

THE CHICKENS OF WOKENESS COME HOME TO ROOST

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The chickens of wokeness are coming home

to roost on the heads of the business leaders who have done so much to unleash this plague upon us.

There's a better, and less cliché-ridden, way to frame that. It's in *A Man For All Seasons*. When Sir Thomas More – whom Henry VIII would have beheaded for not agreeing that Henry could head an independent English church – refuses to arrest a dangerous enemy as he “can’t arrest even the devil until he’s broken the law,” his son-in-law, William Roper, bellows: “So, now you give the Devil the benefit of law!”

More: “Yes! What would you do? Cut a great road through the law to get after the Devil?”

Roper: “Yes, I’d cut down every law in England to do that!”

More: “Oh? And when the last law was down, and the Devil turned ‘round on you, where would you hide, Roper, the laws all being flat?”

The woke leaders of America’s businesses would have done well to remember that scene before they signed themselves and their businesses up in support of the leftwing suite of policy prescriptions that goes by the shorthand “woke.”

They were convinced, or convinced themselves, or pretended to believe, that signing up with the hard left constituted a fight against the devil – a fight against inequality and racism and meanness and climate change, and in favor of harmony and happiness and puppy dogs and joy, and always summertime but never August.

In fact, of course, they were signing up *with* the devil. As Thomas More knew, the devil gets you to do all his dirty work for him, and promptly turns ‘round on you. Then woe betide.

Thus has it proceeded. The fight against inequality became the fight for equity-based discrimination in order to achieve an enervatingly socialist equality of outcome.

Reasonable concern about climate change became economy-destroying climate-catastrophism.

Worries about high levels of imprisonment became city-destroying legalization of crime and criminalization of police.

And once all that had happened, with these business leaders' enthusiastic support, the devil turned 'round on them.

Consider some recent examples.

Perhaps most trenchantly, *Bloomberg* of all places recently reported that many ESG funds have been forced to close for poor performance and rapidly eroding investor interest.

This is hardly surprising. Many ESG funds have been and are fee-generating frauds; they built their supposed alpha simply by stocking up on tech and underweighting energy when tech was soaring and energy was stuck. When those trends reversed, these funds sunk, and their higher fees became wholly unjustifiable.

With regard to the real ESG funds – the ones that really do invest in companies that actually implement the chief E purpose of political-schedule decarbonization and the S goal of equity-based discrimination: companies that cut themselves off from reliable energy while embracing race and sex discrimination to achieve socialism are never going to be more profitable in the long run than sane companies.

These ESG funds require for their survival investors who are sufficiently committed to those woke goals that they're willing to take relative losses to support companies that embrace them. In flush times, there may be quite a few of those. In increasingly tight times, there are far fewer, as ESG-fund managers are discovering.

The obviously absurd magic formulae that they intoned have brought forth monsters – and the tough times have come because of government policies that also follow the woke line. The devil's turned 'round on them.

Then there are the anecdotal and illustrative developments, such as at Starbucks and the NCAA. Both of these businesses have eaten the whole woke sandwich.

Starbucks famously thought that its blue haired baristas were the right people to teach America about race – meaning being avatar instructors of the Kendi-style notions that all white people, and only white people, are immutably racist, and that everything connected with whiteness is evil.

The NCAA similarly has happily set about demolishing the very college women's sports that it is bound to support and protect.

In allowing young men whose bodies were formed by years of testosterone to declare themselves women and then to romp through the women's sports, the NCAA destroyed the competitiveness and the dreams of collegiate glory of the genuine women over whom they towered and against whom they so unfairly competed.

Neither Starbucks nor the NCAA appear to have read the fine print in their contracts with the devil: if you sign up for woke, you'll disarm yourselves from fighting any of the woke program – just as Sir Thomas warned when Roper demanded he cut down all the laws in England.

When Starbucks' CEO Howard Schultz adopted the leftwing line about racism, he thereby signed up too for the

corollary position that racial inequality in outcome in arrests and jailing were *per se* racist, regardless of the behaviors of specific people. Meaning: if non-whites were being arrested and jailed at higher rates than whites, policing would have to be abolished.

