lear then shifted gears to recast Archie as the helpless and hopeless victim of his own cultural bigotries. Tellingly, Lear then pivoted to introduce the 1950s-style spinoff *The Jeffersons* as well as his *Good Times* in which the appeal to family values and the desire for the American Dream could be unapologetically expressed through the lives of aspiring black families, here recast as Norman Lear's 'Noble Savages'. After all, this was the 1970s when the systematic dismantling of the American Dream was just coming into force, and much of black society was still looking forward with hope that the advances in civil rights from the previous decade would give rise to economic and social advances in the future. It would not take long before the realization hit that the economic door which had slammed in the face of the white industrial laborer had similarly choked off the promise of the American Dream for the black worker as well. Now the modern day Hollywood version of the *All in the Family* sitcom that targets black society is one which invokes a cynical sense of self-defeating hopelessness as those victims wait for their inevitable trip down the toilet bowl of history (Blake, 2023).

While *All in the Family* came to be viewed as the embodiment of the struggle between Left and Right, in reality, there was never any disagreement between Left and Right as to the ultimate fate of the Archie Bunkers. But while the Left has felt content to smugly watch him circle around the toilet bowl, the Right has been more proactive. Unlike the *Best* of the Left who have had little understanding and even less interest in the frustrations and the challenges facing the traditional white middle class, the *Best* of the Right have understood quite clearly. After all, they were the ones who designed the economic toilet bowl. They also understood how to effectively market their product by offering the Archie Bunkers a temporary form of employment as political Brownshirts in fomenting the overthrow of democracy before then sending them down the drain. While the smug Left cannot help but wallow in its own sense of superiority, the more seasoned marketers of the Right understand the benefits of the 'buyer beware' approach. Of those who believe that they have been forced to choose between the two alternatives offered by either the Left or the Right, how many would quietly resign

themselves to the fate of the outmoded dinosaur on its way to the sewer rather than rallying to the flag of the apparent opposition?

Despite the fact that the Right bears the overwhelming responsibility for systematically quashing the post-WWII American Dream, in the eyes of many Americans it is the Left that is still held to be responsible. "All in the Family" quite eloquently explained why. Largely oblivious to what actually makes an economy work, the Left has remained absorbed in marketing its badges of silo superiority to maintain its self-created role as political puppet master. By having openly proclaimed that the ignorant bigoted white middle class industrial workers deserve to be washed down the toilet bowl of history, it was hardly a political challenge for the Right to blame the Left as being responsible for that fate. As a country, we must directly confront the fact that the Archie Bunker silo which has come to so thoroughly dominate American politics in the era of Donald Trump is every bit as much a conscious psychological creation of the culturally paternalistic Left as of the corporate racial nativist Right. While there surely still remains considerable psychological satisfaction to be enjoyed among those who see themselves as intellectually superior to the Archie Bunkers of the world, for those who are facing the massive college debts that they incurred in the course of being granted their sense of higher worthiness, what should make such individuals doubt the likelihood that this same economic toilet bowl is waiting for them as well?

The political need to so thoroughly vilify the 1950s is a direct manifestation of the Identity Politics approach to social control. Each newly secured social silo was trained to identify itself in terms of its particular approach to demonstrating a sense of superiority over the moralistic mindless white middle class which purportedly characterized that condemned decade. In the process, the paradigm of social atomization via silo neutralization has revealed its fundamental weakness. In striving to isolate society into an ever larger number of non-cooperative silos, the collective ability to effectively offset the largest such silo has been severely curtailed. While initially designed to facilitate marionette-style political control from above, in practical terms, the Identity Politics movement came to be exceptionally efficient at self-neutralization. For the Right with its dominating control over the largest social silo, Identity Politics has largely become a gratuitous gift from the Left of 'divide and be conquered'.

