

A Dispatch from The Backlash

Written by Margaret Evans, Editor

Monday, 07 March 2016 12:51 - Last Updated Wednesday, 09 March 2016 10:00



As a longtime connoisseur of armchair analysis, I don't think I've ever seen so many "thinking people" simultaneously scratching their heads over a single phenomenon as the one called Donald Trump.

It's all anybody can talk about – on TV, on social media, and, of course, from the living room armchair. And every day, my various newsfeeds are inundated with "think pieces" about Trump, all of them asking the same questions: Why him? Why now? What the hell?

There are as many theories as there are thinkers, and some of them really resonate with me. (Especially the ones expressed with wit, verve, and a minimum of pop-up ads for Botox.) I've read so many of these "think pieces" over the past few months, I'm practically all thought out. I now understand that "people are angry" – for a variety of reasons – and that Trump gives them hope – in a variety of ways – and makes them feel like they have a champion. I get all that, and I am not here to judge.

I'm just here to think out loud. (Or in print, as it were.) Because what the world needs now – quite desperately – is another "think piece."

I found myself drawn into an unfortunate Facebook discussion on the Wednesday morning after Super Tuesday. It was one of those ominously "diverse" threads just itching to boil over – featuring Trump fans, Trump detractors, and everything in between. The insults started flying – as they so often do, now, among Facebook "friends" – and I got my feelings hurt . . . and said so.

That's when a total stranger (and Trump supporter) told me: "PC is over. Toughen up."

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Indeed, PC is over. Ding-dong, the witch is dead. But have you met her older, scarier sister?

The *Daily Beast* just published an article called “How the PC Police Propelled Donald Trump.” According to columnist Tom Nichols, “the pestilence that is the Trump campaign is the result of a conglomeration of political, academic, media and cultural elites who for decades have tried to act as the arbiters of acceptable public debate and shut down any political expression from Americans with whom they disagree. They, more than anyone else, created Donald Trump’s candidacy and the increasingly hideous movement he now leads . . . By assailing sensible conservatives as sexists, racists and imbeciles, they paved the way for a jackass who embodies their worst fears.”

Of the myriad “think pieces” I’ve consumed, this one rings most true for me. But, of course, it would. If you’ve been reading my column for a while, you know I’ve been raging against the PC Police – in my own polite, charmingly southern way, of course – for many a year. Some of you have thanked me for it, while others have silently judged me from one downtown barstool or another, but I think we can all agree now – most of us, anyway – that The Backlash is upon us. And it ain’t pretty.

It appears the PC Police have chastised and scolded a goodly number of our fellow Americans right into the arms of Donald J. Trump, the man who famously “isn’t afraid to say what he thinks.”

And I get it. I really do.

But I now find myself in the ironic position of “policing” the backlash. Because the truth is – the PC Police have a point. Sometimes we really *shouldn’t* “say what we think.” The opposite of political correctness is NOT willy-nilly rudeness and scattershot crudeness. The cure to too many

thou shalt not isn’t *thou canst*,

therefore thou absolutely shouldst!

The antidote to silly campus-bred concepts like “safe spaces” and “trigger warnings” is *not*

to turn our public square into the wild, wild west, where a verbal ambush lurks around every corner.

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To put it more tritely: Two wrongs still don't make a right. And while he may be valiantly smiting the PC Police – yay! – Trump has emboldened us all in ways we ought not be emboldened. If I may be so bold.

I see it all over Facebook, every day. Granted, social media has long been a challenging arena for those of us with delicate sensibilities. But it's so much worse now. The petty put-downs. The free-flying f-bombs. The anger that never stops simmering just beneath the surface, and often bubbles up.

And just look at this presidential election! The abject deterioration has been stunning to behold. Do you honestly think little Marco Rubio ever imagined he'd be at the debate podium referencing spray tans and small hands when he first stood up to tell his inspiring story – a tale of poor Cuban immigrants, a bartender and a maid, who realized the American Dream and bequeathed it to their son, who went on to run for President of the United States?

Of course, Rubio's sophomoric jabs pale in comparison to Trump's deranged remarks about "bullets dipped in pig blood" and "taking out their families" . . . his constant, casual talk of "stupid" people and "bimbos" and "losers." But it's pretty clear, now, that an ebbing tide lowers all ships. When it comes to civility – which is just a fancy word for "the way we treat each other" – Trump is controlling that tide, and we're all going down with him. All of us.

Political correctness started out with good intentions, and – I believe – still has good intentions at heart. The bad thing about PC was never its *intentions* – to treat people with kindness and dignity – but the fact that it was so rigidly enforced. By an elitist group of self-appointed arbiters. Selectively, according to their standards. Through shame and humiliation.

Shame and humiliation never work for long, y'all. Not when they're coming from an outside source. They only work when they come from an inside source – a person's own heart. I don't know much in this world, but I know that.

So if you think you can shame and humiliate Trump's fans into dropping their support, you've got another thing coming. First they'll double down, then they'll shout you down. And if you

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happen to be at one of his rallies, they might even knock you down.

PC is over. Who knew I'd miss it so much?

Margaret Evans is the editor of Lowcountry Weekly. Read more of her [Rants & Raves](#) here or visit her blog at

www.memargaret.com