

Forces of reason fight back against the PC brigade

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There's no doubt the cultural Left's political correctness movement is all-pervasive and dominates our universities, schools, businesses, the media (especially the ABC and Fairfax), politics and way of life.

Almost daily there are examples: "safe spaces" and "sensitivity tool kits" in universities; Qantas and defence force manuals abolishing "he" and "she" in preference to gender-neutral pronouns such as "they"; junior sports abolishing score-keeping because it's wrong to have winners and losers.

I first wrote about political correctness in 1993 when I discovered an American book titled *The Official Politically Correct Dictionary and Handbook*. It was satirical and lighthearted, and included examples such as "personnel access structures" for manholes and "chemically inconvenienced" instead of alcoholic.

Today, it's clear that political correctness is no longer a laughing matter. Instead it represents an insidious and invasive ideology imposing censorship and groupthink in areas such as multiculturalism, race, the environment, gender and sexuality, capitalism, and the benefits of Judeo-Christianity and Western civilisation.

Dare to question multiculturalism, and you are labelled racist and a white supremacist. Criticise Islam and you are Islamophobic. Argue against the Safe Schools gender and sexuality program, and you are attacked as heteronormative, homophobic and transphobic.

Defend Western civilisation and our Judeo-Christian heritage, and you are Eurocentric, binary, guilty of privileging whiteness and, worst of all, Christian.

Attacks on former tennis champion Margaret Court for opposing same-sex marriage prove the PC movement refuses to tolerate disagreement and open debate. Those who question or criticise Aboriginal culture are especially at risk. This was evidenced during a lecture by University of Sydney academic Fiona Martin in which she attacked the work of *The Australian's* former cartoonist Bill Leak — who died in March last year — before saying: "may he rest not in peace".

Such is the dire nature of the situation that American feminist Camille Paglia says: "We are plunged once again into an ethical chaos where intolerance masquerades as tolerance and where individual liberty is crushed by the tyranny of groupthink."

One of the foundations of Western civilisation is an education system based on rationality and reason, but even here the political correctness movement has spread its infection. A rainbow alliance of theories including neo-Marxism, radical feminism, postmodernism, deconstructionism, and gender and postcolonial theories dominate the academy.

British academic Michael Young said knowledge was simply a social construct employed by those more powerful to dominate and control so-called victim groups. French Marxist Louis Althusser said education was a key part of "the ideological state apparatus" without which capitalism could not survive.

Not only do those committed to deconstructionism deny the referential quality of language, thus making reasoned, impartial debate impossible, but radical feminists denounce reason and rationality as a phallogentric, binary concept designed to enforce male dominance and control.

Notwithstanding the unparalleled benefits of Western civilisation, politically correct academics argue a liberal view of education must be overthrown as it promotes whiteness. Omid Tofighian from the University of Sydney says whiteness leads to “different forms of domination and marginalisation — such as racism, sexism, classism, historical injustice and prejudice based on religion”.

As a result of universities teaching “postmodernist gruel”, Paglia says, we have reached a situation where “history is a narrative; every narrative is a fiction; objectivity is impossible, so who cares what’s real and what’s not?”.

Author and Sinologist Pierre Ryckmans, who taught at the Australian National University and Sydney University, went as far as saying that, as a result of postmodern theory, universities were “doomed to founder in the shallows of farce and incoherence”.

Given recent events that prove the dominance of the political correctness movement and the success of the cultural Left’s long march, it might be reasonable to conclude all is lost.

Fortunately, that is not the case. Such is the bizarre and doctrinaire nature of political correctness that there is a growing groundswell of opposition based on the belief that reason and sanity are preferable to ideology and indoctrination.

The Institute of Public Affairs’ Western Civilisation Program, the PM Glynn Institute at the Australian Catholic University and the Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation provide evidence of a resurgence in acknowledging and defending a liberal education within the Western tradition.

Seminars exploring the significance and importance of Western civilisation organised by the Perth-based Dawson Society and Mannkal Foundation also illustrate that all is not lost.

Kevin Donnelly is a senior research fellow at the Australian Catholic University and author of How Political Correctness is Destroying Australia (Wilkinson Publishing).