

What Is Wokism?

Blithering Genius

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1 Introduction

“Wokism” or “wokeness” is often used as a label for leftist identity politics. “Becoming woke” is analogous to “taking the red pill” or “seeing through the matrix”. It implies that we exist within an oppressive system, which is hidden from most people. The “unwoke” do not see the oppression, because they have internalized it. The “woke” have become aware of the oppressive system, and are now fighting against it by awakening others.

This narrative pattern is common among ideologies. An ideology claims that the status quo is oppressive, and that the oppression is hidden behind a grand deception. The ideology exposes the deception and reveals the hidden truth. If enough people become “woke”, then the system will collapse, and a utopia will emerge.

There are different flavors of wokism, but all situate evil in whites, men, Western civilization, or some combination of those three.

The term “woke” and its derivatives “wokism” and “wokeness” are often used ironically and pejoratively. The implication is that modern leftists are delusional and dishonest, not possessing greater awareness. Other terms, such as “stunning and brave”, are used to mock virtue signaling.

I define “wokism” as a type of left-wing ideology that has the following properties:

- It claims that certain identity groups are oppressed.
- It views oppression as *systemic*.
- It mostly consists of virtue signaling.
- It rejects rational discourse and debate.
- It tries to control language and speech.
- It is often allied with government and corporate power.
- It denies biology.
- It inverts natural values.

2 Identity Politics

Wokism views certain identity groups as oppressed, such as women, blacks, Muslims, immigrants, indigenous people, homosexuals, transsexuals, the disabled, etc. Wokism identifies the oppressors as whites, men, Christians, heterosexuals, able-bodied people, etc. Wokism claims that society is dominated by the oppressor group, which uses its power to oppress the victim group.

Wokism is intrinsically divisive. It does not focus on how to create a better society for individuals, or on the relationship between the individual and society — the social contract. Instead, it focuses on the distribution of power and status between identity groups within society. It views society as a zero-sum game, with identity groups, rather than individuals, as the players.

Wokism makes a moral distinction between identity groups. The oppressed are virtuous (victimhood = virtue), and those who take their side (“allies”) are also virtuous. The oppressors are evil, and those who take their side are evil. So, wokism views society as containing a struggle between good and evil.

Wokism contrasts with the liberal view of politics. The liberal is primarily concerned with the relation between the individual and society. He views politics as a contest between ideas, through which we discover the best way to govern ourselves. By contrast, the wokist views politics as a conflict between groups, and thus as a zero-sum game, in which the goal is to transfer power and status from one group to another.

3 Systemic Oppression

Terms such as “systemic racism” and “systemic sexism” are used by wokists to denote the holistic, distributed nature of oppression. It does not exist in specific institutions, such as the government or big corporations. In fact, those institutions can be allies in the fight against systemic oppression. The cause of oppression is in the culture, and thus in people’s minds. Wokism demands a *cultural*

revolution, not just a political revolution. Wokists believe that we must root oppression out of the minds of people. Not coincidentally, this requires propagating woke ideology.

The belief in systemic oppression is impossible to argue against, because any counter-argument is treated as part of the problem. The wokist has a moral duty to shout down any opposing view, because it is the means of oppression. Belief in systemic oppression is necessary to fight systemic oppression. Lack of belief in systemic oppression is a form of systemic oppression. This self-referential circularity protects the belief from criticism.

4 Virtue Signaling

In practice, wokism consists almost entirely of virtue signaling. It is just screeching about systemic oppression and how it must be eliminated. Wokists do not propose any pragmatic reforms of the social order. Unlike communism, which proposes an economic system and makes (bad) arguments for it, wokism has no clear proposals or arguments. The problem is in everyone's heads, and it is conveniently impossible to measure. The solution is to demand that everyone believe in wokism, and this will solve the problem.

Wokists are not realistic or pragmatic. They don't care about the consequences of their political beliefs. A good example is how the "Black Lives Matter" movement caused a huge increase in the murder rate, which was highest among the black population. Thousands of black people died because of the BLM movement. (See Black Lives Matter's Bloody Toll on Black People.) Yet, there was no apparent concern for that consequence among wokists. They ignored it, or denied that their movement caused those deaths.

It is not a coincidence that wokism motivates virtue signaling. Wokism is a parasitic meme that spreads by virtue signaling. The wokist claims moral and intellectual status merely for being woke. She has seen through the grand deception, and she is bravely fighting against it! This behavior is presented as altruism, but it is a selfish competition for social status. The meme is also selfish: it has been selected to propagate itself, not to make society better.

The struggle for social justice can never end, because the desire to compete for social status never ends. So, wokism has an insatiable demand for signaling material.

This demand leads to the media manufacturing social issues for wokists to signal about. When the fight for gay marriage was won, suddenly "trans rights" became a huge social issue. The death of one black man in police custody became a massive moral panic. The media in Canada manufactured the social issue of "MMIW" (missing and murdered indigenous women), portraying it as a problem of racism and sexism, while ignoring the actual statistics about indigenous people and homicide. (See MMIW: A Canadian Genocide?.) The demand for signaling material also leads to hoaxes, such as the Jussie Smollett affair, which are then amplified by mass media and social media.

