

Moralitis

A Cultural Virus



Robert Oulds (Bruges Group)
& Niall McCrae (King's College London)

Published in June 2018 by

The Bruges Group, 246 Linen Hall, 162-168 Regent Street, London W1B 5TB

www.brugesgroup.com

Follow us on twitter  @brugesgroup LinkedIn  @brugesgroup

Facebook  The Bruges Group Instagram  brugesgroup

Bruges Group publications are not intended to represent a corporate view of European and international developments. Contributions are chosen on the basis of their intellectual rigour and their ability to open up new avenues for debate.

About the Authors

Robert Oulds, MA, FRSA, is the Director of the Bruges Group. His Masters Degree is in Communications Management. Amongst other works, Robert is the author of *Montgomery and the First War on Terror*, and *Everything you wanted to know about the EU But were afraid to ask*, both published by Bretwalda Books. He is the co-author of *Federalist Thought Control: The Brussels Propaganda Machine*. And served as Cabinet Member for Education in a London Borough and as a Treasurer and Standard Bearer for the Royal British Legion. Robert Oulds regularly appears on television and radio debating topical issues.

Niall McCrae PhD, MSc, RMN is a senior lecturer in mental health at King's College London. Author of two books: *The Moon and Madness* (Imprint Academic, 2011), and *Echoes from the Corridors: the Story of Nursing in British Mental Hospitals* (Routledge, 2016). He is a regular writer for *Salisbury Review*, and various websites including *Politicalite*, *Rebel Priest*, *Conservative Woman* and *the Bruges Group*.

Contents

Introduction.....	5
Part One	
Background.....	6
Psychology of politics.....	6
Identity politics.....	8
From material to moral currency.....	10
Virtue-signalling.....	11
Immigration: from one extreme to the other.....	13
Part Two	
The cultural virus.....	17
The EU and Brexit: a case study of moralitis.....	21
Prevention and treatment.....	22
List of Illustrations	
<i>Diagram 1: Horseshoe</i>	7
<i>Diagram 2: Virtue-signalling cycle</i>	21

Introduction

The body politic has become infected. Like the growth of bacteria in a Petri dish, the subversive tenets of cultural Marxism have spread as a pinking of the public discourse.

The social class struggle of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has morphed into a postmodern pursuit of identity politics, supported by moral relativism and ‘political correctness’. The division in society is no longer the Left versus Right of previous decades, but a progressive moralism versus the traditionalism of the ordinary people (by which we would include both the workers of ‘old Labour’ and the Tory-voting ‘middle England’). How has such idealism taken hold, and made such dramatic impact on society?

In this monograph we present our thesis of a cultural virus. This manifests in a morality that subverts conventional social norms and quashes dissent. In this delusional condition, people may seem to be acting with autonomy, but the forces of conformity are such that their freedom is limited, and their utterances merely regurgitate group-think. People do not necessarily feel constrained, because the viral symptoms are an expression of progressive ideals. Whereas symptoms of influenza impair physical fitness, the cultural virus enhances social fitness. It is a pervasive and enduring outbreak of moral hubris.

The European Union has been involved as both cause and effect of this virus. It has encouraged the demise of traditional social bonds and a sense of nationhood. Identity groups defined by gender, sexual orientation and ethnicity have been placed at the heart of its policy-making. In return, bodies representing special interest groups are expected to promote the European ideal among their network of citizens in member states and across Europe. Thus pro-EU integration propaganda reaches potentially millions of citizens, sidestepping existing national polity.¹ Love for the EU is expressed at anti-Brexit rallies.

Postmodern progressive ideas are actively spread by institutions such as the EU and the supportive mainstream media, but people do not simply follow instructions on what to think or say. Memes have a naturalistic trajectory, sometimes propagating rapidly through the medium of the internet; in other words, ‘going viral’. We believe that the prevailing values of society, as conveyed by the political and cultural establishment and by the younger generations, have reached the level of moral hegemony. The process by which this has occurred is analogous to a virus. It is an epidemic disease so powerful that it has a cytopathic effect on society, changing the cognition and behaviour of its hosts. While older people have developed resistance, younger people are more susceptible to the virus due to their lack of immunity. Their idealism arises from a lack of ‘real world’ experience.

In this monologue, we begin by considering psychological and sociological perspectives on social and political attitudes. In the second half we present our putative cultural virus of ‘moralitis’. The causes, symptoms and prognosis are described, followed by methods of prevention and treatment.

Notes on the text

We use Left and Right as proper nouns, hence with capitals. However, in adjective form (e.g. left-leaning, right-wing), lower case is used.

1 Farage N (2002): *Democracy in Crisis: The White Paper on European Governance*. Bruges Group.

Part One: Background

Stable democracies such as Britain have a fairly even distribution of moderate Left and Right political allegiances, with elections often decided by a few 'swing voters'. By definition, extremists do not appeal to the majority, and therefore rarely prosper at the ballot box. While younger people are more inclined to vote for socialist or egalitarian parties, older people are drawn to the conservative side of the spectrum. This is attributed to the optimistic idealism of youth and the pessimistic realism of the old. Broadly, the Left favours economic control but is socially liberal, while the Right is economically liberal and socially conservative, as differentiated by Nick Watt, chief political correspondent for the *Guardian*: -

“At its most basic level I would use leftwing to describe a party that believes the state can play a benign, though not necessarily a dominant, role in the governance of society. I would use rightwing to describe a party that is wary of state intervention and believes in lower taxes as a way of stimulating economic growth and giving people greater freedom.”²

Psychology of politics

The conventional dichotomy is problematic, partly because it is used to project good or bad attributes. Authoritarianism, the inclination to control other people, is often positioned on the Right and liberalism on the Left, but this is an erroneous idea influenced by political bias in academe. Controlling tendencies are not exclusive to either side. Indeed, whereas the leftist student activism of the 1960s onwards was libertarian, campaigns for freedom of speech increasingly involve people labelled as right-wing.

Authoritarianism is considered by psychologists as a personality characteristic, thus at a deeper level than political thinking. Like other traits it varies from high to low in the human population. A pioneer of the psychology of politics was Hans Eysenck at the Institute of Psychiatry at The Maudsley Hospital. Forged by his childhood experience in Nazi Germany and his observations on communists in Britain, Eysenck's seminal insight was that people with highly authoritarian personalities are attracted to dictatorial politics regardless of whether these are Left or Right. Thus fascists readily switch to communism (or *vice versa*) should one regime replace another.³

For the political establishment, the far-Right tends to be regarded as more dangerous than the far-Left. For example, the current government led by Theresa May has referred to right-wing extremism as a similar threat to that of Islamist terror. The hard Left is not considered to be so harmful, despite the violence of groups such as Antifa. Adam Perkins, personality researcher at King's College London, argues that government efforts to suppress extremism will fail if the political ideology is targeted, because those with authoritarian personality traits will shift to another political outlet. Instead, Perkins argued, democracy should be promoted, as this starves

2 *Guardian* (9 March 2015): Political labels are useful - but only in moderation. Quoted in article by Chis Elliot.