While Identity Politics in American academia began as a program of social opportunism during the 1960s, in Western Europe, Identity Politics would emerge into a full-fledged political philosophy. At that time, the Western Marxist faith had plunged into an identity crisis of its own, even in its premier temple at the University of Paris (Sorbonne). While Marxism is traditionally portrayed as a movement of modern day industrial workers rising to seize political power, that has never been the practical reality in any society. Where Marxism has succeeded, it has succeeded through the orchestration of a medieval-style revolution in which the peasantry rose up to overthrow their noble landlords to seize the lands for themselves, only to find that they were now enslaved by a doctrinaire clerisy. While Karl Marx erred in proposing that the industrial worker could be successfully exploited in a similar fashion, the medieval scenario is completely consistent with the broader political view that he described. The catchall description that Karl Marx used to describe new world order that would follow the overthrow of capitalism was "dictatorship of the proletariat". It is crucial to recognize that his description was not "dictatorship by the proletariat" or "dictatorship for the proletariat", just "dictatorship of the proletariat". In his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1875), Marx provided a direct explanation of what he meant by that distinction - "the toiling people ... neither rules nor is ripe for ruling". The new world order would be a dictatorship by the Marxist elite. After all, the key political economic criterion for a laborer is one who can follow orders. However, a century after those observations by Marx, it had become abundantly clear across the leading countries of the West that the Marxist clerisy would never succeed in seizing power off the backs of the industrial working class.

In the 1960s with their political pathway forward looking increasingly uncertain, the Marxist academics at the Sorbonne were struggling over the vision for their faith in terms of either the orthodox Leninist version or a more empathetic Marxist Humanism. Ultimately more significant was the much larger collection of Leftist intellectuals across Western Europe and the United States who hovered within the Marxist orbit, exploiting the language of Marxist analysis without professing their complete devotion to the faith. Despite the improbability of a Lenin-style revolution succeeding within their countries, the fact remained that Marxist philosophy still represented the most cogent representation of Plato's *Republic* on the political horizon. Back at the Sorbonne, Marxist professor of philosophy Louis Althusser captured the center of attention in that political world by publishing a series of writings on what he called theoretical anti-humanism. More significant would be his role as a mentor. Nearly two decades earlier, Professor Althusser had served as academic mentor to the philosophy student Michel Foucault at the prestigious Parisian *École Normale Supérieure* (ENS) at which time Althusser's influence led to Foucault joining the Communist Party. Foucault would remain Althusser's friend and defender for the rest of his life (Eribon, 1991, pp. 56-57). While Foucault would leave the Communist Party three years

after he joined, in the later years of his life that dynamic would reverse as Western Marxists and their fellow travelers began the process of joining Michel Foucault.

This new vision of Marxism, which gained the title of Post-Modernism, would be constructed upon the concept of the socially assigned self-identity. However, Foucault still faced the problem of designing an operational program based upon that perspective. He and his disciples possessed a clear advantage in having an additional century of political economic history to draw upon since the days when Karl Marx published *Das Kapital*. Particularly notable was the Revolution of February 1917 in which crucial moment of the Russian Revolution played out. At that time when the Russian army was on the verge of defeat by the Germans and the domestic economy was in tatters, the general populace of St. Petersburg rose up in protest. In response, 10,000 Russian troops were ordered to fire upon the crowds. These troops refused to fire and instead aligned themselves with the protesters. When additional Russian troops were ordered to the scene, they refused to fire upon the mutineers. In the accompanying collapse of military and governmental authority, Tsar Nicholas II was forced to abdicate. After eight months of political chaos, the Bolsheviks of Lenin were able to seize power. The political message of that experience was straightforward. The goal need not be to build up a power base comparable to that of the State. Rather, a more efficient goal can be to incapacitate the State's power to impose its rule. When targeting a democracy, attack its fundamental basis. Democracy derives its power from a shared sense of common interest among the citizenry. The goal for the Post-Modernist Marxist should be to disrupt that sense of a shared common interest.

The understanding of such social interactions is exchanged through language. From Plato onward, Western philosophy has had a long-running interest in the process of how language influences understanding and the communication of knowledge. In particular, the period around the beginning of the twentieth century witnessed a veritable explosion in this subfield of philosophy. Within the domain of Marxist studies, György Lukács published his *History and Class Consciousness* (1923) which laid out the paradigm of Marxist Humanism (Lukács, 2000). Lukács' approach involved supplanting the relatively mechanistic perspective of the dominant Marxist-Leninist school of the day with a more overtly language-based representation of the world. Crucial to Lukács' argument was his development of the concept 'false consciousness'. In this scenario, the social understanding of the capitalistic system is constructed so as to delude the *Cattle* into believing that they too can get ahead in this world. Unfortunately, the *Cattle* are incapable of comprehending the error of their own false consciousness. Therefore, it is responsibility of the Marxist *Best* to 'show them the light' in explaining their predestined role as cannon fodder for the coming Revolution. Lukács' formulation of false consciousness was unquestionably a product of the times as these were the years when Western intelligentsia became transfixed by Einstein's Relativity Revolution. It had now become established 'scientific fact' that, while the *Cattle* may be capable of accurately observing the world around them, they are incapable of recognizing the illusions of those observations which can only be accurately interpreted by the enlightened physicist. Clearly this was a paradigm that offered political utility far beyond the confines of physics.