Virtue signaling is the secret to wokism's success. Wokism offers people a cheap claim to virtue. They don't have to do much: just signal their woke beliefs and feelings.

5 Anti-Rationalism

Wokism rejects rationality as a white, male, Western construct, which is used to maintain systems of power. Of course, this conveniently protects wokists from losing rational debates, and exempts them from making rational arguments for their beliefs. Instead, they appeal to faith and emotion.

Wokism depends on emotionally-charged rhetoric, and shouting down or silencing opposition. They presuppose their ideology. They seldom explicitly state it, and they refuse to debate it. They will only “debate” within the frame defined by their ideological assumptions. They refuse to consider evidence and arguments that do not support their political positions.

Wokists try to constrain science within an ideological frame. For example, they insist that genetic explanations of race and sex differences be rejected a priori, because they are supposedly evil and oppressive. This “blank slate” assumption has been incorporated into entire fields of research, such as anthropology and sociology. Currently, wokists insist that science tells us that sex is not binary. However, this is ideology, not science. Wokists have decided that belief in binary sex is somehow oppressive, and so they have decreed it to be unscientific.

Some wokists consider rationality and science to be a “Western male way of knowing”, which should not be privileged above other ways of knowing. This fits their general pattern of viewing any norm or value as oppressive, other than their own sacred values of diversity, equity and inclusion. Rationality is a standard that can be used to judge people as rational or irrational, and beliefs as right or wrong. By its nature, it is not equitable, diverse and inclusive. It elevates some people and ideas above others. Some cultures have produced more scientific knowledge than others. So, rationality is part of the oppressive system that must be overthrown.

6 Control of Speech and Language

Wokists label all opposing views as “hate speech”, and demand that they be censored. This is a way to avoid rational debate. They insist that all public discourse be framed by their ideological assumptions. They reject discourse outside that frame as oppressive. They will screech that it leads to violence and must be suppressed.

Wokists also try to control language itself. This often takes the form of insisting that certain terms be used. Some examples:

- “special” instead of “mentally retarded”
- “black” instead of “negro”, then “African-American” and more recently “Black”
- “Ms” instead of “Mrs” and “Miss”
- “undocumented immigrant” instead of “illegal immigrant”
- self-defined pronouns instead of normal pronouns
- “people of color”, “BIPOC”
- “birthing person” instead of “mother”

Wokists label their opponents with derogatory terms that have ideological assumptions baked into them. For example, someone who doesn’t believe that a trans-woman is a real woman is labeled

“transphobic”, as if that belief is due to an irrational phobia. This is a way to dismiss opposing views without argument.

Wokists insist on redefining words to fit their ideology. For example, they have redefined “racism” so that one cannot be racist against white people, because white people supposedly have systemic power and privilege. The ideological assumption of systemic oppression is now baked into the word. Wokists use the word “hate” to describe opposition to their beliefs, not a human emotion.

There are many other examples. Controlling language is a way to control thought and discourse, by imposing ideological assumptions at a deep level.

7 Wokism and Institutional Power

Instead of fighting against institutional power, wokists infiltrate institutions and use them to promote wokism. This is not a conscious conspiracy, but more of an emergent symbiosis.

Since wokists situate the big problem in culture, not the social order per se, they do not directly attack the social order. They will demand wealth redistribution, mass immigration and de-policing, all of which undermine society. However, they do not directly attack most social institutions, or even big corporations. Instead, they demand that the government and corporations promote their ideology.

In recent years, the government and big corporations have fallen in line. This is partly due to social contagion, and partly due to convergent interests. Institutions often use virtue signaling to justify their existence and power. Wokists tend to fit well into bureaucracies, and so they are employed in positions of influence within institutions. Institutions are also happy to blame social problems, real or imaginary, on culture and society in general, rather than on themselves.

Governments and corporations are prohibited by law or taboo from using traditional religious symbols. That would not be inclusive. But there is no law or taboo against a government or corporation using the rainbow flag or “Black Lives Matter” to signal its virtue. Traditional religion has largely been replaced in public life by humanism and wokism.

8 Denial of Biology

Many of the things that wokists view as systemic oppression are actually due to biology. Wokists must deny the biological reality of sex and race to defend their belief in systemic sexism, racism, transphobia, etc.

The most blatant denial of biology is the belief that people can be “assigned” the wrong gender at birth, and have their true gender “affirmed” by medical treatments. The mantra “trans-women are real women” is not only an absurd denial of biology; it is also a semantic paradox. (See The Trans Paradox.)

Wokists deny the biological basis of sex roles. There are natural differences between men and women in preferences and abilities. Wokists claim that differences in outcomes between men and women are due to systemic oppression, which is a manifestation of culture/society, not biology.

