

SAFS Newsletter

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Maintaining standards of excellence in academic decisions about students and faculty

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IN THIS ISSUE

Donald A. Downs, ETHICALLY, YES, IT'S TIME TO SHOUT DOWN THE SHOUTER-DOWNERS	1
Lorraine Clark, AFTER THEORY? STANLEY FISH AND THE VIRTUE ETHICS SCHOOL OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM	3
Heinz Klatt, THE LONG, DARK SHADOW OF THE ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION OVER THE UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA	6
Carmel Forde, ON CONTINGENCY	8
Jeff Muehlbauer, THE POLITICIZATION OF NATIVE STUDIES STUDENTS: FOOTSOLDIERS IN SOMEONE ELSE'S WAR	10
Brendan O'Neill, THE VIOLENCE OF THE SAFE SPACE	13
2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND SCHOLARSHIP	15
FACULTY STATEMENT REGARDING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND OPEN DEBATE AT YORK UNIVERSITY	17
Felipe Fernández-Armesto, TAKING OFFENCE: A NEW PANDEMIC?	18
Michael Kennedy & John Carpay, PARLIAMENT, NOT STUDENT UNIONS, SHOULD VOTE ON BOYCOTTING ISRAEL	19
Peter Shawn Taylor, QUOTAS ON CAMPUS	20
Joseph Hickey, AGAINST CORRECTNESS AND THE TAMING OF PEOPLE	22
Frank Furedi, PARANOID PARENTING MEANS UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ARE TREATED AS KIDS	23
Peter Wood, HOW I WOULD HAVE HANDLED JOHN DERBYSHIRE'S APPEARANCE ON CAMPUS	25
Mark Mercer, ACADEMIC FREEDOMS AND THE CIVIL LIBERTIES	27

ETHICALLY, YES, IT'S TIME TO SHOUT DOWN THE SHOUTER-DOWNERS

Donald A. Downs

With increasing frequency, especially on college campuses, speakers presenting unpopular views—or views unpopular with a vocal minority of the audience—are being disrupted or “shouted down” until they leave the stage. This has happened at my own campus and many others.

Such incidents are an embarrassment, an insult to higher education's time-honored commitment to free and open debate, and they speak volumes about the decline of civility in society. But while they violate the spirit of the First Amendment's free speech guar-

antee, if force isn't involved it's not clear that a constitutional violation has taken place.

According to longstanding Supreme Court doctrine, the Constitution and Bill of Rights protect us only against actions taken by government or private citizens acting on government's behalf.

The actions of private individuals or groups are viewed as the equivalent of “state action” only when there is a clear or direct relationship between the private parties and the government.

So, from a purely legal perspective, private individuals acting on their own do not violate the First Amendment when they shout down a speaker.

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They are rude and disruptive, yes. And they might be guilty of disorderly conduct or in violation of a state or local statute protecting free speech. But being loud and disruptive is not unconstitutional.

That's the legalistic view. The decency view points in the opposite direction: that anyone who indulges in shouting a speaker down has violated the very spirit of free inquiry and common decency necessary to sustain constitutional democracy.

As the late First Amendment scholar Thomas Emerson of Yale Law School observed, "the system of freedom of expression" that has served us so well for so many years is based on a delicate balance between the rights of speakers and listeners. You have a right to respond to, or to protest what a speaker says. Civil rights protests at Ku Klux Klan rallies are a good and noble example.

But disruption and silencing are entirely different matters for a variety of sound reasons.

For starters, when you prevent a lawful speaker from presenting his or her views you deprive your fellow citizens of hearing a viewpoint they came to hear, whether they agree with it or not.

Why would anyone want to hear a point of view with which he or she disagrees? Simple. They might want to be challenged or stretch their minds. Or they might want to "know their enemy." Maybe they simply re-

spect the rights of others, which is necessary to the sustenance of a constitutional system.

Those who would shout down a speaker display character traits no constitutional democracy should countenance, much less encourage.

Disrupting or silencing speakers is not reminiscent of the moral authority of civil rights leaders, but of the arrogance and bullying tactics of the wearers of jackboots and the bearers of Gulag arrest warrants.

Were such behavior to become the norm—and sadly too many college authorities confuse such action with free speech these days—political discourse would become nothing less than a shouting match. The bell would toll for free speech in America.

There are those who claim that some speech is so upsetting that it "traumatizes" certain listeners who need to be protected.

