

Political Correctness and The Revolt Of The Primitive

The term “political correctness” made its way into public consciousness through an article by Richard Bernstein in the *New York Times* (1991). It referred to a strain of post-Marxist leftist thought in which the struggle between economic classes had been replaced¹, as a primary ontological framework, with a more differentiated set of oppositions based on such differences as sex, race, and sexual orientation². Thus, as Bernstein put it:

Central to pc-ness, which has its roots in 1960's radicalism, is the view that Western society has for centuries been dominated by what is often called 'the white male power structure' or 'Patriarchal hegemony.' A related belief is that everybody but white heterosexual males has suffered some form of repression and been denied a cultural voice ... (Section 4: p.1)

And he added that, to many of those concerned with this phenomenon, the disturbing thing about political correctness (“PC”) has not been the content of its ideology, but the principle of argumentation that it has employed:

more than an earnest expression of belief, “politically correct” has become a sarcastic jibe used by those, conservatives and classical liberals alike, to describe what they see as a growing intolerance, a closing of debate, a pressure to conform to a radical program or risk being accused of a commonly reiterated trio of thought crimes: sexism, racism and homophobia. (Section 4: p. 4)

Anyone familiar with the climate of the universities of our time³ will recognize these developments, but for others a story may be useful. One that will do as well as any recalls an early experience of my own with PC. This was in 1987, after I had returned from a sabbatical where I had been working on a book on narcissistic processes in organizations. The campus minister was interested in my work and asked me to make a presentation at an institute that he was starting. The presentation required an overview of Freud’s concept of the Oedipus complex.

As I was going through this part of the argument, a woman in the audience, who happened to be the chair of the psychology department at the time, had what can only be called a fit. Without addressing herself to anything I was saying in particular, and without any apparent attempt to control her rage, she said that Freud was a sexist and a misogynist, and went on to condemn the entire psychoanalytic enterprise, which she said was “shot through” with sexism and racism. As she talked, it became clear to me that she didn’t know what she was talking about. She said, for example, that the Oedipus complex did not apply to women, which was why Freud invented the idea of the Electra complex. She was evidently unaware of the fact that it was Jung, not Freud, who used the term “Electra complex.”

Despite this woman's evident lack of grounding in her subject matter, her voice seemed to express a feeling of absolute authority. I recall that at the time this struck me as

very odd. But what struck me as even more peculiar was that as she engaged in this frenzied performance, the other members of the audience were not looking at her as if she were acting strangely, but were looking at me as if I had done something contemptible and despicable.

For the psychoanalytically oriented social scientist, nothing is more useful than a sense of the bizarre. I was being browbeaten, and the other faculty present for the occasion were looking at me as if I had committed a crime. The atmosphere in that room more resembled a police interrogation than the dispassionate search for truth that traditionally has characterized the academic setting. This was a fact that was at least as well known to the other faculty members in the room as it was to me. And yet there they were, passive participants in this assault.

So what was going on here? How did ideas representing such ignorance not only arise in a university setting, but come to be dominant within it, and to dominate it so powerfully that it has become acceptable to meet alternative ideas with rage and disdain? Certainly it was not through their merits, as demonstrated in the intellectual competition that has heretofore defined the university. Observers will acknowledge that these ideas are rarely defended on their intellectual strengths. Rather, they are simply stated and their critics insulted. At one level the answer to how they have come to monopolize intellectual life is "political correctness." But while that is certainly true, it simply raises the question at another level. For where did political correctness get its power? How did an assemblage of dubious ideas, together with a manner of argumentation foreign to everything the university has traditionally stood for, come to dominate the university? And what is the nature of the university so transformed? Those are the questions toward which our inquiry now turns.

Part of the foundation for our inquiry has already been developed. As we have seen, our times have been marked by an increase in our distance from reality, by a separation of behavior from its consequences. This has given rise to the idea of the uselessness of the father and to a rebellion against him in the name of the primordial mother. Political correctness, as a social movement, is the form that this rebellion takes. At the same time, it has come to be the way our ideas of ourselves are shaped in the absence of a direct engagement with reality. To get a better idea of what this means, we need to explore further the role of the father.

The Role Of The Father In Socialization

The father's function, as we have argued, is to engage the indifferent external world and to make a space in that world that is amenable to the life of the family. His role is to create a distance between the family and external reality so that the maternal world can be realized within the family, giving the children a deep feeling that they are important and loved. His role in bringing up the children is related to this. The role of the father is to represent indifferent external reality within the family so that, by introjecting him, by coming to see things from his point of view, the children can learn to cope with that reality.⁴

The father's job is to convey to the children the image that indifferent others would have of them. Seeing ourselves as he sees us, we develop the capacity for what I shall call *objective self-consciousness*. By this, I do not mean to say that we see ourselves as we really are, but rather that we come to be able to see ourselves as objects, in ways that are not determined by our own feelings, whether positive or negative. We develop the capacity to see ourselves as objects in a world of others who share the same idea of reality and understand themselves as objects in the same ways. In Jacques Lacan's (1977) terms, we learn to place ourselves within the symbolic. This is how children learn the rules of exchange that operate within their culture: what they must do to get along, in a reciprocal way, with others who are indifferent to them as individuals. It gives us a basis for coordinating our activities with others in our culture and mediates our relations with them.

The institutionalization of these rules forms the society's normative structure, what George Herbert Mead (1934) called the "generalized other": the mutual expectations we have of each other and the associated beliefs about appropriate behavior. The normative structure mediates our relations with others and ties us into their lives. This mutual relationship among our lives is what gives the normative structure its moral character. We become socialized members of the society by internalizing the normative structure, turning external demands into obligations. In this way, we come to differentiate between legitimate authority and coercion. We learn why we must inhibit our sexuality and aggression and what a fair day's work is. Indeed, it is only through this process that the child comes to make sense of the fact that it has to work in the first place. In general, we come to understand what we previously could not understand: why we must do what we do not want to do. In performance of this teaching role, the father acts both as the agent of the external world, and as our agent in helping us learn how to live in that world. The father is successful in this role when he becomes unnecessary. As the normative structure becomes our own, we develop the capacity to act autonomously and without being dependent on him. This capacity represents a configuration of the mind that Freud called the superego.

One can see the value of the superego by reflecting on the culturally useful activities that it generates. It provides the psychological substrate for the understanding of social order and the experience of obligation. It also preserves society from the distortion of reality and the sense of infinite entitlement that narcissism would otherwise generate. Through the superego, people are enabled to give up their infantile narcissism on the promise of being able to earn the ego ideal later through fulfillment of their obligations.

None of this takes away from the value of the ego ideal and the maternal role. Only the ego ideal can give inspiration to what would otherwise be a dry and joyless pattern of responsibilities. The superego structures our understanding of how we are separate from the world around us, and therefore how we must engage it on its own terms, but the ego ideal provides a meaning for this engagement by giving us an image of overcoming our separation and becoming one with the world. Under the narcissism of the ego ideal, I experience the external world as part of myself. Under the superego, based as it is on objective self-consciousness, I experience myself as being part of the external world. The superego articulates with the ego ideal to form the basic psychological configuration of the socialized adult.

This understanding can clear up a number of difficulties we may have in reconciling ourselves with society. For example, it will be useful for those who are offended by the very idea of seeing themselves as objects. What we need to recall, in this connection, is that this objectivity is only part of the total picture. Far from precluding our subjective understanding of ourselves, it gains its importance by its capacity to enhance our subjective experience by making us richer and more complex human beings. Taken by itself, it is the basis for organizational structure, for universalistic law, and for much else besides. But it is never taken just by itself, and it is this recognition that enables us to appreciate the benefits of these institutions while, at the same time, remaining aware of their limitations.

The family, as Freud understood it, incorporates both the superego and the ego ideal in the form of paternal and maternal elements, recognizing the difference and the value of each. It encompasses the functions of each and the interplay between them, forming a complex whole. It manifests what I shall call a *biparental* model of child rearing.

If Freud is correct about the function of the family, it means that the image of the sexual holy war that first confronted us represents a profound distortion. Neither society as a whole nor families have been formed by the domination of the male principle over the female. Rather they have been formed by an evolution in which paternal elements are engaged with maternal ones to form a complex, biparental whole. The revolt of the primordial mother, then, is not simply an attempt to overturn a paternal order, but an attempt to unravel the connection between paternal and maternal. It is a regressive attempt to repudiate the father's role within the biparental order, and to bring us back to a world in which the primordial mother, who in the infant's mind did not need the father, prevails. This is the meaning of political correctness.

From The Biparental To The Primitive Maternal In The University

To understand the social meaning of a revolt against the paternal, we need to understand how the superego, the institutionalized paternal, traditionally operates in an institutional context. This is an easy matter, with regard to the university, because the workings of both parental functions are clear, and they come to us as "common sense."

In the biparental model, the meaning of the university is the transmission and development of objective self-consciousness. We transmit our best understanding of ourselves, of our world, and of our place within it; and we further develop that understanding.

The function of the superego in the university is primarily the development and application of standards. The superego, by acknowledging the existence of an objective external world that can punish us if we get things wrong, places a premium on getting things right. The meaning of standards is the establishment of the best ways we know of getting things right. The function of research, of course, is to get to know the world better, which means increasing what we rightly know about the world and dismissing what we find out to be wrong. With regard to teaching, the university, in its paternal function, prepares students to achieve something in the world based upon the modeling of good work, work in accordance with the highest standards, and the differential reward of

good versus bad work. If the process is successful, the student internalizes this polarity between good work and bad work as part of his superego. He learns to hold himself to account, and goes out into the world where he or she achieves something based upon the standards that are now his own.

With regard to decision making in the biparental university, the superego manifests itself as intended rationality. The whole panoply of procedures for making decisions in the university exists for the purpose of taking possibilities for action and subjecting them to the highest standards of criticism. It attempts to eliminate subjective distortion, to minimize parochial and narcissistic bias and get as close as possible to a course of action that will have the desired concrete result. Surely this is not to say that the university, any more than anyone or anything else, always gets things right. Certainly it does not mean that university professors are less narcissistic than anyone else – a view that only those unfamiliar with the university could uphold. It is simply to say that rational criticism is an accepted and legitimated mode of university discourse, that the distortions that narcissistic bias creates are recognized as distortions, and that the structures created to limit their effects are seen as legitimate.

None of this is to deny that the ego ideal is present in the university in equal measure to the superego. The ego ideal is the source of the university's ideals, without which it would lose the spirit of its existence and the impetus for its development. It is also present, perhaps most importantly, in the nurturing of the individual student, bringing that student to be able to accept his or her own spontaneity, which is the wellspring of creativity. It should never be forgotten, in this connection, that the muse is a female figure. But within the biparental university, creativity and the pursuit of ideals are channeled by the representation of external demand into good work and concrete achievement. Indeed, it is the dialectical relationship between the ego ideal and the superego, between the creative impulse and the demands of rigor, which constitutes the conversation that is the university's most characteristic form of life.

The premise of the superego within the biparental model is that love needs to be earned through good work, through achievement. To be sure, the superego cannot provide us with love, but only with respect. Love attaches to who we are, not what we do; it cannot be earned (Sennett and Cobb, 1972). But the superego can provide the criteria on which people agree that persons *should* be loved, based on the fulfillment of its requirements. This provides the basis for the social dramatization of love that we call status or prestige, and this is what those of low status feel deprived of.

But put the idea of a self-subsistent, objective external world into question and one undermines objective self-consciousness, the meaning of the father. Take away the idea of an objective world and you deny the legitimacy of external demand and the superego that represents it. The distinction between legitimate authority and coercion is lost. Demands come to be seen as oppression. Deny the superego and all that is left is narcissism; the only question becomes whose narcissism.

When the idea of an objective external world is lost, the idea of doing good work, of achievement, no longer has meaning. Individuals who have had status in the past, and who legitimated that status by claims of achievement, come to be seen instead as having acquired their status illegitimately. The idea of gaining status through achievement comes

to be seen as a smoke screen for theft. Those who have had status are thus redefined as having stolen love from those of low status. They are seen as oppressors who deserve to be hated and attacked, and to have their power destroyed. In this way, the idea of achievement, and the distinction between good and bad work, which served to provide the meaning of the university in the biparental model, come to seem self-serving categorizations whose meaning is to be found in the expression of the father's narcissism.