Wokists also deny the reality of race. They reject the possibility that race differences in social outcomes, such as crime and poverty, are due to genetic differences. That idea is considered “hate

speech”. The differences must be due to systemic oppression, and any suggestion otherwise is systemic oppression. Wokists often deny the reality of race, even though the concept of racism presupposes the existence of biologically identifiable races.

The denial of biological reality often generates contradictions or paradoxes within the wokist worldview. For example, if trans-women are real women, then “woman” is a meaningless term, and so is “trans-woman”. If race is an arbitrary social construct, then so is racism. If sex is an arbitrary social construct, then so is sexism. How could one sex be oppressed by the other if the two sexes are equal in abilities and preferences? How could one sex be oppressed by the other if sex is just a social construct?

9 Inversion of Natural Values

Wokism rejects most natural values and norms as oppressive social constructs.

For example, wokism rejects beauty standards, especially for women, because beauty standards produce unequal outcomes. Some women are more attractive than others. Rather than accepting the natural norm of attractiveness, wokists demand that we overturn it by celebrating diverse bodies, such as putting fat women on the cover of beauty magazines.

Heterosexuality is a natural norm, because it is biologically functional. Homosexuality is a biological disorder. Wokists reject the idea that homosexuality is a disorder, or even abnormal. Instead, they demand that we treat homosexuality and heterosexuality equally, with gay marriage, gays in the military, etc.

In-group preference is a natural norm. People naturally prefer members of their own society, ethnic group or race to others. Some level of in-group preference is necessary for society. A country needs to make a distinction between its own citizens and foreigners. Wokists reject in-group preference when it is expressed by whites or Christians. They label it “xenophobia”, “racism” or simply “hate”. They insist on open borders for white countries, and immigration without limit.

Family is a natural norm. Human beings have always formed pair-bonds and had children. Wokists denigrate the family, and celebrate “non-traditional” family structures, such as same-sex parents, polyamory, single parenthood, etc.

Success is a natural norm, but wokists portray success as oppression and failure as victimhood. The success of European civilization in recent history is portrayed as an evil imposition on the rest of the world, despite the fact that European civilization lifted all of humanity out of the Malthusian trap.

Wokists profess the values of diversity, equity and inclusion, but they apply those values hypocritically. “Diversity” means fewer men or fewer white people. Only white countries need diversity. Hockey, which is majority white, needs more diversity, but not basketball, which is majority black. It is a social problem that men outnumber women in STEM degrees, but not that women outnumber men in college degrees overall. “Equity” means transferring wealth and status from whites to other races, from men to women, etc. The wealth gap between whites and blacks is a social problem, but not the wealth gap between Asians and whites. Wokists screech about the percentage of blacks in prison, but not about the percentage of violent crime committed by blacks. “Inclusion” means the exclusion of whites and men, or the conquest of European societies by immigration.

Diversity, equity and inclusion are not the true values of wokism. They are rhetorical weapons used selectively against whites, men and European civilization.

The actual core value of wokism is liberation from oppression. They identify a victim class and an oppressor class, and then they signal their virtue by demanding that the victim class be liberated from oppression.

10 Conclusion

Wokism is implicitly efilist and eulavist. It rejects life and natural values. Wokists are not aware of their efilism and eulavism. They blame society for everything. But they also worship society, as if it were an omnipotent deity. They align themselves with the power of social institutions, not with nature. They reject the natural purpose of life and natural ways of life. At a personal level, most wokists are urban residents who have little contact with the natural world and choose not to reproduce.

Wokists sacralize nature and human nature, but they reject the reality of nature and human nature. The inequities that they blame on society are almost entirely natural, not social. The sexual norms that they reject — sex roles, the family, beauty, heterosexuality — are all rooted in biology. The race differences that they blame on systemic racism are due to genes. Rather than viewing transsexuality as a mental disorder, they insist that transsexuals are oppressed by the gender binary in other people's heads.

In the 1980s, an early version of wokism demanded that society adapt itself to every type of disability: blindness, deafness, paraplegia, mental retardation, even insanity. People with disabilities must be included in society, not discriminated against. But having stairs is not discrimination. The vast majority of people can walk up and down stairs. Society must be based on the needs and abilities of the majority. Minorities must adapt to society, not vice versa. A wealthy society can make reasonable accommodations for minorities, but it can't erase the inequities of life.

There is a natural unfairness to life. Some people are born with disabilities, and they will have problems that ordinary people don't have. Those are individual problems with natural causes. Wokism views the natural inequities of life as social problems, and demands that society solve them.

Life is based on unequal outcomes. Life has winners and losers. Life is competitive.

Value implies a hierarchy. Value implies winners and losers. Value defines a competition.

At a deep level, wokism is against life and value.

Wokism is a memetic tragedy of the commons. Culture is a commons: a shared resource. People can pollute the culture by propagating socially harmful memes, for their own personal benefit. Unfortunately, our culture is susceptible to this type of memetic pollution.