

Wokeism: The American Orthodoxy

by [Lawrence Eubank](#) (June 2021)



Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889, James Ensor, 1888

“Woke” political enthusiasts consider themselves advanced, progressive and enlightened; but their actions share many of the characteristics of repressive regimes of the past. They call themselves liberal, but their extreme intolerance of any opinion but their own is the antithesis of liberality. They can more accurately be described as liberal-ish or liberalistic—“liberal” in name only, appropriating the term as mere bragging or self-approration, while behaving in a reactionary, repressive manner.

A Monopoly Of Opinion

Liberalists don't conceive of themselves as merely one political party among several, all of them with respectable and arguable platforms. Rather, liberalists consider themselves the One True Party, holding the One True Answer on all questions and issues. For them, every issue is settled; they have the correct attitude, and all other views are disqualified.

In short, they regard their political-moral ethos as settled truth. They elevate their doctrines to the status of an orthodoxy; and they feel justified in stifling all contrary opinions and trying to coerce society as a whole into accepting their dogmas.

Orthodoxy—All Issues Are Settled

You're not entitled to your opinion. . . What matters increasingly is you take the Party line on an ever-growing list of subjects, and that's all you're allowed to say about it.—Mark Steyn, "The Rush Limbaugh Show," July 1, 2020

An orthodoxy (from the Greek *orthodoxía*, "right opinion") may be defined as a socially accepted or dominant set of beliefs. It is a system of thought that somehow acquires sacrosanct status, and thus is deemed authoritatively correct and unchallengeable—an officially-endorsed set of dogmas.

How those beliefs acquire dominance and become an orthodoxy varies from orthodoxy to orthodoxy. An orthodoxy may carry the imprimatur of some authoritative body. For example, a religious orthodoxy may be established by high church officials, convening to determine what is the normative, accepted creed of the religion—the orthodox belief.

There have also been political orthodoxies, systems of thought installed and mandated by a ruling party or regime. In communist countries of the past, the whole Marxist canon of

theories was installed by the ruling regime as a compulsory political orthodoxy.

And there are social orthodoxies, imposed not by any formal authority but by a general consensus of influential voices and public opinion. These social orthodoxies somehow arise from the grass roots, to become narrow, intolerant, orthodox dogmas.

But whatever the source of an orthodoxy's authority, once it has issued its pronouncements and established its dogmas, all questions are closed, all issues are considered settled, and all opposing views are disqualified. From that moment on, dissenters from the orthodoxy are considered heretics and renegades.

Our woke ethos or social movement falls under the definition of an orthodoxy. Here are just a few of the ways:

Signs We Have An Orthodoxy, #1: The "Resistance"

Together, Pecan Resist!

Alongside all those nutty chunks, this pint packs a powerful message under its lid: together, we can build a more just and equitable tomorrow. We can peacefully resist the Trump administration's regressive and discriminatory policies and build a future that values inclusivity, equality, and justice for people of color, women, the LGBTQ community, refugees, and immigrants.—[Announcement](#) from Ben & Jerry's

One indication that the liberalist ethos has calcified into an orthodoxy was the reaction of liberalists to the election of Donald Trump. They refused to accept Trump as a normal political figure, the winner of an ordinary election in the ordinary manner. Rather, they treated Trump and his election as a travesty or aberration, not to be accepted peacefully. They reacted with shock, outrage, and righteous

indignation.

They called themselves the “resistance,” portraying themselves as heroic fighters against an alien takeover of our country, comparable to the French Resistance in World War II. Their “resistance” efforts to impugn Trump were incessant and relentless, even descending to the launching of a KGB-style disinformation campaign, based on bogus documents, in an attempt to smear, discredit, and eliminate him.

But the election of Trump was not an alien invasion or occupation; he was a duly-elected President. So the “resistance” to his presidency was not a reaction to an extraordinary event like a foreign invasion, but rather an extraordinary refusal to live by the normal rules that have heretofore governed us. It was a refusal of spoiled liberalists to accept the results of our electoral processes because the results were contrary to their orthodoxy.

One reason liberalists were unable to accept the election of Trump was that he was different from other Republican candidates in at least one way: Trump was not one of the familiar coterie of tame, submissive Republicans, or “Vichy Republicans,” as John Nolte calls them. Such figures are establishment politicians who have been worn down by the constant nagging and fault-finding of liberalist opinion into abandoning whatever conservative principles they might once have had.

Trump was not one of those; he was not an actor in the usual “third-rate political dinner theater,” as Mark Steyn put it. He was not a participant in the Kabuki election theater wherein the Republican candidate’s assigned role is to put up a feeble effort just for show, and then lose; or if somehow elected, is supposed to be sufficiently cowed that he will never rock the boat or challenge any policies important to liberalist dogmas.

Since Trump is an outsider to that ritualized dumb show, Democrats saw him as a mortal enemy of their party and their orthodoxy; a usurper and an illegitimate president. Their efforts to smear him, impugn his character and remove him from office were their response.

