

Opposing Liberal Intolerance Nina Power

One of today's worst crimes is associating with the wrong kind of person. *Gawker*, returned zombie-like from the dead, recently tried to ensure we all know who is untouchable by claiming (incorrectly) that writer Thomas Chatterton Williams attended the premiere of a new film about Alex Jones directed by Alex Lee Moyer, who is already on the naughty-step for daring to make a sympathetic film about those awful creatures, incels (2020's *TFW No GF*). As *Compact* contributor Freddie DeBoer noted, it was okay to lie about Williams, because, well, he is already an enemy.

It was another example of how liberals vindicate the account of politics offered by Carl Schmitt, no matter how loudly they might disavow his theories. Schmitt famously argued that politics depends upon a distinction between friend and enemy. Liberalism nevertheless operates in a permanent state of denial about this distinction,

progress. And yet it assiduously polices the political boundary, labeling as an enemy any friend who crosses the line.

Liberals know that their friendships, status, and employment depend on remaining “on the right side of history.” Having the correct opinions is therefore paramount, and everyone is on edge in case they slip up and say something that was true a few weeks ago but is now verboten. Yet, as the Greeks already realized a long time ago, if you only have *doxa* without truth, then you are left merely with a bunch of bad ideas and a power struggle between sociopaths.

Here, too, liberals vindicate Schmitt, who noted that our politics is rife with secularized theological concepts. Our ostensibly secular politics demands absolute conformity to its mantras, to its “Catechism of Contradictions,” as John McWhorter has it. In his recent book *Woke Racism*, McWhorter lays out a few of these: “You must strive eternally to understand the experiences of black people/You can

a racist,” and “Show interest in multiculturalism/Do not culturally appropriate. What is not your culture is not for you, and you may not try it or do it.” There are of course many more—our institutions daily deal in contradiction and thought-terminating cliché, and if you make a joke about them or oppose them, you might find yourself in the non-contradiction of being literally, materially unemployed.

Christianity and other religions have a way of addressing the normal misunderstandings and minor transgressions of social life. They teach that everyone is flawed and makes mistakes, but that we can atone and forgive. Today’s secular moralism is different. The archivists of outrage never forget, or forgive. Ostensibly tolerant liberals turn out to have zero tolerance for viewpoint diversity. Private citizens take it upon themselves to operate as an acephalic Stasi for the state, rooting out women (in particular) who think such horrible things such as “Sex is real and matters,” or “Women should

biological males,” or “Children should be left alone to become who they are without medical intervention.”

Opposing liberal intolerance requires not only defending the truth, but getting over the fear of being denounced for consorting with the wrong sort of people (Trump supporters, conservative Christians, radical feminists, Covid skeptics, take your pick). As Kathleen Stock, author of *Material Girls*, put it recently, “when you wield guilt-by-association as a weapon, or feel this kind of guilt yourself, the charge is that there has been association with Bad People, and that an infection has occurred as a result. And it might be contagious.”

Against the false purity of the “good”—those people marked by total conformity with regime ideology and inhumane treatment of others—we should embrace those who have already been expelled from the Kingdom of Woke and those with whom we share first principles,

Liberals are only pretending to be nice: When they search out the witches' mark or declare that you have spoken to the wrong person, or entertained the wrong idea, or watched the wrong documentary when you weren't even in the same city, we should respond, if at all, with: "And?" Against liberal Manichaeism, we should make friends, and stay loyal to those who see the fundamentals in the same way as we do, whatever else we might disagree about. We need something to talk about on the battlefield, after all.



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