3 Eysenck HJ (1954): *The Psychology of Politics*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

extremists of power.⁴ However, extreme parties have sometimes won elections in national crisis, and moved swiftly to consolidate their position by suppressing democratic process.

Eysenck's theory of authoritarian personality traits has been reinforced by research.^{5 6} The confluence of Left and Right at the political extremes was depicted by French political scientist Jean-Pierre Faye as a horseshoe⁷. We present the horseshoe below, contrasting liberal and authoritarian attitudes appended by various political positions.

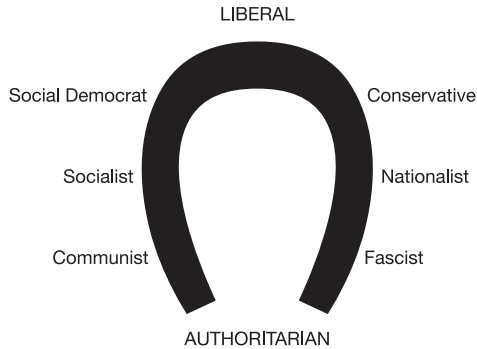


Diagram 1: Horseshoe

Some on the Left are offended by the horseshoe, arguing that the Left is benevolent while the Right is discriminatory. However, in the words of George Orwell socialists have a 'hypertrophied sense of order', and it is the lust for control that most obviously links the extremes of Left and Right. They both like laws, and lots of them. The horseshoe makes sense of regimes that seem to have elements of Left and Right: for example, Nazi Germany is regarded as purely fascist but its original intent was national socialism; China remains communist but is increasingly tuned to Han nationalism. A corollary of the liberal / authoritarian dimension is individualism / collectivism. Both Left and Right become more collectivist towards their extremes. Applying this phenomenon to the philosophy of ethics, deontological interests are overridden by 'means-to-an-end' utilitarianism. Free-thinkers are not welcome on the road to political purity.

4 Perkins A (30 November 2015): Authoritarianism is a matter of personality, not politics. *Quillette*. <https://quillette.com/2015/11/30/authoritarianism-is-a-matter-of-personality-not-politics/>

5 De Regt S, Mortelsman D, Smits T (2011): Left-wing authoritarianism is not a myth, but a worrisome reality: evidence from 13 Eastern European countries. *Communist & Post-Communist Countries*, 44: 299-308.

6 Ludeke SG, Krueger RF (2013): Authoritarianism as a personality trait: evidence from a longitudinal behaviour genetic study. *Personality & Individual Differences*, 55: 480-484.

7 Faye JP (1996): *Le Siècle des Idéologies*. Paris: Arman Colin

Psychologist Jonathan Haidt ⁸ compared six moral concerns in persons of Left and Right political bent: -

1. Care versus harm	4. Loyalty versus betrayal
2. Liberty versus oppression	5. Authority versus subversion
3. Fairness versus cheating	6. Sanctity versus degradation

The left-leaning respondents regarded the first three concerns as highly important, but had little interest in the other three. Primarily concerned with equality and diversity, they were wary of patriotism and religion. Right-wing respondents valued all concerns equally. Understanding of fairness differed between the two groups: those on the Right measured this by opportunity, the left-wing respondents by outcome. Haidt conducted a further survey, asking respondents of Left and Right to rate the moral concerns as if they were on the opposite side. While the right-wing group predicted rival responses accurately, the left-wing respondents believed that the Right is not interested in care, liberty or fairness.

Meanings of Left and Right are shaped by whichever side attains cultural legitimacy. The younger graduate generations, influenced by the left-wing tendencies of the educational system (from primary school to university) and popular culture, are reinforcing an already liberal-left establishment and tuning it to their obsession with identity politics. The Right is often fantasised in extreme form by both the liberal mainstream and Left, being associating with callous capitalism and jingoistic xenophobia. It has been successfully vilified in societal discourse, and anyone expressing moderately conservative opinions risks being ostracised. While the crimes of Stalin are overlooked, any right-wing opinion is perceived as a staging-post to Nazi Germany. The Left is virtue; the Right is vice.

Identity politics

We argue that the present schism in society is not really Left versus Right, but a social class conflict between a ‘progressive’ middle-class and the lower orders. The outlook of the former, particularly the younger generation, is a kaleidoscope of identity politics. This concept originated in the critical theory of the Frankfurt School of sociologists,⁹ and was developed by Left Bank postmodern philosophers,¹⁰ gaining wide appeal from the 1960s onwards. People of a particular race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation have organised politically to pursue their group’s interests, often with political and academic allies. Undoubtedly this has changed society, and most people would see positive achievements from feminism, the civil rights movement in the USA and the gay liberation movement. However, identity groups tend to pursue their cause

8 Haidt J (2012): *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion*. Penguin.

9 Scruton R (2015): *Fools, Frauds and Firebrands: Thinkers of the New Left*. London: Bloomsbury.

10 Sarup M (1993): *An Introductory Guide to Post-Structuralism and Postmodernism*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

beyond equal rights, and the current demands of the transgender lobby are causing widespread concern.¹¹

The ethical stance of identity politics is moral relativism: what is acceptable for one group may be unacceptable for another. People are defined by cultural or sexual status and are represented collectively as members of that group regardless of whether they agree with such identification or the views expressed on their behalf. Biological essentialism has been replaced by social constructionism, but identity constructs are applied in an essentialist way.

Demarcation by an attribute such as gender (a social construct unlike the biological reality of sex) or ethnicity (a cultural or blunt racial category) is used to establish the group's value in terms of virtue, vulnerability and victimhood. A group that ticks these boxes is afforded protected status (including immunity from criticism), and anyone who obstructs the demands of this group is perceived as morally suspect. Thus society is structured on the basis of group value, with a simplistic dichotomising of oppressors and oppressed. Men are considered to be the former, generalised as the patriarchy. White people are exclusively guilty of racism. Heterosexual norms are a tyranny against the 'LGBTQ+ community'. Least favoured by the standards of identity politics is the white heterosexual male (a charge to which both authors plead guilty).