One immediate benefit was that the concept of false consciousness provided a far more effective approach to covering over a gaping hole in Marx's own explanation of his doctrines. Crucial to Marx's doctrine of dialectic materialism was the premise that one's actions are inevitably determined by the interests of his class, even if one's explicit intent appears to be otherwise. In the classic illustration, the early nineteenth century industrialist Robert Owen famously introduced what were, at that time, revolutionary improvements for the workers at his factories. Karl Marx ridiculed the naïve Robert Owen, claiming that those actions had only served to confuse and distract the proletariat from their demand for the end of capitalism. This same argument justified Karl Marx's strident attacks against the Social Democrats who pushed for legislation to establish minimum wages and limited working hours. The downside of Marx's argument about class determinism was how then could Marx justify his own political efforts? Having never worked a single day of his life as a wage laborer and having been directly funded throughout much of his adult life by the capitalist profits from a successful cotton-textile mill owner (Friedrich Engels), Karl Marx could not seriously pretend to be 'of the proletariat'. How then could he serve to advance the class interests of a class to which he did not belong? Karl Marx offered the spectacularly lame excuse of being *déclassé*, that is to say, from outside of the world of the social classes determined by dialectic materialism (Fernandez-Morera, 1996). That claim was, of course, disingenuous given the fact that Marx clearly believed that his *déclassé* class would be the ones who would rule following the overthrow of the capitalists. György Lukács and later Marxists had a decidedly less contrived rationalization for their claimed capability to understand social reality (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020, p. 81).

While Post-Modernism abandoned Karl Marx's devotion to the doctrine of dialectic materialism, it continued to firmly embrace the broader concept of absolute sociological determinism. As invoked in the early nineteenth century by the founder of Sociology, Auguste Comte, the 'problem' of the individual is to be solved

by declaring that we are all the product of the social forces that make us who we are. As such, the concept of the self-initiating individual is an illusion. Regarding the concept of universality within human society, only the 'laws' of Sociology can matter. This perspective provided the ideal philosophical mindset for the emerging silo management program. This absolute sociological determinism of the Left provides the perfect complement to the absolutist folk-spirit racial biology of the Right. From both perspectives, although the 'Enemy' may in practical terms represent a blur of racial/ethnic/cultural groupings, from a political perspective, its collectivity is definitive. There is nothing that this 'Enemy' can do to change itself into a non-Enemy, and the 'Faithful' have no alternative for dealing with that 'Enemy' threat than to eliminate it.

Operationally, Post-Modernism is constructed upon invoking the concept of false consciousness as the fundamental basis for a new claim to authority. All forms of knowledge and experience that the *Cattle* use to understand their world are to be invalidated and replaced. As expressed in his various writings including *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), Foucault abstracted the concept of false consciousness out of the traditional setting of Marxist political economics to focus upon how the *Best* should train the *Cattle* to perceive their world through the understanding that the *Best* imposes upon them, that is to say, by the capture of language. We use words not only to communicate with others but to analyze our own understanding. To systematically change the commonly accepted meaning of those words is to change the understanding that is based upon those words. While Post-Modernism has surely introduced its own set of novel jargon, far more importantly, it is a process of capturing the words of accepted language and transforming the meaning of those words to advance the cause of altering the character of social understanding.

