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POLITICAL CORRECTNESS, CULTURAL POLITICS, AND THE NEW RIGHT

by

Patricia Anne Morgan, B.A.

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

Master of Arts

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

August 26, 1994

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"Political Correctness, Cultural Politics, and the New Right"

submitted by Patricia Anne Morgan, B.A.
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

Thesis Supervisor

Chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University

September 12, 1994

Abstract

Political correctness has been the subject of intense, often negative, media scrutiny in the late 1980s and early 1990s. To comprehend the rearticulation of the concept of political correctness, this thesis uses the concepts of textual mediation, intertextuality, and hegemony, and undertakes both historical and textual analyses. Political correctness has been appropriated by the Right as well as conservatively-inclined media personnel to serve as a very formidable weapon with which to seriously damage the credibility, and therefore, possibility, of the Left's political agenda. I have examined the current campaign against political correctness as an encore performance of the New Right, previously notorious for its rigorous efforts, beginning in the late 1970s, to dismantle the post-war Keynesian consensus. While the New Right's proselytizing on the economic front may have faded somewhat, I contend that such has not been the case in areas more cultural in scope.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Professor John Harp not only for his unwavering guidance and support, but also for his uncanny ability to have read - and thus be able to recommend - so much that was of interest to me. I would also like to thank Assistant Professor Heather Jon Maroney for her deft critical analysis and sharp editing skills, but also for her initial suggestion that I examine the New Right. While this suggestion was meant more as a means through which to ground some of my terminology, it obviously became much more than that, and ultimately contributed significantly to the central argument of my thesis. Thanks are also due to Associate Professor Lorna Weir, who provided me with much material I would otherwise not have had access to, as well as some very valuable initial discussion concerning the issue.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Department of Sociology and Anthropology for providing me with financial support, and to the individual professors whose teaching and guidance were so important over the last year and a half here at Carleton University.

Finally, to my family, and all my friends in the graduate community, my heartfelt thanks for your support and encouragement, which helped make the writing of this thesis a more enjoyable and rewarding experience.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Political Correctness and the New Right

It seems appropriate to begin an analysis of political correctness ¹ with a brief word about the fabled 'New Right', the ideological, political, and economic groundwork

¹ The authors of the unequivocally judicious reference, The Official Politically Correct Dictionary and Handbook do not, curiously, define political correctness itself, but rather only define the concept as it is seen in its adjective form. Beard and Cerf define 'politically correct' as being "Culturally sensitive; multiculturally unexceptionable; appropriately inclusive". Interestingly, they add to this definition the fact that "The term 'politically correct,' co-opted by the white power elite as a tool for attacking multiculturalism, is no longer 'politically correct'". (Henry Beard and Christopher Cerf. The Official Politically Correct Dictionary and Handbook. New York, 1992, p. 87.) In any case, because the following analysis is media-based in its conception, I have chosen to remain faithful to the various media means for describing phenomena involving political correctness. Thus, in the following pages, the reader will occasionally see abbreviations such as PC (standing variously for 'political correctness' or 'politically correct' in media sources, but here mostly only for the former), and anti-PC (simply referring to those persons or forces who are opposed to what they define as politically correct). Additionally, for ease writing clarity, I have decided to use terms such as pro-PCer (persons who argue in support of or act in a manner defined - not necessarily by themselves - as promoting politically correct values and goals), and, correspondingly, anti-PCer (individuals arguing or acting in a matter that is against what is defined as being politically correct values and goals). While these may appear to be distorted acronyms that have no place in a formal paper, the alternative, I think, would be too cumbersome. There have been media examples of, believe it or not, *anti-anti-PC*, (see, for example, the Bulletin article by Don McGillivray, "Joining the Anti-Anti PCs." Bulletin (Canadian Association of Journalism). 1991, 44(Summer), p. 20-21.), but the inclusion of this rather mind-boggling media concoction should not be necessary here.

from which political correctness sprang forth. The New Right came to pass from the rather curious mixture of neo-liberal ² and neo-conservative thought that developed mostly in the early 1970s from the building blocks of Adam Smith and John Locke, among others. The ideas popularized by neo-liberals, such as Friedrich A. Hayek, ³ and neo-conservatives, such as Roger Scruton, came to be potently - if somewhat contradictorily - combined to define New Right thought. ⁴ This has been described by

² By 'neo-liberal', it is important to delineate what the term does *not* mean. As Ruth Levitas points out, . . . neo-liberalism wishes to separate itself sharply from 'pseudo-liberalism', a social democratic liberalism corrupted by the welfare state and the New Deal; this neo-liberalism is not to be confused with a socially concerned liberalism, and does not necessarily imply a libertarian attitude to personal conduct and individual freedom. (Ruth Levitas. (Ed.) *The Ideology of the New Right*. Cambridge and Oxford, 1986, p. 4.)

In this way, Levitas points to a need for the continual assiduity of the reader of New Right doctrine not to be led down the garden path of the proffered 'liberal' ideals. Andrew Belsey is even more to the point when he biting describes the "appropriation of the word 'libertarian' by elements of the New Right [to be] a grotesque confidence trick". (Andrew Belsey. "The New Right, Social Order and Civil Liberties." In Ruth Levitas' (Ed.) *Ideology of the New Right*, p. 173.) In what follows, 'liberal' refers to these more generic meanings, while neo-liberal should immediately trigger its rather more involved articulation of New Right thought.

³ While Hayek's ideas developed in the context of 1930s Vienna, he should certainly not be regarded as being a figure from the past, both because of the mushrooming success and popularizing of his theories particularly in the 1970s, and because Hayek serves as the chairman of the New Right think-tank, the Adam Smith Institute, which was established in 1977. (M. Patricia Marchak. *The Integrated Circus: The New Right and the Restructuring of Global Markets*. Montreal and Kingston, 1991, p. 97.)

⁴ As a prime example of the contradictory interests and priorities of the neo-liberal and neo-conservative elements that made up the New Right, the former's obsession with the freedom of the individual can be sharply contrasted with the latter's insistence for a powerful moral authority and strong government. Still, though, the neo-conservative inclination for authoritarianism can be found in neo-liberal thought regarding the market, to which individuals are bound and subordinated. While each individual must be free to pursue his (I do not see much point in attempting to make this doctrine gender inclusive when it clearly is not) interests, the all-powerful market forces will necessarily subsume that individual, making him subject to its abstract rules and forces. (For a more complete description of the neo-liberal and neo-conservative elements that make up the New Right, please refer to Andrew Belsey's excellent article, "New Right and Civil Liberties," in Ruth Levitas' (Ed.) *Ideology of the New Right*, p. 169-197.)

The label 'New Right' is similarly contradictory and confusing on the international scale, where it may mean significantly different things depending upon which particular cultural and political context one is referring to. For example, Ruth Levitas notes an important difference between the American and British versions of New Right thought:

The USA has seen concerted efforts by the born-again Christians to reverse, through the Moral Majority, all the attitudes and legislation of the permissive sixties. There have also been attacks on family planning and abortion clinics; of over twenty such attacks in 1984 three were on Christmas Day, and were explained as 'a gift to Jesus'.

Overt opposition to personal freedom, particularly in sexual matters, has been more dominant in the United States than in Britain, and Levitas additionally points out that in France, the New Right is overtly (rather than covertly) racist, and cannot easily be distinguished from what would be described as "far Right" groups in Britain. (Ruth Levitas. (Ed.) *Ideology of the New Right*, p. 5.)

Pat Marchak as an ideological and political agenda that became popular in industrial democracies striving to reorganize production, the labour force, and corporate relationships to national governments in the face of what she describes as the reduction of the limitations of space and time due to mobile capital and the silicon revolution.⁵ The most significant aspect of the New Right's political agenda was its express aim to debunk the post-war Keynesian consensus of

... mildly interventionist government; "free enterprise" tempered by some regulation of markets; labour protections and acceptance of workers' rights to engage in collective bargaining; welfare provisions and some redistribution policies; and a fairly widespread agreement that some goods were properly protected from market forces.⁶

In other words, the welfare state came under attack, and it became acceptable to blame the poor for their poverty, and the unemployed for their lack of employment. Further, the virtues of free enterprise and entrepreneurship were extolled to an extent not seen since the mid-Victorian age in Britain, and the good life was promised to come to those individuals⁷ who wholeheartedly embraced these new truths.

In 1994, Canada was ranked first by the United Nations as the best country in the world in which to live, based on life expectancy, education, and standard of living. Despite recurring constitutional qualms (seemingly in perpetuity), and nagging

⁵ Pat Marchak. *Integrated Circus*, p. 3, 110.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷ The individual reigns supreme in New Right thought, particularly in its neo-libertarian strains. However, this individual is nearly always conceived of as the individual rational *man*. While theoretically, at least, the economic model of each individual pursuing private interests through the rational consideration of preferences, priorities, and alternatives is gender neutral, in reality the true 'citizen' can only be a man, while women are only a part of the 'family unit'. In addition, the New Right advocacy of drastic cuts to areas of social policy limits women's ability to engage in full-time paid labour, particularly when such a reliance upon voluntary work in the areas of community care, health care, and education (in other words, in all of those areas where no profit-making business can be made) points to the assumption of the availability of unpaid women carers. Of course, one New Right argument counters this accusation by simply asserting that women were never interested in moving out of the home anyway; it was simply an economic necessity - brought on, of course, by unreasonably high taxes the government needed to pay for the social safety net - that *obliged* them to find paid employment. (Miriam David and Ruth Levitas. "Antifeminism in the British and American New Rights." In Gill Seidel's (Ed.) *The Nature of the Right: A Feminist Analysis of Order Patterns*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1988, p. 144.)

unemployment, Canada is perceived by external sources to be one of the best places in the world in which to live, although the United Nations report does note that aboriginals and women tend not to fare as well as the overall population. Nevertheless, with Reaganism and Mulroneyism finally behind us, and with the Canadian Liberals' recent trouncing of the long-ruling Conservatives, it would seem that the "new world order" has finally come to pass, although unregrettably *not* the one envisioned by George Bush et al. As Pat Marchak remarks in her 1991 book The Integrated Circus: The New Right and the Restructuring of Global Markets, the economic and political agenda of the New Right has thankfully faded somewhat, with much of its ideology debunked by the end of the 1980s.⁸

While we are not hearing so much now about 'downsizing', 'restructuring', 'privatization', 'deregulation', and 'restraint' as was common in the mid-eighties,⁹ what we are continuing to be subject to is right-wing rhetoric of another sort, a good example being that regarding the political correctness controversy. Despite Marchak's somewhat relieved assertion that the "new right's proselytizing has faded somewhat since Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan first took office",¹⁰ and assumably even more so since their

⁸ Pat Marchak. Integrated Circus, p. xiii. As I will explain further in Chapter Three, it is important to note that 'ideology' is not the same as 'theory', in that, for example, the scientific validity of any particular ideology is not a focus of action or interest.

⁹ In the popular media, at least. However, such rhetoric continues to be the order of the day in many private corporations, as well as in the discourse of such areas as educational policy. As John Harp notes, state-corporate discourse is writ large upon the discourse of educational policy, to the extent that

[I]t is business and the relevant state agencies which are the driving force in framing definitions of "crisis" and proposing strategies for "restructuring" public education. That is, they constitute, in Stuart Hall's sense, the "primary definers" of the current situation. (John Harp. "The Crisis in Contemporary Education: Alternative Models of Reform." CRE: The Muni Frumhartz Centre for Research on Education, Working Paper No. 2, July 1993, p. 1.)

Interestingly, Harp further notes David Tyack's observation that 'restructuring' has varying meanings to different constituencies, so that it implies national standards, accountability, and the like to business leaders, while to reform-minded parent groups it may refer to greater decentralization in governance, more autonomy for teachers, and more encouragement of critical thinking among students. (Ibid., p. 1.)

¹⁰ Pat Marchak. Integrated Circus, p. xiii.

reluctant departure from world power and influence.¹¹ I would argue that the phenomenal success of the anti-PC campaign has proven the stubborn longevity of the New Right's agenda. If their rhetoric has become slightly less pervasive on the economic front,¹² this does not by any means preclude its holding power in areas that are perhaps more cultural in nature and scope. It is essential to note, of course, the diffuse and intermingling nature of things 'cultural' and things 'economic', as each obviously plays into the other. For example, that which is cultural is most certainly impeded by that which is economic when, for example, the Trilateral Commission makes recommendations that very concrete and tangible financial restraints should be placed upon those disciplines most critical of corporate capitalism.¹³

I would argue that the New Right climate of the late seventies and the 1980s provided a near perfect incubator for the careful development of the angry and resentful

¹¹ In an *elected* capacity, in any case; both Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan are reported to be doing very good business indeed on the international lecture circuit. George Bush, when he has been approached, has given the definite impression that he sees absolutely no obligation to make public comment "as a private citizen". Brian Mulroney seems to have made a similar choice regarding his future role in the public eye, although he has accepted lucrative offers such as from the Washington Speakers Bureau to address if not the public, then other politicians and public figures. Still, though, Mulroney's perceived injustice at the hands of the Canadian public - which was apparently maliciously and deliberately spurred on by the media - make it unlikely that he will become another Pierre Elliot Trudeau, a man who continues to refuse to let go of his grasp of (at least a lingering part of) the Canadian consciousness, even through nine years of Conservative rule.

¹² A surely part of this gradual decrease involves the simple fact that much of its economic agenda has indeed been put into place. As Heather Jon Maroney notes, while the New Right's nostrums of 'free market', 'deregulation', and so on may no longer be as vigorously promoted, the world has nevertheless been altered so significantly that social and economic policy cannot be discussed in any other way. The success of the New Right's economic agenda has created the vocabulary, conditions, and discourse with which we must *all* speak about 'the new global economy'; as Maroney notes, surely this is what 'hegemony' means. I will discuss hegemony in greater detail in Chapter Three. (Heather Jon Maroney, personal communication.)

¹³ Michel J. Crozier, Samuel P. Huntington, and Joji Watanuki. The Crisis of Democracy: Report on the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission. New York, 1975, p. 173. It is important to note, as Pat Marchak does, that the Trilateral Commission cannot be regarded as being completely in line with all New Right thought. However, the Trilateral Commission had an extremely explicit agenda for restructuring the post-hegemonic global economy in the middle to late 1970s, and dovetailed not completely, but sufficiently, with much of New Right thought. As Marchak explains, there was enough consistency in the basic assumptions to merit the Trilateral Commission's links to the New Right, even if its members were sometimes loathe to accept such a designation. As the most respectable, or 'responsible', agent of transmitting New Right thought, the Trilateral Commission was all the more powerful in influencing public opinion and governmental policy. (Pat Marchak. Integrated Circus, p. 110.)

backlash to the improvements made in the post-war era by various previously disempowered groups, that is, for the development of the politically correct shibboleth with which the New Right could subtly turn the tide of popular opinion against the furthering - or even maintaining - of these gains. When, in 1975, the Trilateral Commission spoke of the perceived problem of a distinct "excess of democracy" in industrialized countries, a large part of what they meant involved their determination that democracies had become "burdened with overactive minority group representation", and that not enough power, by extension, had remained with those who had historically, that is, 'traditionally' (and, ostensibly, justly), held it.¹⁴ In other words, welfare state thinking finally had to be put to rest, and everyone else - that is, everyone other than white heterosexual middle and upper class males - had already received about as much as they were going to get, thank you very much. Indeed, such groups really should feel fortunate that they were allowed any improvements at all, whether these be tangible economic stepping stones, or whether they involve those more elusive social, cultural, and political elements of general acceptance - or even celebration - of what sets them apart from that which is 'normal'.

The New Culture Wars

Debra Schultz notes at the beginning of the National Council for Research on Women's¹⁵ report on the political correctness debate that the virulent accusations regarding "the new intolerance" or, even better, "the new McCarthyism", of political correctness highlight fundamental conflicts over religion and cultural values. She goes on to argue that these accusations and pronouncements are significantly out of proportion

¹⁴ Michael J. Crozier, Samuel P. Huntington, and Joji Watanuki. *Crisis in Democracy*, p. 173.

¹⁵ Note that this is an American organization, and that while I am utilizing American material as if it is reflective of the Canadian milieu, it is obviously not entirely. However, most would agree that the 'PC wars' have, if anything, being more pronounced in the United States than they have been in Canada. In short, I will make use of this material, but simultaneously recognize that strict one-to-one correspondence can not, and should not, be assumed.

to the actual or proposed changes that are really occurring across the country.¹⁶ As the report notes, for the American context, at least, in 1991 the American Council on Education (ACE) concluded that only three percent of the United States' higher education institutions reported controversies over course texts, and only four percent reported controversy over information presented in the classroom. Apparently, the 'great wars' that were supposed to be tearing the humanities apart in violent, radical clashes made it to the headlines, editorial pages, and televised debates, but not, curiously, to the national survey. In stark contrast, ACE further reports that 36 percent of all institutions and 74 percent of all doctoral institutions cited incidents of intolerance related to race, gender, or sexual preference.¹⁷ It is telling to note that in this year 1991, when media reporting on political correctness increased 600 percent from the year previous, most of the latter statistics were either ignored or underreported by journalists, while the small number of incidents which did seem to give credence to the 'tyranny' of political correctness were repeated over and over again,¹⁸ to the extent that Schultz argues that a false impression was created that most of the nation's 3,500 colleges and universities were completely engulfed in the 'PC wars'.¹⁹ In contrast, virtually no institution of higher learning apparently had any legitimate problems with regards to discrimination on the basis of

¹⁶ Debra L. Schultz. To Reclaim a Legacy of Diversity: Analyzing the "Political Correctness" Debates in Higher Education. New York, 1993, p. v.

¹⁷ As reported in above, p. 9. It is worthy of note that those standing in opposition to what they deem as being the politically correct coercion of change would probably argue that these latter statistics regarding the reporting of 'incidents of intolerance' are indeed *part and parcel* of political correctness. In a strange way, even the *reporting* of such things is seen as a threat to those who wish to maintain the status quo, even though the mere attempt to keep some record of incidents of intolerance and bigotry is an awfully long way from active measures implemented to reduce it, or to deter those who cause it. Apparently, we are better off not knowing, especially given the concomitant intimation that such is not an 'accurate', and certainly not an 'objective', record of events.

¹⁸ Most notably, the six examples Dinesh D'Souza uses to develop a critique of the "rhetorical excesses and coercive tactics of the Politically Correct" in his book Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus (New York, 1992), as well as the Canadian ones brought to light in CBC radio's July 28, 1991 *Sunday Morning* program on political correctness, which Dorothy Smith skillfully debunks in her essay "Politically Correct: An Ideological Code", forthcoming in Stephen Richer and Lorna Weir's (Eds.) Beyond Political Correctness: The Future of the Canadian Academy, Toronto, 1995, p. 1-26.

¹⁹ Debra Schultz. Legacy of Diversity, p. 9

gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and so on. The rise of political correctness, in other words, appeared to be "a fuss about nothing".²⁰

With remarkable congruity, much of the Canadian media has followed suit by bemoaning the sad decline of Western civilization, the debasement of the great works of Plato, Shakespeare, Milton, and Kipling, and their categorical replacement with African studies, radical feminism, and other types of "oppression studies".²¹ Ray Conlogue regretfully reports in the Globe and Mail that while the 'progressive ideology' of political correctness is left-wing, it is not the *same* left-wing as that which he "belonged to twenty years ago on campus". As he points out,

The idea then was to bring the disenfranchised into the literary community, to have black professors teaching Shakespeare. Now . . . the idea is to have the black professor teaching Afro-American literature to the exclusion of Shakespeare -- and the white professor.²²

In the same article, Conlogue facetiously refers to Jacques Derrida as "a reactionary intellectual fraud" who was a godsend to the

. . . aspiring feminist or Marxist professor of literature, who often had no personal liking for literature but felt obliged to do his or her share in deconstructing the literary patriarchy (i.e. getting Shakespeare off survey courses and replacing him with testimonials written by oppressed Guatemalan women).²³

Like many a reporter who knows when he is onto something good, Conlogue is one of

²⁰ Dorothy Smith. "'Political Correctness'.", p. 19.

²¹ This is how the National Association of Scholars (NAS) has described "courses that routinely inject race, sex, and class issues into teaching even when they are not relevant". (Carolyn J. Mooney. "Conservative Scholars Call for a Movement to 'Reclaim' Academy." Chronicle of Higher Education, November 23, 1988, p. A11.)

²² Ray Conlogue. "How Long Might it Take to Repair the Damage Wrought by the PC Movement?" Globe and Mail, June 11, 1991, p. C1.

²³ *Ibid.*

many Canadian media personnel ²⁴ to make political correctness a favorite 'pet topic', and has written several pieces both on political correctness directly, and on its supposedly catastrophic effects upon other matters.

With a similar slant, a review of Albertan Ric Dolphin's Not Politically Correct prescribes it and other recent books such as Illiberal Education and The Disuniting of America as the means with which to "equip us for the on-going battle against . . . intellectual fascism", ²⁵ and concludes by recommending readers give a copy of the book to "that granola-cruncher or whale-saving, patriarchy-basher friend or relative *you've come to despise*", suggesting that it might help them "lighten up a little". ²⁶ While it should be noted that Gunter's piece appeared concurrently in the not particularly 'progressive' British Columbia Report and Western Report, ²⁷ astoundingly, the closing of an apparently 'unbiased' Canadian Press piece finishes with the comment by the National Association of Scholars' research director Glenn Ricketts that

²⁴ Also including Helen Branswell, Sondra Gotlieb, Lynda Hurst, Dorothy Rabinowitz, and Douglas Todd. While these individuals may have been selected out, countless more media personnel have come to habitually sprinkle PC jargon through their columns, often with a frequency not really heralded by the subject matter at hand. For example, Dorothy Smith notes a book review: in the New York Times Book Review that remarks that "neither 'Carriage Trade' nor Silas Tarkington is remotely interested in political correctness". (Dorothy Smith. "'Politically Correct'.", p. 22). Why mention it at all, then? It would seem that the liberal use of such currently *à la mode* jargon is thought to make columns and reviews such as this more topical, interesting, and ultimately, more saleable at a time of declining readership.

²⁵ Lorne Gunter. "A Heretic's Guide to the New Puritanism: A Politically-Incorrect Book is Proud of the Fact." British Columbia Report, December 14, 1992, p. 42.

²⁶ [emphasis added.] Ibid., p. 43.

²⁷ The latter is, curiously enough, actually the infamously right-wing Alberta Report, simply under an interprovincial title; the cover and everything inside is completely identical. If, indeed, the British Columbia Report is also merely the earlier-established Alberta Report under a different title, it would seem that there are, at least, (what about Saskatchewan, Manitoba, or perhaps even the Yukon and Northwest Territories?) three 'different' right-wing magazines written and edited by the same people, distributed to three different regions of Canada, under the pretense of being specific to that particular region. Perhaps Ted Byfield et al. have decided to follow the same money-making tactic of the US-owned Canadian versions of Time and Newsweek, although the latter have been legally obliged to include at least some 'local' material. A study of these magazines' proliferation and replication, as related to the rise of the Alberta-based Reform Party, would be very intriguing.

Free speech was fine when the progressives needed it. However now that [they're] in power - the good guys - free speech is not simply a good absolute.²⁸

This complaint begs the question of when was it, exactly, that the 'progressives', as he himself calls them, overthrew everyone else to take complete control of North America's social, cultural, political, and educational agenda? As Ruth King and Chet Singh point out, the notion that victims of oppression have taken over campuses and other institutions is not only a distortion of reality, but constitutes a grave intellectual dishonesty.²⁹

As Stanley Aronowitz's subtitle to his 1993 book Roll Over Beethoven suggests, today is certainly an era of renewed cultural strife.³⁰ As he remarks, "culture wars are no passing skirmish in an otherwise consensual cultural system", and it is clear that culture, once perceived to be the poor cousin of the truly deterministic economy, has come of age in North American politics.³¹ In this way, what seems to be the significantly disproportionate anger of anti-PCers can be seen to signal a serious backlash against the few reforms the post-war Keynesian 'consensus'³² was able to bring about, in which major cultural issues are at stake. Somewhat surprisingly, Pat Marchak has this to say about cultural issues and the New Right:

The new right has no evident interest in the core subjects of a liberal education, and it would not support the notion that the preservation and critical assessment of a cultural heritage are essential to society.³³

²⁸ Helen Branswell. "Political Correctness Argument Heats Up." Halifax Chronicle-Herald. August 16, 1991, p. D14.

²⁹ Ruth King and Chet Singh. "Political Correctness and the New Right." Globe and Mail. July 15, 1991, p. A13.

³⁰ Stanley Aronowitz. Roll Over Beethoven: The Return of Cultural Strife. Hanover and London, 1993.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 18, xi.

³² Certainly it would be foolish to presume that this consensus that Pat Marchak and others refer to came about through peaceful means or even a fraction of unanimity. Serious concessions were made on both sides (for the purposes of clarity, I will simplify the process as being between two, and not many, differing camps), and not through a process of careful negotiation, but rather through tumultuous politicking and much social strife. The 'consensus' arrived at was simply the point at which neither force could push their interests and goals any further - for the time being.

³³ Pat Marchak. Integrated Circus, p. 102.

Although this was certainly not the focus of her efforts, I think that Marchak is incorrect in her assumption that the New Right is only concerned about capital, the free market, and so on. As Marchak herself makes pains to note, the New Right is comprised of a number of different (and often contradictory) factions, but a good deal of the glue that holds them together consists of the utopian promise to return to some earlier golden age, of both innocence, and firmly grounded tradition (of which fundamentalist religion, for example, may be a part).³⁴

It is in this way that I would argue that the New Right has perhaps shifted its focus from its economically-driven contingent to a more culturally-driven one.³⁵ In recent American memory, at least, we have Dan Quayle's infamous public denouncement of the popular television sitcom *Murphy Brown* for favourably depicting the main character's decision to become a single mother, and George Bush's remarks at the University of Michigan Commencement Ceremony that

³⁴ This is particularly true of the New Right in the United States. Banu Helvacioğlu points out that the New Right presents an "image of itself as a revolutionary movement aimed at restructuring American society following the fundamental principles of the Bible and traditional family and community values". Helvacioğlu further notes that

While the American institutional framework is characterized by a strong commitment to secularism as a constitutional principle, the society by and large remains under religious influence. This is ironically summarized in the benediction "God bless secular America." (Banu Helvacioğlu. "The God-Market Alliance in Defence of Family and Community: The Case of the New Right in the United States." *Studies in Political Economy*, 1991, 35(Summer), p. 103 and 120.)

Nevertheless, it is my argument that in the final analysis, the New Right in the late 1970s to mid-1980s was primarily concerned with economic, rather than religious and cultural, restructuring, even if it readily accepted the support of fundamentalist religious organizations, and often high-profile religious or political spokespersons, such as Jerry Fallwell and his Moral Majority (disbanded in 1989), and Pat Robertson, the failed presidential candidate who is now fighting for legislation concerning "a fetus' inalienable right to be born". (Ibid., p. 118.)

³⁵ As early as 1988, Gill Seidel noted the New Right's emphasis in Britain upon culture, which in this case made it possible to

... set the parameters for a discussion of 'race' in such a way as to put repatriation firmly on the agenda ... The black British comedian, Lenny Henry, summarized the workings of the English legal system as: "A citizen is innocent - until proven black" (Gill Seidel. "Right-Wing Discourse and Power: Exclusions and Resistance." In Seidel's edited collection, *Nature of the Right*, p. 7.)

It is in this way that it can be observed that the New Right is comprised of both an economically and a culturally focused contingent; it is just that now the latter is beginning to supersede the former for a change.

Throughout history, attempts to micro-manage casual conversation have only incited distrust. They have invited people to look for an insult in every word, gesture, action. And in their own Orwellian way, crusades that demand correct behavior crush diversity in the name of diversity.³⁶

Note here Bush's pointed confinement of what the political correctness controversy is all about to language alone; this is an oft-repeated tactic of many of those ridiculing the issues and goals that they regard as being politically correct. Apparently, it is easier to ridicule those wishing to put some sort of restraint upon, say, hate speech, than it is to demean efforts towards the furthering of, say, the credibility of those claiming sexual harassment.³⁷ Later on in the address, Bush remarks that we should "be alarmed at the rise of intolerance in our land", by which he means *not* the intolerance of sexists and bigots towards women and other disadvantaged groups such as visible minorities, recent immigrants, the disabled, and gays and lesbians, for example, but rather the intolerance of the *victims* of such attacks, who apparently should simply continue to grin and bear it. Even Robert Fulford, writing in the Financial Times of Canada, points out that Bush's impassioned plea in favour of free speech should be viewed, well, at least a little suspiciously:

After all, Bush campaigned in favor of mandatory allegiance-pledging by schoolchildren, supported jail terms for people caught burning chunks of cloth imprinted with the Stars and Stripes and recently ran a war in which information was more severely rationed than during any similar period in American history.³⁸

Former President Bush's enthusiastic entry into the PC culture wars indicates that the Right perceives the issues associated with political correctness with great seriousness

³⁶ George Bush, "Remarks at the University of Michigan Commencement Ceremony in Ann Arbor," May 4, 1991. Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents: Administration of George Bush, 1991, 27(19), p. 564.

³⁷ Incidentally, daytime television icon Bob Barker recently referred to such claimants categorically - note the plural form - as "unscrupulous women".

³⁸ Robert Fulford. "The Media's Attack on Political Correctness is Suspicious." Financial Times of Canada, June 24, 1991, p. A13.

indeed, indicating that the supporters of such issues are not mistaken in their opinion that there is an awful lot at stake in the PC wars. In fact, Tim Brennan concludes his very interesting paper, "'PC' and the Decline of the American Empire" by arguing that

Just as all scholars had to read the *Iliad* differently after the archeological discovery of Troy, new facts today are breeding a new knowledge. The enormous shift in perspective that comes from reading and studying non-Western traditions, of living in integrated communities, of critically evaluating the media, advertising, and popular culture - this has all rightly been called a Copernican change . . . the entire debate can be summarized in an analogy: the PC-bashers are today playing the Church to the reformers' Galileo.³⁹

Brennan notes that in comparison to the "fundamental religious impulses, the belligerent conformity, and the manias of the Right in power", the pro-PC efforts will appear to be "forms of calculated subversion".⁴⁰ And, indeed, they will be. Although the revolution this time will be in culture rather than science, there can be no mistake that changes in the present narrow and intimidating allowable public discourse - where, for example, intellectuals are compelled to pretend that the US has no class distinctions and no historical and present imperialistic urges -⁴¹ would be utterly and completely subversive to the status quo. Brennan argues forcefully that the PC critics, like the "Church to the reformers' Galileo" before them, simply do not understand what they are attacking, and indeed, it is because of a fear of the unknown that their attack is so vociferous.⁴² Culture is changing, and change is always frightening, particularly to those anxious that such change does not influence their own social and political, cultural and economic standing and influence. In this way, cultural items seem to be not only once again on the political agenda, but as actually being this agenda's main course in the political scene of the 1990s.

³⁹ Tim Brennan. "'PC' and the Decline of the American Empire." *Social Policy*. 1991, Summer, p. 29.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 29.

The Disenchantment with Economic Oracles

Why is this happening, and why is it happening now? One possible reason for the shift in concern from things economic to things cultural is quite simply that overdependence upon economic factors as being the *raison d'être* for every aspect of all things social, cultural, and political has long since stopped being very effective. Capitalism, theoretically, is infinite, but in practice is limited by finite confines.⁴³ It is, in short, a finite system masquerading as an infinite one. By the end of the 1960s, the perpetually growing market economy, that pinnacle of 'free' Western democracies, was already known to be endangered, and as explained above, the development of New Right thought - fashioned from past and present, consistent and contradictory elements - was part of a broad-based international effort to bring about renewed and invigorated growth potential to market economies. While these efforts may have prolonged the stability and possibility of free market cultures at least for a time, they have certainly not done so unequivocally. The 'boom/bust' cycle of regular 'recession'⁴⁴ after the bottom falls out of the last minimal-growth recovery has become increasingly familiar to those citizens who are caught within its throes.⁴⁵ From the likes of the members of the Trilateral Commission down to the blue collar factory worker, there has been a distinct sense of

⁴³ These include limited resources, labour, and even possibly the consumerist lifestyle itself.

⁴⁴ This term simply being more preferable to the less euphemistic 'depression', which connotes nasty images of millions in severe hardship which, admittedly, was more harsh than the recessions common today because of the lack of a real social safety net. However, while we may have some social assistance programs in place today that were not available in the 'Dirty Thirties', people then did not have to endure depression after depression after depression, nor was the existence of a free labour pool of cyclically employed and unemployed workers at levels of 10% or higher deemed politically acceptable. Mulroney's lackluster efforts to make a dent in the unemployment rate in Canada, and his simultaneous re-election in 1988, demonstrated that times have certainly changed since John G. Diefenbaker was kicked out of office because of a considerably lower rate of joblessness as recently as 1963.

⁴⁵ It should be noted additionally that it has been a long time since largely raw resource exporting economies such as Canada's have seen a true 'boom' period, due to the shift away from mass production and industrialization to what some have termed the post-industrial information age.

powerlessness, and few thoughts concerning what to do about it.⁴⁶

In this way, I am arguing that culture has become hotly contested terrain partly, and precisely, because the passions over economy, and overly economic arguments generally, have left a distinctly bitter taste and no real, nor lasting, solutions. I would add further that the New Right's shift from proselytizing about quick economic fixes to its concentration upon the 'moral decay' of traditional Western society has been paralleled by the general population's 'tuning out' of the New Right's declarations of the virtues of the free market, admonitions against 'regulation', 'state interference', and the 'excesses of democracy'.⁴⁷ In other words, because Canadians have become antipathetic

⁴⁶ With regard to those at the level of the former stratum, it is important to note the extremely significant impact the collapse of the Soviet Union has had upon New Right rhetoric. As Pat Marchak notes, the Russian empire had long served an essential role of providing a foil for the extreme free market paradigm, otherwise known as the 'American dream'. The 'evil empire', as Reagan described it, had until this point been rhetorically opposed to the New Right's unabashed promotion of 'freedom', 'liberty', and market rule, and while in some senses the collapse of the communist system seemed to vindicate all of those supporting free market capitalism, the New Right was in fact taken by surprise by this unlikely turn of events. As Pat Marchak summarizes the predicament,

These swift changes bolstered the new right's claims about the superiority of markets over central state management, but even so they were not entirely welcome. For the first time in post-war history, the "free world" was obliged to confront the turmoil of contemporary events with no counterfoil . . . Now the new right appeared as a caricature of capitalism: it was all there was, and it was organized chaos. (Pat Marchak, *Integrated Circus*, p. 15.)

There now having been slightly more distance between those remarkable events and Marchak's 1991 publication date, one can see that the New Right (in the United States, at least, although I would argue that it certainly has global implications) has suffered further weakening due to the increasingly inevitable decline of the United States as a 'superpower'. The symbolic status of one lone 'superpower' seems to be seriously weakened with the loss its counterfoil, possibly because it is no longer so easy to choose which 'team' to 'side with', 'root for', and so forth. (My use of sporting terminology is deliberate, as the Us/Them dialectic of the superpowers has largely been constructed along similar lines.) With such recent examples as the military regime in Haiti ignoring US demands that it reinstate deposed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and North Korea's concurrent obstinacy regarding outsiders' knowledge of its nuclear weapons capabilities, it seems as though the US will soon be, if not already, a superpower only in its own eyes.

⁴⁷ Similarly, I would argue that the New Right's shift from proclaiming the free market as The Answer to its sober "We simply have no alternative" - seen again and again in the Canadian media such as *Macleans* magazine, particularly with regards to cutting the deficit - has, while being a clever strategy to maintain popular support for a time, ultimately been a failure, as angry construction workers in Nova Scotia recently told Premier John Savage in no uncertain terms. Stuart Hall can be seen to anticipate this shift by the New Right for maintenance of their position when he states that "[t]he claims in the economic arena are not that 'monetarism works' but that 'there is no alternative' - a sober, stoic, and longer-term gamble for support." (Stuart Hall, "The Toad in the Garden: Thatcherism Among the Theorists." In Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg's (Eds.) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Urbana and Chicago, 1988, p. 41.)

towards an economy that no-one seems to be able to control or improve, and increasingly disinclined to accept or even absorb the New Right's nostrums and remedies, the New Right has responded by shifting its focus from the economy to culture, and in this way has been able to maintain a powerful foothold in the Canadian consciousness.⁴⁸ Further, they have been able to do this by tapping in to the resentments and frustrations people feel about their own often economically precarious situations, by playing on these fears and subtly connecting them to 'cultural' issues such as immigration, affirmative action, and other changes that are then implied to be the root causes of the general lack of security and stability nostalgically remembered from a time now long since past, but continually reconstructed and romantically portrayed by the New Right, their affiliates, and their followers.

In short, Canadians are concerned for their future economic viability, as individuals and as part of a nation, but have, in effect, resigned themselves as being powerless to do anything to secure it (mostly as individuals, but also as a nation⁴⁹). However, it is my argument that this feeling of powerlessness and lack of control is

⁴⁸ Though, I would argue, a decidedly *less* powerful one. This is evident in Pat Marchak's example below: By 1990 public opinion polls showed that citizens throughout the industrial countries believed that the polluted environment was the most serious issue of the time . . . The new right's nostrums offered no comfort; indeed, it was becoming clear that market forces would not clean up the air or the water or save the tropical and temperate rain forests. (Pat Marchak. *Integrated Circus*, p. 14.)

While dubbing environmentalists as "eco-freaks" and "back-to-the-landers" has no doubt been effective in weakening the degree of environmental concern from what it was at its peak, the issue has only receded rather than been quashed; the New Right have been unable to make as potent a villain of nature as they have of political correctness. Similarly, the New Right has been unable to vilify the 'PCers' to a degree comparable to its previous vilification of the defenders of the social safety net. In this way, the PC scare will *not* lead to a major restructuring (or rather, retrenching) of Canadian cultural, social, and educational policy, and will fade away more rapidly than the decade or so that it took for the New Right's economic salvations to lose their lustre. Of course, this does not mean that it will do so entirely, especially since as I will discuss further in this work, many of the ideas involved in the anti-PC rhetoric have been around for a very long time indeed.

⁴⁹ For example, Canadians have long been accustomed to their national voice being rather meek, particularly with regards to global economic issues, especially in contrast to the commanding and strident voice of the United States. In fact, this is particularly true of economic issues involving the United States exclusively, whether through US overfishing of Canadian waters, or American accusations of excessive federal subsidy of Canadian grain farmers.

rooted at least in part in the new global economy of today, brought about thanks to the dogged efforts of the New Right and its supporters. Lawrence Grossberg notes of this new (and perhaps *continually* new, because it is everchanging) economic milieu that “[i]f Fordism controlled consumption to create demand for standardized mass-produced products, post-Fordism makes production conform to the continually changing demands of consumption”.⁵⁰ There is an incredible emphasis upon diversity and flexibility, and this new world-size economy and international labour market is too immense and complex for individuals to understand, and certainly too elaborate to control. Because many people feel that their fate rests on the whims of an often fickle, and always rapidly changing, global market, their attention to and enthusiasm for the New Right’s economic nostrums has faded significantly in these tough economic times. However, it is precisely because of this frustration that people feel with regard to their perceived economic stability and viability that they have become increasingly receptive to ‘culturalist’ arguments, that is, purported reasons for their economic precariousness, whose roots lie in right-wing prejudice and intolerance. As Debra Schultz puts it (largely within the narrower context of higher education),

The “p.c.” backlash - which plays on genuine national concern over coherent educational outcomes and student fears about access to financial aid and career opportunities - must be placed in the context of shifting demographics and general fear over dwindling resources, and in specific relation to increased representation of women and people of color as students, faculty, staff, and subjects of inquiry in the academy.⁵¹

She notes further that it is in this way that right-wing organizations, whose ideas slowly filter down to public consciousness through media attention of various forms, are able to portray tolerance as a code word for preferential treatment,⁵² and portray ‘politicization’

⁵⁰ Lawrence Grossberg. *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture*. New York and London, 1992, p. 341.

⁵¹ Debra Schultz. *Legacy of Diversity*, p. 10.

⁵² *Ibid.*

of the humanities as being a strictly Leftist preoccupation, as if every concept, theory, and idea were not embedded in a particular political worldview.

Political Correctness and Textual Mediation

While concern with language and discourse may seem to be rather narrowly academic, it is important to point out, as Gill Seidel does, the remarkable impact of discourse and systematic linguistic choices on people's lives.⁵³ Dorothy Smith begins her very cogent article "'Politically Correct': An Ideological Code" with the particularly direct line of argument that before we can comprehend the political correctness phenomenon, we must first of all be cognizant of the fact that the society we live in today is a distinctively textually-based and mediated one, and one in which active 'texts' - meaning material forms such as print, film, computer monitor, or printout, and so forth - "link us as we are in the local settings of our lives into relations organized extra-locally".⁵⁴ The complex interrelations between state, bureaucracy, management, and mass media are text-mediated, as is the resulting public discourse, which Smith defines as "the relations of discourse to which, in principle, access is unrestricted within a given national population", and in which she includes not only material texts of the sort identified above, but also the "talk that goes on around and about media; political talking and writing, academic discourse, both in print and talk, and so on".⁵⁵ Significantly, in a text-mediated culture such as our own, the activities of judgment, knowledge, and decision-making increasingly become the processes not of the individual human mind, but rather the processes of groups of linked individuals, organizations, and institutions, and various other media of discourse (which both create it and filter it through). Social consciousness has in some sense become objectified, not to the effect that we humans are

⁵³ Gill Seidel. "Right-Wing Discourse and Power.", p. 8.

⁵⁴ Dorothy Smith's "'Political Correctness'", p. 1.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 2, 3.

"entirely inert lumps in these relations", ⁵⁶ but nevertheless that they have become so predominant so as to make the notion of a completely independent mind, thought, or action seem increasingly naïve. ⁵⁷ Additionally, while state, bureaucracy, formal organization, mass communications, science, and popular culture have traditionally been viewed as discrete forms or units of organization, they have become increasingly coordinated, to the effect that often,

Texts generated in different settings -- for example, government systems of collecting statistics, social scientific research in universities and think tanks, policy making in government, and mass media -- are coordinated conceptually, producing an internally consistent picture of the world and providing the terms of policy-talk and decisions. ⁵⁸

In this way, then, living in a text-mediated society as we do, we are particularly susceptible to absorbing the messages of ideologies, concepts, and theories which have become particularly powerful regulators of public text-mediated discourse. Not surprisingly, the *control* of these texts by various interests has assumed great significance as a result.

I would argue that in the struggle for control over the PC discourse, the New Right and its conservative supporters have been enormously successful in determining what can and cannot be said in this debate, and indeed in largely determining what the terms 'political correctness' and 'politically correct' signify. The New Right discourse on PC 'caught on' in the popular media, probably to a greater degree than its supporters could have imagined possible. As a result, the Left have been put in an extremely compromising position for (at least) three reasons. One, because the anti-PC rhetoric came out first, the Left have been forced to take to the defense, which usually tends not to

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 1.

⁵⁷ As it probably should in *any* type of social organization of individuals, no matter how 'primitive'. The point here is that increasingly sophisticated technologies, combined with increasingly coordinated structures and institutions, have within our text-mediated society led to widely-spanning meta-discursive regimes as never before.

⁵⁸ Dorothy Smith. "'Political Correctness'.", p. 2

be the most secure, powerful, or credible position. Second, this defensive stance has had the effect of forcing progressives to 'defend' what the New Right already defined as the dominant PC discourse; the terms, concepts, and ideological frame of reference had already been constructed, so that the defense of PC could only be heard on the terms of the New Right's pre-constructed discursive regime.⁵⁹ Third, a major foundation of this anti-PC discourse has been that political correctness is a left-wing phenomenon; those speaking out against it have been purportedly speaking out against what have been described as the 'excesses' of the Left.

By being defined as a left-wing phenomenon, the New Right have been able to cultivate from political correctness a very effective weapon with which to ridicule the Left, and more seriously, to damage the credibility of its political agenda.⁶⁰ With one sweeping motion, it seems, major issues such as environmental policy change, child care reforms, and women's and visible minorities' equality in the workplace can be summarily dismissed merely by connecting these issues with the taboo PC label. In this way, the media event of political correctness has significantly damaged the credibility of an already faltering left wing in Canada in an already neoconservative cultural, social, political, and economic climate. In such environs, it is immensely ironic that it is

⁵⁹ I take this last phrase from the work of Stephen J. Ball, who has looked at the constraints placed upon discourse regarding educational policy in a similar manner to my own understanding of the construction and articulation of PC discourse. (Stephen J. Ball. Politics and Policy Making in Education: Explorations in Political Sociology. London and New York, 1990, p. 11.)

⁶⁰ Though admittedly, the question of what precisely this single unitary political agenda consists of cannot be answered easily. Perhaps unfortunately, what is commonly regarded as the political Left in Canada, and as pertaining to 'Leftist issues' more generally, is by no means a single and consistent front. In fact, given the ever-increasing particularism and pluralism in our society where 'special interest groups' must not only fight with the government to receive concessions but may also bicker and even compete among themselves, goals that *should* be common to all may often end up being won only by certain groups at the expense of others. This zero-sum game mentality, that ultimately creates fissures where there should be strength in unity, has gradually become naturalized and has had a serious disabling effect upon the implementation of substantive progressive social reforms that truly work towards the empowerment and the forwarding of the concerns of all.

individuals sympathetic to PC goals that are the ones described as being McCarthyist in nature and censorious in intent.⁶¹

Statement of Objectives - and Qualifications

In my thesis, I will argue that political correctness has been appropriated by the New Right as well as other conservatively-inclined groups and organizations to serve as a very valuable weapon with which to seriously damage the credibility, and therefore, possibility, of the Left's political agenda. At least partly this remarkable victory can be seen to be due to the vast organizational and networking abilities of the New Right, put in place during the economic restructuring 'revolution' that took place beginning in the mid-1970s. These formidable resources and concomitant capital are still largely available, making them indispensable elements of the anti-PC success story. Also part of this success is what has been a backlash (albeit carefully constructed) to progress made in various areas of the Left's political agenda. This backlash has developed through the resentments and alienations which have unfortunately accompanied many of the strategies through which such progress has been attained. By these strategies I am referring to such policies as affirmative action both in education and in the workplace; the tremendous significance of this policy's implementation and its resulting changing conceptions of 'fair play' and 'justice' by Canadians cannot be underestimated, particularly in these tough economic times. While my argument is that these frustrations

⁶¹ For an excellent refutation of this allegation, and additionally for a detailed comparison and contrast between the McCarthyism of the 1950's and the present politically correct 'movement' which leaves the reader with no doubt as to the tangible differences between the two, please refer to Christopher Phelps' article, "The Second Time as Farce: The Right's 'New McCarthyism'." *Monthly Review*, 1991, October, p. 39-57. As Phelps notes, however, "the campus witchhunt [of McCarthyism] was conducted in the name of academic freedom, freedom of expression, and free scholarship", leading Phelps to contend that while the argument may be the same, the McCarthyism of old and the new attack on political correctness are similar in ways *other* than those the anti-PCers would contend. (*Ibid.*, p. 44.) I will discuss this article further in the chapters to come.

have been largely constructed, that does not by any means imply that they are therefore *false*.⁶²

In what follows, the New Right's continuing success on the cultural front will be illustrated, from the incredible media voice given to the National Association of Scholars (NAS), discussed in Chapter Two, to the concerted efforts of the Madison Center through its coordination of the Collegiate Network to produce young conservatives and to propagate conservative thought among student youth, which is discussed in Chapter Five.⁶³ In Chapter Two, I will also discuss the interesting history of the term political correctness, describe the term's gradual appropriation by conservatively-inclined individuals and groups, and how through such appropriation its meaning was changed fundamentally and enduringly. Chapter Three will be devoted to theory; textual mediation, intertextuality, and hegemony will be offered as a preliminary integration of three theoretical perspectives as a way of understanding the conditions in which the political correctness controversy emerged. In this way, I do not go so far as to attempt to explain precisely 'how PC happened', but rather limit myself to the more attainable goal of articulating some of the theoretical perspectives that I contend are essential to the ultimate description of the sequence of processes from which political correctness arose. In Chapter Four, I enter into close textual analysis of four media texts in my attempt to demonstrate the extent of New Right articulation of political correctness as 'objective journalism', and also use these and other more brief analyses as the means through which

⁶² As will be discussed further, particularly in Chapter Three, my argument is *not* that people are 'cultural dupes' in the vulgar Marxist sense of "false consciousness". Such a theory is, as we shall see, at best inadequate, and at worst condescending.