Undermine the idea of an external world and the father is not seen as having contributed anything, but only as having stolen love. He may be expelled with no loss to anyone. No barrier would then remain between the children and the primordial mother. They would be able to live in permanent enjoyment of their closeness with her. Her power would guarantee their happiness. This is the meaning of the PC university. It is an attempt, in the name of the primordial mother, to expel the father, and the external world he represents, and to substitute the unconditional love of the mother.

In what follows, I will develop this analysis with regard to various aspects of the university, beginning with the organizational considerations of structure and process.

Organizational Structure And Process In The PC University

In order to understand both the appeal and the danger of organization based on the primitive mother, it is necessary to underscore the fact that the primordial mother is a fantasy. She is not a real mother. She is the image of mother cast in the mold of the infant's desire. The primordial mother is the infantile fantasy of a person who would complete the circle of a loving world centered upon the infant. In other words, she is the complement of the infant's narcissism. When individuals identify with her, when they reform themselves in her image, they give up their own adult character and remake themselves on the basis of the most primitive levels of their psyches.

The appeal of this regression is clear enough. As we know, we all desire to fuse with the primordial mother and again be the center of a loving world. But, as a principle of organization, the rule of the primordial mother falls well short of delivering on its promise.

First, notice that the loving world of which the person would be the center would have only one person in it, plus that person's reflection: it would contain no independent others. This is not recognized as a problem by the narcissistic child, who sees no need for independent others. But as a principle of organization in a real world which contains real others, it has a contradiction at its core.

Narcissism, which the connection with the primordial mother enshrines and guarantees, makes it impossible to live peaceably in a world in which there are real others. I demand that you take me as the center of your world, and you demand that I take you as the center of my world. There is no way in which we can make sense out of the otherness of the other. It does not belong in the maternal world, the "good" world which has me as its center, and so therefore must be "bad." It has to be met with total emotional rejection. The gulf between persons is absolute. How can organization be possible at all?

As we can see, the love of the primordial mother, which it seems to us would make the world complete, appears to be a perfect principle of organization. In reality, however,

it would shatter the world. It is a principle of perfect *disorganization*, of chaos.⁵ Within it, we expect to find harmony and meaning. We find instead what Friedan's housewife found in her suburban ghetto: anxiety and anomie.

The problem here is that love is specific. The kind of unconditional love that defines the primordial mother for me means that she (or he) takes my point of view without subjecting it to judgment or to categorization. Love means being accepted because we are exactly who we are. But our own inclusion on the grounds of such specificity defines for us a moral universe which excludes everyone who is not who we are, which is to say everyone else.

At one level, this problem is resolved by the psychology of the group. If the person can substitute a group identity for an individual one, social organization becomes possible at the level of the group. An idea of oneself as a member of a group can serve as one's ego ideal. This opens the possibility that others can adopt the same ego ideal. Those who do so may identify with each other based on that fundamental similarity. In this way, relations previously characterized by envy and antagonism are transformed into group feeling (Freud, 1921).

But this means that the problem of narcissistic disorganization will reappear between groups. Instead of believing that the world should revolve around us as individuals, we come to believe that it should revolve around us by virtue of our group identity. It is those outside the group, those who do not take the group as their own ego ideal, who are now experienced as threats and as not belonging in the world. Thus, for mutually antagonistic individuals, we have simply substituted mutually antagonistic groups. This is the first element of the structure of the PC university.

The second problem of organization based on the primordial mother is the need to provide an affective connection through which the people can make claims on her. In the family, or for that matter in Japanese organizations where the maternal principle is powerful (Doi, 1973), a strong interest on the part of the mother is sought through an appeal based on continual association. But in the university, where people come and go, this is not a viable option.

In the university dominated by the processes of PC⁶, this problem is dealt with through an abstraction. The abstraction is the idea of the child who needs love the most, the one who has been least loved in the past, the victim. It is this abstraction, this specific claim to having been damaged in a certain way and at a certain time, therefore, that provides the basis of the group's identity. This provides the reason why individuals who deviate from the group with regard to the ideology of its victimization are treated as if they do not belong to the group. (See, for example, Carter, 1991). It is a mistake, therefore, to think of these groups as defined by demographic characteristics. At their root, they are defined by an *ideology about* demographic characteristics. My point here is that understanding conflicts among such groups rests less on understanding the claims of the specific groups against each other than on understanding the fundamentally intrapsychic dynamics of the idea of such conflict itself.

The differentiation into groups based on level of victimization determines the logic according to which social structure develops within the PC university. It also gives rise to the basic social process within the PC university, which is, on one hand, to love the

victim and to provide for those so designated a maternal world in which their narcissism will be fulfilled. I call this *compensatory narcissistic inflation*. The other side of this is to withdraw love from and to hate those who have previously been loved, who come to be seen as having stolen that love from those who now are in need of it.

The idea of compensatory narcissistic inflation provides the key to understanding a number of the characteristics of the PC university, which our inquiry now undertakes to elaborate. Perhaps the most obvious of these is the fragmentation of the campus into mutually antagonistic groups that is often referred to as *the balkanization of the university*.

The Balkanization of the University

As we have seen, the shift from biparental psychology to the sole dominion of the ego ideal has the effect of delegitimizing achievement as a ground for appreciation. The concept of respect loses its meaning. The claim that some have earned their status comes to seem an expression of racism, sexism, or classism, depending upon who fares badly in the comparison. In a word, it becomes politically incorrect. In the place of achievement, as a basis for appreciation, the politically correct substitute perceived deprivation.

From this vantage point, we can understand why the students come to engage in a competition for sympathy and even pity. By arguing that they have been victimized, oppressed, abused, devalued in the past, the students assert their claims to compensatory appreciation, for the love that, in their view, has been stolen from them. The African-Americans have their history of slavery and discrimination. The Jews have the history of anti-Semitism and the holocaust. The women have the history of rape and sexual harassment. The homosexuals have homophobia and gay bashing. The white males have a more difficult project, but it is far from hopeless. They can, for example, condemn their ancestors for depriving them of their purity, and in that way join the anti-Oppressor chorus with full fury. It would be absurd to say that such claims do not refer to real histories of oppression. Often they do. My point here only concerns the way they function to express resentments and legitimate competing demands for appreciation.

This emotionally charged conflict, when it takes place in our intendedly multicultural universities, undoubtedly is a source of constant surprise, perplexity, and sadness to the well-meaning individuals who have given rise to it. Certainly they meant nothing of the sort. For them "... the point is to join differences in such a way that the integrity of none is destroyed." They had in mind a mosaic, or a quilt in which "differences are sutured together at their edges to form a whole." (Choi and Murphy, 1992) But by establishing narcissism as the norm for university life, PC advocates made it inevitable that the actual university would be the locus of bitterness, envy and ill will. Resentment and hostility are not just temporary feelings that will be outgrown in the PC university; they are built into its very structure. The fact that each of these groups recognize and are constituted by the difference of the others does not mean, as Choi and Murphy appear to believe, that they appreciate those differences. All it means, within narcissistic psychology, is that they define themselves *against* the others.

It is the superego, and specifically objective self-consciousness, from whose indifferent vantage point each voice is only one among many, that makes it possible for groups to get along with each other. This is the premise of legal-rational authority (Weber, 1947), arguably the greatest achievement of Western civilization. Of course, the superego can be changed. It can be changed to better approximate our ideals, and it can be changed in accordance with differing and developing reality. This is implied by the term “rational” in “legal-rational.” But objective self-consciousness is *not* just one voice among many. It needs to be located at the top of a hierarchy, not only if it is going to function at all, but also if *other* voices are going to function without engaging each other in a duel to the death. The fact that, with its rules, its reliance on reason, its demand for superordinate status, rational-legal authority is seen by the PC as the very source of oppression (e.g. MacKinnon, 1989), has the most profound impact on the way the university makes its decisions.

The Subordination of Rationality in Decision Making

The premise of the superego is the indifference of the world. Truth is seen as neutral and is given independent standing. On the other hand, the narcissistic psychology of political correctness rests all consideration on a prior differentiation between good people and bad people, whose ideas contain this goodness or badness within them. The idea of an independent truth is replaced by a notion of relative “truths” which are not presumed to have even the possibility of validity outside of the community that uses them (e.g. Fish, 1992). Strained through the moralism I have described, this approach comes to mean that the expression of the feelings of a good person must be granted validity without any independent measure of the agreement of those feelings with facts being necessary. By contrast, it is enough to classify a speaker as a member of a bad group in order to discredit what that person says, with no need for any consideration of the content of what is said. Within the context of PC, that is to say, the criterion of logic is replaced by the *argumentum ad hominem*. Later, we shall explore the psychology of PC and show why such ad hominem arguments are as effective as they are.

For the present, it will be useful to note that these considerations provide an answer to those who maintain that what is going on in the PC university is the same thing that has always gone on. The university, these individuals maintain, has always been a contentious place. In response one may acknowledge that the university has always been a contentious place, but its contention has been concerned with what is true and who is right. In current PC times, the question has become who is good.

As a result, decision making in the PC university loses even the intention of being rational. Argument about possible courses of action no longer involves consideration of the actual effects policies will have. The process instead turns to the competitive avowal of one's own goodness and the imputation of badness to one's opponents. But that is only the beginning of the matter. The separation of decision making from the consideration of results, together with the *a priori* establishment of some views as morally good while others are morally bad, has other consequences. It leads to a situation in which the intentions of the actor, and, indeed, often only the purported intentions of the actor, are the only matters of importance, removing the means from moral consideration.

One manifestation of this is **legitimization of coercion**. An example of this occurred recently at the University of California at Berkeley, where on May 7, 1999, Chancellor Berdahl gave in to a list of demands from a group of student demonstrators. Berdahl's capitulation came after an eight day "hunger strike"⁷ by six students, backed up by about a hundred other students. They were also backed up by a number of faculty members from the ethnic and women's studies program, who had previously negotiated an arrangement with Berdahl that satisfied most of the student demands. On the heels of the deal worked out with the faculty, which provided for the appointment of seven full-time professors to their department during the next three years, seed money for a Center for the Study of Race and Gender, a multicultural center, and an ethnic studies community mural, Berdahl had said:

"We cannot have anarchy with every student believing they have a right to demand what resources a department ought to have." (Rauch, 1999)

And, in an official university statement, dated May 3, posted on the UCB web site:

The allocation of resources within the university is not subject to negotiation in the street. It is and must be a part of a reasoned process. I will not allow coercion, intimidation and threat of violence to replace this reasoned process.

But he did allow coercion, intimidation and threat of violence to replace reason. When the students refused to accept the negotiated settlement, Berdahl simply negotiated with them. The final deal bumped faculty hiring to eight, promised no future cuts, a review of department space and a task force that would review the department's progress every six months, together with a promise that the university would not take serious disciplinary action against protestors. (Lee, 1999) The students were jubilant.

"We got everything that you asked us to get," negotiator Sara Kaplan told the hundreds of students gathered outside of California Hall to hear the results of the negotiations. "We got it all. But most importantly, we made them listen to us." (Hernandez, D. 1999)

And the Berkeley administration appeared to take the matter in stride:

UC Berkeley spokesperson said the chancellor has always been committed to shoring up the ethnic studies program, but the protests over the past month only added "urgency" to the problem. He added that the agreement "pretty much closely parallels the agreement" the chancellor had reached with ethnic studies faculty last weekend, but that the new agreement had some "clarifications" with the students in it.

In a statement, Berdahl said that the agreement only reaffirmed his commitment to the strength of the ethnic studies department.

"We have been working to make sure that university support for this department is understood by the entire campus community," he said. "I am pleased to say that today this support is understood clearly by all." (Ibid.)