To give just one example of the egregious behavior of the “resistance,” consider these remarks of Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) inciting citizens against Trump’s cabinet:

If you see anybody from that Cabinet in a restaurant, in a department store, at a gasoline station, you get out and you create a crowd and you push back on them, and you tell them they’re not welcome anymore, anywhere. [\[1\]](#)

Waters didn’t characterize her incitement as an unprovoked attack on innocent people going about their own business, but as “pushing back”—pushing back against people who haven’t pushed first in any way. Waters felt justified in inciting her listeners against Trump’s cabinet, because Trump and his cabinet represent a rejection of the liberalist orthodoxy. In Waters’ mind, that means they are owed no civility or common courtesy. To an unprecedented degree, orthodox woke Democrats feel justified in denying basic civility or decency to anyone associated with Trump.

Signs We Have An Orthodoxy, #2: Reaction To Trump Paraphernalia

The MAGA hat speaks to America’s greatness with lies of omission and contortion. To wear a MAGA hat is to wrap oneself in a Confederate flag. The look may be more modern and the fit more precise, but it’s just as woeful and ugly.—[Robin Givhan](#)

*Rosaine Santos was charged with assault and battery after hitting a MAGA hat off a man’s head at a Mexican Restaurant in Falmouth. When police asked why she did it, she allegedly said he was a “motherf*cker” for supporting*

@realDonaldTrump.— Perry Russom, NBC10 Boston

Liberalists are outraged by the mere fact that there are people who don't endorse their orthodoxy. Devotees of the liberalist orthodoxy can't stand to be reminded, by anyone or anything, that there are dissenters. Ordinary expressions of party affiliation, such as political signs and paraphernalia, incite them like a red flag waved in front of a bull. The Trump motto "Make America Great Again" in particular often causes them to react vehemently, even violently.

To justify such a reaction, the aggressors often adopt a common rationalization of fanatics, dehumanizing their enemies so as to feel justified in attacking them. This usually means that liberalists invent some type of moral shortcoming to attribute to anyone wearing a Trump slogan. For example, they may say, "A Trump shirt represents racism." That imaginary correlation serves as their excuse for accosting the Trump supporter, haranguing him, and even attacking him, as in this incident:

An employee at the Xhale City vape shop in Tucker, Georgia, unloaded a profanity-laced tirade at a customer who came into the store on Friday wearing a "Make America Great Again" hat and a pro-Trump shirt. . .

*The unhinged employee shrieked obscenities at the customer numerous times and ordered him to get out of the store because he can't stand "y'all racist mother f***ers . . . I'm not serving anyone who has to do with that f***er . . . "F*** your capitalism. F*** your f***ing president. He's a racist, stupid piece of sh***." [2]*

How could merely seeing the logo "MAGA" provoke such a stream of obscenities from a person whose job is to serve the public? Clearly the very existence of Republicans, i.e., of people who do not subscribe to the liberalist orthodoxy, challenges liberalists' most cherished convictions. That is

because anyone who casts doubt on their orthodoxy also casts doubt on liberalists' self-esteem and sense of self-righteousness, which entirely depend on the liberalist orthodoxy.

The orthodoxy serves liberalists as a sort of social-justice pseudo-religion. When such an essential component of their world-view is challenged, and when they lack any coherent arguments to rebut the disbelievers and heretics, liberalists tend to react with tantrums, tirades, and violence.

A similar incident was reported in this story:

A Tennessee man was arrested on Saturday after pulling a gun on a couple over the fact that they were wearing Make America Great Again hats . . . Pierce and his wife Cherrie were wearing MAGA hats at a Sam's Club in Bowling Green, Kentucky, when James Phillips flipped them off. He did not know the couple, but was offended by their support of the president. . .

"So I double flipped him off and said 'it goes both ways buddy,'" Pierce told The Gateway Pundit.

At this point, Pierce says that Phillips pulled a loaded .40 caliber pistol, stuck it in his face, and said "This is a good day for you to die."[\[3\]](#)

Imagine being that invested in your political affiliation! The liberalist in question had clearly lost all toleration of political views other than his own. That happens when a person's politics have hypertrophied, taking up too much space in his emotional makeup, and have petrified into an intolerant, rigid orthodoxy. Such a person is so convinced of his own transcendent goodness (bestowed on him by his political views) that he feels justified in vilifying and threatening complete strangers who view things differently.

Our public life has degenerated considerably since liberalism morphed into an intolerant, unreasoning orthodoxy. When Dwight Eisenhower was president, Democrats didn't fly into a rage whenever they saw an "I Like Ike" button. People didn't go into violent tirades whenever they saw a Dewey button. Even Obama paraphernalia, with insipid, vapid slogans like "Hope And Change" didn't provoke violent reactions from Republicans.

Yet today, any bit of political paraphernalia which indicates that the wearer supports Trump or the Republican Party offends the sensibilities of liberalists so severely that it provokes tantrums, tirades, and actual assaults. That is not a normal political response; that is quasi-religious fanaticism, betraying an allegiance to some sort of fanatical, authoritarian creed.

Signs We Have An Orthodoxy, #3: The Reaction To "Build The Wall"

What you're saying is, you choose the worst intent of people's words. When I say I believe something, [you say] I'm in the bunker.—Greg Gutfeld (to Juan Williams), "The Five," Fox News

Liberalists usually "debate" conservatives by claiming to discern some low, unworthy motive behind the conservatives' views—some motive the "deplorables" themselves can't see because they have no insight into their own deviant psychology. That is to say, liberalists' *modus operandi* is to "choose the worst intent of people's words," or to impute the worst intent to it that they can think of.