⁶³ As I have already noted with reference to Debra Schultz's National Council for Research on Women report, I have utilized American material, and will discuss American events and organizations, throughout this work. However, it is not my intent to parade US material and sources as if they were equivalent to their Canadian counterparts, and many differences between the two nations exist (perhaps thankfully). For example, John Harp has observed that racial issues may tend to be more pronounced and have greater salience in the American context, even though Canada's historical treatment of minority groups leaves much to be desired. (John Harp, personal communication.)

to illustrate some of the tactics used (consciously or unconsciously, overtly or covertly) by media personnel to package the PC controversy. In the process, my intent is to debunk several widely-propagated assumptions regarding political correctness, and to use these analyses to articulate many of the central theoretical concerns of this paper. In the final Concluding Remarks chapter, I will return to an analysis of the linkages between the New Right and the political correctness controversy, and will also point to some possible solutions through which progressive forces can perhaps begin to encroach upon the New Right's dominant hold upon the public consciousness, both particular to and beyond the current political correctness rhetoric.

Throughout these pages - and not only in Chapter Four - the reader will find a multitude of media texts examined both broadly and minutely. My analysis is by no means a systematic one, nor is it a representative one in the purely empirical, positivist sense of the term. Instead, I prefer to think of this analysis, and the micro-analyses within it, as being *symptomatic*, and as such the reader should be aware of the fact that there are no upcoming charts and graphs depicting article or word counts of the nature that even a simple content analysis would necessarily entail. Such systematic analyses will soon, if they have not yet already, become available with regards to the political correctness controversy,⁶⁴ and I leave such worthwhile research to those more adept than I in the requisite skills. Early on in my research, I did a systematic search of the Canadian Business and Current Affairs Index on CD-ROM, and certainly read all of these (and

⁶⁴ For example, see Lorna Weir's article "PC Then and Now: Resignifying Political Correctness." Forthcoming in Stephen Richer and Lorna Weir's (Eds.) Beyond Political Correctness: The Future of the Canadian Academy. Toronto, 1995, p. 1-61. At the end of this paper, Weir includes a table depicting the occurrence of political correctness in seven major Canadian publications by year; a corresponding table depicting American material; and tables for both Canadian and American publications according to the context in which 'politically correct' (or its variants) appeared. Finally, some very intriguing organizational trees depicting both the "Hierarchy of Hyponymy" and the more specific "PC Hierarchy of Hyponymy" for Richard Bernstein's New York Times article "The Rising Hegemony of the Politically Correct" have been completed. Such methodical work must have been both painstaking and time consuming, and while I have forsaken such research for what I hope is a rigorous theoretical analysis, it must be pointed out that Weir clearly excels in both endeavours.

countless more) newspaper and magazine articles. However, I chose not to proceed beyond this first step in an attempt to exhaustively cover 'everything' that was being said concerning political correctness. In addition, while extended anti-PC treatises such as Dinesh D'Souza's Illiberal Education will certainly be referred to on numerous occasions (and, admittedly, usually with negative connotations), my efforts in this regard can in no way be seen to be a damning refutation of this book (and others I examine) as a whole.⁶⁵ In fact, the only truly comprehensive, that is, from start to finish, textual analysis in these pages is to be found in the four 'media artefacts' that I have selected for close scrutiny in Chapter Four.⁶⁶ However, the fact that this analysis is not positivistic does *not* imply that it is therefore devoid of validity. My efforts have been to explore the ways in which the media have depicted political correctness, and as such, have been more concerned with the meanings and characteristics, metaphors and symbols associated (rightly or wrongly) with political correctness, than with word counts and other empirical measures. I contend that a deep understanding of these former aspects of political correctness can be arrived at through the close study of certain symptomatic texts, rather than only through quantitative research that while being admittedly more exhaustive and comprehensive, may often end up being intellectually barren or shallowly superficial.

Inevitably, the final analysis has focussed upon those issues of political correctness that are of most concern to me, and this being the case, I make no mistake of

⁶⁵ While certain specific items have been selected for critical discussion, this thesis obviously comprises more than a simple book review, and as such, cannot be regarded as adequate or sufficient criticism of the book as comprised in its entirety. However, I would have no qualms about doing so, if the confines of my problematic did not deny the fruition of this task. While D'Souza's skills in constructing 'mainstream' concerns, thus seeming to articulate 'commonsense' opinions and courses of action, is truly enviable, his arguments are, in the end, unconvincing, perhaps precisely because they are couched in such obviously self-serving language and reactionary, populist rhetoric. Several examples will be examined in the chapters to follow.

⁶⁶ And even these are not *completely* exhaustive, again due to the confines of space. It seems that the more one studies a text, the more there is revealed about it, and, indeed, about one's earlier readings of it. Although perhaps this process is not quite as endless as the post-structuralists would have us believe, it is still formidable

presuming this to be in any way a complete or 'definitive' work. All the same, I have tried to be fair, and in this way provide for a 'representative' sampling of what is 'out there' being consumed by the reading (and television-watching) Canadian citizenry. I do think that there have been some foolish things said and written by individuals in support of political correctness,⁶⁷ and although my analysis does not focus on them, certainly my inclusion in Chapter Four of the extremely complex case of the 'PC scandal' implicating long-time Canadian social activist June Callwood should be an indication of my efforts to keep an open and critical mind regarding the ultimately subtle, impalpable, and often intangible 'social force' known as political correctness.

It is interesting to note that I first entered into this research in much the same

⁶⁷ Or, at the very least, papers written and debates argued in a manner far too academic to be of any real use in turning the tide of the anti-PC wave that has hit the newsstands, magazine stores, and bestseller lists to a large degree superfluous with right-wing rhetoric without much of the alternative showing up. For example, beyond simply carrying on a discourse that is exclusively academic in nature, little 'inside jokes' that only one's peers would (and perhaps wouldn't) understand certainly doesn't seem to help progressives secure much of a foothold in a right-wing discursive regime that is largely populist, reactionary, and heatedly emotional in its appeal. I would argue that the title to Catharine Stimpson's article, "Meno's Boy: Hearing His Story - & His Sister's" is just such an instance of such ineffectual (but no doubt very ingenious) discourse concerning political correctness. While clever allusions to Plato such as this may win accolades within a specific academic community, this article found its way to a much larger audience, the vast majority of whom, no doubt, would have no idea who "Meno's boy" was, much less who his sister was. While Stimpson briefly explains the allusion, the reader may not necessarily draw the connection between it and what it has to do with the larger issues of multiculturalism, freedom of speech, and so on. Although it is true that when Stimpson first wrote the paper, she was probably unaware of this larger potential audience (it was originally published in *Academe* in the November/December 1991 issue), her permission to have it published, as is, in a purportedly 'neutral' collection, was naïve, if not downright reckless. (Catharine R. Stimpson. "Meno's Boy: Hearing His Story - & His Sister's." In Francis J. Beckwith and Michael E. Bauman's (Eds.) *Are You Politically Correct? Debating America's Cultural Standards*. Buffalo, 1993, p. 119-131.) In addition, I will describe in Chapter Five an example of intellectual elitism, arising from a meeting of the Modern Language Association, that Dinesh D'Souza unfortunately exploits to full effect.

hyper-defensive state of mind as many so-called 'progressive' thinkers,⁶⁸ some of whom shall be described in these pages. However, in the end I became convinced not that the PCers can do no wrong,⁶⁹ but simply that the critics of political correctness have tended to repeat - *ad nauseam* - the same old 'horror stories' and the same old arguments lionizing 'tradition' and so on that have been utilized throughout the ages by any person or group fearing change, or more specifically, fearing change for the worse in regards to their own social, cultural, political, or economic standing. Through this realization, my critique of political correctness changed gradually, but substantially, over the course of my research. It was first a distinct uncomfortableness and uneasiness with what I regarded as the overall effect of political correctness, that is, its making the policies and goals of the Left look questionable, and even disagreeable. However, this transformed into a realization that despite the vast coverage, critics of political correctness have had less in real substantive and comprehensive claims against the Left than a commanding talent for controlling what could and could not be said in the debates over multiculturalism, affirmative action, and the "commonly reiterated trio of thought crimes: sexism, racism, and homophobia",⁷⁰ that is, what constituted the issues implied by the signifier of political correctness. Both of these issues will be evident in the pages that

⁶⁸ What I mean by this will become clear after reading of examples in the following chapters, but as a preliminary remark, let it be stated that many 'progressives' have done perhaps *more* to fan the flames of the anti-PC crusade than have the more predictable conservative criticisms, precisely because of their reputation for being liberal-minded. While naturally the openness of critique and self-conscious questioning of the 'correctness' of one's groups' efforts must be both permitted and encouraged, it has nevertheless been disappointing - and debilitating - for the forwarding of progressive goals when left-wing intellectuals, and, particularly, well-known media icons such as Gary Trudeau, very publicly abandon ship, for fear of being labeled one of 'them'. Such is evidence of the extremely powerful abilities of anti-PC rhetoric to both be able to signify (and resignify) individuals and groups as 'us' and 'them', and for the fear of such labeling to have had such a tremendous impact upon Leftists put on the defensive because of the startling rise of an ideological device for which they were so obviously unprepared.

⁶⁹ Although I will maintain that the *scope* of these abilities has been grossly exaggerated by critics of political correctness.

⁷⁰ Richard Bernstein. "The Rising Hegemony of the Politically Correct." *New York Times*, October 28, 1990, Section 4, p. 4. I shall have more to say of Mr. Bernstein's efforts in Chapter Three.

follow, which illustrates my own struggle with how best to evaluate and critique the issues associated with political correctness.

Overall, however, I think that the political correctness scare has been grossly hyper-inflated through hyperbole and right-wing rhetoric, and has garnered its significant strength both from the number of its purveyors and supporters, and from the concomitant (though somewhat delayed) startled, and resultant hyper-defensive, stance of many of the only individuals in a position to significantly retard its monumental and rapid growth. *Pace* Robin Fox, a Rutgers University anthropology professor who is also a member of the reactionary and decidedly anti-PC National Association of Scholars (NAS), who said that politically correct people are small in number (but so are termites), ⁷¹ this debate has been largely controlled by strategically positioned, well-organized, and often well-funded individuals and groups that are resolutely against what they define as political correctness, and this being the case, it has been this hostile contingent, not those *supporting* political correctness, that have been the ones largely dictating the articulation of the discourse. The NAS, William Bennett, Dinesh D'Souza, Allan Bloom, and Roger Kimball and the like contend that they are part of a majority, but a majority that is "silent" because it is too afraid of the "New McCarthyism" and its "thought police", ⁷² and while the latter comment is nonsense, the former - that they are a majority - can in some ways be seen to be accurate as the media, for example, have certainly given this 'majority view' vastly greater coverage and support than they have offered to any of the

⁷¹ Carolyn J. Mooney. "Movement to 'Reclaim' Academy.", p. A11. This appears to be a somewhat contradictory and rather confusing comment, as termites, while small in themselves with regards to physical size, are ant-like *social* insects, that is, they work relentlessly in large groups. The comment seems to have more of an emotional appeal ("PCers are 'nasty little pests just like those pesky termites'") than it does a grasp on reality (or 'rational' debate, for that matter).

When describing this conference, Ellen Rooney additionally notes the discrepancy between the fact that "many conferees [openly] describe themselves as conservative - intellectually, politically, or both" and the official NAS line that the organization represents a 'silent majority', the conferees, apparently, being the exception. (Ellen Rooney. "Discipline and Vanish: Feminism, the Resistance to Theory, and the Politics of Cultural Studies." *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*. 1990, 2(3), p. 25.)

⁷² *Ibid.*

alternative positions. In short, the political correctness controversy has been largely controlled by far-right and other conservatively-inclined individuals, groups, and organizations, that, previous to the New Right populist wave, had been tightly reined in ⁷³ by more moderate conservative thinkers and politicians, and this process has significantly weakened the perceived respectability, and feasibility, of the Left's political, cultural, social, and economic agenda.

Pat Marchak notes that since the rise of the New Right in Canada, that "[f]or the first time in post-war history, traditional social democratic and other left-wing parties [have become] viewed as reactionary: the new right ha[s] become the radical vanguard of a new social order." ⁷⁴ In the case of the economy, at least, the New Right in the late 1980s and early 1990s has been able to successfully present their case that the old Keynesian ideals will not work anymore, and if its economic dicta seem to have lost some of its resplendence in terms of being regarded as 'The Solution', they have been able to recover somewhat by changing their tune to that of simply not having any other choice (of, for example, Canadians no longer having the 'luxury' of a social safety net). It is in this way that the Left has been dismissed by many retractors as 'old news', and "'democracy' itself ha[s] lost its lustre, and become associated with complaints about excessive and unrealistic expectations". Marchak goes on to say that

⁷³ Stuart Hall makes the following humorous but erudite comment regarding the extremist elements in Britain's Tory party prior to the emergence of Thatcherism:

Let out on a tight leash at party conferences, they were permitted to air their recidivistic social doctrines (the hangem-and-flogem brigade) and to push a version of crude economic individualism and the petit-bourgeois ethic of competition against what they regarded as the too well bred Tory squirearchy. (Stuart Hall. "Toad in the Garden.", p. 37.)

Unfortunately for us, I would argue, the brigade broke free of its confines and not only began to spout off about their "recidivistic social doctrines", but actually began to garner a respective audience.

⁷⁴ Pat Marchak. *Integrated Circus*, p. 4.

Where [the Left] was once regarded as radical, it now seem[s] bereft of innovative ideas; it [has been] reduced to defending the welfare state and trying to make public the flaws in the new right's agenda.⁷⁵

In a like manner, in the political correctness controversy the Left has similarly been put on the defensive, with their credibility and suitability to contemporary society's problems (as constructed largely by those in opposition to them) being seriously challenged and derided. This being the case, this work is an effort towards the understanding of how such a process occurred, and was permitted to thrive, with such impressive fecundity.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 115.

CHAPTER TWO

Right-Wing Politics and the Rearticulation of History

The National Association of Scholars and 'Free Speech'

The National Association of Scholars (NAS) met for the first time in November of 1988 in New York City, with a membership of over 500 intellectuals, that, incidently, has since seen its membership increase many times over. ¹ The Association, funded by the conservative John M. Olin Foundation, was founded in 1987, and has been one of the most visible, and relentless, players in the debates over political correctness, particularly with reference to 'academic' issues such as freedom of speech and free inquiry on campus. Debra Schultz cites a NAS statement where they define their mandate:

. . . [to] enhance the quality and content of the curriculum; maintain rigorous standards in research, teaching, ? J academic self-governance; and preserve academic freedom and the free exchange of ideas on and off the campus. ²

¹ For example, in the fall of 1991 this structure of interlocking faculty groups coordinated from a national office in Princeton, New Jersey claimed over 2,500 members in 22 American states. (Denise K. Magner. "Gathering to Anceas Battle Against 'Political Correctness,' Scholars Look for New Ways to Resist 'Illiberal Radicals'." Chronicle of Higher Education, March 11, 1992, p. A17.)

² Debra L. Schultz. To Reclaim a Legacy of Diversity: Analyzing the "Political Correctness" Debates in Higher Education. New York, 1993, p. 15.

It is with reference to such noble appeals, of course, that individuals such as psychology professor Philippe Rushton of the University of Western Ontario are permitted to continue research and, more alarmingly to many, teaching. Rushton's views regarding the inferiority of blacks to whites (and of whites to Asians) is more than Macleans' insipid description of "objectionable"; it is both very disturbing and extremely alarming.³

In addition, it is thought-provoking to note three other 'objectionable' scholars with regard to issues of ethnicity and gender relations, all of whom the NAS would support. In what follows, my intent is not to demonstrate the racism, sexism, and so on that are inevitably a part of all discourse, academic or otherwise, and therefore to 'prove' that the NAS is therefore to be vilified for its overt and latent support for such discrimination, but rather is to indicate the fact that there is no such thing as entirely objective, unbiased, and in particular, apolitical research. Both with regard to intent and effect. It is not the Left and the rise of political correctness that have 'politicized everything', but rather, that all ideas and theoretical paradigms, and all economic proposals and social policies, have always been *inherently* political.⁵ In this way,

³ Tom Fennell. "The Silencers: A New Wave of Repression is Sweeping Through the Universities." Macleans, May 27, 1991, p. 41.

⁴ Doug Smith takes up this point in his critique of the Macleans' cover story on political correctness, the latter of which I will discuss in more detail later on in this chapter. Smith states that Macleans' presents Philippe Rushton (whose case is cited at three different points in the issue, each time recapitulating his racist views), as

... a disinterested researcher slaving away at the social science beakers and test-tubes who, in the name of disinterested science, has come up with the conclusion that blacks are inferior to whites. And of course like any other disinterested researcher who seeks a rational examination of his opinions he immediately arranges to appear on the *Geraldo* show. (Doug Smith. "The 'New McCarthyism'." Canadian Dimension, 1991, 25(6), p. 12.)

⁵ Doug Smith argues that such core works of the canon as The Republic and The Prince are not necessarily simply "great works" of Western civilization to be lionized equally by all, but rather that these classics have their own political and ideological undertones. In this way, the facile dismissal of L. Rigoberta Menchu by "Guatemalan peasant woman turned socialist", by Macleans' and PC critics generally, could be rebuked with the equally glib dismissal of Plato and Machiavelli as "intellectual hirelings whose works are for the most part apologetics for authoritarianism". (Ibid., p. 11.) The point is that both evaluations are reductive and simplistic, and neither the classics nor the politically correct 'treatises' are politically neutral.

Stanley Fish has remarked that in principle, political correctness is no more than what everyone does when practicing politics, defining issues, making judgments, and arguing positions. But it has come to mean that "there's some agenda on one side and purity on the other."⁶

First, there is Thomas Sowell, a senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, whose criticisms of affirmative action and multiculturalism have a particular rhetorical advantage due to the author's own visible minority status.⁷ In Sowell's 'global' documenting of "'Affirmative Action': A Worldwide Disaster", the author recklessly compares data from vastly disparate cultural, social, political, and economic regions of the world as if their differing contexts would make no difference in the gleaning of 'the truth', that is, his attempt to reveal that affirmative action and multiculturalist policies have been disastrous in all of them, all through the ages, and so on.⁸ Because of these 'facts', Sowell asserts that we must quash efforts promoting these goals before we move "from the stage of mere failure to the stage of social disaster".⁹ For example, he implies that in South Africa (the article was written in 1989), the black

⁶ Bill Marvel. "Politically Correct: Any Way You Write It, or Say It, a Once-Innocuous Phrase has Become a Loaded Political and Cultural Weapon." Edmonton Journal, May 8, 1994, p. C4. This article goes on to note that Marvin Dulaney, a history professor at the University of Texas at Arlington, has said that "[i]t's the people on the right, the conservatives, that actually want to control thought and control ideas, as opposed to the liberals". (Ibid.) Dulaney also makes the important point that while affirmative action is purported to be politically correct, it is actually more correct to be *against* it. In our current political, cultural, social, and economic climate, I would agree that this is largely the case. However, it is important to note that Dulaney goes to far with his statement above regarding which groups want to "control thought and control ideas"; liberals want to do this every bit as much as conservatives. The only difference is that it has been the conservatives who have had the upper hand with many issues, perhaps none more so on the cultural scene than the political correctness debate.

⁷ Debra Schultz. Legacy of Diversity, p. 13.

⁸ Dinesh D'Souza similarly asserts that there has never been a successful multicultural and multiracial society, apparently as evidence that there is no point in even making the attempt. However, in what are probably his efforts to conclude this point on a more positive note, D'Souza adds that if everyone left behind "past bitterness - both the wrongs of the ancien régime as well as the wrongs of political correctness", this *might* enable "future generations of young people to be more productive workers and harmonious citizens in a multiracial society". To me, then, D'Souza's publication of Illiberal Education, which even he boasts has "helped to unleash an ongoing national controversy" seems to belie his desire that past bitterness of at least the latter type be left behind. (Dinesh D'Souza. Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus. New York, 1992, p. xx.)

⁹ Thomas Sowell. "'Affirmative Action': A Worldwide Disaster." Commentary, 1989, 88(6), p. 41.

majority is doing just fine, since many white businessmen have been fined "for hiring more blacks and in higher occupations than they are legally allowed to".¹⁰ Such a state of affairs seems to me to have a lot less to do with the 'brotherly love' and unanimity that occurs 'naturally' in countries which have refused to give blacks the vote (much less affirmative action), than with the fact that the black workers probably received a pittance when compared to the more expensive, or rather, 'more qualified', white counterparts.

In a similar vein, Sowell describes a study of black American colleges - which, interestingly enough, is not cited so that others might review the research - which apparently 'proved' that

... even students planning post-graduate study often showed no sense of urgency about needing to be prepared "because they believed that certain rules would simply be set aside for them."¹¹

Witness 'preferential policies' and 'special treatment' rearing their ugly heads, implying not help to disadvantaged students, but 'an easy ride' given by those 'crusaders' foolish enough to offer it.¹² The second example of an 'objectionable' scholar that the NAS would approve of¹³ goes further in these kinds of insinuations. In his article concerning

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 38.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 28.

¹² Sowell further notes that historically persecuted groups such as overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia and Jews in Europe have been "more prosperous than their persecutors" precisely *because* of their oppression, as opposed to the "stagnation" that has occurred among many peoples with a long history of peace and prosperity. (Ibid., p. 27.) Interestingly, this does not really give much credence to the supposed superiority of the great white Western civilization, which has been 'tradition' (albeit an accumulating one) since Plato's time, unless one were to go further to explain that early discoveries, scholars, etc. from Greece, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Middle East more generally are actually included, through cultural appropriation, in the definition of 'Western' civilization.

¹³ Obviously, I am unable to fully enter into the censorship debate within the confines of my current problematic, but let it be stated that I am certainly not advocating that these three intellectuals be banned forever from all forms of professorship, instruction, scholarship, and so on, or even that they necessarily be censored at all. Rather, my purpose here is to demonstrate that 'politics', 'ideology', and 'hidden agendas' are not only the provenance of the Left. What I most strongly object to in NAS discourse, commonly filtered through the popular media uncritically, is their dogmatic assertions that they want to preserve 'objective' and 'unbiased' scholarship. *Diversity and Dissent*, a Madison Center (which is linked to the NAS both in agenda and in funding sources, the John M. Olin Foundation being the prime example of the latter) publication, stated that its *raison d'être* was to "be concerned first with truth, not with perceptions"; their naïveté, if sincere, is truly disturbing. I will discuss the issue of freedom of speech further in this chapter, particularly in the context of Stanley Fish's argument thereof.

the vital role heredity plays in determining human behavior, Paul N. Johnson states that by falsely claiming that environmental factors have a lot (or "everything", as he claims the "Marxist revolutionary propaganda" asserts) to do with individuals' life potential,

Those [ethnic groups] who live in the ghettos can be portrayed as the *biological equals* of those who have contributed to society and who keep society running. ¹⁴

If this comment were not enough, Johnson goes even further a sentence later to assert that "[t]hus the poor can be turned against *their benefactors*, the more successful who pay taxes or donate to charity to support the former". ¹⁵ That such condescending, paternalistic, and indeed blatantly racist inaccuracies and conflation of issues can be thought to be presented 'neutrally' in the pursuit of "truth, not . . . perceptions" is extremely frightening, and indeed, truly appalling. One is unsure of whether to be glad that the author does not seem to be aware of his colleague Philippe Rushton's work, or be suspicious that Johnson is an even *more* extreme version of the Canadian professor.

The third example is one which I came upon unwittingly, as it came from a journal entitled the International Journal on World Peace, and the title of the article was the misleadingly 'progressive' "Political Correctness and Peace". Interested to find out what author Panos D. Bardis - who incidentally happens to be the editor of the International Social Science Review - had to say about the subject, I proceeded to be dumbfounded at the hostile content and tone of this 'peaceful' article. Bardis is particularly abusive in his depiction of female 'challengers', as clearly evident below:

¹⁴ [emphasis added.] Paul N. Johnson. "'Politically Correct': The Attack on Scientific Enquiry into Heritability." Conservative Review. 1991, 2(2), p. 24.

¹⁵ [emphasis added.] Ibid.

. . . nowadays *too many* women are anything but humble or self-effacing, and . . . many males in academia are victimized by *belligerent* feminists with impunity. Much worse, many women conspire diabolically and falsify their credentials in order to advance themselves at the expense of worthier men.¹⁶

Following from this astounding diatribe, Bardis then moves on to women of colour, taking pot-shots at “a black ‘womyn’ at august Cornell University, *obviously a quota student*”,¹⁷ who was apparently seriously out of line when she questioned the presence of George Bush’s armed forces in Iraq. Not surprisingly, Bardis’ article does not discuss anything even remotely related to ‘peace’, but in contrast, is ominously close to what might be defined as infringements upon hate speech laws, of which he would necessarily disapprove. Although the official line of the National Association of Scholars might be cautious support for such already constitutionalized measures, it seems probable that if such policies were not already law, at least some NAS members, if not the organization as a whole, would criticize *their* negative effects upon ‘freedom of speech’. As it stands, they are merely useful examples for the furthering of the NAS assertion that no more restrictions are needed.

¹⁶ [emphasis added.] Panos D. Bardis. “Political Correctness and Peace.” *International Journal on World Peace*. 1991, VIII(2), p. 94. One must wonder with regard to the author’s use of the term ‘belligerent’ when describing feminists; are there any other kind? In reference to the second sentence, I chose not to emphasize any particular words or phrases because I would have ended up with an entirely italicized sentence.

¹⁷ [emphasis added.] *Ibid.*, p. 96. While it is not known whether or not Bardis was vocal in his complaint, it is important to note some very real consequences of speaking out against the war in Iraq, as described by Doug Smith: Warren Hinkle was banished from the *San Francisco Examiner* for writing an anti-war column; Dr. Orlando Garcia was fired from his New York City radio talk show for being critical of the American war effort; Jim Bleikamp was suspended from his job as television talk show host in Columbus, Ohio after criticizing a member of Congress for switching his position on the war; and the editor of the Round Rock, Texas *Leader* was fired for publishing the comments of a Palestinian-American, who said that George Bush was the “biggest liar in the United States.” This publication further made up for the editor’s indiscretion by writing that “we hope that the flag flying from our office and the yellow ribbon on our tree will remove any doubt about our loyalty to the president”. (Doug Smith. “‘New McCarthyism’.”, p. 10.) It would seem that political correctness of *another* kind was being enforced, in the United States, at least. None of these examples were cited in any other of the media or intellectual sources read in my research for this work.

Stanley Fish is one of the most public defenders of political correctness, and as such is inevitably discredited and delegitimated by his opposition.¹⁸ Fish is well-known for his position against the anti-PC 'defenders of free speech', and he argues convincingly in his article "There's No Such Thing as Free Speech and It's a Good Thing, Too" (he has a book of the same name), that while free speech principles serve to protect society against over-hasty outcomes,

. . . the channels are not, as they are sometimes said to be, merely and reassuringly procedural. They have as much content as the contents they "filter," and therefore one must be alert to the content they presently bear and not look to them for a deliverance from politics, for it is politics, either your own or someone else's, that is responsible for the form free speech principles now have.¹⁹

In this way, Fish's thesis that there is no such thing as free speech is consistent with the pro-PC line of argument that no discourse is 'neutral', 'natural', or 'apolitical', and Fish is therefore completely at odds with the opines of the members of the NAS. Fish uses several examples to illustrate his thesis, including the important point that a newspaper's decision to refuse to publish something that it finds objectionable is *not* a transgression of the First Amendment or anything remotely close to 'censorship' in itself, so long as other avenues of publication are available, and there has been no state suppression of the author's views. 'Free speech', then, is certainly not an endangered species, and indeed,

¹⁸ For example, both Dinesh D'Souza and the Newsweek cover story both make a point of describing his "flamboyance", D'Souza in the following manner:

During our interview Fish wore a bold shirt and gold chain, although he seemed equally proud of his deep tan and casually brushed back silver hair. (Dinesh D'Souza. Illiberal Education, p. 173.)

Illiberal Education is filled with such unnecessary filler (if D'Souza's argument should stand on its own on the basis of facts, as he claims that it does); D'Souza also refers to the Duke University department of humanities Fish is associated with as the "Fish tank", a description purportedly coming from "academic circles", but regardless of its origins, certainly adding to D'Souza's position that what political correctness is all about is enforced conformity to the political predilections of the day. (Ibid., p. 161.)

I should additionally note that while I describe Fish above as a public defender of political correctness, he is certainly not any kind of spokesperson in any official capacity, a distinction whose importance will be made evident in the fourth section of this chapter, The Political Correctness 'Movement'.

¹⁹ Stanley Fish. "There's No Such Thing as Free Speech and It's a Good Thing, Too." In Francis J. Beckwith and Michael E. Bauman's (Eds.) Are You Politically Correct? Debating America's Cultural Standards. Buffalo, 1993, p. 54.

Fish's further contention there is actually no such thing as free speech is not, as he states, as "startling or corrosive" as it may first have seemed:

It merely says that there is no class of utterances separable from the world of conduct, and that therefore the identifications of some utterances as members of that nonexistent class will always be evidence that a political line has been drawn rather than a line that denies politics entry into the form of public discourse.²⁰

Fish's assertion that there is no such thing as *real* free speech is convincing, as such would be impossible to obtain, given the fact that First Amendments and the like do not come out of thin air, but rather are constructed by human intellect, which is invariably and unavoidably bias-ridden.

Interestingly, Fish nevertheless makes a convincing argument for the suppression of some speech and other discursive practices, even with his concomitant realization that such a move does risk "deny[ing] us the benefit of Joyce's *Ulysses* or Lawrence's *Lady Chatterly's Lover* or Titian's paintings". Despite these risks, Fish states that

I am persuaded that at the present moment, right now, the risk of not attending to hate speech is greater than the risk that by regulating it we will deprive ourselves of valuable voices and insights or slide down the slippery slope toward tyranny.²¹

It is not my intent in this work to debate the pros and cons of censorship, but it must be noted that the appeal of such efforts is nearly always contingent upon *who* has the power to impose such regulation. In a similar vein, Charles R. Lawrence III argues poignantly that while unanticipated hate speech cannot easily be regulated, this should not prevent notices being posted for organized speeches and rallies, so that minority students could at least be forewarned of a hostile climate on campus at a prearranged time and location.²² However, is it really possible to do this to a sufficient degree without, for example, the

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., p. 55.

²² Charles R. Lawrence III. "The Debates Over Placing Limits on Racist Speech Must Not Ignore the Damage It Does to Its Victims." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 1989, 36(8), p. B3.

posters advertising the event comprising in *themselves* the unanticipated hate speech that Lawrence admits is so hard to regulate? However, There's No Such Thing as Free Speech (the book this time) makes for a convincing argument when Fish cogently describes the following dilemma:

The fact that David Duke was rudely and provocatively questioned by reporters on "Sixty Minutes" or "Meet the Press" was less important than the fact that he was on "Sixty Minutes" and "Meet the Press" in the first place, for these appearances legitimized him and put his views into national circulation in a way that made them an unavoidable component of the nation's thinking.²³

In what must be my summary with regard to the censorship issue due to the differing agenda of this paper, I would assert that the censorship issue is an extremely complex and volatile one. As Fish himself asserts, "[t]here is no safe place".²⁴

However, the fact remains that the National Association of Scholars (NAS), standing as they do for valiant and chivalrous defenders of 'free speech' and 'objective' intellectual inquiry, are every bit as political and bias-ridden as those they oppose and seek to suppress. Carolyn J. Mooney reports the NAS complaint that "[m]any academics have abandoned rational thought and a search for the truth, and instead teach and pursue research with the goal of advancing their own political agendas".²⁵ Clearly, however, the National Association of Scholars is an activist organization itself, and as such, exists to advance its own particular political agenda. At the first NAS meeting in 1988, Allan C. Kors, an associate professor of history at the University of Pennsylvania, urged his colleagues to "stand up" to the politically correct, and watch them "crumble":

²³ Stanley Fish. There's No Such Thing as Free Speech, and It's a Good Thing, Too. New York and Oxford, 1994, p. 118.

²⁴ Stanley Fish. "No Such Thing as Free Speech.", p. 55.

²⁵ Carolyn J. Mooney. "Conservative Scholars Call for a Movement to 'Reclaim' Academy." Chronicle of Higher Education. November 23, 1988, p. A11.

Say to the feminists, "What do you mean by separate courses? You have no methodology." . . . [M]ake them state their agenda to the world. They haven't got the guts to state it, and you'll beat them that way.²⁶

This prescription was part of what Mooney describes as a rousing speech that brought many scholars in the crowded conference hall to their feet. I would argue that this support for Kors and other speakers, and the general high-intensity, highly emotional atmosphere of the conference as a whole is an indication that this convention was more akin to a political rally than a 'scholarly' conference. Given the "rousing" speeches such as these with prescriptions on how to "reclaim" the academy, it is amusing to note that such politicking by the NAS is meant to ostensibly *curb* the politicization of the campus. Indeed, the feminist scholars of whom Kors is so contemptuous stand in sharp contrast to these scholars of the NAS, in that the former tend to be entirely *open* about their personal and political goals. For example, Lynda Hurst reports a comment of a graduate student from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education:

You have to understand that everything, language included, is political. No knowledge, nothing that is taught, is neutral.

Critics say, "You feminists, you have a bias, an agenda." I say, "Yes, and I admit I do. You have a bias and agenda, too, but you don't admit it."²⁷

Given the political rally the first NAS meeting was, it seems clear that feminists are better at both taking responsibility for their actions, and at being more intellectually honest, than are both the members of the NAS, and than its purported mandate to prevent the "politicization of campus life".²⁸

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Lynda Hurst. "'Politically Correct'? Think Before You Speak." *Toronto Star*, June 2, 1991, p. A12.

²⁸ Debra Schultz. *Legacy of Diversity*, p. 15.

A Political Correctness Vignette

In 1991, *A Special Firing Line Debate*, with ultraconservative William F. Buckley Jr., began with the line: "Resolved: Freedom of Thought is in Danger on American Campuses".²⁹ However, host Michael Kinsley of *The New Republic* was quick to reword this to say that what the program was *really* about was what he described as the 'media buzzword' of political correctness. Such uncritical usage of media-constructed terms often cloaks the fact of whose interests it is really in to excitedly describe political correctness as capable of being a veritable 'buzzword', which others in the media have also referred to as 'watchwords' and, apparently unselfconsciously, as 'news speak'. What is a buzzword, exactly? Who decides what it is? What is and what is not considered to be worthy of this designation? Does being a buzzword mean that a new and exciting thought process has transcended individual consciousness to gain credence and instant recognition among the population at large, or does it simply mean that it is something that sells newspapers (or is intended to sell them)? As much of this analysis has been formed during the process of reading and assimilating media material, it is important to point out that much of such material involves the mediatization of cultural, political, social, and economic processes, and often, such mediatization merely constitutes journalists talking to other journalists, thereby keeping the topic 'fresh', but often without truly taking on the issue. Perhaps in the description of political correctness as a buzzword, media personnel subtly trivialize and even delegitimize it, at perhaps a higher order level of discussion than would be picked up by many lay readers. To the media, political correctness may be just one more cash cow that they can milk for all it is worth, while the lay reader, attracted by the flashy 'buzzword' term, will hungrily lap it

²⁹ "Resolved: Freedom of Thought is in Danger on American Campuses." *A Special Firing Line Debate* with William F. Buckley Jr., produced by Warren Steibel, 1991.

up. In other words, "If the media tell me that this is a 'buzzword', it must really be worth my full attention".³⁰

In the televised debate, Captain William F. Buckley Jr. and his "For the Resolution" team of John Silber, president of Boston University; Glenn Loury, Professor of Political Economy at Boston University; and Dinesh D'Souza, previous right-hand man of the Reagan administration and now more well-known as the author of the popular book, Illiberal Education, squared off contra the captain of the "Against the Resolution" team Catharine Stimpson, Dean of the Graduate School at Rutgers University; Stanley Fish, Professor of English and Law at Duke University; Leon Botstein, President of Bard College; and Ronald Walters, Chair of the Political Science Department at Howard University. Significantly, the "For the Resolution" team included two members who could immediately be recognized as being from visible minority groups, apparently in the effort to 'cancel out' the female head of the "Against the Resolution" team and its additional Jewish and visible minority members.

Before going any further, it should be noted that I am definitely uneasy with my own attempts above to 'classify' individuals according to what could easily be argued as being essentialist criteria. However, my efforts are to describe the strategizing that occurred during preparation for the debate, which itself had the end result of trivializing, or tokenizing, such differences. Funny that in the aim to discredit 'PC' goals such as the

³⁰ However, Heather Jon Maroney has suggested that there are two parts to this process. One is the relegation by media personnel of buzzword status to certain words, phrases, and topics that are indeed marked as being important to readers by their buzzword distinction. On the other hand, such labeling of political correctness as a buzzword is concomitantly part of a process in which a long line of buzzwords have similarly proceeded through. That is, they too have appeared, 'buzzed' for a brief time, and ultimately been replaced, in what might be regarded as a 'natural' process of fashion or fad that affects the popular media just as it does other areas of culture. In this way, the buzzword of political correctness may imply to the reader not that "If the media tell me that this is a 'buzzword', it must really be worth my full attention", but rather that "Since this has been described as another of those 'buzzwords', I don't have to pay attention to it". (Heather Jon Maroney, personal communication.) However, I think that buzzwords do help to sell newspapers, perhaps because they offer a frequently addressed 'hot topic' that the reader can follow over time (as short as that time may be, before the next buzzword comes along).

celebration of diversity, the "For the Resolution" team still decided that for purposes of appearance, at least, such differences are indeed important and significant, and indeed, worthy of inclusion. As Debra Schultz has noted with reference to the attention books such as Dinesh D'Souza's Illiberal Education have elicited, minority spokespersons such as D'Souza, Glenn Loury, Thomas Sowell, and Linda Chavez (a Reagan appointee to the United States Civil Rights Commission), who criticize affirmative action and multicultural curriculum innovations, gain significant rhetorical advantages precisely because of their minority status. Schultz argues that conservative organizations such as the Madison Center have actively sought to cultivate additional minority voices and to promote dissemination of their views. With regard to these efforts within student populations, the Madison Center coordinates the Collegiate Network, which gives grants and professional help to 61 student publications on 58 campuses, including the Dartmouth Review, the controversial student newspaper Mr. D'Souza edited while attending Dartmouth College. In her report, Schultz includes the astonishingly explicit laudatory remarks of the Madison Center upon its own efforts:

It is becoming increasingly difficult to graduate from a first-rate American university without having been exposed to conservative thought . . . This is perhaps the greatest achievement of the Collegiate Network in 1990.³¹

As I will continue to argue throughout this work, such remarks would seem to serve as a stiff rebuke to any anti-PC complaint that it is advocates of political correctness who have 'politicized the campus'.

Thus, with the debate meticulously set up in this manner, the program began with William F. Buckley Jr.'s rather confounding verbiage intended to vilify the 'crusaders' of political correctness, soon followed by Catharine Stimpson's best attempts at some kind of intelligent repartee. While the program did more for igniting the controversy than for

³¹ Debra Schultz. Legacy of Diversity, p. 13.

its resolution (as I think it was meant to), mainly through immature name calling³² and tenuously based insinuations and assumptions,³³ it definitely demonstrated the apparently highly significant nature of the debate's subject matter, as well as the crucial importance of its ultimate resolution (ostensibly among the participants present, but more subtly among the viewers at home, to whom the message that political correctness was a very important issue not only in politics or on the campuses but also in their own private

³² Although I admit that I am biased, the most blatant name-calling did seem to emanate more from the anti-PC side of the debate than from the pro-PC one; for example, Glenn Loury of Boston University was constantly referring to the "cult of sensitivity" and to the "sensitivity mongers" of the politically correct "faction". Carefully chosen terminology such as this is a crucial necessity for the emotional, if not intellectual, promotion of any particular argument, as most anyone who has participated in oral debate will readily confirm. In the case of the antagonism directed towards the goals, groups, and interests affirmed to be associated with political correctness, this emotional component has been extremely powerful in carrying the anti-PC tide of disapproval. As another example, Mr. D'Souza carefully bracketed his arguments with such evocative sound bites as "the proliferation of victim classes".

³³ For example, John Silber, President of Boston University, does his "For the Resolution" team more harm than good when he attempts to make the argument that within the political correctness 'movement', there is a distinct denial of transcendence, that is, that the politically correct are guilty of essentialism in their efforts to celebrate diversity and encourage inclusion rather than exclusion. Unfortunately in backing up this argument, Mr. Silber goes on to insist that Shakespeare, for example, had a "very good" understanding of his female characters. Inevitably, this begs such questions as exactly *who* came to this conclusion, Shakespeare's female contemporaries? What about women of today; have they been consulted as to their opinion of what makes a 'good' female character, for instance? Perhaps even Silber, when pushed, would admit that neither of these scenarios are very likely. Stanley Fish, of the "Against" side of the debate, quickly retorted that rather than transcendence, the problem with much of mainstream thought in the humanities and social sciences is that it has really involved the acceptance of one norm *as having achieved* transcendence, as Silber's poor choice of an example amply demonstrates.

In this regard, Silber's point is similar to Allan Bloom's theory of 'transcendental truths', which Peter McLaren describes as such:

Unlike [E.D.] Hirsch, who incorporates information from both mainstream and elite cultures, Bloom seeks to instill, among the worthiest of students, high-status knowledge based on Platonic principles and virtues which treat knowledge as pristine, transhistorical, universal, and context free. (Peter McLaren. "Culture or Canon? Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Literacy." *Harvard Educational Review*, 1988, 58(2), p. 216.)

In this way, Silber and Bloom, et al. can be regarded as being faithful to what Raymond Williams described as the "old humanist" school of thought, which can be traced back to the Middle Ages or earlier. 'Humanists' such as Allan Bloom are contemporary manifestations of one line of thought regarding the old humanist line that "man's spiritual health depended on a kind of education that was more than training for some specialized work". As compared to the alternative "industrial trainer" argument, such theories regarding what education should be are certainly preferable. However, Williams further notes that the old humanists were often "men deeply opposed to democracy", to which Bloom's condition of only the "worthiest of students" can be regarded as being faithful. (Raymond Williams. *Communications*. London, 1962, p. 162.) Interestingly, Stephen J. Ball has indeed noted that the "cultural restorationists" of the New Right represent the old hard-line humanists of the past. (Stephen J. Ball. *Politics and Policy Making in Education: Explorations in Political Sociology*. London, 1990, p. 6.)

lives was repeatedly driven home).³⁴ William F. Buckley Jr. himself, it is interesting to note, contended that while the frenzy to be politically correct will not last long (reason will indubitably reign supreme), politically correct policies such as the addition of non-Western content in university courses are - in contrast to the McCarthyism of the 1950's - *not* a mere historical fiction, but rather an absurd reality to be dealt with expeditiously.³⁵ So much for 'Eurocentrism'; it was having a hard time catching on in Western intellectual - and most certainly, general public - life anyway.

Though it is interesting to note that the term Eurocentrism, too, has been appropriated from what was once its entirely intellectual confines. A recent example of this can be found in a Macleans article by Anthony Wilson-Smith. In it, Wilson-Smith describes Prime Minister Chrétien's government as the "least Euro-centric and Western-oriented government in the country's history", all apparently because the Wilson-Smith thinks that the Liberals have done their best to pretend that Washington doesn't exist, in striking contrast to the previous Mulroney government. Assumably, the head-over-heels efforts to try to gain China's economic favour despite their infamous human rights record has not hurt either.³⁶ I am not trying to imply here that ruminations and creations of the intelligentsia should remain pure and untarnished from their practical usage in real life; indeed, this should certainly be one of the main goals and intentions of any intellectual work. Nevertheless, it is important to note the transformations and distortions these terms and ideas often undergo, whether through ignorance or through more insidious deliberate efforts of various individuals or groups. I would argue that much of the latter

³⁴ This was additionally achieved very effectively by the frequent panning of the large University of South Carolina audience, which mysteriously seemed to occur mostly when support for Buckley et al. could be demonstrated.

³⁵ "Resolved: Freedom in Danger." It is interesting to note that a pan on the South Carolina audience was not done at this point in Buckley's tirade; one can only hope that this is because the appropriate audience support for his remarks regarding the 'myth' of McCarthyism was not forthcoming.

³⁶ Anthony Wilson-Smith. "Breaking with the Past." Macleans, June 20, 1994, p. 12.

has occurred in structuring and restructuring the rhetoric surrounding the political correctness debates.

In the reporting of the political correctness controversy, the media have often appropriated the terms, concepts, and paradigms of the intelligentsia, often without sufficient prudence or, for that matter, much responsibility.³⁷ A telling example of this kind of vocabulary appropriation without care to preserve the term's original meaning occurs in Richard Bernstein's highly influential "Rising Hegemony" article in the New York Times, which will be discussed further in Chapter Four. In it, it is interesting to note Bernstein's appropriation of the previously Leftist-intellectual limited term of 'hegemony', and his simplistic use of it as being merely synonymous to - but perhaps more *à la mode* than - the rather tired equivalent of 'power'.³⁸ Perhaps this is linked with Bernstein's assertion in the article that the "political correctness movement" draws on "theories of Marxist and deconstructionist literary critics",³⁹ a combination that Andrew Calabrese and Silvo Lenart have described as "an inaccurate conflation that must prove puzzling for anyone with a passing knowledge of Marxism and contemporary

³⁷ It is important to point out that by referring to "the media" throughout this work, I do not mean to imply that it is one monolithic and united solidarity, or that it can be effortlessly manipulated by the New Right and other conservative interest groups to relentlessly propagate their agenda. In this way, I hope that I have generally avoided any kind of functionalist reification of the term. However, my argument is that the political correctness debate in the media has consistently reflected anti-PC rhetoric *more* than it has any alternatives. Andrew Calabrese and Silvo Lenart note (particularly with regards to media coverage of campus PC issues) that

In classic doublespeak, contemporary efforts by professors to talk about chauvinism, discrimination, and imperialism are branded categorically by the media as exercises in intolerance . . . Occasionally, in the name of "fairness," several of these magazines have also buried in their pages brief defenses of the nobility of the causes of combating racism, sexism, imperialism and other isms within higher education. This gives the press a token of "balance," but they rely much more on the juicy stuff that sells copies . . . In essence, the media have been irresponsible and they are doing harm to university autonomy and academic freedom. (Andrew Calabrese and Silvo Lenart. "Cultural Diversity and the Perversion of Tolerance." Journal of Communication Inquiry, 1992, 16(1), p. 33-34, 37.)

³⁸ Richard Bernstein. "The Rising Hegemony of the Politically Correct." New York Times, October 28, 1990, Section 4, p. 1 and 4.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

literary criticism", "since Marxian theory and deconstruction are found more often to be in fundamental opposition to each other".⁴⁰

Canadian Content

The grand introduction of political correctness to the Canadian scene is generally accepted to be the May 27, 1991 issue of Macleans magazine, where political correctness, under the intimidating title of "The Silencers: 'Politically Correct' Crusaders are Stifling Expression and Behavior",⁴¹ was ushered into the Canadian consciousness with a bang not only as the cover story, but as the next veritable Canadian media bandwagon. Then editor Kevin Doyle begins the attack in his editorial by describing the "vociferous intolerance towards what they [politically correct people] consider to be *different* habits and ways of life", thus effectively turning the tables on any obviously mistaken perception that it was the *critics* of political correctness who were intolerant of diversity.⁴² In order to get through to even the most obtuse of readers, Doyle italicizes 'different' while effectively reversing the 'pro-difference' and 'anti-difference' camps concomitantly. Doyle thereby at the very least succeeds in confusing the reader, perhaps in the hopes that such a state of mind will facilitate the replacement of the pro-PC message (for example, diversity should be celebrated and included rather than demeaned, trivialized, and excluded) with the anti-PC one (for example, 'the West is the best'). Doyle also refers to the "covert promoti[on of] the aims of special-interest groups", as opposed to, say, "*genuine* health concerns".⁴³ Both the fact that Doyle seems to be maintaining that these groups are trying to 'get away' with furthering their own interests without any of 'us' knowing the better, and the fact that such PC goals of "promoting the

⁴⁰ Andrew Calabrese and Silvio Lenart. "Cultural Diversity.", p. 38.

⁴¹ Tom Fennell. "The Silencers.", p. 40-43.

⁴² Kevin Doyle. "The Evils of the Nons." Macleans, May 27, 1991, p. 4.