But some were not so jubilant. Jack Citrin, (1999b) a professor of political science, put the matter in a somewhat different perspective:

The campus administration reportedly has agreed to circumvent normal procedures and add faculty to Ethnic Studies, to create a Center for the Study of Race and Gender and another for the Study of the Americas, and to authorize a celebratory mural in Barrows Hall, the home of Ethnic Studies. This despite the fact that Afro- American Studies and Ethnic Studies are the only social science departments whose faculty allocation has been increased in the last decade, and when other academic departments, ranked among the top five nationally, are spurned when they seek to recruit additional leading scholars. Parenthetically, the number of students majoring in ethnic studies has been declining while its allocated faculty has grown.

And he asked:

How did it come to this? How did Berkeley, the jewel in the crown of America's public universities, come to quake before a small group of protesters disdained by most students and faculty? The answer: This is just further evidence of the decline of top academic institutions resulting from their embrace of identity politics, a perspective in which every decision is viewed according to how it allocates benefits among ethnic groups. ``No Enemies on the Left" is now ``No Enemies of Color."

Yet, from an organizational point of view, perhaps the most disturbing thing about this subordination of reason was not the coercion itself, but the way that it was seen as being normal and legitimate by the students:

``We won," said hunger striker Alison Harrington, 23, appearing weak a day after she was briefly hospitalized for dehydration. ``This is the best class I have ever taken at Cal!" she yelled, drawing cheers. (Lee, 1999)

And, shamefully, among many of the faculty.

At a press conference yesterday, ethnic studies faculty, including noted Professor Ronald Takaki, pledged to be arrested if the police attempted to remove the hunger strikers' tent encampment in front of the chancellor's office. In addition, one faculty member announced she was joining the six hunger strikers' fast.

Norma Alarcon, the chair of the women's studies department and a Chicano studies professor, wrote a letter to Berdahl to show her disapproval of the current situation and to announce her decision to join the hunger strike.

"I would like to inform you (that) as of this moment, I too, am going on a hunger strike, with the students," Alarcon wrote in a letter to the chancellor. "It is extremely disrespectful for any of us to continue to enjoy food and sustenance, while our students put their health and bodies on the line for us."

The protesters said that the announcement of resumed negotiations and the pledge of faculty, including Takaki, Alfred Arteaga and Elaine Kim, to be arrested alongside student demonstrators signals a growing base of support for the ethnic studies cause.

Takaki, a nationally-renowned scholar on multiculturalism, said he was honored to stand in solidarity with the protesting students.

"If you (Berdahl) decide to arrest the students, then you will also decide to arrest me and at least nine other faculty members," Takaki said. "Education is about this reality of students being directly involved with negotiating. We take action to create a history." (Ahmad, 1999)

Another manifestation of the subordination of rationality in decision making is the **manipulation of emotions**. As thought declines in importance, its place is taken by feelings. What else could take its place? Yet feelings have a logic that is quite different from thought, and lends itself easily to manipulation. For one thing, in what has become a standard scenario, individual incidents are used as the material for stories that, in the absence of alternative stories, can easily be taken to represent the whole. In this way events that may be quite unrepresentative come to support and drive the formulation and implementation of policy. I call this *policy making by isolated example*.

For instance, at Oregon State University, Frederick Harris, a black student in his senior year, passing a fraternity house in the early morning, heard racial epithets and firecrackers. Harris had been the subject of racial harassment as a freshman. That incident had sparked an anti-racism demonstration by 2,000 students and a massive institutional effort to promote "diversity:"

After the 1996 rally, the university stepped up recruiting minority students. Students successfully pushed to form minority education offices for African Americans, Latinos and Asian Americans to offer students social and academic guidance. In addition, the university incorporates diversity training into orientation and requires undergraduates to take a course called "Difference, Power and Discrimination" to graduate.

In addition, the offenders were expelled from school and jailed.

But, despite the fact that African Americans, who represented only 1% of the student population had won election victories as both student government president and vice president at OSU, Harris said:

"I'll tell you about the dread and hopelessness I feel every day knowing things are not getting better, they are only getting worse," Harris wrote in a letter published Tuesday in the campus paper, The Daily Barometer. "Things are getting worse, and it is the responsibility of this university to do something about it!"

University officials were crestfallen:

OSU officials worried the incident was a tough blow to take.

"This will have a huge negative impact on us," said Larry Roper, vice provost for student affairs who has helped to lead OSU's diversity effort. "You can work on this broad effort and then have a couple of people at 3 a.m. on a Saturday morning cause a problem that raises questions about an institution's character."

And:

The university is weighing sanctions against the students.

But President Paul Risser said the alleged actions of a couple of students shouldn't undermine the university's recent efforts to improve the campus racial climate. He hoped to use the incident as a moment for the campus to learn about discrimination.

In a written statement, Risser apologized to Harris and promised "that we will become even more diligent in our efforts to promote diversity."

The irony here is that the students in the fraternity house did not know that Harris was passing by.

"They didn't even know he was outside," [fraternity president] Johnson said.

He added that the students -- a member and a pledge -- were more guilty of "stupidity than racism." Nonetheless:

The fraternity ordered them to write letters to Harris, perform 10 hours of community service and develop a diversity program. (Hernandez, R., 1999)

Policy making by isolated example, of course, thrives in circumstances in which the information media are controlled by a faction that uses it to advance its own views, and which may suppress alternative views. This is far from uncommon. For example, an article by Don Feder in the *Boston Globe* (1999) reports that:

Wellesley College and Brandeis University are almost neighbors. Both are well-regarded, expensive, and prime examples of the academic inclination to crush the larynx of dissenting voices....

Instead of outright censorship, the establishment snubs conservative events and denies funding to alternative publications.

The voice of sanity at Wellesley, Women for Freedom, arranges debates and speakers on issues like racial preferences and academic freedom, presenting ideas students are unlikely to encounter in any other campus forum.

Noting that the organization has sponsored Dinesh D'Souza (author of *Illiberal Education*), and Christina Hoff Sommers, Feder observes that *The Wellesley News*, which is supported by student activity fees, not only refuses to list Women for Freedom's events in its calendar section or cover its programs, but won't even accept paid advertisements. He goes on to say that:

Larisa Vanov, the Wellesley alumna who started the organization, reports the publicity blackout has had the desired effect.

In terms of reaching the student body, the only alternative to an ad in the official campus paper is flyers, but these are usually torn down within minutes of being posted. When Horace Cooper, press secretary to House Majority Leader Dick Armey, spoke to Ivy Leaguers for Freedom (affiliated with Vanov's group) at Princeton, he drew an audience of 70. Over 140 attended a debate in which he participated at Boston University. At Wellesley, the minority critic of quotas addressed four students.

The News won't admit rejecting the ads. Instead, when the group wants to advertise, there's never space available-though there's plenty for in-house advertising. Could this be stealth censorship?

The college administration is terribly blasé about all of this. Officials say they can't interfere with a student publication, even one that bears the school's name and receives \$20,000 in annual subsidies while violating its rules. If this happened to a feminist or gay organization, be sure administrators would read the offenders the riot act.

Feder asks whether, if conservatives can't get coverage in the campus paper, they should consider starting their own? He says that at Brandeis they did, and experienced another aspect of academic repression:

Established two years ago, Freedom magazine is irreverent and iconoclastic-everything the left can't stand when it's on the receiving end.

Last October, the conservative periodical ran articles criticizing the student senate for extravagance and self-interest. Thomas Jefferson said that if forced to choose between having a government and having a free press, he'd pick the latter. Brandeis prefers a complacent student government.

Following the exposé, one senator destroyed copies of the publication while another threatened editor Bryan Rudnick with physical violence. The same loose cannons alleged that Freedom is, among other stuff, anti-Semitic-a neat trick in that Rudnick and several staffers are Jewish.

After cutting the publication's funding by 50 percent last semester as a punishment for its dissenting views, the senate totally defunded Freedom in April.

Marxist, feminist, homosexual and other sanctioned perspectives all are funded from compulsory activity fees. Conservatism is where proponents of diversity draw the line. As at Wellesley, the Brandeis administration tacitly condones this bias. At a school named for the Supreme Court justice known for his expansive view of the First Amendment, this is indeed ironic. Perhaps Brandeis should be renamed Comstock U., to honor the Nineteenth Century book-burner.

But where control of information media is fairly well secure, a further step in the manipulation of emotions can take place through the *fabrication of incidents*. For example, as the power of PC increases, the number of real incidents that can be used, fairly or unfairly, for the manipulation of emotions decreases toward the vanishing point. Yet such incidents may be seen as necessary to drive or maintain policy. As a result, there is an incentive to deliberately manufacture incidents that will serve the purpose. This was noted in an article by Fisk and Finnerty (1999) on one such incident at Kalamazoo College:⁸

[Acting Capt. Jerome Bryant of the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety] noted that a segment on ABC's "20/20" regarding black students concocting racial hoaxes aired a week before the Kalamazoo College incident. In recent years, there has been a rash of alleged and proven hate-crime hoaxes on college campuses across the county. At Duke University, shortly after a black baby doll was found

hanging by a noose from a tree last fall, two black students confessed to perpetrating the mock-lynching to make a statement about race relations on campus. Two weeks ago, police arrested two black students at Miami University in Ohio on charges of staging a hoax that sparked protests last fall. Fingerprints on racist fliers were traced to the students, who denied committing the crimes but withdrew from the university.

In this instance:

... a racist letter pinned to the dormitory door of black Kalamazoo College freshman Bryant Lusbourgh and a fire that charred his room shocked the small, private school and thrust it into the national spotlight.

On the night of the fire, Jones called students, faculty and staff together on the college's grassy quadrangle to solemnly detail the previous days' events. He was greeted with silence and stunned looks as he read aloud the hate-filled letter taken from Lusbourgh's door. It said the college had a "no-nigger policy" that was "designed to insure the failure of all non-white people" and threatened to take whatever measures necessary to enforce the policy.

In the days after the incidents, students covered campus sidewalks and stairways with a rainbow of chalk messages denouncing racism and extolling diversity. They held a candlelight vigil and organized a festival dedicated to tolerance.

Professors devoted class time to discuss the incidents and students, faculty, the Board of Trustees and the alumni association all drafted resolutions condemning the racist letter.

But

Reports obtained by the Kalamazoo Gazette disclosed that police suspected Lusbourgh of authoring the note that sparked a massive outpouring of anti-racist sentiment, from unity marches to sidewalk scrawlings pleading for tolerance.

Although police were unable to prove Lusbourgh's involvement, several factors made detectives highly suspicious, said Acting Capt. Jerome Bryant of the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety. For one, investigators found it curious that Lusbourgh had retained an attorney.

"There does seem to be something suspicious about why a victim gets an attorney because it's not needed when you're a victim," Bryant said. "The only other victim that I know of who hired an attorney is the parents in the Jon Benet Ramsey case."

Even before he got an attorney, Bryant said, Lusbourgh did not give police "100 percent cooperation" and was caught in a lie by investigators when asked if he'd smoked in his dorm room, which is prohibited by college rules. Lusbourgh had smoked cigars in his room, according to interviews with other dorm residents.

"The black male occupant of the room had been smoking the night before in the room. Originally, he stated he wasn't smoking but, after the box of cigars was shown, he stated he did smoke earlier," reported Marty Myers, Kalamazoo's

deputy fire marshal. "(He) refused to have any further interview with the fire marshal's office to confirm any factors concerning the fire or give any statements of the fire."

Yet, while something could obviously have been made of the strong suspicions of the police, especially given the pattern of similar events, that angle was not developed either by the newspaper or by the university administration. In fact, Kalamazoo College President James Jones Jr. played the matter this way:

"This, I'm sure, sounds probably strange - but the major thing I've gleaned from this is how stalwart the student body, the alumni, the parents, the people in the community have been in supporting the college, and the student body's sincere outcry scorching ideas of racism and violence and intolerance."

The response against racism helped unite the campus, minority student recruitment is up this year, and efforts to recruit minority faculty at the 165-year-old college are encouraging, Jones said.

"I don't see any adverse long-term consequences of what happened here at all," he said. "In fact, I see the reverse."

But bear in mind that this "sincere outcry scorching ideas of racism and violence and intolerance" that "united the community" was directed against ideas that evidently did not exist within the community, since the community was united in opposition to them. Indeed, it was directed against something the evidence for which appeared to have been contrived for the purpose. Yet it is apparent that whether the community's response was based on objective reality did not matter to Jones. He appeared to believe that the creation and maintenance of such politically correct sentiments, whether they had any real focus or not, was an end in itself, and justified such means as were necessary for its accomplishment.