Electorally, there is great potential in appealing to a 'rainbow alliance' of identity groups. This approach was illustrated by the feminist pamphlet *Beyond the Fragments*,¹² which arose from the authors' frustration with macho left-wing politics, seeking to empower marginalised and oppressed groups without dismissing their experiences as secondary to class struggle. However, the demarcation of society by gender, ethnicity and other criteria has been criticised as divisive. Former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams argued that identity politics and demands for minority rights are causing fragmentation of society; instead we should focus on the common good.¹³ Celebration of other cultures is promoted to the neglect of the indigenous British, partly due to a guilt complex in white middle-class liberals, who demonise our traditions and history as imperialist and racist. As argued by Trevor Phillips, previously head of the Equalities Commission, a cohesive society cannot be built on closed communities.¹⁴

The identity politics movement has taken inspiration from the marketing industry, which learned that products are best sold through targeted messages. Segments of society are created, with ideal attributes; people in that segment are encouraged directly or subliminally to be the person portrayed by advertisements (e.g. the perfect mum). Such divisions may be artificial, but by constant reinforcement the marketing man's myth becomes real. Politicians jumped on this bandwagon, and by the 1990s election campaigns conceptualised target groups (e.g. 'Mondeo man'). People are fixed into discrete communities and encouraged to preserve their difference, because this is rewarded in relation to other groups. Like commercial marketing, political targeting of identity groups encourages a sense of need. However, such need differs from the

11 McCrae N (31 January 2017): Transgender zealots are riding for a fall. *Conservative Woman*. www.conservativewoman.co.uk/niall-mccrae-transgender-zealots-riding-fall/

12 Rowbotham S, Segal L, Wainwright H (1979): *Beyond the Fragments*.

13 *Daily Telegraph* (27 March 2012): Rowan Williams: fixation with gay rights, race and feminism threatens society.

14 *Guardian* (16 March 2015): Trevor Phillips says the unsayable about race and multiculturalism. Article by Michael White.

aspiration promoted by advertisers; the message is that the targeted group is disadvantaged. Whereas product marketing creates a need for that product, political marketing creates a dependence on the political party.

The structure of a heterogeneous society divided into homogenous groups, sharing the same territory but following different norms, is desirable for cultural Marxists. It undermines traditional values and national identity, leading to a potential 'Year Zero' on which to build a radically new society. Balkanisation justifies the existence of an ultimate authority to rise above internecine conflict, maintaining minority rights against the tyranny of democracy. Alleged victim groups and their allies compete for prioritisation by the public policy process. Claim your rights, or check your privilege.

From material to moral currency

In his book *Affluenza*, psychologist Oliver James¹⁵ railed against consumerism and how people are driven to compete by displaying their wealth with luxury goods and services. However, in liberal capitalist economies with a moderately redistributive taxation system, cars, holidays and other symbols of wealth are no longer the preserve of the rich. As the affluent middle class can no longer distinguish itself materially, it has turned to moral value to mark its superiority over the uncultured lower strata. We argue that 'affluenza' now manifests in moral competitiveness, with tension between the social classes. Events for International Women's Day are often dominated by middle-class interests, ignoring the real disadvantage of cleaners and catering staff.

Whereas in the past our morality was guided by religious scruples, the modern moral landscape is secularist. Indeed, as faith declines in Western culture (though not in the growing Islamic populace), the state is replacing not only God but also the family. Consider the ideological fervour by which the NHS is defended, and also the enthusiasm in the liberal-left middle-class for a universal salary, whereby every adult would receive a standard guaranteed income from the state (putatively, a monetary realisation of virtue). Indeed, the religiosity of a state is inversely proportional to the strength of its welfare system.¹⁶ There is no better attack on conservatism or the 'Protestant work ethic' than the elevation of the state to an all-encompassing provider. Family breakdown is rife, while the dyad of 'stay-at-home mother' and breadwinner husband is disparaged. Mothers are encouraged to work and given public money to leave their children from the youngest age to nurseries, where their moral education can begin.

In the prevailing culture, a person's moral standing is determined by the values of the liberal-left establishment. In the past, the Left gained most of its support from the working-class masses, led by trade unionists. Many influential figures in the arts and in academe were attracted to the labour movement, and by the 1960s the political balance in universities had swung to the Left. Today, the Labour Party is less popular in traditional working-class provincial areas, drawing support from the expanding minority ethnic communities and from the 'intelligentsia'. The affluent middle class, previously tending to vote Conservative, is increasingly a Labour

15 James O (2007): *Affluenza*. Vermilion.

16 Gruneau Bruin J, Hill PC, Laurin K, Mikulincer M, Granqvist P (2017): Religion vs the welfare state – the importance of cultural context for religious schematicity and priming. *Psychology of Religion & Spirituality*.

constituency. This remarkable transformation was illustrated in the 2017 General Election, when Canterbury was won by Labour for the first time in history, mostly due to middle-class voters in the posh areas.¹⁷

This shift in political demography became apparent after the collapse of communism abroad and the decline of both state socialism and heavy industry at home. The economic (moderated Marxist) *raison d'être* of the Left was gone. The traditional labour movement seemed anachronistic, and middle-class Labour politicians (characterised by Tony Blair's 'New Labour') eschewed class conflict. A new creed was needed. Yet it was not just the state that had failed. The very working class that Labour had sought to help had failed their would be liberators: they appeared stubborn to accept a changing, globalised world of new socially-progressive opportunities: multiculturalism and the EU, for example. Indeed, the changing pattern of Labour support was dramatically revealed by the EU referendum, with the traditional working-class base voting Leave, in stark contrast with the overwhelming Remain vote in metropolitan areas.

This social divide was conceptualised in David Goodhart's *The Road to Somewhere*.¹⁸ 'Anywheres' (roughly a quarter of population) dominate our culture and much of political establishment, as well as universities, public sector and most professions. They are more affluent, living in metropolitan, multicultural areas. They consider themselves to be sophisticated, which one dictionary defines as 'deprived of native or original simplicity'¹⁹

'Somewheres' are more numerous (half of the population) and are more rooted in provincial or cultural identity (which may include communities of black or Asian ethnicity, who normally vote for Labour but are not necessarily Europhile). They may not be rich financially, but have strong community bonds, enjoying the simpler things in life such as the local pub. The crucial point, from our perspective, is that the 'Anywheres' have assumed moral supremacy.

Virtue-signalling

As children go through schooling they are continually exposed to the liberal-left perspectives that dominate the middle-class culture of the teaching profession. Child-centred learning theory nurtures feelings as well as facts, but although this suggests naturalistic personal development, the state's official ideology is promulgated throughout. The proportion of school-leavers going to university is nearing the 50% target of Tony Blair's government²⁰, and the aim of this policy was not only to increase academic qualifications, but to mould the social attitudes of the younger generation. Campus culture is a powerful medium for postmodern ideology, and many university courses such as gender or media studies blatantly proselytise. Those who can navigate the complexity of group identities and sensitivities are most likely to prosper, but mastery of the courtly rituals of political correctness requires a high level of intellect and emotional intelligence. In a complex web of identity politics, the simplest message is that some groups are good and others bad.

17 Claridge A (2018): A middle class betrayal. *Salisbury Review*, summer: 18-19.

18 Goodhart D (2017): *The Road to Somewhere: the Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics*. London: C Hurst & Co.