This has given rise to the so-called Trigger Warning movement on campuses and the "dis-invitation" of speakers. But it's a weak argument, assuming that such listeners lack the fortitude and wherewithal to withstand the rigors of constitutional discourse.

The ethical answer to our original question is clear. Shouting speakers down is anathema to the cardinal principles of free speech even if the First Amendment is not directly at stake. Statutory laws punishing such behavior are legitimate.

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AFTER THEORY? STANLEY FISH AND THE VIRTUE ETHICS SCHOOL OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Lorraine Clark

Stanley Fish, *Versions of Academic Freedom*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2014. 163 pages including Coda, Appendix, Works Cited, Index.

Can one mount a coherent, persuasive defence of academic freedom on the basis of an admittedly “hybrid,” perhaps “monstrous” anti-foundationalist foundation, an anti-theoretical theory? Such is Stanley Fish’s task here, laid out (some may be relieved to hear) with his usual clarity. The six chapters of this slim book sketch a representative “taxonomy” of five main “schools” of academic freedom Fish distills from the literature on the subject: an overview of the five schools; a chapter on each school; a Coda seemingly pointing towards Aristotle as his “surprise” philosophical foundation (more later); and an Appendix containing a talk given at Rice University, “Academic Freedom, the First Amendment, and Holocaust Denial.”

The five main chapters (2-6) together amount to a sustained argument for Fish’s own position, the ‘It’s Just a Job School,’ described immediately in chapter two but then invoked in each subsequent chapter as his standard for critiquing the other four schools. The schools range along a continuum from “the most conservative” (his own) to “the most radical” view of academic freedom, a move “marked by the transfer of emphasis from academic [freedom as limited to a specific realm] ... to freedom, which does not limit the scope or location of what is being asserted at all” (p. 4).

Fish’s own standard of academic freedom is “professionalism, pure and simple:” the distinctive task of the academic profession is the pursuit of truth and the advancement of knowledge; professionals should exercise the standards of competence established within their disciplines and the academy as a whole towards achieving this task, and not engage in such

extraneous tasks as “forming citizens or inculcating moral virtues or training soldiers to fight for social justice” (p. 10). The latter activities subordinate the disinterested search for truth, the distinctive task or purpose “intrinsic” to the academy, to ends “extrinsic” to the academy’s proper sphere. And Fish both concedes and insists that this intrinsic-extrinsic distinction is not grounded in some prior, external standard of “nature” or “reality” or “theory” but is self-constituting or constructed: it’s how true scholars and academics rightly demarcate their own professional task and boundaries. In this view, then, academic freedom is highly circumscribed: it is limited to those areas in which professors have professional competence, and to the conditions they require for exercising that competence. They are not free, for example, to turn a physics class into a class on social justice.

Conservatives may be pleasantly surprised to hear Fish endorse such a view. But it comes with some large caveats to which I shall later return. This boundary between what is “intrinsic” and “extrinsic” to the academy is of course the bone of contention in disputes about academic freedom, and provides Fish’s own standard for defining the other four schools. The more any school attempts to expand its definition of “the academy” –and, hence, of academic freedom—into areas “extrinsic” to the academy properly (i.e. professionally) defined, the more the term “academic” is whittled away, swallowed up by the word “freedom,” extended indiscriminately into all areas of life. The result, he says, is that what many “politicizing” professors consider to be an exercise of their academic freedom instead becomes the violation and indeed the ultimate destruction of the entire concept.

Fish’s second school of academic freedom, for example, with which he acknowledges some affinities, is “the ‘For the common good’ school.” It shares with his school the claim that academics are engaged in the special task and “spirit” of following the evidence wherever it leads them, adhering to standards of professional competency, regardless of external market or political forces. But instead of resting content with this task, this school proclaims that its labours are essential to the flourishing of democracy:

“professional values are subordinated to the higher value of democracy or justice or freedom; that is, to the common good” (p. 11). Once again, the academy subjects itself to an extrinsic not intrinsic justification of its activities.

Such a school leads logically to “the ‘Academic exceptionalism or uncommon beings’ school,” which claims that the superior “moral virtue” and “wisdom” of academics (conferred on them by their professional training) makes them necessary counterweights to the tyranny of popular opinion in a democracy. Academics should thus be granted greater freedom from the laws and regulations binding ordinary citizens, who are bound for instance as “employees” not to criticize their employers or flout workplace rules. Again, Fish argues that “professionalism” dictates that as employees bound to certain rules and regulations of their universities, faculty cannot claim “academic freedom” allows them to violate those rules; only in the sphere of scholarly research are they free. Professors have one duty in the classroom, where they’re authorized to perform certain tasks; but another in research, where their specifically “academic” employer actually authorizes them to be “free” (p. 91). (Fish invokes Immanuel Kant’s distinction between the “public”/scholarly and “private”/functionary uses of reason, from “What Is Enlightenment?”)

