

The Backlash

A Column for the Politically Incorrect

Coeditors: Peter Hanus & Joseph Murphy

Political Correctness and the Cult of Intolerance

Editors' note: Because of the nature of this article, some people may find the reading heavy (sorry PHwt). The PHwts of this world may want to skip to the last section. Though references are not given, they will be made available to individual's upon request.

It has been referred to as "the new McCarthyism" and "fascism of the left." Those who abide by it, and enforce it, have been referred to as "tenured radicals," "the silencers," and "all-purpose victims." It has spawned beliefs and practices from the ludicrous to the insane; from the performance of pagan rites in a course on women's spirituality at U.P.E.I. to "anti-racism" seminars held in some American colleges "where all whites are racist, and only they can be racist," Whites, therefore, can only learn to become less racist. "Political Correctness" (or PC), as it has been called by proponents and opponents alike, has been primarily, though not exclusively, a movement on college campuses (it's starting to make an impact at U.P.E.I.). To look at what this frequently criticised movement is, three questions will be addressed: (1) what do the proponents of PC say it is, (2) what do the opponents of PC say it is, and (3) what has been its impact on college campuses throughout North America. It should become evident that PC has come to champion that which it preaches to be against: intolerance.

PC and the Multicultural Curriculum

"Political Correctness" as a term originated in the early part of the century, when it was used by some Marxists (those who adhere to the theories of Karl Marx, known as the FATHER of socialism and communism) to define their ideological stances. Anything that conformed to the Marxist ideology was "politically correct" and anything that didn't was "politically incorrect." This phraseology eventually dropped out of usage but was revived in the early eighties by "enlightened" university faculty pushing for the rights of minorities. According to the proponents of PC, these rights extend not only to job opportunities and equal pay, but also to proper repre-

entation in history, nondiscriminatory language usage, nondiscriminatory dress and demeanour, and even the development of nondiscriminatory science. This now leads us to the rehashed Marxist theories of the PC and how they are used to uncover such ghastly social wrongs as racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, lookism, classism, ageism, heterosexism, ableism, . . . (don't worry if you don't understand what all these terms mean, just as long as you get the main idea that everybody in society is oppressed--except healthy, white, heterosexual, European males). The basis-forming thesis for PC states that in Western society, white European males have traditionally held institutional power (i.e., access to resources and privileges through economics, networks, acceptance, etc.). With such power, white European males have created a society that acts in their own best interests, and have thereby created ideologies that protect their interests and oppress everyone else's. This ideological domination (referred to as "patriarchal hegemony") instills in minorities "false consciousness;" that is, those who are not white European males, and thus not benefactors of Western society, who accept the status quo are naive and are actually oppressed (even though they don't realise it). Some radical feminists claim that heterosexuality instills false consciousness in women/womyn/wimmin/womon, and thus women/etc. will never be truly free from patriarchal domination unless they become lesbians. This brings us to why the proponents of PC believe that PC is necessary in universities. Supposedly, contrary to the claims that academics have made over the years, these academics within our universities have not been searching for the "objective" (factual, value-free) truth, but rather have been promoting objectivity as a tool for research so that the accepted patriarchal ideology would not be questioned. Academia is not a place to search for the truth, but rather a power struggle between individuals to reveal that which is most beneficial to the individual. As a result, due to the high percentage of white European males that have been university professors, we have been presented with a view of the world that excludes other cultures, and even women. To rectify this, the works of such DWEMs (dead white European males) as Shakespeare and Plato must be taught beside, or be subordinate to the testimonials of oppressed Guatemalan women such as "I Rigoberta Menchu" (as well as the works of other minorities). Never mind that the originality and thought of Shakespeare and Plato are more apparent than in these much simpler works--as long as the author is a member of an oppressed minority she/(he) is "politically