Likewise he failed to realize that his grandstanding about equity included an endorsement of equity-based equality of outcome, and so empowered unionization efforts, including specifically at Starbucks.

Now, when Starbucks finds itself shutting an initial 16 stores (with more surely to come) in cities like San Francisco and Portland that followed most closely the prescriptions indicated by Schultz's evangelizing for the Devil of Woke, he responds with indignation.

Howie is now bemoaning that those cities have become unsafe and that unionization is bad in the long run for both Starbucks and its employees. He's right, but he of all people will not be heard to mouth these complaints.

He was himself a chief lumberjack cutting down the laws, basic economic knowledge and profound underlying moral premises that protected him and Starbucks from what's befallen them. The devil's turned 'round on him.

Whom can he ask for help, or to mourn? And note that even at this late remove, Schultz still can't admit the obvious: that it was the very principles that he so preeningly embraced that have led to all of these problems.

After all, once you sell your soul to the devil, he's hardly going to let you denounce him.

The case is the same with the NCAA. It too went all in on equity and on the other provisions of modern leftist confusion, including allowing people who were born and constructed as men to dominate women's sports, rolling back 40 years of progress.

How then could it effectively complain when the United States Supreme Court declared that student athletes should be able to earn some money for their efforts, instead of doing all their hard work for the benefit of wealthy schools and a massively profitable NCAA itself?

That is hardly an equitable outcome – especially considering the relative racial makeup of the parties concerned. And just as with Starbucks, the NCAA now faces a unionization crisis, as Penn State's football team leads what will likely be a broad, if perhaps uneven, movement toward student-athlete unionization.

That's just equity at work, right, NCAA? Devil's turned right 'round, folks. (Or, since it's the NCAA, surely *folx*?)

Then consider the raft of federal and state legislative proposals that seek to stop the mass resale of stolen goods.

The same companies that were happy to sign onto equity proposals that make cities unsafe for their citizens want a special carveout – an additional deal with the devil – to stop their establishments from being burgled while leaving their customers to get robbed on the way home.

It's a special kind of evil – and stupid – that, when the devil turns 'round on you, you gleefully link arms with him, continuing to do his bidding as long as he leaves you alone for just a little bit longer.

Additionally, and to keep today's theme alive, there are the ever-growing pile of stories about companies that are reaping what they have sown not in terms of their own stupid policies being visited against them, but rather in the sense of, as it were, "the wages of sin."

Consider how much, for instance, Warner Bros. Discovery is paying for its and DC Comics' embrace of woke: see the Daily Mail's delightful story, Holy Wokery, Batgirl! *Wokegirl* is so ghastly that, despite having spent at

least \$90 million on it already, Warner's new boss David Zaslav is sending it to a cave in the desert southwest somewhere to lie forever unseen.

The official story is that it's so unwatchably bad that it can't be fixed, but that's true of quite a lot of modern fare that gets released. The likelier story appears to be that the movie was unfixably the final move toward making the DC Comics movie realm wholly women-powered, with dirty evil toxic men like Batman and Superman killed off forever.

Vast piles of recent and not-so-recent market data suggest that the teenaged boys who are the only plausible mass audience for superhero movies don't much care to watch endless female-empowerment screeds that treat guys as evil or irrelevant. Go figure.

Finally, just because it's so funny: the women of *The View* invited Governor Ron DeSantis to join them on their program. That's weird, because within the recent memory even of Joyless Behar they have, amongst other things, called him "a negligent, homicidal sociopath," a "fascist and a bigot," and "anti-black" and "anti-gay."

He naturally declined this offer to be spat upon, but not because they lied about him viciously. Rather, he refused because no one cares about ABC (or CNN or MSNBC or the rest) anymore. They've destroyed their credibility, their respectability, and any conceivable reason to go on their programs. Good job, ladies.

It's been a bad month for the Corporate Woke Ropers of this world, now they've voluntarily flattened all their defenses, coast to coast.

Maybe it's time for them to start planting some trees and reseed the forests that used to protect them from the devil. They can't do that, though, until they acknowledge who the devil is and how they have helped him so much in recent years.

Otherwise, he's just going to keep knocking them flat.

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