The fourth and fifth schools are “the ‘Academic freedom as critique’ school” and “the [closely related] ‘Academic Freedom as revolution’ school,” where “the shift from academic as a limiting adjective to freedom as an overriding concern is now complete” (p. 13). Whereas the first two schools argue that academic freedom should be exercised within the limits or norms of the profession, the “critique” and “revolution” schools argue that these professional norms should themselves be subject to critique and overthrow or “dissent,” contesting the very distinction between what is “intrinsic” and “extrinsic” to academia set by those norms that Fish relies on not only to distinguish among the different schools, but to define and defend the very idea of academic freedom itself. The “political agenda” implicit in the “common good” school becomes explicit: the question whether a professor’s e-mail to his class comparing Israelis

to Nazis was offered “in the spirit of vigorous discussion, or in the spirit of vigorous partisanship” is moot, for these schools. But in Fish’s view, if academics behave not as scholars but as political advocates, they do not merit academic freedom (p. 19).

Again, this may sound pretty good to those of us who deplore the rampant politicization of the academy. But now to the caveats. Fish concedes that he shares with Judith Butler (the “critique” school, not quite a “revolutionist”) her anti-foundationalist critique of any appeal to “professional norms” as having any permanence or ahistorical foundation in “reality” or “the nature of things.” The line they draw between what is “intrinsic” and “extrinsic” to the academy or profession is indeed an arbitrary one, drawn by disciplinary practices as those unfold over the long period of historical time that is in his view wholly constitutive of those disciplines. Disciplines with their norms are always evolving, and as they do, the lines demarcating what is “intrinsic” and “extrinsic” to those disciplinary practices are always changing: one man’s sphere of disinterested scholarly practice is or becomes another man’s interested political practice. There is no unchanging theory or epistemology or philosophy that undergirds or presides over those norms; they are always intrinsic to and emerging out of the disciplinary practices themselves, providing them with a wholly “immanent [not philosophical or transcendent] intelligibility” (p. 22) (quoting philosopher Ernest Weinrib). As Fish quotes his primary philosophical guru, Richard Rorty, this means that the philosophical defences of academic freedom are merely “abbreviations of practices rather than foundations for practices”—“that is, it is the history of a practice and not a theory about it that tells us what is central to its performance” (p. 22).

This means that, according to someone like Butler, Fish can neither authoritatively carve out a sphere of contemplative scholarly thought, a sphere regulated from within by its own disciplinary norms or “immanent intelligibility,” nor account for change within a discipline, the kind of change that “dissent” and “revolution” can only bring to that discipline from “outside” those norms. Fish dismisses her objection to the arbitrariness, artificiality, and fictionality of his

line of demarcation by conceding it. (Yes, that line is a willed construct, defined by the task any discipline sets for itself; but so what? These constructs are all we have; we can't perform all tasks; and the line gains its own authority through the history of the disciplinary practices as those unfold.) Here, he points out, he and Butler absolutely agree: "Is it a transcendental ground that conditions the academy's difference, or is it precisely the way that line of demarcation is drawn that produces the difference upon which the academy's self-definition depends? Both Butler and I would affirm the second alternative" (p. 125; my emphases).

What Fish does not concede to Butler is that disciplinary change can only come from the outside: again, from a philosophical, theoretical, God's-eye or Archimedean point of view outside the disciplinary practices that in his view constitute any such illusory point of view. Nor can disciplinary change arise from an external "reality-beyond-our-heads," that is, a "realist epistemology" that would allow the truth, objectivity, or reality of the discipline's object of study to resist and hence alter the disciplinary practices brought to bear upon it. For Fish there is no truth, reality, or objectivity outside of those understood as constituted by the practices themselves. Any change within disciplinary norms is generated from within, by the gradually evolving practices of its practitioners. And how do those happen? Presumably, through perfectly "amicable collisions" among them.