At any rate, the subordination of rational decision making to moralistic sentiment is largely what lies behind what I call the *drive to the extreme*.

The Drive to the Extreme

The psychology of the superego contains a built in conservatism. This psychology rests on an internalization of external order and places a premium on the maintenance of established structure. In politics, the superego presses toward a solution that can be applied universally and then toward the acceptance and maintenance of that system. Narcissistic psychology, because it presses for the attainment of something that cannot be attained, has a built in radical bias. It is fundamentally opposed to established structure. The psychology of the superego is realized through creation of an organization. The ego ideal attempts to realize itself through creation of a movement. History, it seems to me, embraces both of these dynamics, and recommends a proper balance between them. When the realism of the superego is repudiated, however, the sole operation of the ego ideal creates a politics that manifests what I think of as a drive to the extreme.

The degree to which the PC university has been driven to the extreme is not always understood by those outside such universities. A suitable illustrative example is provided

in Kors and Silverglate's magisterial study *The Shadow University: The Betrayal of Liberty on America's Campuses* (1998):

In June 1989, the Massachusetts Board of Regents adopted a statewide "Policy Against Racism" for higher education. It "proscribes all conditions and all actions or omissions including all acts of verbal harassment or abuse which deny or have the effects of denying to anyone his or her rights to equality, dignity, and security on the basis of his or her race, color, ethnicity, culture or religion." It mandated both "appreciation for cultural/racial pluralism" and "a unity and cohesion in the diversity which we seek to achieve," outlawing "racism in any form, expressed or implied, intentional or inadvertent, individual or institutional." The regents pledged "to eradicate racism, ethnic and cultural offenses and religious intolerance," and "required," among other things, programs "to enlighten faculty, administrators, staff, and students with regard to ways in which the dominant society manifests and perpetuates racism."

The extreme character of this policy is clear enough. It rests on an extreme left-wing political theory and it mandates feelings and makes one responsible for the implications others may draw from one's behavior, even one's unintentional behavior. But the level of extremity can be fully understood without a consideration of the political behavior that it legitimated:

At the state's flagship campus, the University of Massachusetts—Amherst, in the spring and summer of 1992, the student newspaper, the *Collegian*, lost all real protection of the rule of law. At an angry rally on the campus after the acquittal of the Los Angeles police officers in the Rodney King affair, protesters turned their hatred against the supposed "racism" of the *Collegian*, which had written of the L.A. "riots," unlike Professor John Bracey, later head of the Faculty Senate, who at the rally termed the rioters "our warriors." Protestors invaded the offices of the *Collegian*, smashing windows, destroying property, and assaulting staff. Northampton police arrested one protester for attacking a *Collegian* photographer with a baseball bat and dragging him to the Student Center (the municipal court sentenced him to counseling). The *Collegian* appealed to the university for protection, but was refused. Editors and staff got a Northampton police escort to another municipality, and published a few editions in hiding, but these were stolen and destroyed. Marc Elliott, editor-in-chief, told the *Boston Globe* that it was "like a Nazi book burning." Undefended by the university, the editors of the *Collegian* surrendered and agreed to an editorial structure of separate editors and sections for every "historically oppressed" minority on campus. Managing editor Daniel Wetzell told the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, "There's 100 people running scared right now, and 100 people intimidating them. I'm not going to put a student organization above my safety." He told the Associated Press, "We gave up our journalistic integrity for the safety of the students."

When the *Collegian* appealed for protection, U. Mass's chancellor, Richard O'Brien, replied that there was a conflict between two values that "the university holds dear: protection of free expression and the creation of a multicultural community free of harassment and intimidation."

The idea that these storm trooper tactics were defended in the name of creating a climate free of harassment and intimidation was expressed without apparent irony by this university chancellor.

In 1994, in response to an inquiry about the actions taken by the administration in 1992, the new chancellor, David K. Scott, replied, in writing: "*Collegian* takeover of May 1, 1992: charges were not brought; Whitmore occupation of May 1, 1992: no disciplinary action was taken; Theft of copies of *Collegian* May 4, 1992: Individuals who may have taken copies of the *Collegian* were never identified. It is difficult to call the action theft because the paper is distributed to the public free of charge."⁹ As for the physical assault and the destruction of the newspapers: "I am not aware of any specific statements by the administration in response to the incident with the *Collegian* photographer or the theft of copies of the *Collegian*."

In 1995, Chancellor Scott proposed a new harassment policy that would outlaw not only "epithets" and "slurs," but, in addition, "negative stereotyping." The policy caught the eye of the media. *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis illustrated the gulf between liberal and campus views of freedom. U. Mass's policy, he wrote, would "create a totalitarian atmosphere in which everyone would have to guard his tongue all the time lest he say something that someone finds offensive." Lewis asked: "Do the drafters have no knowledge of history? No understanding that freedom requires 'freedom for the thought that we hate?' And if not, what are they doing at a university?" He concluded that the "elastic concept of a 'hostile environment'" intolerably menaced "freedom of speech, at universities of all places." (pp. 150-151)

"Universities of all places," indeed. For the U.S. Federal courts have held uniformly that the university has a very special place in American society, and that the free exchange of ideas is critical to its function (*Ibid.* p. 56). This is a fact that in previous times was known to everyone. It is stunning to reflect upon how far we have come from this bedrock understanding.

At any rate, there are a number of dimensions of the drive to the extreme. First is what we may see as the insatiability of demand. In the absence of a superego that can adjudicate between reasonable and unreasonable claims, the measure of victimization must be the subjective feeling of being victimized. To be sure, the feeling of being victimized may come from real victimization, but the exploration of narcissism shows that this feeling also can come from interpreting the indifference of the world as a personal threat. This, of course, is the mechanism of paranoia. This means that, as real victimization is eliminated, the university's process stands in danger of coming under the control of the community's most easily offended, paranoid, and hysterical elements.

Recent events at Saint Cloud State University in Minnesota provide an illustration of this. In this case, which began in the summer of 1998, two black graduate students in the Applied Psychology program (APSY) issued charges of racism against the department. One of the students, Susan Bullock, objected to the word "nigger" in one of the books being used in her course, *Social Bases of Behavior* -- an anthology of readings on disability issues. She confronted the professor, John Hotz, before class. He, according to

a story by William F. Meehan, III. in the *Minnesota Scholar* (Meehan, 2000) was stunned by the student's objection, having used the text for ten years without the slightest protest. So when he went into the classroom, he immediately addressed her concern. He told the students that he also found the word offensive and never used it. And he sincerely apologized for the distress that the word may have caused anyone. He stopped short only at saying he would remove the book from the class reading requirements.

Bullock, who stopped attending class but passed the course, persisted in her public charges of racism. Taking up her cause, the chairman of the department, Avelino Mills-Novoa tried to bring her charges up at a departmental meeting. The faculty refused to consider her charges, saying she would have to bring them through the official channels for student complaints. Mills-Novoa, evidently, made it clear she would not have to proceed through such channels, saying "I have seen what the process does to students of color." (p.2)

At about this time, Bullock's grievance came to be associated with another charge by a black graduate student, and one which is, for our purposes, a bit more interesting. In this case, according to Meehan, a black male graduate assistant named Ray Shorter charged that the Counseling Psychology curriculum "was a 'white' (Eurocentric) theoretical perspective, and that 'Black Psychology' and 'Black Psychologists' were excluded". (p. 2) His letter, written September 9 and distributed publicly on the campus e-mail system, led to a meeting of the faculty committee of Graduate Counseling Program, his major. "Many of those on the committee acknowledged that activities to address 'diversity' issues had been ongoing in the department for some time, but they renewed their commitment to educating themselves further in the area of minority differences in counseling practice and agreed to future exploration and training in this area," according to one faculty member (p.2). But, unmollified:

Shorter launched a malicious public attack on APSY, however. In the coming weeks, he sent letters and e-mails to the administration and to all SCSU faculty via the campus e-mail system on 22 September and 16 and 23 October. The gist of the letters was to accuse the APSY faculty of harboring "evil thoughts and practices," of making him experience "a mental and spiritual, torturing death," of even trying to "kill [him]." The following is part of 16 October letter:

Anytime that I enter any area of the department or its classes, I'm in constant fear and danger of my life. White faculty members within the department are trying to murder my mind and spirit. They are continuing to forcefully inject me with the deadly disease called White Supremacy which is viciously attacking every aspect of my life. The more I demand that white faculty members stop trying to lynch me, the more they continue to deny my request; as if they were like starving cannibals, slobbering over the last human remains..." (p. 2)

And, subsequently:

Shorter continued his vicious campaign. However poorly written, Shorter's letters contained ugly references to "Hitler," "genocide," "torture chambers," and "lynching." (p.3)

One might think from this that Shorter, and perhaps Bullock, had blundered into a department dominated by the Ku Klux Klan. But it appears that this was far from the case. On the contrary, the APSY department appears to have been the very model of multicultural sympathy:

The APSY Department can be considered "diverse," and it can point to a record of commitment to University-mandated, as well as self-initiated, professional development in "diversity training." When the allegations of racism first arose in the fall of 1998, the department was chaired by a minority male faculty member, and its largest graduate program (Counseling Psychology) was chaired by a minority female faculty member. Of twenty full time faculty in the department at the time, twelve were white males, six were white females, three were minorities (two females, one male) and one white female was designated as partially disabled.

At their own initiative, in 1996, the APSY faculty designed and held an all-day retreat at one faculty member's house where they discussed ways to improve cultural diversity, including development of two new courses in the area. This retreat was a follow-up to two other extensive training sessions in which the department contracted with nationally known multicultural consultants to evaluate their programs and curriculum and suggest improvements. (p.3)

Notwithstanding their efforts, notwithstanding the fact that independent observers completely exonerated those faculty members subsequently charged with racism, and despite the fact that the students' charges were based on nothing but their feelings, the university administration adopted the students' orientation and subjected the APSY faculty to a campaign of abuse. This included what faculty members called "tongue lashing" and "woodshed whipping," as well as a form of "sensitivity training" that included what one faculty member called "level shifting:

On one level it attempts get us to agree that we lived in a white-dominated culture, with a history of slavery and oppression of blacks (and, indeed, all minorities), and that we also must have benefited personally from this 'white privilege'. But when we would agree to this "institutional racism," the level of accusation shifted to a much more serious one of 'intentional (personal) racism'. That is, we were racists and were therefore guilty of the allegations directed against us. (p.3)

The result:

By March 1999 the "functional" department was in disarray. Two minority faculty (the Chairman and the Counseling Psychology Graduate Program Director) simply refused to meet with the white faculty under any circumstances, and have yet to do so. Three white female faculty and a minority female faculty aligned themselves with the Chairman and Graduate Director to form the separatist group. Moreover, in a dreadful display of disregard for academic quality, academic standards, and APSY students, the separatists requested APSY become two departments, themselves in one department, the rest of the faculty in another. "The net effect of their 24 March 1999 proposal was to take away the

courses (and programs) that some of the senior (white) faculty had developed and taught, in some cases, for thirty years" ... (p.4)

But as far as the effects on university process are concerned, nothing that has occurred at St. Cloud State is out of line with the depredations that have been described elsewhere in this chapter. What I particularly want to call attention to in this case is the fact that universities have the purpose of education and, in the case of a department of applied psychology, of training. The fact that the university was dragooned into supporting these students' allegations represents, at the same time, a shift in the Counseling Psychology Program in the direction of legitimizing these students' views and attitudes within the context of their profession. Yet a look at the way that Shorter, in particular, distorted what was, in reality, a quite benign and supportive environment, leads us to a very frightening view. It is that the university has given itself over to a process in which extremely unbalanced individuals are loosed upon the world as trained counseling psychologists.

To be sure, Shorter may have been invoking these epithets as a way of gaining an advantage, or calling attention to himself. But if he truly felt that "Anytime that I enter any area of the department or its classes, I'm in constant fear and danger of my life" and was convinced that these good liberal folks were trying to "forcefully inject me with the deadly disease called White Supremacy which is viciously attacking every aspect of my life" and lynch him, one cannot help but be appalled at the effect he is likely to have upon his clients. And he would gain credibility in his endeavors from the enthusiastic endorsement of St. Cloud State University.