The orthodoxy (meaning, its adherents) doesn't need any proof when it imputes motives. Its chosen axioms and dogmas are held as revealed truth; so all those who challenge those dogmas are wrong and evil, a conclusion requiring no proof. For example, Democrat Representative Mark Takano gave a

speech on the House floor in which he said,

[T]he President wants a wall that is nothing more than a monument to hate. The American people are tired of this President's games. [\[4\]](#)

“Hate,” like “fascist,” is a term that has been used so promiscuously that it is now almost meaningless. Takano chose the worst motivation he could think of to *read into* conservatives’ policies. Liberalists start from such a premise, then argue not against their opponents’ arguments, but against the motivation which they themselves invented—a straw man.

People who want to enforce our immigration laws are often accused of “hate” or “racism.” But what about the liberalists’ motivation? The real reason Democrats oppose a border wall is at least partly that *it might well work*, that is, might help stem the invasion of illegal aliens. And liberalists’ sense of moral superiority depends partly on a policy of welcoming any and all illegal intruders, in order to prove that they, the liberalists, are more inclusive, welcoming, and non-judgmental than thou. Thus they morally condemn, on contrived grounds, anyone who challenges their cherished dogma.

For wokesters, that is the goal of all their debates and policies—to establish their own moral superiority. Democrats debate and legislate not within a framework of politics and good public policy, but on a basis of the supposed moral imperatives of their invented self-righteous ethos. “Politics ain’t beanbag,” the humorist Finley Peter Dunne once said. And for liberalists, politics ain’t politics – it’s sainthood. It’s the Pilgrim’s Progress. It’s their soul’s sanctification. Since liberalists don’t have a morality derived from a real religion, they have invented a substitute—a pious, virtue-signaling social-justice creed. It is the source of their sense of moral worth.

Their policies are far removed from earthly realities. Their political stances are actually, to them, moral obligations—religious duties that have (in their minds) the effect of rendering them righteous and holy. As a result, when judged by normal political standards, their policies often appear utterly insane. For example, liberalists don't care anything about the practical results of the Hispanic (and Islamic) invasion on our country, which they vociferously support. They only care about protecting the source of their self-approval and sense of self-worth. That's the game they're playing.

More Madness Over "Build The Wall"

Here is one reaction to "Build the Wall," this one involving the Edmonds Bakery in Edmonds, Washington. Ken Bellingham was attacked for selling cookies with the words "Build the Wall" frosted on them:

Bellingham, who's owned the Edmonds Bakery for 26 years, initially apologized for designing and selling the "Build the Wall" cookie last week. . .

A patron, Ana Carrera, saw the cookie and took a picture of it, and sounded off, upset about what Bellingham initially called a joke.

"There's nothing funny about racism or racist ideals + policies," Carrera said on Facebook. [\[5\]](#)

Typically, opponent Ana Carrera didn't choose to debate the issue of building a wall by rational argument, but by character assassination—by attributing the worst motive she could think of to Bellingham. (Liberalists always arrogate to themselves the right to determine what anyone means by any policy contrary to theirs.)

"There's nothing funny about racism or racist ideals and policies," Carrera said. True, but Carrera should first be

required to show us that wanting to build a wall *is* racist—not just assume it as self-evident. Carrera should be required to prove her central point, not “beg the question.”

But in liberalists’ minds, wanting to enforce our immigration laws is *ipso facto* racist. In fact, any policy or opinion that inconveniences or obstructs a minority group in any way, or that attempts to reserve certain rights for citizens while denying it to foreigners, is automatically deemed racist. Thus there is no need for liberalists to rebut the arguments of opponents of the orthodoxy; those opponents are heretics.

The story continues,

Others . . . said this baker’s decision to sell the cookies does not reflect the character of the Edmonds business community.

“We cannot condone this type of behavior and business practices not only in Edmonds but anywhere in the country.”

Because if you let Bellingham sell cookies that read “Build the Wall,” pretty soon we’ll have people just putting any old message they want to on cookies, and then where will we be?

On the other hand,

“People should lighten up,” said Bellingham, as he etched “Lighten Up” on a heart-shaped cookie.”

How The Orthodoxy Is Imposed

Gender, race, and climate, behold, the three horsemen of the liberal apocalypse, designed not to start a national conversation, but to stop a real one.

With race, if you don’t agree that we are a racist country then you are a bigot, and therefore, you are evil.

With gender, if you don't see the patriarchal victimization of all women, you are a sexist and likely evil.

*If you question faulty climate models, you are a denier, a smear that puts you on par with Holocaust deniers.—Greg Gutfeld, *The Gutfeld Monologues: Classic Rants from the Five**

The liberal orthodoxy is different from other orthodoxies in that it isn't the product of any authoritative organization, such as a church hierarchy or a governmental body. It is not imposed by law or decree of public officials. Rather, an ad hoc collection of writers, bloggers, social-media users, and other highly-visible personalities take it upon themselves to compel support for the liberalist orthodoxy. They tout the liberalist, politically-correct view on any subject and excoriate everyone who deviates from the orthodox line in the slightest detail.