This is why Fish concedes that his defence of academic freedom through a possibly "quixotic" or "quaint" return to an "ivory tower" idea of the academy as a sphere of rarified, contemplative intellectual activity removed from practical concerns and self-justifications may indeed be "a hybrid, perhaps even a monster. I combine an antifoundational epistemology with an insistence on maintaining a foundational structure that is, by my own admission, artificial, historically emergent and, therefore, challengeable; and I do so in the conviction that without such a foundation—supported by nothing but itself—a certain mode of experience will be lost" (p. 127).

His Coda waxes Aristotelian on this "certain mode of experience"—the virtues of contemplative thought (he calls these pleasures; we can also call them goods)—that for Aristotle constitute the highest human goods: the pleasures of rationality, the intellect. Aristotle's distinction between the contemplative and the active life, or theoretical and practical wisdom, where the activity of contemplative wisdom "seems both to be superior in serious worth and to aim at no end beyond itself, and to have a pleasure proper to itself" (Aristotle) is, Fish says, "a perfect account of the academy, a realm where contemplation with no end beyond itself is mandated, and 'practical activities' are admitted only as objects of that contemplation. That is the basis of the distinction I have been urging between the kinds of truth sought in the academy—truths sought independently for their 'own sake' independently of any call to action—and the kind of truth sought by those who conduct inquiry with a view to deciding and implementing policy" (p. 133).

Does this betoken a "conversion" to Aristotelian metaphysics, foundationalism, epistemology, or ideas of virtue? Fear not: it heralds what I predict is Fish's "new direction," which will turn out not to be a new direction at all. He is headed for what I'll call "The virtue ethics school of academic freedom": he will "reconstitute" this foundational Aristotelian distinction on the anti-metaphysical, anti-realist, anti-foundational, historicist "practices" of philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre (After Virtue, mentioned just once in Fish's book but completely congruent with Fish's account of the authority of historically evolving practices or disciplines (p. 63)), together with Rortyan pragmatism. Such will be the new version of Aristotle's "practical vs. theoretical wisdom," with the latter not a transcending of disciplinary orthodoxies from which they might be critiqued but their apotheosis.

Fish has indeed a hybrid here: Rorty, MacIntyre, Kant, Thomas Kuhn (acknowledged), most of all Edmund Burke's account of the slowly evolving nature of institutions, constituting a "second nature" that elides "nature" altogether. He is trapped within his disciplinary orthodoxy, his dogma, endlessly re-

peating the loop, because he will not allow for the possibility that there may be a real Aristotle who will elude him because Fish's disciplinary orthodoxy precludes that very possibility tout court. Too bad: Aristotle's line of demarcation has everything to teach us all about what ought to be the real relation between theory and practice, which is what Fish is really looking for and thinks pragmatism has found. Interestingly, Marxist theorist Terry Eagleton (a relentless critic of the social constructionism practiced by Fish and his benighted profession) praises virtue ethics as a way of "recovering the real" against such constructionists, commenting in passing that virtue ethics properly understood is to moral philosophy what authorial intention is to literary studies (*Trouble with Strangers*, 2009). Is authorial intention the real form of "immanent intelligibility" Fish as literary interpreter searches for but will never find? Now that would be a conversion experience.

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THE LONG, DARK SHADOW OF THE ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION OVER THE UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

Heinz Klatt

On July 1 of this year, Professor emeritus Jacques Frémont will be the 30th president and vice-chancellor of the University of Ottawa. The nominee is a 74 year-old lawyer who, after a "rigorous and vast process of selection" has been unanimously chosen and then appointed for a four-year term. After having held a number of prestigious positions in the past, since 2013 he has been the president of the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse du Québec.

Professor Frémont comes with extensive administrative experiences but also with heavy baggage. It

appears that the Nominating Committee was looking precisely for this baggage because it is ideological in nature. Ideology or religious affiliation, in many appointments and institutions, appears to trump most, if not all, other qualifications of candidates, and Frémont, to the discredit of UO, comes with the "right" ideology.

The president-elect has been the prime promoter of the *Projet de loi n° 59: Loi édictant la Loi concernant la prévention et la lutte contre les discours haineux et les discours incitant la violence et apportant diverses modifications législatives pour renforcer la protection des personnes.*

As feared by those who value freedom of speech in general and academic freedom in particular, the projected law widens rather than restrains the purview of the existing Charter, thus giving the Quebec Human Rights Commission even more powers to investigate and judge than it already has. Currently it is required that there be a victim, a person who is harmed and wants redress. Frémont wants none of that. The Commission, by the way, has the power to impose fines up to \$250,000 and in case of recidivism double the amount, which clearly can financially ruin somebody or some institution.