⁴³ [emphasis added.] Ibid.

aims of special-interest groups" are thus regarded as being so hideous in themselves, is amusing, to say the least.

In Maclean's lead cover story concerning the "New Wave of Repression [that] Is Sweeping Through the Universities", Tom Fennell describes the rising temperatures on campus due to the demands by students, political activists, and intellectuals to ban "seemingly disparaging references to color, sex or sexual preference".⁴⁴ With regards to Fennell's deliberate use of the term 'seemingly', where derision, contempt, and intolerance are apparently only in the overly-sensitized minds of those calling for changes, the following basic but refreshing suggestion by Bill Good in B.C. Business Magazine seems to make good sense:

There may be times when we do go too far with all this terminology. Frankly, I'd rather err on the side of being careful. For too long we've given little or no thought to the messages our choice of words implied . . . It may mean changing a job description or title. It may mean working harder to find new jokes. It may mean finding some books to introduce to preschoolers that show women as doctors, pilots and board members, as well as nurses and homemakers.⁴⁵

It should be noted that Good does have a personal stake in this, that is, a pre-school age little girl who, much to Good's disappointment, talked about being a nurse or a stewardess without considering becoming a doctor or a pilot. As such, I suppose that Good would be considered to be one of Doyle's "Nons" who are working "covertly" to promote their "special-interests". Be that though this may be, it is revealing that Good closes his article by referring indirectly to the anti-PC rhetoric of returning to 'tradition', to that lost world of 'civilized' and 'rational' thought and action. He states:

I don't want to go back to those days. I don't think they were good old days at all. So the next time you hear someone make fun of this business of being politically correct, think of the alternative.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ [emphasis added.] Tom Fennell. "The Silencers.", p. 40.

⁴⁵ Bill Good. "The Language of Respect." B.C. Business Magazine. 1992, 20(11), p. 70.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Nevertheless, the author of Macleans' cover story goes on to discuss how the scourge of political correctness has had resounding repercussions upon university life, in the American context, at least:

. . . 16 major U.S. colleges have *abandoned* the teaching of *traditional* courses, including the origins of *Western civilization*, as a requirement for graduation, and have replaced them with *so-called* social justice courses on such subjects as *feminism* and *Third World studies*. And in some cases, professors who object to the *new conformity* are *heckled into submission* or refused full-time professorships (p. 44).⁴⁷

As is evident from the words I have italicized, the partiality and skewedness of the description is just barely contained, purportedly still under the guise of objective journalism. Further, when the reader goes to the cited page to find out more about the claims in this last sentence, he or she must read all the way through most of the second page (not page 44 at all) to find the only example they could apparently come up with: a University of Toronto professor of philosophy who was apparently denied tenure at Yale because he was regarded as being "too conservative". The catch is that this occurrence of PC enforcement of conformity occurred to the professor, Thomas Pangle, in the late 1970s, over a decade before there was ever seen a 'need' to put this article together in the first place.⁴⁸ Apparently, this was the best that the author of Macleans' cover story could come up with.

Political correctness has nevertheless become a veritable smorgasbord of possibilities for journalists, particularly in the United States, but also here in Canada. A

⁴⁷ [emphasis added.] Tom Fennell. "The Silencers.", p. 41.

⁴⁸ D'Arcy Jenish. "A War of Words: Academics Clash Over 'Correctness'." Macleans, May 27, 1991, p. 45. No other examples of professors being refused full-time professorships were listed. In addition, Doug Smith notes that the article provides no substantiating information to allow the reader to determine if this is really why Pangle didn't get the job. Smith further notes a more potent example of political correctness at work, albeit of a different kind:

No mention is made in any of the [Macleans'] articles of the treatment that David Mandel was subjected to at McGill University, where, in the opinion of the *Quebec Human Rights Commission* investigator, he was denied a tenure-track appointment because of his left-wing political views. [emphasis added.] (Doug Smith. "'New McCarthyism'"., p. 11.)

media event it certainly has been; Reg Vickers of The Calgary Herald has reported - probably somewhat facetiously - that in 1991, almost as many inches of column space had been taken up by the subject of political correctness as had been by the apparently only slightly more controversial issue of constitutional reform.⁴⁹ While the question of which topic was the more 'real' one, and the one having the most significant repercussions on the day to day lives of Canadian readers may seem to be self-evident,⁵⁰ the fact that political correctness garnered such massive media attention nevertheless needs to be reckoned with.

The Political Correctness 'Movement'

The phenomenon of political correctness is very fascinating and simultaneously very unusual, for it is neither an easy nor obvious subject to which to *give* coverage. What exactly *is* political correctness? It's not an official policy, *per se*, and it's not even really a social movement in the proper sense of the term. However, as Dorothy Smith points out, in our textually mediated society,

As it appears in multiple media sources, [political correctness] comes to have a discursively constituted reality; it is represented as an entity -- something called a PC movement or a PC philosophy takes on a virtual reality.⁵¹

It is in this way, Smith contends, that we then end up with apparently uncontroversial comments such as Jerry Adler's in his PC piece in Newsweek that "PC is, strictly speaking, a totalitarian philosophy".⁵² Astoundingly, Dinesh D'Souza has implied that

⁴⁹ Reg Vickers. "Do the Right Thing (Or Else - Big Sibling May be Watching)." Calgary Herald, December 28, 1991, p. D7.

⁵⁰ Indeed, Vicker's own facetious tone seems indicative of this fact, particularly as he compares it to constitutional issues in the year after the ill-fated Meech Lake Accord.

⁵¹ Dorothy Smith's "Politically Correct: An Ideological Code." Forthcoming in Steven Richer and Lorna Weir's (Eds.) Beyond Political Correctness: The Future of the Canadian Academy. Toronto, 1995, p. 23.

⁵² Jerry Adler et al. Taking Offense: Is this the New Enlightenment on Campus or the New McCarthyism?" Newsweek, December 24, 1990, p. 51.

Adler was in fact too ambivalent and wishy-washy in his depiction of the politically correct 'thought police', as is evident in D'Souza's comment that

. . . the article implied that university leaders permitted these excesses in pursuit of a good cause, and that historical and demographic changes on campus made tensions virtually inevitable. *Newsweek's* subtitle "Is this the new enlightenment on campus or the new McCarthyism?" reflected the ambivalence of the editors about the P.C. project. ⁵³

So even though Adler et al. parade horror stories illustrating how those who trespassed against the "prevailing orthodoxy" were made to suffer - as D'Souza freely admits - they had nevertheless unmistakably fallen victim to the very same coercive PC methods of inducing conformity to the "regnant orthodoxy" D'Souza explains they were trying to describe. ⁵⁴ Apparently, D'Souza himself is far more unequivocal about his own verdict, a fact that becomes clear in reading any of his work or listening to any of his interviews or debates.

Examples of such extremity can be found on nearly every page of Illiberal Education, including the following:

Instead of cultivating in young people those qualities of critical thought and civil argument that are the essence of a liberal education, university leaders have created *sham communities* where serious and honest discussion is frequently drowned out by a combination of *sloganeering, accusation, and intimidation*. ⁵⁵

D'Souza also notes the "character assassination and rhetorical bullying" he has been made subject to over the years, how he has become "a collector of epithets", and how, interestingly, critics have sought to discredit him through "guilt by association". ⁵⁶ To foreshadow part of my final chapter, D'Souza's 'associations' - including, of course, his already-mentioned participation in the Reagan administration - are interesting indeed,

⁵³ Dinesh D'Souza. Illiberal Education, p. xv.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ [emphasis added.] *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xiii and xviii.

though D'Souza's complaint of guilt by association is intriguing in that it reflects what is perhaps D'Souza's intent eagerness to distance himself from them. It seems to me that one can only be guilty by association if the group one is associated with is in some way objectionable.

That political correctness is in fact more of a media event, introduced by right-wing forces and thereafter taking on a life of its own in the popular media, than any kind of social movement is summed up very nicely by past National Action Committee on the Status of Women president Judy Rebick, who aptly stated that

I've been involved with movements for a long time and I've never known a movement without a newspaper, without a publication of any kind, without any spokespeople and with no one claiming to belong to [it].⁵⁷

Rebick goes on to note with exasperation that

We in the women's movement have to fight like hell to get media attention but somehow this phantom movement which doesn't exist gets better coverage than any other social movement I can think of.⁵⁸

In this way, then, it is very useful to maintain a healthy dose of skepticism when reading in the media again and again of the political correctness *movement*. Despite what may be the media's wish to - and articulation of - the contrary, political correctness is about as much a single unitary movement as popular journalism is objective and unbiased.

However, I do not mean to imply that there are not 'PCers' who do not view themselves as being *part* of a movement. Although these 'zealots' or 'puritans' are extremely small in number, they admittedly do their cause a disservice, by, to use the often cited examples, trying to do away with phrases such as "a nip in the air" and "a chink in one's armour".⁵⁹ One must *assume* that these well-meaning but misplaced

⁵⁷ Bruce DeMara. "Correctness just 'Phantom' of Right Wing, Feminist Says." *Toronto Star*, February 13, 1992, p. A2.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Andrew Calabrese and Silvio Lenart's "Cultural Diversity.", p. 36.

attempts did not come from thin air, being that they are testimonially cited in anti-PC texts so frequently. As Debra Schultz has noted with regards to the reporting of political correctness 'incidents' in the United States,

As "political correctness" coverage moved through the media during 1991, journalists most often cited variations of the same incidents . . . Journalists' repeated references to the same controversies - most occurring at a few high-profile institutions - created the false impression that most of the nation's 3,500 colleges and universities were engulfed in the "p.c." debates and experiencing conflict over diversity in exactly the same way. ⁶⁰

In this way, such 'proof' of the scourge of the political correctness movement has really been more anecdotal than empirical, and as Dorothy Smith remarks, the movement is widely propagated to be tyrannical, oppressive, and coercive, while the

. . . exercise of institutionalized power and authority goes unremarked even when it acts to censor or restrict academic freedom. No issues of McCarthyism, tyranny, or censorship are raised. ⁶¹

She continues to observe that it is the *structuring* of these apparent examples of the authoritative ascendancy of the political correctness movement within the anti-PC narrative that leads the reader to see the fit, without any experience of incongruity and with no apparent reason to question or critique its validity. This is evident even when the cited cases clearly do not fit, or at the very least, imply far more power and control on the part of protesters than is actually the case. As Smith notes,

. . . incidents, such as that of the solitary ex-mental patient picketing a students' comedy night, that otherwise might be hard to assimilate to the frame of 'tyranny' or 'totalitarianism' . . . [are the] critiques of established powers from those in low power positions [which] can be described as tyranny or censorship or the like without any sense of strangeness. ⁶²

⁶⁰ Debra Schultz. *Legacy of Diversity*, p. 8,9.

⁶¹ Dorothy Smith. "'Politically Correct'", p. 20.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 14-15, 21.

Political correctness is not only incorrectly promoted as being a movement, but the examples used as 'proof' of wide-ranging coercive powers of political correctness are stripped of their original context and 'extraneous' particulars, so that certain segments can be related only to substantiate the anti-PC line of argument.

To return to the assertion that political correctness is a veritable social movement sweeping the campuses,⁶³ it is important to note that while having no publications, spokespersons, and so on, PC is nevertheless still *treated* as a social movement. I would argue that like most social movements, political correctness is decreed by the dominant constructors of social discourse to be one rising from the Left, and that this assumption is then filtered through media channels largely unquestioned. Of course, not all social movements arise from the Left at all, despite this being the view that is articulated. Examples of right-wing social movements certainly include the rise of Nazism and Fascism, fundamentalist religious movements, and perhaps closer to home, the swelling ranks of REAL Women and the extraordinary rise in popularity of the Reform Party.

In fact, those groups and individuals *critical* of political correctness are closer to constituting a social movement than are those supportive of the goals of political correctness. While the anti-PC side of the debate has the National Association of Scholars, for example, there is no corresponding political organization for those supportive of PC.⁶⁴ While both sides of the debate may well share (or perceive themselves to share), a common cause, identity, and political, social, cultural, and ideological orientation within their respective pro or anti group, the pro-PC side of the debate is far less politically mobilized as a united front than is its anti-PC counterpart.

⁶³ The implication is that if these radicals are permitted to run amuck on the campuses today, they will be changing the world tomorrow, hence the need for the non-academic reader of the popular media to be alarmed.

⁶⁴ For example, while associations such as the American Association of University Professors may have issued statements supportive of political correctness, such organizations were not set up *specifically* for the PC debates, as the NAS was. (Mary W. Gray, Lawrence S. Poston, Carol Simpson Stern, and Paul Strohm. "Statement on the 'Political Correctness' Controversy." *Academe*. 1991, 77(5), p. 48.)

This difference is reflected in the media, even in media examples discussing the rampant power of the politically correct movement. For example, there is apparently nothing paradoxical about the fact that in discussing the PC movement, comments from members of activist organizations such as the National Association of Scholars *against* the 'movement' are far more common in these articles than the comments from lone individuals supportive of political correctness, much less any kind of pro-PC organizations. Doug Smith notes that in Tom Fennell's article in the Maclean's cover story, only one person - an academic, but nevertheless only a single person, not a spokesperson for any kind of pro-PC association - is given an opportunity to defend the liberalization of the university, a point which is, incidentally, never returned to.⁶⁵ In addition, the content of articles with headlines such as "National *Movement* to 'Reclaim' Academy is Sought by 300 Conservative Scholars",⁶⁶ and "*Gathering* to Assess the Battle *Against* 'Political Correctness'"⁶⁷ is strangely not to do with this formidable activism against political correctness, but rather is about the pro-PC "infection"⁶⁸ sweeping the campus. It would seem that it is those *critical* of political correctness who are "Taking Offense",⁶⁹ that is, are on the offensive in a more organized and coordinated fashion than are those tyrannical politically correct individuals.

Political Correctness Now and Then

What initially made me very interested in the phenomenon of political correctness was the sheer vastness of media coverage it received in newspapers, magazines, and even in scholarly journals. However, this kind of attention has occurred only very recently, that is, mostly in the early 1990's. Lorna Weir provides a systematic content analysis of

⁶⁵ Doug Smith. "'New McCarthyism'.", p. 9.

⁶⁶ [emphasis added.] Carolyn J. Mooney. "Conservative Scholars.", p. A13. While this was the subline of Mooney's article, it is nevertheless in larger print than the headline itself, which also refers to a call for a conservative 'movement'.

⁶⁷ [emphasis added.] Denise K. Magner. "Gathering to Assess Battle.", p. A17.

⁶⁸ Paul N. Johnson. "Attack on Scientific Inquiry into Heritability.", p. 23.

⁶⁹ Jerry Adler et al. "Taking Offense.", p. 48.

the number and type of articles in both Canadian and American newspapers from as early as January of 1985 through to October of 1990. These are the early years of political correctness, and in her article, Weir describes the gradual transformation over time of the term's meaning.⁷⁰ My own indexing of CBCA, the on-line Canadian Business and Current Affairs catalogue of Canadian periodicals and journals (that, however, also lists 25 American publications available in Canada), listed 76 such articles from the period of May 1991 to March 1993.⁷¹ Political correctness is now a very hot topic; Weir's table depicting seven major Canadian newspapers illustrates that from 1985 to 1990, reference to political correctness increased from 7 to 65, more than an eight-fold increase.

I will discuss in detail in the next chapter a preliminary integration of textual mediation, intertextuality, and hegemony as a means through which we can begin to comprehend the conditions in which this term became popularized as a media buzzword, to be repeated so often so as to - at least temporarily - ingrain it into the hearts and minds of the general reading (and television-watching) public. For now, however, I will describe the term's beginnings, its original meaning, and its subsequent rearticulated meaning. It is of course this latter definition of political correctness that has cogency and resonance in the minds and mouths of Canadians. This being the case, it is all the more crucial to illustrate the vast disparity between this new articulation, and what political correctness once was. In this way, I hope to begin to demonstrate the vast powers of construction and reconstruction, articulation and rearticulation, that the New Right and other conservative groups and individuals have at their disposal in this, our remarkably

⁷⁰ Lorna Weir's "PC Then and Now: Resignifying Political Correctness." Forthcoming in Stephen Richer and Lorna Weir's (Eds.) *Beyond Political Correctness: The Future of the Canadian Academy*, Toronto, 1995, p. 49-52.

⁷¹ And those listed had to include some variant of 'political correctness' in their actual title. Many more articles that described or discussed political correctness (or the 'new McCarthyism' or the 'tyranny of the Left', for example) within the meat of their texts, were passed over in this search.

text-mediated society, although some further elaboration of these issues will follow in Chapter Three.

Tim Brennan begins his very cogent and succinct article, "'PC' and the Decline of the American Empire" by stating that

Discussions (or more accurately, accusations) of "political correctness" have been around for a long time, but never until now have they served as an umbrella for a host of conservative targets that do not really belong together.⁷²

For example, the "enemy" has been defined by William Bennett as multiculturalism and curricular reform; by Allan Bloom as "the failure to see all worthy civilization as emanating from Greece"; by E.D. Hirsch as the retreat from "the basics" of education; by Camille Paglia as the "puritanical nitpickings of literary theory";⁷³ by Roger Kimball as the takeover of the campus by ex-sixties radicals; by Dinesh D'Souza as affirmative action and "intolerant" campus activists; and by George Bush as "administrative restrictions on forms of 'hate speech' that . . . infringe on academic freedom and First Amendment rights".⁷⁴ Brennan rightly notes that given such an incredibly wide scope of what PC is said to comprise, it is necessary to investigate how right-wing journalists and academics have been able to link these issues, and why their commentators have largely accepted the linkages as 'natural'.

Brennan continues by observing that we usually forget that it was the Left itself, not the Right, that first coined the term, as a way of "joking oneself into honesty".⁷⁵ That is, the effort was to become self-consciously aware of the distinction between the life individual progressives wrote, talked, and dreamed about, and the realities of

⁷² Tim Brennan. "'PC' and the Decline of the American Empire." *Social Policy*. 1991, Summer, p. 17.

⁷³ Linda Wayne and Robin Ulster further note that Paglia has described the supporters of political correctness as "behav[ing] like the Hitler Youth", as well as using some of the more typical anti-PC rhetoric such as referring to political correctness as a "fascism of the left". (Linda Wayne and Robin Ulster. "High Stakes: The 'Politically Correct' Debate and Feminist Academic Practice." *Resources For Feminist Research*. 1991, 20(3/4), p. 57.)

⁷⁴ Tim Brennan. "Decline of the American Empire.", p. 17.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

McDonalds, television, golf, and consumerism that are so difficult to actually extricate oneself from in daily life. Brennan describes the anti-PC wave of articles by the likes of John Taylor ⁷⁶ whereby this fact is never mentioned, and is even "obscure[d] to make the Left appear guilty of the humourlessness and rigidity that the term was designed to ridicule". ⁷⁷

The original location and meaning of the term politically correct has consistently, and deliberately, been made esoteric, to the extent that the new conservative media personnel and intellectuals now using the term have nearly been able to both take credit for its very invention, and let their own contorted reinterpretation of the term take over as the *only* one triggered in the reader by the act of the eyes passing over the page. This kind of reworking seems to have been done almost effortlessly; a telling example can be found in Irving Howe's "The Value of the Canon", where he doesn't even see the need to back up his assertion to this effect with a citation of supporting research:

In the academy, whichever group goes on the offensive gains an advantage. Some of those who are now attacking "traditionalist" humanities and social science courses do so out of sincere persuasion; some, from a political agenda (*what was at first solemnly and now is half-ironically called P.C. - politically correct*); and some from an all-too human readiness to follow the academic fashion that, for the moment, is "in". ⁷⁸

In this article, Howe does not once discuss the origins of the term politically correct; the only thing that an unsuspecting reader could glean from this quote is that reasonable authors such as Howe have actually *rescued* PC from the solemnity and rigidity the term had to suffer when in the humourless hands of the Left (or wherever it came from, since Howe does not even specify this). Other articles and books are even worse than this,

⁷⁶ John Taylor. "Are You Politically Correct?" In Francis J. Beckwith and Michael E. Bauman's (Eds.) Are You Politically Correct? Debating America's Cultural Standards. Buffalo, 1993, p. 15-31. This article was originally published in New York magazine in 1991.

⁷⁷ Tim Brennan. "Decline of the American Empire.", p. 17.

⁷⁸ [emphasis added.] Irving Howe. "The Value of the Canon." In Francis J. Beckwith and Michael E. Bauman's (Eds.) Are You Politically Correct? Debating America's Cultural Standards. Buffalo, 1993, p. 134.

truly taking credit for the invention of the phrase political correctness to describe *radical* (read: maniacal rather than progressive) and *conforming* (read: blind obedience to dogma lacking persuasive power rather than, say, efforts to rectify previous exclusion and occlusion of silenced groups) thought and behavior with which those dangerous Leftist subversives are trying to infringe upon our rights.

One source which is indeed even worse than Howe's is Dinesh D'Souza's Illiberal Education, that quintessential paragon of the anti-PC brigade. For example, in his "Introduction to the Vintage Edition", D'Souza describes political correctness in the following way:

The term "political correctness" seems to have originated in the early part of this century, when it was employed by various species of Marxists to describe *and enforce* conformity to preferred ideological positions . . . there is no indication that they spoke of political correctness with any trace of irony or self-deprecation.⁷⁹

As I have been emphasizing, the latter part of this statement in particular is utterly false. Indeed, it gives this reader cause to speculate as to the conviction D'Souza really has when he later loftily avows that "while people are entitled to their own opinions, they are not entitled to their own facts".⁸⁰

Ruth Perry, in an article entitled "Historically Correct", traces the origins of the term political correctness to the English translation of Mao Tse-Tung's "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People", first translated into English in 1966.⁸¹ However, as Perry notes, the term almost immediately began to be mocked by Western Leftist users, to the effect that

⁷⁹ [emphasis added.] Dinesh D'Souza. Illiberal Education, p. xiv.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xx.

⁸¹ Ruth Perry. "Historically Correct." Women's Review of Books, 1992, IX (3), p. 15. It has also been suggested by Heather Jon Maroney that 'correct' may have become a popular substitute for 'right', the latter implying as it does both the 'right' approach, strategy, and so on, and 'right' as being the *political* Right. With the adoption of 'correct', 'right' would only signify the latter, and in this way, the Right could be 'right', but they could not be correct. (Heather Jon Maroney, personal communication.)

No sooner was it invoked as a genuine standard for sociopolitical practice - so that we might live as if the revolution had already happened - than it was mocked as purist, ideologically rigid and authoritarian.⁸²

Similarly, Lorna Weir notes that "uttering PC marked the sender as both hostile to dogmatism and aligned with the forces of social change".⁸³ As Perry remarks, the fact that "[p]olitically correct' has a long been our own term of self-criticism" makes it absolutely infuriating that George Bush et al. are currently using the term to discredit the Left.⁸⁴ It is evident that it was not neoconservatives who 'rescued' political correctness from the austere and humourless grips of dogmatic Leftists, but rather that the term, almost immediately from its first usage in Western circles in the late 1960s, had been used in an eminently ironic and teasing manner.

Or, at the very least, in a decidedly *self-conscious* manner. It is true that Ruth Perry points to one early example of 'correctness' being used in an assumably thoroughly serious manner in a 1971 book by Toni Cade, where the author describes herself as, among other things, a young Black woman who "tries to raise her daughter to be a correct little sister". Even here, however, criticism was immediately forthcoming from one of her peers, Audre Lourde.⁸⁵ Overwhelmingly, political correctness "focused and expressed all the uncertainties about dogmatism and preachiness that the new movements [Black power, women's movement, etc.] were questioning, including the pieties of the

⁸² Ibid., p. 16. Perry notes of the present popular media articulation of political correctness that although the mainstream press is obviously trying to construct the phrase on a Stalinist "party line" model, there is little evidence of its use in the Old Left, and a great deal of evidence that within the New Left, it was nearly always used with a double consciousness. Indeed, the fact that the phrase has survived with these self-mocking, ironized meanings is testimony to a self-critical dimension to New Left politics, a flexibility, a suspiciousness of orthodoxy of any sort. This quality of the Left is, I would argue, double-edged in that the Left's flexibility and ability to be self-critical have been both pros and cons in the current efforts to deal with the conservatively articulated political correctness controversy. However, as I will more fully discuss in Chapter Five, it is ultimately to the betterment of the Left that it is an unceasingly polyvalent, diverse, tolerant, and inclusive force towards progressive change.

⁸³ Lorna Weir's "PC Then and Now.", p. 7.

⁸⁴ Ruth Perry. "Historically Correct.", p. 15.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

Old Left, of corporate America, and of the government.”⁸⁶ In this way, appropriation of the term by conservatives and the popular media to signify some “narrow-minded doctrinaire position” on the part of progressives, is ludicrous, especially with regard to

... the worsening economic and political position of women and African Americans in this country. Without rehearsing the depressing statistics about unemployment, salary scales, mortality, education levels and the like, let me end by pointing out that insofar as the accusation of “political correctness” restrains or embarrasses anyone inclined to point out these appalling inequalities, the phrase is now successfully forestalling discussion of everything it ever stood for.⁸⁷

It is worthy of note, for example, that while reporters like Tom Fennell of Maclean's write that “the sexual balance among university teachers is rapidly changing”, Doug Smith caustically notes that such “dizzying change” has been recorded by Statistics Canada as a move from 13% of full-time women in 1969-70 to only 17% by 1985.⁸⁸ With realities such as these, Perry seems quite right in her remark that the anti-PC brigade is “like Goliath trying to disqualify David by appealing to fair play”.⁸⁹

Interestingly, my own research has revealed self-conscious use of the term ‘correct’ in an article by none other than Colin Gordon, one of Michel Foucault’s principle translators and interpreters, when he is describing Foucault’s refusal to articulate a strategy of resistance in his more broadly defined analysis of the micro and macro practices of power in contemporary society. Gordon notes that because Foucault consistently refuses to “assume the standpoint of one speaking for and in the name of the oppressed”, a certain caution must be invoked against the project of formulating “the lines of a ‘correct’ political strategy”.⁹⁰ Although this essay, based on his preface to

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Doug Smith. “‘New McCarthyism’”, p. 10. Smith sarcastically notes further that “Fennell, like Ronald Reagan, must believe that facts are ‘stupid things,’ and avoids using them to back up his case [for good reason]”. (Ibid.)

⁸⁹ Ruth Perry. “Historically Correct.”, p. 15.

⁹⁰ Colin Gordon’s “Other Inquisitions.” Ideology and Consciousness. 1979, 6(Autumn), p. 43.

Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977, was written in 1979, this is nevertheless still well before the term 'politically correct' had overflowed its original Leftist group-specific usage into the often nebulous and sometimes perfidious jargon of the media. Evidently, Gordon, as well as many other users of the term, recognized early on the problems inherent in unimpeachably 'correct' political action, thought, and policies.

In addition, as Lorna Weir points out, it is crucial to one's present understanding of the mutation of political correctness that originally,

. . . PC was applied restrictively to the practices of a particular social movement: it pertained to the culture or practices of the women's movement or gay liberation or a Marxist party, but not to a common culture crosscutting these movements.⁹¹

In this article, Weir describes the transformation of the use of the term political correctness by members of *particular* social movements to its resignification by the media for an expansive social movement in itself, implicating all that is distinct within its broad and pliant horizons. In the past, political correctness was used in an ironic manner towards individuals toeing the party line a bit too vigorously or unquestioningly in any single particular movement; now it seems to be a negatively-laden symbol, signifying all that can be regarded as even vaguely 'Leftist' in connotation, so that nearly everything between the poles of a blue box advocacy group through to, say, a radical lesbian separatist movement, can be decried in one fell swoop. Adding further significance to this point is attention to the perspective from which the term is now presented, and to whom it is now directed. What I mean by this is that rather than being used by a member of a particular social movement to poke fun at oneself, or gently at another individual member, the term is presently being mobilized as an all encompassing weapon by the media and other individuals and groups to direct criticism towards not themselves, nor

⁹¹ Lorna Weir's "PC Then and Now.", p. 4.

the groups that they identify with, but rather is directed towards every person and every organization defined as 'Leftist', that is, that stands in opposition to the status quo. As Lorna Weir aptly states,

Unlike the hybridized voice of PC in the mass media of the 1980s, deriving from and tied to social movement usage, the neoconservative variant of PC situates its speaking position and readership wholly external to social movements; it is about them, the dangerous people in universities stifling democratic rights.⁹²

Weir makes clear the fact that even when the term came up in the popular media prior to the 1990's, it in no way had the same sorts of negative over-generalizing, and indeed, *moralizing* connotations of what it is to be Leftist in political orientation that it does today. In their well-written article "Cultural Diversity and the Perversion of Tolerance", Andrew Calabrese and Silvo Lenart contend that

The mainstream media's amplification of the "PC" controversy has offered a moralistic way out for anyone who doesn't like being asked to reflect on systemic harm done to a wide range of groups the political right treats as economic burdens, malcontents and wound-lickers.⁹³

In an article by Charles R. Lawrence, III, the issue is placed within the framework of racism, and Lawrence forcefully argues that by, in this case, reducing the argument to one where one must choose between liberty of free speech and the goal of the elimination of racism. "this has placed the bigot on the moral high ground and fanned the rising flames of racism".⁹⁴

It is clear that the term politically correct has been appropriated by the neoconservative media - among other groups - to serve their own political agenda of resistance to progressive social change, as well as to act as a symbolic cue or trigger for many readers' resentments and alienations unfortunately accompanying the policies

⁹² Ibid., p. 5.

⁹³ Calabrese and Lenart's "Cultural Diversity.", p. 33.

⁹⁴ Charles R. Lawrence, III. "Debates Over Placing Limits on Racist Speech.", p. B1.

through which previous progress in the realms of employment equity and the like has been achieved. As I will argue in Chapter Three, it is crucial to remember that such feelings and emotion-laden opinions are not in any way 'naturally evolving' out of such policies, but rather that these sentiments have been skillfully constructed by conservative forces through their formidable organization, coordination, and resources, and the remarkable amount of coverage given to their views by the media.

It is somewhat ironic to reflect upon Thelma McCormack's reminder that for Canadians, political correctness should be old hand. As she states in her article "Politically Correct",

It is a measure of *Maclean's* Americanization that it seems to have forgotten that Canadian scholars anticipated the "politically correct" issues during the debates on Canadianization of faculties and Canadian studies as a discipline . . . Canadian studies was dismissed as soft knowledge, narrow and parochial, providing courses and degrees for second-rate students who could not survive in the more intellectually rigorous disciplines, while depriving first-rate students of a more sophisticated cosmopolitan experience and perspective.⁹⁵

It is perhaps indicative not only of the Americanization of Maclean's but also of Canadian society at large that while not to quite as high a degree as in the United States, the Canadian media, and plenty of Canada's citizens - whose views the media putatively support - have been transfixed by what has been described as the "paper tiger"⁹⁶ of political correctness, a term now so over-used and distorted that it should, as Andrew Calabrese and Silvo Lenart insist, simply be buried, never to be heard from again.⁹⁷ Indeed, the original meaning of political correctness to Western Leftist intellectuals and social movement participants can never again be what it was. One can only hope that the term's most recent, and most seriously damaging, transformation of meaning will

⁹⁵ Thelma McCormack. "Politically Correct." *Society*, 1992, 16(2), p. 17.

⁹⁶ Lynda Hurst. "'Politically Correct'", p. A12.

⁹⁷ Andrew Calabrese and Silvo Lenart's "Cultural Diversity.", p. 33.

eventually die out to follow its more worthy predecessor. It will only be then that the goals of political correctness can begin to be seriously addressed, and that the Left's political agenda can be achieved, which, if one may still classify it under one general grouping, must certainly be the social, political, and economic equality for all.

CHAPTER THREE

Textual Mediation, Intertextuality, and Hegemony

Selling the PC Package

Although the 'media buzzword' ¹ of political correctness does sometimes seem as though it descended suddenly and abruptly upon an unexpected public, it did not actually appear from thin air, but is instead a term previously limited to particular group uses that was somehow snatched up by the media and revived to become resignified and popularized into a term of general public usage and (rather particular) comprehension. How did this occur? If we are to believe Dinesh D'Souza's "Introduction to the Vintage Edition" of his book Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus, the term came to be revived in the late 1980s, applying to the "assorted ideologies of the late 1960s and early 1970s: black consciousness and black power, feminism, homosexual rights, and, to a lesser degree, pacifism, environmentalism, and so on". ² Apparently,

¹ I have discussed the media relegation of 'buzzword' status to certain terms and ideas in Chapter Two.

² Dinesh D'Souza. Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus. New York, 1992, p. xiv.

media personnel such as Richard Bernstein at some point reached levels of saturation with regards to these 'correct' aims and initiatives,³ and that is when he and others of his ilk proceeded to courageously⁴ break away from the correct stance that "everything is political"⁵ to write, only rudimentarily, of course, about excesses of these efforts. D'Souza goes on to modestly note that publication of Illiberal Education "did not entirely create" the phenomenon of the anti-PC movement, but he does note that what followed was an "avalanche of critical scrutiny, both in the serious and the popular press, and on television" that built up swiftly and reached "typhonic force" mere months after the publication of his work.⁶

³ Of course, no explanation is provided for why media personnel reached exasperation in relation to these issues at this particular stage of history; it is as if a new and exciting thought process suddenly transcended the individual 'pet peeve' level to instantly become a national issue of concern which the media felt absolutely compelled to address. Nothing could be further from the truth. For a variety of reasons, but in particular because of the social and political context carefully set up by years of New Right infiltration into and influence upon the public conscience, the time was ripe for just such a media campaign, although its duration and monumental success surely could not have been fully anticipated even by those who carefully sowed its seeds.

⁴ My use of this term is deliberate; as Christopher Phelps notes, the deluge of magazine articles, newspaper columns, books, and talk shows that were claiming that political correctness had run amuck on campus frequently referred to the tremendous courage that was required to "speak out against the 'tyranny of the Left'". (Christopher Phelps. "The Second Time as Farce: The Right's 'New McCarthyism'." Monthly Review. 1991, October, p. 39.) Apparently, the vast coverage of the topic and considerable political mobilization against it involved an inordinate number of very brave people, indeed.

⁵ As I have discussed in Chapter Two, it is a common political practice for anti-PC ideologues such as D'Souza to insist upon the neutrality of, for example, a departmental curriculum in the humanities that was completely objective and value-free since time immemorial, until the left-wing radicals 'politicized' everything. Critics such as Robert Hughes bemoan the apparent loss by the PCers (and eventually of everybody else if they can be sufficiently coerced) of a love of literature 'simply for the sake of literature', implying that the effort to be aware of a particular work's social context and resulting political implications automatically occludes the possibility of enjoying that work as a fine piece of literature. (Robert Hughes. The Culture of Complaint: The Fraying of America. New York and Oxford, 1993.) D'Souza histrionically brings to mind for the reader the similarities between the "contemporary campus activists" of today - "products of the counterculture of the 1960s" - and the "Stalinists and Trotskyists of an earlier day". (Dinesh D'Souza. Illiberal Education, p. xiv-xv.) Somewhat surprisingly, he mentions the incredibly value-laden catchphrase of 'the new McCarthyism' only in passing, a 'restraint' not demonstrated by scores of other anti-PC writers, most obviously by the authors of the Newsweek PC piece by Jerry Adler et al., but a quick scan through my Bibliography, by no means a complete list of PC material, will reveal five additional references. (Jerry Adler et al. "Taking Offense: Is This the New Enlightenment on Campus or the New McCarthyism?" Newsweek. December 24, 1990, p. 48.)

⁶ Dinesh D'Souza. Illiberal Education, p. xiv and xv.

Although it may be unfair to poke fun at D'Souza's crude depiction of the process through which anti-PCness reached such a crescendo when such sophisticated analysis was clearly not part of his intent (obviously, he had other things in mind), it seems also true that D'Souza is of the sell-an-ideology-like-you-would-sell-any-other-product school of thought which Pat Marchak refers to in her book The Integrated Circus: The New Right and the Restructuring of Global Markets, a position which is entirely consistent with much New Right thought in general. As Pat Marchak describes this New Right theory, politicians simply create the want, or the "product" for the citizen, who wouldn't want it if the desire for a particular product had not been carefully propagated by those in power.⁷

In this way, then, public opinion to the New Right is regarded as nothing more than the successful selling of certain ideas and politicians, and citizens will not demand, for example, the welfare state, until they have first been conditioned to want it. For the New Right, the strategy to overturn the Keynesian consensus was to simply and surely replace this desire with another, that of the free market and the 'free' private entrepreneur. Surprisingly, Marchak's own depiction of this theory can best be described as being normatively ambiguous. On the one hand, when referring to the New Right's theory, she uses reductive language such as "nothing more" (than slick marketing techniques, for example) in describing the New Right's explanation for their emergence as a major ideology in the 1980s, thereby implying to the reader that she holds such a theoretical explanation to be a bit simplistic and reductive. Further, she notes that this type of perspective "reduces intelligent, literate, and apparently independent people to

⁷ M. Patricia Marchak. The Integrated Circus: The New Right and the Restructuring of Global Markets. Montreal and Kingston, 1991, p. 113.

the level of zombies".⁸ On the other hand, she almost seems to agree with them when she states that

Marketing techniques have long been used by political parties, though the sophisticated use of computerized data banks and techniques based on the knowledge gained from a half-century of opinion polling and marketing experiments is now far more manipulative than Goebbels ever dreamed. . . The propaganda capacities of the new international *zakai* were formidable.⁹

The crucial point is that from this kind of perspective, the New Right have merely been that much better than the Left in constructing an appealing package to 'sell' to the 'masses'. As Ruth Levitas notes in the case of Thatcherism, this can imply that the only essential problem with regards to Thatcherism is simply that the Right won this battle of ideas, rather than the Left.¹⁰ It also overemphasizes the role of successful ideology on the part of the dominators, thereby reducing every social and cultural, and particularly, economic and material, aspect of daily life to the exigencies of the current ideology. Levitas notes that "experiences and needs are constructed through the interpretation of events so that they are always mediated by ideology", but this does not mean that

⁸ Pat Marchak. *Integrated Circus*, p. 113.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 113-114. As a point of clarification, the "zakai" that Marchak refers to here is defined as "a self-conscious core of business leaders whose task is to create an ideological consensus and to influence, if not to direct, public policy". (*Ibid.*, p. 94.) Marchak asserts that her use of the Japanese term is deliberate, in that until the 1970s, European and North American business leaders had argued that business should *not* be engaged in policy-making or social planning. Until the rise in popularity of the New Right, its spokespeople and supporters had always publicly refused to undertake the task of shaping opinions, although their actions, of course, sometimes belied their statements. As Ruth Levitas notes, private capital has always tried to protect itself in this way, and in particular to defend itself against socialism and organized labour. (Ruth Levitas. (Ed.) *The Ideology of the New Right*. Cambridge and Oxford, 1986, p. 3.)

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10-11. Levitas further notes that Gramsci's theory of hegemony has been misunderstood by the Left, particularly in their overemphasis of ideology to the exclusion of material factors. Levitas reminds us that Gramsci's is a view which places a great deal of emphasis upon the ideological, but it nevertheless "does not reduce class struggle to a battle of ideas". (*Ibid.*) Gramsci's notion of hegemony will be discussed more extensively further in this chapter.

ideology *determines* these experiences and needs.¹¹ Whether discussing Thatcherism and other New Right success stories, or the present concern of the stunning success of the anti-PC crusade, such explanations are clearly inadequate.

Textual Mediation

So how *has* the New Right been able to successfully take control of how people think about the issues involved in political correctness? In other words, how have the New Right articulated the manner and means through which we have largely come to think and speak about political correctness, and how has their particular articulation of concepts, issues, and events had such tremendous staying power, not to mention remarkable synchronicity and complementarity with other existing discursive regimes? As I pointed out in Chapter One, Stephen J. Ball uses this term 'discursive regime' in his analysis of how the discourse of educational policy is constructed and constrained.¹² In a manner similar to my own argument with respect to the recent media obsession surrounding political correctness, Ball describes how a

¹¹ Ruth Levitas. *Ideology of the New Right*, p. 15. Dorothy Smith and George Smith make the important point, as I would like to, that a *focus* on ideology does not mean that government economic policies and the like are ideologically *determined*. As they state:

[W]e understand ideologies as essential constituents of the processes coordinating government policies and different sectors of government and other ruling relations. The cogency of ideologies is a function of how well they articulate the practice of ruling to the economic conditions confronted by different sectors of the relations and apparatuses of ruling. As underlying economic conditions shift, policies and administrative practices coordinated by a given ideological frame cease to be practically effective in sustaining or advancing capital accumulation . . . Hence shifts in the ideologies "ruling" state economic policies and administrative practices serve as "markers" of underlying shifts in economic conditions confronted by rulers. (Dorothy E. Smith and George W. Smith. "The Job/Skills Training Nexus: Changing Context and Managerial Practices." *The Nexus Project: Studies in the Documentary Management of the Job-Education Nexus*, 1988, Occasional Paper No. 3, Department of Sociology in Education, OISE, Toronto, p. 48.)

In this way, then, ideology can be regarded as coordinating different levels and functions of government and other relations and apparatuses of ruling, such as professions, business, the media, and so on, but not as having the means to do such in a deterministic fashion.

¹² Stephen J. Ball. *Politics and Policy Making in Education: Explorations in Political Sociology*. New York and London, 1990, p. 11.

... 'crisis in education', more apparent than real, was constructed in the media out of the critiques launched by the so-called New Right Notions like standards, literacy and heritage were mobilized against the 'isms' of education, such as progressivism, comprehensivism, egalitarianism, multiculturalism, pluralism, relativism.¹³

The comparisons between the 'crisis in education' and the 'crisis of political correctness' are, without going into further detail, obviously numerous. So too, are the fruitful strategies with which to analyze them, and one of these strategies with regards to comprehending political correctness is to focus upon its dominant discourse, and how this discourse constructs certain possibilities for thought and action, that is, delimits what is permissible, and displaces, occludes, or excludes other variations (as much as is possible).¹⁴

In the beginning of Gill Seidel's article "Right-Wing Discourse and Power: Exclusions and Resistance", the author sees the need to justify what might seem to be a narrowly academic concern with language and discourse.¹⁵ Her aim is to illustrate the functions of discourse and systematic linguistic choices and their effect on people's lives, an aspect of which Pat Marchak helps to explain:

Ideology alone would not have changed the world. But ideological explanations for why the world has changed can be powerful instruments for restructuring societies, and that is what the new right provided. One would be foolish to dismiss the power of words, especially words that are assiduously propagated and well funded. The messages of the new right became vital carriers for the restructuring of the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁶

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ It is crucial to note in this narrative of dominant discourse the crucial element of struggle. There is not one all-pervasive discourse permeating all things, but rather a multitude of differentially powered discourses struggling to be heard in an endless supply of interrelated and overlapping contexts. This process occurs over time and across space, and is in a continual state of flux. This implies that a dominant discourse of the type that Gill Seidel refers to is *not* guaranteed its dominance, both across differing contexts and over the passage of time. Hegemony itself is an outcome of the intersecting struggles of different classes and social groups; the dominant discourse is not simply a dominant class 'creation'.

¹⁵ Gill Seidel. "Right-Wing Discourse and Power: Exclusions and Resistance." In Seidel's book (Ed.) The Nature of the Right: A Feminist Analysis of Order Patterns, Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1988, p. 7.

¹⁶ Pat Marchak. Integrated Circus, p. 10-11.

My own argument in this regard has been that through a process similar to that of the dismantling of the post-war Keynesian consensus which Pat Marchak describes so well, political correctness has been widely ridiculed and derided, with a similar result of delegitimation, although clearly neither process occurred overnight.¹⁷ Just as with the dismantling of the Keynesian consensus, where, suddenly, heresies of the post-war era gained a new respectability and legitimacy,¹⁸ so too have issues regarding equality, tolerance, and respect become to a large extent distorted in what they signify, and concomitantly have been replaced with a distinct impatience, intolerance, and disrespect towards issues of progressive social policy. If with the rise of New Right rhetoric it became acceptable to say that "welfare for single mothers creates single mothers", and that "unemployment insurance creates unemployment";¹⁹ with the rise of the anti-political correctness campaign, it became acceptable to say that 'equality' really meant bestowing 'special treatment', and that 'multiculturalism' really meant 'giving *them* our jobs and our children's educational opportunities' (in the form of quotas for both the business world and the university).

Political correctness has been identified, defined, and articulated largely by those critics who stand to potentially lose the most because of it,²⁰ and in this way they have

¹⁷ Obviously, I am not saying that the process was exactly the same for these two very different operations, especially as political correctness never really had (the chance to have) success in the same way that the welfare state did. While the attack upon political correctness can be seen as coming from much the same ideological framework as the attack upon the social safety net and the like, (and similarly, many policies associated with political correctness such as multiculturalism, affirmative action, and so on to be in some regards a logical development from Keynesian ideals), I want it to be absolutely clear that I do not intend to oversimplify a veritable revolution in global economic restructuring that occurred in the Reagan/Thatcher/Mulroney years in order to have it 'fit' the process of delegitimizing the policies and goals associated with political correctness.

¹⁸ Pat Marchak. *Integrated Circus*, p. xi.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Or, at least, believe that they do. Do not forget that these fears have also, to a large degree, been carefully constructed. It is impossible to accurately conjecture as to the level of anxiety towards, for example, changing demographics, if these had not occurred in combination with right-wing fear-mongering, scare tactics, and so on. However, it is certainly conceivable that such changes in, say, immigration from non-white countries or proportional increases of women in the workforce, would not otherwise be sufficient in themselves for the considerable anxiety, resentment, and frustration of many of those who have had to adapt to them.

carefully and deliberately sought to ensure that such ideas and issues will (hopefully) never be taken seriously again. Ideologies never exist in a complete void, so that the New Right, or any other group, is able to fashion them entirely to serve their own interests; Marchak points out that as ideologies emerge and flower into social movements or political parties, they are continually fashioned and refashioned to fit many interests and numerous agendas.²¹ When referring to the different nature and weight of what she describes as majority and minority discourses, Gill Seidel observes that

Ideology does not exist outside discourse; and dominant discourse is pervasive because it derives its power from institutions. It therefore wields the institutional power to make its meaning stick. In Europe, the dominant discourse is white, Christian and heterosexist.²²

This dominant discourse is articulated and perpetuated through the texts of the popular media, both written and spoken. In this way, language can indeed be seen as an object of intellectual inquiry - perhaps in a way that may often seem overly theoretical and academic - but at the same time, it is *no less* an instrument of action and power. Seidel makes the powerful suggestion that linguistic exchanges are a stake and a site of social, cultural, political, and economic struggle,²³ and I would similarly argue that written texts, as well, are of crucial significance in the effects of their articulation of dominant, and non-dominant, discourses.

Another important point to note is that concomitant to the dominant discourse being powerfully pervasive (and persuasive), it also has the effect of delegitimizing *alternative* discourses. Stephen J. Ball describes the dominant discourse as the "discourse of derision", in that while it legitimates itself, it does all it can to debunk and

²¹ Pat Marchak. *Integrated Circuit*, p. xii. And part of this process, certainly, is the often intense struggle between these differing interests; struggle that is continuous, polyvalent, and overlapping. In other words, struggle for power, control, and in short, one's own interests never ceases; its actors are always involved in many different struggles simultaneously (even if they are contradictory).

²² Gill Seidel. "Right-Wing Discourse and Power.", p. 8.

²³ *Ibid.*

distort not only the words and ideas of other discourses, but also these discourses' speakers and writers.²⁴ In this way, it is the dominant discourse that "passes itself off as *unmarked*",²⁵ as neutral and objective, a phenomenon that certainly seems to be accurate with regards to the New Right's control over discourse concerning political correctness. Indeed, it is often difficult to imagine, much less articulate, what the dominant anti-PC discourse is *not* saying,²⁶ or is glossing over,²⁷ after being bombarded day in and day out with scores of different articles, columns, and books, which while ostensibly being 'different', 'new', and 'fresh', are more commonly recombined reiterations of the same old anti-PC message of intolerance. In this way, the dominant discourse that is critical of political correctness attempts to construct certain possibilities for thought regarding the issue, while concurrently constraining others; dominant discourse is every bit as much

²⁴ Stephen J. Ball. *Politics and Policy Making in Education*, p. 18. Ball notes further that words and concepts change their meaning and their effects as they are deployed within different discourses, for example when the New Right speaks of 'freedom' and 'choice'. (Ibid.) In this way, conflicting discourses may arise even within a common language and particular vocabulary. With this being the case, it is no wonder that oral debates between individuals widely separated ideologically tend so often to favour the individual who speaks the dominant discourse. Below is Mikhail Bakhtin's wonderful description of the relative success, or lack thereof, of discourse appropriation:

And not all words for just anyone submit equally easily to this appropriation, to this seizure and transformation into private property: many words stubbornly resist, others remain alien, sound foreign in the mouth of the one who appropriated them and who now speaks them; they cannot be assimilated into his context and fall out of it; it is as if they put themselves in quotation marks against the will of the speaker. (Mikhail Bakhtin. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Edited by Michael Holquist. Austin, 1981, p. 293.)