Jim Geraghty describes this process:

Big Brother isn't watching; the mob is . . . There is no sinister, government-run system for punishing those who say or do controversial or unpopular things. Groups of often-anonymous individuals on social media take it upon themselves to enact their vision of justice. . .

No sinister cabal . . . suddenly announced a new regime of seemingly random spotlighted surveillance and draconian social punishment for deviating from the mob's amorphous definition of acceptable behavior. Groups of not-particularly famous, not-particularly powerful Americans chose to impose this new system upon all of us. [\[6\]](#)

Any liberalist with a public platform of any kind can contribute toward this repressive atmosphere, wherein only one narrowly-defined viewpoint is acceptable and all contrary voices are treated as pariahs. Here is one typical incident, reported by Tucker Carlson:

Brown University students forced the cancellation of a speech by former New York City Police Department commissioner Ray Kelly simply because he supported the policy of stop-and-frisk. Any deviation from orthodoxy was considered grounds for silencing. [7]

(Stop-and-frisk made the streets safer for normal citizens, but it had a “disparate impact” on black youths, and thus could easily be portrayed as a racist policy. Liberalists seized that opportunity to once again display their holier-than-thou bona fides, in contrast to right-wing social sinners.)

The Brown Daily Herald reported,

A lecture by New York City Police Department Commissioner Raymond Kelly scheduled for Tuesday afternoon was canceled after protesters halted Kelly’s speech and would not yield the floor. [8]



Protest against stop-and-frisk, complete with clever slogans: “RAY[cist]” Source: Xvex7, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ray_Kelly_Protest.jpg

In other words, the protesters wanted to prevent the debate, not win the debate.

Violence In Defense Of The Orthodoxy

Most Christian opponents of gay marriage oppose gay

marriage; they don't oppose the right of gays to advocate it. Yet thug groups like GLAAD increasingly oppose the right of Christians even to argue their corner. It's quicker and more effective to silence them.— Mark Steyn, "The Age of Intolerance," National Review

Liberalists seem to believe that opponents of the orthodoxy are so evil, and such a menace, that violence against them is justified. Consider the case of Bicycle Lock Boy:

A former East Bay college philosophy professor . . . Eric Clanton had been linked by police to violent assaults with a metal bike lock during a "free speech" rally in Berkeley on April 15, 2017. . .

Clanton attacked at least three people with a metal U-lock during the April 15 rally in and around Civic Center Park . . . Clanton struck at least seven people in the head, according to authorities. One person received a head laceration that required five staples to fix. Another was uninjured but had a piece of a helmet broken off. A third was struck across the neck and back, police wrote. [\[9\]](#)

Devotees of the orthodoxy are certain that the dogmas of the orthodoxy are by definition correct, and that therefore anyone who disagrees is evil. They are certain of their own righteousness, so they feel justified in assaulting outsiders. Their creed is, "Go forth and bash right-wingers, because we are much better, holier, and more righteous than they." That seems to be the mental process of thugs like Eric Clanton.

Some liberalists tried to justify Clanton's attacks. George Ciccariello-Maher commented, "You can't reason with fascism—it's irrational. You can't argue your way around it. You just have to stop it." [\[10\]](#)

Spoken like a true, uh, fascist. The logical flaw in Ciccariello-Maher's argument is one of "begging the question."

Ciccariello-Maher assumes, conveniently and without proof, that his chosen enemies are fascists; perhaps his definition of “fascist” is “anyone who doesn’t subscribe to the liberalist orthodoxy.” Having made that giant rhetorical leap, he then propounds the Ciccariello-Maher rule: “You can’t reason with people opposed to my political views; you just have to attack them violently” (the same rule the Nazi Brownshirts had).

Liberalists would have us believe that they react so vehemently against political opposition because their opponents—Republicans, right-wingers, traditionalists—are uniquely evil and therefore must be met with unprecedented violence. But the real reason for liberalists’ fits and tantrums is that they are more spoiled, fanatical and intolerant than any previous political group in our country’s history.

Orthodoxy As Secular Piety

[P]eople want the comfort of religion without its discipline and prohibitions.—Theodore Dalrymple, “Teddies for All,” Taki’s Magazine

The woke or liberalist ethos, while not a religious orthodoxy, might be considered an *irreligious* orthodoxy, or perhaps an alternative-religion orthodoxy. Modern liberalists generally have minimal attachment to Judeo-Christian religion and morality. They have created their own ersatz morality, based on their conception of “social justice,” meaning that it is a morality for society as a whole, not a personal morality. They have turned this homemade politicized morality into a substitute religion—a self-righteous, virtue-signaling system of secular piety. The net result is that haranguing society (i.e., other people) about “proper” liberalist norms is their substitute for any true religious and moral principles, which might have application to their own lives.

Liberalists have invested so much in their virtue-signaling social-justice ideology—their Social Morality—that they can't abide any suggestion that they're wrong. Their whole self-image and sense of personal worth derive from their left-wing social-justice ideology. They *must* support and defend that ersatz moral system in order to vindicate and justify themselves. Any competing ethos must be destroyed, since it brings their own ethos into disrepute and casts doubt on their own moral worth.

