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Postmodernism and Political Correctness: The Decline of Reason and Free Speech

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Master Degree in English: Literature & Civilisation**

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Dedication

*I would like to dedicate this work to everyone who believed in me, supported me,
and kept my motivation in check enough to reach this point.*

To my parents who never left me to struggle, especially the recent years.

To my dear sisters and brothers who had my back no matter what.

To my best friends, the one-and-onlies, “people”.

*And to a very special someone who made me feel like I can do anything, who is the
main reason I had this idea.*

And of course, I thank Allah for having been able to do all of this.

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My best regards go to the members of the jury, and a huge thanks to all my teachers and mentors.

Abstract:

During the past few decades, a controversial topic has been roaming mainly in the radar of the Western civilization. New political parties and new philosophies rose with ground-breaking ideas and demands for change in the political and social systems. Since the 1980's, the issues of political correctness and the postmodern activism have been triggering endless debates and discussions, as the Western world grew polarized. This topic has been an intense source for authors, philosophers, and journalists across Europe and the United States. Several books, articles, and debates have been produced to discuss this issue alone until this day. And while it is a widely known concept among intellectuals, the majority of people have yet to put their hands on its exact meaning, its real purpose, and its consequences. This study aims to provide the simplest possible definition for political correctness, to explore its history and context within the postmodernist thinking, and to clarify its effects on today's society, politics, and free speech.

Key words: political correctness; postmodernism; free speech; socialism; leftism; liberalism; Progressivism;

المخلص:

خلال العقود القليلة الماضية ، كان هناك موضوع مثير للجدل يدور بشكل رئيسي في رادار الحضارة الغربية. ظهرت أحزاب سياسية و فلسفات جديدة بأفكار ومطالب غير اعتيادية للتغيير في النظم السياسية والاجتماعية. منذ الثمانينيات من القرن الماضي ، كانت قضايا نشاطات ال"ما بعد الحديثة" و مواضيع "الصواب السياسي" أو "اللياقة السياسية" تثير مناقشات و مناظرات لا تنتهي ، حيث أن العالم الغربي انقسم الى طرفين. كان هذا الموضوع مصدرًا مكثفًا للمؤلفين والفلاسفة والصحفيين في جميع أنحاء أوروبا والولايات المتحدة. تم إنتاج العديد من الكتب والمقالات والمناقشات التي تتناول هذه المسألة وحدها حتى يومنا هذا. وبينما هو مفهوم معروف على نطاق واسع بين المثقفين ، إلا أن أغلبية الناس لم يتمكنوا بعد من تحديد مفهوم دقيق لهذا المصطلح، وهدفه الحقيقي ، وعواقبه. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقديم أبسط تعريف ممكن للصواب السياسي ، واستكشاف تاريخه وسياقه داخل مفهوم ما بعد الحداثة ، وتوضيح آثارها على المجتمع اليوم و على السياسة وحرية التعبير .

كلمات مفتاحية: الصواب السياسي، ما بعد الحداثة، حرية التعبير ، الاشتراكية، اليسارية، الليبرالية،

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Language has always been the ultimate means through which humans, not only communicate, but essentially spread knowledge and new ideas. It is an accessible ability that allows people to learn, teach, and create whatever they want of thoughts and beliefs. However, this freedom of thinking seems to be slowly declining recently. Today, ideas which are considered "radical" or "alien" are unaccepted. Authorities thrive to restrict individuals to a united and neutral thinking that satisfies all kinds of people. It is a postmodern ideology known as "political correctness".

A major part of politics has always been about discourse and the interpretation of the relationships between nations, between the law and the people, and between individuals within society. The postmodern thinking came to shift all these systems from the classical format into a new progressive format. It came to "correct" the wrongs and make dynamic changes. Generally, postmodernism revolves around the attempt to reject the modern assumptions about culture, identity, history and most importantly language. Postmodernism went far enough to, not only dismiss traditional norms and ethics, but also scientific standards and facts. It emerged basically to question all truths, but allow no speculations. This arguably falls under a violation of the basis of freedom of speech. In other words, postmodernism seeks to reform or "Correct" language itself and the way people think, through what is known by political correctness, or PC.

In his Manual on the "Ministeriosprobe" website, "Political Correctness and Postmodernism" 1998, Don Closson attempts to define the postmodern culture, and how it affects our thinking, but only from a religious point of view (particularly Christian) which is subjective and barely critical.

A manifesto under the title *2083 - A European Declaration of Independence*, was written by Anders Breivik and originally published on July 22, 2011. It depicts how society used to be prior to Political Correctness - the prime of freedom of speech and personal safety. Breivik tends to call it "Cultural Marxism", and he gives an explanation on how it reformed society to make them vulnerable to the introduction of economic Marxism and forced 'equality'. It includes Feminism as a major aspect of Political Correctness. The book almost covers all the elements to criticize the PC culture; however, the study strays from objectivity, as it is overshadowed by the bias, and its main aim is to trigger a civil war aiming to exterminate European Marxists and banish Muslims from Europe.

Dinesh D'Souza published his book *Illiberal Education: Political Correctness and the College Experience* in 1992, in which he discusses the effect of political correctness on free speech in academia, mentioning how it forces diversity to the point of keeping certain students from being admitted to some schools on the expense of others. Additionally, how the majority (whites, males, etc.) are discriminated in comparison to the minority groups in the name of diversity and public satisfaction. This book basically focuses on criticizing the liberal educational system, as it goes against the original standards of liberalism, according to D'Souza.

Jonathan Zimmerman posted an essay, "The Two Kinds of PC", on the "Inside Higher Ed" website on June 16, 2016, where he explains two kinds of Political Correctness. He dismisses one, but justifies and approves of the other, even though both approaches share a similar danger and abuse.

Professor Stephen R. C. Hicks heavily takes on the subject of Postmodernism and explains it in his book *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to*

Foucault, originally published in 2004. He provides a controversial insight on the reasons why postmodernism has been the most powerful intellectual movement of the 20th century. Dr Hicks also discusses Free Speech in relation to Postmodernism, in an extensional essay added to the book. However, his explanation mainly deals with the radical relativism and anti-foundationalism to criticize the political "Left" in particular, without tackling the relation between postmodernism and political correctness and their influence on freedom of speech.

The study will examine political correctness and its context within postmodernism. It will discuss how both concepts are collectively violating freedom of speech and free thinking. Moreover, the paradox in the fact that postmodernism puts everything into question, but simultaneously excludes itself from that questioning. The study will also delve into all forms of the postmodern influence on society, media, even science and other conventionalities. Additionally, it will discuss the suspicious state in which language has been made to by political correctness, and all the factors leading up to that result.

This study aims to reclaim freedom of speech and free thinking by clarifying the fact that Postmodernism is unnecessarily crossing certain limits as it is rejecting, and incorrectly modifying some of the most conventional principles that defined our way of living and sustained it, such as language, free thinking and logic. That way, it only poses as a threat to civilization and true knowledge. Therefore, Postmodernism should be reviewed, if not discarded at all. And no opinion or view should be labeled as politically correct or incorrect.

Central to this study is the overlooked reality that political correctness disguises as a call for equality, while it actually presents a false image of it, as postmodernism keeps pushing towards an abuse of relativism. The main question is as follows: to what extent do

Postmodernism and Political Correctness jeopardize language and freedom of speech, while disguising as a noble cause?