19 Merriam-Webster Dictionary. www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sophisticated

20 *Daily Telegraph* (9 April 2008): Labour sticks to 50 per cent university target.

Aligning with groups of approved vulnerable status is a necessity in polite society, with social and occupational / professional rewards for those who espouse the correct values. Moral rectitude is displayed in a public performance known as virtue-signalling. Mostly this is done so routinely and ritualistically that the person who is speaking or posting an online message is not thinking in a principled way. It is mere compliance. A minority of people, however, seek and exploit opportunities to display their values, sometimes expressing these in a quasi-religious piety. Repetition of mantras promotes the virtuous nature of those with fashionable or supposedly enlightened views. Self-aggrandisement is perpetually on show in mainstream media, where journalism has become dominated by comment. News reports serve the sanctimony of the medium more than informational needs of the reader (as illustrated by persistently damning coverage of Donald Trump).

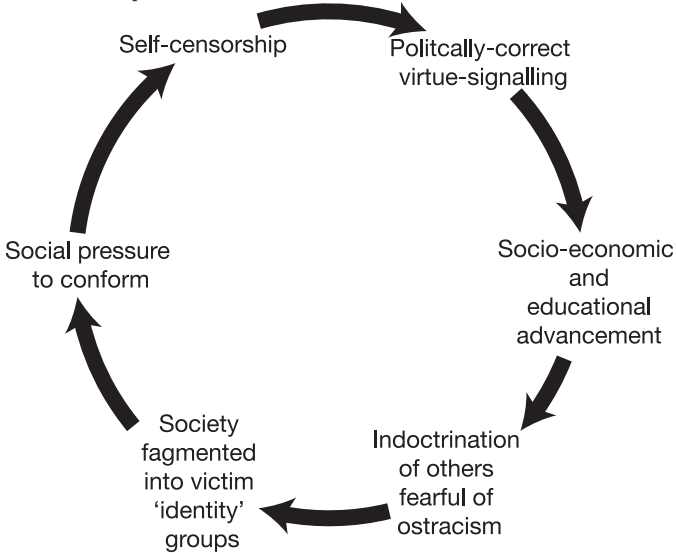


Diagram 2: Virtue-signalling cycle

A moral system needs deviants to be shamed *pour encourager les autres*. A casual joke or careless remark on social media can readily lead to a person being ostracised. In the Soviet Union a worker’s advancement was not on merit, but depended on their approval as a good communist. It was an economy based on nomenclature. On social media a similar, albeit informal, system prevails. Such control is increasingly formalised: in China, a ‘social credit’ scheme is being introduced, whereby each person is scored by an algorithm that measures the desirability of his or her social media interaction.²¹ In East Germany people had two personas: the public reflection of the party line, and the private being.

21 *Independent* (10 April 2018): China ranks citizens with a social credit system – here’s what you can do wrong and how you can be punished.

The modern economy is increasingly driven by communication. From ubiquitous use of internet-based social media, new social norms have evolved, with social network membership informally regulated by political correctness. ‘Echo chambers’ and ‘social bubbles’ are formed on Twitter and Facebook, in which repetitious mantras and denunciations maintain the tight norms of ideological rectitude. Self-censorship is powerful: much of the policing of thoughts and actions is at a subconscious level, thus requiring no deliberation. Sigmund Freud would have perceived this as the super-ego in action.²² However, in a state of social flux, people look to others for guidance, and role-models are important.

Student unions have increasingly imposed their ideological dogma on campus, with ‘safe spaces’ and ‘no-platforming’ policies. They are the vanguard of a broader mission to manipulate society. The ascent of identity politics has led to groups demanding immunity from criticism (while they continue to attack others). Transgression of political correctness incurs pronounced social sanctions. Furthermore, debate has been suppressed by law against ‘hate crime’, which is defined by the perception of the person who took offence. In an *Alice in Wonderland* absurdity, guilty until proved innocent seems to be the legal standpoint of identity politics. Far from the anticipated individual freedom that should have come from the overturning of the old order, an ever more intolerant system has replaced it. Authoritarian regimes in the past have exploited the tendencies of righteousness and moral absolutism in the young (such as the Nazi Party with its Hitler Youth and the communist regime of Chairman Mao). The tightening ratchet on freedom of speech has been described as the ‘new puritanism’.²³

Immigration: from one extreme to the other

The puritanical approach to those with the wrong opinions is most clearly demonstrated on the topic of immigration, which has become so inflammatory that criticisms are taboo in public discourse, despite the sheer scale of arrivals from abroad and the associated cultural impact. Immigration is often simplistically dichotomised into welcoming all or raising the drawbridge. In reality, most ordinary people do not think like this. It is an example of how the liberal-Left establishment controls the debate.

Fifty years ago Enoch Powell delivered his infamous diatribe against immigration policy. After the Second World War, Britain tapped into its colonies in the West Indies, Africa and Asia to fill gaps in the workforce. By the 1960s the growing numbers of immigrants was causing concern in the mostly working-class areas where they were settling. As MP for such an area in Wolverhampton, Powell was representing the fears of his constituents, and his prophecy of racial strife became known as the ‘Rivers of Blood’ speech. Powell was immediately sacked by Ted Heath from the Conservative shadow cabinet, but he was supported vociferously by much of the white working class, as demonstrated by a march by London dockers.²⁴ His speech had impact in the tighter controls applied by the Immigration Act 1971.

22 Miller GA (1966): *Psychology: the Science of Mental Life*. Harmondsworth: Pelican.

23 Ridley M (4 February 2017): A new puritanism explains why some feminists are making common cause with Islam. *Spectator Life*.

24 Sandbrook D (2006): *White Heat: a History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties*. London: Abacus.

The 'Rivers of Blood' oratory has been marked in mainstream media as a turning point in race relations. There is no race war. Mixed-heritage couples and their offspring have shattered simplistic racial categorisations. The overtly racist National Front was never widely supported, and a British sense of fairness explained the success of the 1967 film *To Sir with Love*, in which Sidney Poitier played a West Indian teacher in a tough East End school. Today we have a Muslim mayor of London and Muslim home secretary. Fifty years after Powell's speech, there is widespread acceptance that Britain is represented by multiple ethnicities.