Republicans, conservatives, and traditionalists thus are not mere political opposition; to liberalists they are dangerous, and must be portrayed as uniquely evil, scary, immoral, deplorable, and despicable. The "deplorable" faction must be traduced and denounced as evil at all times.

The Orthodoxy In Command—Some Bad Habits

The liberalist orthodoxy shares many of the characteristics of other, earlier orthodoxies, including official state orthodoxies such as Marxism and Nazism. Of course, liberalist orthodoxy is not as completely in control and not as repressive as those orthodoxies; there are degrees of social control among such things. But with that proviso in mind, it must be said that liberalist dogma has many similarities to dogmatic, intolerant political orthodoxies of the past. Let us look at a couple of more-or-less universal characteristics of orthodoxies.

A Common Characteristic: Assent To the Orthodoxy Is Mandatory

All orthodoxies compel conformity. Everyone within the sphere of influence of an orthodoxy must assent to it, or at least make a convincing *appearance* of assent. For instance, during the Spanish Inquisition, when Catholic orthodoxy held sway as a rigid authoritarianism, dissent from the dogmas and strictures of the orthodoxy rendered a person a heretic, and put him in danger of the *auto-da-fé*.

In communist countries, under various strains of Marxist orthodoxy, and in Nazi Germany under its race orthodoxy, dissent from the ruling ethos, even in the smallest matters, was not tolerated.

Both “the appearance and the actuality” of assent were required in the U.S.S.R., as related in this passage by Timotheos Tzouladis:

Mezhlauk was guilty of “thought crime,” a very real transgression in a state that demanded both the appearance and the actuality of capitulation. The Polish writer Czeslaw Milosz later described the rationale of their guardians: “The enemy, in a potential form, will always be there; the only friend will be the man who accepts the doctrine 100 per cent. If he accepts only 99 per cent, he will necessarily have to be considered a foe, for from that remaining 1 per cent a new church can rise.” [\[11\]](#)

Citizens not only had to conform outwardly, in their behavior, but also inwardly, in their hearts and minds—or at least convince the authorities that they did. Anything that betrayed doubt could mark a person as an “enemy of the people,” and thus subject to punishment. This could happen via any small giveaway or slip, as in these examples from *The Gulag Archipelago*:

Orachsky . . . had been imprisoned for a facial crime (really out of Orwell)—for a smile! . . . While showing another teacher in the classroom something in Pravda, he had smiled! . . . But the smile had been observed, and the fact of smiling at the central organ of the Party was in itself sacrilege! . . .

A plumber turned off the loudspeaker in his room every time the endless letters to Stalin were being read. (Every day for hours on the radio). His next-door neighbor denounced him. . . He got “Socially Dangerous Element”; eight

years. [\[12\]](#)

There are different pieties for different orthodoxies. In our own country, not agreeing that unlimited immigration is an unalloyed blessing, or not subscribing to the gay-rights agenda in all its dogmas and demands, brings condemnation down on one's head—as it did on Carrie Prejean, for example. (Carrie Prejean, a beauty-pageant contestant, said she thought marriage should only be between a man and a woman.)

However, such offenses don't usually bring a prison term; PC orthodoxy doesn't possess that kind of authority yet, being mainly an unofficial, grassroots ideology. But the sacrosanct status of our orthodox dogmas remains in effect in any milieu where the orthodoxy wields power and influence—as it does in university administrations, for example.

Punishing Dissent

Why has any expression of measured concern about the trans phenomenon become so impossible? . . . Since backing gay rights has grown ordinary, un-abridged enthusiasm about transgenderism became, overnight, the ultimate litmus test of tolerance. And in these us-them times, this is one more issue on which one cannot stake out a nuanced view. You're for it or agin it. One discouraging word and you're a transphobe.— Lionel Shriver, "It's not transphobic to question transgenderism," The Spectator

Assent to an orthodoxy is mandatory, and the keepers or guardians of an orthodoxy therefore impose some kind of sanctions against those who dissent. In totalitarian states, the full force of the justice and secret-police apparatus can be brought to bear on dissidents. And in our own informal, grass-roots orthodoxy, a barrage of abuse and vituperation from right-thinkers is employed to punish dissenters.

In either type of orthodoxy, heretical views aren't debated; they are merely identified as heretical by the

keepers of the orthodoxy, and then denounced. There is no need to debate dissenters. As Mark Steyn often says, devotees of the liberalist orthodoxy are “in the shut-up business. They don’t want to win the debate, they want to end the debate.” This is an essential characteristic of orthodoxies.

For example, when Martina Navratilova took a stand against the phenomenon of men competing in women’s sports, she shocked and enraged liberalists. Navratilova made the startling statement, “You can’t just proclaim yourself a female and be able to compete against women.”

Guardians of the orthodoxy hastened to vilify her. Their first reaction was, as always, name-calling: they called Navratilova “transphobic.” That word is an epithet, or easily-applied label, not a rebuttal. Devotees of the orthodoxy generally deem name-calling a sufficient argument, eliminating the hard work of reasoned rebuttal.

