



## Age of Cant: Science, Identity and the War on Truth

Kim Bryan

The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep ... but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end, for they do so with the approval of their own conscience

CS Lewis

While the term 'cultural marxism' is growing in popularity among opinion leaders in the West, we should not be seduced into thinking it 'real'. The term is a contrivance of today's new, and distinctly post Marxian, political discourse in which the format of almost any reality is contested, and may be described in terms which are the precise opposite of its original meaning.

The 'philosophy' these 'critics' are describing - postmodernism, or the idea that truth is subservient to 'ideals' - is a product of the liberal humanities, for centuries the dominant model of thinking in capitalist 'democracies'. Today, its influence can be seen across the spectrum of western political life.

In contrast to the Marxian analysis of society in which all social consciousness outside of class is 'false', postmodernism treats identity as fluid, the subjective 'truth' of the unconscious person. It's great idea - that truths exist to be found beyond the facts - is an assault not only on the physical laws of nature but on the science of society, developed over the last century by Marxists and non Marxists alike.

Entirely in accord with the observations of social scientists that the progress of ideology reflects wider economic change, the ascent of postmodernism mirrors the development during the eighties and nineties of the neo liberal model of capitalism. During this period the shape of governance in much of the post industrial West shifted from the Keynesian welfare system to the 'enterprise' model, adapted to accommodate a 'services' based consumer economy.

In its code of universal scepticism postmodernism may appear progressive. The idea that we can escape the influence of outmoded social conventions is seductive, at least for the aspiring individual. In reality, however, postmodernism targets natural, social or moral laws without discrimination threatening those which protect the poor or the weak from harm. Recognising oppressive constraints imposed upon us by political power relies entirely upon political consciousness, an assessment rooted not in aspirations or ideals but in scientific principles. If we can no longer recognise the economic roots of structural hierarchies, or believe we are 'beyond' them, the control it enables dominant groups to exercise over our lives is reinforced. In a relative world, in which we are 'defined' by our 'choices', in other words our patterns of consumption, 'freedom' is really no more than branding, the meanings we 'choose' or are persuaded to attach to our social experience. For the individual, reality is not vanquished, merely circumvented by the power of imagination.

Old identity politics - monarch, nation, church and family - romanticised social hierarchies in order to justify the exploitation of 'inferior' cultures and classes. In denying the absolutist nature of dominant economic power, postmodern identity politics is the 'same old' but expressed publicly in 'special pleading' - competition between elite groups for political, commercial or social advantage. The practitioners of special pleading are not validators, they neither understand nor expose real or discernible patterns of discrimination or oppression, they simply appropriate its 'experience'.

In its progress from leftish liberation 'theologies' rooted in feminism and sexual freedom, to the charade of elite 'identity' politics, this ultimate 'false consciousness' is following the personal journey of its philosophical father, Michel Foucault, whose undulating relationship with the Marxist left ended, in the assessment of his biographer, Didier Eribon, in 'violent anticommunism'.

The ideal postmodern man subordinates his intelligence to his senses, choosing facts like fashions, on the basis of whichever aesthetic is more pleasing, rewarding or convenient. In a world that doubts its existence, it is no longer necessary for those at the highest levels of power to merely manipulate or misrepresent truth. In a market that is 'free', the commodity known as facts is no longer, in any meaningful sense, an impediment in the moulding of the public discourse.

## **Fake Science**

The culture and ideology fostered in this globalization process relate largely to 'lifestyle' themes and goods and their acquisition; and they tend to weaken any sense of community helpful to civic life

Noam Chomsky

Incorporating what Fredric Jameson called the 'cultural logic of late capitalism', the 'open' approach to truth is tuned to the neo liberal economic model in a shared preoccupation with personal choice. In its alternative 'science' framed to open new markets, postmodern thinking elevates socially constructed ideals of perfection, what is 'desirable', over the laws of nature. Scepticism towards the role of nature, the superstitious idea that 'we' can tame its powers, is the driver of the new materialism opening the way for laws rooted in biology,

history and society to be denied simply because they do not suit us.