Also common is the appropriation of minority discourse *itself* in the form of self-criticism. For example, Miriam David and Ruth Levitas note that the New Right attack on the post-war consensus ironically drew upon "left-libertarian criticisms of the bureaucratic nature of the Welfare state, and its failure to meet the needs of the weakest members of society - but . . . proposed reduction or abolition of state provision as the appropriate solution to these problems". (Miriam David and Ruth Levitas. "Antifeminism in the British and American New Rights." In Gill Seidel's (Ed.) *The Nature of the Right: A Feminist Analysis of Order Patterns*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1988, p. 141.)

²⁵ Gill Seidel. "Right-Wing Discourse and Power.", p. 13.

²⁶ For example, about the brutal realities of the *real* McCarthy era, or about the fact that women and minority groups continue to make less for the same jobs as do white men.

²⁷ For example, the difference between infringements on freedom of speech, and the need to deter hate speech; or indeed, the difference between a few spokespeople of disadvantaged groups attempting to reduce intolerance, and a veritable *takeover* of the campus by left-wing radicals.

about what is *impossible* as an object of discussion and debate as it is about what is possible.²⁸

As Gill Seidel notes with relation to alternative discourses, "[b]y contrast [to the dominant, "unmarked" discourse] the discourse of the dominated is perceived as marked, subjective, and politically engaged, as well as emotional and hysterical".²⁹ I contend that this is precisely how those attempting to defend political correctness have been perceived, not only by those in control of the dominant discourse, but also by those largely controlled *by* it, that is, the Canadian reading (and television-watching) consumers of such dominant rhetoric. Additionally, much of this discourse has been so camouflaged as being the "natural order of things",³⁰ that frequently, attempted criticism of anti-PC rhetoric has indeed given *strength*, rather than a cutting blow, to the way in which those criticizing political correctness most wish it to be perceived. This is evident in the apparent eagerness of so many writers, ostensibly supporting PC, to quickly affirm the Right's contention that there are indeed 'radicals' out there, trying to terrorize the

²⁸ Stephen J. Ball. Politics and Policy Making in Education, p. 15.

²⁹ Gill Seidel. "Right-Wing Discourse and Power.", p. 13.

³⁰ Colette Guillaumin further notes with reference to this point that

Right-wing discourse, and speech, which present 'facts as they stand', claim, therefore, that these facts are correct, that they must be maintained and/or improved, according to their own logic and in conformity to their nature. Relations of domination, exploitation, inequality are held as socially necessary and, furthermore, they are sometimes dressed up in terms of 'complementarity'. (Colette Guillaumin. "Sexism, a Right-Wing Constant of Any Discourse: A Theoretical Note." in Gill Seidel's (Ed.) The Nature of the Right: A Feminist Analysis of Order Patterns. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1988, p. 22.)

It is in this way, then, that the Reform Party can say that "poverty will always exist", and that pay differentials between women and men, and between visible minority groups and whites, can be rationalized. For example, Thomas Sowell makes the point - tenuous in itself - that equal qualifications in terms of educational credentials between ethnic groups and whites are often not equal, due to poorer quality of inner city schools and the like. Should not such inequities be *rectified*, rather than simply being used as rationales for why affirmative action programs and university entrance quotas should be discontinued? (Thomas Sowell. "'Affirmative Action': A Worldwide Disaster." Commentary. 1989, 88(6), p. 24.)

academy³¹ (and following that, apparently, the world), without really doing research and investigation to see whether this is indeed the case, or if, as I have been contending, that the same handful of incidents - whose links to some kind of tyrannical power of political correctness are frequently tenuous - are being repeated over and over again.³² In this way, the only difference between anti-PC rhetoric and many of their progressive commentators is one of scale; the latter group inserts 'a few' in front of the 'radical', (as in, "Yes, it is true that there are a few radical PCers out there"), apparently thinking that in this way that they are both covering their bases, *and* permitting the possibility to 'move on' from this concession. No one has ever been fired because of political correctness,³³

³¹ For example, in her article, "Campus Thought Police Would be Better off Monitoring Pop Culture", which laments the rampant prejudice and intolerance in Hollywood, Suanne Kelman nevertheless asserts that "universities and government agencies are becoming ever more politically correct, zealously stalking the faintest wisp of sexism [and] racism". (Suanne Kelman. "Campus Thought Police Would Be Better Off Monitoring Pop Culture." *Globe and Mail*, May 6, 1991, p. C1.) While Kelman's piece may be assumed to be merely inconsistent, vigorously pro-PC articles such as that by Calabrese and Lenart, which I have used extensively in other regards, refer to "stories of righteous and counter-productive attempts by faculty to bully students, colleagues and administrators into intellectual self-flagellation" as "misguided efforts", but they do not give any further information, leading the reader to assume that these reports have merely been picked up by reading the popular media, and have *not* been verified. (Andrew Calabrese and Silvo Lenart. "Cultural Diversity and the Perversion of Tolerance." *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 1992, 16(1), p. 36.)

³² For example, Dinesh D'Souza wrote a whole book on the subject, and yet he only discusses six examples. Further, Canadian critiques often discuss these very same incidents, as if there is a dearth of Canadian material, so the American is taken just as if it had happened in Canada. However, it should be noted that some of my own analysis is dependent upon American material. While I have attempted to use Canadian material whenever possible, we Canadians are fortunate to have experienced less 'PC fever' than our Southern neighbours, even if Canadian media personnel have been no less enthralled.

³³ This, despite the implications of comments such as those by the Dean of Yale University on ABC's *Nightline*. As Christopher Phelps notes, Dean Donald Kagan assures viewers that this new McCarthyism is even worse than the old, when he is interviewed by Jackie Judd on the program's May 13, 1991 broadcast:

Kagan: When I was a student back in the 1950s, in the days of Joe McCarthy, there was some such thing, but it was infinitely less effective than now. I don't think anybody was really afraid to speak his mind, even from a very unpopular, what would be thought to be an unpopular, point of view.

Judd: Are you saying that there is more intimidation today . . .

Kagan: Oh, sure.

Judd: . . . than there was during the McCarthy era?

Kagan: Oh, sure. No contest. (Christopher Phelps. "Second Time as Farce.", p. 40.)

either in the United States or in Canada, not even fired because of what had *falsely* been ascribed to PC tyranny.³⁴

This state of affairs stands in stark contrast to the fate of those professors (as well as authors, reporters, directors, movie stars, and politicians) blackballed during the real McCarthy era, where it has been estimated that more than six hundred high school teachers and university professors lost their jobs.³⁵ Christopher Phelps notes further that in 1953, at the height of the zeal to expose "traitors" and "communists" (who were actually the same thing, despite differing terminology), the American Association of Universities, a body of thirty-eight leading university presidents, issued a statement that membership in the Communist Party "extinguishes the right to a university position".³⁶

³⁴ With regard to this last point, it is clear that many issues and events labeled as being examples of tyrannical political correctness have in fact nothing to do with it. Dorothy Smith describes several such incidents in her analysis of the CBC-radio *Sunday Morning* program dealing with political correctness that aired in July of 1991, such as a lone demonstrator picketing a play because, as a mentally ill person, he found the play, titled "Loonie Tunes", offensive. In the reporting, not only are the original events lifted out of their local historical context and reshaped in their reporting to the relevancies established for that discourse, but all of the 'PC initiatives' come from those who lack access to the institutional processes of regulation and change. Except for a couple of incidents that eventually led to student union involvement (two out of the six described, which undoubtedly were the best incidents that could be found), none of the incidents described could in any way be seen to be indicative of a tyrannical 'PC dictators'hip'. In contrast, the exercise of *institutionalized* power and authority goes unremarked in anti-PC discourse, "even when it acts to censor or restrict academic freedom". (Dorothy Smith. "'Political Correctness': An Ideological Code." Forthcoming in Stephen Richer and Lorna Weir's (Eds.) *Beyond Political Correctness: The Future of the Canadian Academy*. Toronto, 1995, p. 14, 15, and 20.)

³⁵ Andrew Calabrese and Silvo Lenart have noted that

The mass media have now come to be a bullhorn for an intolerant right which temporarily has the moral indignation of a majority of the public on its side. But for the media to side with the Right in branding institutional efforts to support and expand diversity in the university as McCarthyist is nonsense. McCarthyism relied on the concentrated power of national politicians to be effective in intimidating those who were subdued. The red scare was a "struggle" only in the sense that it was staged to appear so, for those who waged the Cold War against their fellow citizens had the might of Congress on their side.

The very limited abilities of the politically correct 'zealots' of today stand in stark contrast to the abilities of Congressional committees in the 1950s to destroy individuals' livelihoods through innuendo alone, as the latter are protected from libel suits in matters of state. (Andrew Calabrese and Silvo Lenart. "Cultural Diversity.", p. 40.)

³⁶ Christopher Phelps. "Second Time as Farce.", p. 46. As Phelps notes, McCarthyism was based upon a similar rationale as is the present attack upon the "McCarthyism of the left": the exposure of "Communists and Communist thinkers" was hailed by Joe McCarthy himself as an example of the new spirit of "trying to promote freedom of thought and expression in college". In addition, it is the *elasticity* of the anti-PC ideology, just like the ideology of the real McCarthy era, that furthers the potential success of the Right; "'political correctness' can smear almost any political belief with suspicion". (Ibid., p. 45, 54.)

He notes further that presumably, the contemporary charge of new McCarthyism ³⁷ is meant to disembody the name from history and to erase the memory of the Right's legacy of repression and reaction, while a new attack is waged against progressive social movements. Phelps also contends, however, that the term only draws attention to itself and that it in fact "raises the specter of the right's own authoritarian past". ³⁸ With regard to the differences between the two with regards to actual lived experience, Phelps has this to say:

Conservative faculty [today] are not having their tenure revoked, finding themselves called before congressional committees, being queried secretly by federal agents, or discovering that their friends, coworkers, and relatives have been interrogated. They aren't being denied due process or blacklisted from jobs. The effort to create a campus free of bigotry, in short, does *not* constitute a new McCarthyism. ³⁹

I strongly agree with this distinction, but am slightly less optimistic than Phelps in that I would contend that a certain amount of caution is in order with regards to the stated hypothesis that the catchphrase of 'the New McCarthyism' stands only to remind citizens of the Right's own oppressive and authoritarian past. 'The New McCarthyism', has, I believe, been mobilized as an enormously powerful negative signifier, and rather than merely serving as a reminder of the past sins of the Right, has furthered the popular conviction that 'radical' Right and 'radical' Left are different only in name, not in kind. ⁴⁰

³⁷ Phelps states of this new McCarthyism that it is curious that

None of those who see a new campus McCarthyism can define the term. Nor do they compare historical McCarthyism to the contemporary university in a systematic way. This neglect of intellectual responsibility is curious, since opponents who cry "leftist tyranny" invariably complain that the modern academy is marred by a decline in the quality and standards of scholarship . . . While it is powerful as an epithet, their phrase makes for weak history. (Ibid., p. 41.)

³⁸ Ibid., p. 47.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ In addition, accusations of the 'new McCarthyism of the Left' rarely stand independently, but rather are coupled with frequent mention of Stalinism, to the effect that certain, perhaps younger, readers absorbing this rhetoric might not immediately identify the *real* McCarthy era with the Right at all. What is emphasized is *not* where the original McCarthyism came from, but rather that it is thriving today as a 'tyranny of the Left'.

What I am saying is that in a bizarre twist, the population has to a large degree accepted the Right as the 'watchdog' of the Left, a historical moment that must be as equally loathsome and uncomfortable for the Left as it is undoubtedly gloatingly triumphant for the Right.⁴¹ As Pat Marchak notes with regards to the rise of the New Right in the late 1970s, for the first time since the Second World War the Left appeared to be the "defender of tradition", while the Right appeared "radical and innovative".⁴² How ironic, then, for the Left to have once again conveniently been slotted into the 'radical fringe' niche in the current anti-PC tirade of conservatives. Apparently, conservatives feel more at ease with the "defender of tradition" role that they have historically held (the exception, of course, being the height of the radical New Right economic agenda in the mid-1980s).

Intertextuality

This discussion of textual mediation and the articulation of the dominant anti-PC discourse leads to a more comprehensive examination of two theoretical concepts: intertextuality and hegemony. Two of the most significant elements which act to profoundly shape any discursive practice are intertextuality and hegemony, and the dominant discourse of political correctness can be seen as having been constructed and articulated to a large degree through these processes. My interest in these two complex theoretical concepts lies in their far reaching explanatory power, with relation to the actual processes through which texts are created, propagated, regulated, naturalized, and

⁴¹ Of course, I am not saying that justice has in any way been served by this state of affairs. On the other hand, leftist authors such as Phelps do their cause a disservice by, for example, implying that there is no such thing as a radical right-wing: "Since the essence of McCarthyism is opposition to radicalism, the very idea of a 'McCarthyism of the left' is nonsense". (Christopher Phelps. "Second Time as Farce.", p. 47.) Such a denial that populism and reactionary organic waves of anti-Left sentiment cannot be 'radical' - as if this term can only be used to describe what is leftist (and, therefore, progressive, good, and just) - is, I feel, inaccurate, and indeed, misleading. Was not the rise of fascism in 1930s Italy a *radical* departure from the previous communist inclinations of much of the populace and policy-makers? Like it or not, in the late 1970s and 1980s the New Right had replaced traditional social democratic and other left-wing parties to become the radical vanguard of 'a new social order'. (Pat Marchak. *Integrated Circus.*, p. 4.)

⁴² Ibid., p. 258.

transformed. In what follows, I will describe intertextuality and hegemony in turn, discuss the combination of these concepts, and finally, link them to the political correctness discourse. As will become evident, not only do intertextuality and hegemony require one another in the analyses of all discursive practices, but they aid greatly in the comprehension of a dominant discourse such as that of political correctness which involves such a high degree of textual mediation.

In order to comprehend the term 'intertextuality', a basic understanding of what is meant by 'text' itself is first necessary. This term is often exaggeratedly thought of as potentially being capable of including almost everything, and text has indeed been defined in a wide variety of ways. Beyond the everyday definition of a text as a written work of some type, texts may also be described as

... any product whether written or spoken, so that the transcript of an interview or a conversation, for example, would be called a 'text' . . . [I]t is quite appropriate to extend the notion of [text] to cover other . . . forms such as visual images, and texts which are combinations of words and images, for example in advertising.⁴³

In this work, most of the texts that have been utilized to study the depiction of political correctness have been newspaper reports, editorials, magazine articles, and so forth, which constitute the usual, everyday definition of a text. However, it is important to note that like Norman Fairclough, I would contend that texts can also be a combination of images and words; in Chapter Four, several cartoon strips will be briefly discussed as texts.⁴⁴ In addition, in Chapter Two, the television program *A Special Firing Line*

⁴³ Norman Fairclough. *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge, 1992, p. 4.

⁴⁴ In addition, there are things about texts such as these that are significant beyond simple letters, words, and phrases. For example, if some of these words are presented in an enormous, high visibility font while others are not, it is inadequate to say that all of the words in question were used; some were obviously emphasized more than others. Christopher Phelps notes that because the *Newsweek* cover story on political correctness (which I discussed briefly in Chapter Two and will further in this chapter) "emblazoned the phrase 'THOUGHT POLICE' across its cover in ominous block letters", the more 'balanced' subtitle of "Is This the New Enlightenment on Campus or the New McCarthyism?" had the effect of only being a rhetorical question (and this was even before one began reading the article). (Christopher Phelps. "Second Time as Farce.", p. 39.)

Debate was discussed, even though my discussion was not based upon a complete transcript of the program, but rather only a few informal notes.⁴⁵

Ian Parker describes texts as "delimited tissues of meaning which may be written, spoken, or reproduced in *any form* that can be given an interpretive gloss".⁴⁶ In his book, The Crisis in Modern Social Psychology - And How to End It, Parker discusses post-structuralist and postmodern issues with regard to higher education extensively, and further remarks that at every reading or re-reading of a text, the power exists to "weave new pictures of the real".⁴⁷ This power is extant in both the sender and the receiver, both the writer and the reader, both the speaker and the listener. As will become clear in what follows, intertextuality is of crucial significance not only for those creating texts, but for those absorbing such texts. Just as there are no 'original' texts, faithfully transcribed without variation through the years by a multitude of different authors with diverse background knowledge, so too are there no readers, or interpreters of texts, that will read texts in precisely the same manner. Indeed, even if the former were true (of, for example, religious treatises carefully transcribed *ad infinitum* by medieval monks), the latter is unlikely to be, unless each reader (of these treatises, for example) had only read *exactly* what other readers had read - in precisely the same order - and replicated their thought processes minutely, down to the last synapse.⁴⁸ If such a scenario was unlikely in the Middle Ages, it seems ever more unrealistic in today's diverse and complex society.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ I would assert, however, that a complete transcript of the program would indeed be necessary if the analysis was intended in any way to be 'complete'.

⁴⁶ Ian Parker. The Crisis in Modern Social Psychology - And How To End It. London and New York, 1989, p. 57.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ This scenario, too, ignores differences of personality which may either be hereditary or based upon such environmental factors as interpersonal relations.

⁴⁹ Although it is also the case that this society is, to paraphrase Dorothy Smith, a textually-mediated one as never before experienced, with the discourse of state, bureaucracy, mass communications, and so on becoming increasingly coordinated. (Dorothy Smith. "'Politically Correct'"., p. 2.)

Although a discussion of Jacques Derrida's deconstructionist conception of the multiplicity of meanings of a text is beyond the scope of this paper, it follows from this basic idea of different texts always being open to differing interpretations, that texts *cannot* be viewed as entirely independent and autonomous products of authors (or speakers, or actors) whose intentions are fully and completely achieved in their final creation. Following from this, in turn, comes the idea of texts as being productive in themselves, as being full of snatches of other past or contemporary texts,⁵⁰ and, indeed, as being inherently intertextual in nature. According to Christopher Phelps, for example, the New Right's use of the term 'the new McCarthyism' to describe the tyranny of political correctness conjures up the Right's own authoritarian past, despite what he says is their attempt to displace history.⁵¹ Although I have some reservations about Phelps's optimistic assertion to this effect (described earlier in this chapter), it is nevertheless indicative of the power of a text to constitute within it, from bits and pieces of old texts - such as history,⁵² in this case - an interpretation *other* than, or even oppositional to, that which was intended by the author.

Julia Kristeva, a French psychoanalytic theorist, first coined the term 'intertextuality' to refer to Russian scholar Mikhail Bakhtin's translinguistic approach to the analysis of texts. Kristeva's conception of intertextuality has been described as

⁵⁰ With regards to contemporary texts, it is important to remember that discourses may occur in many contexts simultaneously, polyvalently, and even contradictorily. For example, Doug Smith refers to Maclean's magazine as being "in the news verification business -- if you have read it elsewhere, you can be sure you'll soon be reading about it in *Maclean's*". (Doug Smith. "The 'New McCarthyism'." Canadian Dimension. 1991, 25(6), p. 8.) In this way, Maclean's must be conscious of current texts, as well as vigilant in its efforts to get *its* interpretation of the story out on time.

⁵¹ Christopher Phelps. "Second Time as Farce.", p. 47.

⁵² Obviously, what we regard as history is inherently intertextual in nature. However, it is also true that history is always 'written by the victors', a reality for which intertextuality alone is unable to address. It is here that the pairing of intertextuality with hegemony is necessary, as shall be illustrated in the coming pages.

indicating "how one or more systems of signs are transposed into others".⁵³ To Kristeva, the term implies "the insertion of history (society) into a text and of this text into history". In Norman Fairclough's view, the first part of this statement means that the text *absorbs* and is built out of texts from the past. Indeed, in this conceptualization, texts themselves are the major artefacts that constitute history. The second half of the statement describes the process by which the text responds to, re-accentuates, and reworks past texts. In so doing, the text helps to make history by transforming prior texts, and restructuring existing conventions to generate new ones. As well, the text contributes to the wider processes of cultural modulation, of which the anticipating of and attempting to change subsequent texts can be a part.⁵⁴

In this way, then, intertextuality refers to the inherent multiplicity of differing contexts, historical backgrounds, and present definitions of the various elements incorporated explicitly or implicitly into a text. In the words of Floyd Merrell,

According to the concept of "intertextuality", each text is a mosaic of citations of other texts; it absorbs them and transforms them with its coming into existence and with each and every reading.⁵⁵

This "mosaic" may or may not be explicitly demarcated, and the elements included are in no way obliged to remain faithful to their 'original' (if indeed, an original occurrence could ever be traced)⁵⁶ context; they may be used to assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth.⁵⁷ In this way, certain words and phrases may be used precisely because they trigger off earlier meaning and contexts, and simultaneously, others may be

⁵³ Toril Moi. *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*. London and New York, 1985, p. 156. It should be noted that English translations of Kristeva's work are scarce, in particular of *La Revolution du langage poetique* of 1974, which is why secondary material has been used.

⁵⁴ Norman Fairclough. *Discourse*, p. 102.

⁵⁵ Floyd Merrell. *Deconstruction Reframed*. Indiana, 1985, p. 203.

⁵⁶ Indeed, as Merrell again notes, no element of language can be seen to have . . . a determinate *centre* nor any retrievable *origin*. "Belief in such is no more than nostalgia," says Derrida. What actually exists is a complex network of *differences* between signifiers, each in some sense carrying the *traces* of all others. (Ibid., p. 2.)

⁵⁷ Norman Fairclough. *Discourse*, p. 85.

used that signify aspects and issues beyond the intent or knowledge of the author. For example, it seems clear that the anti-PC brigade's use of terms such as 'totalitarian', 'tyranny', 'regime', 'thought police', 'storm troopers', and 'new McCarthyism' can be mobilized effectively to either trigger emotions and memories of Stalinism, Nazi Germany, and the McCarthy era in readers old enough to remember such events first-hand, or more typically, to act as trigger signifiers for all of the previous texts (in the form of newspapers and magazines, history classes, television documentaries, and so on) that other readers may have amassed over the course of their lives. Texts, and indeed, any type of discursive practice, are generated out of combinations of other texts; they necessarily draw upon and transform other contemporary and historically prior texts.⁵⁸

Hegemony

Although the term has come to be essentially synonymous with his name, Antonio Gramsci was not in fact the sole originator of the concept of hegemony. In fact, as Perry Anderson points out, the term (*gegemoniya* in the Italian) had existed long before Gramsci's adoption of it, and was in fact one of the most central political slogans in the Russian Social-Democratic movement from the late 1890s to 1917.⁵⁹ However, the meaning of the concept changed quite significantly over time, to the effect that it was transformed from referring in 1922 to the domination of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat (if the former succeeded in confining the latter to a corporate role by inducing it to accept a division between political and economic struggles in its class practice), to Gramsci's eventual reference to the mechanisms of bourgeois rule over the working class in a stabilized capitalist society. As Anderson remarks,

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 40.

⁵⁹ Perry Anderson. "The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci." *New Left Review*. 1977, 100, p. 15.

Gramsci, by contrast, now employed the concept of hegemony for *a differential analysis of the structures of bourgeois power in the West*. This was a new and decisive step.⁶⁰

This change in the conceptualization of hegemony reflected a growing awareness that Marxist theory had failed to explain the course of societal transformations, or rather, that the particular transformations that took place failed to fall under the rubric of Marxist revolution. For example, how was it that revolution had not taken place in countries with more advanced capitalist formations, while it apparently *had* in the so-called economically backward country of Russia? According to Renate Holub, Gramsci "critically confronted the fact that the economic crisis situations in the various Western countries had not led to a political crisis, as Marx had predicted".⁶¹ Indeed, as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe so aptly describe it, the formulation of Gramsci's hegemonic paradigm reflected a fault, (in the geological sense), a fissure that needed to be filled up with the decline of Marxism's explanatory power.⁶²

One important way in which hegemonic theory goes beyond Marxism is that rather than implying an economic reductionism, where everything is essentially dependent upon the economic and class structures in place in a particular society, Gramsci's hegemonic paradigm encompasses many more of the elements that constitute a society. To Gramsci, hegemony operates ubiquitously in multiple sites of political and social relations, existing in both the public and private spheres. Hegemony penetrates the civil as well as the political sphere. In other words, hegemony infiltrates the microspaces of everyday life,⁶³ and because of this, hegemony pays attention to the microlevel of analysis rather than only to the macrolevel. In addition, Gramsci placed greater

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 20.

⁶¹ Renate Holub. Antonio Gramsci: Beyond Marxism and Postmodernism. London, 1992, p. 5.

⁶² Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics. London, 1985, p. 7.

⁶³ Renate Holub. Antonio Gramsci, p. 198.

significance upon the links between language, culture, and the political, and in this way hegemonic domination is not simply economic domination by the ruling class, but rather, domination that

... extends and expands its mastery over society in such a way that it can transform and re-fashion its ways of life, its *mores* and conceptualisation, its very form and level of culture and civilization in a direction which, while not directly paying immediate profits to the narrow interests of any particular class, favours the development and expansion of the dominant social and productive system of life as a whole.⁶⁴

Hegemony attempts to capture the complex nature of authority, which, according to Gramsci, is coercive but concomitantly dependent upon the subordinate majority's *consent*.⁶⁵ The dominant class, which to a large extent constructs⁶⁶ the prevailing hegemony, is in fact quite dependent upon the 'spontaneous' compliance of the less powerful masses⁶⁷ to be coerced into submission. This consent is carried out by systems and structures of beliefs, values, norms, and practices of everyday life which unconsciously legitimate the status quo.⁶⁸ As Stuart Hall explains,

... hegemony is understood as accomplished, not without the due measure of legal and legitimate compulsion, but principally by means of winning the active consent of those classes and groups who were subordinated within it.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Stuart Hall. "The Rediscovery of 'Ideology': The Return of the 'Repressed' in Media Studies." In Michael Gruevitch, Tony Bennett, James Curran, and Janet Woollacott's (Eds.) *Culture, Society, and the Media*. London, 1982, p. 85.

⁶⁵ It is interesting to note that Gramsci and Foucault share this notion that power and domination can function only insofar as those dominated *agree* to that domination; there can be no domination without consent. (Renate Holub. *Antonio Gramsci*, p. 199.) As I will explain, this is an important part of hegemonic theory's explanatory power of the phenomenon of political correctness.

⁶⁶ One must remember that those largely in control of constructing hegemony do not in fact control it completely; there *is* room for the encroachment of more 'subversive' elements. More will be said of this point in the next paragraph.

⁶⁷ I use the term 'less powerful' here deliberately, as I do not wish to imply that the 'masses' are completely powerless. As Heather Jon Maroney has noted, the power of subaltern groups is not just a theoretical postulate, as in the Foucauldian notion that 'power is everywhere', but rather is part of a historical definition of modern society as a democratic, parliamentary, and capitalist social formation. In reality, hegemony requires a lot of work to maintain, and this would not be the case if the subaltern class was completely powerless. (Heather Jon Maroney, personal communication.)

⁶⁸ Renate Holub. *Antonio Gramsci*, p. 45.

⁶⁹ Stuart Hall. "The Rediscovery of 'Ideology'"., p. 85.

In this way, the hegemonic paradigm goes beyond the Marxist by understanding that while political power is indeed exercised by the dominant groups within a society, this is achieved through a combination of the maintenance of the cultural power of the minority and the consent of the relatively disempowered majority. Hegemony managed to explain what had always been an inherent weakness of Marxism: the failure to account for the free consent of the governed to the leadership of the governing classes.⁷⁰ An important point, however, is that this consent is not in fact based upon a fully conscious decision on the part of the subaltern group;⁷¹ as Paul Thibault states, a hegemonic system can only be imposed with the collaboration of the dominated to identify with the dominant social meaning making practices in ways in which they are not likely to be fully conscious.⁷²

Laclau and Mouffe contrast Gramsci's theory with what they regard as E. Bernstein's more 'gradualist' theory of the eventual evolution of society into the socialist form. According to them,

... Gramsci has no room for a principle of *Entwicklung*. Struggles derive their meaning from their hegemonic articulation, and their progressive character - from a socialist point of view - is not assured in advance.⁷³

However, it is important to remember that the dominant group does not have exclusive control over the creation of the hegemonic values and norms of the society; hegemony is

⁷⁰ Graeme Turner. *British Cultural Studies*. London and New York, 1990, p. 208.

⁷¹ It is interesting to note that Stuart Hall argues that institutions of the media actually *manufacture* consent, without any direct compulsion to do so: "[they] freely articulate themselves systematically around definitions of the situation which favour the hegemony of the powerful". (Stuart Hall. "The Rediscovery of 'Ideology'." p. 86.) In particular, Hall in another article notes the rather astounding manner in which Thatcherism has gradually colonized the mass tabloid press in Britain. As he puts it, the various papers "vie with each other in the extremity of their vivid identifications with and glorification of Thatcherism as a philosophy and the symbolic person of Mrs. Thatcher herself." (Stuart Hall. "The Toad in the Garden: Thatcherism Among the Theorists." In Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg's (Eds.) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Urbana and Chicago, 1988, p. 47.) Such extreme allegiance to, and aggrandizement of, right-wing ideology that reveals itself in policy decisions most decidedly *not* in the interests of the working class is quite remarkable.

⁷² Paul J. Thibault. *Social Semiotics as Praxis: Text, Meaning Making, and Nabokov's Ada*. Minneapolis and Oxford, 1991, p. 113.

⁷³ Laclau and Mouffe's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p. 71.

not maintained through the obliteration of opposing interests, but rather through their *articulation*, to some degree, into the political agenda of the hegemonic group. As Graeme Turner argues, there must be some change, some flexibility, in the political orientation of the dominant group in order to convince those it will lead to accept this leadership.⁷⁴ Turner further argues that this can be seen to optimistically imply a gradual historical realignment of opposing class interests,⁷⁵ but I would contend that no such closure, that is, some ultimate utopian melding of bourgeois hegemony with working-class interests, is very likely. Political interests are not fixed but change historically, and, it must be recalled, emerge out of continual struggle. At best, the interests of many opposing interests could become less dissimilar. However, this in itself does *not* guarantee a better or more 'just' society, and in this way, Turner misunderstands the concept of hegemony, including its 'ultimate' potentialities.

Intertextuality, Hegemony . . . and Political Correctness

It is now appropriate to begin to explore the relationship between intertextuality and hegemony, and thereby engage these concepts into an examination of political correctness. Intertextuality is affected by hegemonic forces in a number of ways. Norman Fairclough argues quite forcefully that an intertextual view of texts *must* be linked with a theory of social and political change, in order to enable the investigation of discursive change within the wider processes of cultural and social change. Texts are productive, but as he states,

⁷⁴ Graeme Turner's *British Cultural Studies*, p. 212.

⁷⁵ (Ibid.) It should be noted that Turner makes this statement in opposition to the rigid Althusserian model of ideology; change of any sort is indeed more likely in Gramsci's conception, but this still does not imply *positive* change.

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. . . this productivity is not in practice available to people as a limitless space for textual innovation and play: it is socially limited and constrained, and conditional upon relations of power. The theory of intertextuality cannot itself account for these social limitations, so it needs to be combined with a theory of power relations and how they shape (and are shaped by) social structures and practices.⁷⁶

While there are always a multitude of possible texts to be drawn upon and articulated in any particular discursive event, it is where the discursive event stands in relation to hegemonies and hegemonic struggles that determines whether, for example, the text will contest existing hegemonic practices and relations or, conversely, accept them as given.⁷⁷

Language is seen to play a crucial role in hegemonic processes in society to Gramsci, and he viewed language not as a static and normative abstraction, but rather, as a dynamic historical social *process*.⁷⁸ As Paul Thibault states, Gramsci concerned himself with the significance, both theoretical and political, of language and linguistic change in the struggle between opposing hegemonic principles. Because Gramsci recognized the materiality of language, he realized that the invention by the subaltern classes of new structures, or counter-hegemonies, is at least in part dependent upon the very structure, the very nature, of language itself. Language and the texts it produces constitute for Gramsci a terrain where certain moral and political attitudes are propagated, while others are silenced and marginalized.⁷⁹ This recognition of the links between human agency, social and historical processes, and linguistic practice in the Gramscian theory of hegemonic struggle further demonstrates the appropriateness of pairing it with intertextuality.

⁷⁶ Norman Fairclough's *Discourse*, p. 103.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁷⁸ Paul Thibault's *Social Semiotics as Praxis*, p. 243.

⁷⁹ Renate Holub. *Antonio Gramsci*, p. 46.

It is evident that language is indeed implicated in the production and reproduction of hegemonic domination; certain interpretations do tend to occur again and again, and indeed, to become naturalized in a sense, to the effect that these particular readings may be largely accepted without question. Fairclough gives an example of this process when he describes how the establishment of a coherent link between the sentences "She's giving up her job next Wednesday. She's pregnant", is based upon the assumption that women cease to work outside the home when they have children.⁸⁰ Holub points to a similar example revealed by Foucault, whereby in the process of 'telling' history,

The western point of view, the true discourse, was mostly a white and male discourse, often obfuscating, despite all its claims to objectivity and rationality, the experiences and ways of seeing of social groups that do not take part in the privileges of the dominant white power elite.⁸¹

To control the dissemination of concepts, theories, and ideology (as well as of 'history') is an extremely important source of power, particularly in a society organized and regulated by textually-mediated relations. In Michel Foucault's conceptualization of 'power/knowledge', this complex of text-mediated relations is itself an organization of power, one that is envisaged as decentred and distributed over a complex of discursive sites. As Dorothy Smith remarks of this loosely coordinated complex of relations that Foucault called 'discourse',

New conceptualizations and knowledge d[o] not proceed from a determinate source and spread into discourse as its organizers. Rather the creative sources of change operat[e] in a field of relations from multiple sites of interplay with ongoing discursive concerns. No one position c[an] command.⁸²

However, she goes on to point out that the reality of contemporary textually-mediated society clearly allows for the *coordination* of these multiple sites of power/knowledge

⁸⁰ Norman Fairclough. *Discourse*, p. 84.

⁸¹ Renate Holub. *Antonio Gramsci*, p. 200.

⁸² Dorothy Smith's "'Political Correctness'", p. 3.

generated by the relations of ruling, and to observe that the powerful right wing has come to have a disproportionate amount of leverage in the control of public discourse. As Smith notes,

The right-wing, representing a powerful section of the capitalist class in the US has created information and policy generating think tanks, an institute for training journalists as recruits to replace the predominantly liberal professional journalists of today, a multi-headed attack on liberal higher education and particularly on 'multiculturalism' and on the gender and ethnic diversification of the university curriculum.⁸³

In Chapter Five, I will discuss some of the vast resources available to the New Right to aid in the dissemination of their discourse, both generally and with particular reference to the campaign against political correctness. For the time being, however, my focus is upon the effects of having the right wing largely in control of the dissemination of anti-PC rhetoric in a textually-mediated society such as Canada. It is necessary to emphasize, however, that this control is not evident as any kind of tangible censorship, per se:

Ideological codes don't appear directly as they do in an act of censorship; no one seems to be imposing anything on anybody else; people pick up an ideological code from reading, hearing, or watching, and replicate it in their own talk and writing . . . Thus ideological codes operate as a free-floating form of control in the relations of public discourse.⁸⁴

While not being censorship itself, the ideological code of political correctness *does* constrain what can and cannot be said, what types of words and arguments flow freely, and which ones do not.

As I discussed in Chapter Two, the PC signifier also acts to trigger an enormous number of associations, thereby tainting serious discussion of these issues and ideas with the dreaded PC label. Rather than being a coercive tyranny of the Left, political correctness can be more usefully described as a negatively-laden signifier created by the

⁸³ Ibid., p. 4.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 5.

New Right in their appropriation and rearticulation of the term political correctness from the Left. Political correctness serves as a *scapegoat* symbol through which an attack can be made against the successful progress various disadvantaged groups have achieved with respect to equal employment, education, standard of living, and basic human respectability. Lorna Weir states it well when she remarks that through the resignification of political correctness,

... neoconservatives attempted to delegitimize the presence of anti-racist and feminist politics within universities, the social movements which have arguably had the greatest impact on higher education in Canada and the U.S.A. The neocon PC offensive represents a hegemonic response to gains made by a series of social movements over the course of the 1980s.⁸⁵

Political correctness is *not* multiculturalism, affirmative action, and the like per se, but rather is the trigger signifier for these policies which individuals are able to attack with less heed for diplomacy than is required if they attack these programs *directly*. What I mean by this is that columnists (as well as authors, intellectuals, and private citizens), by using PC as a kind of cloak or codeword, are able to invoke a far more subtle kind of argument against giving 'concessions' to disadvantaged groups, while simultaneously retaining the appearance of giving their full support for such progress. One clear example of this is evident in the Maclean's cover story on political correctness, where the then editor Kevin Doyle reassures us all of his liberal motives by favorably quoting from George Bush's recent commencement address to the University of Michigan:

Although the movement arises from the laudable desire to sweep away the debris of racism, sexism and hatred, it replaces old prejudices with new ones.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Lorna Weir's "PC Then and Now: Resignifying Political Correctness." Forthcoming in Stephen Richer and Lorna Weir's (Eds.) Beyond Political Correctness: The Future of the Canadian Academy. Toronto, 1995, p. 2.

⁸⁶ Kevin Doyle. "The Evils of the Nons." Maclean's. May 27, 1991, p. 4.

Just in case anyone was in doubt of his opinion, Doyle closes the editorial by unequivocally stating that the "arrogance" of the "Nons", as he describes individuals supportive of this "laudable desire", is a "far more insidious evil" than those "practices railed against".⁸⁷ In this way, then, this 'PC movement' is really a discursive regime constructed by the New Right to delegitimize the claims of disadvantaged groups and to justify the maintenance of the status quo.

In a textually-mediated society such as contemporary Canada, the concepts, theories, and ideologies produced as texts by the complex interrelations of the state, bureaucracy, management, professions, and mass media (which are highly coordinated rather than discrete units of organization), are extremely powerful regulators of public text-mediated discourse. Dorothy Smith uses the model of a genetic code - "the replicate capacity of a DNA molecule" - in which multiple copies of the code can be made, with each resulting copy having its own ability to replicate further, as an allusion for how the PC ideological code is replicated and transmitted. She states:

An ideological code such as "political correctness" operates in the field of public discourse to structure text or talk and each instance of its functioning is capable of generating new instances.⁸⁸

Smith further notes that these individual ideological codes may be, and perhaps often are, components of ideological "master frames", or metanarratives.⁸⁹ In this way, the single ideological code of political correctness can be regarded as being part of a much larger composite of New Right and otherwise conservative ideology and thought. This indicates one of the reasons why progressives may use the single political correctness code, when they would probably be opposed to the metanarrative as a whole. Single codes such as the rhetoric against political correctness can become disembodied from their sources, and

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

⁸⁸ Dorothy Smith. "'Politically Correct'.", p. 4.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 5.

people can then pick them up and use them *without* realizing where they came from, and particularly, the efficacy of meaning they carry with them.

Later in her article, Smith provides a sophisticated textual analysis of a CBC radio program about political correctness, through which she demonstrates the process by which the ideological code of political correctness is presented and subsequently replicated, with the end result being that listeners have acquired a device which they can deploy thereafter. This is not merely the process of providing individuals with some new fashionable phrase or lingo; the ideological code of political correctness organizes, or 'stage-manages', if you will, a very particular way in which to operate the code in the discovering and constructing of one's own PC stories. In this way, the PC code as 'taught' by the CBC documentary organizes a telling of the events attributed to the 'PC tyranny' in that it structures *how* these events are recounted so that they will necessarily instantiate it. In this case,

In the dialogue between public and intra-institutional discourse created by the documentary, the PC code operates to displace the principle of "human rights", replacing it with "freedom of speech" as the exclusive principle to operate at the level of public discourse . . . It operates to reaffirm the authority of the established and to discredit the voices of those attempting change.⁹⁰

Each event included is intended to exemplify political correctness gone awry; for the most part, what doesn't fit, isn't there. The reader or listener learns how to operate the code, as teller of a story or as reader/listener. In this way, replication can occur *ad infinitum*, and in turn, the recurrence of the code from multiple sites *confirms* its reality. What came 'first', or rather, the code's original ideological provenance, is no longer relevant: it has become anonymous.

As was explained in great detail in the Intertextuality section of this chapter, what goes into a text is constantly being contested, with certain concepts and philosophies

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

winning out more often over others, either because of the particular reader (or listener) or because of the particular writer (or speaker). However, as was made evident in the Hegemony section earlier, one of the basic ideas involved in the theory of hegemony is that it is never complete, and always involves, and indeed, *requires*, the consent of the subaltern group to be dominated. As Raymond Williams has argued, hegemony is always a *process* rather than an achieved state,⁹¹ and can never be considered - particularly by the group in power - to be complete. In this sense, hegemony is always 'leaky', so there *must* be some acceptance and subsequent incorporation by the dominant group of the less powerful majority's concerns, however subtly altered to serve state interests, in order to convince those it will lead to accept its leadership. This is not to say that the dominant group cannot falsely construct a 'concession' to be noted again and again as evidence of their benevolent willingness to be 'democratic'. While some genuine concessions are certainly made, it is obviously in the interests of the ruling class to *construct* concessions, or to mobilize a meagre concession as if it were a significant one (such as 'a war on drugs'), rather than to actually concede a serious effort (towards, say, the improvement of urban slums) substantiated in moneys and other resources.

Ideology is obviously not meant to be taken as being deterministic of all aspects of culture and economy, but rather, is a coordinating device that functions to facilitate the process of coordinating government policies and different sectors of government and other ruling relations, such as those of the New Right. In addition, it is important to delineate the distinction between 'ideology' and 'theory', as Dorothy Smith and George Smith do below:

⁹¹ Raymond Williams. *Marxism and Literature*. London, 1977, p. 125.

We do not view theory or ideology as interchangeable terms. Rather "theory" is situated in the social relations of a scientific discourse such as economics; in such a context it is formulated according to logical criteria, subjected to testing, debated, criticized, etc. The same set of concepts are made over for ideological uses as they become the organizing concepts of relations of ruling. In contexts of ruling, it is the practical cogency of ideology, its capacity to do the work of coordinating different phases of ruling as well as of formulating and generating solutions to problems confronting rulers, that becomes important. *Its scientific validity is not a focus of action or interest.*⁹²

In this way, when Stuart Hall refers to the "'organic' ideology" of, in his case, Thatcherism, what matters about the ideology is not its truth or falsehood, in a rigorously scientific sense, but rather its truth in terms of common sense. Hall notes that

The first thing to ask about an "organic" ideology that, however unexpectedly, succeeds in organizing substantial sections of the masses and mobilizing them for political action, is not what is *false* about it but what about it is *true*. By "true" I do not mean universally correct as a law of the universe but "makes good sense," which — leaving science to one side — is usually quite enough for ideology.⁹³

Michael Apple notes in his book Official Knowledge: Democratic Education in a Conservative Age that the Left has a lot to learn from the success of the Right in appropriating and transforming for their own uses the malcontents and resentments of the day:

The first thing to ask about an ideology is not what is false about it, but what is true. What are its connections to lived experience? Ideologies, properly conceived, do not dupe people. To be effective, they must connect to real problems, real experiences.⁹⁴

Apple's theoretical debt to Stuart Hall is obvious here, but the point that is noticeably absent from *both* of the above quotations, but mainly from the latter, is that such "popular

⁹² [emphasis added.] Dorothy E. Smith and George W. Smith. "The Job/Skills Training Nexus.", p. 48.

⁹³ Stuart Hall. "The Tond in the Garden.", p. 46.

⁹⁴ Michael Apple. Official Knowledge: Democratic Education in a Conservative Age., New York and London, 1993, p. 20.

sentiments”⁹⁵ have to a large degree been *constructed for* the general populace, rather than being a completely naturally occurring set of emotions and opinions that the Right have simply been more cognizant of than the Left.

As pointedly noted by Ruth Levitas with regards to the appeal of anti-welfarism in Britain, “it emphatically does not have this appeal because it provides solutions which meet people’s needs or speaks directly to their experiences”.⁹⁶ In contrast, such experiences and needs are always mediated by ideology, to the extent that they are constructed through very particular interpretations. Events, needs, and experiences are certainly not irrelevant or fanciful, but I strongly agree with Levitas when she notes that “for solutions to appeal, they must be preceded or accompanied by descriptions of experiences and needs which render the solutions apparently relevant”.⁹⁷ Levitas notes that Stuart Hall in particular makes a point of insisting that what is involved in the appeal of New Right ideology is the misdescription of needs and experiences, in order to impose pseudo-solutions which are actually detrimental to the interests of the people involved. However, she points out further that even he, at times, comes perilously close to arguing that the success of the New Right, or Thatcherism, can be explained by the fact that it addresses the real needs of ordinary people in a way that the Left has failed to do.⁹⁸ In short, Hall’s explicit recognition that the New Right’s connection with need and experience is both illusory and constructed is what redeems him and puts his analysis at a significantly more sophisticated level than, say, David Edgar, who says only that the New

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ruth Levitas. (Ed.) *Ideology of the New Right*, p. 15.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 16. For example, Levitas notes that in an earlier article by Hall, he states that the welfare state “is experienced by masses of ordinary people, in the very moment they are benefiting from it, as an intrusive, managerial, bureaucratic force on their lives”. (Stuart Hall. “The State - Socialism’s Old Caretaker.” *Marxism Today*, November, 1984, p. 27.) Of course, there is some truth to this point, but the fact remains that ultimately, it is like many leftist defenses and concessions in that it potentially provides fodder for right-wing attacks of the ‘excesses’ of progressive social policy.

Right connects to "the very real fears of social chaos", and in this way is an example of a New Right *critic* promoting essentially the same argument as the New Right itself.⁹⁹

Hall does rightly point out that Thatcherism in Britain has been a phenomenon that many a Marxist social theorist has pointedly avoided trying to tackle, precisely because its monumental and long-term success cannot be adequately explained away by any kind of overly economically deterministic argument which relies too heavily on class analysis, nor even by any kind of 'cultural dupe' theory. With regard to economic reductionism, Hall notes that class interest, class position, and material factors are useful starting points in the analysis of any ideological formation, but they in themselves "are *not sufficient* -- because they are not sufficiently determinate -- to account for the actual empirical disposition and movement of ideas in real historical societies".¹⁰⁰ As for the latter 'cultural dupes' position, Hall rightly insists that

It is a highly unstable theory about the world which has to assume that vast numbers of ordinary people, mentally equipped in much the same way as you or I, can simply be thoroughly and systematically duped into misrecognizing entirely where their real interests lie. Even less acceptable is the position that, whereas "they" -- the masses -- are the dupes of history, "we" -- the privileged -- are somehow without a trace of illusion and can see, transitively, right through into the truth, the essence, of a situation.¹⁰¹

Political correctness, as it is presently understood, did not come out of thin air, and *could* not have become the media bandwagon that it is today if it did not somehow connect with the popular media's readership. As I discussed in Chapter Two, the massive attention towards, and coverage of, the 'social movement' of political correctness has a lot to do with the resentments and alienations unfortunately accompanying much of the progress disadvantaged groups have made in recent years; progress made with regard to

⁹⁹ As cited in Ruth Levitas' (Ed.) *Ideology of the New Right*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁰ Stuart Hall. "Toad in the Garden.", p. 45.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

employment equity, affirmative action, and multiculturalism. It is essential to communicate the fact that I would certainly not contend that such policy implementations have been without their problems, and in fact, in particular contexts, may have caused more damage than they are worth. However, as Tim Brennan has remarked about affirmative action in education with respect to minority students,

... there is some truth in arguing that, in its present form, minority hiring is a sick response to generations of racist abuse and exclusion. But right now it is all we have, and it is something. At the very least, it is visible proof to non-white students that staying in school can lead to a respectable career . . . Instead of trashing this flawed and fragile set-up, we should be extending it. Its problem is that it does not go far enough.¹⁰²

Michael Apple adds to this the important point that affirmative action¹⁰³ has also tended to help middle-class white women more than it has aided visible minority groups,¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Tim Brennan. "'PC' and the Decline of the American Empire." *Social Policy*, 1991, Summer, p. 24.

