

Political Correctness- Where is the line?

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Civilización Occidental y Cristiana. León Ferrari. 1965

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In recent times, there has been a worldwide upsurge in the demand for the politically correct. It seems like these days, it's almost impossible to say something without being later confronted by a negative response to what has been said. Some see this as a form of growing respect between social groups, while others consider it oppression towards freedom of speech. Given how easy it is to share opinions these days, we have to wonder, where is the limit of our words?

It goes without saying that the matter of political correctness is always on the social networking agenda, but its presence in the governmental sphere is also fascinating. A large number of politicians tend to experience the extent of the matter when their opinions are criticised for being too controversial.

For instance, in the Spanish-speaking world, the previous president of Mexico **Felipe Calderón**

was criticised for using the term 'telling Chinese tales' when describing lies told by Zhenli Ye Gon – a Chinese-Mexican businessman.

Needless to say, this expression could seem offensive without a proper explanation of its meaning. But, in reality, it is merely a Spanish play on words that refers to a type of Chinese fiction characterised by wit and fantasy. Even so, being President is a role that carries a lot of responsibility and power. For some, it is obvious that this president in particular should have chosen better words.

Similarly, from time to time, political correctness has affected the art world to the point where works have been disassembled due to the controversy they have provoked. In Argentina, the artist **León Ferrari** is known for his controversial artwork as declaring his viewpoint against the connection between the state and the church.

Many of his pieces reflect an ironic take on a mixture of violence, politics and religion in our society. On more than one occasion, his works were taken down after the judge's ruling and a majority verdict. In this case, it seems that the most apt method of political correctness is to silence the strongest opinions rather than disputing them or vocalising any disagreements.

Taking these examples into account, it's worth questioning why certain influential figures can avoid criticism and therefore the repercussions of their words more so than others. The American president Donald Trump, for example, is able to say something offensive against Islam almost every day - without having to face up to the negative reactions of those he affects. Could this be a matter of status?

What, then, would be the conclusion of this discussion? If on one hand, it's possible that those who over-endorse political correctness are preventing an essential discourse between different cultural viewpoints, then at the same time we need to consider the consequences of our words and what is worth labelling as offensive. In this way, we will not threaten our freedom of speech.

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It's true that public opinion can determine the popularity of public figures, but despite the negative response towards Trump over the past year, he continues expressing himself as he likes without considering the consequences.

After all is said and done, if we did not have the privilege of debate, we would undoubtedly become vacant robots, without the desire to stand up and defend for our own opinions. We've already come a long way - let us not regress!

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