



7-2020

## The Pacifican July 2020

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### Recommended Citation

University of the Pacific, "The Pacifican July 2020" (2020). *All Issues - Student Newspaper, The Pacifican, Pacific Weekly*. 1171.

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Jul 24, 2020 · 4 min read

# On Cancel Culture, White Privilege, and Living in a PC Society

by Liliana López

Hello. I am Liliana, who's last name is pronounceable. I am Liliana, your neighbor who's nicely manicured lawn matches all the others in this white suburban neighborhood. Liliana, who's parents are accent-less, tax-paying, citizens, and I am Liliana, who grew up being the only Mexican girl in her advanced classes. Hello, it is nice to meet you.

Sometimes I wonder if I am qualified to speak as a minority, because in some ways I have been so far removed from the struggles that minority families and their children face. Nevertheless, *I am a Chicana*. Anything that I haven't lived, I've seen; I've witnessed how both the left and right have fallen short in their dealings with minorities. You've both been awkward around us, as if we were an Amazon package with a big "HANDLE WITH CARE" stamped across the top.

To my conservative friend, let me show you why BIPOC (black, indigenous, & people of color) are angry, why it may *seem* like we overuse the term "white privilege." Many of us have grown up in cultures that have taught us to "keep your head down." We have been taught that speaking up only gets you into trouble; it's better to be quiet and do your job well, if you do this, there will be no problems and you will be left in peace. But now, many of us who once followed these rules are now breaking away from them. We are finally saying, "Hey, I am a human being too. If someone disrespects me, or insults my culture, I have the RIGHT to tell them that it is not ok." When you hear someone talk about white privilege, it does not mean that you have not struggled, but rather that you have not felt pain or hardship due to your skin color. It just means that no one has ever told you to go back where you came from. No one has ever collectively called whites criminals, or made fun of your traditions. I know many conservatives hate the idea of a "PC culture," of living in a society where they can't say anything without offending someone. But it's not a question of

being “politically correct.” It has nothing to do with politics and everything to do with people. When someone says that something is offensive, know that they are *choosing* to tell you about words and actions that have hurt them, oftentimes they are acting in good faith and believing that you did not hurt them willingly. I want to let you know that I too wish to be respected, and assuming that my people are all drug dealers and rapists is not a good place to start.

And to my liberal friend, I’d like to say that there is nothing more dangerous than one’s own ego. It’s so easy, of course, to feel good about removing a racist person from our midst. To feel like we’re the better person when we disassociate from someone who doesn’t meet our standards of morality. Perhaps you yourself don’t want to get cancelled, so you posted a black square, changed the link in your bio, and made sure you bought from a black business the next time you went out. But, do people of color only merit support when an injustice is committed against them? Do we only seek out their art and learn about their history when progressive society demands that we do so? No. Cancel culture and white guilt is toxic and wrong, and shouldn’t be the driving force for your activism. Fear of being judged by others shouldn’t be the reason we choose to love others, or to understand their struggles. Don’t be just if it’s only to satisfy yourself, ethics are not a Scout badge that you can pick up and wear.

Finally, I’d like to tell both of you that there is nothing to be gained by calling each other names on social media. Are you any better? In what measurable way are you worthier than them, and have earned the right to insult your neighbor? Sit down with each other. Talk about politics, and talk with each other. See if you can figure out the answer to the Great American Question: Who deserves to be respected, Republicans, or Democrats? And once you have solved that, you’ll have gotten a lot further than we, as a country, have in a long time. If you ask me, the message of the Revolution is this: the only way to create change, to battle injustice, is to start each day by promising to be the most ethical person possible. And like I said earlier, that doesn’t mean you have to walk around on eggshells around us. You don’t have to feel that you can’t say anything without someone getting offended. Don’t worry about saying or doing “the wrong thing,” because acting with sincerity and human kindness is always the most ethical thing to do. It is the right thing.