Michel Foucault expended much of his efforts considering the challenges facing the establishment of this linguistic totalitarianism. Inevitably, this would have to be a staged process, and Foucault would only live to see the beginning of success in the first stage, the capture of the Ivory Tower. The 'Question Authority' movement on college campuses had initially focused upon discrediting leaders within society at large who were regarded to be authority figures. For the Post-Modernist, the focus shifted to the conceptual structure of knowledge itself. In this effort, early Post-Modernism received a major boost from the writings of Jacques Derrida. He too had attended the prestigious Parisian *École Normale Supérieure* a few years after Foucault and was also soon befriended by the eminent Marxist Professor Louis Althusser. They would remain political allies thereafter. While working largely independent of Foucault, Derrida perfected the linguistic technique of 'Deconstruction' as a mechanism for discrediting the conceptual basis of accepted knowledge. Borrowing from the Einstein perspective on Relativity, Derrida embraced the doctrine that the *Cattle* are unable to understand that the words they use to describe reality do not actually reflect that reality. In turn, he argued that this implies that language is a collection of words that can only have meaning with respect to each other, not to the world beyond them. The role of the Deconstructionist is to 'discover' the internal meaning of those purely linguistic connectivities. While not a formal member of the Communist Party, Derrida explicitly described his approach to systematically 'deconstructing' the generally accepted meaning of words as being a radicalization of Marxism (Derrida, 1994, 2002). If one can successfully undermine the individual's ability to draw upon their previously accumulated understanding of the world, it becomes far easier to displace that understanding with a vision of the world most suited to reflect the interests of the *Best*. Of crucial importance is the denigration of understanding that is gained through logical coherence and empirical correspondence. Not only is the scientific method to be dismissed as delusional, it is to be condemned as racist, misogynist, classist, etc., that is to say, any label that might appeal to the political silo you wish to bamboozle.

This was an excellent time for the rise of the Post-Modernist movement. Particularly in the United States, but for much of Western Europe as well, the large proportion of academics of the Left were losing confidence in traditional Marxism as a useful framework for analyzing social and political concepts. A switch of allegiance to the Post-Modernist movement offered numerous benefits. Particularly when armed with the sharp hatchet of Deconstructionism, political power could be exerted from the lecture hall podium in a way that the broad brush of more conventional sociological Marxism could not. Since on its surface, the language of Post-Modernism appeared to be largely familiar, it didn't trigger the reflex negativity that traditional Marxist jargon would often elicit.

By design, Post-Modernism is a language of the lecture hall. Debate is pointless in any meaningful sense of the word, since discussion can only be deemed to be legitimate within the language assumptions of Post-Modernism. In particular, any controversy with a fellow faculty member who invokes rational analysis in their criticism of Post-Modernism must necessarily be a one-sided affair since, by definition, it is axiomatic that any evidence-based logical argument offered by such an adversary is to be treated as inherently invalid (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020, pp. 38-39). While surely many college faculty members continued to embrace the scientific principles of logical coherence and empirical correspondence, it was soon convincingly demonstrated that any aggressive defense of those principles within the academic world would likely unleash a withering assault from

the Post-Modernist ‘faithful’, while the opportunity for rebuttal was explicitly excluded. By the 1990s, safe ground had been established for both Deconstructionism and Post-Modernist Marxism more broadly throughout much of higher academia. Having constructed a secure economic foundation within the world of university faculty from which to monetize the Post-Modernist faith, the path to expanding that political market was straightforward.

In the evolutionary course of Post-Modernism from ‘not’ to ‘is’ to ‘ought’, previously accepted knowledge had been, at least formally, discredited by the Deconstructionist offensive. It was now time to discover the Post-Modernist ‘knowledges’ and then to apply those ‘knowledges’ to remake the world in their image. This process involved establishing the linguistic definition for each recognized social silo, assuring that suitable targeted populations would come to be assigned to the appropriate silo(s), and developing a set of silo-specific languages that would serve to appropriately circumscribe how each member of every silo comes to understand both themselves and the outside world. To reinforce the inviolability of their specified silo walls, the Post-Modernist insists that those from outside the ‘faith’ be condemned for committing error if they dared to attempt to examine the ‘knowledge language’ of another cultural silo. Such an external examination must be seen as necessarily implying a claim to intrinsic silo superiority by that unauthorized observer when they attempt to examine a ‘lesser’ silo (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020, p. 41). Transparently, this Post-Modernist claim is little more than a regurgitation of the doctrine for the unique trans-silo insight of the *déclassé* Post-Modernist elite who are responsible for defining those silo languages. To invalidate any attempt at serious criticism of their political philosophy, Post-Modernism fervently condemns ‘rational analysis’ and ‘scientific method’ as an intellectual deceit that divides humanity into the exploitative ‘Western White Males’ and the exploited ‘Noble Savages’. Playing upon the broad range of still potent resentments toward the condescending contempt that has so characterized Western colonial dominance, the Western White Male founders of the Post-Modernism Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida positioned themselves as Platonic Counselors for the oppressed Noble Savages whose liberation required the guidance of Post-Modernism. Two crucial assumptions underlie the Post-Modernist line of attack. First is the patronizing implicit assumption that all those from outside of the ‘Western White Male’ category are effectively incapable of participating in analysis based upon logical coherence and empirical correspondence. Secondly, Post-Modernists openly proclaim that all such rational analysis inherently produces culturally discriminatory conclusions that necessarily benefit the ‘Western White Male’.