'An expert' Henry Kissinger famously said, 'is someone who articulates the needs of those in power'. In today's world evidence of that truth is discerned in the subordination of real science to the power of the 'expert'. Since the 'public good' is framed as adherence to concepts rather than facts, today excellence in a field of study rapidly consigns open thinkers to the ultra margins of society. Rather than aspiring to the independence which, in a science lead setting, would legitimise confidence in the product, today's experts are the opposite - 'stakeholders' in a favoured doctrine or policy which it is their duty to protect, if necessary, at the expense of the facts. It's not that they are wicked, on the contrary they are idealists. It's just that their role is that of the political commissar not the scientist, driven by postmodernism's alternative truth that science is understood not through 'laws' but the power of 'belief'.

The transition of scientific 'opinion' to a form of stakeholder investment, in which status is earned from ideological purity, has produced an absolutist anti science which refuses to give up on the idea that biology can be 'reoriented'. The truth that good medicine is predicated upon working in harmony with the laws of nature is gone, in favour of an unworldly pursuit of 'perfection' tied in reality to the need of the new technology led economy to 'appeal' to its 'market'. From each according to his needs, today's market seeks to supply us with what we do not need but are simply persuaded to 'want'.

In light of their direct appeal to the integrity of the person, health panics are today's gold standard in the more general war to legitimise the idea that good 'science' is less about truth than 'intent'. At the heart of every anxiety insinuated into our lives is a denial of the laws of nature, a process re-imagined in the Orwellian language of the postmodern as the product of 'intelligence'. Far from being 'problematic' the 'threats' targeted by the new bio capitalists - food and fellowship - are the cornerstones of a healthy life. The health of the market, on the other hand, depends upon our belief that we are sick.

## The Food Problem

As a result of today's 'expert' opinion, and its stubborn refusal to bow to empirical data on morbidity and mortality, the gulf between the public's perception of its condition and the truth is a yawning chasm; while we may well think it the product of our 'excesses', nearly all diet related disease is in fact malnutrition in the elderly, mortality based on body size varies hardly at all except at the margins and 75% of the NHS budget is spent on people aged 85+.

'Obesity' and the food/lifestyle panics it has spawned, is perhaps the first example in the modern era of an aggressive new 'health' doctrine in which social or cultural desires or superstitions are materialised over the realities of biology. Since the 1980s the biological laws governing our relationship with food have given way to a powerful social model predicated on the idea that reality can be subordinated to make people 'better'.

Before the era of commercially driven stakeholder science the healthy nature of intuitive eating would have been largely undisputed with body shame regarded as a sign of low self esteem in people. The science hasn't changed. Policies designed to enforce changes in behaviour produce marginal, usually short term, effects with no impact on our long term

relationship with food which in the end defers to the messages coming from our bodies rather than our 'doctors'. In full knowledge of the biological laws that compel our bodies to fight us when we 'diet' and of the identical twin studies showing strong predisposition in body size, stakeholders refuse to give up on the idea that nature, the reality of what we are, can be beaten by 'willpower', the desire to be what we wish.

Instead of being led by the evidence, postmodern science does the opposite, assuming that any data that supports the 'wrong' attitude cannot be science. No matter how robust it may appear to be, discomfoting real science is routinely interpreted by today's stakeholders as 'controversial' or 'insufficient', re-examined not because it deviates from its laws but because it fails to 'reveal' what stakeholders assume to be the hidden truth. While science can rarely be regarded as 'settled', old truths should never be revisited by people whose 'method' is buried in ideology. In reality attempts to modify body size with malnutrition produces a failure rate of 90-95% and an increased rather than reduced overall mortality. It is a truth that accords with what we learn when we do diets but subordinate to our 'inner feeling' that 'ugliness' is somehow 'wrongness'.

Anyone who read the news reports in July 2016 of a 'definitive' study that said 'obesity' was the second biggest cause of 'preventable' death after smoking likely believed they were reading new, improved 'science'. In fact, in the words of the Guardian, the study was an attempt 'to overcome the problems of previous studies'. In other words, it was a reexamination of an existing body of data, in this case research suggesting body size is a passive ingredient in mortality except at the margins where co morbidities are more likely to be found. It's likely that, to this point, most readers will have been unaware that such a body of data existed; it's likely too that by the time they got down to the disclaimers buried in the press reports, that this study does not in fact establish a link between 'obesity' and higher mortality, they were already convinced.