Another factor that operates in the drive to the extreme arises from the psychodynamics of resentment. Resentment, because of its narcissistic premise, is a bottomless pit. This explains the curious phenomenon that, at politically correct universities, the absence of serious racism or sexism, for example, does not appear to diminish the intensity of the struggle concerning them. This is suggested by a report on Oberlin College, written for *The New Republic* by Jacob Weisberg (1991). Thus:

To see how obsessed the campus is, one only has to pick up an issue of *The Oberlin Review*. The news, letters, and editorial columns of every issue are full of accusations of racism, sexism, heterosexism, homophobia, 'ableism,' and a host of other insensitivities abhorrent to the disciples of what might be called Oberlinism.

But

Oberlin has a long liberal pedigree. The college, which first enrolled blacks in 1835, was a stop on the underground railroad. Today it brags of its achievements in recruiting and retaining minority students and faculty. With the exception of the odd bit of bathroom graffiti, there is little of what anyone outside of a college campus would call racism. But in a perverse equation, perceived racism at Oberlin is inversely proportional to actual racism: the less students see, the harder they look....

Last spring two black women were asked to leave an outdoor table at a local bakery because they were eating food bought at a rival restaurant. They initiated a boycott, vowing to make life hell for the racist establishment. The ignorance, the audacity, the arrogance, and the racist attitude to do such a thing is what is horrifying

to us,' one said in the letter to the *Review*. 'We have got to realize that it is not just the administration and all of the other top brass practicing bigotry. It's the everyday person perpetuating it.' (pp. 22-23)

The point here is that the oppressed's ego ideal, never fulfilled, is defined by the oppression directed against it. It only exists in a state of conflict with whatever it experiences as keeping it from fulfillment. In a way, it needs racism, or sexism, or the like in order to survive as an identity. In the absence of real racism, sexism, or other real assaults, it needs to project it. But, ultimately, what keeps our ego ideal from being fulfilled is reality itself. By projecting oppression onto reality itself, narcissism manages to ensure its permanent continuity, for there is always plenty of reality to fulfill that purpose. And it means that reasonable steps to deal with real problems are never enough, and are overtaken by unreasonable steps to deal with fantasy problems.

The insatiability of demand has a profound irony associated with it. As Maslow (1970) observed, most of us want a positive conception of our self. We want to see ourselves, and want others to see us, as persons who have done something worthwhile: to have a sense of our self as strong and active. In a word, we want respect and self-respect. But this is not something we can attain on the basis of having been victimized in the past.

At its best, recognition of oneself as having been victimized reflects a sense of the self as comparatively weak and passive. To be sure, the circumstances of victimization may have been such that any self would have been overcome. But be that as it may, there is no way of resolving this dilemma. Failure, no matter how inevitable, is still failure. And the pity of others can never help us to get beyond the sense of ourselves as pitiful. At its worst, the claim of victimization may fall on deaf ears, and be met with increasing resentment, hostility, and a feeling that one is getting more than one deserves.

In the absence of a superego that could offer a program for the attainment of respect, the perception that others pity or resent them is likely only to raise the level of the victim group's feeling of being victimized. Sadly, the logic of narcissism leads victim groups to redouble the efforts that caused them this pain in the first place.

A final reason why PC tends to move the university toward the extreme has to do with the logic of moral debate. As I have said above, under the superego, debate centers on the issue of what is true and what course of action is right. Under the rule of the primordial mother, debate becomes a matter of who is good. The aim of the debate is to show that one's opponent is bad (in this case racist, sexist, homophobic, etc.) and that one is good. For some groups, being good just means being a member of the group, as defined by its ideology of victimization. For others, and specifically for white males, being good means proving that one is good despite one's group identification. The result of this is that, for white males who make up the university power structure, goodness is always in question and must be demonstrated continually, through a kind of moral one-upmanship that operates by an incremental ratcheting up of the stakes.

For a full understanding of this, one must see the intrapsychic dimension that operates here. The PC individual, especially the white male, must not only operate according to the rules of a game of moral goodness. He also must prove to himself that he is good. But goodness in this case means the absolute love of the oppressed. There is no

room here for ambivalence or measure. Yet love is within the domain of the ego ideal. It is irreducibly narcissistic. Even the love of the mother for her child is based on her identification with the child.

The love of the oppressed demands something that is psychologically impossible, the permanent abandonment of one's own separate identity in exchange for enthusiastic subordination to the narcissism of another. Individuals who accept this demand must experience their own spontaneous responses as a continual indictment and condemnation of themselves. The point is that in a moral universe defined either by being or by loving the oppressed, one's own ego ideal and superego are defined as oppression. This is intolerable to the self, which must be permanently vigilant against this perception of badness, political incorrectness, at the core of its own being.

The problem is that unacceptable thoughts and feelings are naturally going to be produced with some frequency. The mind moves, so to speak. This is the source of human creativity. For the politically correct, however, it is also the source of feelings of extreme danger,

Consider the question of racial preferences in this regard. A society may, for good reasons, give a preference to some groups or individuals in the distribution of rewards and opportunities. There is no need to dispute that. Yet the choice to give a preference will naturally be a contentious issue, since whenever some are given preference, others will be disadvantaged. Experience tells us that they will have a case to make, and it will be on terms that stress their own worthiness. The interchange among affected parties on these issues of relative worthiness is a central process in a democracy.

But look what happens in the case of political correctness. Here, the arguments made by those who have been disadvantaged become unthinkable. They cannot be weighed, because they cannot be considered. Considering them would subject oneself to the feeling of being bad for simply having them. Thus, the spontaneous movement of the mind must be truncated and cut off. This will be especially a problem in the case of an individual who is himself a member of the group that is being disadvantaged, and who is therefore likely to naturally feel enhanced by assertions of worthiness on behalf of his group, including statements that assert the values he uses to justify his own position.

In order to have a sense of how radical a departure this is, one needs to recognize how natural and ordinary are the contentious disagreements among competing groups over the distribution of resources, and how extraordinary it is for some of these groups to be deprived of the capacity to assert their own claim and defend themselves. It is surely the moralization of the issue of race and its ideological cognates, that has been the cause of this. But in the course of this moralization the most basic understanding of the process has been lost. For the fact is, obviously, that the politics of identity is still politics. Racial groups, along with any of the other groups defined by the ideology of victimhood, have become political actors. If they are looked at in that way, it would be seen to be the most natural thing in the world for other groups to oppose them in the light of their own interest. But it is this opposition, and even the idea that such an opposition can be legitimate, that is lost under the regime of political correctness. With it goes much of the range of feelings that provide the motivational base of the democratic process. All of these lose their feeling of legitimacy and become phenomena which one is supposed to

hate. From all of this you can see how much of oneself one must rule out of bounds in this process of political correctness.

Notice again how this process differs from what one would find under the superego. The superego attaches goodness and badness to behavior, and permits behavioral acts of reparation as ways of compensating for previous badness. Narcissism attaches goodness and badness to the self, and does not permit reparative actions as a way of reestablishing one's goodness. Narcissism demands an absolute, perfect goodness, and our own recognition that we fall short of that ideal drives the continual recreation of a perfect fictional identity and the abandonment of who one is.

There are two ways of responding to the experience of the self and its feelings as hateful. They each further different elements of the drive to the extreme. One way is simply to endorse this viewpoint and hate oneself. When this happens, one loses connection with one's own ego ideal. One then becomes dependent on those who originated one's self-hatred for one's sense of direction. In this way, one loses the capacity to give resistance to the forces of political correctness, whose natural drive toward the extreme becomes more powerful as a result.

The other way of dealing with the unacceptability of one's impulses is by turning an internal conflict into an external one. One can project one's hated thoughts and feelings into others and hate them there. One thereby joins the forces of political correctness and in that way enhances its drive toward the extreme.

Psychoanalysis refers to this dynamic as "projective identification" (Klein, 1975). Through projective identification, one is enabled to reject the unacceptable element without rejecting oneself. This permits a remarkable trade-off. One loses the pain of finding oneself wanting and gains the feeling of perfect goodness that comes with being a pure and righteous warrior in the struggle against evil. That's quite a role and it's not surprising that so many adopt it. It offers narcissistic benefits, especially in the form of self-righteousness, in excess of anything the real world can provide. All one loses is a realistic sense of who one is.

Projective identification, no doubt, helps to explain some of the vigor and verve with which the campaign for PC is pursued, and the unabashed hatred and contempt that the politically correct hold for those whom they attack. In addition, it gives us cause to reflect that the common explanation for intergroup hatred, that we hate those who are different from ourselves, is fundamentally mistaken. Insofar as projective identification is behind the hatred, we do not hate others who are different from us. Rather, we hate those whom we experience, rightly or wrongly, as being like us, with regard to characteristics that we cannot accept in ourselves. Ultimately, then, we do not hate others at all. It is ourselves we hate. Political correctness is a way of defending ourselves against our own self-hatred.

Others who are different from us may make us feel uncomfortable, but the recognition that they exist simply acknowledges that there is an objective external world. Most of us can manage that. Again, hatred involves a wish to destroy. Yet the desire to destroy the external world cannot ever have been anything but an aberration, otherwise

there would be none of us available to tell the tale. It would seem to be our postmodern, politically correct colleagues for whom the existence of an external world is peculiarly a problem, and our inquiry has now offered us further insight into why that is so.

The irony in all of this is that, if PC is to be justified, it must be justified as a way of combating racism. But Young (1993) has observed that racism, that is to say *real* racism, is itself a form of projective identification. Seeing PC as a form of projective identification leads us to wonder how effective it possibly can be in this combat. It suggests the alternative possibility of complementary dynamics of projective identification, each helping to convince the other that their enemies are not the products of their own imaginations, but are quite real. In this way they reinforce each other, justify each other, and ensure each other's existence. Racism and political correctness are both fantasies of persecution and they need a persecuting object. If the other is not available, it must be invented. Moreover, since the object of one's hatred is inside, no amount of attacking an external representation will reduce its force, but will cause only an amplified antagonism with outside forces as our tactics, increasingly desperate, escalate and as our enemies respond. In this way we see the power behind an additional element of the drive to the extreme.

The Redefinition Of The Purpose Of The University

In the biparental model, the university provided a place where ideas were not acted upon, and where they could therefore be separated from their consequences and debated in accordance with their merits as ideas. Time has winnowed out the best and most powerful statements of these ideas and has left the results to us in the form of a canon of great works. These great works have been the fundament of the educational process in the traditional, biparental, university. In the postmodern PC university the distinction between ideas and their consequences is lost, which paradoxically has the effect that ideas *are* their consequences. This subordinates the discussion of ideas to the university's overall morality play and turns it into just another arena of political activity.