As described by Foucault, all knowledge is to be “local” to the knower (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020, p. 34). This is to say, the ‘knower’ should have no idea how they came to ‘know’ what they think. Foucault invoked the terminology of ‘power-knowledge’ to describe the concept of establishing the totalitarian society based solely upon the control of language (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020, p. 35). To achieve this state of affairs, Foucault quite directly borrowed from Richard Dawkins’ famous invention of the ‘meme’. Explicitly choosing a name that resembles the word ‘gene’, in his *The Selfish Gene* (1976) best seller Dawkins had defined ‘meme’ to be a parasitic idea that can infect the brains of others and transform those brains into empty echo chambers whose only function is to parrot the meme that the parasite has used to infect them. In tribute to Dawkins, Foucault chose ‘episteme’ (epistemology - theory of the origin and limits of knowledge) to denote his particular packets of parasitic ‘knowledge’ that function to determine how the infected target will understand the world (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020, p. 34). Consistent with the traditional Marxist doctrine of exploiting the exploited, Foucault justified his parasitic episteme as being a mechanism for freeing the targeted individuals from conceptual ‘oppression’. In practical terms, Foucault’s epistemes are to be seen as packets of Politically Correct ‘knowledge’ that serve to instill ‘Right Think’ into the targeted subgroupings of society to build and solidify the corresponding Identity silo.

The Post-Modernist knowledge principle asserts that any claim to objective knowledge is fundamentally invalid. “[W]hatever it is we call truth is nothing more than a construct of the culture calling it that” (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020, p. 59). Interestingly, there are two crucial types of objective reality which are explicitly granted an exception to this philosophical prohibition by the Post-Modernists – identity and the ‘oppression’ based on identity. That is to say, the only conceptually valid forms of objective reality are the two tools that Post-Modernism uses to build its linguistic totalitarian society. In contrast, two concepts are quite explicitly excluded from the category of ‘reality’ by the Post-Modernist - the individual and the universal (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020, pp. 60-61).

Once a person becomes fused into the concept of their identity silo, their existence as an individual is negated and their ‘understanding’ of the world is defined by their assigned silo identity. Within the jargon of Post-Modernism, the role of the ‘Diversity Theorist’ is to justify the suppression of individualism within each Identity silo and to compel the uniformity of understanding within each silo (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020, pp. 150-152). Central to that silo identity is a systematic blindness to the identities within other silos. As a result, the idea of a ‘universal’ concept is rendered to be intrinsically absurd. Hence, within the Post-Modernist

perspective, a rights-based liberal democracy is unambiguously reduced to the conceptually inane. In practical terms, you can only make claim to having a right when your silo manager identifies that claim to be valid. With your conceptual isolation from the other silos there can be no universal 'laws' accessible to you that could serve to limit the power of your silo manager. Over time, an apparent exception to this rule was introduced in the form of 'intersectionality'. In this variation, specified sub-grouping of silos are allowed to provide shared membership to some persons among those selected silos, as long as the more global exclusion principle among silos is preserved. A further variation in this policy of restricted trans-silo understanding is promoted by the 'Standpoint' theory. In this variation, the silo walls of the privileged are claimed to be transparent from the outside to members of the oppressed minorities who can see inside the 'Western White Male' silo to gain 'knowledge' of their oppressors. By virtue of this selective ability of the oppressed to understand both the world from inside their silos of oppression as well as the world from the perspective of the oppressor, the oppressed come to be regarded as inherently superior (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020, pp. 194-198).