There have been other incidents where transgender activists have used the “transphobic” epithet to beat down opposition. Dr. Rachel McKinnon, a born-male professor, won the women’s cycling world championship in October of 2018. When actual female competitors complained that it wasn’t fair, he responded:

If Sharron Davies, Paula Radcliffe, or Martina Navratilova had said we need to keep black women out of sport to “protect it” and the “integrity of women’s sport,” that would be obviously racist. That’s why it’s obviously transphobic to exclude trans women now.”[\[13\]](#)

Thus McKinnon did offer a sort of crippled “proof by analogy” (comparing himself to black competitors) as justification for his desire to participate in women’s sports; but his fatuous analogy was too feeble to be worth considering. Anyway, he hardly needed a rationalization; “trans women” are a sacrosanct category of people within the

liberalist orthodoxy, so anyone who resists anything they want is automatically a heretic and a transgressor, and will be vilified as such. Hence “Rachel” declared his critics to be in violation of the orthodoxy, and he called them the name that branded them as such: transphobics.

A Common Characteristic: An Orthodoxy Has Its Own Particular Crimes, Sins and Epithets

“I’m Don Lemon. The president of the United States is racist. A lot of us already knew that.”—CNN host Don Lemon, “CNN Tonight with Don Lemon,” January 11, 2018

“KU granted Chick-fil-A, a bastion of bigotry, a prime retail location in the heart of our campus.”—Mará Rose Williams, “‘A bastion of bigotry’: Faculty demand that KU sever ties with Chick-fil-A,” Kansas City Star

Orthodoxies, being sacrosanct belief systems, are deemed by their devotees to be infallible and authoritative. Anyone who doesn’t subscribe to the orthodoxy is considered *ipso facto* a miscreant in rebellion against the Truth, who must be repressed in order to uphold the integrity of the orthodoxy. Such a heretic are generally attacked via the use of one element from a stock inventory of terms of condemnation. These terms of condemnation constitute a kind of vituperation boilerplate, the characteristic epithets of the orthodoxy.

These epithets generally don’t identify a particular overt act or belief of which the accused is guilty, but are just generalized terms of abuse, whose ultimate meaning is that the accused has transgressed against the orthodoxy, or dissents from some dogma of the orthodoxy.

Here is a typical example: a tweet from one Stephen King, condemning Donald Trump in rather ornate language:

I think we all agree that Donald Trump is a vile, racist,

and incompetent bag of guts and waters. How happy I would be to tell him "YOU'RE FIRED" next November. [\[14\]](#)

(King considers his point self-evident; "I think we all agree" is his substitute for evidence or proof.)

In such contexts, "racist" doesn't mean racist in a literal, denotative sense. It doesn't mean that Donald Trump has shown or expressed biased thoughts or behavior against other races. It just means that Donald Trump's social policies are in conflict with the orthodoxy, and in particular with the orthodoxy's practice of bending over backwards to placate and appease racial activists.

"Racist" is just one item among a large set of stylized boilerplate epithets of our orthodoxy. Such terms are used almost like curse-words, contentless terms of abuse. They are not literal denotations—much as calling someone a "bastard" doesn't mean you literally question the circumstances of his birth.

Epithets of the Liberalist Orthodoxy

Trump is not just a pathological liar, and it's not just that he is running the most corrupt administration in the modern history of our country, or that he is a racist, sexist, a homophobe, a xenophobe and a religious bigot.—Senator Bernie Sanders, <https://twitter.com/BernieSanders>

A Creighton University professor of theology recently referred to an Omaha, Nebraska pro-law enforcement "Back the Blue" demonstration as a "white supremacist rally" which would "showcase Midwestern racism."—Dave Huber, "Creighton U. prof calls pro-police gathering a 'white supremacist rally'," The College Fix

As previously stated, every orthodoxy has its own set of epithets, based on the particular sacred principles of the

orthodoxy. These are pat terms of abuse for use against anyone guilty of thoughts or deeds contrary to the orthodoxy.

Some common terms of abuse used by the liberalist orthodoxy are “racist,” “sexist,” “homophobe,” “hater,” “Islamophobe,” and so on. But again, these terms are not to be taken literally. Calling someone “racist” doesn’t mean you can point to actual racial animosity or bigotry in that person’s words or deeds. “Homophobe” doesn’t mean the accused discriminates against gays. It is just used to defame someone who disagrees with the gay agenda on some policy like redefining “marriage” to include gay liaisons.

For liberalist believers, the choice of which stock epithet to use depends on which particular liberalist dogma the targeted miscreant has sinned against. Dissenters from global-warming orthodoxy are usually maligned as “deniers,” or as yahoos who don’t believe in science. People who favor enforcing our immigration laws receive the label “racist” or “xenophobe.” People who don’t believe gay “marriage” is desirable or even possible can be labeled “homophobic”; indeed, people opposing *anything* gays want are labeled homophobic.