In support of their claims of authenticity, the authors of the 2016 study, stating wrongly that others had failed to control for smoking, an activity more common in the lean, determined that the smoking group should be excluded entirely. In addition, the study engages in 'extrapolation' a wholly unscientific but these days common 'standard' which assumes 'lives saved' based on outcomes which do not exist independently of other factors which would be compounded by the changes extrapolated. Most egregious was the failure of the study to follow previous studies in attempting to control for factors which are undisputed as independent major causes of inequalities in mortality ... race, class and the life experiences associated with oppression or lack of opportunity. The latter is likely to be significant if polling published in October 2018 by the British Liver Trust is to be believed, that weight has overtaken race as the UK's 'most common form of discrimination'.

A similar pattern of behaviour is discernible in the attitude of stakeholders to foods or food groups which, through assumptions about the character of larger people, they 'link' to 'obesity' and by extension to 'lifestyle'. Harm associated with the 'low fat diet' craze of the eighties is just, after forty years, becoming recognised: 'overenthusiastic scientists, massive conflicts of interest, and politically driven policy makers can make deeply damaging mistakes' admits the former editor of the BMJ, Richard Smith, before concluding, naturally,

that practitioners had simply opted for the 'wrong' kind of diet. When starved, our bodies, it seems, compensate, in this case, by stocking up on carbohydrates. Given the power of the ideological framework, it's unlikely that practitioners will draw the logical conclusion, that 'experimenting' with the natural cycles of our diet is 'contraindicated'. Ignoring the threat posed by malnutrition, even at lower levels, stakeholders simply refuse to give up on the idea that if we adopt restrictive models of eating with 'problem' foods such as meat, dairy or sugar either reduced or removed, lives will be 'saved'.

In contrast to the obsessions that pre occupy market driven 'health' policy, a large body of policy grade evidence, including the 2006 US 'Changing Lives' study, suggests inequality of outcome in mortality is a 'function primarily of socioeconomic disparities' which outweigh behavioural and even genetic factors by some distance. It is here, in the degrading life experiences associated with poverty and powerlessness, that excess disease can be usefully understood and addressed rather than exacerbated by morally driven 'interventions'. It is a truth which, thus far, has failed to inhibit the determination of our practitioners to blame or shame us onto a life path overwhelmed by needless anxiety, indifferent to the real lives and needs of those at the bottom of society.

It's not that people don't have the right to try to be thinner, fitter or to pursue changes in their diet or way of living which they feel will make life better. It's just that it's not science or terribly important. If stakeholders succeed in normalising the withdrawal of civil rights or medical care to 'non conforming' people, however, the inequalities of outcome which feature across the health care system will be 'empowered'.

### The Germ Problem

If the ability of relativism to subordinate truth to economic interests was in any doubt, the current 'war' on the coronavirus has surely settled the argument. With the high street retail and hospitality sectors following manufacturing into oblivion, measures taken to 'stop' the virus have 'merged' symbiotically with 'progress' to a new 'virtual' economy. In an astonishingly short space of time the science, which placed Covid 19 firmly in the manageable not the 'pandemic' category, migrated to a universal adherence, not to the laws of immunology, but to a new 'ideal' of 'citizenship'.

By the end of 2020, just ten months into the war, the policy of 'spreading' the infection over longer periods was 'successful'. While the virus remains undefeated, the mindset of the population has shifted towards a 'new normal' in which the sociability of old society is viewed suspiciously as a 'spreader' of death. Employing a concept of 'safe' which almost weekly expanded in scope before landing at 'the virus must be gone', the wagers of this particular war appear to have succeeded in transferring our perception of Covid 19 from the realm of science to the realm of 'values' in which the inevitable triumph of good over evil depends on what we 'do'. Mostly, we have become persuaded that the laws of virology will respond to our 'good behaviour' and that our leaders will 'reward' us with a return to normality.

What many people saw as 'the science' was really 'opinion' canvassed by political 'leaders' tied, structurally, to monopoly economic interests. Those who go into quarantine rely still

upon the spread of immunity in others which, in the case of common viruses, science has never previously understood to mean the elimination of all risk. Distancing and mask wearing are indeed small sacrifices to make for the 'protection of others' but, set against the power of a virus, they are a mouse fighting an elephant. Over the long term, a policy of 'isolating' as opposed to 'treating' a virus of this type would likely result in significant social harm not to mention higher overall mortality.