Sub-Questions:

- 1 - What is the relationship between postmodernism and political correctness?
- 2 – What are the limits that political correctness has exceeded, and what are the consequences?
- 3 - Why is political correctness targeting language, and what is its true aim?
- 4 – How can we protect the basis of freedom of speech, and at the same time achieve equality without violating human principles?

Hypotheses:

- 1 –Postmodernism is the whole and political correctness is part of it as a tool in its mission to make reformations.
- 2 - Political Correctness is trying to monitor all opinions and censor certain thoughts. It touches on people's own personal views and beliefs, and therefore violates the right for freedom of speech. It tends to create a unified world without offenses, but it ends up creating a dystopia.
- 3 – Political correctness targets language because its aim is to mind-wash, and to create unified popular opinion to keep control of the world. Language has become a victim of euphemism and censorship.
- 4 - The Postmodern Culture should either be reviewed and reduced to certain limits in its theory-application to exclude conventionalities, or simply proceed its principle of questioning, but also include itself in that questioning, fairly, so that each individual can have their own opinion. As

granting the freedom of speech to everyone can bring no harm, as long as that freedom is concerned with language and discourse, rather than actions.

Methodology

This study will revolve around contemporary political and societal circumstances. It will discuss the phenomena known as political correctness and how it is changing the world and the way individuals communicate and think. The methodology is Descriptive Analytical, in which qualitative data will be collected and analyzed with regards to history, theoretical approaches and current political events. This procedure will follow a close reading over a selection of quotations, definitions, and points of views to understand the notion of political correctness, its context within postmodernism, and its effects on discourse and free thinking.

The Structure of the Study

This study will consist of three chapters. The first chapter will discuss a variation of definitions for postmodernism, political correctness, language and freedom of speech. Additionally, it will provide a clarification about the connection between postmodernism and political correctness, and the context which the two terms share. Furthermore, it will explore the ostensible and external aims of the politically correct movements. The second chapter will examine those aims and reflect them on the contradicting consequences of those movements and ideologies. It will also theoretically review the effects of the PC culture on language through euphemism, and how it potentially threatens to restrict people from freedom of speech. Finally, the third chapter will dive into real life events that are centered on political correctness and its consequences. It will discuss political situations, media, college atmospheres and most importantly society.

Chapter One:

A Historical Background of Postmodernism and Political Correctness

Introduction

The term Political Correctness has gone through multiple contexts through history before finally settling on a single one. In the recent decades, it has been used as a critique towards particular political movements and campaigns, and their goals to achieve equality and neutrality, especially in the United States. While these movements are receiving a notable amount of support, many however agree that their methods are questionable. The idea is that these movements thrive to “correct” each individual’s “political stance” to fit the convenience of all groups of people. Additionally, Political Correctness (PC) is often considered part of the postmodern movement. This chapter aims to explain Postmodernism within the context of Political Correctness, and define both terms, with their aspects, goals, and relation to free speech.

I) 1. Political Correctness through the Postmodern Lens

Around the mid-1980s, the notion of Postmodernism emerged among academic studies and it has since proven to be the most vigorous intellectual movement until this moment. It was embraced by very famous public thinkers such as Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, who are arguably the pioneers of the postmodern revolution. It covered a wide variety of fields including art, music, literature, and science for that matter. Evidently, Postmodernism can be a very vast concept to simply be restricted to a single and concise definition. Nevertheless, the discussion will be mainly concerned with the aspects of Political Correctness and Freedom of Speech.

One of the latest and most relevant discussions about postmodernism within a political context is that of the American philosopher, Stephen Hicks. As of recently, he has become perhaps the most recognizable critic and commentator on postmodernism, alongside Canadian

psychologist Jordan Peterson. Professor Peterson has praised Hicks' book *Explaining Postmodernism* from 2004. He emphasized its focus on defining postmodernism from a political point of view, as it allowed him to tackle on the issue of Political Correctness throughout his campaign until this day.

From a general overview of the concept, Postmodernism is a revolutionary movement that followed the classical Modernism, as the name suggests. It often refers to the contemporary radical ideas that call for change. "We are postmodern now. Leading intellectuals tell us that modernism has died, and that a revolutionary era is upon us—an era liberated from the oppressive structures of the past," (Hicks 1). Postmodernism has come mainly to question and reject traditional constructs and norms, conducted mostly by its predecessor, Modernism.

Stephen Hicks broke down the major targets of postmodernism, by referencing Michel Foucault. He clarified the fact that Foucault based his analyses in an attempt to oppose the "universal necessities" or basically the principles that humans lived by. And the fact that "reason" and "truth" became of meaningless nature to even depend on (2). This basically implies that truth and knowledge, as we know them, must be thrown away. It is an extreme form of Relativism¹, where no truth is absolute, and no reasoning to convey rights or wrongs. Feelings and thoughts tend to be no longer constrained, which lets anybody do or say whatever they please (Hicks 2).

However, not all postmodernists lean to the artistic view of the movement. Many approach it to practice a sort of political activism². They basically believe that dominance and

¹ **Relativism:** the doctrine that knowledge, truth, and morality exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context, and are not absolute.

² **Activism:** the policy or action of using vigorous campaigning to bring about political or social change.

oppression are heavily exercised in the Western civilization in the name of reason and truth. Or like Jean-François Lyotard states it: “Reason and power are one and the same,” (Hicks 3). This implies that postmodernism wants to confront this incorporation of power and reason. Professor Hicks goes on to explain that postmodernism seeks to exercise power for the purpose of social change and to fight the “political horrors” of our time. Such horrors can be simply illustrated by the sufferance of certain minority groups, like women, the poor and racial minorities. While it is claimed that the pain of those horrors aren’t equally suffered by the males, whites, and the rich, as they are among those who exercise this power (3).

Jordan Peterson resonates heavily with the point regarding the postmodernists’ view on the manifest of power. He implies it in a lecture published in 2017 for the TV Program *Ideacity*, where he attempted to define Political Correctness. In the lecture, Peterson describes PC as a “paradoxical amalgam³” of Postmodernism and Marxism. He claims that Postmodernism adopts the central claim of Marxism which suggests that the world is mainly built around groups of “oppressors” and “oppressed”.

Jordan Peterson does not stop at that point only however; he also explains that another claim by the postmodernists is that there is an infinite amount of ways to interpret any set of phenomena. At the same time, though, no particular interpretation should be privileged above any others. This means all facts are to be questioned; however, no speculation as to what could be actually true is allowed. In another word, there is no absolute truth, but no particular truth can be chosen or approved, not even if it were scientific. It could be argued that this contradicts the basis of freedom of speech and freedom of belief.

³ **Amalgam:** a mixture or blend.

At first, Postmodernism gives the impression that there is a freedom of thinking when it opens everything to an infinite amount of interpretation. But this quickly backfires with the fact that this movement falsifies all facts without leaving real possibilities, or offering alternatives. It basically wipes the page blank, leaving it that way forever. Daniel Overgaauw, a student of International & European Law at the University of Groningen, who has a particular interest in the philosophy of law, he says that liberty is an essential element in finding the truth, and that “wrong truths” help us identify the right ones. He discusses freedom of speech:

The idea of ‘truth’ not only logically implies the existence of something called ‘untruth’, just like the existence of ‘human’ requires the existence of ‘non-human’ (e.g. animals and minerals) and ‘tree’ requires the existence of something like ‘non-tree’, it also suggests that the untrue should be something which can be heard and can therefore be contested: if you prevent a certain view from being expressed, there is no longer any discussion possible. (The Paradoxes of Liberty)

This means that in order to have a decent free discussion, all opinions, no matter how wrong, should be discussed and heard, until truth is achieved. Postmodernism on the other hand, discards this trait, by rejecting all truths, without allowing any alternatives. This forces a sense of meaninglessness, and violates freedom of discussion.