Vilifying a dissenter from the liberalist orthodoxy is just a matter of selecting the desired epithet and slapping it on the target like a label. For instance, Sen. Bernie Sanders, in a speech to Al Sharpton’s National Action Network, April 5, 2019, attached a series of stock epithets to Donald Trump. Overcoming his great reluctance to speak ill of a Republican, Bernie said,

It gives me no pleasure to tell you that we have a president today who is a racist, who is a sexist, who is a homophobe, who is a xenophobe, and who is a religious bigot. I wish I did not have to say that. But that is the damn truth. [\[15\]](#)

The logic behind Sanders' mud-slinging is this: *Trump opposes liberalist policies on several subjects; and we know that orthodox liberalist policies are correct, virtuous, and noble, whereas opposition to them is sinful. Therefore Trump is a sinner, a reprobate, and a deplorable human being, fit to be called a homophobe, xenophobe, religious bigot, etc., etc.* No more specific charge against Trump than that was made in Sanders' rant.

To devotees of an orthodoxy, any dissent from the orthodox dogmas justifies smearing the dissenter with one of the stock epithets. And so our political "debate" continues, as a never-ending argument at cross purposes, with political arguments being advanced by Republicans, and epithets and catch-phrases launched by Democrats in return.

By Comparison: Communist Epithets

As previously stated, the epithets of any orthodoxy simply mean that the object of the epithets has transgressed in thought, word or deed against one of the dogmas of the orthodoxy. The epithets are not to be taken literally, as meaning their dictionary definitions. Rather, the epithets simply indicate their target has incurred the displeasure of the orthodox.

For comparison, we can see the process at work in communist regimes of the past. Offenders against the regime's Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy were deemed "anti-Soviet," "bourgeois," "fascist," "counter-revolutionary," and so on.

The epithet "anti-Soviet," an accusation much relied on by communist regimes, didn't literally mean that the accused was opposed to the Soviet system or to Marxist ideology. It only meant that the accused had said or done something not in accord with the regime's current policies and views; any element of actual "anti-Soviet" intent was usually negligible.

Asking, in all innocence, a question embarrassing to the regime could be labeled “anti-Soviet,” as in this example:

The secretary of a District Party Committee went into the fields to speed up the plowing, and an old peasant asked him whether he knew that for seven years the collective farmers had received not one single ounce of grain in return for their “labor days”—only straw and very little of that. For his question the peasant got ASA—Anti-Soviet Agitation—ten years. [\[16\]](#)

Asking a Party apparatchik an uncomfortable question, then, could be labeled “anti-Soviet” because it was unflattering to the orthodoxy, even though the actual intent of the questioner was merely to seek help with a problem,.

Reporting embarrassing facts about conditions during wartime could also be considered anti-Soviet, as in this example:

[Charges of] Anti-Soviet Agitation—never let up . . . throughout the war. Sentences under 58-10 were handed out . . . to those in the rear who were guilty of the slanderous rumor that rations were meager; to those at the front who were guilty of the slanderous rumor that the Germans had excellent equipment; and to those everywhere who, in 1942, were guilty of the slanderous rumor that people were dying of starvation in blockaded Leningrad. [\[17\]](#)

The repeating of slanderous rumors, or rather, true but embarrassing facts, could be labeled anti-Soviet, although the actual intent was merely to pass on a factual report.

Not just criticism of the Soviet regime, but any statement less than scathing about Western nations, could be considered “anti-Soviet agitation.” Alexander Solzhenitsyn reported this example:

One Soviet citizen was in the United States and on his

return said that in the United States they have wonderful automobile roads. The KGB arrested him and demanded a term of 10 years. But the judge said "I don't object, but there is not enough evidence. Couldn't you find something else against him?" So the judge was exiled to Sakhalin because he dared to argue, and they gave the other man 10 years. [18]

Here we see a case where the stating of a fact was classified as "anti-Soviet," meaning "not in accord with our orthodoxy." Anti-Soviet rhetoric was a crime, consisting of failing to constantly cheer for Soviet society and denounce "bourgeois" society.

In Marxist societies, the epithets used to condemn thought crimes were not meant literally, but were simply labels applied to infractions against the dogmas of the orthodoxy. The same process characterizes our own orthodoxy.

A Common Characteristic: The Orthodoxy, Rather Than Written Laws, Rules Society

For years, universities have denied basic procedural protections to students accused of sexual misconduct . . .

Things were supposed to change in August, when the new Title IX regulations took effect . . . Now it appears that many campuses are fighting to ensure these protections remain illusory. It's not that institutions aren't changing their policies. Rather, they are doing so to comply superficially while claiming increased authority to subject students and faculty to processes that provide few, if any, of the protections that the regulations require.—Samantha Harris and Michael Thad Allen, "Universities Circumvent New Title IX Regulations," National Review Online

In an orthodox environment, there are new, higher truths and dogmas, and therefore there is a need for new,

higher laws and procedures. Previous laws and legal procedures are superseded. Traditional norms may still *appear* to function, but only as long as the actual results are not harmful to the orthodoxy; if they are, objective rule of law must be overruled. That is because minions of the orthodoxy knows what outcome is desired—who is in tune with the orthodox, and who is not. Hard-and-fast rules would only impede the task of repressing enemies of the orthodoxy.