Until the late 1990s, immigration was managed by the government, allowing a relatively small annual inflow on specified entry criteria, while taking care not to worry the electorate. This changed with the election of 'New Labour' in 1997, when the floodgates were opened. Since then, millions have arrived from Africa and Asia, and millions more from East Europe under EU freedom of movement rules. Integration was ditched by Blair's administration, replaced by a multiculturalist approach that encourages distinct cultural identities and practices. On a wave of popularity, Blair swept aside any critics. Immigration was a means of overcoming the forces of conservatism, or as one of his aides said: 'rubbing their noses in diversity'.²⁵

The establishment tends to portray a liberal immigration policy as wholly beneficial: as well as allowing a vast labour supply, it supposedly enriches society. It is often said that the NHS would fall apart without its legions of immigrant staff, although this overlooks the demand on health services of a net influx of at least quarter of a million people, particularly as most of the incomers are net recipients in the tax system. According to Ben Broadbent, Deputy Governor of the Bank of England, low-skilled immigration has contributed to a stalling in wage growth at the lower levels of the job market.²⁶ This is not just a right-wing reaction: pronounced Labour-supporting *Guardian* columnist Polly Toynbee wrote, 'immigration is now making the rich richer and the poor poorer'.²⁷ The segments of society most affected by the surge of immigration from poorer parts of the world are the lower social classes, which suffer most from overwhelmed public services, while being priced out of the area in which they were raised. These 'Somewheres' see how their home town has changed dramatically in demography and culture.

According to the UK Statistics Authority, over a third of children born in Britain in 2016 had at least one foreign parent; in London it was two-thirds, and in Newham almost nine in ten. As Alp Mehmet of Migration Watch explained, immigration and higher birth rates among recent-arrival communities is driving relentless population growth.²⁸ The answer from our political establishment to the resulting housing crisis is not to control demand but to increase supply. Millions more homes are needed, but we are not allowed to say why. Precious green space is lost; *Portakabins* are erected over school playgrounds; blocks of flats proliferate on the skyline and reach ever higher. Not surprisingly, many of the white working class (and some established black and Asian communities) feel alienated.

25 *Daily Telegraph* (23 October 2009): Labour wanted mass immigration to make UK more multicultural, says former adviser.

26 *Guardian* (23 September 2015): UK wage growth stifled by tepid investment and low-skilled migration.

27 Toynbee P (11 August 2006): Immigration is now making the rich richer and the poor poorer. *Guardian*.

28 *Daily Express* (1 December 2016): Population boom: parts of London see 85% of children born to foreign parent.

Voters in the old Labour heartlands of Midlands and northern England balk at the level of immigration and the dramatic change it has caused to their towns and cities. Sometimes this provokes the white working class into voting for anti-immigration parties such as the BNP or (in milder form) UKIP, but generally Labour has taken votes for granted in these areas. Recently, however, many of the provincial working class have followed the lower middle class in voting Conservative. In the 2017 general election, solid Labour seats in Stoke and Mansfield were won by Tories. The EU referendum vote also went against official Labour Party advice, resulting in blatant disdain for the lower social classes that voted for Brexit. These traditional Labour voters are regarded by the urban graduates who have taken the reins of the party as backwoodsmen, at best ignorant and at worst racist bigots. Arguably this is social class snobbery, and the powerful denigrating the poor.

This rejection of the progressive prospectus of Labour might be seen as treachery, but a consolation for the urban Labour leadership is that this segment of the population is shrinking. Demography is destiny. The UK, like other Western European nations, will soon have an electorate comprising over fifty per-cent ethnicities other than indigenous, as does London already. The Muslim population has risen steadily, due to inflow and larger families, by conservative estimate reaching 13 million by 2050²⁹. This may be convenient to Labour, but it is more than that: arguably, this was a deliberate policy to replace one set of voters with another.

Having co-opted minority groups that are socially disadvantaged and thus deserving of special treatment, the middle-class Left has created a comfortable position for itself, benefiting from the cheaper goods and services of immigrant labour while displaying its concern for social justice. Immigration thus has material and moral value. As immigration is described as 'cultural enrichment', this suggests something wrong with the indigenous culture.

Minority ethnic communities have moral currency in identity politics. There are vast voting *blocs* to nurture in a status of victimhood. Favouring of client groups may be criticised as the timeless tactic of divide and rule, but the political and cultural establishment determines the narrative. Immigrants from continents oppressed by Western cultural, economic and military imperialism are not only useful for virtue-signalling, but also pawns for the revolutionary zeal of cultural Marxism. Perceiving immigration as inherently progressive is absurd on considering the very conservative cultures that they bring. Indeed, civil liberties could be threatened by the growth of fundamentalist Islam, which denies gender equality, free speech and choice of belief. The notion of turkeys voting for Christmas comes to mind. As noted by a *Salisbury Review* writer: -

“The decadent culture of the declining West, fixated on the rights of ‘the other’, will be replaced by a vigorous manly culture which can replicate itself. Isn't history the account of the rise and fall of civilisations?”³⁰

There are two major factors for the decline of Labour north of the Watford Gap. First, the identification of ordinary English / British people with their families, local communities, church, and 'Queen and country'; secondly, the aspiration of those straddling the border of the lower and middle classes, as in the 'white van man' who buys the *Sun* newspaper and complains of paying

29 *Daily Telegraph* (29 November 2017); Muslim population of the UK could triple to 13m following 'record' influx.

30 Miller A (2018): *The Great Replacement*. *Salisbury Review*, summer: 4-5.

taxes to pay for shirkers living on state welfare. Neither of these traits are endeared to patronising Labour politicians in Islington. This was perfectly illustrated by Emily Thornberry (who bears the title Lady Nugee), who posted an image on Twitter of a house sporting a St George's cross with a van parked on the driveway (before a by-election in Rochester). Although she denied a malign motive, it was obvious that she was ridiculing the resident for the two undesirable attitudes described above.³¹ The lower social classes, who should be lauded as the bedrock of society, are Britain's version of the Poujadistes, the 1950s French political movement that opposed state interference in the lives of ordinary people, favouring the traditional institutions of society over socialism.³²

As Italian communist Antonio Gramsci asserted, traditional loyalties must be broken to free people from their social opium and pave the way for a socialist society.³³ However, the identity politics categorisation of oppressor / oppressed status appears to have become an end in itself. It is a cost-free way for the socio-economic elite to show virtue without harming their privileged status.

There is perhaps no better example than the perverse ideology about immigration. The liberal-left graduate population that is advancing its status in the establishment has uncritically accepted that all immigration is necessarily good, and that any doubters must be bad. This is delusional. Unlimited immigration inevitably impairs quality of life through unsustainable demand on housing, public transport and public services, loss of green land and farming, demographic change and the threat of regressive cultural mores and practices. Hard-won liberties are likely to be denied by the growth of a religious creed that the secularist liberal-left would abhor were it a sudden and surprising Christian revival. Why support policy that makes their lives harder? As we will now argue, the explanation is a cultural sickness.

31 *Guardian* (23 November 2014): Emily Thornberry 'damaged Labour's election prospects with Rochester tweet'.

32 *Guardian* (28 August 2003): Pierre Poujade: shooting star of a 1950s small traders' revolt (obituary).