In conclusion, postmodernism is strongly connected to political activism, as it seeks to exercise power to help the supposed “Oppressed” confront the supposed “Oppressors”. And that is by any means possible, even if it meant defying reason and logic. Political Correctness is its main tool, and it comes in all shapes and forms, whether by decreasing freedom of speech,

propaganda, or even abuse of power. So what is Political Correctness? What aims does it seek, and how can it be related to freedom of speech?

I) 2. Modern Political Correctness

Whenever political correctness is mentioned, freedom of speech has to follow. They are often associated with each other in a conflicting manner. Each time someone is described as “politically correct”, it is automatically assumed that they lack genuineness and freedom of thought. And that they are restricted to the system, and not allowed to speak freely.

The term “Freedom of Speech” can be defined as the state of being free to speak without any restrictions. The *Oxford Dictionaries* website defines it as “the power or right to express one's opinions without censorship, restraint, or legal penalty.” Meaning every individual is free to express their point of view, and no authority has the right to stop them. However, freedom of speech can have its own exceptions.

It is undeniable that speech can be used unfairly and for illegal purposes. Such uses can be exemplified through hate speech, fraud, or defamation⁴. Freedom of speech is “the right of people to express their opinions publicly without governmental interference, subject to the laws against libel⁵, incitement⁶ to violence or rebellion, etc.” (Dictionary.com) this basically implies that, while everyone is free to think and interact with whatever thoughts they please, they still have to deal with the consequences of their speech. Governments are obligated to ban hate

⁴ **Defamation:** the action of damaging the good reputation of someone; slander or libel.

⁵ **Libel:** a published false statement that is damaging to a person's reputation.

⁶ **Incitement:** encouraging a person to commit a crime or break the law.

speech and incitement, as it is justified to have restrictions to protect public interest or the rights and reputations of people (What is freedom of speech?).

But sometimes restrictions can go further than what can be justified. It is a violation to the right of freedom of speech when prohibition goes far enough to ban certain expressions unreasonably labeled as “hate speech”, or imprison people for simply having “radical” ideas. In addition, there comes a serious problem when defamation laws stop legitimate criticism of a government or public official (What is freedom of speech?). This is where political correctness comes into play. Many times people are arrested for laying out radical ideas, legitimate criticism, or even speaking a specific language that is questionably labeled as racist or sexist. They call these people “politically incorrect”.

In the simplest and most modern meaning of the term, Political Correctness basically refers to the avoidance of using language, policies and actions that could be offensive to others, especially those relating to sex and race (Cambridge English Dictionary). However, the meaning of “Political Correctness” can be diverse and relative, as it has gone through multiple uses through history, and within different contexts.

The earliest record of its usage goes back to the early-to-mid 20th century. One of the first few appeared in a report by The New York Times in 1934, stating that only pure “Aryans⁷” whose opinions are “politically correct” were granted reporting permits by Nazi Germany (How ‘politically correct’ went from compliment to insult). It addressed the German strict orthodoxy in giving permits only to journalists whose opinions are approved and acceptable by the fascist government. The next known use of the term, within the same period, was during the debates

⁷ **Aryans:** people of Indo-European heritage.

between American Communists and American Socialists. The latter used the term “politically correct” to call out and criticize the former when they supported all the policies of the Soviet Union without question.

American educator Herbert Kohl addresses these debates, in the late 1940s and early 1950s:

The term "politically correct" was used disparagingly, to refer to someone whose loyalty to the CP line overrode compassion, and led to bad politics. It was used by Socialists against Communists, and was meant to separate out Socialists who believed in egalitarian moral ideas from dogmatic Communists who would advocate and defend party positions regardless of their moral substance. (16)

The term disappeared the following decades, and only by the 1970's that it was back into the scene, with the emergence of what was known as the New Left. They were a group of activists who campaigned for a broad range of American social issues such as civil and political rights, feminism, abortion rights, gender roles and drug policy reforms. They used the term “Politically Correct” as a self-critic satire. It was their way to convey self-awareness, to ridicule the critics, and to protect their efforts for social change from being considered too rigid (Aufderheide).

By the 1980's and 1990's the term was starting to become widespread, and commonly used among articles and several intellectuals. Allan Bloom published his 1987 book *The Closing of the American Mind*, in which he criticizes the American higher education, claiming that a rigid ideology was being implemented in universities. Many interpreted this as a direct assault towards

political correctness, such as the Professor of English literary and cultural studies at CMU Jeffrey J. Williams (11). It was suggested that Bloom's book was the genesis of the forthcoming and ever-growing campaign against political correctness. The term became part of the American Conservative lexicon. After it used to be an ambiguous term of the Far Left (New Left), American Conservatives were then using the term against progressive teaching methods and curriculum changes in the secondary schools and universities of the U.S (Whitney and Wartella). From then on, it was commonly used as a pejorative⁸ phrase in many political debates, and it was even associated with the term "Thought Police"⁹ in certain articles discussing Political Correctness in *Forbes* and *Newsweek* in late 1990 (Whitney and Wartella).

The former U.S. President George H.W. Bush gave a commencement speech in May 1991, at the University of Michigan, where he used the term, saying: "The notion of political correctness has ignited controversy across the land. And although the movement arises from the laudable desire to sweep away the debris of racism and sexism and hatred, it replaces old prejudice with new ones. It declares certain topics off-limits, certain expression off-limits, even certain gestures off-limits." Bush was criticizing political correctness, implying that although it does have noble aims, it tends to push beyond them, and only solve problems by creating more.

Eventually, the term has become negative in nature. It is only used to describe and to criticize anyone belonging to the Far Left, or supporting their movements. This means, that there is no neutral way to use the term. There are those who acknowledge it and criticize it (Conservatives), and those who deny the term and its meaning, and approve of the Far-Left

⁸ **Pejorative:** expressing contempt or disapproval.

⁹ **Thought Police:** In the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, by George Orwell, the Thought Police are the secret police of the "superstate" Oceania, who discover and punish "thoughtcrime", personal and political thoughts unapproved by the Party.

principles. It has gained a reputation so severe that it led some commentators to criticize its usage. Polly Toynbee from *The Guardian* stated in 2010, that "the phrase 'political correctness' was born as a coded cover for all who still want to say Paki, spastic, or queer". This meant to say that political correctness is an excuse to allow using words and expressions that are arguably considered as "racist" or "inappropriate".

The term will keep being associated with these movements in the meantime, whether they embraced it or not. So it is safe to refer to these movements altogether as "political correctness" in further discussions. Political correctness is a system that is being implemented by the political Left wing in the United States. The aims of this system are generally about helping minorities (women, blacks, or homosexuals) to gain equality with their "counterparts" (males, whites, or straights). In addition to altering language, and limiting certain expressions to supposedly cease "hate speech", or any offensive words. All of this is in hopes to achieve equality, justice, and public satisfaction in total. At least, that is what they claim.

I) 3. The Ostensible¹⁰ Aims and Policies of the PC culture

3.1. A Background on the Left Wing

After decades of different uses in multiple contexts, the term political correctness has finally settled on its modern final stage. It is now mainly concerned with the late postmodern political activism, mostly conducted by the Left wing in the United States. The latter, often referred to by "The Progressive Left", has gone through a long history of conflict against

¹⁰ **Ostensible:** stated or appearing to be true, but not necessarily so.

religion, social constructs, and more importantly Capitalism¹¹. The roots date back to the French Revolution during the late 18th century.