There is yet more political mileage to be made from systematically creating new forms of 'discrimination' whose sole function is to justify a sense of entitled superiority among those who wish to see themselves as being faced with persecution. Crucial to that process of Post-Modernist expansion is the identification of newly discovered social boundaries as a means of defining new silo walls. These 'previously hidden' boundaries are then declared to manifest the subtler forms of social oppression. Upon their identification by the Post-Modernist, these boundaries are then 'problemized' to call attention to their role in oppression (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020, pp. 61-62). Inspired by Derrida's writings on Deconstructionism, Post-Modernists call for "disrupting binaries" by invoking the concepts of fluidity, ambiguity, indefinability, and hybridity to both 'discover' and obliterate the boundaries between categories (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020, pp. 59-60). Given the clear evidence that effectively all of the diversity that exists within the world of biology is a direct result of the mechanistic creativity intrinsic to binary sexuality, it is surely self-evident why Post-Modernism must reject the relevance of biology when it is applying its own crippling narrow representation of 'binary'.

In the words of Queer theorist Jay Stewart, "Queer theory and politics necessarily celebrate transgression in the form of visible difference from the norm" (Stewart, 2017, p. 62). As Jay Stewart's quotation indicates, this form of Post-Modernism self-consciously moves beyond the initial paradigm of exploiting the exploited. Rather, in this case, membership is quite explicitly characterized by the claim to a qualitative superiority over those who live within the 'norm'. While Queer theory had its origin among those who wished to claim that they have transcended the bounds of binary sexuality, this philosophy has long since moved well beyond those earlier limits. To define a 'norm' is to 'categorize'. It is in fundamental rejection of these two concepts that Queer theory defines its purpose, liberation from the 'normal' (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020, pp. 89-95). Queer is to be defined as anything that falls outside the 'binary'. By establishing "an identity that might be celebrated as it disrupts norms and subverts values of society" (Goodley, 2014, p. 8), Queer theory enables the philosophical conquest of that society. In asserting that all forms of oppression can be understood in terms of existing outside of some oppressive 'binary', Queer theory not only carried over into the other branches of Post-Modernism, it helped drive that movement's philosophical transition from 'is' to 'ought' (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020, pp. 99,109).

To a striking degree, the mission of Post-Modernism is not merely to call attention to divisive forms of oppression but rather to politically capture and invert those forms of oppression. The American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-2) would characterize homosexuality as a "Sexual Deviation" for the last time in 1968. Apparently in honor of that fiftieth anniversary, the American Psychological Association has more recently issued its "Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Boys and Men" (2018) which states that "traditional masculinity" should be treated as a psychological illness ("APA Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Boys and Men," 2018).

It should be noted that there is one form of cultural oppression that is strikingly absent from the Post-Modernist discussion - economic class (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020, p. 185). The reason behind this 'oversight' is arguably self-evident. After all, there still are traditional orthodox Marxists within the Western intellectual world who are better qualified than most to see behind the scam being run by the Post-Modernists. For the Post-Modernists to even accidentally step upon the political turf of those traditional Marxists would be courting a potentially disastrous blowback.

Much has been written regarding how the presidency of Barack Obama served as a call to arms among white supremacists. He quietly but firmly stomped upon all of the classic clichés that such whites have used for so long to justify their claim to superiority - blacks are lazy, ignorant, stupid, immoral, violent, capable only of following and not of leading. However, virtually ignored has been the parallel rebellion of the Left against the legacy of the Obama Presidency. The Obama Presidency posed a fundamental threat to the Post-Modernist concept of false consciousness as a mechanism for manipulating the racial frustrations and

animosities within American black society. The idea that improvement for black society could be achieved from internally generated understanding and initiatives created within the democratic system is anathema to the Post-Modernist *Best*. On a more gut level, Post-Modernism is disgusted by Barack Obama's 'normalcy'. His 'no-frills' respectful but firm persona would hardly seem out of place in the canonical family sitcom of the 1950s, and he projects a confidence that black men and women can and will gain their long-delayed piece of a more equitable American Dream. He will not be cannon fodder for the Post-Modernist Revolution.

Decades before Barack Obama reached the White House, the term 'woke' had been understood within the black community as describing a defensive response to racial exploitation and manipulation. In part, it reflected a recognition of the fact that not all forms of racial discrimination are self-evident and that rational understanding of how such covert discrimination operates can provide the basis for a more effective response. Shortly after Obama's first election to the Presidency, the era of 'ought' Post-Modernism under the title of Social Justice scholarship emerged to give rise to the now ubiquitous redefinition of 'woke' as one who has been made aware of the Post-Modernist 'problemized' boundaries (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020, pp. 181-182). The linguistic infrastructure of the Post-Modernist silo system had been established, and it was time to compel society to put on their politically-tinted glasses to see and act within the world as the new language of the *Best* was instructing them.

