

# Myths of the Cultural Left

The term "Cultural Left" was coined by the philosopher Richard Rorty, to distinguish the direction left-leaning political thought took when it broke off from its traditional class- and resource-based concerns in the late 20th century. Rather than focus its efforts on working conditions, economic exploitation, and the incentives toward deception and inequality naturally arising from free-market Capitalism, as the "Old Left" used to do, the "Cultural Left" abrogated this crusade, and in its place took on the challenge of addressing inequalities arising from the way people felt.

*The heirs of the New Left of the Sixties have created, within the academy, a cultural Left. Many members of this Left specialize in what they call the "politics of difference" or of "identity" or of "recognition." This cultural Left thinks more about stigma than about money, more about deep and hidden psychosexual motivations than about shallow and evident greed.*

*-- Richard Rorty, Achieving Our Country, 1998*

This distinction has become valuable in speaking coherently about the political "Left" in America, as the phenomenon Rorty was observing has since exploded, first within our schools, and then, having been taken up by the political class, in our public, and finally private, institutions. In the private company for which I work, for instance, we are required to be trained on, and agree to, the following text:

*[ I will refrain from ] stating that I don't see color ("color blind"), or that there is only one race, the human race. This denies a person's racial and ethnic experiences. Microinvalidations are forms of communication that exclude, negate, or ignore the thoughts, feelings, and experience of another person.*

Although this amounts to little more than rank censorship, and though it may be self-contradictory on its face, it is nevertheless the kind of policing of thought that has become normal, and expected, in corporate America. The Cultural Left is now an identifiable, mainstream ideology, one that has established dominance over the definitions and control over the cultural norms of the nation.

The Cultural Left is grounded in an ideology, and like any ideology, it contains a number of fallacies -- either explicit, or else hidden as evidentiary or argumentative failures. The following is a list of a few of the more pertinent myths implicit in the movement's propaganda. This is a partial list of assertions, often implicit in opinions and arguments, for which the evidence is absent or contradictory, and whose propagation deceives and manipulates the populace.

What are not included are common abuses of sense, for which the solution is additional attention to an argument's structure and term definitions. For example, the incoherent approaches to the concepts of racism or cultural appropriation are not addressed here.

-A. Yampolsky, Los Angeles, 2021

## **Men Already Had It**

Or have it. They are already liberated and well-incorporated into existing social structures.

## **Suitability For Civilized Living**

Women are suited naturally for stable, peaceful coexistence under civilization. Culpability for human violence falls primarily on the male. If civilized societies are to flourish, men require domestication.

## **Sexual Substitutability**

There is no social role for which, *ceteris paribus*, the same social benefit would not be achieved were its members swapped with their sexual opposites.

## **Sexual Independence of Human Preferences**

Differences in preferences across sexes are primarily the result of culture. Nurture, not nature, defines the preferences most significant to individual happiness.

## **Submission Is Worse**

Domination is always preferable.

## **Ascribed Identity Is A Workable Proxy For Real Identity**

An individual's worldview, preferences, and choices are more likely to match, across most variables of social interest, with those of another, if the perceived sex or race match.

## **The Possibility of Equality, Part 1**

An individual with a given set of natural attributes can be as suited as any other to prosper within a free democracy.

## **The Possibility of Equality, Part 2**

It is possible to achieve a stable reconciliation between inequity aversion and Total Social Equality<sup>†</sup>.

## **The Possibility of the Universality of Non-Natural Rights**

Non-natural rights, such as those supporting universal suffrage or right-to-repair, can be universal, pertinent to any culture, applicable to any time.

## **Original Sin**

It can be beneficial to American society if individuals assigned to specific named groups experience a sense of guilt for the circumstances into which they are born.

### **The Myth Of The Third Option**

A person can give preference to one race over another. A person can be blind to race. And there exists a third option.

### **Meritocracy's False Promise**

The promise of meritocracy is something other than quality or excellence. And quality can be reliably attained in the absence of meritocratic requirements.

### **The Possibility Of Universally Objectionable Cultural Traits**

There are, or can be, cultural traits that are unquestionably objectionable, in any culture, at any time.

### **The Possibility Of A Perfectly Pluralistic Society**

It is possible to have a stable society in which all cultures and personal traits are respected equally by all, and suppression of individuality is entirely absent.

### **The Existence Of Incomparables**

Some experiences cannot be compared with others.

### **The Myth Of Unimaginable Experiences**

Human imagination is limited to the experiences of one's life and the lives of those of similar appearance.

### **The Righteous Presence Of Original Inhabitants**

Colonization is always contextualized by original inhabitants whose presence was morally pure.

### **The Attainability Of Respect By Demand**

It is possible to bypass the earning of respect by threatening social sanction.

### **Invalid Joy**

Some joy can be invalid, or invalidated. Previously experienced joys can be diminished *ex postfacto*.

†) Total Social Equality is a calculation which takes into account qualitative outcomes, such as feelings of hope, belonging, self-respect, the sense of social status, and the degree to which one identifies with others in society, and compares them in aggregate across identitarian groupings of the population. The comparison can require proportional as well as non-proportional results in order to satisfy the equality condition.

Let  $F$  be the full set of such socially relevant feelings.

Let  $\psi(f)$  represent a feeling intensity function, determining how strongly a given feeling in the set is felt by an individual  $i$ .

Let  $I$  be the set of social identities enumerated and acknowledged by the Cultural Left, and let that be a finite set.  $A$  and  $B$  are discrete identities in that set, such that  $A \in I$  and  $B \in I$ . Integers  $a$  and  $b$  are counts of individuals in  $A$  and  $B$ , such that  $a = |A|$  and  $b = |B|$ .

The basic equation requires, as a condition of "social justice," that the sums of the intensities of these feelings across any two identitarian groups  $A$  and  $B$  be equal.

$$\sum_{i=1}^a \sum_{f \in |F|} \psi(f)_i = \sum_{i=1}^b \sum_{f \in |F|} \psi(f)_i$$

The non-proportionality of such a formulation strikes many as unfair. A proportional version could take the entire population  $n$  into account, for example,

$$(a/n) \sum_{i=1}^a \sum_{f \in |F|} \psi(f)_i = (b/n) \sum_{i=1}^b \sum_{f \in |F|} \psi(f)_i$$

In practice, there seems to be a restriction on the sizes of both sets, such that

$$F = \{x \in F \mid |x| < 10\}$$

$$I = \{x \in I \mid |x| < 10\}$$

Perfect Social Equality, as distinguished from Total Social Equality, is a conceit that does away with the arbitrary and finite limit to the set  $I$ , such that the count of identities is infinite:

$$I = \{x \in I \mid |x| \rightarrow \infty\}$$

However, this ideation, and its repercussions, are rejected by the Cultural Left.