The anti-monarchist who supported the revolution sat to the left of the presiding member's chair in the parliament, in opposition to those who were in favor of the “old regime” on the right (Knapp and Wright). However, later in the mid-19th century, the French Left expanded their interests furthermore around nationalism, socialism, democracy, anti-clericalism¹², and especially Marxism. At the time, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels published their *Communist Manifesto* which influenced and promoted the idea that all human history is the history of class struggle. This marked the cornerstone of today’s Left-wing policies, which is mainly based on overthrowing Capitalism and creating a classless, stateless, communist society.

Unlike the French, though, the United States’ left wing focuses less on Communism, and set their goals more about Socialism and anti-hierarchy. They are mostly influenced by Thomas Paine’s theories about the redistribution of resources in order to achieve social equality. It was a concept which he called “Asset-based Egalitarianism¹³”. There have been many different views about how to reach a classless and stateless society, encouraged especially by delegates from the International Workingmen's Association (Marshall 9).

The American Leftists basically oppose social hierarchy and thrive for social equality and egalitarianism. They aim to support those who are oppressed and disadvantaged within society against those who aren’t, in addition to providing opportunities to the minorities and releasing them from unjustified inequalities. Their goal is social justice (Smith and Tatalovich 30). The

¹¹ **Capitalism:** an economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than by the state.

¹² **Anti-clericalism:** the opposition to religious authority, typically in social or political matters.

¹³ **Egalitarianism:** the doctrine that all people are equal and deserve equal rights and opportunities.

minorities in question are represented evidently by the women; homosexuals; people of color such as the blacks and Latinos; and very recently transgenders¹⁴. In addition, other groups include the poor and those with special needs. All of which are to reduce Capitalism, white supremacy, and male dominance in the current society; and achieve multiculturalism and gender neutrality.

3.2. The Progressive Movements

Progressivism is the dominant feature within the modern leftist system, which mainly refers to the social movements that seek to influence social or political system changes that serve and appeal best to the community. The following are a few examples of those movements:

a) The Feminist Movement

This social and political movement is mainly concerned with the rights and demands of women. Ever since the first wave of feminism back in the late 19th century in the US, its main goal has been about achieving political, economic, personal, and social equality between sexes (Beasley 3-11). This means equality in opportunities, outcomes, and treatment in education, at work and any other environment, the same as men. The demands of these movements include the right to vote, to work, and the right to earn fair wages. In addition, it was thanks to these movements that abortion is now legalized in most states, and that protection against sexual harassment and domestic violence has increased (Echols). Feminism continues its campaign to this day seeking to achieve more demands for the women.

¹⁴ **Transgenders:** used to describe someone who feels that they are not the same gender.

b) The Civil Rights Movements

Besides feminism, there have been multiple other movements that aimed to ensure the rights of other certain groups of civilians, most importantly the people of color, the disabled and the LGBT¹⁵ community which includes the homosexuals and transgenders. These rights basically guarantee the physical and mental safety of people, and protection from discrimination (Civil Rights Act 1964).

The blacks' civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s took place in the United States to protest for equal rights under the law. As for the LGBT community, human rights and civil rights organizations pushed the United States to legalize same-sex marriage in 2015, after it already had been legalized in multiple other nations.

All of the above, and more were movements that occurred, and still are occurring, thanks to the leftists. The previously mentioned "New Left" of the 1960s and 1970s only enhanced and improved the process of the overall campaign on its quest to reach these social goals.

c) Euphemism and Censorship in Language

In addition to movements that contributed in the practical changes of the social system, the Left has also shown a relentless effort in trying to change certain aspects of language. The main idea is that there are certain words and expressions that might be offensive or cause discontent towards particular groups of people. Euphemism means to describe the language or words that are used alternatively in the place of those inappropriate or profane expressions (Webster's Online Dictionary). There can be many examples for euphemisms, such as the

¹⁵ **LGBT:** community of those lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered.

euphemism for “die” which is “pass way”, or “Damn it” being replaced by “Darn it”. Other expressions are often completely banned without any replacements.

However, the left focuses on much more controversial expressions to replace. Some words they deemed as pejorative and hateful were demanded to be either banned or replaced. Rosa’s Law is perhaps one of the most famous achievements for the left in the United States, as the former president Barack Obama signed the bill in October 5th 2009. It is a law that replaces expressions such as "mental retardation" with "intellectual disability" instead. There are other euphemisms that the left movements are currently trying to implement such as “gay” instead of “homosexual”, "pro-choice" instead of "pro-abortion", and other words considered misogynistic¹⁶ and sexist towards women, such as “girl” to be replaced by “female student” in schools (Conservapedia).

The goal of euphemism and censorship is mainly to fight a problem in particular. The term for this problem was coined in the 1970’s by Dr. Chester Pierce, and used in 2010 by Derald Wing Sue in his book *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*. It is called Microaggression, which means a “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color.”(xvi) The term was first used to refer to the insults made by non-blacks towards the blacks. However, by the early 21st century, the term was starting to be applied in the situations of all other groups that are considered marginalized or discriminated, including women, the LGBT community, the poor and the disabled (Paludi M 22).

¹⁶ **Misogyny:** dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women.

All of these previously mentioned aspects of the Left can basically be referred to as the “political correctness”. They seek to correct the social and political system to best fit all kinds of groups without discrimination or unfairness. Every single individual is obligated to adapt to these newly corrected systems. And those who oppose or disagree with at least one aspect, they are automatically condemned by the leftists, and considered to be “politically incorrect” and contributing in the discrimination of the minorities.

It is worth noting that the Leftists are often associated with the Liberals in the contemporary usage of both terms in the United States, with the Rights being in the same page as the Conservatives. Although the classical meanings of the terms do not completely match, both the Leftists and Liberals focus on socialism and the support of the minorities (Kazin).

Conclusion

Political Correctness is a system which has risen following the postmodern movement in the late decades. It is the tool used by the left activists that seek to make changes within the social and political systems, in the name of social equality and multiculturalism. These changes include exercising power to reclaim the rights of minorities, and altering language to avoid offending certain groups of people. Even though their aims could be justified, their methods, however, can be questionable. Can Political Correctness cross limits? Is freedom of speech in danger?

Chapter Two:

The Drawbacks of Political Correctness

Introduction

Recently, the Progressive Left in the United States of America has been conducting a wide set of activist movements. They mainly seek social and political changes within communities and laws all across the country. Among these changes is stopping discrimination towards minority groups and achieving equality between women and men, straights and gays, and blacks and whites. More importantly, is that these postmodern movements hope to alter language for the sake of replacing or discarding certain expressions that are considered offensive or inappropriate. They seek to create a system that is “politically correct”. And anything that goes against these principles will be condemned and labeled “incorrect”. Although these goals seem to be noble and righteous, some argue that the methods can be questionable and tend to be “resentful”. And most of the aims of these movements are arguably more than what meets the eye. This chapter aims to clarify the paradoxes claimed to be in the postmodern framework, and dive into the backlashes of the “political correctness” system.