¹⁰³ Interestingly, of the two signature or 'authoritative' anti-PC pieces in Canada and the United States, it is the *Canadian* one that seems to most openly question employment equity and affirmative action policies. Jerry Adler's "Taking Offense" surprisingly makes a strong bid for objective journalism with an admittedly small, but nevertheless present, mention of the possibly detrimental effects a threat by the Department of Education to cut funds could make to the goals of such policies:

Last week a bureaucrat in the Department of Education jeopardized decades of progress in affirmative action by threatening the loss of federal funds to universities that award scholarships specifically for minority students. (Jerry Adler et al. "Taking Offense." *Newsweek*, December 24, 1990, p. 50.)

Not too surprisingly, the ultimate reason for this threat rested squarely upon the unruly and radical proposals and policies of the politically correct, making it one more of the tired old 'bit the hand that feeds it' kind of arguments in what has been a very long line with regards to the issue of political correctness and others. However, *Maclean's* "The Silencers", by contrast, doesn't even go this far, instead elevating arguments such as that of the National Association of Scholars (NAS) association research director Glenn Ricketts, that special treatment such as quotas and the like are destroying merit (which is indubitably completely objective and rationally ascertained) as the principle basis for hiring and promotion. Below is an example of *Maclean's* careful bracketing of material about employment equity measures with regards to women with value-laden terms such as 'special', and their example of what such programs imply for males:

[Women] are filling more university teaching posts partly because of federal and provincial employment-equity programs . . . [A]cademics are taking special steps to increase the number of women on staff. [The] acting director of the religious studies department at the University of Alberta . . . says that to increase the number of women on staff . . . which now has . . . no women, he does not intend to hire any more full-time male staff members until there is parity. (Tom Fennell. "The Silencers: A New Wave of Repression is Sweeping Through the Universities." *Maclean's*, May 27, 1991, p. 42.)

Doug Smith notes that "*Maclean's* suggests readers should feel sorry for the male academics who will not be hired in this department", as opposed to being concerned that in 1994, there are *no* female faculty members in this, and many other, university departments. (Doug Smith. "'New McCarthyism'.", p. 9.)

¹⁰⁴ Michael Apple. *Official Knowledge*, p. 26.

which concurs with the more specific, but no less significant, claim by the likes of Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar that feminism has, since its conception, been interested in the promotion of middle-class white women's interests, often at the expense of blacks generally, and of black women specifically.¹⁰⁵ It is very appealing - and sorely tempting - to many Canadians in these tough economic times to be able to grasp onto the sometimes subtle, sometimes blatant, 'blame *them*' carrot that the media¹⁰⁶ dangles in front of their noses in the guise of PC bashing. As Apple notes,

... popular consciousness can be articulated to the right precisely because the feelings of hope and despair and the logic and language used to express these are "polysemic" and can be attached to a variety of discourses. Hence, a male worker who has lost his job might be antagonistic to the corporations who engaged in capital flight or can blame unions, people of color, or women "who are taking men's jobs" . . . The response is *constructed*, not preordained, by the play of ideological forces in the larger society.¹⁰⁷

In this way, the Right has merely been a lot *better* at "disorganizing other more progressive groups, in shifting the terms of political, economic, and cultural debate onto the terrain favored by capital and the Right",¹⁰⁸ than the Left has been in attempting to do the same thing to the status quo.

Just as political correctness is not one unitary social movement, neither does it have one single unifying discourse, nor do the individuals who write about it or in

¹⁰⁵ Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar. "Challenging Imperial Feminism." *Feminist Review*, 1984, 17(Autumn), p. 3-18.

¹⁰⁶ I do not mean to imply here that the media are faceless automatons who act as mere cogs in the conservative machine to further the interests of the New Right. As my media example of Lennox Farrell's article "Power and 'Political Correctness'" (discussed in Chapter Four) demonstrates, alternative and status quo-challenging works do exist in the popular media (to say nothing of the less mainstream), and indeed, often thrive. However, this is merely part and parcel of the process of hegemonic control; it is *not* all-powerful or dictatorial, suppressing all opposing views. One can only hope that the permitting of other voices and the partial incorporation of their perspectives cannot continue infinitely with no real meaningful and tangible change in the hands of power occurring. It is essential to remember that Gramsci's theory of hegemony is ultimately more optimistic than is, for example, Althusserian theory, because it implies that change can, and indeed *must*, occur continuously, even if such change is not automatically 'progressive'.

¹⁰⁷ Michael Apple. *Official Knowledge*, p. 32.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

reference to it write from one perspective alone. Nevertheless, it is clear that the dominant view reiterated again and again in the media is that freedom of thought, speech, and action are indeed in serious danger both on campus and, by extension, in the society at large. However, as my discussion of textual mediation, intertextuality, and hegemony is meant to illustrate, no controlling ideology of the day can remain impervious and hermetically sealed against 'leakage', such that in Gramsci's view, the existing relations of power are not impervious to resistance and transgression. As Colin Gordon remarks in relation to the common misunderstanding of Foucault's work to imply the absolute omnipotence of power,

It hardly needs to be pointed out that if this were the case history would assume the form of a homogeneous narrative of perpetual despotism, and the subtleties of genealogical analysis would be entirely superfluous.¹⁰⁹

In this way, then, it is not the perfect synchronization of the ruling class interests with the accepted ideologies of the day that is worthy of study, but rather it is the manner in which these interests and ideologies somehow fail to correspond with or reinstate each other, leaving room for resistance and positive change, that is worthy of our attention. For these elements are what help to insure that history - and not perpetual despotism - continues, perhaps in ways even thought impossible within the present confines of the current anti-PC discourse.

As Colin Gordon reminds us, while the study of history does tend to relegate forms of resistance to a lesser status than the forms of domination to which greater attention is necessarily paid,

¹⁰⁹ Colin Gordon. "Other Inquisitions." *Ideology and Consciousness*, 1979, 6(Autumn), p. 36.

... the facts of resistance are nevertheless assigned an irreducible role within the analysis. The field of strategies is a field of conflicts: the human material operated on by programmes and technologies is inherently a *resistant* material. If this were not the case, history itself would become unthinkable.¹¹⁰

The problem, thus, is that conservative forces have proven themselves, both generally, and in particular with regards to their campaign against political correctness, to be "particularly pragmatic and adaptable in mobilising media and . . . populist support"¹¹¹ on behalf of the perpetuation of their discourses, in stark contrast to the abilities of the Left to do the same to publicize, much less *popularize*, alternative discourses. As Stephen J. Ball further notes,

'The ideological' is a kind of stage lighting which keeps the spotlight on the stars and the behind-the-scenes action in deep shadow, thus maintaining our belief in the reality of the plot and keeping our concentration on the main action.¹¹²

However, as the theory of hegemony dictates, conservative dominance on the popular front is by no means guaranteed, and the current 'consensual'¹¹³ interpretation with regard to political correctness is *not* written in stone, but rather is continually maintained through the efforts, contest, and struggle of many different interests. While at the superficial level, it may sometimes seem as though 'the Right has power' and everyone else does not in this 'debate' over political correctness, the effort must be made to look beyond the limelight "to the behind-the-scenes action", thus calling into question "the reality of the plot".

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 42.

¹¹¹ Stephen J. Ball. *Politics and Policy Making in Education*, p. 8.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 14.

¹¹³ I use this term in two senses: one, to evoke the Gramscian notion that hegemony requires the consent of the subaltern classes, and two, to point out the fact that just as the post-war Keynesian consensus was not by any means characterized by harmonious unanimity, so too, the discourses regarding political correctness are at times contradictory and oppositional, even though the media have tended to reduce these differences.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Media Artefacts

More PC Vignettes, The Radical Professor, and Liberal PC Critics

Beginning in the late 1980s, the concept of political correctness experienced an abrupt and boisterous metamorphosis from a mere term or phrase ostensibly to become a veritable social movement. In October of 1990, Richard Bernstein wrote an article in the New York Times entitled "The Rising Hegemony of the Politically Correct".¹ With it, perhaps unknowingly, Bernstein set into motion one of the most successful Anglo North

¹ Richard Bernstein. "The Rising Hegemony of the Politically Correct." New York Times, October 28, 1990, Section 4, p. 1, 4. As I noted in Chapter Two, Bernstein's use of the term 'hegemony' in this article is a case of media appropriation of the concepts and ideas of social theory. Due to the confines of both space and time (rather than any reduced 'intellectual capacity' of media personnel and their readers), such mediatization usually results in rather simplistic and crude representations of theoretical terms, representations which are often only mere sketchy outlines of what they once were (and of course continue to be, albeit in different kinds of enterprises). In this way, a reader of both 'serious' theoretical papers and of popular media such as the New York Times would be foolish to read into the latter's 'hegemony' the same denotations and connotations as he or she has come to expect from the sources of the former. The term political correctness itself can be seen in this manner, in that the media's appropriation of the term from its previously Leftist intellectual origins, combined of course with a generous dose of right-wing rhetoric, has resulted in a 'political correctness' that is nearly alien to its birthplace, unbeknownst, of course, to countless consumers of popular media.

American ² media circus rides in recent history, that of the political correctness controversy. He is perhaps the first to popularize the conception of what he calls the "p.c.p.", that is, the politically correct person, who allegedly - and without variation - is unreservedly committed to "affirmative action", "women's studies", "gay and lesbian studies", "African-American studies", "1960's radicalism", "powerful environmentalism", "Palestinian self-determination", "Third World revolutionaries" (particularly those in Central America), "otherness", and "biodegradable garbage bags". P.c.p.'s are definitely and unequivocally *against* "Exxon", "the white male power structure", "a sense of humour", "patriarchal hegemony", and the "commonly reiterated trio of thought crimes: sexism, racism, and homophobia". ³

Apparently, serious repercussions come to those who refuse to adhere to this "new orthodoxy": ⁴ witness the case cited in the article of poor maligned Professor Gribben of the University of Texas, who opposed the tabled course changes towards a more diversified curriculum and was subsequently "denounced in the campus newspaper as a right-winger", and was subject to a rally held on campus "to harangue him". As he meekly states, "I just wanted to question a few features and *my world fell apart*". ⁵ Witness the anti-PC tactic of victimization of conservatives, or rather, of normal people

² Lorna Weir points out that there is no corresponding term for 'political correctness' in the Québécois mass media. (Lorna Weir. "PC Then and Now: Resignifying Political Correctness." Forthcoming in Stephen Richer and Lorna Weir's (Eds.) Beyond Political Correctness: The Future of the Canadian Academy, Toronto, 1995, p. 45.) In addition, in the European media, the term has not gained nearly the momentum nor the fervour of its counterpart in Canada and the United States.

³ Richard Bernstein. "Rising Hegemony," Section 4, p. 1, 4. It is worthwhile noting the debilitating effect of Bernstein's carefully chosen words "commonly reiterated", as if those decrying such "thought crimes" have nothing better or more substantial with which to defame 'us', and thus must resort to repeating themselves *ad nauseam* about 'the same old things' that are, apparently, only just barely legitimate issues.

⁴ Of course, by using the term "new", Bernstein unwittingly admits that there was indeed an *old* orthodoxy, or 'hegemony', as he perhaps would prefer to term it. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵ [emphasis added.] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

like you and me, just trying to make a living and live a decent life. ⁶

Dinesh D'Souza's own contribution to the anti-PC tirade is considerably more sophisticated and potent than are Bernstein's and other columnists' earlier efforts. In fact, D'Souza makes an effort to note this point precisely in the "Introduction to the Vintage Edition" of his immensely successful 1991 book, Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus. In reference to John Taylor's "Are You Politically Correct?", for example, D'Souza notes that it gave "no plausible explanation for why any of this was going on, who precisely these new authoritarians were, and what they sought to accomplish". ⁷ However, D'Souza also notes that perhaps more important than such deficiencies in early efforts is the fact that these writers aided in

. . . intensify[ing] the temperature of derision aimed at political correctness, and [they] helped to legitimize such contempt among the intellectual and social au courant. P.C. was starting to look uncool. ⁸

With this latter statement, there can be no mistake that D'Souza's intentions are to trivialize the aims and goals of progressive groups and individuals whom he would label as inflexibly and coercively politically correct. The fact that PC could look "uncool" implies that it can be regarded as being a trend like any other, for example, such as the world of fashion (with the exception, of course, that the former 'fad' discussed by

⁶ As briefly discussed in Chapter Three, and as I hope to illustrate here, the apparent neutrality of such terms as 'normal' and 'decent', and 'tradition' and 'family', as used by media personnel such as Bernstein and others in the business of influencing public opinion, should by no means be taken as innocently being such; these are very specifically loaded terms, although it is of course also the case that their users are not always completely in the know of each and every triggered implication, emotion, or association. Nevertheless, depending upon whose carefully formulated meanings are the rule of the day, various concepts and terms can have radically differing implications. Significantly, the use of such 'neutral' but in reality highly value-laden terms has contributed a great deal to the New Right's construction of the anti-political correctness campaign.

⁷ Dinesh D'Souza. Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus. New York, 1992. p. xv.

⁸ Ibid.

D'Souza is a potentially very "dangerous" one ⁹). In this way, D'Souza's slant can be seen to be surreptitiously consistent with William F. Buckley Jr.'s assertion, described in Chapter Two, that political correctness is the kind of nonsense that will not last, since reason and rationality ¹⁰ will inevitably reign supreme. While D'Souza is apparently committed to saving the world from politically correct fanatics, statements such as the one above imply, somewhat contradictorily, that he intends to do so largely by belittling the current fad as unfashionable, and by encouraging others to do the same.

Political correctness seems to be everywhere, though in my view, decidedly *not* in the form of an insidious instrument of neo-Stalinist thought policing, which most in the media and elsewhere have hysterically contended has (or, will soon, if it has not yet already) spread from the radical campuses to infiltrate every aspect of daily life. In what I would argue has been more of a political correctness feeding frenzy than any kind of

⁹ As a rather thought-provoking aside, it could easily be argued that the tumultuous and high-flying world of international fashion moguls and their models is equally, if not more so, dangerous than the 'horror stories' of those souls' long-suffering because of the 'thought police' of political correctness. Not only do tens of thousands of models and would-be models often starve themselves and otherwise abuse themselves through the use of harmful substances (diet-inducing or otherwise), but the fashion industry has also wreaked havoc on the bodies and minds of generations of young girls and women (and, to a small degree, men) everywhere as a result of their depiction of ultimate femininity as being near-anorexic thinness. This has additionally been the result of continually changing criteria of what is 'hot' and what is not (for example, the current craze of overly-inflated lower lips supplied by collagen injections, versus earlier raves over high cheekbones, which were again produced through either surgery or excessive use of 'dramatic' cosmetics). It will be interesting to see whether the current revelations of the many side effects of breast implants will eventually make 'soft' breasts once again acceptable (if only for a time).

¹⁰ 'Reason' and 'rationality' being, of course, dangerously exclusionary terms in themselves, in that they have historically been defined wholly by white middle-class men. Dinesh D'Souza apparently believes that Eurocentrism itself is a fiction concocted by the naive and misplaced efforts of minority group leaders. In relating a personal example (with which his book is liberally sprinkled) of how he 'won over' a group of students protesting the overly-dominant 'white perspective' in the humanities, he has this to say:

Gradually, students realized that the concession to white norms of all qualities of logic, clarity of expression, and decency of behavior -- and the implication that such things could not be expected from other groups -- was profoundly condescending and ultimately demeaning to minorities. (Dinesh D'Souza, *Illiberal Education*, p. xiii.)

This can be (and probably has been) seen as a fairly potent argument, until one further considers the fact that minority groups have largely had no say in determining what defines 'rational thought' and 'decent behavior'. In terms of the latter, for example, 'decent behavior' for blacks and women was long thought to comprise of submissive servitude to their white male 'owners'. Such 'generalities' are in themselves demeaning and extremely damaging to minority groups, not, as D'Souza would have us believe, the other way around.

horrible tyranny of politically correct "sensitivity mongers",¹¹ not only have newspaper and magazine editorials, journal articles, and popular books been hurriedly spewed out, but even movies,¹² cartoon strips, and greeting cards have been quick to climb aboard the anti-PC bandwagon. For example, last summer the comic strip *Bizzaro* ran a series of cartoons lampooning political correctness, with such punch lines as "In the interests of animal rights and 'pet equity', would you mind joining us on the floor?", as innocently requested by two individuals, upon their hands and knees, whom the reader is to assume are the mother and son of the male breadwinner who has evidently just returned from the 'real world'.¹³ *Non Sequitur* has also exploited the issue, oftentimes in a blatantly direct and blunt fashion, such as in its comic strip of the fall of 1993 entitled "Political Science in the Nineties". In it, an observer stands by the open door of a classroom, occupied solely by a bearded and bespectacled 'radical' professor, sitting at his desk with his hands folded in front of him. Behind him the chalkboard reads:

1. Demand tolerance of your point of view.
2. Give none to others.

Class dismissed¹⁴

The radical professor hypothesis is an extremely robust one, particularly in media articles faithful to the recent spate of right-wing books such as Dinesh D'Souza's Illiberal Education, Roger Kimball's Tenured Radicals, Allan Bloom's The Closing of the American Mind, Robert Hughes' Culture of Complaint: The Fraying of America, Francis J. Beckwith and Michael E. Bauman's edited collection Are You Politically Correct?

¹¹ The reader may recall my discussion in Chapter Two of *A Special Firing Line Debate* on political correctness, where Glenn Loury, member of the "For the Resolution Team" (the resolution being "Resolved: Freedom of Thought is in Danger on American Campuses"), used this term, *ad nauseam*, throughout the program. (*A Special Firing Line Debate* with William F. Buckley Jr., produced by Warren Steibel, 1991.)

¹² See, for example, the recently released *PCU*, which, as can be gleaned from its title, concerns the trials and tribulations undergone by the courageous protagonists in a university swept up in the vice-like clutches of political correctness zealots.

¹³ P. Piraro. *Bizzaro*. Edmonton Journal. August 19, 1993, p. D10.

¹⁴ I. Viley. *Non Sequitur*. Edmonton Journal. September 13, 1993, p. C3.

Debating America's Cultural Standards, and William Bennett's earlier but no less venomous attack in his 1984 book To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education,¹⁵ of the ill-conceived attempts to replace the 'classic' texts of Western civilization with other,¹⁶ lesser works, an apparently seriously misguided undertaking for which blame was placed squarely on the shoulders of 1960s radicals who were now in positions of power in the universities. In books such as these, as well as in the barrage of staunchly supportive newspaper and magazine articles which followed their publication, the oft-repeated argument is that relics of the sixties - apparently unemployable in any other (more worthwhile) capacity - stampeded into the ivory towers of higher learning and immediately¹⁷ set about radicalizing such things as research methodologies, ways of teaching and grading and, most controversially, course content itself. This apparently occurred to such a degree that even Canadian authors such as Cyril Levitt, who through most of his book Children of Privilege lionizes and romanticizes the 1960s generation (while simultaneously criticizing others, such as Myrna Kostash and Wini Breines, for doing the same), decry the effects of this radicalization. Due to Levitt's rather peculiar positioning, I shall quote him at length:

¹⁵ Dinesh D'Souza. Illiberal Education: Roger Kimball Tenured Radicals. New York, 1990; Allan Bloom. The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students. New York, 1987; Robert Hughes. Culture of Complaint: The Fraying of America. New York and Oxford, 1993; Francis J. Beckwith and Michael E. Bauman. (Eds.) Are You Politically Correct? Debating America's Cultural Standards. Buffalo, 1993; and William Bennett's To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education. Washington, 1984.

¹⁶ I use the term 'other' deliberately, to connote both the sense of being alternative, as well as the postmodern notion of being viewed as an Other, that is, as the inferior object who can never be regarded as being equal to the subject (who has the power to define those less powerful as Other). For an interesting analysis of the 'Us-Other' dialectic, refer to Marianna Torgovnik's "Defining the Primitive/Reimagining Modernity" in her book, Gone Primitive. Chicago, 1990, p. 3-41.

¹⁷ That is, immediately beginning in the late 1980s and early 1990s; what they were doing with their zeal before this time is *not* adequately explained.

Academic standards have fallen directly and indirectly as a consequence of the student movement. Veterans of the movement who made careers in public and high school teaching brought much of the “do your own thing” ethos with them into the classroom. As a result the level of literacy and numeracy of a whole generation of potential university students has been compromised.

Former activists who became university teachers brought into their various disciplines, especially in the humanities and social sciences, whole new perspectives and methodologies, many of suspicious provenance and questionable scholarly significance. At the very least, the core of many areas of scholarship was ripped apart, as colleagues could no longer agree on what was central and what was peripheral.¹⁸

Such pronouncements are merely milder (although surprisingly, not *that* much milder) versions of the diatribes of Bloom and Kimball, et al. This is one of many Canadian and American examples of ‘progressives’ potentially damaging the very goals and ideals they hold most dear, by ultimately settling for right-wing rhetoric¹⁹ in the place of the often far more difficult to articulate critical debunking of such discourse. Levitt, as a Canadian fully immersed in many student “peace and love” organizations in the sixties, describes this book as a labour of love concerning the “saints and martyrs, the keepers of the social

¹⁸ Cyril Levitt. Children of Privilege: Student Revolt in the Sixties. A Study of Student Movements in Canada, the United States, and West Germany. Toronto, 1984, p. 193.

¹⁹ However, it is important to note that such rhetoric is usually much easier to come by than are its alternatives. As has been discussed in Chapter Three and elsewhere, the regulation and articulation of *which* terms to use and *what* they signify has so far - for political correctness and for many other issues - been largely controlled by right-wing forces. It is in this way that such rhetoric comes to mind and mouth most easily. Of course, this is not to say that the purveyors and replicators of right-wing rhetoric are in any way cultural dupes; this can most easily be illustrated in the appearance (extremely latent or otherwise) of right-wing rhetoric in what are supposed to be ‘progressive intellectual’ texts. *Even* (I use this term ironically) those learned sages supposedly standing ‘above’ society to analyse it fall victim to the subtle rearticulation and regulation of terms, ideas, and issues by right-wing forces. As Colette Guillaumin states in relation to the below-surface sexism that often remains in Left-wing discourse,

To think ‘Left’ is to attempt to focus one’s mind to counter the weight of facts and constraints. In concrete reality such critical interventions are rare, so that large areas of conformity remain unchallenged, and this always includes generalized sexism. It follows that the ideology of the Right is not the exclusive property of a movement, or of a party of the Right, or of the extreme Right. It is invariably present in all relations of domination. (Colette Guillaumin. “Sexism, a Right-Wing Constant of Any Discourse: A Theoretical Note.” In Gill Seidel’s (Ed.) The Nature of the Right: A Feminist Analysis of Order Patterns. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1988, p. 24.)

conscience" that the sixties student generation embodied.²⁰ As such, coupled with the above remarks, it can best be seen as being normatively confused and intellectually underdeveloped.

Interestingly, it is of all things a Trilateral Commission report²¹ that discredits the current anti-PC assertion that sixties-generation radicals are the reason behind the current efforts to, say, *replace*²² Shakespeare, Milton, and Aristotle with The Color Purple by Alice Walker and L. Rigoberta Menchu by "a Guatemalan peasant woman who became a supporter of socialism and feminism",²³ Rigoberta Menchu. The popular anti-PC argument is that radicals bred and raised in the 1960s have now completely overrun our universities, thus causing our current problems concerning, for example, the breakdown of moral certitude regarding "central" and "peripheral" course content.²⁴ However, this is the *current* argument, and as such, begs the question of what exactly was occupying these radicals in the two decades between the sixties and the nineties, such that all of a sudden, political correctness is vociferously sweeping through the universities?²⁵

²⁰ Cyril Levitt. Children of Privilege, p. 6.

²¹ Please recall that the Trilateral Commission, while not being entirely consistent with the ideology of the New Right, nevertheless "had the most explicit agenda for the restructuring of the post-hegemonic global economy in the middle to late 1970s", as discussed in Chapter One. (Pat Marchak. The Integrated Circus: The New Right and the Restructuring of Global Markets. Montreal and Kingston, 1991, p. 104.) This being the case, it is amusing that my research has revealed that this association effectively, if unintentionally, laid the current 'radical professor' hypothesis of the conservative anti-PC brigade to rest.

²² Note the zero-sum game mentality elicited by the constant use of words such as 'replace', 'loss' and 'eliminate' by doomsdayers such as the late Allan Bloom and his colleagues in the notorious National Association of Scholars; ostensibly, all 'good' literature, philosophical thought, and scientific advances are going to be categorically thrown out the window in favour of the more 'fashionable' and politically correct treatises that have nothing valuable to contribute beyond their current 'correctness', which could ostensibly be taken away at any day due to the whims of the politically correct leaders and organizers.

²³ D'Arcy Jenish. "A War of Words: Academics Clash Over 'Correctness'." Maclean's. May 27, 1991, p. 45.

²⁴ Cyril Levitt. Children of Privilege, p. 193.

²⁵ Dinesh D'Souza himself implies that the political correctness crusade is happening now because of (note the tense) "the new generation of professors and administrators -- products of the counterculture of the 1960s -- who are *coming* to power in American universities". [emphasis added.] (Dinesh D'Souza. Illiberal Education, p. xv.) What were these radicals doing for the past twenty-five to thirty years? Graduate school does not take *this* long to complete, and neither does the transition from junior to senior faculty (a power differential that is perhaps substantial, but not as much as D'Souza and others would have us believe it to be).

It seems extremely unlikely that after twenty years of relative silence, the progeny of the sixties, by now long established in positions of power and influence, would suddenly in the late 1980s and early 1990s 'regress' back to the universities, the roots of their radicalism of old. The Trilateral Commission report, I contend, puts a final nail in the coffin when it - significantly, in the year 1975 - tackled the problem of "excess democracy" in the Trilateral nations by claiming, among other things, that there were too many critics in academe.²⁶ In other words, this complaint was raised almost twenty years ago, with most of the faculty members in question necessarily having grown up in the 1950s and earlier. In this way, the current conviction that it is the recent seizure of power by the radical sixties fringe elements of society that is the root problem underlying the present political correctness 'crisis' does *not* seem incredibly convincing. It would seem that conservatives will *always* find too many radicals among the intelligentsia; for the current spin-doctors of the anti-PC campaign, the 1960s have merely provided for what is perhaps a more immediately intuitive signifier which people in the recession-battered 1980s and early 1990s can grasp on to, even if the fit is not actually accurate.

Further, in the year 1969, Sidney Hook was already complaining about the Left's "barbarism of virtue", a phrase that Tim Brennan conjectures Dinesh D'Souza might have had in mind when he decried the "new barbarism" of multicultural education, and that Roger Kimball might have been thinking about when he wrote of the current battle in

²⁶ Michel J. Crozier, Samuel P. Huntington, and Joji Watanuki. The Crisis of Democracy: Report on the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission. New York, 1975, p. 6. To deter such critics, the authors recommend that those disciplines most critical of corporate capitalism should be reined in by fiscal restraints. Mass education, apparently, should also be curbed, since there are already too many educated people for the number of available jobs. (Ibid., p. 173.) Such chilling pronouncements are clear examples of the intermingling of what is social, cultural, and political with what is economic, and it is doubly certain that groups such as the Trilateral Commission, which roughly fall under the umbrella of New Right ideology, have a great deal of interest in *each* of these areas.

academia between "culture and barbarism" in his book Tenured Radicals.²⁷ In addition to casting doubt upon the radical sixties professor hypothesis, this is also a very useful illustration of how language - and often the very *same* language, over and over again (past successes often helping to secure future ones) - serves to create extremely powerful rhetorical devices for any argument, but particularly for what Stuart Hall would call an "organic" or populist one.²⁸

Astoundingly, even the *greeting card* industry has seen fit to appropriate the term of political correctness, as John Callahan's postcard of "The Politically Appropriate Brain" illustrates. Underneath this title is an illustration of an enormous head containing a pie graph depicting the percentages allotted by the politically appropriate brain to "Apartheid 9%", "Rain Forests 10%", "Whales 10%", "Comfortable Sandals 30%", and finally, to "Guilt 40%".²⁹ Notice, also, how this work conjures up fuzzy conceptions of idealistic hippies of the late 1960s and early 1970s, perhaps tempered with a bit more of the 'burden' it is to be white and middle-class that people in the nineties are somewhat

²⁷ Tim Brennan. "'PC' and the Decline of the American Empire." Social Policy. 1991, Summer, p. 16. In Chapter One, I described an article by Catharine Stimpson as an example of overly-academic progressive responses to the political correctness debate, and here I will briefly mention another problem with the article: its implicit elitism. This is evident in Stimpson's assertion that

Far more vulgar commentators . . . have concocted a weird syllogism that links proponents of multiculturalism with proponents of deconstruction . . . these vulgar commentators cry [that] multiculturalists and deconstructionists are both barbarians, a linguistic turn comparable to confusing a New York City or Miami or Los Angeles neighborhood with a European chateau. (Catharine Stimpson. "Meno's Boy: Hearing His Story - And His Sisters. In Francis J. Beckwith and Michael E. Bauman's Are You Politically Correct? Debating America's Cultural Standards. Buffalo, 1993, p. 120.)

Such unnecessary posturing could be argued to be classist, intellectually elitist, or even racist (a big-city "neighborhood" as compared to an implicitly white "European chateau"), but regardless Stimpson simply does not *need* to resort to such allusions. For example, why does the author not simply discuss what the term 'barbarian' signifies, or why it was chosen over, say, 'the opposition' (those supporting multiculturalism and deconstructionism)?

²⁸ Stuart Hall. "The Toad in the Garden: Thatcherism Among the Theorists." In Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg's (Eds.) Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture. Urbana and Chicago, 1988, p. 46.

²⁹ John Callahan. "The Politically Appropriate Brain." NobleWorks, 1993.

more likely to take for granted.³⁰ In any case, the point remains that such individuals are radical idealists not to be taken seriously.

Perhaps most interesting is Garry Trudeau's somewhat surprising long-running satire of political correctness in *Doonesbury*, during which "a group of women students³¹ at Penn filed racial harassment charges against a white student who called them 'water buffalo'",³² and a student complains about his "self-esteem motivated" inflated grade by 'teaching' his professor that

If everyone's special, then no one is! How can I develop self-esteem if I'm not allowed to develop self-respect?³³

More recently, *Doonesbury* completed a long-running 'trial' in which a white male student won his court case against a mathematics professor whose 'B+' was a "narrow, absolutist, eurocentric" and "racist" grade that was an attempt to "disempower" and "marginalize" the student (and by extension, his culture, which is identified as the 'minority group' of the Greco-Athletic fraternity).³⁴ Given Trudeau's reputation for being somewhat of a champion of progressive causes (witness his periodic attention to issues such as homosexuality, living with AIDS, and his scathing satires of the powerful National Rifle Association and tobacco industry governmental lobbies), it is doubly disconcerting to see such hyperbolic myths of political correctness perpetuated,³⁵ both in

³⁰ This latter conception of white middle-class people feeling 'burdened' by their positions of power and advantage is also propagated by the title of the *Saturday Night* article concerning Canadian columnist and social activist June Callwood, but the article has the added twist of bringing to mind feminism's long-running assumption that it could speak for all women, where in fact it has historically been more intent upon securing power for white women only. This article will be discussed at length in the last section of this chapter. (Adele Freedman, "White Woman's Burden," *Saturday Night*, April 1993, p. 40-44, 74-84.)

³¹ We are to assume here, apparently, that since these students are identified as being women, they are necessarily white women, and not, say, women of colour. Apparently, Trudeau has yet to read Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith's edited collection *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies*. New York, 1982.

³² Garry Trudeau. *Doonesbury*. *Edmonton Journal*. July 10, 1993, p. C3.

³³ Garry Trudeau. *Doonesbury*. *Edmonton Journal*. August 3, 1993, p. C3.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, *Ottawa Citizen*. Beginning on December 21, 1993, p. C7.

³⁵ The student naturally ended up winning the case, along with a sum of money, implying that such could also conceivably be the case in the 'real' world, if, that is, the promoters of political correctness are not stopped.

reference to Trudeau's reputation, and additionally due to the troubling fact that the ultimately anti-PC message is all the more powerful coming from someone of his professed political standing.

In some ways, it is individuals such as Trudeau, people thought to be 'already converted', that stand to do the most damage to the progressive goals associated,³⁶ accurately or inaccurately, with the political correctness controversy, even if they are merely trying to be dangerously funny (as Trudeau's efforts in this regard generally appear). It is essential to point out in the delineation of the phenomenon of political correctness that too many so-called classic liberals have disconcertedly fallen into the anti-PC brigade along with companions with whom otherwise they would have little in common. What is it about political correctness that seems to be able to draw together otherwise opposed liberals and conservatives? Probably the principle reason for this crossing over of progressives lies in their collective fears of being associated with the taboo PC label, and in their resulting defensive (and often hyper-defensive) stand against it. One of the most formidable aspects of the ideological code of political correctness is its seemingly infallible efficacy in pigeon-holing individuals as 'us' (the eminently reasonable majority who would most certainly prefer to do away with the nasty inequities in our society, but who realize that such change cannot occur overnight, involving serious

³⁶ My intent is to be consistent in acknowledging the fact that 'progressive goals', or for that matter, any kind of unitary 'agenda' of the political Left, are very difficult to identify, in part because of the significant dissolution and fragmentation of various Leftist groups from their previously more united front, in the name, sadly, of 'difference'. This concept has been often celebrated by various disadvantaged groups in an empowering way, and has definitely alleviated some of the previous silencing of 'different voices' by more mainstream elements in the latter's arrogant assumption that, for example, white middle-class feminism adequately represented all women, but within it lies a very distinct danger. As Gill Seidel notes at the beginning of her introduction to *The Nature of the Right*, the notion of difference - as echoed at both ends of the political spectrum - is ambiguous and problematic because it suggests that there is some quality, some essence, that in relation to language or identity is somehow innate and unmediated by social forces. In the case of women, the notion of difference may be a biological justification of domination. (Gill Seidel. (Ed.) *Nature of the Right*, p. 5.) Thus, let the reader be content to assume that by the progressive values of the Left, I am referring to the view that the status quo is simply not good enough, and progressive goals are those which strive to redistribute wealth, power, and respect more equally.

investments of time and money that, sigh, just never seem to be available), and 'them' (those hysterical, tyrannical, irrational, and sometimes even abusive radicals who are demanding veritable - and perhaps dangerous - revolution immediately). In this way, it is the ideological potency of the anti-PC line of argument that brings not only conservatives and 'apoliticals' into its fold, but also progressives who in other contexts may be more unflinchingly 'leftist' in their views and actions. Such is the power of a successful ideology, as articulated through the processes of textual mediation, intertextuality, and hegemony. This is particularly so with regards to the PC issue, when progressives, or 'the other side', were so obviously unprepared for the vociferousness and popular support for the anti-PC rhetoric of the Right. This unfortunately made progressives particularly prone to hasty misjudgment regarding the issue, to some degree resulting, at least in intellectual circles, in "professors of all ideological persuasions [buying into the anti-PC rhetoric because of] their own paranoia, self-pity, hallucinations, and media handouts".³⁷

Of course the anti-PC brigade has had an absolute field-day with this kind of crossing over effect, and perhaps no one more so than Dinesh D'Souza. He gleefully recounts in his Introduction the shamefaced "defections of prominent intellectual figures and media from the progressive camp", one of whom - a prominent national newscaster who is "routinely blasted in conservative bulletins" - having apparently composed a far "more strident formulation than anything [D'Souza] had said" when he confided, off the record, of course, that "'many of us here are concerned about the thought police who are

³⁷ Catharine Stimpson. "Meno's Boy.", p. 127-128. This judgment of Stimpson's may seem a bit harsh, but perhaps not when it is coupled with the assertion that such 'selling out' occurred in the face of a "wider public debate [that] has been scuzzy, effluent with polarities, scare tactics, half-truths, and cartoonish exaggerations". (Ibid.)

roaming our nation's campuses'".³⁸ D'Souza refers to ambivalent articles in such publications as the New York Review of Books, which, incidentally, was "one of the last best hopes of the politically correct",³⁹ as proof that the PC issue had deeply fractured the liberal intellectual mainstream, and indeed it has, with debilitating effect. To D'Souza, however, the crowning glory was Marxist historian Eugene Genovese's favorable review of Illiberal Education, and it is hard to say which factor - Genovese's political orientation or his ethnic composition - contributed most to D'Souza's glee at finding him in the 'anti' camp.

D'Souza goes on to cite a number of other persons whom he himself calls progressive thinkers (as opposed to himself, one might conjecture), who have questioned some of the various goals, and means to those goals, of political correctness. However, I would contend that the "qualities of critical thought and civil argument" which he asserts have suffered because of the enforcement of a 'PC orthodoxy', are alive and well in leftist thought. In other words, the fact there *has* been so much critical thought, civilly presented, among progressives concerning the issues implied by the PC signifier, indicates *not* rigid conformity to political correctness, but rather a robust engagement

³⁸ Dinesh D'Souza. Illiberal Education, p. xvi, xvii. This is a perfect example of New Right terms, ideas, and general political thrust being incorporated into 'liberals'. D'Souza does not say when this comment was made, but I would argue that it is pretty certain that it occurred *after* the term 'thought police' had been introduced into the anti-PC discourse by right-wing forces and proliferated by the media thereafter. In addition, with reference to D'Souza's falsely moderate claim that this comment was more strident than any of his own, the sound bite of "the proliferation of victim classes", oft-repeated in televised *A Special Firing Line Debate* described in Chapter Two, seems to lead to a certain amount of skepticism regarding D'Souza's ostensibly abstemious and dispassionate platform. As Linda Wayne and Robin Ulster further note,

... while D'Souza emerged as the moderate PC expert, the press fails to mention that during his work as a Reagan policy analyst, D'Souza's most celebrated coup was the redirection of funds from abortion clinics to adoption centres. As the founding editor of *The Dartmouth Review*, D'Souza "ran an interview with an ex-official of the Ku Klux Klan, illustrated by a staged photo of a black student hanging from a tree." Commenting on PC-ism in *Forbes Magazine*, D'Souza stated that "the propaganda of the New Barbarians threatens to do us in" and advocated funding cuts to the humanities departments in retaliation. Clearly, there is nothing moderate about D'Souza's position. (Linda Wayne and Robin Ulster. "High Stakes: The 'Politically Correct' Debate and Feminist Academic Practice." Resources For Feminist Research, 1991, 20(3/4), p. 59.)

³⁹ Dinesh D'Souza. Illiberal Education, p. xvi.

with critique. For example, should not the questioning by Andrew Hacker (whom D'Souza facetiously describes as simply being one more conversion) of the problems associated with employment equity measures be seen as concrete proof that political correctness is, in fact, *not* an enforced orthodoxy that coerces all progressives to maintain the same point of view? D'Souza does not go far enough to even begin to address this question. He stops at the point of crowing at, and exulting the fracturing of, the progressive "front", and indeed, would probably also not acknowledge that conservatives, too, are not united in their view of the politically correct reign of terror.⁴⁰

The PC Artefacts

Thus far in this chapter, it has been my intent to critically analyze and discuss some of the ways in which political correctness has found its way into the popular media. Through discussion of Richard Bernstein's watershed piece in the New York Times, Dinesh D'Souza's book Illiberal Education (which, while not being a media article per se, has had such an enormous influence upon the media that it deserves examination), and various other media such as film, cartoon strips, and greeting cards where political correctness has surfaced, I have outlined some of the methods of articulation of political correctness as being a negative, dangerous, coercive, and suppressive force. However, none of these discussions, nor any of those found in my other chapters, have been involved textual analyses of complete texts, but rather have been choice snippets from the various sources available to me. This latter, more close and comprehensive, kind of analysis is essential to my efforts to further demonstrate issues such as 'reporter

⁴⁰ Robert Fulford's article that I briefly discussed in Chapter One comes to mind in this regard. (Robert Fulford. "The Media's Attack on Political Correctness is Suspicious." Financial Times of Canada, June 24, 1991, p. A13.) However, I would contend that the Right do have a more united front than do the Left, the latter being significantly damaged by the exigency placed upon the shoulders of progressives to 'defend' themselves, a defensive position put upon them for which many were caught unprepared. It is in this way that I say the effect of the anti-PC campaign has been, to a large degree, debilitating.

objectivity',⁴¹ the positioning of the writer and reader within the Us/Them dialectic constructed by the anti-PC rhetoric, and other issues that can really only be credibly illustrated within the meat of an entire text.

It is with this purpose in mind that the following four examples are presented. Bear in mind my cautionary note in Chapter One that, throughout this work, my intent is not to empirically delineate how many articles have been written about political correctness, how many reporters and columnists are on the 'pro' side and the 'anti' side, and so on. Rather than being systematic as a media study, this work is hoped to be *symptomatic*, but nevertheless representative in its own right. In this way, to paraphrase Colette Guillaumin, my intent is to identify the political project that is being constructed, to identify and grasp an ideology in its very process of articulation.⁴² Each of these media artefacts are available for viewing in Appendix A, both so that I can remain within reasonable confines in my description of each piece, and in order to facilitate easy analysis of *my* analysis, that is, the critical comparison of my thoughts with other possible interpretations. The very nature of intertextuality and hegemony makes my critical analysis only one interpretation of many, and one for which certain interests (that is, my own) are necessarily promoted. As discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Three, I agree with much post-structuralist thought based upon the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, that the meanings surmised by any particular reader are fundamentally polyvocal in nature. This being the case, any particular author has no hope of transferring virtually every aspect of his or her own opinions, interests, political allegiances, and so on to the minds and

⁴¹ Which, I should point out, is frequently attempted with the best of intentions, particularly in Canadian Press news releases, as opposed to columns and editorials. Of course, the fact that this is the case, apparently with sincere motives, is itself a very subtle detractor of one 'PC' issue, that is, that there is such a thing as the neutral and objective reporting and telling of history. In this way, an article that seems to provide a 'balanced view' can make the concerns of the supporters of political correctness seem not to ring true by its very structure, and to indicate a certain wariness and circumspection towards what are probably exaggerated concerns on the part of those champions of political correctness.

⁴² Colette Guillaumin. "Sexism, a Right-Wing Constant of Any Discourse.", p. 21.

mouths of his or her readers, despite what might certainly be a concerted desire and effort on the part of the author. However, I also agree with Stuart Hall, in that while all texts are essentially plural in character, they are not, thereby, *infinitely* open-ended; hegemony makes this scenario virtually impossible.⁴³

The first media artefact to be examined is Gordon Donaldson's "War of the Words", a typical example of the slant taken by much editorial work in newspapers and magazines of late, regarding political correctness.⁴⁴ It should be noted that while the four media analyses chosen are meant to be symptomatic illustrations of how the ideological code of political correctness is articulated and perpetuated, they depict far more variability in perspective than what four randomly picked articles would manifest. In this way, Donaldson's article is typical of the content and slant of most popular media articles, while, for example, the article *following* Donaldson's is very unique and unusual. This article is a very innovative 'independent' piece by Lennox Farrell that is in itself a cogent analysis of how the media have largely portrayed political correctness. The third article, the only American one, is a New York Times piece written in 1988, entitled "Scholars Attack Campus 'Radicals'", which describes the first meeting of the then newly-formed National Association of Scholars. The fourth article is a more extended narrative in Saturday Night magazine describing the fate of columnist and long-time Canadian social activist June Callwood. In this final case, I have an additional purpose of

⁴³ Stuart Hall. "The Toad in the Garden.", p. 45.

⁴⁴ For example, also see Ray Conlogue's "How Long Might it Take to Repair the Damage Wrought By the PC Movement?" Globe and Mail, June 11, 1991, p. C1; Eve Drobot's "Come, Let Me Offend You." Newsweek, September 28, 1992, p. 8; Don Gillmor's "P.C. Debate: Seriousness and Silliness." Montreal Gazette, May 2, 1992, p. J2; Sondra Gotlieb's "When Queer Isn't Queer: At Last, A Guide to the Politically Correct." Financial Post Daily, September 18, 1992, p. 10; Kay Sunstein Hymowitz's "Rumpelstiltskin Gets Bumped From the Schoolyard: And Cinderella Might Live Happily Ever After if She'd Just Take Charge of Her Own Life (The Politically Correct Movement in Kindergarten)." Globe and Mail, August 31, 1991, p. D1; Wayne Jones' "Leave Language Alone: If Those Who Want to Impose Political Correctness on English Don't Watch Out, They'll be Stereotyped as 'Intellectually Challenged'." Books in Canada, 1992, 21(4), p. 27; and Kevyn D. I. Nightingale's "Why Being 'Correct' Isn't Right." Globe and Mail, January 20, 1992, p. A16.

presenting a very ambiguous and highly complex case of political correctness 'at work', so to speak, though of course my most immediate interest is in the manner in which Saturday Night chose to present it.

"The War of the Words"

The first article to be examined is the quite resentful and reactionary "War of the Words" by Toronto business writer Gordon Donaldson, written in 1991 and published, not too surprisingly, by the Metropolitan Toronto Business Journal (please refer to Appendix A).⁴⁵ As mentioned above, this piece is actually quite typical of the slew of columns and editorials written over the last couple of years about the 'scourge' of political correctness and what a horrible danger it presents, not only to campus defenders of free speech, but also to the freedom and liberty of everyone *outside* university boundaries.⁴⁶ Like most such articles, its main means for transmitting its message is the clever combination of humorous derision and contempt for political correctness, with rather startlingly scathing adjectives used to describe the promoters of such change, here

⁴⁵ Gordon Donaldson. "The War of the Words (Person the Lifeboats! It's Time to Save What's Left of the Language From the Politically Correct)." Metropolitan Toronto Business Journal. 1991, 81(7), p. 13.

⁴⁶ This second part of the argument is essential to attract the attention of readers, as most Canadian consumers of popular media are either not connected at all with university life, or have only remote links, such as sons or daughters, grandsons or granddaughters. This being the case, newspaper and magazine columns and editorials get the readers' attention first by offering a voyeuristic look into the goings on of the 'ivory tower', and second by implying that what happens there will eventually have (negative) repercussions even in one's own life.

including “language Luddites”, “PC vandals”, “hupersons”,⁴⁷ and “raging PC morality squads”. This combination makes possible both the ridicule of the goals of political correctness *and* the scare-mongering such articles often attribute to PCers themselves, but which is actually evident in their own tactics to warn their readers of the ‘tyrants’ and ‘thought police’ of political correctness.

As is evident from the sarcastic subtitle, “Person the Lifeboats! It’s Time to Save What’s Left of the Language From the Politically Correct”, and from the cartoon depicting both the men’s and women’s washrooms as having been crudely relabeled “Persons” washrooms,⁴⁸ Donaldson is not exactly subtle in expressing his views about the damage political correctness has wrought upon ‘our’ daily lives.⁴⁹ He refers to political correctness as “a new disease from the campuses”, and as I have mentioned,

⁴⁷ The apparent merit of this term is that it takes the ‘man’ out of ‘human’, but not, as pointedly noted by *Newsweek*’s high-profile cover story, the ‘son’ out of ‘person’. (Jerry Adler et al. “Taking Offense: Is This the New Enlightenment on Campus or the New McCarthyism?” *Newsweek*, December 24, 1990, p. 52.) In Donaldson’s article, this kind of gender-neutralizing of language is, not surprisingly, taken to its extreme:

First you need a Personager in charge of the personagement of the operation whose persondate is to personipulate the personufacturing to keep the balance sheet in the hue of a certain visible minority and prevent it from acquiring the tincture of another one. The Annual Report may claim unblushingly that the firm is in the pink because pink is not a sensitive colour, not yet, although they’re working on it. (Gordon Donaldson. “War of Words.”, p. 13.)

Such exaggeration has been used time and time again to resist not only changes in language such as attempts to make it more gender-inclusive, but to resist *any* kind of proposed change, by implying that chaos would reign supreme if such loony proposals actually became reality. In addition, ‘huperson’ is Donaldson’s own concoction, which is a strategy common in many anti-PC articles which, when done carefully, makes the reader unaware of which terms are the author’s own, and which have truly been suggested by those individuals and groups the author defines as being politically correct (and thereby not worthy of consideration by reasonable and rational folk).