From the Study of Great Works to the Practice of Politics

An indication of how far the university has moved from the study of great works to the practice of politics is provided in a study by Will Morrissey in the journal *Academic Questions* (1992-93). Morrissey sampled the contents of the *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association*, the preeminent journal in the field of literature, over the period 1930 to 1990. Reading all of the articles for the years 1930, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, and 1990, he classified them as ideological, nonideological or tendentious. He defined ideology in this way:

a systematic or (if vague and incoherent) at least a general view of contemporary society and of large-scale or fundamental respects in which it should or should not be changed. Thus, ideology combines beliefs and moral opinions pertaining to the social, economic, and/or political system. (p. 56)

Adding:

Typically, an ideology also comprises beliefs about human nature, its malleability or permanence, and its divine, natural, or historical origin. However, in this study such beliefs were not counted as ideological unless explicitly associated with beliefs and moral opinions about the social, economic and/or political system. (56)

And he said:

In this study, an article is classified as ideological when (a) there is, assuming his sincerity, no mistaking its author's ideological commitment *and* (b) its argument is either clearly intended to support that ideology or depends for its plausibility on the reader's sharing it. (p. 57)

Articles in which "political comment is prominent and yet still incidental to the argument of the whole" were not considered ideological in his criteria, "Yet," he said, "they may signal a preoccupation with political or social issues. He therefore introduced the category of the "tendentious" to refer to:

articles in which incidental political or social comment is so prominent it raises a question about whether the author's true motive in writing is not at least in part political. (p. 58)

The results:

From 1930 through 1960, few articles are ideological (varying from 0 percent to 3 percent), and those few are dominantly centrist; the sole exception, in 1960, was moderately conservative ... The number of tendentious articles was also very low, but only through 1950. From having made up no more than from 1.5 percent to 4.0 percent of all articles in earlier volumes, tendentious articles leapt to 15.5 percent in 1960. After 1960, the percentage of tendentious articles remained in the very low double digits, reaching 19.5 percent in 1990. However, after 1960, the percentage of ideological articles increased markedly in the 1970s and dramatically in the 1980s, until, in 1990 they made up 52.5 percent of all articles. Only 28.0 percent of articles in 1990 were neither ideological nor tendentious. (p. 59)

Morrisey classified the overwhelming majority of these articles as leftist, saying:¹⁰

The categories of "left" and "right" are deliberately crude, and are chosen because they are easy to apply and address the major point at issue. However, they hardly do justice to the specific flavor of the articles in question -- a defect subsequently remedied, to a degree, by some representative quotations. (p. 59)

Morrisey's further specification finds that

one might expect these articles to exhibit great ideological diversity, even if they are all alike in rejecting American society or Western civilization. And, indeed, several distinct ideologies -- Marxist, feminist, Afrocentrist, and so forth -- are represented... [But] In the last decade or so, *PMLA* articles of leftist persuasion, despite what must seem to an orthodox Marxist or a democratic socialist as their extraordinarily *outré* quality, have had more ideological elements in common than

can be found to distinguish them from one another -- to the point where one may speak of a *PMLA* ideology. (p. 61)

This ideology is radical egalitarian -- *PMLA* articles almost uniformly condemn hierarchy and authority of any kind. Even the assumption that something is real -- that is, that it exists independently of cultural perspectives -- is disdained as implicitly hierarchical... Foremost among suspect realities are (so-called) gender differences, and one of the worst manifestations of hierarchy is to take heterosexuality as a norm... Above all others, the word "subversive" and its variants evidently provides a *frisson* these writers find hard to resist. (p. 62)

In other words, what Morrissey finds in this *PMLA* ideology is the same spirit that motivates political correctness in all of its other manifestations.

The standard response to the charge that the university has become politicized is the idea that "everything is political." This is a view that follows from the denial of an objective external world. It means that ideas are not to be judged on the basis of their objective truth, but rather as attempts by a group to serve its interests. Ideas are accepted as true, then, only because of the power of the group that puts them forward. For example, literary criticism that does not address issues of power is still political in that it serves the political interests of those who wish to keep the issue of power out of literary discussion.

Of course, one may see this aspect of things, if one wishes, without giving up the idea that such criticism may have independent validity in its own terms. But this is exactly the point that the forces of political correctness want to make. For them, literary criticism not only has a political aspect, it has *nothing but* a political aspect.

The absurdity of this view is best revealed in its application to science. Scientific theories are developed within a human community in which power is distributed in certain ways, and they may have consequences that affect the distribution of power. But that does not mean that they are not true or false in their own right.

The classic story illustrating this comes from the dawn of modern society, with the Catholic Church's attempts to force Galileo to deny his view that, contrary to the canonical teachings of Aristotle, the earth moves around the sun. They threatened him with torture and he did, indeed, recant. But, the story goes, under his breath he said "*eppur si muove*" (and yet it moves) (Furedy, 1996). And, independent of the correlation of human forces at any given time, it still does

The Transformation of Teaching and Research

But the university isn't just any institution, it has a specific function or purpose, and that purpose has to do with teaching and research, with the transmission and development of knowledge and ideas. Underlying everything that takes place within the PC university is the dual process of excoriating those seen as oppressors and expressing love for those seen as victims. As a consequence of this, the entire nature of what constitutes knowledge changes in the PC university. Knowledge becomes whatever ideas express hatred of the oppressors and love of the victims. As a consequence of this come changes in the ideas of the transmission of this knowledge, in the form of teaching, and the creation of new knowledge, in the form of research and scholarship.

The meaning of teaching and research change completely in the PC university, and the result is nothing less than a redefinition of the purpose of the university. The university turns into a setting for a Manichean battle between the forces of goodness, as personified by the victims and their righteous allies, and the forces of evil, personified by the oppressors: those who previously had status, and the whole panoply of social institutions through which they gained that status and have maintained it.¹¹ Teaching and research are redefined within this context.

Research becomes advocacy research. Rather than the disinterested pursuit of the truth, research becomes the development of weapons for use in the holy war. We have already seen some of the products of this in Chapter One where, as we noted, inconvenient facts are buried or ignored, research “findings” are molded to fit conclusions antecedently drawn, and critics are intimidated. It is worthwhile noting that the prestige given to academic research by society is based on people’s capacity to depend on research findings. But that was based on work that was accomplished under a more objective regimen. As time goes by, and as the constraints imposed by ideology increasingly limit the reliability of knowledge so produced, the prestige of academic research will disappear. At that point the academy will have squandered the reserve of trustworthiness that our ancestors, over the course of hundred of years, devoted their lives to accumulating.

Teaching is no longer the study of intellectual and artistic achievements, characteristic of the superego, but becomes a politicized process in which the forces of goodness are trained and mobilized and the forces of evil are subverted. Everything that is done is legitimated by reference to its function in this battle. The narcissistic premise here is that anything else serves the purpose of oppression. As the well-known slogan of the 1960s put it, “If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem.”

For example, here are some of the ways the politically correct, writing in academic journals, redefine the teaching of composition:

All teaching supposes ideology; there simply is no value free pedagogy. For these reasons, my paradigm of composition is changing to one of critical literacy, a literacy of political consciousness and social action. (Laditka, 1990: 361)

And, in an award winning essay:

[The classroom in composition ought to be considered] a disruptive form of underlife, a forum which tries to undermine the nature of the institution and posit a different one in its place. (Brooke, 1987: 151)

Or take a recent case at Wesleyan University, which, until the *Hartford Courant* brought the matter to public attention, offered the course COL 289, "Pornography: Writing of Prostitutes." The course was characterized this way in its own course description:

The pornography we study is an act of transgression which impels human sexuality toward, against, and beyond the limits which have traditionally defined civil discourses and practices—defined, that is, by regimes of dominance and submission, inclusion or exclusion, in the domains of organ and emotional pleasure. Our examination accordingly includes the implication of pornography in the so-called perverse practices such as voyeurism, bestiality, sadism, and

masochism, and considers the inflections of the dominant white-heterosexual traditional by alternative sexualities and genders, as well as by race, class, age, mental and physical competence.

It had a suitable final project: "Just create your own work of pornography." — video, essay, live performance. "I don't put any restraints on it," Professor Hope Weissman explained.

Wesleyan student Brian Edward-Tiekert told the *Hartford Courant* that the assignment is not "substantially different from a literature class where the instructor gave a creative-writing assignment for a final." But Mr. Edward-Tiekert may never have had a literature class in the traditional sense. If he had, he would have known that in such a course the final project is intended to demonstrate what the student has learned about how to write, not how to transgress. And it is difficult to imagine what the analogue would have been for Matthew Smith's final project, which was a video of him masturbating. To be sure, one may give oneself comfort by supposing that such courses and projects are an aberration at the university. But if one did that, one would be in disagreement with Mr. Smith, who said: "That's what kids do these days, they make porn at school." (Weinkopf, 1999).

In all of this, we find a disparagement of the idea of great works which is closely related to the depreciation of achievement I have already discussed. The very idea of great works comes to be seen as a technique of oppression (Searle, 1992). As we have seen, what replaces the study of great works is overt political activity, itself intended to exemplify the morality play in which the forces of goodness attack the forces of badness.

But it is also worthy of mention that the depreciation of greatness also leaves the way open for the elevation of material that is stunning in its triviality, an indiscriminate outpouring of material with no serious claim to distinction based only upon its location in the Manichean order of battle. Thus, we have this:

"I couldn't have taught this class 10 years ago," declares Stanford Prof. Kennell Jackson to an overflowing classroom on the first day of the spring quarter. 'But people don't look at me like I'm crazy anymore -- what history does has broadened considerably.' And Prof. Jackson is not exaggerating. 'Black Hair as Culture and History,' his ambitious new upper-level seminar, addresses how black hair 'has interacted with the black presence in this country -- how it has played a role in the evolution of black society.'...

If not for Prof. Jackson's earnestness, one might mistake the class for a parody of multiculturalism. The syllabus, handed out on the first day of class, includes such lectures as 'The Rise of the Afro' and 'Fade-O-Rama, Braiding and Dreadlocks.' According to this course outline, local hair stylists will visit for a week of discussions. Enrolled students will view the 1960's musical 'Hair,' read Willie L. Morrow's '400 Years Without a Comb,' and Dylan Jones's 'Haircults,' and study the lyrics of Michael Jackson's hit pop single 'Man in the Mirror.' (Sacks, 1992)

A special element of the faculty's contribution to the transformation of the course of study is worth mentioning in its own right. This is the denial of reality. As we saw before, in the traditional family the father had the function of coping with external reality. This was the

meaning of the superego. Thoroughly repudiating the superego and denigrating its works means that the necessity of coping with external reality must be denied and, indeed, with it must go the idea that there is an external reality that has to be coped with.

From this, we get the idea that each group may define reality however it sees fit, and that, indeed, groups have done so all along. Thus, denial of an objective reality is seen as politically correct because the assertion of an objective reality was merely a power ploy on the part of the politically dominant group to legitimate and make natural its dominance. From this, we get the fact that peculiar claims concerning history, for example, are not only asserted but taken seriously. This is perhaps most blatant in 'Afrocentric' thought. Thus, for example, a collection of essays called 'African-American Baseline Essays,' which was adopted by the public school system of Portland, Oregon, maintains according to C. Vann Woodward, that

Africa is the mother of Western civilization, that Egypt was a black African country and the source of the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome. Africans also discovered America and named the waters they crossed the Ethiopian Ocean, long before Columbus. (Woodward, 1991: 42)

When a teacher in Portland, Richard C. Garrett, questioned such things, he was told 'You have your scholarship, we have ours.' (Garrett, 1992)¹²

More important, though, is the denial that the laws of the physical universe are not objective but represent, again, only the outlook of the white males. Thus:

[D]espite the deeply ingrained Western cultural belief in science's intrinsic progressiveness, science today serves primarily regressive social tendencies. [I]ts ways of constructing and conferring meanings are not only sexist but also racist, classist, and culturally coercive. (Harding, 1986: 9)

Counterpoised to this is an emerging 'feminist' science, based on a feminine communion with the object of study (Harding, 1986). We see in this communion the loss of boundaries between self and other characteristic of the maternal world. What will be left of the technological capacity of the West if the laws of physics, for example, lose their special place among the universe of possible texts is anybody's guess.

Restrictions on Speech

Most widely publicized among the abuses of PC have been restrictions on speech. These have taken place in the classroom. For example, Stephen Thernstrom was pilloried for insensitivity for reading, in his course on race relations at Harvard University, from white plantation owners' journals (D'Souza, 1991). And Ian Macneil, a visiting professor, was denounced by the Harvard Women's Law Association, who repeated their denunciations in letters sent to other universities who might have considered hiring him. His crime consisted, in the first instance, of including in his case book, as an example of the legal 'battle of the forms,' a 'sexist' quote from Byron and then for being awkward in his response to the ensuing vilification. The quote:

A little she strove, and much repented,/

And whispering, 'I will ne'er consent' -- consented. (D'Souza, 1991: 197-198)

More widely publicized have been the proliferation of restrictive speech codes designed to combat 'hate speech.' Thus, the University of Michigan adopted a code that prohibited any behavior, verbal or physical, that stigmatizes or victimizes an individual on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, creed, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, handicap, or Vietnam-era veteran status. (cited by D'Souza, 1991: 142)

Because of the obvious danger that such codes would, as they have been, declared in violation of the First Amendment, a great deal of effort has gone into crafting them so that they would prohibit what is offensive and preserve what is valuable. But such efforts would have to come to nothing. They would have to be based on a formal distinction between types of speech. But the real issue for their politically correct authors was never *what kind of* speech is offensive, but *whose* speech is offensive.