II) 1. The Paradoxes of the Postmodernism

Within the context of political activism, postmodernism mainly revolves around the Marxist claim that the world is built between “Oppressors” and “Oppressed”, in addition to the claim that no particular interpretation should be privileged above others, all within the infinite number of interpretations (Peterson). As mentioned previously, dominance and oppression are mainly exercised in the name of reason and truth according to the postmodernists (Hicks 3). The idea is that the world has only one currency, and that is power. For postmodernists, there is no

such thing as “reason” or “truth”, all of which are the tools and excuses for those who are in power to keep their positions. However, there are problems and contradictions with these claims.

In his lecture on *Ideacity*, Jordan Peterson points out most of the paradoxes of postmodernism. His first point regards the claim of “infinite interpretations”. He explains that it is accurate to assume that the world can be interpreted in an infinite amount of ways, but the conclusion that no interpretation should be privileged above all others is wrong. Peterson argues that it does not mean that there are no “viable interpretations”. There is at least one correct answer among all of the possibilities.

Peterson asks the question “what constitutes constraints on the viability of an interpretation?” Meaning to ask what guides humans to the “right” and “correct” interpretations? He simply answers this by implying that the reason why humans are still alive and are still prospering today is because they followed the right interpretations, otherwise they would be extinct. He uses the theory of evolution, explaining that it solves the problem of interpretations “by killing every single thing that interprets things badly enough to die.” This implies that humans survived despite the infinite amount of possible interpretations, by only following those that are viable so far. Those who follow the wrong ones just fail or die. Peterson puts this into perspective by relating to “success”. People not only survive, but also succeed thanks to viably interpreting the world, and competing and cooperating according to its rules. The rules in this context refer to logic and reason, which Postmodernism happens to be against.

The postmodernists want to give the idea that people do not have to be logical and reasonable in order to survive and succeed. Instead, they resort to the idea of “powerlessness”, instead of “incompetence”. Some individuals often use their failure as an excuse to claim being oppressed. “In my honest opinion, it’s wrong to play the victim game when it comes to

oppression. Not everything unfair in life is from being oppressed.” (Dalog) This point covers some examples in which blacks play the “race card”, and women play the “sex card”. All of this brings the discussion to the other postmodernist claim, Marxism, which is the idea that the world consists of “oppressor” and “oppressed”.

The first paradox with this claim, according to Jordan Peterson, is that this idea is an interpretation in itself, which contradicts the first claim about the infinity of interpretations of the world, and that no particular one could be viable. The second point that Peterson explains is that the only reason that could possibly let postmodernism embrace Marxism is that they are compassionate with the oppressed, even though “paradox” is a technical part of the theory. However, he does not believe compassion is part of their claim. He insists that it is impossible to claim having compassion for the oppressed, and simultaneously abide with the tenets of Marxism as a functional political doctrine, especially because of certain “abhorrent political practices” such as those of the Stalinist Soviet Union.

The most important argument that Jordan Peterson offers next is concerning the postmodernists’ claim that the world is represented by a hierarchical pyramid of power. He basically supports Stephen Hicks’ explanation, as he associates the matter to the “Nietzschean Ressentiment” or “resentment” (Hicks 192). Nietzsche mentions the concept of “Ressentiment¹⁷” in his *Genealogy of Morals*, as he explains the idea of revenge for justice, by those who are weak, poor, and less successful, towards the richer and more successful counterparts. Stephen Hicks explains the concept as follows:

¹⁷ **Ressentiment:** the French translation of the English word resentment, which is a psychological state resulting from suppressed feelings of envy and hatred which cannot be satisfied.

As a result, the weak feel frustrated: they cannot get what they want out of life. They become envious of the strong, and they also secretly start to hate themselves for being so cowardly and weak. But no one can live thinking he or she is hateful. And so the weak invent a rationalization—a rationalization that tells them they are the good and the moral because they are weak, humble, and passive. Patience is a virtue, they say, and so is humility, and so is obedience, and so is being on the side of the weak and the downtrodden. And of course the opposites of those things are evil—aggressiveness is evil, and so is pride, and so is independence, and so is being physically and materially successful. (193)

This implies that “Ressentiment” gives those that are less fortunate the excuse to claim being oppressed within the system of the world. It becomes instantly easier to justify failure with weakness, helplessness, or being disadvantaged under oppression. Therefore, it would only make sense to demand equal advantages. However, the demands in this case appear to be more than about equality.

Jordan Peterson adds in his lecture that if the postmodernists think that the relationship established between hierarchies within that pyramid is power and power only, then it is safe to assume that the only motivation for postmodernists is the will to take over that power, rather than merely seeking equality. Considering the Marxist claim that a world of hierarchy is inevitable suggests that “equality” is almost impossible. All of which concludes that postmodernists only seek to sit on the top of that pyramid using power. The oppressed in this case, does not want to be equal to the oppressor, but rather wants to replace them.

A notable example would be George Orwell’s criticism towards socialism in the UK, in his book *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Orwell discusses the socialist intellectuals who supposedly

showed support towards the poor and the working class. However, he doubts that fact, implying that socialists did not actually love the poor, but simply hated the rich (161).

In general, political correctness is a dangerous ideological game boosted by the postmodernist doctrine. The postmodernists' main goal is to disregard reason and truth in order to expand their credibility, but at the same time to discard any disagreements. In addition, it aims to victimize the less successful (oppressed) and identify those who are more successful and in higher positions as perpetrators (oppressor). It seeks to implement changes within society and laws to pull the hierarchy down and take it over. The Progressive Left and the Liberals are the major leads in this politically correct ideology, operating through their social movements, and forcing language and speech restrictions.

II) 2. The Backlashes of the PC Culture

The first chapter clarified the ostensible goals of the progressive left's movements to force a politically correct system. They generally aim to restore the rights of those oppressed minority groups, like the women, the black, and the gays. And they want to stop everything they deem as an image of discrimination, especially parts of language. However, the resentful methods used throughout these movements, and the reactions towards disagreements, are apparently questionable. The paradoxes with their doctrine's principles, postmodernism, all suggest that the goal behind these movements isn't only what is offered. And the results of these movements do not give optimistic and civilized impressions. This section will provide a different perspective into the political correctness movement, and its backlashes on society, politics, and freedom of speech.

The theory of “ressentiment” that concerns the postmodernists and socialists can be practically illustrated through today’s progressive movements. These political movements include feminism, anti-racism, and anti-homophobia. In addition to George Orwell’s theory about the socialists’ hate towards the rich, other examples of “ressentiment” are seen in the hate that these minority groups project against the supposedly superior and oppressing majority that include the males, the whites, and the straights.

As previously mentioned, the minorities often use the excuse of oppression to justify failure, win over arguments, and/ or gain advantages. Such cases include the blacks using “the race card” or women using “the gender card”. Playing a card is an idiomatic phrase that refers to the exploitation of racist or sexist attitudes in the audience by accusing others of racism or misogyny (Wikipedia). For instance, a woman would accuse a company of being misogynistic for not hiring her, saying the reason would be her gender, instead of incompetence. This could be considered part of the known term “appeal to motive”.

Appeal to motive is a certain argumentative method through which one counters an argument or a statement by bringing up the motives of the opposing subject (Wikipedia). In the previous example, the woman assumed that the motive which made the company refuse her is sexism or misogyny. “A common feature of appeals to motive is that only the possibility of a motive is shown, without showing the motive actually existed or, if the motive did exist, that the motive played a role in forming the argument and its conclusion.” (Wikipedia)

However, “ressentiment” isn’t the only problem of these “identity politics” movements that operate all under political correctness. There are a few more contradictions and serious violations with their claims. What are the problems of each one of these movements?