⁴⁸ I am grateful to Heather Jon Maroney for pointing out that this illustration is evocative of the anti-ERA (Equal Rights Amendment) movement, and in addition for noting that the shock value of the “Persons” label would not be significant across large sections of Europe and certain regions of Québec, where the population seems to do just fine with washrooms that are not sex-specific. (Heather Jon Maroney, personal communication.) It is possible that there is some association between this difference and the differing attention and status the political correctness scare has received in Anglo-North America and these other regions, but further inquiry into this topic will not be attempted here.

⁴⁹ Donaldson is definitely writing ‘to’ a like-minded audience by describing what ‘they’ want to do, as opposed to ‘us’ who must stop them. Such opposition between ‘us’ and ‘them’ helps to polarize the issues into black and white, and also serves to embarrass any potential supporters of political correctness in that it assumes from the start that the reader is ‘reasonable and rational’ just like the author himself.

interestingly describes its promoters as being “language Luddites”. This label goes back to the early nineteenth century, when it referred to any of the various groups of British and continental European workers who rioted and destroyed machinery in the belief that it would diminish unemployment.⁵⁰ Interestingly, Donaldson’s choice of the term ‘Luddite’ to describe PCers belies the fact that while the politically correct ‘crusaders’ are promoting change, the Luddites were singularly *resistant* to change.⁵¹ Regardless of this minor clarification, however, Donaldson’s choice of language points to his position as the manufacturer/capitalist, if you will, a member of the group he feels *should* be controlling the possibility and type of change that is to occur (if any, indeed, must).

Donaldson’s article is somewhat inane and sometimes carelessly written,⁵² but is humorous in places. What I wish to focus on is Donaldson’s statement that he feels “discriminated against”; that is, as a member of the white male middle class he feels hard done by. Why? Because “they” have taken away “his” language, his “raw materials”, he says, as a columnist.⁵³ In the very act of saying this, of course, Donaldson is in fact clearly demonstrating his dominant position within Canadian society, not solely through his apparent perceived rights of ownership and control of the English language. Thus, it is evident that the not-so-subtle political perspective of this article is that of the dominant

⁵⁰ Since the occurrence of technology taking over people’s jobs is a veritable reality today even more so than it was then, it seems apparent that these dissenters were *not* really as loony as Donaldson might have us assume.

⁵¹ Heather Jon Maroney, personal communication.

⁵² For example, the author obviously didn’t bother putting his work through a spell-checker when he wrote of “Ivisible minorities”, apparently meaning ‘Invisible’. In addition, Donaldson is prone to making short, but explosive, statements, and then not explaining them any further. For example:

In the sexist days of boom and bust, bulls and bears roamed Bay Street. Robber barons welshed on deals and got off scot-free.

Not any more.

There is no manna from Heaven and Ma Bell is on steroids. Sex is replaced by gender. (Gordon Donaldson. “War of Words.”, p. 13.)

In this inflammatory diatribe, there are a multitude of potentially ‘PC’ issues addressed, but none sufficiently or adequately. For example, by the contents of the first short paragraph, does Donaldson mean to imply that political correctness actually has made stockbrokers and the like *accountable* for their dealings? What of the apparently debilitating effect of sex being replaced by gender? Donaldson doesn’t say, but rather only implies that all of these changes are terrible.

⁵³ Gordon Donaldson, “War of Words.”, p. 13.

ruling class; apparently, the disadvantages and wrongs done to members of less complacently powerful groups are far less important than the threat of violation of "his" language.⁵⁴

What makes this doubly ironic is that even through the act of writing about his supposed discrimination, Donaldson is creating yet more of those valuable inches of PC column space that are so much in demand these days. The political correctness controversy has been more of a windfall for columnists than the *content* of such columns would often have us believe.⁵⁵ As Huntly Collins has pointedly noted, the 'conspiracy' of political correctness has provided media personnel with an irresistible opportunity to attract more readers at a time of declining print readership generally. The PC scare allows for sensationalized headlines, graphics, and stories that play on what Collins describes as the "deepest fears of white, middle-class Americans - the very segment of the population that newspapers and magazines must attract if they are to remain economically viable".⁵⁶ I would agree - to a point. As I have argued throughout this analysis, it is of the utmost importance that we always remember and recognize the fact that these "deepest fears" of the mainstream population are *not* naturally occurring, but rather are carefully constructed. There is nothing *natural* about holding the opinion that by giving a few small concessions to previously marginalized groups in, say, curriculum course content, that one is thereby allowing 'them', the Others, to take over.

Also part of this argument is the generalization that all political correctness is about is, in fact, language, as if progressives merely wanted to euphemistically 'redefine'

⁵⁴ At the same time, however, it is interesting that he himself seems to downplay the importance of a 'pristine' language: "I am a small manufacturer who mines words from dictionaries, rearranges them a bit and sells them in job lots called magazine articles and books". (Ibid.) Facile comments such as this make his trivialization and criticism of the goals of political correctness seem all the more unjustified. In addition, one might think from this rather humble description that Donaldson would *welcome* language changes, in that they might give him 'new material' to work with.

⁵⁵ For a pleasant, if somewhat surprising, contrast, refer to Robert Fulford's "Media Attack on Political Correctness Suspicious.", p. A13.

⁵⁶ Huntly Collins. "PC and the Press." *Change*. January/February, 1992, p. 16.

what it means to be poor, disabled, or otherwise disadvantaged. One very interesting media tactic which this article amply demonstrates is the strategy of convergence upon language, as if language were the only thing at stake. The very title of Donaldson's article indicates his focus, but it is also evident in Henry Beard and Christopher Cerf's The Official Politically Correct Dictionary and Handbook. Indeed, in the following cleverly written passage, they actually criticize the PC 'movement' for *only* being about language:

... language is not merely the mirror of our society; it is *the* major force in "constructing" what we perceive as "reality." With this in mind, it's easy to see why so many reformers have forsworn a unified assault on such distracting side issues as guaranteeing equal pay for equal work; eliminating unemployment, poverty, and homelessness; counteracting the inordinate influence of moneyed interests on the electoral system; and improving the dismal state of American education, all in order to devote their energies to correcting the fundamental linguistic inequities described in these pages.⁵⁷

As I have been arguing in this work, the political correctness controversy has created such an commotion precisely *because* it acts as a ideological signifier for so much more than mere language alterations, which, in a 'living' language such as English (purported to be the most amalgamating and fastest-changing of all the world's languages) should not pose too much of a problem.

As is illustrated below, Gordon Donaldson makes a similar complaint, and in so doing attempts to claim the moral high road:

They cured the halt, the lame, the blind, deaf, dumb, crippled and disabled by calling their disabilities *abilities* . . . Social workers, now rapidly outnumbering workers, have won the war on poverty by replacing the poor with the *underprivileged*. Some underprivileged get *affordable* housing because they can't afford housing and the word subsidy offends all those who don't get one.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Henry Beard and Christopher Cerf. The Official Politically Correct Dictionary and Handbook. New York, 1992, p. xiii.

⁵⁸ Gordon Donaldson. "War of Words.", p. 13.

In this way, Donaldson, and unfortunately many of his readers, is able to rationalize that the goals of political correctness are not worthy of consideration or even respect, and thereby is able to dismiss PC as being a silly fad that isn't about anything important after all. For the close reader, however, one nagging question remains: Why, then, does Donaldson appear to be so upset?

"Power and 'Political Correctness'"

The second article is my personal favourite, and is also the one most demonstrative of a refreshing non-mainstream perspective, both in its unique viewpoint and in its innovative approach (refer to Appendix A).⁵⁹ The author, Lennox Farrell, is a Toronto teacher and member of the Black Action Defense Committee. In the article, Farrell only specifically mentions political correctness once,⁶⁰ but the piece is nonetheless specifically targeted towards the prevailing anti-PC media feeding frenzy. Through the careful manipulation and juxtapositioning of the dominant - and not so dominant - norms of our society, he adeptly demonstrates just how egalitarian a society we live in, and just how trite and merely *à la mode* are the concerns of those championing the furthering of disadvantaged groups' emancipation, one of the central concerns of political correctness. The political and cultural perspective he operates from is, refreshingly, the non-dominant discourse of a member of a visible minority, but in his

⁵⁹ Lennox Farrell. "Power and 'Political Correctness'." *Toronto Star*, June 6, 1991, p. A25.

⁶⁰ Farrell, like many involved in the political correctness debates on both sides, does not do justice to the term's origins, as is evident in his statement that "[p]olitically correct" . . . was coined, and released into general circulation after some of the victims, a 'vocal minority' had the temerity to challenge the academy". (Ibid.) As was discussed in Chapter Two, the term political correctness has been around significantly longer than the recent 'PC wars', and right-wing critics of political correctness often try to take credit for inventing the term themselves to criticize the dogmatic and humourless left-wing where the term in fact originated. This can be regarded as an example of right-wing control and articulation of the PC discourse, in that their inaccuracies and sometimes deliberate distortions are often innocently picked up by their critics without critique or investigation, thus allowing for the incorporation of at least some aspects of right-wing discourse within works that are *supposed* to work against it. If progressive thinkers pick up enough of this rhetoric, it can result in one of two options: one, the individual will become one of the many 'converts' to be gleefully recognized by PC critics such as Dinah D'Souza; or two, the individual will unwittingly incorporate so much right-wing rhetoric into what is supposed to be a progressive work supporting political correctness, that it will be neither convincing nor credible.

article he carries this even further to the double disadvantage of being a *woman* of colour. In this narrative, however, being black and being female are not disadvantages at all; in fact, it is members of this "Darkie Wymyn of Ethiop Melanin" group that are the dominant ruling class.⁶¹ This ruling class is so dominant that

Theirs, for example, is the first toe print in outer space; theirs the only worthy name in the classics; theirs the last word on philosophy. They carry status in international institutions that wage war, such as NATO, and the U.N. Security Council; that wage subsequent charity, such as World Vision; that wage supporting communications, such as Reuters and CNN; that wage politics, such as the Vatican and Moral Majority; that wage social peace, and national freedoms, such as the IMF and the World Bank.⁶²

Sections of the article such as this allow for the thinly veiled "Afro-fembo" dominant class *dr. snatis personae* to fall by the wayside for a time (until the pretense is once again faithfully adopted), a very clever and deliberate strategy through which to persuade even cynics to recognize - at least to some degree - the remarkable extent to which white middle and upper-class males have largely controlled the discourses and activities of normal and routine 'real life'.⁶³

In a telling example, Farrell describes the DWEM's as numbering "less than 20 per cent of the population", as being "similar in abilities to the rest of humanity, yet [as]

⁶¹ Ibid. It should be noted that it takes an avid follower of the PC controversy to realize that this "Darkie Wymyn of Ethiop Melanin" is in reality a clever play on the acronym DWEMs (that is, Dead White European Male), which has been disparagingly used to refer to, for example, the overwhelming preponderance of such figures in core university course content. In this way, grasping the full significance of this article is requisite upon readers' familiarity with the issues surrounding political correctness. I do not believe such requirements to be overly insular, however, because as I stated above, this article is meant to serve as a unique voice of dissent in what has generally been a vigorous round of PC bashing in the popular media. The real intent of the article, I would contend, is to remind such individuals that the goals of political correctness are neither trivial nor unworthy of attention; they are meant to address what are very serious inequities that continue to exist, largely unchallenged, in contemporary society.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Interestingly, Ruth Perry makes reference to a similar tactic used by Toni Cade in the 1960s, in a lecture of predominantly black students. In the lecture, Cade reads aloud an "anti-feminist paper in which all the references to men and women had been changed to 'us' and 'them,' thus disguising the sexism as racism." Predictably, everyone in the class criticized the obvious racism of the piece; it was then that Cade revealed her trick, effectively instilling in her students the point that "racism and chauvinism are anti-people." [emphasis added.] Ruth Perry. "Historically Correct." *Women's Review of Books*, 1992, IX(5), p. 15.

control[ling] 80 per cent of the world's power plays".⁶⁴ Later on, he describes the "reverse racism" that

. . . comes specifically from the Black right wing who insist that terms like, "affirmative action, and employment equity" are not really designed to reverse decades of racism, and sexism, but are instead nothing but un-democratic, quota-related, non-meritocracy processes designed to prevent the best qualified from getting ahead.⁶⁵

Political correctness, then, and all of the policies it entails, is "a cure worse than the disease".⁶⁶ Although this competing version of political correctness, as seen by the black minority member that Farrell represents, is not likely to be wholeheartedly accepted by the mainstream public, Farrell is at least able to publicize an alternate view through his very clever utilization of the media.⁶⁷

It is through this 'imagine if' scenario that Farrell is able to very effectively deliver his message, that what we take for granted as 'normal' or nothing more than 'tradition', is in reality the gross dominance of one group imposing its political and cultural discourse, its social and economic power, its theoretical blinkers, and its stranglehold ideological supremacy upon the rest of us. In such environs, Farrell points to the immense irony of this group purportedly championing the rights of free speech and their battling of the injustices of censorship:

Nationally, these Afro-fembos are *sapientia et eloquentia* on every issue: the Constitution, the economy, the environment - pro and con; the hard sciences and high tech . . . [These DWEMs] are also the newswymyn who coin phrases such as "white on white violence." About the genesis of diseases like AIDS they mint

⁶⁴ Lennox Farrell. "Power and 'Political Correctness'"., p. A25.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ As I have asserted elsewhere, my view of media personnel is certainly *not* of them being mere cogs in the capitalist machine, reiterating right-wing rhetoric unceasingly without variation or critique. However, I have been arguing that such works are usually the easiest to come by; the words, concepts, and ideological frameworks that come most easily to the minds and pencils of media personnel are necessarily those that are most dominant and pervasive, and these are indeed products of a persistent and industrious right wing.

counterfeit assumptions that soon pass into the currency of talk shows that degrade whole continents and peoples. Without similar access to the print and electronic means these continents and peoples experience censorship, and are left without the benefits of free speech.⁶⁸

Elsewhere in the article, Farrell discusses how the "meek and the exotic" have been disinherited in museums, and how those who have been victimized are beginning to realize that "their history has been destroyed, and their culture distorted".⁶⁹ With such realizations, Farrell perhaps foreshadows what he describes as the "joining" of the battle by the oppressed, who will neither be able to write their history nor teach it "unless they stop behaving like victims".⁷⁰

One final point regarding this article is that, although extremely clever, in some ways it can be seen as providing fodder for those *fighting* political correctness, and those adamantly against change generally. What I mean by this is that Farrell's scenario of black women in power could conceivably be used by conservative forces to rationalize their *own* immense power and dominance. Once the argument has moved past the point of conservative white males admitting that yes, they probably do hold 'slightly' more power than certain 'other' people, they can then go on to justify this privilege, by saying that if black women, for example, had imperialistically colonized whites and subjugated 'their' own males to subservience and domestic unpaid labour, *they* would have acted in just the same way as have white males. Such an argument assumes that it has only been the fate of history that white males happened to 'win the war', and that Lennox Farrell's article 'proves' that any other group would have acted in precisely the same manner. This line of argument also serves to justify the status quo and the stubborn refusal to permit any concessions. As the argument goes, if Hitler had won the war, Jews, blacks,

⁶⁸ Lennox Farrell. "Power and 'Political Correctness'". p. A25.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

homosexuals, and any number of other minority groups would probably not even be around, let alone permitted to enjoy the liberties the white ruling class has graciously allocated to them. Thus, such groups should be thankful for what they've got, and should not dare to provoke the ire of their otherwise benevolent dictators (though the latter group certainly would not stand to be referred to as such).

In this way, Lennox Farrell's article is another demonstration of how immensely difficult it is to provide a robust and longstanding line of dissent against the highly elastic right-wing rhetoric, which all too often can manage to subtly turn such dissent to its own uses and interests. This is a perennial problem - not only with regards to the political correctness controversy - which often understandably leads to intense frustration and bafflement among progressive thinkers. When the Right *already* seems to have such a stranglehold upon populist rhetoric, sloganeering deftly aimed at the 'common man' that they themselves have to a large extent created, and upon what Stuart Hall calls "organic ideology", ⁷¹ the occurrence of progressive pieces being twisted and rearticulated to suit the agenda of the Right, as such an argument *pace* Farrell could constitute, is often almost too much to bear.

"Scholars Attack Campus 'Radicals'"

The third article to be discussed is one by Joseph Berger that was published in the New York Times in 1988, when it reported on the first national assembly of the National Association of Scholars (refer to Appendix A). ⁷² The article can be seen as a representative example of the 'objective reporting' that has been a hallmark of the political correctness media event, in that while certain attempts are made to give a 'balanced' view, inevitably, the anti-PC rhetoric - either reported or stated by the reporter him or herself - is ultimately depicted as having the greatest legitimacy.

⁷¹ Stuart Hall. "Toad in the Garden.", p. 46.

⁷² Joseph Berger. "Scholars Attack Campus 'Radicals': 'Barbarians Are in Our Midst,' History Professor Says of Academic Adversaries." New York Times. November 15, 1988, p. A22.

Generally, news reports, as opposed to actual columns and editorials, are indeed less prone to bias than are the latter, but often they are mistakenly believed to be *free* from it. In actual fact, the type of language, the third-person impersonal narration, and rigid structure merely help to camouflage the author's prejudices and predilections.⁷³ In some ways, this can be seen to be potentially *more* dangerous than, for example, the odd extreme column by the likes of Barbara Amiel,⁷⁴ in that with the latter, the reader is at least *aware* of the fact that the column is the personal opinion of the author. With a news report, the apparent objectivity of the 'facts' often makes the reader oblivious to the covert slant of the material, which can simply involve what gets included in the article and what does not, or can involve whether some comments included in the work are taken out of context while some are not. As Dorothy Smith observed in her analysis of

⁷³ Such bias is not only at the individual level, but is often at the level of newspapers themselves, or, indeed, *chains* of newspapers. Robert Fulford, for example, points to *Maclean's* strict editorial policy:

... many of these attacks [upon political correctness] are at least partially invalidated by their sources. *Maclean's*, for instance, is now the most rigidly edited magazine in Canadian history, its editors processing the news by rules so strict that they have become a legend in journalism. What does it say when *Maclean's* ... reports on the campus disputes and in effect stands up boldly as the champion of free expression? It suggests, at the very least, a confusion of values. (Robert Fulford. "Media Attack on Political Correctness Suspicious.", p. A13.)

In this way, *Maclean's* and other publications' claims to objectivity, or indeed, freedom of speech, can be regarded as being remarkably similar to George Bush's, whose passionate commencement address at Ann Arbor in favour of free speech, Fulford contends, was at odds with Bush's imposed censorship and rationing of information during the Gulf War. (Ibid. Fulford's comments regarding this contradiction were briefly discussed in Chapter One.) As another example, Conrad Black is well-known to write editorials for some of the newspapers he owns, and likely shapes many of those for which he is not the cited author.

⁷⁴ Amiel's columns are, in fact, extremely right-wing as a rule, not an 'odd' case. In recent history, she has discussed such matters as woman-centred medical research (to which her vocal opposition purportedly drew in more money for the cause than if she had remained silent), the new and terrifying power of the state (otherwise known as the failed effort to give gay and lesbian couples the same rights as everyone else), and the 'rampant' problem of false accusations of sexual harassment on the part of "so-called victim" women. With regards to this last issue, that is, the "feminist reign of terror", Amiel had this to say:

Meanwhile, good Canadians who found the silence of ordinary people shocking while the horrors of McCarthyism or Nazism were going on do nothing. "What did you do, Mother," Canadian children will ask in a decade or two, "when men were imprisoned and reputations shredded in Canada's Feminist Salem?" I know what I will answer, but what, dear reader, will you say? (Barbara Amiel. "The Tyranny of Modern-Day Feminism." *Maclean's*, July 11, 1994, p. 13.)

An alternative answer to this question of Amiel's, and one which she was certainly not looking for, would be that some readers, at least, were mourning the fate of Anita Hill and countless other women like her, and perhaps even working towards making the sexual harassment of women an issue to be seriously discussed, not scorned, derided, and delegitimated.

the CBC *Sunday Morning* show on political correctness, "[g]enerally speaking, what doesn't fit, isn't there".⁷⁵ Such programs, like other news texts whether written or spoken, are heavily stage-managed:

Not everyone identified as a participant is given a speaking part; none get to choose what parts their voices will play . . . The structuring role of the Reporter is concealed, backstage.⁷⁶

Berger does get a few points for his efforts towards neutrality by the fact that he puts quotation marks around the word 'radical' in the title of his article, "Scholars Attack Campus 'Radicals'". In this way, he is indicating that such pronouncements are at least theoretically contestable, although it is arguable as to how many readers quickly scanning the headlines would notice the single quotation marks. More likely, they would notice the first line of the subheading: "Barbarians Are in Our Midst". Similarly, it is debatable as to how much notice readers actually take of qualifying phrases such as "what they see as", "what it [the NAS] calls", and "what they suggest", in what is usually the rapid reading of this, or any other 'objective', newspaper article, although the inclusion of such qualifiers is certainly preferable to their absence. Unfortunately, however, such qualifiers tend to be glossed over by readers who, accustomed to the language and structure of newspaper stories, are often skilled in the art of skimming the 'technicalities' such as quotation marks and qualifying phrases, to get the 'meat' of 'gist' of the text. Through this very same process, those words and value-laden phrases so typical of the anti-PC discourse, used either by the journalist or by those he or she interviewed for the article, tend to stand out from the rest of the text, such that 'radicals', 'thought police', 'PC zealots', and the like, may become - for a time, at least - ingrained into the minds of many readers. Indeed, this may often be the mindset with which the reader leaves the reading

⁷⁵ Dorothy Smith. "Politically Correct: An Ideological Code" Forthcoming in Stephen Richer and Lorna Weir's (Eds.) *Beyond Political Correctness: The Future of the Canadian Academy*. Toronto, 1995, p. 16.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13, 16.

of the article, so that it is these sensationalized terms, phrases, and insinuations that end up colouring the reader's perceptions of political correctness. As a result, the 'neutralizing qualifiers' described above probably have far less effect than intended by their purposeful presence in news reports.

However, even without these possibly unavoidable limitations upon objectivity, Berger does indeed support anti-PC rhetoric several times where such support was by no means involuntary or inevitable. The first example is below:

The group, the National Association of Scholars, met over the weekend at a conference at the Roosevelt Hotel in Manhattan and *shared war stories* of what they suggest is a revolutionary transformation of university life.⁷⁷

While Berger does use qualifying language such as the phrase "what they suggest", he does *not* do so for the statement just prior to this describing how the members of the NAS "shared war stories", even though he had the same opportunity, and, I would argue, obligation, to do so. Further, the close reader of this passage might wonder where Berger got this description from in the first place; was it one of the catchphrases reiterated throughout the conference, or was it the author's own concoction? Berger doesn't say. Regardless of the answer to this question, however, it seems clear that it was in the author's interests to use such exclamatory language, particularly early on in the article in order to best capture the reader's attention. In order to sell the slick anti-PC package to the reader, such phrases are used to inflate the importance and significance of the political correctness debate to those readers, who will now continue their reading of the story of these 'veterans of war'.

Berger's article is also unnecessarily biased when its second subheading is titled "Classical Writers Replaced". Note the tried and true anti-PC tactic of using alarmist language such as 'replace' to imply the exclusive 'special interests' of the politically

⁷⁷ [emphasis added.] Joseph Berger. "Scholars Attack Campus 'Radicals' .", p. A22.

correct, as if the individuals and groups arguing for changes in the curriculum are fighting for the banning of "the *traditional* canon of the *great* works of Western literature", ⁷⁸ to be exclusively replaced with 'their' own, necessarily inferior and parochial, works. It is interesting to note further than in the meat of the text, Berger does indeed use qualifying language to describe how

[s]peakers assailed changes in curriculums that *they said* had replaced classical writers valued for their merit with writers who were valued because they are women or members of minority groups or were more sympathetic to *what the scholars called* the "radical agenda." ⁷⁹

Apparently, Berger did not see the need to take the same care in his subtitles, nor to even put quote marks around the word 'Replaced', which obviously could have been easily accomplished.

The final example of Berger's presentation of the news report in a manner that gave greatest legitimacy to the anti-PC rhetoric is the whole of his concluding paragraph, where he describes the members of the NAS association as variously being president of a university, as coming from Harvard, as having authored "a major work on the Holocaust", ⁸⁰ and as having written "a landmark [sociological] study". ⁸¹ Intriguingly, not one of the six 'keynote' members of the NAS that Berger takes pains to introduce at the end of his article have been quoted *within* it; apparently, the only point of their being presented is the fact that they have impressive credentials, with their membership in the NAS thereby making this organization seem that much more credible. In this way then, surely Berger's 'objective reporting' can be seen as being anything but, and it seems clear

⁷⁸ [emphasis added.] Francis J. Beckwith and Michael E. Bauman. (Eds.) *Are You Politically Correct? Debating America's Cultural Standards*. Buffalo and New York, 1993, dustsleeve notes.

⁷⁹ [emphasis added.] Joseph Berger. "Scholars Attack Campus 'Radicals'"., p. A22.

⁸⁰ The subject of the work obviously gives a significant rhetorical advantage to the arguments of the NAS, in the same way that members of visible minorities such as Dinesh D'Souza gain greater status and credibility for their complaints against multiculturalism and affirmative action. Diversity and inclusion *do* matter, despite the NAS's professed political standing.

⁸¹ Joseph Berger. "Scholars Attack Campus 'Radicals'"., p. A22.

that although newspaper reporters admittedly have to deal with the many constraints and limitations of time, space, and so on, they simultaneously have significant powers at their disposal to construct both what is called 'the news', and their readers' interpretations thereof.

Similarly, I would argue, the NAS's claims to be the defenders of free inquiry and objective scholarship are unconvincing, some reasons for which I discussed in Chapter Two. It is interesting to note that in this article, Dr. Stephen H. Balch, president and executive director of the association, called on his fellow members to

... bring public pressure to bear against abuses they witnessed and create professional groups within their disciplines to fight some of the trends. He also said they should consider setting up "new educational centres" to compete with ideological programs.⁸²

It seems to stretch the outermost boundaries of incredulity to imagine that such "new educational centres" would not in themselves be considered ideological, and indeed, for such individuals to vilify such horrid culminations of political correctness as "sensitivity and racial awareness training" in the same breath seems remarkable.⁸³ If such action as "creat[ing] professional groups" and "setting up new educational centers" are still to be regarded as being apolitical, it is not clear what more must be included in the NAS's definition of their attack upon the *politicization* on campus that has "contaminated . . . the objectivity on decisions about curriculum, promotion and academic discourse".⁸⁴

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ With regards to the latter, I would agree with Debra Schultz's assessment:

... speech codes, diversity workshops, and curriculum transformation efforts -- perhaps imperfect or still evolving as solutions -- are, in fact, responses to institutional racism and sexism that most critics of "p.c." fail to confront. (Debra L. Schultz. To Reclaim a Legacy of Diversity: Analyzing the "Political Correctness" Debates on Higher Education. New York, 1993, p. 25.)

Schultz further notes that the incidence of racial, ethnic, and gender harassment and attack on campuses around the United States greatly surpass the number of reported 'PC incidents'. (Ibid.) To me, this makes the conservative focus on such incidents seem at best, unconvincing, and at worst, self-serving. The NAS, and many other conservatively inclined groups and organizations, are 'special interest groups' just like all the others which right-wing rhetoric has so vilified.

⁸⁴ Joseph Berger. "Scholars Attack Campus 'Radicals'." p. A22.

“White Woman’s Burden”

The Saturday Night article concerning the fate of longtime Canadian social activist and columnist June Callwood, entitled “White Woman’s Burden” (refer to Appendix A), was written by Adele Freedman and published in 1993, making it the most recent of the media artefacts I have discussed in this chapter. The article itself is very lengthy, tells its story at a leisurely pace (as Saturday Night articles are apt to do), and intermingles Callwood’s biography with the telling of the fall of the “Former-Saint-Now-Just-a-Woman”,⁸⁵ along with descriptions of her house, her “love of flying”,⁸⁶ and so forth. The intent of the article, however, is to sympathetically describe how “the politics of anti-racism push[ed Callwood] over the colour line”, as the rhetorically-presented question of the subheading suggests.⁸⁷ I would contend that it was appropriate for the Saturday Night article to deal with Callwood in a sympathetic manner, given the many important contributions she has made throughout her life to help the underprivileged in Canada. However, it is clear that there was a distinct over-emphasis upon Callwood as being a victim of the “politics of anti-racism”⁸⁸ (that is, one major aspect of political correctness), an occurrence which is ironic given the strength of character Adele Freedman and others quoted in the article otherwise attribute to Callwood.

The basic overview of the events surrounding Callwood’s eventual resignation from a women’s hostel in May of 1992 is this: June Callwood is a Canadian journalist and broadcaster long known as an ardent but fundamentally pragmatic social activist who has founded a number of centres and hostels for teenagers, for battered women, for people living with AIDS, etc. Almost paired with her distinction as a social activist is her

⁸⁵ Adele Freedman, “White Woman’s Burden”, p. 77. This is how Callwood’s daughter Jill apparently referred to her mother; Adele Freedman’s next sentence is “What I heard from Callwood’s political opponents was more like Former-Woman-Now-Just-Power-’n’-Privilege”. (Ibid.)

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 76.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 40.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

reputation for being a 'character', that is, as somebody who has no qualms about speaking her mind. It is this latter quality which got her into trouble. The incident which the article discusses is the forced resignation of Callwood from one such organization called Nellie's in May of 1992, which she had co-founded in 1974. This event was brought about, at least in part, by an earlier incident, in which Callwood had verbally abused a black protester (poet and novelist Marlene Nourbese Philip) demonstrating against the "'silencing' [of] Canadian writers of colour" at the 54th World Congress of International PEN, in Montreal in 1989.⁸⁹ While this action did not have immediate repercussions, it nevertheless followed her to Nellie's, where, over a period of several months, issues of power began to develop, and these increasingly began to be identified not merely as differentials in power, but also in terms of race and ethnicity.

The incident itself (and not only the reporting of it) is very significant because it demonstrates the extreme complexity of racial and ethnic relations in a diverse environment,⁹⁰ and the problems that sometimes occur when conflicting political, cultural, social, and economic perspectives are thrown together in any given organizational context. Unfortunately, misunderstandings and underlying resentments

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 43. PEN is the acronym for playwrights, editors, essayists, and novelists. In all, there were twelve protesters, and apparently, Philip and one white protester approached Callwood to give her a leaflet. Callwood responded to what she described as their "bizarre behavior" by telling the demonstrators - one at a time and then generally - to "f--- off". For a report of the incident, refer to H.J. Kirchhoff and Isabel Vincent's "Charges of Racism Spark Protest: Is PEN 'Locking Out' Writers of Color?" Globe and Mail, September 26, 1989, p. A17.

⁹⁰ While through the bulk of this work I have been arguing that the anti-PC rhetoric has been misleading, hyperbolic, and reactionary, I am certainly not thereby asserting that the issues signified by the anti-PC ideological code are easily redressed. It *is* hard work, and it *is* challenging, to live and work in a manner conducive to harmony, respect, and tolerance for individuals and groups different than one's own (whatever one's ancestry). However, this does *not* mean that all efforts to do so should be sanctimoniously rejected as burdensome, impractical, and unworthwhile. Banu Helvacioğlu has noted that conservative rhetoric regarding questions of race and gender has found a ready constituency because "there are no easy, clear cut answers to questions surrounding race and gender, nor is there an alternative conception of social reality which would consider racial and gender oppression as social problems to be dealt with outside the individualist, legal interpretation of the liberal world view". (Helvacioğlu uses 'liberal' here in the everyday (albeit American) sense to refer to "the founding principles of American politics and the dominant conception of social reality centered around the notion of free, autonomous individuals".) (Banu Helvacioğlu. "The God-Market Alliance in Defence of Family and Community: The Case of the New Right in the United States." Studies in Political Economy, 1991, 35(Summer), p. 117, 131-132.)

often go unchecked, not only in more typical kinds of hierarchically-structured organizations, but even in those that make a concerted effort to be operate as a collective, and to come to decisions consensually. This is far more work and far more time consuming ⁹¹ than is the case in structured organizations, and as Tim Brennan cogently remarks, problems can result when hatred of the top-heaviness of traditional political organizations is so great that the

. . . first and only inviolable principle [i]s to have no leaders; all decisions [a]re arrived at by "consensus," . . . [to opponents] this [i]s a brilliant example of PC as paralysis -- interminable meetings, moralistic breast-beating about not wanting to impose one's ideas on others and, of course, the inevitable result that strong personalities en[d] up making all the decisions. ⁹²

Indeed, Adele Freedman reports that Callwood admits that the collective organization that structured Nellie's was "ten times more work than a hierarchical structure", and further, that "[t]he weakness of the model is demonstrated when someone won't be good". ⁹³ This latter statement is an indication of the forthright leader that Callwood was and continues to be; unfortunately, it is also a hint as to the difficulties others had in being "good", according to Callwood's definition. While she had gained a bit of bad press for her behavior towards the black demonstrator in 1989, ⁹⁴ at Nellie's two years later, Callwood again behaved in what was seen as a racist manner when she delegated a woman of Korean descent onto a committee simply by pointing at her and saying "You". Was this racist?

⁹¹ The article notes the comments of Marcia McClung, granddaughter of Nellie, who exasperatedly stated that "[i]t took five hours to decide on the colour of the towels". (Adele Freedman. "White Woman's Burden", p. 43.)

⁹² Tim Brennan. "'PC' and the Decline of the American Empire." *Social Policy*, 1991, Summer, p. 18.

⁹³ Adele Freedman. "White Woman's Burden.", p. 43.

⁹⁴ While Callwood had subjected a white activist to the same treatment, the media reporting of the incident focussed almost entirely on her verbal abuse of the black demonstrator. (H. J. Kirchhoff and Isabel Vincent. "Charges of Racism Spark Protest.", p. A17.) Callwood said of the incident: "'It would have been okay if both of them had been white'", an assumption that (while certainly possible) is both unquestioned and implicitly supported by the bulk of Freedman's narrative. (Adele Freedman. "White Woman's Burden.", p. 43.)

My intention here is not to determine the answer to this question, but rather to analyze the way in which the situation was explained in the Saturday Night article. For example, it is interesting to note that while the subheading of the article implies that the problem was purely to do with 'oversensitivity' regarding racism at Nellie's, there was *also* conflict regarding sexual orientation, that was equal to, if not greater than, the concerns regarding possible systematic racism at Nellie's.⁹⁵ Further, the reported instigator of the whole power issue had not to do with "the politics of anti-racism" at all, but rather concerned debates regarding how to best help survivors of incest.⁹⁶ While charges of racism did eventually come about, race and ethnicity were certainly *not* the immediate nor incessant 'polarizing' issues that the subheading of the article implies them to be.

The issues of race and ethnicity are further distorted by Freedman's deliberate portrait of one of the event's main 'villains', Laura Coramai, as being veritably obsessed with systemic racism. This is evident in (at least) two examples, the first being some of Freedman's apparent 'filler material', of which the article is chock-full. Rather than just using those of Coramai's comments that the author thought would have the best 'fit'

⁹⁵ According to the article, the tensions involved "the white lesbians fighting with the black girls". (Ibid., p. 83.) Freedman escalates this further by making it difficult for the reader to determine who said what to whom. For example, she states that "the coalition arrived with more demands: Joan Johnson and Karen Hinds would not attend staff meetings until 'the white-racist-lesbians were fired'". It is only through the careful reading of this passage that the reader discovers that the comment was *not* in fact Johnson and Hinds', but rather was "according to the[ir] lawyer". (Ibid.) In addition, the article notes a comment by Laura Coramai that she insists is inaccurate: "'We're going to fix you, you racist'". In this case, it is Callwood's word against Coramai's, and I am not suggesting that Callwood was lying, as it is impossible to know what actually transpired. However, the way in which it was presented suggested Coramai was being insolently accusatory and dangerously aggressive, while Callwood "'sat there sobbing'". (Ibid., p. 76.)

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 40. The issue was basically whether or not the 'grassroots' staff at Nellie's was equipped to deal with situations such as incest survivor flashbacks, which may frequently involve self-destructive physical harm, or whether incest, perhaps, was "just not a Nellie's thing". (Ibid.)

(which she obviously did in any case)⁹⁷, Freedman also finds it necessary to include the following:

Before she would meet with me about this piece, Coramai wanted to ask a few questions - "like a quiz," she said. It began: "Name a few ways the media distorts the reality of women of colour." A week later, Coramai called to say we were on . . . [Audrey] Ellis [secretary of the board at Nellie's] thought she was a troublemaker: "Laura Coramai said many times that racism was more important than Nellie's." Sitting across from me at a downtown eatery was a woman of slim build and serious mien who arrived with written notes and a pile of Xeroxes . . .⁹⁸

Coramai is portrayed as a self-righteous instigator of racial tensions who is obsessed with anti-racism politics to the exclusion, and detriment, of everything else. In this way, this 'filler', as compared to that describing Callwood's difficult life,⁹⁹ her house that "errs on the side of sentiment rather than style", and so on, *does* seem to serve a very useful purpose after all. In an article this long, with the facts of the incident interspersed with long stretches of description such as these, the reader is unable to quickly skim the article like a news report such as Joseph Berger's to get its gist. Instead, the reader must read of

⁹⁷ Recall my theoretical discussion in Chapter Three, and in this chapter with regards to Joseph Berger's piece, of Dorothy Smith's analysis of the CBC radio *Sunday Morning* program on political correctness. Both there and in this case, the reporter has the role of 'stage-manager', as it is she who ultimately decides what will be included, and what won't be, and the context (or lack thereof) of the material included. In her book, *The Conceptual Practices of Power*, Smith describes the circular process peculiar to the ideological organization of narratives, which I have customized for this particular example:

The ideological circle . . . begins with the original events, the lived actuality, as they are recorded in various media . . . The text [of a magazine or a radio program] is the product of that work, appearing before the reader [or listener] in synthetic form, seamless, and without traces of its making . . . [T]he reader can [then] plug the interpreter [the politics of anti-racism] into the reading, . . . [and] the primary narrative thus comes to stand, via this interpretive loop in which reader and text cooperate, as a manifestation of the [ideological code of oversensitivity to racial issues]. (Dorothy Smith, *The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge*, Toronto, 1990, p. 179-181.)

In this case, the reader is not told *why* Coramai would feel that racism is an important issue, or indeed, *that* racism is an important issue, in this article. The particulars are selected so that the ideological code can make sense of them, and then the code finds for the listener or reader *just* that sense in the particulars. (Dorothy Smith, "'Politically Correct'", p. 14.)

⁹⁸ Adele Freedman, "White Woman's Burden", p. 74.

⁹⁹ For example, the article discusses her underprivileged upbringing, the fact that she "quit school and got a job" so that her adulterous mother wouldn't have to support her, and the fact that she and her husband were "Depression kids". Significantly, efforts are also made to describe her part-Métis ancestry, and how as a child, her two best friends were a Chinese cook and a Jewish girl who "nobody [else] would play with". (Ibid., p. 77, 80, and 78.)

the incident exactly as it was constructed by the author within the detailed context set up by her, and it is difficult to read it any other way.

The second way in which Coramai is perceived to be the irrational, radical enemy, with the issues of race and ethnicity thereby effectively being trivialized, is when her comments are compared to those of Senator Anne Cools, who as a Barbados-born black is, significantly, even *more* of a woman of colour than is Coramai, who is a blend of Scottish, South African, and Chinese ancestry.¹⁰⁰ Laura Coramai describes her experiences at Nellie's:

I was so drained. For me, it's made me see how ingrained systemic racism is in society. I understood how it worked personally, but it wasn't until my experience at Nellie's that I realized what a lot of things are in place to hold it up. It makes me sad and angry. I also realized how difficult it is to explain. I don't know how to explain it. Everything is so subtle. It's easier if racial slurs are thrown up on the bathroom wall. Here it couldn't be pinpointed.¹⁰¹

These are Coramai's last words in the article, which occur near its conclusion: after Freedman has effectively set her up as being one of the principal 'traitors' who plotted to secure Callwood's resignation. In this way, her last statement is made to appear very insincere and hypocritical, all the more so given Senator Cools' remarks on the previous page that both downplay issues of race and ethnicity, and women's power as independent subjects:

The *real issue* is: why are women not managing these agencies properly? . . . Are these charities any more? Redressing historic grievances is not a charity according to the Income Tax Act . . .

¹⁰⁰ Obviously, my argument here is not meant to be essentialist, just as it was not in my description of the participants of the *A Special Firing Line Debate* in Chapter Two. My point is that in both cases, such differences are important, there to give more credibility to the "For the Resolution" side of the debate, and here to delegitimize Coramai's concerns. If Senator Cools is not concerned, why should Coramai be?

¹⁰¹ Adele Freedman. "White Woman's Burden.", p. 84.

What we see here is the inherent backwardness of women fighting for power. They don't know what power is. This is a group of gals playing doll's house . . . Empowerment? This is all negative power. It's the quintessence of the expression of helplessness and powerlessness -- women salvaging women. ¹⁰²

Cools does make the important point that Callwood's downfall may have cost charities a lot of money in potential donations ("Once the golden goose is dead, it won't come back." ¹⁰³), but it seems unnecessary for her to make this point by delegitimizing any kind of attention being paid to issues of race and ethnicity, and indeed, women's efforts to empower themselves, both independently from men, and to fight systemic racism.

So it is through this focus upon the oversensitivity of individuals such as Laura Coramai towards issues of race and ethnicity that Callwood's forced resignation is defined as her victimization by the forces of anti-racist politics. In her article, Freedman used the phrase "Former-Woman-Now-Just-Power-'n'-Privilege" to describe how Callwood's political opponents have supposedly likened her. Freedman is obviously *not* one of these opponents. As has been made evident, Freedman very skillfully constructed a victim out of what must be one of the country's most unlikely candidates, and regardless of the rightness or wrongfulness of Callwood's dismissal, Freedman's depiction of it is a veritable smorgasbord of carefully ordered exposition, strategically articulated description, and reader manipulation for the textual analyst. Undoubtedly, a far different interpretation of Freedman's narrative could be obtained from a different interpreter, or indeed, the same interpreter in a different context, in a different setting of both time and place, and at a different point of life. The complexities of intertextuality and hegemony make this unavoidable. Such are the fascinating intricacies of both analysing texts, and of living in a textually-mediated society such as our own.

¹⁰² [emphasis added.] Ibid., p. 83.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

CHAPTER FIVE

Concluding Remarks

The New Right, the Global Village, and Adam Smith's Little World

As we hurtle towards the precipice of not only the *fin de siècle* but the veritable conclusion of the millennium itself, in a peculiar sort of way our world has become not larger, but rather markedly smaller. Marshall McLuhan's 'global village' - debunked nearly as often as it has been touted - has in some senses come to pass. In an immensely ironic and perhaps even lingeringly bittersweet way, this has occurred in part because of the globalization of the market economy, so avidly sought by the New Right. As has been discussed in Chapter One, the mid-1970s and early to late 1980s gave rise to a growing awareness among the corporate and political leaders of economically hegemonic countries¹ that their once closely-guarded stranglehold upon world economic power was

¹ I make the distinction 'economic' for purposes of clarity, but economic domination should certainly not be seen as occurring in the absence of cultural subjugation. Nevertheless, Japan's 'silent' economic success story is an interesting anomaly to this tendency. Perhaps the notion of cultural domination inevitably going hand in hand with that which is economic has a reality that is somewhat larger than life to someone situated in a country with the noteworthy distinction of having the largest undefended border in the world, that is, with the United States.

slipping away at an alarming pace. Due to the rapidly changing economic climate, with its multitude of technological and social changes, there was a distinct need to form some sort of concentrated, concerted, and united front with which to battle back ascendancy. As Pat Marchak summarizes the predicament,

The steel industries, assembly-lines for mass production, wages for mass consumption, nuclear families, and nation-states were all disappearing or in jeopardy by 1970 as mobile capital and the silicon revolution reduced the limitations of space and time.²

The New Right set as its task the challenge of, and eventual victory over, the largely held Keynesian consensus - commonly identified with the notion of the welfare state - that had been in place for the past forty years.³ It expressed dissatisfaction with democracy, equality, social welfare policies, collective bargaining, and other hard-won rights recently

² M. Patricia Marchak. The Integrated Circus: The New Right and the Restructuring of Global Markets. Montreal and Kingston, 1991, p. 3.

³ Obviously, what was put into place was by no means a complete victory for the champions of the underprivileged; concessions were made on both sides. Of issues such as the rights to collective bargaining, income security, employment and job tenure, child care, health care, and adequate food, education, and accommodation, only some came to be established (and many only rudimentally) in law and social policy in the post-war implementation of the welfare state. In this way, the conservative elements had to be content with granting these few concessions, while the more progressive elements had to agree not to any kind of veritable socialist state, but to the few concessions they had managed to buy in the confines of an otherwise free market economic infrastructure. Stuart Hall sums up what he describes as the "settlement",

The Right -- marginalizing their more reactionary and free-market elements -- settled for the welfare state, comprehensive education, the Keynesian management of economic policy, and the commitment to full employment as the terms of peaceful compromise between capital and labor. In return, the Left accepted to work broadly within the terms of a modified capitalism and within the Western bloc sphere of strategic influence. (Stuart Hall. "The Toad in the Garden: Thatcherism Among the Theorists." In Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg's (Eds.) Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture, Urbana and Chicago, 1988, p. 36.)

In addition, Ruth Levitas makes the very important point - when speaking of the disconcerting similarity between the commentators of the New Right and the movement itself - that the post-war consensus was not 'socialism' in any way, shape, or form. Everybody did *not* agree that 'equality was a good thing' (as one of the commentators she cites apparently believed), and importantly, failures of the welfare state, from this point of view, are failures of capitalism, *not* of 'socialism'. Indeed, as she eruditely notes, such failures of the welfare state hinge precisely upon the contradiction between the goals of welfare, for example, the abolition of poverty, and the capitalist context which requires that there be no more than a limited alleviation of poverty. (Ruth Levitas. (Ed.) The Ideology of the New Right, Cambridge and Oxford, 1986, p. 14.)

achieved by citizens (or rather, special interest groups lobbying on behalf of the somewhat ignorant citizen) ⁴ of democratic societies.

The New Right sought to replace this state of affairs with a 'return' to the highly romanticized nineteenth century ideals of sheer market omnipotence and, somewhat contradictorily, individual liberty above all else; ⁵ liberty, that is, of the business entrepreneur to pursue the biggest buck through private enterprise, rather than the liberty of the worker to pursue a fair wage through union solidarity. Ruth Levitas points out that the New Right like to think of themselves as returning to their original nineteenth century ideals, prior to these doctrines' "contamination" by the socialist ideals of the welfare state. However, as she observes,

It should . . . be noted that the neo-conservatives are "returning" to a particular construction of nineteenth-century Toryism, owing more to Lord Salisbury than to Benjamin Disraeli; they are *selecting*, rather than embodying, a tradition. ⁶

⁴ The reader is urged to recall here the notion, discussed in Chapter Three, that 'the masses' only want what they are told to want. According to the New Right, the method of dismantling the welfare state and replacing it with the unregulated and competitive free market was thought simply to involve the 'selling' of this latter concept so that citizens would forget why they wanted the former system in the first place. As Pat Marchak describes, the New Right presumes that politicians and other influencers simply create the wants and desires of citizens for them, and in this way, public opinion for the New Right is nothing more than the successful selling of certain ideas and politicians by those in power. (Pat Marchak. *Integrated Circuits*, p. 114.)

⁵ I say that these two simultaneously upheld ideals were ultimately contradictory because, on the one hand, the private citizen is granted the fullest of freedom to pursue his (or her, ostensibly, but not in reality) interests through rational calculation of the costs and benefits of each alternative choice he is presented with (the *Homo Economicus* syndrome), but on the other hand, this citizen is entirely subject to the abstract and perhaps often even whimsical forces of the market. This contradiction can best be summarized by quoting, as Stuart Hall does, the paradoxical assertion that political theorist Andrew Gamble coined on its behalf that what 'we' needed was "Free market *and* strong state". (Stuart Hall. "Toad in the Garden.", p. 39.)

⁶ [emphasis added.] Ruth Levitas. (Ed.) *Ideology of the New Right*, p. 4. In addition, while there is no doubt that the New Right portfolio was uneven and often disjointed, in particular because of the presence of both neo-liberal and neo-conservative doctrine, the crucial point is not whether there were opposing forces struggling for supremacy in New Right ideology, but the fact that such conflicts do not necessarily lead to conflicting outcomes at the level of *policy*. In this way, one can see the distinct lack of effect even the most biting academic thrashing of the inconsistencies and contradictions of New Right policy embodied in Thatcherism, for example, is likely to have. As Ruth Levitas rightly notes, it is only where logical contradictions produce conflicts at the level of policy that the *strength* of Thatcherism would thereby be reduced. (Ibid.)