33 Murphy PA (26 April 2014): Antonio Gramsci: take over the institutions! *American Thinker*.

Part Two: The Cultural Virus

Culture is maintained by a socialisation process that is explained by social learning theory. According to psychologist Albert Bandura, behaviour is the product of a triad of cognitive factors (knowledge and beliefs), environmental influences (particularly social norms) and behavioural factors (skills and practice).³⁴ Bandura's research showed that children instinctively imitate peer behaviour without need for encouragement and reward. People are more likely to change their behaviour if exposed to positive modelling. Social learning is beneficial because it avoids the wasteful and error-strewn process of individual trial-and-error learning.

In the dual inheritance theory of Luca Cavilla-Sforza and Marcus Feldman, evolution has two strands: cultural and biological.³⁵ As likened to Charles Darwin's original theory³⁶, culture evolves through a process of variation, competition and inheritance, but is transmitted through learning (nurture) rather than by genes (nature).³⁷ Cultural evolution was considered by Darwin in *The Descent of Man*,³⁸ and the idea was developed by geneticist Richard Dawkins.³⁹ In *The Selfish Gene*, Dawkins argued that human beings are mere conduits for the survival of genes. He introduced the term 'meme' for a unit of cultural transmission equivalent to a gene (e.g. ideas, fashions), which follows the same rule of natural selection. This concept has not been verified scientifically, but it has heuristic value in our understanding of cultural continuity and change. The meaning of meme has broadened to include 'an image, video, or set of text that becomes popular and spreads rapidly via the internet'.⁴⁰ Indeed, social learning in the digital age is substantially different from previous generations due to the much wider social learning environment and rapidly changing norms. Traditionally, enculturation primarily involves parents, family and friends, teachers and peers, but the internet has expanded the number and diversity of 'cultural parents'.

Memes have been likened to germs in communicable disease, being spread by social interaction. The epidemiological rather than genetic model of memetics is criticised for its negative connotations, not only for relating beliefs to a disease but also for denying that people decide what to believe. This raises the sociological tension between structure and agency. The massively successful marketing industry suggests that people can be influenced directly or subtly by unsolicited messages. Younger people, particularly those exposed to university culture, are most susceptible to being infected by a prevailing morality. Ideas are not necessarily chosen, but may be uncritically accepted because they are widely believed in the person's social environment. Therefore, structure may override agency. Experiments in the 1950s by Solomon Asch⁴¹

34 Bandura A (1975): *Social Learning & Personality Development*. New Jersey: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

35 Cavilla-Sforza LL, Feldman MW (1981): *Cultural Transmission and Evolution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

36 Darwin C (1859/1968): *The Origin of Species*. London: Penguin.

37 Boyd R, Richeson P (1985): *Culture and the Evolutionary Process*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

38 Darwin C (1871/2003): *The Descent of Man*. London: Gibson Square.

39 Dawkins R (1976): *The Selfish Gene*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

40 *Urban Dictionary* (2017): Meme. www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=meme

41 Asch SE (1956): Studies of independence and conformity (I): a minority of one against a unanimous majority. *Psychological Monographs: General & Applied*, 70: 1-70.

demonstrated that the majority not only rules, it also converts: participants knowingly chose a false answer to a question if everybody else gave that answer. Just as healthy people might catch a disease, sceptics may be converted to a prevailing belief.

Memes do not need factual basis to be spread widely and accepted. The Islamic tradition of *isnād* entails a chain of transmission of the words and deeds of Mohammed, as written in *hadiths* and *sunnah*. Veracity of truth depends not on evidence but on the authority of the teller. A meme may be latent for many years before proliferating. For example, the idea of cultural appropriation began in obscure Californian academic literature decades ago, but it has suddenly spread. This concept is the inappropriate use of the cultural elements of a perceived minority, and therefore in this logic a 'victim' group, by members of the dominant and therefore more powerful 'oppressor' culture. This turns multiculturalism and cross-fertilisation of customs from a positive process to another opportunity to find racism in innocent and mundane interaction, thereby reinforcing the oppressor / oppressed narrative. The cultural appropriation meme has now taken hold, as seen with the tightening rules about what can be worn at a fancy-dress party, prohibition of the African American 'corn row' hairstyle in white schoolchildren, and frowning on Westerners practising yoga.⁴²

Moral hegemony is so communicable and endemic in society that it could be considered as a cultural virus. We have named this 'moralitis'. To be sure, we mean not a pathological disease of the brain, but a psychosocial affliction of the mind.⁴³ This is not to revive the Soviet Union's abuse of psychiatry, whereby dissidents were committed to mental hospital and given heavy doses of tranquillisers to cure their 'schizophrenia'.⁴⁴ No, this is a cultural malady – and in many places the sick are the majority.

The infection is concentrated in metropolitan areas of affluence and in towns and cities with high student populations, and throughout our political and cultural institutions. People who contract the virus may be divided into two types. First are the carriers. Not active propagators, they learn what to say and what values to convey. As a large brigade of foot-soldiers, their compliance with moral hegemony is vital for the disease to overcome healthy minds. The second type is the contagious. This is the opinionated minority, enthused by cultural Marxism, who police social discourse and push boundaries to advance their cause. Often it is such people who are promoted to positions of power. The contagious sweep others along in their moral hubris.

The symptoms of moralitis include inflexibility of thought and expression, restricted language, self-loathing and a reactionary emotional response to conflicting opinion. Truth becomes something to manage, rather than to understand. Ideally, beliefs should be based on facts, but for cultural Marxists facts are based on beliefs. As this causes cognitive dissonance, various mechanisms protect the believer from the challenge of reality.

42 McCrae N (30 October 2017): Hallowe'en and humour under attack. *Conservative Woman*. www.conservativewoman.co.uk/niall-mccrae-halloween-humour-attack

43 Most viruses are not pathogenic, and some have entered the genome. Nelson PN, Carnegie PR, Martin J, Davari Ejtehadi H, Hooley P, Roden D, Rowland-Jones S, Warren P, Astley J, Murray PG (2003): Demystified...human endogenous retroviruses. *Molecular Pathology*, 56: 11-18.