The proposed modifications are important in that they do away with the requirement of a person being hurt or discriminated against. Every Muslim, for example, can come forward, call himself a "victim," and request compensation (read: money) for his hurt feelings or perceived discrimination if he reads something critical of Islam or the "holy Prophet," such as the Prophet's flight in one night on Rajab 27, 615 from Mekka to Jerusalem on Buraq (a real rather than an oneiric or metaphorical horse) and then from Jerusalem on a ladder up into heaven and back again. Buraq is the name of the winged, centaur-like horse with a woman's head, that is embellished by a golden crown, the horse being the speediest means of transportation at the time although available only for the Prophet.

For the reader less versed in Islamic theology: The nightly ascendancy of Muhammed from Jerusalem

into heaven and back again is the basis of the argument for the claim of Jerusalem as the third holiest Muslim city that must be under Muslim governance. Were Muslim religious authorities to consider that the mi'radj was just a dream or fantasy, the claim to Jerusalem could hardly be made. Could anyone dream of ascending into heaven from Rome and then lay claim to the city? Could the Jews claim the Sinai for Israel on the basis that this is where Moses received the Ten Commandments? Or should the Vatican perhaps claim Jerusalem because this is where Christ was crucified and from where he ascended into heaven? Homeric laughter would break out were this to happen. Very soon, however, criticizing will not be a laughing matter at the University of Ottawa!

I personally sharpened my ears and became even more alarmed when I heard Professor Frémont explain in an interview that he was inspired by the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the United Nations, arguing that this august body with its leader "goes in the same direction." He apparently likes the intellectual company he keeps.

Since 1999, under the pretext of wanting to contain "religious intolerance," the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, OIC, with 57 member states that typically vote as a bloc, under the leadership of Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt and Pakistan, all countries that imprison, flagellate or execute blasphemers, urges the United Nations to formulate a universal blasphemy law. This coveted law shall prohibit religious intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization, blasphemy and, of course, "islamophobia," the pan-chreston that comprises anything one dislikes. The activist countries consider "islamophobia" more reprehensible and offensive than the kind of "justice" that is administered by the mullahs or emirs, such as decapitation for apostasy. By the way, according to the 34th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, in 2007, Islamophobia is "the worst form of terrorism." Right!

Reader, nota bene: Saudi Arabia, Iran, etc. argue for religious tolerance while at the same time criminalizing blasphemy! Are these countries not the most "christianophobic" nations in the world?

Is Professor Frémont being accused of advocating decapitation of apostates or hanging of homosexuals? Of course not. Then, what is the common agenda among Jacques Frémont with his revision of the Quebec Charter, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the United Nations? It is their advocacy of censorship, their active pursuit of curtailing our right to unfettered freedom of expression, a sine qua non for any democracy, unless there is immediate danger of harm. A president who at his university piously talks about academic freedom and in his other life actively enables religious fanatics and opportunists to have somebody prosecuted who exercises his right to speak his mind, is probably not the best person to represent his university. Who can still have hope that we may find common ground for defining hateful speech («discours haineux») or defamation of religion («diffamation des religions») that are to be proscribed?

In 2002, the French author Michel Houellebecq was taken to court in Paris by four Muslim associations for insulting and defaming Muslims for his characterizing Islam as the "most damned stupid religion" («L'Islam est la religion la plus con du monde») and for stating that after reading the Quran he collapsed in disbelief («effondré»). Of course, the notion of «incitation la haine», key concept of all Human Rights legislations, played a central role in the adjudication and acquittal of Houellebecq to the great astonishment of the Muslim organizations in France. The worse a law is the more courageous a judge has to be to neutralize its toxin.

As of this writing, the Egyptian-German author Hamed Abdel-Samad is being prosecuted in Berlin on the basis of an anonymous denunciation, his sin being his characterization of Muhammed as a "mass murderer and pathological tyrant" in his book *Mohamed. Eine Abrechnung* (2015) ("Muhammad: A Reckoning"). It is to be hoped that the German judges have a better understanding of freedom of expression than professor Frémont. But the price that our avant-guard pays is high: both authors have to live under police protection.

In conclusion, I want the reader to know that I "hate"

Islam in as much as it is violent and murderous.

I “hate” what has become known as Islamism in as much as it pursues jihad with the goal to impose shariah law on the unwilling.

I further “hate” the aspirations of our useful idiots in the West who in a surreptitious and disingenuous manner impose undemocratic, if not fascist, elements into our Western liberal democracies.