It is essential to point out that such value-laden terms as 'private enterprise' and 'small entrepreneur' no longer exist as they did in the romanticized versions of Victorian-era England. Today, even more so than in the past, each 'private entrepreneur' cannot be seen to stand on equal footing with his or her peers; multinational megacorporations are the rule of the day. As Pat Marchak biting remarks,

Adam Smith's little world has no analogue in this global economy. To invoke his dicta on the relationship between each man's pursuit of selfish interests and the magical achievement of the common good is to admit that in the twentieth century the science of economics has lost all sense of reality.⁷

The globalization of the market economy, so avidly sought by the New Right, has indeed come to pass, and certainly, Adam Smith's little world - if it ever really did exist - has long since been dead. American economic power has been regained, but it has not in any way been the same *kind* of ascendancy as that of the post-war boom years. The rise of transnational corporations, to which American economic power is certainly linked, involved enormous organizations which straddled the globe, the shifting of production and assembly operations as short-term profits dictated, the exploitation of communities and labour both at 'home' and abroad, and the creation of new (but often temporary) industrial capacity in Third World countries.⁸ Unfortunately, globalization and the transnational conglomerates also brought about a change in financial markets, allowing those who invested in them a tremendous amount of whimsy; in fact, the same kind of short-term profit mentality on the transnationals themselves. "Buy American" was a tired

⁷ Pat Marchak. *Integrated Circus*, p. 267-268.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

old cliché even before it was popularized.⁹

Proponents of the New Right's economic nostrums also discovered, too late, that the more global capital becomes, the more intimately connected are the rich and poor countries. Not only were what had once been thought to be 'Third World problems' infiltrating America itself,¹⁰ but the once merely "parochial" problems of developing countries, such as social and political upheaval, were affecting the world economy as a whole, as never before experienced. Suddenly, it seemed, global capital meant that the welfare of developing countries, with their continuing debt crisis,¹¹ unemployment, poverty, growing international terrorism and fundamentalist movements, and environmental crisis, could no longer be easily ignored.¹² It was issues such as these for which the New Right had no proselytizations. As Pat Marchak notes, the New Right megacorporations also ran into serious blockades, because they failed to "invest enough money in research and development, new plants, or the retraining of the domestic labour

⁹ Except, of course, to the middle and lower income Americans, some of whom came to believe that they were actually investing in their own brighter futures by being loyal consumers of US-based megacorporations. What was *not* articulated in the advertisement campaigns as part and parcel of this appeal to American consumers, was that many 'American' companies had long since deserted the labour pools of America, shifting to cheaper Third World locations. In this way, buying a General Motors vehicle made in Mexico was actually *worse* than buying a Honda made in the United States. Canadians, too, have felt the tug of 'loyalties', even though it is probably less in our interests to buy (yet more) American imports than it is to diversify our economy. For example, if Canada imported more from Europe, the latter would likely be more favourable to increasing its Canadian imports, decreasing our overdependence upon the US to do so.

¹⁰ Pat Marchak. *Integrated Circus*, p. 259. Marchak notes further to this point that

Other casualties were all too evident in the major cities of Europe and America among populations without employment or inadequate sources of subsistence . . . [T]he employed as well as the unemployed demanded that the government pay attention to the deterioration of the social fabric. (Ibid.)

¹¹ While Marchak does not make mention of the debt crisis among industrialized nations, it is interesting to note that after the globalization of the world economy was essentially complete, conservatives and the media, particularly in Canada, began a relentless attack upon the deficit, which had the result of effectively replacing the environment as the foremost issue of concern for Canadians. Indeed, deficit arguments became a primary means of justification for the further dismantling of the welfare state, particularly with regards to unemployment insurance, higher education, and health care. In this way, while we are not hearing so much about 'deregulation', 'privatization', and so on as I described in the Introduction, the deficit *can* be regarded as being another economic issue around which to gather New Right forces. Nevertheless, Reaganism, Thatcherism, and Mulroneyism it is not.

¹² Pat Marchak. *Integrated Circus*, p. 260.

force".¹³ Not for the first time in history, technology developed more than did its inventors, and the New Right began to learn the hard lesson that privatized utilities, for example, *did* need some regulation. They also discovered, "as the bourgeoisie of the fourteenth century discovered, that knowledge cannot be neatly confined to what is immediately useful and supportive of the status quo", and that "reduced spending on education eventually affects the very companies that condemned the public education systems".¹⁴ In these ways, then, the New Right helped to bring about a global market economy that ultimately superseded their intentions. The world had indeed become *too* small.

The New Right's Cultural Legacy

The New Right has assiduously endeavoured to effectively and permanently dismantle the welfare state as it had been understood for the past forty years. At least partially, this reflected their anguished efforts to come to terms with a new world of information, a world where limitations of space and time matter less and less to ever-mobile capital, as well as to the increasingly hot property of commodified information. As I noted in Chapter One, Pat Marchak asserts that the New Right's power finally seemed to lose some of its strength and fade into the woodwork in the early 1990s. As I also indicated at this point, however, my own argument is that while the New Right's rhetoric may have become slightly less pervasive on the economic front, this by no means precludes its holding power in areas which are perhaps more cultural in nature.

In this regard, I support the argument of Banu Helvacioğlu in her article "The God-Market Alliance in Defence of Family and Community: The Case of the New Right in the United States". In this article, Helvacioğlu cogently observes the disconcerting staying power of the New Right, contrary to the widespread perception that, with Ronald

¹³ Ibid., p. 254.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 261, 260.

Reagan's passing of the torch to the more "mainstream and bipartisan approach" of George Bush, the New Right would gradually fade into obscurity.¹⁵ The movement is still definitely alive and well, and Helvacioğlu rightly points out that liberals were naïve to think that New Right "fringe groups" would ultimately disappear over time, as did their far Right predecessors such as "the Know Nothing Movement of the 1850s, the Coughlin movement of the 1930s and the John Birch Society of the 1960s".¹⁶ Helvacioğlu blames the strength of this assumption on progressives' unceasing optimism in the infallibility of American liberalism. She notes that the main source for this optimism is a firm belief in the fail-safe "separation of powers, institutional checks and balances and the constitutional protection of individual rights and freedoms".¹⁷ The strength and durability of the New Right can, at least in part, be perceived as being due to both this significant lack of recognition by progressive forces that the New Right was indeed something to be reckoned with, and to the "flexibility and opportunism of the NR activists".¹⁸

Such flexibility and opportunism are evident in the New Right's shift from attempting to dictate economic matters to their more recent convergence of forces upon the cultural arena. The phenomenal success of the anti-PC campaign has proven the stubborn longevity of the New Right's agenda, and a significant part of this success has been gained and garnered by the formidable support networks already in place, due to the snowballing power and support achieved by the New Right since their introduction into public consciousness in the early 1970s. The familiar argument of Pat Marchak, in her book The Integrated Circus, is that the New Right succeeded - if only for a time, in her view - in fundamentally altering the terms of public debate over welfare, citizens'

¹⁵ Banu Helvacioğlu. "The God-Market Alliance in Defence of Family and Community: The Case of the New Right in the United States." Studies in Political Economy. 1991, 35 (Summer), p. 104.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

rights,¹⁹ equality, public property, and the nature of work. In other words, with the ascension of free market ideology, the welfare state suddenly became unacceptable, and as she notes, heresies of the mindset of the post-war era suddenly became the “common sense” of the 1980s.²⁰ This vociferous challenge to the Keynesian consensus, perhaps appearing sudden but in reality gradually building in strength and influence over a number of years, did in no way occur independently of overt concerted strategic efforts, but rather in combination with a daunting amount of funding and support from many different sources.²¹ International business leaders initiated policies and funded the dissemination of publications with this radically different approach to how a society was supposed to arrive at wealth and prosperity, and as Marchak notes, the ideology of the New Right became a veritable social movement. As such, it was not a passing

¹⁹ For example, in Andrew Belsey’s essay concerning the New Right in Britain, he sarcastically notes that to the New Right, the only ‘rights’ citizens deserve to have are the

... rights of individuals not to be disturbed by demonstrations, pickets, riots, trade unions, rights of employers to hire and fire at will, rights of tenants to buy their council houses, etc. (Andrew Belsey. “The New Right, Social Order and Civil Liberties.” In Ruth Levitas’ (Ed.) *Ideology of the New Right*, p. 172.)

This narrowly economic and individualistic conception of rights fits perfectly with the New Right obsession for law and order, which involves an insistence on the imposition of social discipline upon this very ‘free’ society. As New Right conservative Roger Scruton notes, strikes are “tantamount to rebellion”, and for him the solution is clear: “. . . reward extravagantly those servants who are essential; but make them servants. As for the others, let them strike, and permanently”. (Roger Scruton. *The Meaning of Conservatism*. London, 1980, p. 112.)

²⁰ Pat Marchak. *Integrated Circus*, p. xi.

²¹ For example, the organizations included the Mont Pèlerin Society in Geneva, the Kiel Economics Institute in West Germany, and the Clube de l’Horloge in France. Britain’s Institute of Economic Affairs, Adam Smith Institute, Centre for Policy Studies, The Institute of Directors, and Aims of Industry had as their American counterparts the Heritage Foundation, the American Conservative Union, Young Americans for Freedom, the Thomas Jefferson Center Foundation, the Reason Foundation, the CATO Institute, and the Society for Individual Liberty. (Ibid., p. 91.) While some of these organizations have existed since the pre-war years, Miriam David and Ruth Levitas note that the Heritage Foundation was founded specifically to propagate New Right policies; the others achieved a similar effect by uniting writers, intellectuals, business leaders, and politicians, whose common objective was to dismantle the Keynesian welfare state. (Miriam David and Ruth Levitas. “Antifeminism in British and American New Rights.” In Gill Seidel’s (Ed.) *Nature of the Right*, p. 144.)

convention of utopian amateurs, but rather a well-funded political organization dedicated to the dissemination of its message(s).²²

Marchak makes pains to point out, as I wish to, that this is not to be regarded as a kind of "conspiracy theory", for as she rightly points out,

. . . the "conspirators" did not meet clandestinely and did not deceive; on the contrary, they announced their intentions publicly. They published extensively, bombarded the media with information and interpretations, and aggressively sought out audiences for their messages.²³

Throughout the world, groups, institutes, and media were established and well funded to disseminate what became known as New Right thought; the well-funded institutes and think-tanks had funding sources publicly listed in their annual reports. The manner in which many intellectuals, business leaders, and politicians suddenly and spontaneously began using a whole new vocabulary to explain the recession of the early 1980s, and to promote a new agenda, was in fact actually underpinned by considerable planning, organization, and funding. With regard to the latter, one only need to refer to thinktanks such as Canada's Fraser Institute, established in 1972 thanks to a fundraising drive headed by a former vice-president of MacMillan-Bloedel. Through the years, funding for the thinktank has been generously provided by Eaton's, Molson's, Canadian Pacific, Domtar, BC Packers, Cadillac Fairview, Daon, IBM, Imperial Oil, Place Development, Imasco, Canadian banks, Noranda, Pemberton Securities, Genstar, Abitibi-Price, BC

²² Pat Marchak. *Integrated Circus*, p. 9. In regards to the messages of the New Right, Marchak and others have noted that some New Right supporters understood it as a means for recovering clear values and lost innocence; many of the well-funded institutes published both economic treatises and religious tracts. Banu Helvacioğlu in particular describes the surprising resurgence of Jerry Fallwell's Moral Majority (which has since, thankfully, folded) and other fundamentalist organizations during the dominance of the New Right. As an example, she cites the case of New Right ex-senator Jeremiah Denton from Alabama, who advocated compulsory use of chastity belts for teenage girls. (Banu Helvacioğlu. "The God-Market Alliance.", p. 115.) It would seem also that Ronald Reagan's desire - fated to remain only that - to have America's youth educated about the apparently only superficially contradictory theories of humankind's existence: Evolutionism and Creationism, is indicative of the New Right's differing content. On second thought, *social Darwinism*, at least, does fit rather nicely into much of the New Right's agenda.

²³ Pat Marchak. *Integrated Circus*, p. 9.

Telephone, and other companies from the forestry, mining, oil, newspaper, and telecommunications sectors.²⁴ As Pat Marchak notes, the Fraser Institute not only succeeded in promoting New Right ideology through numerous publications and media coverage, but it also “provided the platform for the ‘restraint’ program of the Social Credit government” in the 1983 British Columbia election.²⁵ Today, the Fraser Institute continues to be a staple source of information for the Canadian media, and indeed, their annual announcement of “Tax-Free Day” (that is, the first day of the fiscal year that one’s income has surpassed what will be directed to taxes) is a well-known popular media observance.

Even more intriguingly, we find that many of the New Right economic thinktanks can be further linked to the recent dissemination of anti-PC rhetoric, and that lo and behold, many corporate funders have contributed to *both* efforts. That is, part of the reason why the anti-PC campaign has been so successful in capturing the hearts and minds of the reading (and television-watching) public is that it has been disseminated along the same links in the same networks that had propagated New Right economic dogma. While the lack of success of the New Right’s economic agenda to completely exact the prophetic ‘New World Order’ has perhaps left some neo-conservatives and neo-liberals disillusioned,²⁶ the funding machinery behind the institutes and thinktanks is still largely in place, allowing for New Righter’s transferral of efforts from the economic front to matters cultural, often with their funders’ full support.²⁷ In this way, the formidable

²⁴ Ibid., p. 111-112.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 112.

²⁶ Although even the most disaffected among the New Right would have to concede the insurmountable effect it has had upon the way the world does business, which was really its primary concern. However, while globalization has largely occurred (although there are still a few hold-out regions remaining), it has brought about many problems that were unanticipated, such as the greater interdependence of otherwise widely disparate countries of the world.

²⁷ Although I maintain that such cultural support is probably not as enthusiastic as that for the New Right’s promised but failed quick fixes for the economy, and may already be dwindling. This would make sense with regards to the anti-PC media peak arriving in 1991, and its since having faded somewhat, although sheer media saturation is another important aspect of this.

degree to which common roots and links have existed among efforts in the late 1980s and early 1990s to influence public opinion with New Right thought generally, and the New Right shibboleth of political correctness in particular, seems clear.

Specifically, Debra Schultz points out that one New Right organization, the John M. Olin Foundation, directly or indirectly funded the anti-PC histrionic 'trilogy' of Allan Bloom's The Closing of the American Mind, Roger Kimball's Tenured Radicals, and Dinesh D'Souza's Illiberal Education, and additionally provides for the needs of the National Association of Scholars.²⁸ As well, the entire career of Dinesh D'Souza highlights the concerted internship, training, and placement efforts of the Madison Center²⁹ (also funded by the Olin Foundation, among others), who note proudly that "D'Souza, a former Collegiate Network editor, has been thrust to the forefront of the battle against radical orthodoxy".³⁰ As Mark Hager has remarked,

. . . the right-leaning think-tanks grew to unprecedented size, wealth, power, and influence. This trend was especially sharp during the 1980s, when several right-wing policy institutes forged strong links with both the Reagan-Bush administration and with

²⁸ Debra L. Schultz. To Reclaim a Legacy of Diversity: Analyzing the "Political Correctness" Debates in Higher Education. New York, 1993, p. 11.

²⁹ Which, incidentally, was founded by the late Allan Bloom, among others. Among its acts of notoriety, a Newsweek article by Jerry Adler and others supportively depicts one of its members, "prominent liberal" James David Barber from Duke University, marching down to the bookstore and turning on its spine every single book in the political science section that had the word 'Marx' in it; apparently, the ratio of one 'Marxist' (certainly at least some of these books were debunking Marxism rather than supporting it) book for every seven other books was far more attention to Marxism than Barber thought was warranted. Barber proceeded to then angrily demand the removal of not just some of these volumes, but *all* of them. (Jerry Adler et al. Taking Offense: Is this the New Enlightenment on Campus or the New McCarthyism? Newsweek, December 24, 1990, p. 49.) Apparently, then, even *established* books are in danger of suffering the wrath of conservatives, and possibly, even their censorship. One can thereby understand how irate they would be about the recent demands for 'inclusion' by radical PCers of works such as L. Rigoberta Menchu and The Color Purple (although the latter do not have the word 'Marx' in their title).

³⁰ Madison Center, 1990, p. 14. Cited in Debra Schultz's Legacy of Diversity, p. 13. As a point of clarification, the John M. Olin Foundation funds the NAS and Madison Center, and the latter coordinates the conservative Collegiate Network. Of the Madison Center's budget of over one million dollars in 1990, 39% went to the Collegiate Network, 23% to grants for like-minded scholars and journalists, 12% to its college guide, and 8% to the Philanthropic Roundtable, a consortium of conservative foundations. (*Ibid.*, p. 12.)

rich corporate and family-sponsored funding foundations. At the onset of the 1990s, this increasingly tight-knit network expanded its reach even further through an array of institutional links with right-wing organizations on campus.³¹

He goes on to bemoan the fact that in terms of influence on the American campus, the Left doesn't even begin to match these kinds of resources, access, and visibility.³² For example, student advocates of affirmative action, multicultural curricular reform, and programs to address campus violence and harassment have been able to organize in the Campus Journals Network. This was established in 1988 by the Center for National Policy in Washington as a vehicle for liberal views, but it has been consistently less well-funded than the Madison Center's Collegiate Network.³³ Debra Schultz additionally points to the example of the draconian slash in funding by the Reagan administration to the National Endowment for the Humanities, which she argues was at the center of the political correctness debates in the late 1980s. As one example, funding for women-related projects declined by \$1 million - a 50% decrease - to less than 1% (0.67%) of the total NEH budget.³⁴

Textual Mediation - and Me³⁵

As Dorothy Smith's work has shown, by living in a text-mediated society we are particularly susceptible to the messages of ideologies, concepts, and theories which have become particularly powerful regulators of public text-mediated discourse. As she notes further,

³¹ Mark M. Hagar. "The Real Orthodoxy Network." *Z*, 1992, April, p. 58.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Debra Schultz. *Legacy of Diversity*, p. 16. For example, unlike the Madison Center, the Campus Journals Network has only been able to give one-time grants to new liberal campus publications of, at most, \$2,500 each. (*Ibid.*)

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22. (These figures are from Rubin's 1985 National Council for Research on Women report which is unavailable but is cited by Schultz.)

³⁵ If this somewhat odd section heading sounds rather familiar, it is a play upon Allan Bloom's address to Harvard University entitled "Western Civ - and Me: An Address at Harvard University," which was first printed in *Commentary* in August of 1991. (Allan Bloom. "Western Civ - and Me: An Address at Harvard University." In Francis J. Beckwith and Michael E. Bauman's (Eds.) *Are You Politically Correct? Debating America's Cultural Standards*. Buffalo, 1993, p. 147-161.)

Ideological/conceptual/theoretical command of the field of text-mediated relations is immensely powerful, the more so as it is *largely invisible* as power, and, the right-wing, or perhaps more realistically, the US capitalist class aims at and is increasingly effective in securing it.³⁶

As Sidney Blumenthal maintains, it has been an objective of the right-wing, particularly since the 1960s (and the great fear the liberals or, worse, the Left, had been successful in securing the ideological heights), that it procure control of public discourse through their command of concepts, ideologies, and theories.³⁷ Given this state of affairs, it is immensely ironic that through the anti-PC campaign, the Right has managed to do just this with remarkable efficacy precisely *through* strategic mobilization of the vocabulary of progressive politics, utilizing such terms as 'totalitarianism', 'tyranny', 'McCarthyism', and 'storm troopers'.

As described in Chapter Two, the original ideological provenance of the device political correctness has become displaced, to the effect that while media distribution has ensured that nearly anyone can utilize the term, few will do so with complete cognizance of the fact that it is embedded in a particular ideology that serves conservative political interests. The ideological code of political correctness may not appear as any kind of 'censorship', but it nevertheless constrains, as much as is possible, the way in which the issues triggered by the PC signifier are conceived of and discussed. Indeed, it confines the realms of the possible. In effect, the development and propagation of the dominant anti-PC discourse has largely determined not only what can be said and thought about

³⁶ Dorothy Smith's "Political Correctness: An Ideological Code." Forthcoming in Steven Richer and Lorna Weir's (Eds.) Beyond Political Correctness: The Future of the Canadian Academy, Toronto, 1995, p. 4.

³⁷ Sidney Blumenthal's The Rise of the Counter-Establishment: From Conservative Ideology to Political Power, New York, 1986, p. 150-151.

political correctness, but also has defined who can speak, where, when, and with what authority.³⁸

While intertextuality insures that a multitude of meanings, significations, and associations will always be part of any text, discourse, or discursive regime, it is also true that such polyvalency and lability are not in actual practice *unbounded*. In a textually-mediated society, some of these discourses will be more powerful in constructing, articulating, and controlling the issues of which they speak than will others. Stuart Hall notes that Thatcherism in Britain "has changed the currency of political thought and argument" by "successfully presenting itself as a force on the side of the people".³⁹ Discursive regimes are not 'right', 'just', or commonsensical in themselves, but rather depend upon the deliberate and careful construction of what individuals will perceive as 'the best road', but neither are they immobile once having achieved public acceptance. Hegemony requires real work to become 'the order of the day', and this is never in a state of accomplishment or completion, but must be constantly and ceaseless renewed and reenacted.⁴⁰ It is through such continual flux, that is shaped by many social forces and the multitude of continuous, overlapping, and contradictory struggles, that discursive regimes themselves are subject to continuing evolution and development. While the Gramscian notion of hegemony does not imply in itself that these struggles eventually and inevitably will result in a more egalitarian place to live, it is his emphasis upon such unceasing struggles' evolution and historical development that makes this better society at least in the realm of the possible.

³⁸ Stephen J. Ball. Politics and Policy Making in Education: Explorations in Political Sociology. London, 1990, p. 19.

³⁹ Stuart Hall. "Toad in the Garden.", p. 40. Hall further notes that this has occurred despite no revitalization of the economy, nor any reduction in the rate of unemployment. (Ibid., p. 41.)

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 54.

Hope for the Left

Where is the Left in all of this? To be perfectly blunt, the Left was unprepared for, and left scrambling by the wayside of, the advancement of the shibboleth of political correctness by the Right, just as it had been rendered impotent by the earlier sly encroachment of New Right economic thought, which itself caused serious damage to the post-war democratic consensus in its attempt to completely debunk Keynesian idea(l)s. Pat Marchak explains:

The traditional left wing was left behind during the 1980s. Where it was once regarded as radical, it now seemed bereft of innovative ideas; it was reduced to defending the welfare state and trying to make public the flaws in the new right's agenda.⁴¹

Marchak goes on to make a point significant to my own argument regarding the political correctness controversy: while the Left attempted to rebuke the New Right's agenda and to gain back some of its previous adherents, it did so mainly through analyses that, in the end, despite being often perceptive and penetrating, were far too academic⁴² to really catch hold of the public imagination. This is especially true when compared to the

⁴¹ Pat Marchak. *Integrated Circus*, p. 114-115.

⁴² Though the Right does not invariably avoid complex explanations. This is evident in an example I have selected from Francis J. Beckwith and Michael E. Bauman's introduction to their edited collection *Are You Politically Correct? Debating America's Cultural Standards*. The context involves the authors' familiar anti-PC complaint against diversity in that they are arguing that it is not racism, sexism, and homophobia that have left out "black lesbian writers", but rather that it is because "canon inclusion is based on objective standards of excellence and . . . none have met these standards". With regards to homophobia, they have this to say:

To call someone "homophobic" is logically as well as psychologically futile. First, it is logically fallacious when used against someone who is arguing that homosexuality is immoral, because whether or not one fears homosexuals is irrelevant to the question of whether homosexual practice is moral . . . Second, if one is homophobic, that is, suffering from a phobia as one would suffer from claustrophobia, then the homophobe cannot help himself and is therefore suffering from a mental disorder. Consequently, calling someone homophobic is tantamount to making fun of the handicapped, unless of course the accuser is himself homophobic. (Francis J. Beckwith and Michael E. Bauman's (Eds.) *Are You Politically Correct? Debating America's Cultural Standards*. Buffalo, 1993, p. 9,12.)

Beyond the dubious nature of, most obviously, their first statement, it is clear that the Right is not afraid of complex argument, although it is important to note that this particular exposition was not included within the meat of the four-page introduction, perhaps to avoid "scaring off" any potential reader. Note, too, the strategy in the final sentence of turning the tables on the Left by accusing the politically correct of "making fun of the handicapped", thereby appearing to take the moral high ground themselves.

populist sloganeering which the New Right produced,⁴³ in its attacks on the poor, the handicapped, the unemployed, women in the work-force, the public sector, the welfare state, democracy, majority choice, labour, unions, the underdeveloped nations, impoverished regions, indebted countries, and intellectuals themselves; all the groups in society defended by the Left. As a result, those intellectuals, for example, questioning America's imperial powers, and those social scientists who investigated the causes of unemployment and inequality, ended up being in the New Right's direct line of fire: they were easy targets.⁴⁴ Adding to this problem is the fact that the analyses of social scientists and intellectuals of contemporary society and popular culture may often be perceived as attacks on "America" in its entirety, while as Lawrence Grossberg notes, "many people cannot imagine living elsewhere, and certainly not anywhere better".⁴⁵ No wonder right-wing rhetoric is regarded as more appealing.

Dinesh D'Souza's introduction to Illiberal Education provides two very clever examples of the skillfully manipulative means through which New Right spokespeople can pretend to 'identify' with (largely by identifying *for*) the general populace. His first example begins with the statement that the people implicated in promoting or allowing PC policies to be approved, such as university administrators, have acted like politicians scurrying away to evade the public limelight until a controversy 'blows over'. Since

⁴³ The aforementioned introduction by Beckwith and Bauman, previously cited for its relative intellectual complexity, regresses to a startling degree in a bid for a bit of knee-jerk reactionary support from its readers when they state that among the "controversial assumptions" of multiculturalism is the notion that all cultures have contributed equally to the history of the human race. Alarming, they seem to think that they have decisively refuted this supposition by relating the following:

Concerning the first assumption, we are reminded of the multiculturalist professor who told his students that we in the West have ignored for too long the valuable and revolutionary "scientific" and "magical" insights of the hut people of South America, to which a student replied, "If these insights are so valuable, why are they still hut people?"

(Ibid., p. 11.)

Such posturing of xenophobic and narrow-minded remarks - likely to have gotten a laugh out of the class in question - for an erudite refutation of this "controversial assumption" is truly alarming.

⁴⁴ Pat Marchak. Integrated Circus, p. 115.

⁴⁵ Lawrence Grossberg. We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture. New York and London, 1992, p. 394.

there was a "deathly silence" coming from the administrators, the defense of politically correct policies was left, he states, to the "faculty radicals", ⁴⁶ who, while perhaps performing well in ideologically like-minded company, apparently were absolute pushovers in any kind of 'impartial' debate. D'Souza actually asserts that these 'radicals' were "too embarrassing to *mainstream sensibilities* to do well in public", and in this way gives the reader the opportunity to chortle quietly about those silly ivory tower types. ⁴⁷

However, this is just the beginning of the robust anti-intellectualism that D'Souza, like many in the New Right, has been able to cultivate amongst the receivers of his message. ⁴⁸ The second example of D'Souza's formidable skills in triggering emotional responses of identification to his diatribe occurs later on in the same page, when he states that the general consensus amongst the 'radical' Left was that people were simply too stupid to comprehend the complexities involved in the PC debate:

⁴⁶ As well as newspaper columnists, most of whom D'Souza rightly points out have probably not set foot on a campus for years. D'Souza later contrasts this remoteness with his own capabilities:

I found, during my recent campus travels, that I can still pass for a student. I feel a bond with the new generation of young people . . . Everywhere I observed a strong idealism, a search for principles that transcend expediency and self-interest. I admire this youthful quest and believe that universities should sustain and encourage it. (Dinesh D'Souza., Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus, New York, 1992, p. xviii, 23.)

Apparently, the reader is to assume that 'PC' goals such as commitment to the bettering of conditions for historically disadvantaged groups has lead many a student astray from this "search for principles that transcend expediency and self-interest", which in turn must involve other, different, ideals. That is, *real* ideals that *everyone* can identify with.

⁴⁷ [emphasis added.] Ibid., p. xviii. To belabour a point which, it is hoped, should already be quite clear, terms such as these are by no means neutral, impartial, nor apolitical. The particular definition of any term is always influenced (often extremely subtly) by its context and its deliverer or sender. This term additionally ends up having a particularly strong conservative slant because of the term 'mainstream'. On the other hand, while much literature from the opposite end of the political spectrum would be loath to use such terms as 'mainstream sensibilities', in reality it is often difficult to identify who exactly one is referring to; for example, is my own infrequent and reluctant (but nevertheless present) use of the term 'Canadian consciousness' unconsciously complicit to this kind of political framework?

⁴⁸ This anti-intellectualism so invoked by the New Right is eminently ironic in that all along, it has been the New Right - to a far greater degree than the Left (which has tended to not have the same resources available, due in no small part to its lack of consistency with corporate interests) - that has supported its intelligentsia. In addition, the conservative end of the political spectrum has tended to have far more of a consensus between different strata of members, as opposed to the sometimes formidable opposition between intellectuals and grass roots workers, for example, in the Left.

At the 1991 conference of the Modern Language Association, as reported by the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the consensus seemed to be that Americans could not understand the incredible complexities of academia -- "It's like trying to reduce a Henry James novel to a telegram," protested Martha Banta of UCLA's English department -- and that, moreover, many were just plain stupid, "people who don't know the difference between Plato and NATO," in the words of Berkeley sociologist Todd Gitlin, who was a leader of Students for a Democratic Society in the 1960s.⁴⁹

Take note of the careful bracketing of "many were just plain stupid" catchphrase with the two unfortunate⁵⁰ quotes from 'radical' professors, whose statements seem all the more credible since they are coming individuals first from UCLA, and then, even worse, from

⁴⁹ Dinesh D'Souza. *Illiberal Education*, p. xviii. Note that the MLA has been targeted by many critics of political correctness as being overly PC itself. For example, its commitment to other voices and other interpretations was widely mocked and derided once it became known that one of the papers presented was titled "Jane Austen and the Masturbating Girl". Intriguingly, Allan Bloom has his own 'masturbational fantasy':

Picture a thirteen-year old boy sitting in the living room of his family home doing his math assignment while wearing his Walkman headphones or watching MTV. He enjoys the liberties hard won over centuries by the alliance of philosophic genius and political heroism, consecrated by the blood of martyrs; he is provided with comfort and leisure by the most productive economy ever known to mankind; science has penetrated the secrets of nature in order to provide him with the marvelous, lifelike electronic sound and image reproduction he is enjoying. And in what does all this progress culminate? A pubescent child whose body throbs with orgasmic rhythms; whose feelings are made to articulate in hymns to the joys of onanism or the killing of parents; whose ambition is to win fame and wealth in imitating the drag-queen who makes the music. In short, life is made into a nonstop, commercially pre-packaged masturbational fantasy. (Allan Bloom. *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*. New York, 1987, p. 74-75.)

Just because Bloom did not choose to include the word 'masturbate' in the title of his book does not seem to be an adequate reason for howls of outrage at the former, and stalwart support for the latter.

⁵⁰ I say that such comments as these are unfortunate for two reasons. One, most obviously, they provide D'Souza and others of his ilk with prime material with which to paint Leftist intellectuals as being snobbish, elitist, and so on. Second, it seems to me that comments such as these serve no practical advantage anyway; do they really aid in furthering the discussion in question, or are they biting jabs made mainly to get a laugh from individuals who, like the speakers in question, are obviously extremely frustrated by their lack of a grasp upon 'the mainstream' way of thinking? In cases such as this where individuals like D'Souza get their hands on these juicy tidbits, it really doesn't matter a whole lot that (or indeed, if) these comments were taken out of context; they should not have been uttered in the first place.

Berkeley, the apex of the 1960s 'counter-revolution'.⁵¹ It seems quite superfluous for D'Souza to add, innocently, of course, that Todd Gitlin just happened to be a leader of the SDS in the 1960s: the scenario has already been set.

So where is the Left left, so to speak, at the end of the day in such environs? Certainly it must have some realization of the Right's remarkable success in setting the political correctness agenda, and in articulating for the people what would and would not be overtly and covertly denoted by the term. So too it must be acknowledging the lack of efficacy of its own efforts to launch a counter-attack. Indeed, as I have argued, part of the problem has been the very fact that the Left, initially slow to respond to the media event of political correctness, have as a result been obliged to take the defensive stance, while the Right has had the concomitant advantage and pleasure of being the offensive attackers, largely unified under a common battle cry.

Obviously, a large part of this superior organization, foreplanning, and preparation on the part of the Right has come about through its far more formidable resources; clearly, capital is on its side. Another important difference between the two is the degree of support the Right has been able, and anxious, to offer to many of the prime formulators of its attack, that is, conservatively-inclined intellectuals and media personnel. The Left has meagre resources in comparison, and has traditionally had far greater divisiveness within the various blocs of its network, the enduring opposition

⁵¹ Of course it is silly to assume (and dishonest to mislead others to do the same), that students and professors in radical beatnik universities such as Berkeley are (or ever were) ideologically and politically united in their common belief in what has of late become defined as being politically correct. As just one of many examples, Berkeley currently employs Aaron B. Wildavsky, a professor of political science and public policy who also just happens to be a member of the National Association of Scholars, and a very verbose one to boot, unlike the 'silent majority' the NAS insists is timidly trembling out there, waiting to be mobilized by the NAS. Wildavsky asserts that "It is fundamentally wrong to have quotas", and urged his fellow like-minded colleagues to mobilize to fight against the movement on college campuses towards "radical egalitarianism", which was defined by another NAS member as the erroneous belief that everybody should be given the same treatment, regardless of 'merit' (that quality that is so easily rationally evaluated). (Carolyn J. Mooney. "Conservative Scholars Call for a Movement to 'Reclaim' Academy." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 23, 1988, p. A11.)

between intellectuals and grassroots workers being only one of these. I have mentioned previously how unfortunate it is that such divisions exist, in particular when they lead to different groups fighting amongst themselves for more power, funds, and so on, where the unification of such groups would surely be more beneficial for all.

However, such divisions are not easy to efface, and perhaps no attempt *should* be made to do so. The Left, in all of its differing, sometimes even hostile, camps, represents a commitment to diversity and a respect for the openness of discussion and debate that the Right will never have. For example, beyond the fact that women of colour have created a space for themselves despite the historical confines of white middle class feminism, there are groups among the Left that can, in some instances, be diametrically opposed: witness the different perspectives of aboriginal groups fighting for self-government, and animal rights organizations which are opposed the hunting and trapping of animals. It is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine such a state of affairs in the right-wing, which, while comprising certain contradictory elements, cannot even begin to approach the diversity which the Left represents. What boils down to is this: the Left has a veritable *commitment* to diversity as part of how it defines itself, while the Right will only *permit* the voicing of others if it doesn't seem to have any other choice.

It is in these ways that the Right's claim that the politically correct 'thought police' are out there to suppress freedom of speech and thought is a certain fallacy. The incredible diversity of both the Left *and* of the defenders of political correctness (not necessarily the same) is proof positive of this fact. Such diversity perhaps leads to a defense of political correctness that is less homogeneous, less repetitive, and less hyperbolized than that of the anti-PC spin doctors, and indeed, to perspectives that are more difficult for the popular media consumer to 'swallow whole'. This is particularly relevant if, as is more likely the case with a diverse agenda, any particular receiver of progressive messages may agree with *some* of it, but not with other aspects. However,

the Left is more representative of Canadians' real needs, interests, and opinions than the current anti-PC/anti-leftist media circus ride would have us believe.

Hope for the Left, therefore, is not unreasonable nor out of touch, even if its credibility has been seriously damaged by the anti-PC campaign. A more egalitarian society, too, is not out of the question, even in these days of increased intolerance and impatience regarding both the possibility and probability of a progressive agenda of social policy. With the rise of the New Right, the Left has learned the difficult lesson that traditional Marxism may not account for much of what Thatcherism and Reaganism, as well as anti-PC ideology, purport to offer people. As a result, progressives are gradually moving away from orthodox Marxian definitions of current conditions and proposed solutions. As Lawrence Grossberg defines the possibility of a new Left politics, "[i]t will have to measure both intellectual and political progress by movement within the fragile and contradictory reality of people's lives, desires, fears and commitments, and not by some idealized utopia nor by its own theoretical criteria".⁵²

While the cleavage is still between rich and poor, between the "haves" and the "have nots", this cleavage is not adequately described in typically Marxist class terms; it has regional and ethnic dimensions, as well as one of gender, that do not neatly fit into class lines. As Pat Marchak notes:

The weakness of socialism is not terminal; a renewed resistance to the predations of capitalism will grow in new international forums. It will, however, be a different kind of socialism; a socialism that is necessarily informed by a greater understanding of global society; a socialism that is less likely to reduce the universe to two opposing classes, less likely to advance state ownership as the vehicle of change, and more concerned with the fates of small communities in which "workers" are the minority and work itself is in need of redefinition.⁵³

⁵² Lawrence Grossberg. *We Gotta Get Out of This Place*, p. 396.

⁵³ Pat Marchak. *Integrated Circus*, p. 263.

While the New Right largely created the global economy, it is now up to the Left to transcend it to create a global *community* that respects the diversity of its component regions, and as Pat Marchak notes, strikes a fine balance between global controls and small community controls.⁵⁴ It would seem to me that since the Left is already strongly committed to diversity and the encouragement of 'different' voices, it potentially stands to be more prepared than the Right for the emerging global society in which decisions of social, cultural, and political, as well as economic, scope will have to be made at an international level. As Lawrence Grossberg notes,

. . . we are all precariously caught in the circuits of global capitalism, and everyone's position is increasingly precarious and uncertain . . . [There are no] guarantees about the future of any single nation. We can imagine ourselves involved in a politics where acting for another is always acting for oneself as well, politics in which everyone struggles with the resources they have to make their lives (and the world) better, since the two are so intimately tied together!⁵⁵

As he notes, it is up to the Left to imagine this possibility for the people, and to construct for them "new sources of hope" that will get "people to care again: to care about the potential ecological, political and economic disasters facing the world; to care about the structures of inequality which maintain some people in luxury and condemn others to poverty, starvation and death; to care about the attacks on people's freedom and equality".⁵⁶ Perhaps it is the Left which will end up being the least parochial, and the most prepared, in this attempt to come to terms with the enormous international changes that have resulted from what has been the veritable shrinking of the world.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 268.

⁵⁵ Lawrence Grossberg. *We Gotta Get Out of This Place.*, p. 392.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 393.

An Island of Freedom in a Sea of Repression⁵⁷

To conclude, the Left would do well to remember Andrew Calabrese and Silvo Lenart's remarks that 'political correctness' is a term now so over-used and distorted that it should simply be buried, never to be heard from again.⁵⁸ The Right, it must be conceded, has thus far won the bid (perhaps more tellingly described as the ownership rights) to instruct the reading (and television-watching) public of their version of political correctness, that is, as a discrediting device mobilized to seriously undermine the authority of marginal groups in public discourse, and the latter's call for equal footing socially, economically, culturally, and politically. In the terminology of Dorothy Smith, the ideological code was successfully planted, and this being the case, it has since been exercising its formidable possibilities of replication, in an apparently unending fashion. However, this is in fact *not* going to occur *ad nauseam*; indeed, we have already seen the cresting of the PC wave, for our world and the institutions within it are not static. Like everything worthy of study, political correctness is multifaceted, polysemic, labile, and everchanging; I believe that political correctness, even after the initial height of fascination and obsession, will continue to intrigue for a long time to come.

To elicit the ideas of a very different, but at least in this sense concordant, theorist, a society without power relations can only be regarded as being a hypothetical

⁵⁷ This subheading is a play upon Chester E. Finn, Jr.'s diatribe upon how the university is apparently "an island of repression in a sea of freedom", a phrase Finn picks up supportively from "civil rights scholar" Abigail Thernstrom. The latter is a political scientist who also just happens to be the wife of Stephan Thernstrom, a Harvard professor 'victimized' by politically correct anti-racist politicking. I have reversed 'repression' and 'freedom' not because I am necessarily arguing that the university is 'freer' than larger society, but rather to indicate that it is the minority discourses of the Left that are the real islands in what has become a sea of right-wing anti-PC rhetoric. I mean that these minority discourses are 'islands' both in terms of scale comparisons to the sea surrounding (and threatening to engulf) them, and in terms of being points of salvation and refuge. (Chester E. Finn, Jr. "The Campus: 'An Island of Repression in a Sea of Freedom'." In Francis J. Beckwith and Michael E. Bauman's (Eds.) Are You Politically Correct? Debating America's Cultural Standards. Buffalo, 1993, p. 70.)

⁵⁸ Andrew Calabrese and Silvo Lenart. "Cultural Diversity and the Perversion of Tolerance." Journal of Communication Inquiry. 1992, 16(1), p. 33.

abstraction,⁵⁹ and as Colin Gordon states of Foucault's work elsewhere, if this were not in fact the case, "history would assume the form of a homogeneous narrative of perpetual despotism".⁶⁰ Inevitably, the rage for anti-PC rhetoric will (and has, I would contend, already begun to) fade away, precisely because the realities of intertextuality and hegemony in our textually-mediated society make this the necessary outcome. "Hegemony, as they say, is leaky",⁶¹ and in this way, the anti-PC brigade will eventually lose their hold upon the North American consciousness. While it remains to be seen whether the New Right will be able to fashion some other issue to their advantage,⁶² it is precisely my point that there are simply no guarantees that they shall succeed in their efforts. While it is true that as the PC debate rages on, the social, political, and economic equality of all will be waylaid for an indeterminate duration, the time will eventually and inevitably come when the simple linking of the value-laden PC phase with otherwise "laudable desire to sweep away *the debris* of racism and sexism and hatred"⁶³ will no longer automatically elicit disregard and intolerance for any particular problematic, whether this be racism, sexism, homophobia, or any other issue of inequality.

In the meantime, the Right will continue to use PC as an epithet for as long as it appears to have the power to focus attention.⁶⁴ Rather than go on the defensive,

⁵⁹ Michel Foucault. "Afterword: The Subject and Power." In Huber Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow's (Eds.) Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics. Chicago, 1982, p. 223.

⁶⁰ Colin Gordon. "Other Inquisitions." Ideology and Consciousness. 1979, 6(Autumn), p. 36.

⁶¹ Raymond Williams, I believe, was the first one to describe the concept of hegemony in this way, but my source was Tim Brennan's "'PC' and the Decline of the American Empire." Social Policy. 1991, Summer, p. 127.

⁶² And the reader would be incorrect to assume that I think that they will not; beyond the perennial tug-of-war realities of living in a world governed by hegemonic struggle, the Right have simply too many resources, believers, and past successes for this not to be the case. However, one can still be hopeful that the Right will not see such a spectacular success as they have had with the PC wars, or, at the very least, that the Left will be better equipped to handle such an event if and when it does come about.

⁶³ [emphasis added.] George Bush. "Remarks at the University of Michigan Commencement Ceremony in Ann Arbor," May 4, 1991. Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents: Administration of George Bush. 1991, 27(19), p. 564.

⁶⁴ Debra Schultz. Legacy of Diversity, p. 31.

progressives must continue their struggle to shatter the Right's control over meaning making regarding what is signified by the letters 'P' and 'C'.⁶⁵ As Tim Brennan urges,

... in addition to just setting the record straight, people concerned about these issues need to stop being defensive. We need to imagine fully for the public what the right-wing vision of society amounts to in all its ugliness and irrationality, and make that the topic of a full-scale onslaught. To do this, we will need to build, piece by piece, a strategy of public access, of interventionary rhetoric, of alternative sites of communication.⁶⁶

All of this, of course, will take a great deal of effort and struggle, with no guarantees as to any real impact before, say, the media and the public mind it speaks to move on to another 'watchword', perhaps leaving the newly recharged Left behind in the dust. However, it is my hope that this analysis may have constituted some small part of such a worthwhile endeavour to "imagine fully" what sort of environs the PC critics would have as the bedrock of our society, and that alternatives, if not fully articulated, have at least been pointed out as the real "islands" in this "sea of repression".

⁶⁵ John Mowitt makes a thought-provoking point in this regard when he states that Dinesh D'Souza's book, *Illiberal Education*, even more so than the exertions of the National Association of Scholars, has effectively functioned to "strip the initials 'pc' of their technological denotation", that is, 'personal computer'. Even more intriguing, Mowitt goes further to assert that (as he insists Roland Barthes would have been among the first to point out) the political denotation PC "is shadowed by the mirror connotation of 'cp' or 'communist party'". (John Mowitt. *Text: The Genealogy of an Antidisciplinary Object*. Durham and London, 1992, p. 242.)

⁶⁶ Tim Brennan. "Decline of the American Empire," p. 28.

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Appendix A

METROWATCH

The War of the Words

Person the lifeboats! It's time to save what's left of the language from the politically correct

by GORDON DONALDSON

THE LANGUAGE OF NORTH AMERICAN business is a basic form of communication evolved from the grunts emitted by our ancestors while clubbing each other to death during property transactions. Even today, it boils down to: "How much?" "Too much." "Let's have lunch." But it is threatened by a new disease from the campuses called "politically correct" language.

PC language goes beyond Orwellian Newspeak, bureaucratic loonydooc and even Mulblarney. It does not distort the meaning of words, it removes it. It does not claim that black is white. There is no black or white, nor, for that matter, male or female or anything in between. These language Luddites believe that dictionary English is a racist, sexist, discriminatory weapon of the white, male ruling class.

As a member of that class who hasn't done a great deal of ruling lately, I feel discriminated against. I am a small manufacturer who mines words from dictionaries, rearranges them a bit and sells them in job lots called magazine articles and books.

These PC vandals are destroying my raw materials, ruining my roots, poisoning my wells, ravaging my rain forest. They've murdered Dick and Jane. They began by de-sexing people into persons. Everyone now talks about persons. It used to be an insult—who was that *person* I saw you with? Then these hupersons were decolourized into *luisible minorities* and the other kind you can't see but give you the nasty feeling that they're around somewhere. Former females now want to be called *womyn*, although *wimmin* has been available to them for generations.

They cured the halt, the lame, the blind, deaf, dumb, crippled and disabled by calling their disabilities *abilities*. Outside sports and right-wing politics, no one is permitted to be nuts, crazy, daft, stupid or even a bit slow on the uptake. These beings are *challenged*, but we

don't know by what or by whom or to what. Could be pistols for two, breakfast for one.

Social workers, now rapidly outnumbering workers, have won the war on poverty by replacing the poor with the *underprivileged*. Some underprivileged get *affordable* housing because they can't afford housing and the word subsidy offends all those who don't get one. The ideal family now consists of one regular-sized Person, two and a half stature-challenged Persons and a Significant Other who does something significant that we don't want to talk about.

The threat to business begins with the PC word *personhole*, now being used by persons who don't have to climb down them and have never stepped into one that some challenged personhole left open. Companies that manufacture (sorry, fabricate) personholes, or even the lids, not the actual holes, should review their job specifications.

First you need a Personager in charge of the personagement of the operation whose persondate is to personipulate the personufacturing to keep the balance sheet in the huc of a certain visible minority and prevent it from acquiring the tincture of another one. The Annual Report may claim unblushingly that the firm is in the pink because pink is not a sensitive colour, not yet, although they're working on it.

This keeps you out of that *sea of white*

faces which offends so many people with white faces.

Delete sensitive job specifications like Stripper and Hooker. Buy some jillhammers... and watch that Bottom Line.

In the sexist days of boom and bust, bulls and bears roamed Bay Street. Robber barons welshed on deals and got off scot-free.

Not any more.

There is no manna from Heaven and Ma Bell is on steroids. Sex is replaced by gender.

Certainly there is no place for sex in the boardrooms of the nation. It must not be joked about, mentioned, alluded to or performed. The business of business is business. But now raging PC morality squads have identified a new sin there—*agrim*.

At first I was all for this because I thought Ageists were nasty to old geezers, or gezeresses. But no, they are the middle-aged, who keep dumping on the young. This despicable behaviour comes naturally to them because, well, because they're middle-aged.

And there is *lookism*. Lookists judge other hupersons by the way they look. You'd think the young would welcome this attitude because they tend to look better on the outside than the geriatrically challenged or the Phantom of the Opera. Again no. If someone else has an attitude, it's not politically correct.

