

One insight that I owe to my reading of Robert Bellah's essay, "Class Wars and Culture Wars in the University Today," is the peculiar convergence of interests between "defenders of pre-modern tradition" and "the postmodernists."

If my interpretation of the normative tradition of the Enlightenment is sound, then, so far as followers of the Enlightenment (*sc.* modernists) are concerned, the fact that something is traditional is no more, even if no less, a reason for accepting it as valid than the fact that it is nontraditional—and vice versa. Modernists, in other words, are committed to critically validating *all* claims to validity, those of nontraditionalists (*sc.* modernists or postmodernists) as well as those of traditionalists (*sc.* defenders of premodern tradition).

So the only really important issue is whether or not one concedes that experience and reason are uniquely authoritative over all claims to validity, no matter whose. Modernists clearly and consistently make this concession, premodernists and postmodernists do not.

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