When, in support of its 'impact spreading' policy, the UK government needed to override the data advising against the wearing of facemasks in public spaces - dozens of controlled trials in fact - it had no trouble finding public spirited scientists to provide it with 'different' answers. Regardless of regional waves, shifts or developed levels of immunity, the University of Oxford felt entitled to extrapolate positive 'correlations' with mask wearing 'cultures' while Edinburgh University concluded that whatever 'inhibits' the dispersal of droplets 'must' inhibit infection. Many facemask wearers may well believe the mask is keeping them and their loved ones alive. Others, seduced by the cry that the answer lies in our hands, will defer to the moral case, associating it with decency and care for others.

In effect, the new social modelling based 'science' treats the virus as if it were the result of man's rather than nature's 'failings' though, it must be said, not in every case. The effects of the 'isolate' policy - 'stay home' messaging, shutting medical services and the denial of treatment to thousands of old, sick or infected people - documented by Amnesty, Turning Point, Cancer Research UK, the Alzheimer's Society and even the ONS, were treated mostly as unavoidable, responsibility laid at the door of the 'pandemic'.

While 'abandoning people to die' - described by Amnesty as a 'scandal of monumental proportions' - was treated as an honest mistake, for the rest of us mostly the media followed the 'shaming' pathway of 'lifestyle' panics, overplaying the rare at the expense of the common and encouraging a blaming, snitching culture. Ignoring the natural curve of infectious diseases, advocates on all sides played to the 'moral' narrative rather than the science, seeking 'correlations' to 'explain' outbreaks or vindicate their policy positions, correlations which the global picture suggests do not exist.

In spite of the resilience over many centuries of similar mutating viruses such as rhino, RSV and influenza, the idea that coronaviruses could or 'must' be 'eliminated' triumphed because stakeholders in vaccination programmes overpowered those invested in the treatment options. At time of writing, precedents from recent history, the overuse of drug remedies for minor ailments, admitted by JAMA and the BMA to be 'massive' and 'widespread', as well as the antibiotic resistance created by routine over prescribing, are about to be repeated as world leaders prepare to instigate a radical new programme of mass rather than targeted vaccination for a virus not harmful to the vast majority.

In light of our strange blindness to its historic record of complicity and error, the medical establishment remains the interest group trusted most by those in power to convey its messages. If we succumb, finally, to the notion that science is no longer determined by laws but by the 'opinion' of 'experts', the surrender of what remains of our collective agency and intelligence will follow.

## Fake Politics

It is not only in the sphere of social care that special pleading has found a 'milieu' but also in the sphere of politics, the merits of the case judged less on facts than the quality or utility of the 'performance'. Through the medium of 'self determination', high profile groups and individuals pursuing political goals are 'redefining' oppression. In filling our heads with concepts of oppression which rely on perception rather than hard reality, they are portraying their feelings of anger or frustration as morally equivalent to abuses of human rights.

Two contemporary cases - the 'new antisemitism' and 'trans rights' - show how the theatrical medium of postmodern 'identity politics' is 'enabling' abuses of power by high profile individuals and groups.

### The 'New Antisemitism'

Rhetoric about the 1 per cent and economic inequality has the same underlying theme - a small group of very rich people who cleverly manipulate others to defend their interests. So anti-capitalism masks and normalises anti-semitism.

John McTernan, March 2019

The 'new antisemitism' is the most explicit example of a political intrigue which is succeeding, and dramatically, through pretending to be something else, in this case the voice of a bullied or ignored minority. With concerns focused on foreign policy, where, ideologically, the ranks are pretty much closed, its 'meanings' were 'understood' at the very highest levels of power.

The idea, advocated by supporters of western foreign policy generally, that a 'new antisemitism' explains opposition to the state of Israel, has been growing in influence here for decades, allied to the generic doctrine that opposition to western 'leadership' is based on 'hatred' of our 'democracy'. It was the threat of an outlier leading the Labour Party however which spawned the lurch by the pro war political class to its extremes, rebranding its interests as a 'besieged Jewish community'.

Under the 'new' antisemitism old right wing antisemitic narratives blaming 'powerful Jews' for the crimes of capitalism (or finance) are reclaimed and applied instead to the anti imperialist, anti war left. Following the self serving 'perception' model ... 'I feel that when you talk about elites, bankers, corporations, media you really mean Jews' ... it uses the subjective language of 'identity' to protect existing class based privilege.