44 Lader M (1977): *Psychiatry on Trial*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

George Orwell wrote in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: 'Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.'⁴⁵ The younger generations seem to have learned in school and tertiary education that their country has a dark past of which they should be ashamed. National heroes such as Winston Churchill, who defended us from Nazi invasion, are reinterpreted as racist or imperialist.⁴⁶ Recently English Heritage launched a public consultation on removing problematic historical figures from its estate, with a graphic image of a wrecking ball smashing Nelson's column.⁴⁷

Of more profound impact is another Orwellian strategy, whereby whoever controls the language controls the debate (a dictum attributed to various writers). 'Newspeak' in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is unlike any existing language in that its vocabulary shrinks rather than expands over time. Topics that the prevailing culture finds uncomfortable are given euphemistic labels, such as 'grooming gangs' for the widespread and organised rape of white schoolgirls by men of Pakistani Muslim background.⁴⁸ By contrast, dislikeable people are labelled with exaggerated terms, often ending in '-phobic' (e.g. 'transphobic', 'Islamophobic') or '-ist' (e.g. 'racist', 'misogynist'). Use of the noun rather than the adjective condemns the whole person, rather than merely his or her opinion. A minor *faux pas* can result in a person being ostracised, if not dehumanised. Damning labels are thrown around like *confetti*. In the BBC comedy show *The Young Ones*, Rick was an early victim of the cultural virus, calling everyone a 'fascist'. Ultimately this is counterproductive: as outspoken singer Morrissey argued, 'racism' has become the most meaningless word in the English language.⁴⁹

The right of free speech for these '-ists' or '-phobes' has been curtailed by another Orwellian concept: 'hate speech'. Governments have stifled freedom of expression, arguably exploiting identity politics to exert draconian powers over the populace. A daily average of nine persons are arrested by British police for 'improper use of public electronic communications network' under the Communications Act 2003, section 127.⁵⁰ 'Black Marias' at dawn, merely for expressing a politically-incorrect opinion on Twitter or Facebook. So, while the values of the dominant culture are expressed in liberal philosophy, the virus of moral hegemony is highly authoritarian. It is protective of the establishment and postmodern schema. Diversity of ideas is strangely absent from the heterogeneity celebrated by the political and cultural establishment. Alongside the widely reported increase in food intolerances, society is suffering from 'ideallergy', an intolerance of other people's ideas.

45 Orwell G (1949): *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Martin Secker & Warburg.

46 *Daily Mail* (31 January 2018): The very middle class mob that stormed Churchill cafe: Junior doctor, headteacher's son and student union officers among mob who burst in before branding wartime leader 'racist'.

47 *Daily Express* (17 April 2018): Outrageous! Taxpayer-funded group in advert 'promoting destruction of Nelson's column'.

48 McCrae N, Harradine K (3 June 2018): Muslim rape gangs and the inconvenient truth. Rebel Priest. www.julesgomes.com/single-post/Muslim-rape-gangs-and-the-inconvenient-truth.

49 *NME* (6 June 2018): Morrissey elaborates on support of For Britain party, says treatment of EDL founder Tommy Robinson is 'shocking'.

50 *RT* (12 October 2017): British police accused of 'wasting time' as hate speech arrests up almost 900% in some areas. <https://www.rt.com/uk/406467-hate-crime-twitter-troll/>

Whereas activists in the past spoke truth to power, now they speak power to truth. Noam Chomsky described 'a herd of independent minds marching in support of state power'.⁵¹ Behaving like a flock of sheep is not a new phenomenon, as human beings are social animals and they are more likely to seek shelter in a group when they are confused or feel threatened. In describing the phenomenon of 'bad faith', Jean-Paul Sartre observed that people deny their freedom, because it relieves them of responsibility.⁵² However, as warned by Michelle Baddeley in her book *Copycats and Contrarians*,⁵³ a strong group mentality can be dangerous, particularly with the accelerated spread of ideas and denunciations on social media. While well-intended, the #MeToo movement has created an atmosphere of summary justice akin to the witchcraft hysteria of the sixteenth century. *Jihadism* is an extremist herd mentality that thrives on the internet. Meanwhile, injustices that do not fit the agenda of identity politics are ignored (as seen with the establishment derision for the protests against the imprisonment of Tommy Robinson⁵⁴).

In his satires, Roman poet Juvenal famously asked: '*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*' (who watches the watchmen?).⁵⁵ Not the global social media companies, whose founders and staff are clearly infected by the virus and readily collude with governments to eradicate problematic thought from their supposedly liberating fora. The politico-moral consensus of supranational institutions and global corporations is mutually rewarding. It allows them to present themselves as being kind and open, essentially good, while reinforcing their position as world leaders. Mark Zuckerberg admitted that Silicon Valley is an 'extremely left-leaning place'.⁵⁶ Moralising to the tune of identity politics is a lucrative cover for profiteering monopolies such as Facebook, YouTube, Google and Twitter. Although these corporations are culturally on the Left, their perspective on business regulation is more of the libertarian Right.⁵⁷ Aggressively limiting their taxation liability is an interesting juxtaposition with their liberal-left persona.⁵⁸ As propagators of the virus, social media companies are as effective as a contamination of water supply.

Simplistic good / bad dichotomies reveal a symptomatic degradation of the mind. Naturally, people want to be seen as good, lowering their resistance to the virus. The viral memes are enforced with increasingly draconic sanctions, but society has created an internalised Big Brother, a tyranny of self-censorship. To cope with the rapidly evolving rules for discourse, it is safer to

51 Chomsky N (2 July 2016): Why does the US support Israel? http://www.subtitleclick.com/watch/rawvideos/noam_chomsky_why_does_the_u.s._support_israel_3760.aspx

52 Sartre JP (1956/2003): *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*. London: Routledge.

53 Baddeley M (2018): *Copycats and Contrarians: Why We Follow Others...and When We Don't*. Yale University Press.

54 James J (8 June 2018): Uprising: how the establishment jailed Tommy Robinson and lost control of working class Britain. Politicalite. www.politicalite.com/world-exclusive/uprising-establishment-jailed-tommy-robinson-lost-control-working-class-britain/

55 Juvenal. *Satires* (VI). www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/JuvenalSatires6.php

56 *Washington Times* (10 April 2018): Silicon Valley an 'extremely left-leaning place,' admits Zuckerberg.

57 *New York Times* (6 September 2017): Silicon Valley's politics: liberal, with one big exception.

58 *Independent* (22 November 2017): 'Google tax': Philip Hammond announces crackdown on tax avoidance by tech giants.

www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/google-tax-budget-2017-avoidance-tech-companies-latest-measure-a8070006.html

be silent. However, unlike the mere carriers of the virus, the contagious loudly proclaim their morality. In some cases, a person's outlook changes radically, and he or she displays the zeal of the convert. In the severest form of moralitis, memes are expressed with reactionary fervour, suggestive of moral panic.

Rabies is a deadly disease that attacks the central nervous system. Its cardinal feature is the delusional state of hydrophobia: an irrational fear of the life-giving substance, with predictable consequence.⁵⁹ Similarly, people afflicted by moralitis reject the social pleasures that they would normally enjoy, or the social assets from which they would benefit. Comedians, mostly left-wing since the 1980s, now find that their audiences pause before laughing at a joke, if it touches on any cultural sensitivity. A politically-incorrect comment on Twitter, meant in jest, may provoke a savage response by those infected with moralitis, who seem to gain more from denunciation than from enjoying a momentary relief from seriousness. For example, someone joked that the Nigerian footballers had offered to compensate their supporters after a defeat at the 2018 World Cup; their airfares would be refunded on submitting their bank account details. To ordinary people this is an amusing reference to the well-known e-mail scams, not unfairly associated with Nigeria. Nobody believes that all Nigerians are involved in such trickery, but the joke was condemned as racist. As in chronic schizophrenia, moralitis causes anhedonia, the inability to have fun.⁶⁰

The family is disdained by the infected young; like schoolchildren in Maoist China, they denounce their parents for crimes such as criticising immigration policy or displaying patriotism. Rejection of national identity was most emphatically demonstrated in the EU referendum and its aftermath, and this phenomenon has revealed the extent of the cultural virus and its grip on society. Let us consider the strange phenomenon of intractable allegiance to the EU.