2.1. The Epidemic of the New Wave Feminism

Feminism has been around for a long period of time, especially throughout the Western world ever since the first wave during the 19th and early 20th century. It was a period of feminist activity and thought that focused on legal issues, but most importantly on gaining the right to vote. After that, came the second-wave feminism of the early 1960s, which focused on more issues than just active suffrage¹⁸, such as sexuality, family, and work opportunities. However, more than two decades later, a couple of more particularly controversial waves of feminism followed: the third wave around the 1990's and the fourth wave from 2008 until today.

These new waves mainly revolve around the issues of violence against women, abortion rights, and workplace matters such as the unfair maternity-leave laws and single working mothers' rights (Baumgardner and Richards 77), (Iannello 70-77). But perhaps most of what could have drawn controversy towards the new wave, are issues like the concept of "patriarchy", contradictions about "sexual liberation", and "gender wage gap". These recent feminist movements have received multiple criticisms and disapprovals for several reasons.

One of the initial and major criticisms the new wave feminism received, is the lack of cohesion. Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner, an American author and speaker, discussed the main problem as to why this generation finds it difficult to take the term "feminism" seriously anymore, in her book *The F Word*. The term quickly became pejorative and gained a bad reputation, and Rowe-Finkbeiner argues that the main issue is the absence of a single cause for

¹⁸ **Suffrage:** the right to vote in political elections.

the third-wave feminism. Each wave had a theme of its own. The first wave focused on the enfranchisement¹⁹ of women, while the second dealt with equal opportunities for work and sexual discrimination. As for the recent waves, they only seem as “extensions” or unnecessary follow-ups to the previous waves, without any real new cause to fight for (85).

Another controversy concerns the concept of “patriarchy”. “Modern feminism has degraded into an angry and bitter man-hating movement of females (and some males) who would rather blame the patriarchy for all of their problems instead of putting in the necessary effort to achieve what they want in life.” (Navarro) Patriarchy is the masculine social system which women believe is set against them. This idea claims that women are a minority, and men are an oppressing evil which should be fought and brought down by all costs. It neglects the goal of “equality”, and suggests that men are the enemy instead of being the women’s equals. This shapes a perfect example of Nietzsche’s theory about “ressentiment”.

Patriarchy is the main basis behind the concept of “gender cards” played by women against any given inconvenience. Both Hillary Clinton and Marine Le Pen were accused of using the woman card during their campaigns of the American Presidential Election of 2016 and the French Presidential Election of 2017 respectively. They allegedly tried to exploit the feminist movements to gain the votes and the compassion of the popular, medial, and politically correct opinion (O’Neill).

The concept of patriarchy draws more controversy as feminists assume that it gives them a “pass” from being sexist or oppressing in any way. It is often claimed that minority groups like women or blacks, can never be oppressors against the majority like the males or whites. In other

¹⁹ **Enfranchisement:** the giving of a right or privilege, especially the right to vote.

words, for feminists, women cannot be sexist because men have the power (George). However, it is logically unfair to take the historical context of women's oppression as an excuse to practice prejudice against males. Olivia Goldhill, a journalist from Quartz, discusses this topic: "...these broad social inequalities don't give women permission to freely commit the same transgressions as men." It is generally a topic related to "reverse discrimination" which refers to a case in which members of a dominant or majority group are discriminated against by a minority or historically disadvantaged group (Wikipedia), but feminists tend to deny that it is even possible, claiming that oppression and discrimination are not the same (Fabello).

Another argument brought up against the new wave feminism, is that it ignores the concept of intersectionality. Coined by black feminist scholar Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in 1989, the term explains that there are other factors through which individuals can be oppressed, other than gender (Cooper). These factors include class, race, religion, age, and disabilities, and they are all involved together in each individual's experience within oppression. The term calls out the fallacy in the feminist claim that gender is "the primary factor determining a woman's fate" (Hooks). It basically argues that feminism so far has only served white women, and forgot about the rest of the more marginalized from women of color.

Furthermore, the new wave has been criticized for their contradictory principles concerning "sexual liberation" and "women empowerment". The problem started with the second wave of feminism around the 1980's, as the feminist movement was divided under a disagreement in terms of sexual liberation of women. A debate referred to as "Feminist sex wars" started between anti-pornography feminists, and the sex-positive feminists. The former viewed any sexual representation of women as encouraging violence towards women, such as

pornography. As for the latter, it viewed all of these sexual representations as empowering for women, and they used them to express their femininity and to challenge objectification (Iannello). Many critics think that this feud resulted in the third wave feminism. These new waves are often associated with the “Raunch Culture” for their glorification of sex and femininity (Newman). However feminists claim to have “fused” between these two views, implying that the ability to make autonomous choices about self-expression is the essence of women empowerment, whether it was anti-pornography or sex-positive. Both views are now accepted as forms of self-expression. For instance, they consider the "hijab" as an act of resistance against the Western’s hate towards Islam and the "belly shirt" an act of resistance against the sexual representation of women by the patriarchy (Newman). This created contradictions and confusion among the critics.

One of the most important criticisms the new wave feminism has received is about the gender wage gap issue. Most feminists basically claim that the average payment of working men is more than that of the women, and the main reason according to them, is patriarchy. However, many agree that the wage gap is a myth (Agness). And after all, if there is any kind of wage gap, there are many reasons for it other than discrimination towards women:

Simply put, women aren’t being paid less for doing the same job as compared to men. Most women simply aren’t interested in pursuing careers that society places a higher monetary value on. They are also less willing to put in the same amount of work hours as men because of other commitments such as raising a family (Navarro).

This means that if women could have the same average jobs as men, there wouldn't be a problem of wage gap. Women have their roles and men have their roles.

2.2. Multiculturalism

America is often referred to as the “melting pot”, as it is the broadest land of opportunity to which immigrants come together from all different parts of the world to form a new culture. However, Multiculturalism changes the meaning of that American nickname, suggesting that people cannot just “melt” and assimilate within a unified culture, but rather keep their cultural differences and still be able to live amongst each other.

Multiculturalism in the current context of “identity politics” is a term that simply relates to the cultural and religious differences within societies and communities. The recent Western Liberal and Leftist political movements call out for diversity and multiculturalism to protect and join all of the marginalized minority groups into the standard and major societies. Evidently, these minorities include the African Americans, the LGBT community, the disabled, and especially the ethnic and religious minorities, and minority nations (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). The main aim is to stop discrimination against these groups, provide them the same rights as all other individuals, and gain a proper governmental representation. While the idea of multiple cultures living peacefully together in one society is optimistic, there seem to be many inevitable drawbacks that should not be ignored.

Political multiculturalism has received a remarkable amount of criticism, especially in the recent years, given the debates intensifying over the topic of immigrants and refugees. Most

critics focused on the dangers of the clash of cultures. Frank Salter, an Australian academic, suggests that problems of discrimination and group conflicts are more likely to occur in multi-ethnic societies (*The Need to Reform or Dismantle Multiculturalism*). This implies that the distinct cultures just cannot coexist. Salter adds in *The Independent Australian*:

More ethnically homogeneous²⁰ nations are better able to build public goods, are more democratic, less corrupt, have higher productivity and less inequality, are more trusting and care more for the disadvantaged... Moreover, they are less prone to civil war, the greatest source of violent death in the twentieth century.
(Wikipedia)

This statement does not only include the Western nations, but even the majority of Arab nations. Ethnical homogeneity in the Arab world is the reason why there are hardly any political issues about “oppressed minorities”, and conflicts between ethnic groups rarely exist.