Because it views power as class based, Marxist theory specifically does not target ruling class interests on the basis of identity, regarding the 'Jewish' character of power as a 'false consciousness'. In treating the 'Jewish money' narrative as an expression of the politics of class rather than the ideology of 'anti communism', the concept of the new antisemitism implies that 'Jewish control' is real, a bizarre affectation in which today's antisemitism is understood through the mindset of the old. This redefinition is allied to a more general rewriting, by the right, of twentieth century history, in which the appeasement of fascism by western capitalism is denied and the sacrifices of the left, particularly the Jewish left,

purged from the record. In September 2019, two years after it adopted 'full IHRA' - in effect the 'new antisemitism' doctrine - the European Parliament adopted a resolution which apportioned blame for World War II to Communism equally with Nazism.

Until the eighties, most 'mainstream' historians explained the origin of Nazi atrocities in Nazism's racially oriented world view and hatred of 'weakness', ideas resting on the far right of the political spectrum. In shifting the focus of the threat to the left, including an inclination to rebrand the Nazis 'left wing', the new 'moral equivalence' of 'totalitarianisms' enables blame for both the war, and present ills, to be shifted from fascism onto a generic 'evil' found invariably in critics of western power.

Claims of a 'left wing antisemitism' overwhelmed media space very quickly, being escalated systematically, using the panic model, beyond initial 'concerns' to a wholesale revision of meaning. In less than a year, anti imperialist, anti racist, anti war and even social justice doctrines or values generally were routinely 'understood' as expressions of antisemitism. A significant body of empirical evidence, provided by Amnesty International, the Community Security Trust, You Gov, the Institute of Policy Review and the Economist contradicted its claims, finding online abuse generally, including antisemitic abuse, targeted far more commonly at the left by the right. The alternative model, promoted by conservative pro war politicians, celebrities and 'journalists' relied almost entirely on the 'perceptions' of alleged victims and their allies.

Making inevitable its adoption into law and common practice, western institutions are being 'persuaded' to incorporate into their 'anti racist' policies the full IHRA definition of antisemitism. In its 'examples' IHRA accepts the 'right' of Israel to share in the privileged status of 'democracies' by which it means western states. This includes its 'right' to immunity from the judgements meted out to others and its 'right' to 'self determine' as an ethnic state. In its embrace of western supremacy and the subordination of non Jews living in or displaced from Palestine, the IHRA definition could never be accepted by anyone on the anti imperialist left which opens the way for a policy of total no platforming. In light of its Orwellian rebranding of hatred to mean denial by the oppressed of the 'rights' of the oppressor, the full IHRA definition is not accepted by the Palestinian community or by anti Zionist Jews nor is it adopted by any nation outside the western sphere of influence. Its status as 'international standard' reflects only the disregard of elite powers for the principles of sovereign equality as they are enshrined in the UN Charter and understood by everyone else.

With 'global' concerns tuned almost spiritually to the aims of western foreign policy, the players of this particular parody revelled in a loud but wholly spurious victimisation which elevated feelings of 'offence' at the politics of others to equivalence with historical experiences of genocide or persecution. Their targets, mostly hard working, grassroots activists, disproportionately Jewish or Black, were shut out of political spaces, losing friends, jobs and reputations. Social media searches not reliant on self reporting (AI and CST) exposed what was, in effect, a pattern, by their high profile accusers, of exaggeration, misrepresentation and fabrication. Once 'identity', the voice of a minority community, was invoked, the accusers 'right' to 'interpret' the words or actions of what were, in reality,

political adversaries, was never challenged or reciprocated. Nor was it compromised by the evidence which was secondary to the obligation on all of us to 'validate' the accusers 'experience'. In the case of Louise Ellman, this extended to her 'right' to repeat publicly claims about her local party discredited in court.

As you might expect given its commission the EHRC report into the Labour Party found transgressions of procedure and propriety, the majority in reality breaches of the rights of those accused of antisemitism. Naturally, the 'damning' report's failure to substantiate the priori claim of 'institutional antisemitism' made no impact on the narrative with no self reflection expected of the accusers who continued to demand apology and redress from their victims.

Rather than being disproved, the truth of hundreds of years of history has been vindicated by this campaign, that antisemitism is the tool of reactionaries. In understanding the power of today's special pleading, alarms should sound at the ease with which ideas drawn from far right revisionism and the fringes of the Zionist movement have become assimilated into the western 'leadership' narrative.