Thus:

A student newspaper funded by Vassar College termed black activist Anthony Grate, 'hypocrite of the month' for espousing anti-Semitic views while publicly denouncing bigotry on campus. In an acrimonious debate, Grate reportedly referred to 'dirty Jews' and added, 'I hate Jews.' Grate later apologized for his remarks. Meanwhile, outraged that the *Spectator* had dared to criticize a black person, the Vassar Student Association first attempted to ban the issue of the publication, and when that failed it withdrew its \$3,800 funding. The newspaper 'unnecessarily jeopardizes an educational community based on mutual understanding,' the VSA explained. (D'Souza, 1991: 10)

The point is, as I have argued, the whole purpose of the politically correct university is to idealize the oppressed and demonize the oppressors. This holds true of speech as well as anything else. Symbolic activity which feeds the narcissism of selected groups is not only protected but obligatory. Given the totalizing character of narcissism, anything that conflicts with it is forbidden. This is what the discourse of 'sensitivity' is all about. But put this baldly, it is hard to see how anyone except the most ideological could accept it. And that is the dilemma of those who want to write speech codes.

Finally, we may mention among the abuses of PC, programs designed to 'fight' racism, sexism, homophobia, and other offenses by 'sensitizing' individuals who do not have the right opinions or emotions. A good deal of emotional brutalization may often be seen in these programs. Remember that a failure to idealize the underappreciated groups is seen as a sign of racism or sexism, or whatever the underappreciated group is. These attitudes do not belong in the loving maternal world and cannot be allowed to persist at the university. The subjectivity that underlies them is seen as diseased or evil and any steps that eradicate it are seen as legitimate and worthwhile. The methodology here most powerfully involves the infliction of shame.

Shame And The Emotional Power Of Political Correctness

The issue of shame enables us to return to our starting point. How does political correctness get its power over its opposition? The stands taken as politically correct are often quite radical and have a great deal of opposition to them among more traditional

elements of the university. But these traditional elements are often rapidly and decisively overcome. They often stand quite mute in fact. How does that happen?

Consider this case of a student describing his experience at a mandatory 'Diversity Seminar,' given to incoming students at the University of Michigan.

One activity that particularly angered me was called 'Take a Stand.' An imaginary line was drawn down the center of the room. One side is the 'comfortable' side, the other is the 'uncomfortable' side. When the facilitator made a statement, we were to stand on whichever side of the room corresponded to our opinion of the statement. The farther away from the center one stood, the more comfortable or uncomfortable he was.

The first statement was 'Dating someone from another race.' I walked over to the uncomfortable side, and when I turned around, I found myself alone. I was simultaneously confused and embarrassed.

'You mean all of those people are comfortable with dating people of another race?' I asked the facilitator.

'Yes,' he replied....

'Would anyone like to comment on why they're standing where they're standing?' asked the facilitator. Not surprisingly, everybody's eyes were on me.

'Since you asked,' I said, 'one of the many reasons is that my parents would probably boot me right out of the house.' I didn't feel bad about saying this.

One member of the group said 'That's how your parents feel, but how do you feel?'

I feel that I was ostracized from the group because of my beliefs. (Boeskool, 1991)

In this case, students were required to state their beliefs and then publicly humiliated if they turned out to be politically incorrect. The case is far from being an aberration. In fact, under the aegis of university administrators, such practices have become the norm. For example, remaining with the University of Michigan, Kors and Silverglate report:

The University of Michigan has an "Office of Orientation," which presented its program, "Commitment to Diversity," to the 1988 National Conference of the National Orientation Directors Association.... In October 1988, Michigan set the following primary goal for "future diversity programming": "Establish [a] common base for working definitions and understanding of terms and definitions: societal, institutional and individual discrimination; racism; sexism, homophobia, and heterosexism; religion [*sic*] intolerance; 'ableism' intolerance; understanding [and] appreciation of differences." It instructed "programmers" to instruct students about both discrimination at Michigan and the significant changes achieved "as a result of student activism." The desired result of this was "recognition that University [*sic*] is committed to becoming a leader as a multi-cultural institution and that students are expected to commit to contribute to that goal as new members of the community." It further instructed programmers to "engage students personally in the issues," which included getting undergraduates "to look

at personal beliefs, values and behaviors that may discriminate against or harm others," and to "make a personal commitment to change."

Michigan provided programmers with written forms that would lead undergraduates to examine, publicly, their private beliefs and values, and to commit to change. There was "A Personal Exploration," which asked participants, among other things, "What is your earliest remembrance of race? ... Describe one of the first experiences with race that you had in the classroom? ... Which students do you feel most comfortable with: Black, Chicano, Native American or Asian students? ... Which students do you feel least comfortable with: Black, Chicano, Native American or Asian students?" What were the goals of such programs? Michigan's Orientation Program Task Force, in its internal documents, stated the "Objectives" of its 1988 Winter Orientation Program for undergraduates: "An understanding of the importance of the issue of diversity, and its applicability to racism and other forms of discrimination, especially sexism and heterosexism; ... self assessment regarding their own experiences, background, attitudes, and competencies related to these issues; ... a heightened awareness to the levels of racism, sexism, and heterosexism and their various impacts." Pp. 225-6)

This sort of activity is certainly not limited to the University of Michigan. In fact, perhaps because university personnel must be reliably depended upon to participate in this process, it isn't even limited to students. Consider this from the University of Cincinnati:

The University of Cincinnati extended "racial sensitivity training" to staff and faculty. William Daniels, a library employee, described his experience at such a session. Attendance was mandatory, and all participants were ordered to have read Barbara Ehrenreich's essay on "cultural diversity." Vice Provost Mary Ellen Ashley called the group's attention to the silence of the white males among them, saying that she would tolerate this for the moment, but that they would have to participate. The vice provost asked all attendees to write an essay on the topic "What I can do to help our department demonstrate our appreciation for diversity," and explicitly stated that anyone who disagreed with the university's policy on diversity should find work elsewhere. When one librarian denied his need for "cultural diversity training," the vice provost asked the entire group to reflect on the "gall" of such a claim. (p. 227)

It might be possible to imagine that this sort of thing might have some validity if virulent racism, or other such thought crimes, were indeed rampant on university campuses. But, as we have seen, the term "racism" has a degree of elasticity among the politically correct and does not necessarily have anything to do with an attitude that can reasonably be called objectionable. For example, consider this:

On February 8-9, 1991, the United Ministries in Higher Education, Pennsylvania Commission, held a "seminar" on "Racism on campus" for nine universities in Central and Western Pennsylvania. The goal of the seminar was to send "teams" back to each campus to develop "specific 'nextsteps' in dealing with issues of racism." On several campuses, offices of student life and student services paid participants' travel and registration fees. The seminar provided a

packet of materials from universities around the country. These materials lead us to the logical conclusion of current "multiculturalism," group identity, anti-individualism, and intrusive thought reform.

Participants were given a "Glossary of Terms, which asked, "Who is a racist?" and answered, "All white individuals in our society are racists. Even if whites are totally free from all conscious racial prejudices, they remain racists." Another "term" was "White Racism-Power + Prejudice Racism.... In the United States at present, only whites can be racists."¹³ It defined "Personal Racism as: "Lack of support for ethnic minorities who take risks to change an organization.... Questioning the need for affirmative action goals. . . . 'Color blind' statements that refuse to see race as a part of an individual's identity." It defined "Organizational Racism" as "Premature negotiation to avoid conflict.... Absence of a training program that develops staff attitudes, understanding and skills for combating racism." (pp. 231-2)

Now let us return to the psychology of the issue. As Goffman (1959, 1967) has shown us, society may be seen as being a very intricate drama, in which participants present claims for deference based upon a definition of themselves and the situation and others transact a drama in which those claims are maintained. Typically, he notes:

Each participant is allowed to establish the tentative official ruling regarding matters which are vital to him but not immediately important to others, e.g., the rationalizations and justifications by which he accounts for his past activity. In exchange for this courtesy he remains silent or non-committal on matters important to others but not immediately important to him. (1959: 9)

On the surface, then, we all grant deference to each other. At least we typically give each other sufficient deference to validate each others' characters and keep the drama moving. Underneath the surface, or backstage, so to speak, a vigorous process is at work seeking to ensure that the apparently spontaneous mutual endorsement taking place on the surface comes off. And this backstage activity involves, on all of our parts, a deep understanding of the ways in which we have to play our roles and other people have to play theirs.

Thus, on the one hand, we stifle a yawn when a story someone is telling is boring to us, and we try very hard not to show that stifling a yawn is what we are doing. On the other hand, we avoid situations where we know that groups who are deferential to us in public may have reason to be discussing us more critically. In other words, we all know that we are playing roles and we have to know this in order for the roles we are playing to come off. But we have this knowledge privately, since the public display is not of the playing of the roles, but of the roles that are being played.

This means that social life is a kind of sleight-of-hand operation, in which we all both know, and don't know, about the performance that we, and others, are putting on. And we maintain this tenuous but necessary balance by asserting our own and accepting each others' privacy.

Political correctness works by denying the right to privacy. The premise of narcissism, after all, is that other people are not entitled to have independent minds. PC turns our private

awareness of our inner feelings into a source of shame. To have to try to act in a politically correct manner is to be politically incorrect. As George Orwell put it in his book *1984*, "A Party member is required to have not only the right opinions, but the right instincts." (1949: 174) Thus, love of the oppressed, not the display of love but love itself, is a criterion for one's own moral acceptability.

The alternative to that acceptability is to be the target of rage and scorn. The result of this is that individuals take their own deviation from the public demonstration as indicating that there is something wrong with them. Unable to dispel this impression by admitting their feelings, they each participate in the public ritual of agreement, leaving all the others to believe that there is something wrong with them for their own deviation. It is the apparent unanimity of the consensus so formed that maintains this apparent unanimity.

A classic experiment by Solomon Asch (1956) illustrates this dynamic. In that experiment, subjects were required to make the simple perceptual judgment of whether lines were the same or different lengths. But they were confronted with the question in a group situation in which the other members of the group had already unanimously made their judgments in an erroneous way. Unbeknownst to the subject, the other members of the group were confederates of the experimenter. The question was whether the real subject would contradict the clear evidence of his senses and go along with group, or whether he would go along with his senses and differ from the group. Strikingly, most of the subjects -- approximately three quarters -- conformed.

Thomas Scheff (1990), analyzing this experiment, argues that the response which occasioned the conformity, a response felt, incidentally, both by those who conformed and those who did not, was shame: 'the fear that they were suffering from a defect and that the study would disclose this defect.' (p.90)

Thus, he quotes Asch on the subjects who conformed:

They were *dominated* by their exclusion from the group which they took to be a reflection on themselves. Essentially they were *unable* to face a conflict which threatened, in some undefined way, to expose a deficiency in themselves. They were consequently trying to *merge* in the group in order not to feel peculiar. (Asch, 1956: 45; cited by Scheff, 1990: 90-91; emphasis added by Scheff)

The obvious point is that three quarters of Asch's subjects, in an experiment that meant nothing, failed to resist conformity because they feared it would reveal some undefined "deficiency." What could one expect in the tense political atmosphere of a university where the "deficiency" that would be revealed would be, for example, one's "racism," with all the connotations of slavery, lynchings, and Jim Crow laws that that charge brings with it?

The denigration of the father and his role leaves the individual, especially the male, in the terrible position of being stuck with the sense of unworthiness that the superego functioned to allow him to turn into guilt and discharge. And this unworthiness has to be contrasted with the evident purity claimed by the oppressed. They are idealized and perfect.

In the narcissistic world of political correctness, guilt cannot be seen as being part of the natural limitation of being human. The game has changed. Guilt, which refers to behavior, is no longer the metric of morality. The metric of morality is shame, which attaches to the

identity. Thus, the white male is stigmatized, not for what he does, but because of who he is -- a white male.