The EU and Brexit: a case study of moralitis

The prominence of morals in signifying status was demonstrated in the EU referendum and its aftermath. A yawning gap appeared between young and old, with educational level and socio-economic status also important factors. This demographic divide was expressed as a conflict between progressive morality and national identity. Older people of the working or lower-middle class are patriotic and socially conservative, and they cannot understand fellow citizens' attraction to a foreign authority. The privileged middle class and the younger generation of students think of themselves as global citizens, and they find the idea of British / English identity excluding. They supported the Remain cause with vigour, and continue to do so.

The EU, to the apparently brainwashed young, is a paragon of virtue. It is the guardian of peace and tolerance, suppressing nationalism and prejudice. Patriotic belonging has been systematically undermined by the EU as backwardness and a moral fault, as seen in its vilification of Hungary.⁶¹

59 Leung AKC (2007): Rabies: epidemiology, pathogenesis, and prophylaxis. *Advances in Therapy*, 24: 1340-1347.

60 Bentall RP (2003): *Madness Explained: Psychosis and Human Nature*. London: Penguin.

61 Furedi F (2018): *Populism and the European Culture Wars: the Conflict of Values Between Hungary and the EU*. London: Routledge.

The EU is not supported by the hard Left or much of the old Labour constituency, but to the privileged urban middle class that now dominates the party's support, it means more than Europe – it is internationalist. For the political establishment, the alliance between supranational institutions and global corporations is convenient and profitable for all concerned. Supporting the EU allows people in power to present themselves as being kind and inclusive, while preserving their economic advantage.

For the younger generation, however, the economic arguments for the EU do not seem to be as important as cultural values. This was shown by a survey conducted by one of the authors in collaboration with economist Jonathan Portes.⁶² The Attitudes to Brexit Questionnaire was completed by 162 nursing and midwifery students at King's College London, of which 80.5% voted Remain. Respondents were asked for three words that symbolised the EU and Brexit to them. For the EU, economic benefits came a long way behind terms that expressed virtue, such as 'tolerance' and 'inclusiveness'. Similarly, the economy was scarcely mentioned in words symbolising Brexit; instead, many respondents focused on the character of Leave voters: 'xenophobia', 'divisive', 'backwardness' and 'stupidity'. The minority of Brexit supporters did not express doubts about the morality or intelligence of those favouring EU membership.

Indeed, the referendum has signalled the danger of failing to nurture a positive national identity. It is remarkable that identity politics are so prevalent in the student and graduate ranks, while this major aspect of identity is disparaged. Nationhood is potentially the most inclusive of all, yet it was seen by the survey respondents as regressive if not racist. Group-think on major topics can have the effect of quelling debate in university, leaving assumptions unchallenged. Brexit is clearly divisive, but some people show no willingness to heal the rift. This is due to the moral supremacy caused by the cultural virus. For students to associate Leave voters with racism is a very divisive stance against compatriots (including, in this survey, a fifth of their peers).

The loss of rationality from public discourse and reckless abandoning of evidence in favour of moralistic mantras damages the *civitas*. People have become fearful of change, as they might be castigated for uttering any opinion that deviates from orthodoxy. In the dogma of EU good, Brexit bad, it is not only the referendum verdict that is contested, but those who voted Leave are seen as despicable. There is little prospect of compromise, and inevitably this will undermine the economy as well as social cohesion. 'Brexit means Brexit', asserted Theresa May, but the nay-sayers do not want to contribute to making a success of independence from the EU. Their reaction is to reject their own country: this is the dehumanising impact of moralitis.

Prevention and treatment

Should we let the epidemic of moralitis run its course? Political correctness will surely eat itself. But this would be negligent: much damage will be done while we fail to assert Western Enlightenment values. As Jonah Goldberg⁶³ and Douglas Murray⁶⁴ warn, the West is in danger

62 McCrae N, Portes J (2018): Attitudes to Brexit: a survey of nursing and midwifery students. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/jan.13706>

63 Goldberg J (2018): *Suicide of the West: How the Rebirth of Tribalism, Populism, Nationalism and Identity Politics is Destroying American Democracy*. Crown Forum.

64 Murray D (2017): *The Strange Death of Europe: Immigration, Identity, Islam*. London: Bloomsbury.

of committing cultural suicide. Taking a public health approach, preventative action is needed to arrest the spread of this destructive disease.

Let us begin with treatment. This will not be easy: the afflicted have no insight into their illness, and they will not like the taste of the medicine. Consider the vehement attacks on Canadian psychologist Jordan Peterson, whose YouTube channel and book *Twelve Rules for Life*⁶⁵ have engaged millions of people who had lost hope with Western culture. As Melanie Phillips observed in the *Times*,⁶⁶ the shrill outrage of the young social justice warriors when their worldview is challenged by the likes of Peterson suggests that their house is built on sand. They doth protest too much.

Societies have a natural evolutionary propensity to produce contrarians who challenge assumptions and act as catalysts in overturning the *status quo*.⁶⁷ They lead the way by unherding and gathering others who mistrust the established order. Sceptics and advocates for freedom of speech can win by presenting the moral case of their position and exposing the corruption at the heart of the cultural Marxist schema of identity politics. These people are the antibodies that will reduce the incidence and prevalence of the disease.

A post-viral culture will be more liberal, not less. Most people don't want a jingoistic revival, but an inclusive sense of belonging with opportunity for all. A lively culture will support open, rational debate. Facts will not override feelings, but truth will be restored to public discourse. This calls for radical reform to the education system, and the rooting out of political bias. Jordan Peterson is tough on the stifling group-think of identity politics and political correctness. We must be tough on its causes.

With its hegemonic status in society, is moralitis really possible to eradicate? Well, as Mahatma Gandhi reputedly said: 'first they ignore you, then they laugh at you, they fight you, then you win.'⁶⁸

65 Peterson J (2018): *Twelve Rules for Life: an Antidote to Chaos*. London: Allen Lane.

66 Phillips M (5 June 2018): Defenders of free speech have a new prophet. *Times*.

67 Baddeley M (2018): *Copycats and Contrarians: Why We Follow Others... and When We Don't*. Yale University Press.

68 Although the quote fits Gandhi's philosophy, there is no evidence of him actually saying this. <https://quoteinvestigator.com/2017/08/13/stages/>