"After 2011, there were dramatic changes in how highly educated white liberals answered questions related to race and ethnicity. These shifts were not matched among non-liberal or non-Democratic whites, nor among nonwhites of any political or ideological persuasion. By 2020, highly educated white liberals tended to provide more 'woke' responses to racial questions than the average Black or Hispanic person." (al-Gharbi, 2024)

Centerpiece to the Post-Modernist efforts to compel conformity in understanding is the reaffirmation of the 'education as organized ignorance' doctrine. This political policy is well illustrated by the teaching manual (*A Pathway to Equitable Math Instruction: Dismantling Racism in Mathematics Instruction, 2021*) which in 2021 was actively considered by the California public school system to be formally imposed upon the public school teachers of that state (Blume, 2021). In this manual, the guidelines for each month of the school year begin by instructing the teacher in bold print "**White supremacy culture shows up in math classrooms when ...**". Their list of these various sins include when "math is taught in a linear fashion and skills are taught sequentially", "when teachers reduce math teaching to things that are more easily measurable, like literal math", when "students are required to 'show their work' in standardized, prescribed ways" and in the idea that "Grades are traditionally indicative of what students can't do rather than what they can do, reinforcing *perfectionism*" [a cultural evil], as well as when "teachers are deciding for students what math they should interact with". "Upholding the idea that there are always right and wrong answers perpetuate *objectivity*" [another cultural evil]. In a nod to Plato's Socratic Method of instructional manipulation, the teacher should "learn to shift your position to a facilitator, rather than a knowledge giver". The 'facilitator' must recognize that "requiring students to raise their hand before speaking can reinforce *paternalism* and *powerhoarding*". The 'facilitator' should "bring the groups together to co-construct mathematical definitions as a class" and must "cultivate mathematical identity so that everyone can see themselves as mathematicians". This manual clearly illustrates the logic behind the standard defense that Critical Race Theory is not being taught to students. It is the classroom teacher who is the target of this political program. After all, how many cows actually get invited to attend the annual American Dairy Association meeting? The classroom teacher is to be trained as silo warden to insure that the students only learn to think within the crippling intellectual box that the silo manager designs.

One of the factors that makes the patronizing intellectual viciousness of this manual so striking is that only five years earlier the widely celebrated *Hidden Figures* movie, based upon Margot Lee Shetterly's book of the same title, told the tale of Katherine Goble Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, Mary Jackson and the other black women 'computers' who carried out critical mathematical calculations during the early years of the NASA space program before electronic computers had been developed to assume that role. We must ask if these women, as young girls, had fallen into the hands of school teachers trained in the 'Noble Savage' doctrine of weaponized woke 'mathematics', would the crucial descent trajectory of the crippled Friendship Seven spacecraft that brought astronaut John Glenn safely back to earth in 1962 have been correctly calculated? How many other Mercury program astronauts might have been similarly endangered without the skills of these black 'computers'? Let us not mince words. This *A Pathway to Equitable Math Instruction* teaching manual is crassly bigoted and racist. Faced with a classroom in which many of the students may come from social backgrounds that have not fully prepared them to learn how to most effectively understand and succeed within the world in which they live, the teacher is demanded to intentionally further cripple them.

The fallback defense is that society needs this kind of initiative to stave off the onslaught of Rightist dogma. That response begs the question of how the MAGA movement differs from a conventional Post-

Modernist silo of anti-rational aggrieved ignorance? After all, Post-Modernist silos are focused upon claiming to defend against perceived or real accusations of inferiority and presenting those accusations as proof of one's own superiority. Without any serious doubt, Post-Modernism has played a significant role in not only preparing the political ground for the rise of the MAGA movement, it has also surely provided useful guidance for the silo managers of that movement. It has now become ever so easy to portray any attack against democracy from the Right as being merely a defense against 'wokeism'. Our society unquestionably faces a considerable challenge to identify and weed out the various perversions of word meaning that the Post-Modernist movement has planted in the garden of American democratic discourse. In some instances, the political corruption of word meaning is transparent in its purpose to co-opt the language of democratic society. In such cases, the pushback should be equally direct. In other instances where the political dynamic is more subtle, ask yourself whether a particular assertion actually helps you understand and deal with the objective realities of our society, or are you just being 'woked'?

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