Guilt, because it is based upon actions which can be more and less good, is relative. Moreover, we can make reparations for our bad actions by doing something good. We do not have to be stuck with our guilt. Shame, by contrast, is absolute and irredeemable. It relates to us by virtue of who we are; and we are, and remain, who we are.

We have seen the results of this in the course of our discussion of the drive to the extreme. Within the psychology of shame, as we have seen, the only way people can claim worthiness is to project their unworthiness outward and attack it as part of the political correctness project. In that way they become politically correct. Those unwilling to go through this transformation typically internalize the rage of the politically correct in the form of depression, and that leaves them without the sense of authority that they need to resist political correctness.

The Moral High Ground

The defenders of PC identify with the primitive maternal, an image of perfect moral purity, utterly without ambiguity. On the basis of this identification, they tend to feel that the moral high ground is theirs by right. The critics of PC, incorporating the paternal, inherit the vision of moral complexity that it is the father's business to convey. They understand that, within them, there is the capacity to do wrong as well as right. Psychologically, this puts the critics of PC at a disadvantage when up against its defenders.

But in assessing their own moral worth, the critics of political correctness should bear in mind that it has not served its apparent beneficiaries very well. This is especially so in the case of those whose condition makes the most profound claim for alleviation through race-conscious policies: truly disadvantaged African-Americans. PC has prevented robust discussion of serious problems within the lower classes of the African-American community and has guaranteed that their very real problems would remain and even worsen. The classic case here was Daniel Moynihan's (1965) observation that the welfare system was destroying the black family, a view that was blasted as being racist. About this, William Julius Wilson said:

the controversy surrounding the Moynihan report had the effect of curtailing serious research on minority problems in the inner city for a decade, as liberal scholars shied away from researching behavior construed as unflattering or stigmatizing to particular racial minorities. Thus, when liberal scholars returned to study these problems in the early 1980s, they were dumfounded by the magnitude of the changes that had taken place and expressed little optimism about finding an adequate explanation. (1987: 4)

What needs to be remembered is that the moral stature of PC attaches solely to fantasy. What the paternal offers that the primitive maternal does not is the capacity to assess our actions morally on the basis of their consequences. When PC is judged in terms of its consequences, its claims to moral superiority come into serious doubt.

But, of course, the morality of PC is not a function strictly of its consequences. It poses a moral question in its own right. Kors and Silverplate address this issue directly. They say:

Recognition of the sanctity of conscience is the single most essential respect given to individual autonomy ... From the Inquisition to Soviet psychiatry, history has taught us the nightmare of violating the ultimate refuges of self-consciousness, conscience, and private beliefs. In Schiller's *Don Carlos*, Alba proclaims to the mighty Phillip his right to keep his opinion from the king, noting that even "a slave can keep his feelings from a king. It is his only right." The final horror of *1984* was the party's goal of changing Winston's consciousness against his will. The song of the "peat bog soldiers" sent by the Nazis to work until they died was, appropriately, "Die Gedanken sind frei"-"Thoughts are free" for that truly is the final atom of liberty. No moral person would pursue another human being there. Colleges and universities do. (pp. 211-2)

The Anomaly Of Female Power

One further point which needs to be made about the psychodynamics of the PC university relates to the ambiguous position of women. Within the psychology I have outlined here, women are seen as defenseless victims of male oppression on one hand, and as exemplars of the omnipotent primordial mother on the other. Thus, we find, on the one hand, that the image of the woman as passive, helpless victim is ubiquitous in our society, with whole classes of institutions having been created to protect these victims. On the other hand, and indeed partly through the manipulation of this image, women have manifested enormous power in the transformation of almost every aspect of society. This paradox is particularly interesting in connection with the theory developed here because it is difficult to think of any other way to explain it.

An example of this contrast occurred at the University of Michigan in 1992. This case involved a sophomore student in an introductory Political Science course. The student, in a paper criticizing telephone polling, invoked a hypothetical "Dave Stud," who, while "knowledgeable" about a certain area of taxation, refused to answer a pollster's question because he was busy "entertaining three beautiful ladies in his penthouse."

This male student's female teaching assistant responded this way in the margin of the paper:

This is ludicrous & inappropriate & OFFENSIVE. This is completely inappropriate for a serious political science paper. It completely violates the standard of non-sexist writing. Professor Rosenstone has encouraged me to interpret this comment as an example of sexual harassment and to take the appropriate formal steps. I have chosen not to do so in this instance. However, any future comments, in a paper, in a class or in any dealings w/me will be interpreted as sexual harassment and formal steps will be taken. Professor Rosenstone is aware of these comments -- & is prepared to intervene. You are forewarned! (*The Michigan Review*, 1993)

The disparity here between the frail, vulnerable woman, grievously damaged by the merest mention of male sexuality; and the powerful woman, capable of mobilizing the

full weight of the University of Michigan against a hapless sophomore, is breathtaking. As we shall see in the next chapter, it reaches its apotheosis in the politics of issue of women in combat.

Conclusion

Having maintained that PC represents psychological regression, it is important to reiterate that regression is not necessarily bad. On the contrary, as psychoanalytic thinkers such as Kris (1952) have observed, regression is a necessary element of creativity. Again, it might be argued, times of continuous change such as those we live in call for the enhancement of creativity in all areas of life. This may be, putting the best light on it, the deeper social function of postmodernism and the rise of the primitive maternal. But Kris' point was that, in order to contribute to creativity, regression has to be in the service of the ego. What we see being played out in PC, however, and in the revolt of the primitive maternal against the paternal generally, is not regression in the service of the ego. It is regression against the ego. And this regression against the ego now forms the core of our educational system. It increasingly controls our image of who we are, of what the world is, and of how we fit within it.

Before leaving this issue, it is important to point out the likely consequences of this regression. As I have said, in contemporary society the individual is protected from the consequences of his actions and shielded, as never before, from direct contact with indifferent objective reality. This does not mean that reality may be ignored. It means, instead, that reality must be dealt with symbolically and by rigorous analytic thought. This makes it absolutely essential that the modalities of free thought and open discussion, by which we seek objectivity by guarding against our biases and limitations, must be maintained with ruthless diligence. But it is precisely these modalities that are thrown out by political correctness. In this way, society has set itself up to be blind-sided by forces that it will not be able to comprehend. These forces will grow in power as the results of our self-inflicted ignorance accumulate.

¹ This replacement itself is a matter of interest. Defenders of political correctness often note that the related furor did not begin until the Cold War was over. They take this to mean that the "right" had to find something to oppose after communism collapsed. This fails to recognize that opposition to PC came, not from the right, which has never been heavily represented within the university, but primarily from the center; and that it was

the left that was deprived of an identity by the collapse of communism, forcing its revolutionary spirit into identity politics.

² The Marxist origins of political correctness suggest an irony that, were it not for political correctness, might provoke reflection amongst the corporate executives who, through their support for some forms of “diversity training,” are attempting to promote it within their own corporations (Lynch, 1997). They might wish to consider that when a corporation promotes the ideas that all “cultures” are equally valid, they undermine the special character of their own culture and, hence, the motivational structure that energizes their own organizations. Of special concern would be the cultural premise that the organization needs to maintain economic viability.

³ From its origins in the university, political correctness has, of course, spread widely throughout the culture. However, largely due to the effects of political correctness itself, information about its workings elsewhere has generally not been publicly available. Because the method of our inquiry involves the detailed analysis of process, this chapter will be primarily focused on the dynamics of political correctness as they have played out within a university setting. Much of what is said here will easily be seen to apply to other organizational and social settings.

⁴ It is critical to note that this happens to girls as well as boys, even if not entirely in the same measure. Thus, consider this from the columnist Anna Quindlen:

My relationship with my father was more man to man. He required of a fully developed human being that she have exhaustively studied both Max Shulman

and Machiavelli, Django Reinhardt and Louis Armstrong... His motto was “winners need not explain.” He treated B's as if they were F's.... If you couldn't keep up, you got left.

I kept up....

My father exercised only the tyranny of his expectations, but it was tyranny enough. And then, not so many years ago, I realized that, like a heart transplant after the rejection phase, his expectations for me had become my own. And I stopped valuing myself by how my father valued me. I know from literature and life that is perhaps the greatest passage that human beings ever make. (1993: E17)

⁵ Hobbes (1939) put it this way:

Again, men have no pleasure, but on the contrary a great deal of grief, in keeping company, where there is no power able to overawe them all. *For every man looketh that his companion should value him at the same rate he sets upon himself;* and upon all signs of contempt, or undervaluing, naturally endeavors, as far as he dares (which amongst them that have no common power to keep them in quiet, is far enough to make them destroy each other), to extort a greater value from his contemnners by damage, and from others by the example. [emphasis added, 160]

Which contributes strongly to this:

In such condition there is no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving, and removing, such things as require

much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death..

⁶ Universities clearly differ in their degree of PC. Moreover, it inevitably generates resistance to itself. It is therefore unlikely that any university can be said to be entirely PC. Nonetheless, it is possible to think about the PC university as an ideal case, which is what I am doing here.

⁷ According to U.C. political scientist Jack Citrin (1999a) the hunger strike consisted in limiting their diet to Jamba Juice and Ensure. Jamba Juice is proclaimed on the web site of its manufacturer to offer: "An extraordinary health experience unlike any you've ever tasted. Jamba is enticing fruit and vegetable flavors, vital nutrients and total convenience: everything you need to live an active, healthy life. (<http://www.jambajuice.com/what/index.html>). Ensure, a product of Abbott Laboratories, is advertised on their web site as a "complete adult nutritional beverage available in a variety of flavors." (<http://www.abbott.com/products/nutritionals.htm>). The concept of a hunger strike brings with it a sense that the striker is putting himself in danger through his actions. These students were not putting themselves in danger. In that sense, they were not so much on a hunger strike as on a diet.

⁸ As with all the articles cited in this chapter, the quoted material consists of excerpts, not the entire article.

⁹ Kors and Silverglate p.162

¹⁰ Morrissey's results in tabular form (p.60):

Percentages of Politically Biased Articles

Year	Ideological	Tendentious	Total
1930	0.0	4.0	4.0
1940	1.5	1.5	3.0
1950	3.0	1.5	4.5
1960	1.5	15.5	17.0
1970	10.0	10.0	20.0
1975	5.5	11.0	16.5
1980	41.5	12.5	54.0
1985	50.0	12.5	62.5
1990	52.5	19.5	72.0

Left, Right, Center

1930:	No ideological articles.
1940:	1 ideological article, centrist.
1950:	2 ideological articles, centrist.
1960:	1 ideological article, rightist.
1970:	5 ideological articles, leftist.
1975:	2 ideological articles, leftist.
1980:	10 ideological articles, leftist.

1985: 12 ideological articles, leftist.

1990: 19 ideological articles, 3 centrist, 16 leftist.

¹¹ There is, of course, such a thing as real oppression. But oppressors are not a mythic force of the sort that the psychology of the ego ideal projects. They are simply human beings who have let their narcissism run away with them.

¹² For a discussion of Afrocentric 'scholarship' see Lefkowitz (1992). This is from her account:

...several years ago I had a student who seemed to regard virtually everything I said about Socrates with hostility.... [H]er instructor in another course had told her that Socrates (as suggested by the flat nose in some portrait sculptures) was black. The instructor had also taught that classicists universally refuse to mention the African origins of Socrates because they do not want their students to know that the so-called legacy of ancient Greece was stolen from Egypt.

But,

Because Socrates was an Athenian citizen, he must have had Athenian parents; and since foreigners couldn't become naturalized Athenian citizens, he must have come from the same ethnic background as every other Athenian.... It was as simple as that.

(29-30)

¹³ The idea that blacks cannot be racist, because racism requires power and only whites have power in our society, is a staple at the PC university. But it is absurd. For one thing, it implies that the Nazis were not racist until they gained power in 1933. For another, in the face of the fact that white people are overwhelmingly opposed to racial preferences

(e.g. Thernstrom and Thernstrom, 1999), and that such preferences remain in place after thirty years, the idea that black people do not have power is ridiculous. It is a measure of the corruption PC has wrought within the university that such preposterous statements go largely unchallenged.