As a result, in orthodox societies, the *form* of legal protections may exist, but not the substance. As Vladimir Voinovich explained,

All, or nearly all, Soviet people know that in the Soviet Union it's not the laws on the books, but the unwritten rules of behavior, that matter. [\[19\]](#)

In orthodox societies, the written law and criminal code are the least of what guides law enforcement. Here's one example of the irrelevance of written law, involving a crackdown on shop-keepers suspected of black-market dealings in Communist Czechoslovakia:

[M]any small shopkeepers and artisans had been dragged away [and] no one knew where they were or what they were accused of having done. Many of them waited in jail for months before they were finally tried by People's Tribunals whose decisions were not based on our established legal system but on "class feeling," and whose sentences were meted out in a completely haphazard way. [\[20\]](#)

In a communist society, justice is administered by reference to "class feeling," that is, by reference to the dogmas of their orthodoxy. Preserving the orthodoxy takes precedence over the formal written law. And similarly in our own orthodox society.

Our Orthodoxy Overrules Written Law

In our own orthodoxy, a similar phenomenon exists. It is not uncommon to see the authorities flouting laws and ignoring court rulings, when those rulings are contrary to the dogmas of the orthodoxy. For example, laws aimed at the enforcement of our immigration laws are routinely flouted by public officials. In those matters it is the orthodoxy that governs, not statutory law. A case in point :

Jhonny Soto-Ubaldo was arrested on federal gun charges this month, giving U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement a new chance to place a detainer on him . . .

ICE says New York police departments had Mr. Soto-Ubaldo in their custody. . . [in] June 2018, when he was first arrested in Queens. But he was released despite an ICE request that he be turned over.

Two months later, he was again arrested on local charges and then released without ICE being notified. In 2019, he was arrested six times, with ICE requesting notice each time of his release and authorities defying the requests. . . .

Mr. Soto-Ubaldo, 19, is a citizen of the Dominican Republic. [H]e entered the U.S. on a six-month visitor's visa in 2016 but didn't leave when his time was up.

New York City's sanctuary policy prohibits police from cooperating with ICE unless someone has been convicted of charges the city considers serious. [\[21\]](#)

For another example, laws forbidding racial favoritism in university admissions are blatantly flouted. Formal laws and court decisions against such racial favoritism may exist, but university officials—who are generally devotees of the liberalist orthodoxy—evade the laws by a variety of subterfuges. Here is one example of the practice:

The College Board is going to assign a secret “adversity score” to students who take the SAT in an apparent attempt to help colleges get around a potential Supreme Court ruling on race-based admissions.

The score will be assigned to every single student who takes the test, but students will not know what the score is, and the College Board is not disclosing how the score is determined, the Wall Street Journal reports. . .

The move is an attempt to do away with differences in test scores that result from disparities in wealth and education [and race!] and preempts a ruling from the Supreme Court on race-based affirmative action. Several college admissions officers told The WSJ the tool will be especially useful if the Supreme Court bans race-based admissions.

“The purpose is to get to race without using race,” Anthony Carnevale, former employee of the College Board . . . told The WSJ. [\[22\]](#)

That is, the purpose is to evade the law. That is just one of many duplicitous maneuvers college administrators use to circumvent the law, in order to enforce the dogmas of the liberalist orthodoxy.

In some cases, minions of the orthodoxy condone blatant crime and violence. Police forces have the job of maintaining order, meaning stopping lawless behavior like riots, arson, and violence in the streets. But the rioters in Seattle, Portland and other cities in the summer of 2020 are children of the orthodoxy. Therefore elected officials and police sided with the rioters, condoned their crimes and stood idly by to let them run riot. In our society, it’s not the crimes committed, but the motivating ideology behind the crimes, that governs our officials’ response to them.

On the other hand, citizens are sometimes punished for infractions committed against the orthodoxy, rather than for

breaking any actual laws. In one case reported in *Reason* magazine, two high-school students were punished for transgressing against the orthodox dogma that we must all abhor firearms:

Two male students at Lacey Township High School in New Jersey posted photos of guns on Snapchat. . .

The photos were not taken at school. They were not taken during school hours. They did not reference a school. . . And yet, administrators at Lacey Township High School suspended the boys for three days, and also gave them weekend detention. . .

The two students had visited a gun range owned by an older brother on Saturday, March 10, 2018. . . They also took a few photos and posted them on Snapchat . . . On Monday, the boys were forced to meet with an assistant principal and an anti-bullying specialist, who quickly decided to punish them for clearly constitutionally-protected speech. [\[23\]](#)

When written laws conflict with the dogmas of the liberalist orthodoxy, it is always an uphill struggle to secure a judgment based on rule of law.

Orthodoxy In The Driver's Seat

Our home-grown woke orthodoxy is at this moment a social movement or secular religion; it is not in control as a vested governmental creed. But it has the characteristics and the potential of being as oppressive and totalitarian as any orthodoxy of the past. If it does achieve total dominance in society, the situation will be even more as described by Mark Steyn in a speech to the Institute of Public Affairs in Australia:

We now live in an age of state ideology. There's a correct position on certain subjects, and it's an ever-growing list: same-sex marriage, climate change, transgender

rights, Muslim immigration. [F]ree speech does not extend to these areas . . . on these subjects there's only the approved Party line, and dissenting views not only can't be heard in public, but should not even be expressed in private.

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