### 'Trans Rights'

I do think it's important that we experiment with new vocabularies. That new words help us conceptualize our social existence in a different way

Judith Butler

Another alarming sign of the growing influence of the postmodern 'ideal' of 'liberating' us from all knowledge of how the world actually works is a piece of academic quackery called 'queer theory'. In the purity of its ambition - the 'queering' of all experiences related to human sexuality - queer theory is waging a war on sexual norms using a model constructed entirely from unquantifiable relative 'meanings'. Two movements modelled from queer theory are currently active in the public domain; 'trans rights' denies the biological divide between men and women while the second, 'minor attracted persons', the divide between adult and child.

Rejecting the biological origins of human sexuality, 'trans rights' is a break with decades of campaigning by feminists and LGBs which relied upon biological norms to argue for the rights of women to equality with men and the right of non heterosexual people to be regarded as 'real' men and women. Masculine and feminine gender roles, viewed by old school feminism as fluid and artificial, are regarded by 'transgender' ideologists as essential truth, the basis upon which we discover our authentic self; the biological sex binary is the 'construct' from which the 'self' must be 'liberated'.

Like the 'new antisemitism' transgender ideology is not interested in quantifiable measures of civil, economic, cultural or political oppression. As in all instances of special pleading, including commercially driven health panics, 'values' or 'ideals' are the chosen milieu, as they empower stakeholders to extrapolate meanings. Since the 'internal reality' of the individual is freed from accountability to laws or common standards, in reality, the 'ideal' is

working only for those who imagine or assume entitlement.

In the real world, the new identity based understanding of injustice plays to the benefit of those at the top of society whose expectations are outlandish primarily because they are unrelated to any actual experience of persecution. Critics of transgenderism are not getting 'cancelled' for denying civil rights but for refusing to accept the doctrine that biological restraints on our freedom of action are 'oppression'. Posie Parker's infamous 'transphobic' billboard was removed because it carried the google definition of woman as 'adult human female' while the Canadian feminist, Meghan Murphy, lost her twitter account for 'misgendering' a 'transsexual' who sued women beauticians who refused to wax his testicles. People seek to 'change' sex for a myriad of differing, entirely individual reasons. Given the absence of a collective identity, it's no surprise that transactivists opted to create one by infiltrating existing movements. In its aim of subjugating civil society to the needs of the individual, however, transgenderism is the philosophical opposite of the gay liberation it appropriated. Under the trans doctrine it is the duty of the 'community' to accept the 'right' of individuals to transcend collective experience, including the limitations placed on all of us by the laws of nature.

The ability of capitalism to 'absorb' liberation movements, altering their direction, is well documented except now it happens in days not decades. Last year's 'Black Lives Matter' uprising originated in the hard experience of people at the bottom of US society, its focus shifting quickly to abuses of power across the world. In deference to the new 'identity politics' however, its leaders subordinated its anti imperialist 'manifesto' and public sympathy for Palestine to a more 'parochial' appeal. In mass media the 'new' BLM was played out as a 'culture war' between elite groups adopting working class people, black or white, as the 'voice' of their upper class interests.

Diverted from its potential as a grassroots movement of the global poor, BLM was 'transitioned' almost seamlessly to a marketing opportunity for the global rich, one not missed by the imitative trans lobby which, during June 2020, staged well publicised 'Black Trans Lives Matter' marches in London, New York and, naturally, Hollywood. Assembling its 'new vocabularies' from the lived experience of every oppressed group, transgenderism is a masquerade, another parody created in postmodern universities to accommodate the desire of elite groups to control and market 'meaning'. Its critics will likely follow the tortuous route of history's outcast black panthers, suffragists or 'gay libbers' but certainly not its advocates who are a pastiche of special pleading by rising stakeholder interests. Like the fat panic, trans 'affirmation' is rooted in the malign influence of empires, notably but not exclusively, the medical-pharmaceutical 'deep state'. For the multiple industries feeding off body dysphoria what Jennifer Bilek called Transgenderism™ is the great leap forward.

It is a denial of the realities of power and precedent, as well as the philosophical outlook of the original theorists themselves, to believe that ideas derived from queer theory can be limited to honest campaigning for political rights. In reality, queerism will follow the pattern of other vested interests in politics and society. Initial 'reasonable' aims, focused on the pain of individuals, will clear a path in which escalation is established towards a new 'reality'. Initially, the long term plan is always denied - until recently many trans activists

were keen to tell us they weren't seeking to replace sex based rights or activities - but, once accepted, the 'new normal' is 'fed' by a rapacious market. In addition to replacing the biological sex binary, queer theorists favour the removal of laws rooted in what Judith Butler called 'gendered subjectivities', including the age of consent and sex within the family. If you don't believe you can be persuaded that some children can consent to sexual relations, ask yourself what you have been persuaded already to believe, that they can 'know' they are living in the 'wrong' body.