Person the lifeboats, I say, and save what's left of the English language. If these vandals are so hung up on gender, let them tackle French with all those *le's* and *la's*. I say go paint store signs in Montreal.

TORONTO WRITER GORDON DONALDSON IS A CONTRIBUTING EDITOR TO BUSINESS JOURNAL. THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS COLUMN ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE PUBLISHER.

Power and 'political correctness'

*If black were white,
what might
the world be like?*

By Lennox Farrell

PRETEND THAT the world, in its governance, has become an Afro-centric matriarchy. It is now controlled by the DWEMs — Darkie Wymyn of Ethioip Melanin. They number less than 20 per cent of the population, are similar in abilities to the rest of humankind, yet, they control 80 per cent of the world's power plays.

Theirs, for example, is the first toe print in outer space; theirs the only worthy name in the classics; theirs the last word on philosophy. They carry status in international institutions that wage war, such as NATO, and the U.N. Security Council; that wage subsequent charity, such as World Vision; that wage supporting communications, such as Reuters and CNN; that wage politics, such as the Vatican and Moral Majority; that wage social peace, and national freedoms, such as the IMF and the World Bank.

Nationally, these Afro-fembos are *sapientia et eloquentia* on every issue: the Constitution, the economy, the environment — pro ar.d con; the hard sciences and high tech. They lead in Parliament, or in the Senate, two of their other boardrooms; occupy the chairs in universities, and disinherit the meek and the exotic in museums.

These DWEMs are the editors who champion the rights of free speech, and battle the wrongs of censorship. They are also the newswymyn who coin phrases such as "white on white violence." About the genesis of diseases like AIDS they mint counterfeit assumptions that soon pass into the currency of talk shows that degrade whole continents and peoples. Without similar access to the print and electronic means these continents and peoples experience censorship, and are left without the benefits of free speech. Ever mindful, however, of the effects of "visual preaching," the DWEMs relentlessly reproduce their own images of power and privilege.

The DWEMs have the notion that theirs is the right, therefore, to praise or punish, to validate or invalidate (despite the abnormality of the notion). These rights are so widespread and axiomatic, that its practice is the absurdity of the habitual. Any attempt to deny this right is a direct challenge of God, Himself — Black Mama that She is in Heaven!

But even in the face of God the poor hurt curse. From the vast maw of Black feminist privilege boomerangs counter-phrases designed to confound the confused, who think that they should be thoroughly pissed off, simply because they have been constantly pissed on!

Other apt ethnic phrases flung would be "white mutants, white activist . . ." et al. However, "reverse racism" comes specifically from the Black right wing who insist that terms like, "affirmative action, and employment equity" are not

ILLUSTRATION BY RUPH ANDERMAN

really designed to reverse decades of racism, and sexism, but are instead nothing but un-democratic, quota-related, non-meritocracy processes designed to prevent the best qualified from getting ahead. A cure worse than the disease.

"Politically correct" is another sector-specific term. It was coined, and released into general circulation after some of the victims, a "vocal minority" had the temerity to challenge Academia. Being what it is, academia is the designer and architect of social systems — be they premised on equity, or on inequity. There are other functionaries with other scripts in the society. Some, such as columnists with the bloods, are high decibel advocates for the system. They are, nonetheless, mere gargoyles hanging off the wall. The unsung heroes are the academics

who are the pillars and cornerstones.

Of course, the world being the way it is, dominance will scheme the way it can; and the dominated will continue to be irrevocably human. It means, that unless the DWEMs can prove that they are superior, and have a divine right to rule, that conflict will continue, and intensify. Those who have been victimized realize that their history has been destroyed, and their culture distorted. They know though that victims do not write history, will not be allowed to teach it, and will not inherit the Earth — unless they stop behaving like victims! The battle is joined. Is there still occasion for honorable dialogue, and creative solutions?

Lennox Farrell is a Toronto teacher and a member of the Black Action Defence Committee.

SCHOLARS ATTACK CAMPUS 'RADICALS'

'Barbarians Are in Our Midst,'
History Professor Says of
Academic Adversaries

By JOSEPH BERGER

Outraged by what they see as the "radicalization" of courses, hiring policies and academic standards at American universities, a group of 300 American scholars has begun what it calls a movement to reclaim the academy.

The group, the National Association of Scholars, met over the weekend at a conference at the Roosevelt Hotel in Manhattan and shared war stories of what they suggest is a revolutionary transformation of university life.

Many complaints of the group's generally conservative members were featured in Allan Bloom's best-selling book "The Closing of the American Mind" and in other forums. But the scholars' fervor has reached such a pitch that they have borrowed a tactic of the opposition by organizing themselves.

Indeed, the remarks of speakers like Alan C. Kors, a University of Pennsylvania history professor, sounded more like calls to battle than the measured evaluations of a scholar, and the applause he received was more typical of a political rally than of an academic conference.

'Barbarians in Our Midst'

"The barbarians are in our midst," he said of his academic adversaries. "We need to fight them a good long time. Show them you are not afraid, they crumble."

The chief complaint expressed at the conference was that political objectives, many of them flowing from affirmative action programs for women and members of minority groups, had contaminated what the conservative scholars said was the objectivity on decisions about curriculum, promotion and academic discourse.

Iris Molotsky, a spokeswoman for the American Association of University Professors, said that the points made at the conference were unwarranted and that clashes between conservative and liberal ideologies were not new.

Many of the scholars at the meeting are senior people who have seen American universities transformed by the ascent of teachers and administrators whose political views were shaped as students in the 1960's.

Dr. Stephen M. Balch, president and executive director of the association, said in his opening remarks that the group would try "to redeem American higher education from intellectual and moral servitude to forces having little to do with the life of the mind, or the transmission of knowledge."

Classical Writers Replaced

Dr. Balch called on members to bring public pressure to bear against abuses they witnessed and create professional groups within their disciplines to fight some of the trends. He also said they should consider setting up "new educational centers" to compete with ideological programs.

Speakers assailed changes in curriculums that they said had replaced classical writers valued for their merit with writers who were valued because they are women or members of minority groups or were more sympathetic to what the scholars called the "radical agenda."

Indeed, Thomas L. Shurt of Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, derided many of the new courses as "oppression studies." He and others said the courses had a political purpose, to undermine Western institutions.

An 'Orwellian' World

Mr. Kors, a specialist in 17th and 18th-century European intellectual history, described what he termed a "chillingly 'Orwellian' world at the University of Pennsylvania. There, he said, teachers whose comments are found to be insensitive to women or blacks are subjected to "thought reform" and "thought police."

He recalled an incident in 1985 when Murray Doffman, a lecturer in legal studies, had referred to a black student as an "ex-slave." Mr. Doffman, Mr. Kors said, publicly apologized for his remark to the university, but was required to undergo "racial sensitivity seminars" in line with the university's "racial harassment policy."

Bruce E. White, a spokesman for the university, said that Mr. Doffman, after finding that several black students were unfamiliar with the 13th Amendment, had told the class that "as a Jew and former slave he celebrated the end of his slavery in Passover," and expressed surprise that "black students, whom he said were former slaves, did not celebrate the passage of the 13th Amendment." That amendment, Mr. White reported Mr. Doffman as saying, was responsible for the enrollment of black students at the university.

Mr. White said Mr. Doffman was suspended for one semester in April 1985, agreed to take two two-hour sessions of "sensitivity and racial awareness training" and required to review the content of his course with his colleagues. He also issued a public apology to the university.

Another speaker, Joanne J. Kirkpatrick, the former United States representative to the United Nations and now a professor at Georgetown University, told of how her speeches at three major universities were repeatedly interrupted by hecklers. Those same universities, she said, permit extreme statements or behavior from what she called "the fascist left."

Members of the association include John R. Silber, president of Boston University, and such scholars as Oscar Handlin, the Harvard social historian; Lucy Dawidowicz, author of a major work on the Holocaust; Robert Janszow, the astronomer; James O. Wilson, the political scientist, and James Coleman, the sociologist who wrote a landmark study on the impact of integration in the mid-1960's.

WHITE WOMAN'S

June Callwood seemed like the last woman anyone would call a racist. Was she insensitive to the needs of an institution she created or did the politics of anti-racism push her over the colour line?

When Canada's fabled doer June Callwood quit the board of directors of Nellie's, a women's hostel she had co-founded in 1974, amid charges of racism and verbal abuse, it was as though a national treasure had gone into hock. She who, as journalist, broadcaster, and social activist, had been levitating in the Canadian imagination for so long, had been swiftly and suddenly brought back to earth. Callwood's resignation was dated May 1, 1992. It was reported on May 9. Facts were few, interpretations were many. The themes were age-old — power, race,

justice — with the late-century nuances of personality, feminist teachings, and what came to be called the death of liberalism. Last fall, as the Nellie's crisis showed no signs of resolution, Callwood was taking gliding lessons, and had a bruised shin to show for it. "I needed something spiritual," she said. "I'm beginning to worry about myself, I'm so depressed."

She was giving me the tour of Jessie's Centre for Teenagers (named for her daughter Jesse), which she founded in 1982 to do something about teenage pregnancies. "Look — a bowl of condoms ▶

by Adele Freedman

BURDEN

der that stone," said Callwood, coming up the driveway of the clapboard farmhouse in suburban Islington that has been home for forty years. "We had to use a post-hole digger. We had to go down four feet because of frost – it was April – which was hard work. My husband said: 'One thing for sure – if Casey were here, he wouldn't be helping.' It gets you through it." But not over it. "I'm sad all the time," said Callwood. "I used to be happy all the time. I had a hum to me. My body was in such harmony with my life – and I haven't had that since he was killed."

A snug and eccentric affair, the house grew in fits and bulges to accommodate four kids and two offices, a corner nook for Callwood downstairs, and an upstairs one for her husband, the sports writer Trent Frayne. "My husband says I can't find the kitchen," joked Callwood, standing in her tiny one. The décor errs on the side of sentiment rather than style, but two excellent paintings by Gershon Iskowitz hang in the living room. Otherwise, it's books, mementos of a half-century's worth of journalism and activism – and awards. Callwood has received so many honours she displays only those that "mean the most." Had she not been on the founding boards of so many organizations, her walls and table tops might be

**“All the coin I've got is my credibility,”
“Forever, people who call me will ask,**

– isn't that good?" she said, breezing through an upstairs lounge, her voice a clarified soprano that, in anger or other lively emotions, has a tendency to squawk. Callwood, sixty-eight, still has the streamlined stride of the confident and long-legged girl who, as remembered by her younger sister Jane, "just seemed to carry herself so well." Her physical impression – silvered hair worn straight, lined face worn weathered, sunny smile – is of a raw beauty foretold in the fifties (Callwood's heyday as a magazine writer), when, hugely buxom and beribboned, she appeared in an ad for Blue Bonnet margarine.

Nowadays, Callwood's effective charms might be measured by the heft of her little

black book. Peter Bronfman, whom she met after he'd sent her a fan letter, helped her to raise \$1.5-million for Jessie's move to a new building. The architect, Jack Diamond, designed the building for free. Callwood is accessorized in institutional logos. Dangling from a gold bracelet is a charm in the shape of a little peaked roof – Jessie's. The pendant of her gold necklace is a door that swings free of its frame to reveal a garnet heart – the logo of Casey House, the AIDS hospice of which she is also a founder. Opened in 1988, it was named for her youngest child, Casey Frayne, who was killed on his motorcycle in 1982, at twenty.

"That's where Casey's ashes are – un-

almost bare, as well as many a suit lapel in the flattering pastels she favours. "I wear the Order of Canada when I need to – when I need to get money for something," she said of her power pin.

"I'll give you Founding 101," Callwood said brightly, straightening her back as she dusted, sitting down, with a damp cloth. "First you go and meet people in the field – the AIDS Committee of Toronto, for instance – 'Do you want or need a hospice but there's no time to do it? Do you mind if I try?' Then you phone a few people who are experts in the field – doctors, public-health officials, your network of friends – and you say: 'We're going to found a hospice – will you attend?' It's going to be

a big meeting then. I have phoned the Ontario Ministry of Health and said to somebody: 'We're going to have a hospice and we don't want to make a mistake' – so they send the director of the District Health Council. He arrives at a huge meeting and just about faints.

"We've got all the experts you can find in one room. I do minutes. I write down all the names – so-and-so and what they do. I mail that to Health and Welfare in Ottawa, the prime minister, the provincial ministry of health, the premier, the medical officer of health in Toronto, and the mayor. Their secretaries open a file – and you've only had one meeting! At the first meeting, if something doesn't look as if it will work, you'll never see them again. So we strike three committees: one to search for a house, a programme committee, and a fund-raising committee – and: 'Each of you, which committee do you choose?' – and they're all signed up. You never have a meeting where nothing happens, you keep the minutes flowing, and you never act as if it won't happen – never – and it happens! A year and a half later you're cutting the ribbon."

But it was the unravelling, not the founding, of Nellie's that Callwood had uppermost in her mind. She kept returning to the iconic scene of that drawn-out

lay the seeds of her recent undoing. "The issue of race and representation involves more than June Callwood, yet she was singled out for blame," mused Lisa Steele, a video artist who worked for fourteen years at Interval House in Toronto, a shelter for battered women. "A mythology develops around certain situations to encourage groups who must articulate themselves if they are to go forward. Possibly, they have to identify an enemy. As a very outspoken, very progressive feminist and civil libertarian – anti-censorship, anti-homophobia, anti-racist – Callwood, because she remained hands-on, made herself vulnerable. She's quick to speak back. She's not afraid to speak out. That's how someone like June Callwood gets to be somebody. The very impatience and intemperance that gained her status in the Left turned against her. In that sense, it's a Shakespearean tale."

Callwood admits to her impulses: "I know I have to be reined in. Clashes happened in the early days of Casey House, too – a clash of ideas, style, that's all. I'm quick to be indignant. I say fuck off."

Callwood said it most fatedly in September, 1989, during the 54th World Congress of International PEN, an organization that is an Amnesty International for writers. Twelve writers and artists, and

bean background; the other was white. Philip held out a leaflet "I said fuck off," said Callwood – three times, according to Philip's account in her recent book, *Frontiers*. "It seemed bizarre behaviour," Callwood continued, "so I said 'fuck off' and went on my way. It would have been okay if both of them had been white." That seven-letter phrase followed her all the way down the basement stairs of Nellie's.

Nellie's was one of the first women's hostels in the country, and always the most political. The board – twenty-one women who monitor budgets, raise money, work with volunteers, and keep an eye on the place – operates as a collective. So does the staff, which usually stands at ten. Decisions must be reached by consensus. "It took five hours to decide on the colour of the towels," sighed Marcia McClung, who was on the original board. Callwood allows that "it's ten times more work than a hierarchical structure," but sticks by consensus: "We thought it was a noble model for women who had been taking abuse to see women working collaboratively, like quilting, or in a farm kitchen. The weakness of the model is demonstrated when someone won't be good."

Nellie's is a registered charity under the Income Tax Act, which forbids the ▶

says Callwood. Wasn't there a scandal?''

drama, which took place in the basement of the hostel, a big old Victorian mansion in Toronto's east end, on December 3, 1991. She and Vicki Trerise, a lawyer, started up Nellie's, named for Nellie McClung, the feisty western novelist and suffragette, in 1974. Callwood was early to grasp the need. "She saw family violence as an issue in the late sixties," said Marcia McClung, Nellie's granddaughter. "That's her big strength. People get on the train with her. She can cut through the shit. June is better at starting things than at running them – one of those people who have to have ownership. She really wants to be in the driver's seat."

Therein, to some feminist observers,

their supporters, were demonstrating outside Roy Thomson Hall in Toronto, the venue of a gala concert. They had placards and leaflets accusing PEN Canada, organizers of the congress, of under-representing – "silencing" – Canadian writers of colour, who "often face racism in their daily and writing lives." At 11 p.m., as Callwood, the incoming president of PEN Canada, was leaving the hall, two women approached. One was M. Nourbese Philip, an African-Canadian writer of Carib-

PHOTOGRAPH OF NELLIE'S JENNIE AASE

Radical shift: Callwood under arrest in 1968 (below): "In my generation, you weren't arrested unless you were an awful person"; (left) posing at Jessie's in 1987

to three weeks (four, for women with children), but rules, as always, are there for the breaking. Forgoing revenue, Nellie's hid an illegal immigrant in the attic room for over a year until Callwood and Marilou McPhedran, a lawyer and former chair of the Nellie's board, settled her immigration problems. Her troubles

behind her, or so she believed, Joan Johnson was hired as a service provider at Nellie's in June, 1989.

To keep pace with a changing clientele, Nellie's had begun to recruit women of colour and former recipients of the service onto the staff and board in 1988. By the fall of 1991, nevertheless, there were only three women of colour who were active on the board, and three on the hostel staff. Five of the six belonged to the new Women of Colour Caucus,

“Because she remained hands-on, Callwood was vulnerable. The impatience that gained her status in the Left turned against her”

advancement of any political cause, or the influence of public opinion towards any one side of a controversial issue. It is also a nonprofit corporation funded by Metropolitan Toronto, which funnels provincial monies at the rate of \$34.55 a day for each of the thirty beds; discretionary funding comes from the United Way. The Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services provides a lump sum for the counselling of battered women, who make up a third of Nellie's clientele. The remainder are women with a history of prostitution, teenagers who can't make their way in the big city, destitute refugees who have fled trouble spots like Vietnam, Ethiopia, and Somalia, and incest survivors. Some arrive with their children. Where once most of the residents were white, half are now aboriginal women and women of colour.

Nellie's policy was to do whatever was necessary to help a woman, or as Callwood put it: "Nellie's took in anybody against the law." So many turned up in the beginning that Nellie's would pack the house. Once the legal thirty beds were filled, the couch made do. The staff, known as service providers or front-line workers, would empty their pockets to shop for groceries. No-one was refused.

Ten years ago, there was an influx of ex-psychiatric patients and women just out of prison. They didn't have broken noses or black eyes, but nobody wanted them. Nellie's took them in, and began working with other agencies around town to develop a programme for long-term housing. That, too, is run by a collective. More recently, drug addicts and prostitutes with HIV have been given safe haven. Stays are limited by Nellie's policy

formed "just to come together, and to try to get policy procedures in place to fight racism," said one. Callwood, among others, opposed the creation of a caucus: "It's not a Nellie's thing. When you break off, you do demonology - you imagine the other side are plotting."

A few months into 1990, the farm kitchen began to smoulder. The kindling issue was incest survivors. Like the women with psychiatric histories ten years earlier, they posed a special challenge. Women who have experienced incest can go into flashbacks when memories of abuse are triggered. In that state, they are capable of extremity. "It often involves physical harm - self-mutilation," said a longtime service provider, Joyce Brown.

Throughout 1990 and 1991, the treatment of incest survivors was a subject of discussion (Continued on page 74)

June Callwood

(Continued from page 44) at staff and board meetings. How to deal with the self-destructive actions of women in flashback? Was the time expended in counselling incest survivors diminishing the quality of the hostel service as a whole? The staff struggled, finally turning to a "facilitator" – an outsider who might help a group resolve interpersonal problems. It still came to a divide. Three staff members, two of them women of colour, owned up to lacking the training and expertise to deal with women in dangerous mental health. They wondered whether they, and perhaps even their colleagues, weren't doing more harm than good. Maybe incest survivors were just not a Nellie's thing.

That was not the view of the rest of the staff, including one woman of colour, who were determined to carry on as always. "Maybe it wasn't said," Audrey Ellis, the secretary of the board, told me, "but the feeling that was given by the staff who were prepared to do it was: 'If you can't deal with it, you may be in the wrong job.' At that point, issues of power arose." It appeared to the two black service providers who had expressed reservations, one a former resident, both relatively new on staff, that consensus was just another word for "fuck off."

"The women there the longest indeed have the power, even if there's no formal power structure," said Ellis. "But the structure is based not just on longevity. It's also based on knowledge, work. Lots of the service providers sit on other organizations, and go to city-council meetings. I'm not saying the two women of colour didn't do that – I don't know – but they accused the white staff of being workaholics, 'obsessive and sick.' The attacks implied something purposeful, as if the whites were a corporate elite of multinationals reaping great profits. Women dealing with incest aren't in it for fame and fortune! It's turned out that we haven't spoken for a year about incest, only about the horrible things white women did."

The situation polarized, and it wasn't pretty. It polarized around power, race, sexual preference, ideologies, personalities, written texts, spoken words, even body language – not all at once, but with the mounting force of implosion. The board split into three main factions: women with a business-as-usual approach; women of colour trying to show the workings of systemic racism at Nellie's; and their sympathizers. The staff split. When the Women of Colour Caucus – mostly heterosexual – said they would bring racism before

the board, they were told by white women on staff: "Then we'll say you're homophobic."

Laura Coramai joined Nellie's board, and the Women of Colour Caucus, in October, 1991. She had been nominated by a black service provider who thought the board "needed a different perspective." Before she would meet with me about this piece, Coramai wanted to ask a few questions – "like a quiz," she said. It began: "Name a few ways the media distorts the

"Those women were trying to stop a problem at Nellie's," says one feminist. "June's not the enemy – she's making herself the enemy"

reality of women of colour." A week later, Coramai called to say we were on. To Callwood's thinking, Coramai was one of "the bad guys." Ellis thought she was a troublemaker: "Laura Coramai said many times racism was more important than Nellie's." Sitting across from me at a downtown eatery was a woman of slim build and serious mien who had arrived with written notes and a pile of Xeroxes, including a few she had copied for me: assorted newspaper clippings about the demonstration at the 1989 PEN conference.

What did PEN have to do with Nellie's? "The connection is June Callwood told a black woman to fuck off. She treats some people differently than others. It's not as though June thought about it and learned from it. I would say at one point of my life I was racist – I'm Scottish, South African, Chinese, Canadian-born – but the difference between me and someone else is I have looked at it."

Coramai remembers her first board meeting, on November 5, 1991. Callwood, who had already served three terms on the board, was back to establish a regular fund-raising event and get a resource centre open. She had been trying to get a centre off the ground for two years. She and a former staff member had surveyed all the women who had used Nellie's,

both the hostel and the housing programme. "The women wanted a place to come and see staff, and a place to bring their kids," she said. A public-health nurse, incest counselling, a drop-in centre, a day-care centre, nutrition classes, and a literacy programme were part of the plan. The Women of Colour Caucus said English as a Second Language was needed, so she added it. When Sylvia Sweeney, at the time with the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, told June she thought she could get some of the money, Callwood sprang: "I dusted off the proposal and sent it in." When she took the news to the board she was prepared for joy, not criticism.

"A needs assessment should be updated," Coramai told me. "Location was important, for example, for outreach. Someone asked: 'Is there a committee?' Callwood said: 'I got it under control.' Someone else said: 'When there's a service coming up, there should be at least one more board representative on the organizing committee.' June looked around: 'Anyone want to be on the committee?' She pointed around with her finger and said: 'You.' It was Zina Haong, a Korean-Canadian, another new woman-of-colour board member. That was a weird way to be asked to be on a committee. She wouldn't have done that to a white woman. I'm part Asian, I know how people perceive Asian people – as people who will join a committee and not cause trouble." Coramai had no way of knowing Callwood's finger was sore from all the pointing it had done in thirty years. It was all there in Founding 101.

"They wanted the process to be stopped immediately, so they could be controlled," remembers Callwood. "In one version I heard the caucus wanted to take it over – make it available to any woman all over the city. There are 2,000 women in Nellie's network! They said we had to redesign the programme. They said it was racist. I was mad – is having a public-health nurse racist? Is having a literacy programme racist? I said: 'We've got a window here.'" In her fierceness, she said a lot more. Frightened, some of the women of colour felt they'd been put down by "power and privilege"; Callwood saw bull-headedness and naivety. (When she resigned, the resource centre went with her. Said the lawyer Clayton Ruby, Callwood's old friend: "She had the money on unstated terms: 'We know you and your track record.' There's a world out

June Callwood

there where you get judged on what you do. She's a lady that creates.")

The table had been laid six times over for the fateful board meeting on the evening of December 3, 1991. Callwood was one of more than thirty women, board and staff, gathered in the basement of Nellie's, which had been renovated as a children's playroom. Plastic kids' chairs, a few upholstered swivellers, an old sofa, extra folding chairs, all in a circle. Nowhere to put stuff. Plate of cheese being passed. Someone always buys food. It was going to be a long evening. Always is.

The heart of every board meeting is the reading of staff reports. Seated six or seven chairs down from Callwood was Joan Johnson. Callwood recalls an elaborate turban and "angry body language." At a point which everyone who was there, and many more who weren't, recall as climactic, Johnson spoke. Weeping with emotion, she read a "letter" – pages of handwritten notes she had co-authored with Karen Hinds, another woman of colour on staff, on behalf of the Women of Colour Caucus. She complained of racism at Nellie's, and the need to address it, seriously and systematically. Her voice escalated into a high-pitched cry. She was tired of being silenced, she said, and of being ignored by the board and the white women on staff. By all accounts, it was a howl of pain. "When Joan Johnson unloaded all that, it was a powerful unloading," said Ellis. From various members of the board came a chorus of: "Thank you for sharing your pain." As Callwood tells it: "I waited till she finished, and then I went at it." Reduced to their essence, Callwood's attack and Johnson's response were:

Callwood: "Are you the same woman we helped for over a year?"

Johnson: "Do I have to be grateful all my life?"

"I went into emotional shock – everybody did," remembers Laura Coramai. "The chairperson at the meeting – a white woman – tried to stop June – she put her hand up and said 'Wait.' June continued – she didn't follow the rules – she continued – then more people were going 'Wait' – then the women of colour left the room to discuss it. People's safety was not being recognized." In the midst of the mayhem, one of the hostel staff came over and gave Callwood a hug. She was later reprimanded by a facilitator for hugging a racist. One board member said to me: "When June spoke – 'I don't understand how

you can make such incredible accusations,' she said – that was not a wise thing to do. It's like saying to your daughter who is worried she is fat that she's not fat. June denied Joan Johnson's feelings." Callwood's feelings weren't in good shape, either: "I sat there sobbing. I was so demoralized by the hatred. I stayed to the end."

Callwood missed the next board meeting in January. (She vacations in Fort Lauderdale that month.) On February 4, 1992, she was back in Nellie's basement for the next meeting. The board had decided to speak to both her and Johnson in hopes of reconciliation. Callwood was asked to apologize for revealing that Johnson had once been a resident – "for her racist behaviour," said Laura Coramai bluntly. "All June had to do was listen," said the *Toronto Star* columnist Michele Landsberg, who later wrote up the events at Nellie's. "All June had to say was: 'I beg your pardon,'" said the writer Marni Jackson, a Callwood loyalist.

"Again there was a white woman in the chair," recalls Coramai. "She asked: 'Any new business?' – but everyone was waiting. Joan Johnson asked: 'Do you have anything to say?' June Callwood said: 'Yes,' and she went into a very sarcastic way of talking. She was not sincere. It was racist behaviour. Also her body language – it was dismissive, nonchalant. It was only a half-hearted apology. So Joan Johnson said: 'I can't hear that, then.' Then a white woman said: 'You can at least give June a chance.' My body went into what's-going-to-happen mode. June Callwood said: 'Joan and I are friends.' That was not a racial slur, but the tone – again the caucus had to go out of the room – round two, here we go – I couldn't believe this – our people had to do it again – the long road again."

Callwood remembers: "I said: 'I'm going to apologize, although I was coerced. I'm apologizing for the breach of confidence, but I'm not going to apologize for taking her on.' So it was partial. Joan Johnson interrupted me throughout. The noise was so loud there was a five-minute recess. The women of colour bolted into the hall. The meeting resumed. 'Next item?' Some of the women of colour said: 'Aren't we going to deal with what June just said?' The chair said we were going to move on. Then Laura Coramai said: 'We've been meeting in the hall. We're going to fix you, you racist.' That's what I heard. In the hubbub not everyone heard it." Coramai denies the remark: "What I said was: 'We as a caucus have to deal with that incident of racism.' What hap-

pened with June is she got defensive. If you feel it's your space, your organization, then it's: 'Who are you to question me?' That's what happens."

"I got up," continued Callwood. "I waited a second to see the reaction. Nobody paid attention. Then I had to get my boots – it was February – my glasses, papers. I went out into the hall and found I couldn't get air in my lungs. I've never had asthma but I guess it was an asthma attack. I couldn't breathe. Audrey Ellis came out and said: 'Let me drive you home.' Then I found I could breathe. She phoned my husband to say I'd had a problem."

Ellis said, "I had to cross the room as I was leaving behind her. I knew I had just been put into a camp with the racists. 'That's too bad!' I thought. 'I'm not going to be frozen to a chair!' That's what we're dealing with. There were a group of white women who grovelled. They were trying to recognize the legitimate feelings of women of colour, but they went overboard."

After that meeting, the Women of Colour Caucus contacted Carolann Wright, a community worker and politician involved in the formation of a city-wide collective known as the Coalition of Women of Colour Working in Women's and Community Services, which had about forty members including some from Nellie's. Wright knew she was risking blame when she entered the fray, but felt there was no other course: "Having been on the receiving end in organizations I've been in – I've always known I can lose my job – I've just been very indignant around this stuff."

"These women were obsessed by a kind of racism: 'I founded this place, I'm powerful, I can do what I want.' Founders take it personal. It's their baby, their life. We say, 'It's a nice vision [but] here's what it needs now: a cultural context.' What do we have to do to get heard?"

In March, after consulting with staff and board members, Wright and the coalition presented a list of their demands to Nellie's board: nine were for structural and procedural changes in the interests of clarity, accountability, and meaningful representation of racial minorities. The tenth demand was for Callwood's resignation for "being emotionally and verbally abusive to women of colour on staff and for violating confidentiality as to the history of a former resident." Wright said, "We singled June Callwood out for her resignation because she was the one specified by staff," meaning Joan Johnson and Karen Hinds, with the sup-

port of the Women of Colour Caucus.

In April, Callwood went through with On Stage At Nellie's, a gala fund-raiser that netted \$22,000. Then she chose to leave rather than endure "the humiliation" of having the call for her termination debated. The board could not agree on the wording of an acceptance. The secretary wrote down: "The caucus will take June's letter of resignation and examine it to see if it's a racist document."

"Are you writing about Former-Saint-Now-Just-a-Woman?" Callwood's daughter Jill had asked one morning. What I heard from Callwood's political opponents was more like Former-Woman-Now-Just-Power-'n'-Privilege. Callwood wasn't powerful enough to save her weekly column in *The Globe and Mail* from being axed in 1989. Mainly, she wrote about social issues, with a strong focus on the individuals who endured and grappled with them, and she worked her buttocks off on the column.

She also spent two months of every year campaigning for a raise. Most memorably, she was seen dashing through the newsroom one day outfitted in a babushka, torn trench coat, unlaced sneakers, and very ripped pantihose. She had a staff

photographer take a picture that she slipped under then editor in chief Norman Webster's door with a note: "Give this poor woman a raise." Those were her happy times. *Globe* publisher Roy Megarry was down on the column – too depressing – and Webster's successor, William Thorsell, didn't like it much, either. Callwood hung in as long as she could, then she left. She remembers her departure anatomically, as the sensation of Thorsell walking her out the door, his hand in the small of her back.

Callwood's background was not privileged. She spent her childhood in Belle River, Ontario, near Chatham – "around four hundred people, we're talking village," she said. She is French Catholic and Métis on her maternal side; on her father's, English and Protestant. Her mother, Marie Margaret Hortense Lavoie (they called her Gladys), was sent to a residential convent in Montreal when she was four. When she started coming back to Belle River, in her early teens, she was in a rebellious frame of mind. "My mother was for upward mobility in every fingernail," Callwood said. "She meets my father one summer – she's seventeen, he's nineteen – and he wants to lay her. My dad was English. My mom thought: 'This

is how you get out of Belle River.' They eloped. I was born six months after they married." Her sister, Jane, who now lives in Sturgeon Falls, Ontario, was born two years later.

Harold Callwood, known as Byng after he accidentally shot himself in the foot, was a school dropout. As a teenager, he had worked as a handyman, then a plumber servicing summer cottages. He graduated to milk cans – repairing, re-tinning, and finally manufacturing them. Both he and Gladys had their flings. In 1936, Byng took off to the prairies, leaving his wife and two girls to fend for themselves. Gladys, who had left the church, nonetheless put the nine-year-old June into a convent to "make a lady" of her. Said Callwood, "I came back with a rosary and Bible. Mother threw them out."

Just after war broke out, Gladys and her daughters discovered Byng had enlisted in the army, and they moved to Regina to join him. In 1940, after Byng went overseas, Gladys took June and Jane to Brantford, Ontario. She had a boyfriend there. She worked in a bank. Harassed, she was impatient with June. "Do I have to support you?" my mother said. So I quit school and got a job. At sixteen a cub reporter for *The Brantford*

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June Callwood

Expositor, Callwood was assigned to cover Airforce training base SFTS No. 5, and an army base.

It was the beginning of a career in newspapers, a love of flying – and eleven "semi-engagements" to fresh-faced pilots just out of high school. They spun her around the canteen floor to the big-band sounds of Glenn Miller and some gave her their wings as keepsakes before going off to war. All eleven were killed. Callwood still has those wings in a Birks box, along with the letters she wrote that came back marked "killed" or "missing – pre-

Appendix A

sumed dead." She can't bear to open it. Byng Callwood returned safely, and "got to be the poultry king of Canada!" said Callwood. He went down to the States, saw an eviscerating machine, and had one made from his drawings. Callwood's dad introduced the Canadian poultry industry to the modern chicken.

"My picture of my childhood was I must have been pretty deprived," Callwood reflected one day. "But when I thought of the self-reliance I had, I began to see what really happens. My grandfathers took me over." Grandfather Lavoie was a bootlegger. His front was a restaurant called the Log Cabin Inn. There were

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chairs and tables on the main floor, and a dining room with a dance floor upstairs. The speakeasy lay to the left of the stairs, behind a metal door. Grandfather Lavoie lost everything in the stock-market crash of 1929. His Chinese cook sat in an empty kitchen, while he sat playing solitaire in an empty dining room. When June was six, a couple came to dinner. They cranked up the Victrola. She did a tap dance. She got a dime. She has never forgotten a single cent of her income.

Grandfather Callwood was a magistrate of Essex and Kent counties. It was from him that June, while still a toddler, got her first insights into the justice system. "The family legend is I sat on his lap in court," she said. "The family used to say I was so interested in what happened I didn't make noise. He earmarked money in his will to send me to law school – that was in 1928 and I was a girl! – but by the time he died it went into his estate."

Callwood's recollections of her childhood are all mixed up, like everyone else's. She read a lot, had "a lot of lone time," and mostly relished it. Her two best friends in Belle River were Grandfather Lavoie's Chinese cook and Nanny Garber, a Jewish girl whose family had a dress shop – "nobody would play with Nanny."

As she practised individuality, she was also learning social responsibility: "There was a lot of mutual taking care of each other. If something went wrong anywhere in Belle River, it was your problem – you had to fix it. Those responses were built into me." So is guilt: "For the mistakes I make, I eat myself out – is Catholic guilt worse than Jewish guilt? Catholic guilt is a humdinger. To disappoint myself is very hard to forgive. I misjudged the whole thing at Nellie's. I replay it in my head – 'What would you do the next time?' Dammit, I wish I had a better sense of how things have changed!"

A woman of resolve, she has never resolved her life: "I never sought a career line." The one thing she did seek was stability – a man – "somebody really sound and truthful, because of my dad. Both my sister and I married the opposite of our father. He was always deceiving people." Callwood found hers at *The Globe and Mail* – Trent Frayne, whom she calls Dreamie – where she got a job in 1942. Her first of three go-arounds at the paper (and the only salaried one) lasted to 1945. She was the only female general reporter on the paper. George McCullagh, the publisher, came on to her. The other men watched out for her. She married Frayne in 1944, wearing a pair of pumps that cost a whopping twelve dollars – "I

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had been fitted to carry nuclear bombs – “the first female, and the first non-military Canadian, in spite of that hairdo, to have this trip,” noted Cherry.

What Cherry hadn't noticed under that hairdo were signs of a nervous breakdown – an identity crisis, Callwood calls it – that began in March, 1956, and lasted nearly a year: “Oh, I think I'd avoided being an adolescent – I was only thinking about being a good wife and mother and writer – I needed to work it out.” Her

Chatelaine asked if Callwood could “help” Dr. Marion Hilliard, the “obstetrician of choice of a whole bunch of us,” put down her thoughts, daringly feminist ones for the times, in a series that was so successful it became Callwood's alias-Hilliard's first book for Doubleday in the U.S. The second was *How to Talk with Practically Anybody About Practically Anything* by Barbara Walters. She mimicked Otto Preminger in 1977 and, in 1987, Bob White. “It was like being a parrot – it's a pretty

As “Canada's husband and wife freelance writing team,” Callwood and Frayne were featured almost as much as they featured others

remember looking down and thinking “That's six dollars on each foot!” She kept her “single name” not on feminist principle but because it was *Globe* policy not to hire married women, certainly not ones married to other staff.

She left her job when she was obviously pregnant with her daughter Jill. “I found I was bored at home, so I took flying lessons in 1947, when Jill was one and a half,” said Callwood. “I'd put her in a folding playpen in the control tower and fly. I got my licence, too. I thought I was finished with writing. My flying instructor was a woman who flew with the Ferry Command – she delivered Spitfires – named Violet Millstead.” Callwood wrote a profile of Millstead and sold it to *Liberty* magazine – fifty dollars. “I realized I could write magazine pieces at home, and still do all the stuff a wife should do – and bring in some money.” By 1951, she was the mother of three – two girls and a boy – and moving on to bigger things at *Chatelaine* and *Maclean's*.

Her flight path was observed by the *Globe and Mail* society columnist Zena Cherry in 1956: “The other day, glamour-puss June Callwood, competent writer, wife of another competent writer, Trent Frayne, and mother of three small Fraynes, was at the C. Ward Chase cocktail party, hatless and with a new hairdo – flar on top and swooped down over her head like a helmet. June explained, ‘I said to my hairdresser, Charles of Cyrano's, ‘do me one that'll go under an airforce coverall’ – ‘Suez?’ everyone asked. ‘North Pole,’ said June.” She was on her way to Wichita, Kansas, to board one of the B-47s that

doctor prescribed sodium amytal. For the first time in her life she got cold sores. (The second time was last July, after reading Michele Landsberg's analysis of the Nellie's crisis in *The Toronto Star*.)

Callwood's magazine pieces for *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine* had personality and life. What was to become a liability, in her view, was something she had going for her: “I'm extremely reactive. I don't stay cool enough in my head. People are more centred than I. I'm busy paying attention to everything going on around me.” She covered Marilyn Bell's swim across Lake Ontario, alert to every nuance of what was happening on shore. She blew the cover of the Happy Gang, having discovered, by interviewing them separately, that the seven entertainers were not so happy. Her writing had a social edge. In the 1950s, she tackled subjects like the sexual abuse of children, birth control, test-tube babies, and “the battle of the sexes.”

Whoever Callwood didn't get to write about, her husband, who had also gone freelance, did. Promoted as “Canada's husband and wife freelance writing team,” the couple were featured almost as often as they featured others. In 1956, they questioned a panel of child-rearing experts assembled by *Maclean's*. Callwood and daughter Jesse were on the cover of *Chatelaine* to advertise Callwood's “My baby's first year.” It got to be “June Callwood Spends a Day in the Operating Room” and “June Callwood Spends 17 Hours in an Emergency Ward.” She says, “I did everything – we both did. We were Depression kids. Everything was for income.”

Including ghostwriting. An editor at

limited thing to do,” said Callwood, but she hasn't forgotten the cheque for \$18,000 she got for the Barbara Walters book.

Emotions – developed out of files she kept on love, hate, fear, anger, courage, guilt, depression, anxiety, and happiness after a year spent reading psychology – became Callwood's first book for Doubleday with her own name on it. It was also a turning point in her thinking: “The key thing I learned is if you treat a baby really well, the baby will turn out a nice person. If you don't, it might lead to unhappiness, even suicide. I thought: ‘I'm going to make sure babies are treated well,’ and I've been doing it ever since. That's been my centre pole.”

In 1966, she had a cause to hang from the centre pole. “My son Barney – he was eighteen then – was bringing home hungry kids. Many were out of foster homes and susceptible to drugs – they wouldn't get treatment. I found a house, and went to the churches and synagogues – Beth Tzedec gave \$200, Holy Blossom gave \$2,000, the United Church, \$5,000 – to my amazement, people gave. ‘This was easy! You can fix stuff!’ The house rented for \$600 a month. I put up \$600 and opened the house one day – a hundred kids slept there the first night. Things got scrambled – drug overdose, rape, everything else. We made some mistakes – no money, no staff – we didn't know what we were doing.”

Yorkville Digger House wasn't Callwood's first venture into founding – she was a founding member of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association in 1964 – but it was her first hostel. “It comes from

June Callwood

journalism," she said. "Journalism makes you go to primary sources. You've got to do more than a story." She became a story at 11 p.m. on July 10, 1968, when she was carted off to jail in a paddy wagon for protesting police conduct in Yorkville. "They put me in a cell smeared in shit, which was a mean thing to do. I thought I was ruined. In my generation, you didn't get arrested unless you were an awful person. One year later, I was B'nai Brith Woman of the Year!"

Up to then, Callwood's name was known to everyone to do with journalism. Her arrest pulled her out of the crowd. "I could talk about her to my dentist," said Robert Fulford. "She gathered steam and regard." By the time Nellie's was up and running, in 1974, she knew what she was doing. When, towards the end of the seventies, a developer was going to demolish the Nellie's house, Callwood pitched the Rotary Club to give the \$70,000 to buy it. Formerly a parrot, she became a golden goose.

"Power and privilege?" she flares. "It's an ability to help to change. It doesn't give me personal pleasure. My prominence is a trust. I don't have power – I have influence. Now, if I phone someone to help Jessie's, I might not get it. I don't know what to change. What is it they'd like me to become? Except for my son's death, nothing in my life has hurt so much."

According to Callwood's estimate, Nellie's has forgone \$150,000 in donations since she left. She has not sat idle. Last December, she was helping a group get a drop-in centre for teenagers with AIDS, and was in touch with the Prime Minister's Office about preventing the deportation of refugee families to Eritrea and Somalia. She is tireless. "Yesterday," she said to me one morning, "I walked through the front door, all the lights were on, my guy comes downstairs, I get undressed, we go to bed in the amiable way we have for the past fifty years, I was quite restored. We're famous for leaving parties early."

At Nellie's, after Callwood resigned, the situation kept worsening. At the end of May, 1992, three white board members, after consultation with the United Way, had ready an interim grievance procedure. Laura Coramai wouldn't let it pass. In June, Carolann Wright and the coalition arrived with more demands: Joan Johnson and Karen Hinds would not attend staff meetings until "the white-racist-lesbians were fired," according to the lawyer, Mary Lou McPhedran. Harassed and iso-

lated, Johnson and Hinds eventually filed grievances with the Ontario Human Rights Commission, a path followed by two more staff and a board member.

Callwood's friends, led by Pierre Berton, leapt to her defence, which did her more harm than good. From then on it was: "Is Callwood a racist?" Said the feminist politico Natalie La Roche: "June is not the enemy – she's making herself the enemy! They were trying to stop a problem in the workplace at Nellie's. June is the one who altered that battleground so June's issue becomes a national issue. She could back off, and say she was wrong, and go on to a new challenge. She's costing. She's wasting national energy!"

As tensions mounted, Carolann Wright, at the request of *The Toronto Star*, co-authored an article that ran on September 3, 1992. An attempt at disentangling the Nellie's mess in print, it contained no attributed quotes (except for those allegedly spoken by Callwood) for fear that either Johnson or Hinds could lose her job or suffer reprisal. Wright hadn't wanted a discussion in the media in the first place: "When we're written about, it's all the stereotypes – we're 'aggressive,' or we 'want to take over' – take over what? What is it you're holding onto?" Callwood was not only singled out but made an example of: "Power and privilege do not inoculate one from being challenged on the issue of racism," wrote Wright. The battle of the last straws was joined.

"When I read it," Callwood told me on September 14, "I began to scream, and scream, and scream till I was hoarse. I'm sixty-eight. Forever, people who call me June Callwood will ask: 'Wasn't there a scandal?' All the coin I've got is credibility. The only money I make is from speeches. If you were an organization with lots of people of colour, would you ask me to be a speaker?" She took a sleeping pill and went to bed. The next morning she wrote to the then minister of community and social services, Marion Boyd, with a copy to the Nellie's board, and asked her to disband the board and put in a management committee. "They made a mistake picking on someone with a reputation who had been around a long, long time," she said.

Asking the ministry to intervene was like asking Ronald Reagan to invade Grenada. The ministry is not supposed to involve itself with the internal matters of an organization. Boyd did not fire the board. What with all those who had resigned in the spring of 1992 and six more resignations to come in November, there would soon be no board in any case. In

McPhedran's view, there hadn't been a functioning board for two years: "The board had failed to act. The alarm bell was ringing around race and around meaningful inclusion. It rang for a long time, and it wasn't answered. The issues raised by the women of colour were valid. People are in massive denial. It was up to the board to be a board – to go beyond personalities to objective criteria."

While McPhedran doesn't see the blow-up at Nellie's as spelling the end of the nontraditional collective model, others aren't so sure. Senator Anne Cools, who is Barbados-born and powerfully herself, and who founded Women in Transition, a women's hostel, in the seventies, was forthright: "These places are a mess. These directors are not accountable. The real issue is: why are women not managing these agencies properly? Can staff just get rid of boards? A board is a corporate entity. If staff are able to call a board member onto the carpet, they're in conflict of interest. Are these charities any more? Redressing historic grievances is not a charity according to the Income Tax Act. Charities should not be a mechanism for social justice. That dollar isn't there for the advancement of any political cause, however righteous. These agencies all enmeshed in these struggles – it raises the question of how much assistance is being given to women."

Cools continued: "What we see here is the inherent backwardness of women fighting for power. They don't know what power is. This is a group of gals playing doll's house. It's a big house, but the relationships inside it are very congested. That's why systemic racism can be personified. It's the white lesbians fighting with the black girls. It's the engaging of psychological dynamics without knowing what it is you are engaging. Empowerment? This is all negative power. It's the quintessence of the expression of helplessness and powerlessness – women savaging women. If any group talks about empowerment and doesn't talk about what they've done to June Callwood, then they don't understand building something or creating something. It works through individuals who get things done. If an agency has people like these, they get money. Once the golden goose is dead, it won't come back. Dead is dead."

Meanwhile, the board approached Sylvia Moustacalis, of the Ministry of Community and Social Services' Toronto office, to see about putting in a management committee. Laura Coramai was pleased: "Everyone felt it was helpful

*The writer in 1986
Callwood was a high
flyer. In 1992, she
had to learn to glide.
'I misjudged the
situation at Nellie's.
Damn it, I wish I
had a better sense of
how things changed.'*

June Callwood

when she stepped in – a chance for grievances to be addressed, thank God." Moustacalis proposed to put in a four-person team, technically a subcommittee of the board, by the end of last September. It would establish terms of reference, institute work around racism and homophobia, coordinate communications between board and staff, oversee an operational review, appoint an independent party to examine allegations of sexual harassment, and assist in the implementation of proposals. When Coramai discovered that all the policy changes that the Women of Colour Caucus had in mind would take up to five years to implement, she knew "it wouldn't be the be-all and end all."

On November 2, four board members resigned, leaving two women of colour and, in Coramai's words, "three very dedicated women in denial." She talked that week with Moustacalis, who urged her to get off the board. She gave the same advice to Zina Haong. Coramai told me: "I was so drained. For me, it's made me see how ingrained systemic racism is in society. I understood how it worked personally, but it wasn't until my experience at Nellie's that I realized what a lot of things are in place to hold it up. It makes me sad and angry. I also realized how difficult it is to explain. I don't know how to explain it. Everything is so subtle. It's easier if racial slurs are thrown up on the bathroom wall. Here it couldn't be pinpointed."

Haong resigned the day after Coramai

The three dedicated white women called a membership meeting and began recruiting board members – and ex-board members – until there were once again twenty-one, including seven women of colour. The management committee arrived in mid-December, three months behind schedule. It was sent packing. The new board scheduled an organizational review by outside consultants, and intends to mount a public relations campaign when it's over.

On December 22, the board fired Joan Johnson. She, too, had feared for her reputation and her livelihood. She didn't stand a chance. Long even by Nellie's standards, the December 3 meeting had come to an end, a year and three weeks after it was called to order. ■

END

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