The second problem caused by these multiculturalist movements is “forced diversity”. The term is mainly concerned with the issues of equal employment opportunity, as all workplaces are required to offer equal opportunities to the less dominant groups. However, the social justice has changed the true essence of diversity at workplaces and it emphasized it to the point it has become a direct “tokenism” (Snell). Tokenism is “The practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of sexual or racial equality within a workforce.” (Oxford Dictionary Online) This implies hiring members of the minority

²⁰ **Homogeneous:** of the same kind; alike.

groups based on their origins rather than competence and ability, just for the sake of diversity. This could create a bias in hiring for jobs or recruiting for colleges.

Dinesh D'Souza did a research in the University of California at Berkeley and discovered that Hispanic²¹ students have a 100% chance of being admitted into the school, while Caucasians²² have an approximately 5% chance of being admitted (3). This means that the principles of admission in that university are based on race, rather than academic capability. It is due to the forced concept of diversity, as they want to raise the representation for the Hispanic race at UC Berkeley. This could happen in workplaces, and many other fields, where white or straight individuals could be rejected on the expense of other minority members in the name of diversity.

2.3. The Politically Correct Language

The most important component of Political Correctness is its language. Everything about the Liberal and Leftist movements pursuing equality is mostly connected to discourse. Restricting and reducing language is part of their mission to fight the discrimination against the minority groups. What is known as Euphemism replaces specific expressions and removes others that are thought to offend certain individuals. The aim is to create a neutral language that is politically correct. At a certain point, many have interpreted this policy as “politeness” (Klotz).

Although the goal might seem noble, there are problems that still lie behind this policy. The main issue that political correctness ignores about language is context. Ben O'Neill wrote an

²¹ **Hispanic:** relating to Spain or to Spanish-speaking countries, especially those of Central and South America.

²² **Caucasians:** white-skinned; of European origin.

article about this topic in *The Independent Review* journal. He explains that some words have meanings, but those meanings can change depending on the context and the “intention” of the speaker. For instance, when bullies use the word “retarded” to insult an individual’s intelligence. The original meaning of the word “retarded” is not insulting. The word simply refers to those who have an impeded or slow mental process. The literal meaning is “accurate, and it is a neutral description because the term itself does not imply a value judgment about such diminished mental functioning.” (O’Neill).

However, what matters are the context and the intention behind the words used. Replacing the words that are considered “offensive” just because of the history of its usage does not change anything as long as context is ignored. Sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois states that “if men despise Negroes, they will not despise them less if Negroes are called ‘colored’ or ‘Afro-Americans’” (qtd. in Mühlebach). They can change words, but racists will be racists, and bullies will be bullies. Discrimination problems will remain, and implementing politically correct language will only violate free speech without any improvements. Political correctness could only create misjudgments on people’s words when “hatred” is put upon the literal meaning of words rather than the contextual one.

When speaking about humor in a *Big Think* video, comedian and writer John Cleese described political correctness as an “Orwellian Nightmare”. He talks about how he has been warned about performing in college campuses, as the cult of PC can be offended at some of his jokes and they would label them cruel. He worked on two books about psychology and psychiatry with English professor Robin Skynner. Cleese quotes Skynner saying: “He said, ‘If people can’t control their own emotions, then they have to start trying to control other people’s

behavior.’ And when you’re around super-sensitive people, you cannot relax and be spontaneous because you have no idea what’s going to upset them next,” (Derschowitz).

With the politically correct language, some words become a form of violence (micro-aggression). In the Western world, members of the minority groups (women, blacks, and gays) are now able to sue upon claims of being assaulted through “unpleasant” or “offensive” words. There are many similar instances especially at workplaces and academia (Lukes and Bangs).

Conclusion

The postmodern politics has dynamically changed the state of Western civilization with the implementation of political correctness. The Liberals and Leftists seek to break the inevitable Hierarchical system, and force a world where everyone should have the same abilities, same roles and same outcomes. A world where the so-called “minority groups” are praised and procured, and the other “majority” groups are discriminated in the name of justice and equality. Political correctness is a vile doctrine used by politicians to create a sensitive and easily-manipulated society by keeping a unified popular opinion through the media, and condemn whoever differs. It is fascism disguised under the name of justice. It replaces old prejudices with new ones, and it violates freedom of speech and thought.

Chapter Three:

A Record of Politically Correct Incidents

Introduction

The world has seen major changes in the last few decades with the coming of the groundbreaking postmodernist thinking, not only artistically, but especially in the political field. The postmodernists appeal to make radical changes within the classical political systems and social constructs. Censorship and identity politics movements all seek to make a politically correct society to stop offending the minorities, and limit the language from any explicit usage. This created several instances of controversy, as the issue draws more attention with multiple incidents within the context of political correctness. Many of these incidents resulted from all of the previously mentioned epidemics of the PC culture, from the new wave feminism, to forced diversity, and euphemism. This chapter aims to show some examples of the recorded controversies caused by the PC culture.

III) 1. The #MeToo Movement

The “Me Too” or #MeToo movement is one of the most recent feminist movements against sexual harassment and assault. The concept first started on social media following the allegations against American famous film producer Harvey Weinstein in October 2017. The phrase “Me Too” was used among twitter posts in order to raise awareness and to encourage other victims to talk about their experiences with such assaults. Many female celebrities later followed the trend, and more people from the community used this “hashtag” to reveal their own stories (Vogue). Immediately the following year, more accusations rose against powerful men across industries. And more debates over gender and sex followed, as it has been a period of demands for change on all levels of politics and society (Grady and North).

However, as positive as this movement seems on the surface, and as much support as it has received recently, it has also been criticized. Writer Helen Pluckrose from *Areo Magazine*, who's currently writing a book about postmodernism, argues in an article the fact that the Me Too movement has increased Androphobia in society. This concerns the harsh consequences that follow any alleged misconduct, as more males have been fired from their works for merely being accused of minor behaviors. The fact that feminists have created different degrees of "sexual assault" created a controversy among male critics. It goes to a point that even "looking" or "smiling" at a woman is now considered a certain degree of sexual misconduct that precedes severe consequences (Stephens). The online survey website *SurveyMonkey*, made a 2019 survey which showed that 60% of male managers are afraid of being accused of harassment when they have to mentor, socialize, or meet with women in the workplace (Bailey-Millado).

Another point which critics discussed about the movement is the negligence of "due process". This movement has gone far with enough support that it became easy for any female to claim being assaulted, and instantly receive the praise without having to confirm it (Stephens). American writer Ijeoma Oluo revealed that she was asked by *USA Daily* to write a piece arguing that "Due Process" is unnecessary to confirm sexual assault accusations. She immediately refused and asserted that she certainly believes in due process (The Establishment). Another common argument against the alleged sexual harassment allegations is that most victims came out with their stories at least years later, which raises suspicions (Grady and North). As the popular motivational speaker Tony Robbins previously put it, women are only victimizing themselves to gain attention, especially through such a famous trend (Perez).

Furthermore, one of the critiques this movement has received is the fact that this kind of publicity is scandalous and could cause trauma for the victims instead of empowerment, as it is often claimed (LaMotte). In addition, it can only create more outrage, and alienate innocent men who are victims of a dangerous generalization, instead of creating a peaceful and emotionally serious communication to solve this problem (Hempel).