In order to 'prohibit' dissent, trans activists are utilising the 'understanding' of 'hatred' favoured by the ruling classes, definitions which deny their political agency. For trans activists, 'transphobia' assumes 'rights' - the 'right' for instance to appropriate other people's territory or identities - which subvert rather than materialise common standards. It is a strategy understood philosophically as 'queering'. In the creation of privileged spaces, the role of stakeholders recruited to the ideology is central. Across mainstream media, the power of the 'expert', a trope for elite self interest, is used to strike down voices of reason. The Wikipedia entry for journalist Abigail Shrier opens with a reminder to readers that her 'unproven' hypothesis about the marketing of transition to young girls is 'rejected' by every established US psychiatric and paediatric institution which it then goes on to list.

'Rights' movements rooted in the service of the self are not cries from the margins of society where justice or opportunities for personal progress are denied but fetishes of the privileged, cultivated to open markets. The marketing opportunity created by transgender ideology is open ended, inciting discordance in people by telling them their 'wrongness' can be put 'right' or their desires materialised. In January 2021, three months after losing the Keira Bell court case, the performance of the Tavistock and Portman 'Gender Identity Development Service' (GIDS) was rated 'inadequate' by the Care Quality Commission, a fall from its previous 'good' rating. The CQC found that underlying disorders such as autism and anorexia were not fully addressed before patients were referred for transition, a 'flawed' process exacerbated by staff fears of being branded bigots.

When unfulfilled, human desires can be a source of pain in our lives, fuelled by the restrictive social roles which, perversely, trans ideology treats as signposts of 'true' identity. If the assessment of a 'human right' is stretched to encompass desires or needs conceived arbitrarily or 'reconstructed' from social norms, it is stripped of all meaning, functioning, in effect, as a 'meme'. While the idea that social meanings can be 're-conceptualised' may sound radical, forward thinking even, any ideology which denies the power over our lives of structural hierarchies, will, in practice, subordinate us to those hierarchies. Not reared in the socialisation patterns of women, which include placating the needs of men, the mostly heterosexual males demanding ownership of women's pronouns or access to women's and children's spaces are likely to get what they want, and to overwhelm those spaces even where they are few in number. Not all social norms repress us, some - the taboos against incest, rape, paedophilia for instance - form the basis of a whole range of rights which protect the weak from abuse by the strong.

## In Conclusion

As a result of the shift from realism towards 'idealism', we are drowning under a tsunami of commercially generated cant, unable to identify the interests that are leading public 'opinion' or understand the direction of travel. In their subversion of our human spaces, today's stakeholders have occupied our perceptual world to the extent that the further from reason their ideas reside, the more intensely we believe them.

If, in its denial of the supremacy of Kings and Church, the Protestant reformation was the ideological voice of an ambitious mercantile class, the new 'philosophy' knocking on the doors of the academy, 'transhumanism' - the idea that through technology we can achieve a semi mechanised state of physical and mental perfection - is the voice of the new corporate class of technocrats and 'philanthropists'. For multi millionaire 'transwoman', Martine Rothblatt, the top earning CEO in the biopharmaceutical industry, transgenderism is 'the onramp to transhumanism' and the end of 'fleshism'. According to Rothblatt 'denying' a man's 'right' to be a woman is akin to South African apartheid (Bilek, 2020)

In shifting social 'need' from the arena of fact to fantasy, postmodernism has laid the foundations of what Zygmunt Bauman called the 'consumer playground' economy in which 'services' fill the void left by our dissociation from reality. Through decades of social engineering marketed as 'science' we have been groomed for our own personal journey into a sanitised, solitary, 'space' branded to meet our 'needs'.

In this cowardly new world, the pursuit of enlightenment, expressed honestly in the spheres of philosophy, poetry and theology, will find no home. Postmodern man will have no more need for art, literature or faith than he does for science or politics. A recidivist, indulgent materialism will placate our 'needs' providing 'answers' not only to the frustrations of life but to the problem of death itself.

## Reading

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