Almost two years later, the movement still runs, as more accusations surface day by day, more men are “witch hunted”, and more women are blindly supported without due process, for the main reason that it is the politically correct way to approach the issue.

III) 2. Jordan Peterson and Alternative Pronouns

The alternative pronouns issue (pronouns other than “he” or “she”) usually falls into the transgender topics, but it isn’t necessarily and specifically about the transgender. Trans people, as they are called, usually try to shift between the two known genders, which are male and female. The topic, without question, still sparks controversy, as women want to be recognized and referred to as men, and vice-versa, even though it is biologically impossible, and surgeries alone do not achieve it (Moynihan). However, other people want to change to alternative genders that never existed before, and even give themselves certain pronouns, such as “Ve”, “Xe”, or “Ze”.

Their primary argument is that sex and gender are not the same. Meaning that the former relates to the biological nature of the human, and the latter relates to the social traits, behaviors and roles that a human has in the society (Madhukalya). Many support this claim, on which they base the fact that humans can be any gender they want according to the way they behave, and the

choices they make. This implies that a person, for instance, can be biologically a man (sex), but socially a woman (gender) simply because he likes dresses and acts feminine. According to the argument, that person has the right to be referred to as a woman. This opened the space for others to choose to claim alternative genders; other kinds than the two known ones, and without any biological transformations. These people are often referred to as “non-binary” (Kandola).

In June 2017, the parliament of Canada passed the law of “Bill C-16”. This law protects gender expression and gender identity as a Canadian human rights act and as a criminal code. A majority of the Canadian community supported this act and agreed that gender identity should be considered a protected and sacred ground from discrimination. However, not everyone agreed, and among the most notable critics is none other than Jordan Peterson (Dragicevic).

The Canadian psychology professor of the University of Toronto released a video lecture online criticizing political correctness, and one of the main points he addressed is this new Canadian legislation. He basically objects to use the alternative pronouns to address some of the trans students and staff with, as requested by them. He is frustrated at the fact that the Canadian legislation almost criminalizes the refusal to use those words, and he fears they could elevate the act to the level of “hate speech”. Peterson stated to the BBC that “[he’s] studied authoritarianism for a very long time - for 40 years - and they're started by people's attempts to control the ideological and linguistic territory," (Murphy) He refers to the ideological game that is “political correctness”.

Evidently, his statements sparked outrage, especially in the University of Toronto. Peterson was faced, and heavily criticized by trans people and their supporters at a free speech rally with a white noise machine, as pushing and shoving broke out in the crowd. Additionally,

his employers threatened to punish him for breaking the Ontario Human Right code unless he uses the pronouns (Murphy).

Jordan Peterson continues his campaign against political correctness in his lectures, addressing many issues concerning postmodernism, the freedom of speech, and the leftist and liberal movements in the recent years.

II) 3. PC Madness in Universities

Universities in the USA have arguably hosted the most notable growth of the PC culture. Students have become sensitive to thoughts that challenge their beliefs and opinions, and a system of extreme neutrality and “correctness” has been conducted within most of the universities to satisfy all kinds of students with all kinds of beliefs, and to ban any radical or unwelcome thinking inside college campuses. Among the topics which students sanctify is that of the transgender and alternative pronouns. The most common concept that the majority of western universities adopted was the “Safe Space”.

Safe spaces are mainly territories created inside universities or campuses for those that feel marginalized, like women, and the LGBT community (Amenabar). These safe spaces were meant to keep the “minority groups” isolated with their own beliefs and thoughts, away from people whose thoughts offend or challenge theirs, and without the interruption of any other individual, as it is restricted for any other group to access those spaces.

This concept has received heavy criticism, as it has been implied that it violates free speech, criminalizes disagreeing thoughts and blurs the line between physical violence and causing offense -microaggression- (Safe Spaces Are Dangerous). Others pointed out the fact that

such safe spaces directly imply that other places are unsafe and should be made safer (Shulevitz). Shulevitz speaks more in her article of *The New York Times* about how these college systems are raising a generation scared of new challenging ideas, a generation that cannot deal with disagreements and only seeks approvals and support from the rest of the world.

Conclusion

Despite the ostensible goals which political correctness claim to aim at, the consequences and backlashes that resulted from its movements and efforts for change have shown more negative impressions than positive ones. The media outlets keep on trying to cover up the PC culture and to popularize it, but the results are difficult to ignore. Free speech is being stifled; logic as we know it is being rejected and people are under the danger of an Orwellian mind-washing system.

General Conclusion

To sum up, this study has tried to conduct the simplest perspective into the concept that is political correctness, and clarify its relation to the postmodern culture. Postmodernism, as complex of a term as it is, emerged since the 1980's for the sole purpose of defying the usual and the normal. Though it might occasionally come across as intriguing and ground-breaking, most of its aims seem arbitrary and extremely absurdist. Or as it is usually described: "weird for the sake of weird". It certainly becomes difficult to assume there is any nobility or "reason" behind the motivation for a doctrine that aims at blind changes, especially when the doctrine itself rejects reason and logic.

However, as an artistic movement, it didn't spark the same controversy which it did in the political field. Postmodernism took on new levels by adopting the Marxist claims, calling for socialism, and hiding under the mask of compassion. A compassion for those supposedly oppressed against the oppressors. A compassion for which they attempt to break the only component of the relationships between people in this world: power. The component that, by their own logic, is inevitable, which concludes the assumption that power itself is their only goal. Their ideology aims to create a world with forced equality, by urging to hate the successful, justify the failures, and establish a unified popular unchallenged opinion. It aims to raise a community sensitive to any radical thoughts or explicit truths. It aims to create a convenient and correct language that appeals to all. This whole ideology came to be known as political correctness.

This study has also tried to expose the leaders of this ideology, their ostensible goals, and their real goals. It gave an objective perspective into the nature of movements, and compared

their claims to the consequences. As the postmodernist thinking grew, the Leftist party and their equivalents, the Liberals, were rising within the same period. These two political parties are the ultimate hosts of the political correctness culture. They are the top advocates for socialism, social justice and equality, and multiculturalism. While their efforts against racism are admirable, there is total unfairness with forced diversity, censorship, and the witch-hunting of the social justice warriors (especially feminists and LGBT community).

The third chapter has shown a realistic view into the madness of political correctness. Some recorded cases of controversial political incidents prove that political correctness is real, and its results are causing concerns in the United States. But what are the possible solutions?

If more people read about political correctness and postmodernism, then it might be possible to prevent an Orwellian world. People need to understand the power of the media and how it is easy for it to manipulate the popular opinion, and to control the herd. Political correctness does not only exist in the United States, but everywhere, with one face or another. The PC culture is the popular opinion that no one should dare to challenge, or question. And with the existence of social media, the problem only grows more dangerous. A mature community has the right to be exposed to all truths without censorship, and to have the ability to express all opinions. There is no shame in agreeing to disagree. As for the oppression theory, it is more offensive, racist, or sexist, to indulge the disabled, the colored, or the women for their nature, than it is to ignore them. When an employer does not hire a woman for her incompetence, it only means he ignored her gender. To hire her based on the fact that she is an oppressed woman is an underestimation, and an ultimate sexism.

There is no shame in living traditionally. Just because logic and reason are old and fixed doesn't mean we can change them when we are bored.

“Political Correctness is a doctrine, recently fostered by a delusional, illogical minority and promoted by a sick mainstream media, which holds forth the proposition that it is entirely possible to pick up a piece of [dirt] by a clean end!”

- Unknown

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