Finally, a precious little jewel in the ongoing debate. Hillary Clinton, as Foreign Secretary, in Muslim company once opined that to determine what constitutes blasphemy we are “sufficiently intelligent to substitute our judgment for that of God.”

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ON CONTINGENCY

Carmel Forde

Michael Bérubé and Jennifer Ruth, *The Humanities, Higher Education, and Academic Freedom: Three Necessary Arguments* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). ISBN: 978-1-137-50611-5

Is academic freedom necessarily plural and collective, or “defensively singular and individual?” (p. 109). On this question, Michael Bérubé and Jennifer Ruth provide insight into the collective significance of academic freedom for the American university; and, by implication, for Canadian universities. Writing in part as a response to the recommendation of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) that shared governance include contingent faculty, Bérubé invites us to consider the necessity of the humanities for the academic mission of the university, while Ruth raises concerns about the devastation wrought by the structural blindness among the elites and the casualization of the professoriate.

From their tenured and expert positions they rail against the hegemonic version of economic determinism that so many espouse on academic freedom and tenure, that the latter are outmoded, unaffordable, elitist. “Far from being an elitist relic or a neo-liberal fantasy...the tenure system works against the contemporary tide of expropriation” (p. 117). Few other institutions can serve this crucial role.

The public perception that the humanities hold less value than they once did is a continuing worry. Using several sources for a careful forensic analysis of decades of enrolment statistics, Bérubé gives an impassioned vindication of the humanities, arguing that in large universities demand for humanities courses often exceeds capacity, and that the much-maligned critique of the Enlightenment is both relevant and essential to the tasks of higher education. Bérubé argues that continual reinterpretation of the values of liberty, equality, and justice are necessary corollaries to the contingency of value, and that the Enlightenment project is incomplete, rather than morally bankrupt. In his view arguing about universalism is “precisely what we’re supposed to be doing” in the academy.

Subsequently, Ruth worries about the cultivated apathy among the tenured, suggesting that sparks of activism are smothered by a “theoretically sophisticated quietism.” Having established that there is more than enough money on campus, she argues that the real problem is a crisis of employment, noting that “somebody somewhere (everybody everywhere) was seeding a shadow workforce” (p. 58). She faults middle managers, tenured faculty mired in inertia and passivity, presidents of universities, and government, as well as neoliberalism and corporatization.

Comparing contingent faculty to Arendt’s “stateless,” Ruth’s voice is unusual in her recognition of the deplorable conditions under which so many teach, as well as the politics of ad hoc hiring practices. Acknowledging that the vast majority of such faculty are no longer “people working full-time elsewhere,” but PhDs seeking full-time positions, Ruth and Bérubé applaud the activism of contingent faculty on failing faculty infrastructure. Ruth observes,

“none of the potential paths forward would be possible [without this] concerted and considerable effort on the part of contingent faculty.... Most tenured faculty and administrators seem paralyzed in contrast.” But the solution proposed by the contingent workers - improved salaries, benefits, security - is unacceptable, she writes. Such changes will not underwrite academic freedom or ground participation in governance.

In the remaining chapters, the authors together argue for a necessary remedial professionalization. Since academic freedom is indispensable for any faculty member who participates in university governance, having more tenured faculty is necessary. Since there is no path for promotion for adjuncts, and since tenured teaching-intensive positions provide a path which “won’t break the bank,” universities ought to create such positions. “Only if professors hire and evaluate one another in accordance with the rigorous hiring and meaningful reviews assumed by the tenure system can they protect their autonomy,” argues Ruth (p. 116). Since there is no academic freedom without tenure, contingent faculty members have no academic freedom; their participation, then, necessarily generates conflicts of interest in governance. If they have a means of achieving tenure, teaching-intensive staff will provide the necessary complement of instructors for governance.

While I agree that more tenured positions might help to preserve, or enhance academic autonomy, there are residual problems. Ruth clearly articulates her concern about a tenured professoriate that is in the main apathetic and lethargic regarding casualized labour issues in the academy. Even though the authors are clearly activists, they appear to be rather unusual in the tenured class, so one might reasonably wonder whether an increased tenured class would only entrench passivity. The authors are concerned about the indifference of the tenured class, and yet it isn’t clear that there would be change in the politics of an enlarged tenured professoriate.

Further, I believe Bérubé and Ruth are too optimistic in finding tenured teaching-intensive positions to be a pivotal solution. Although some consider these

a vast improvement over the instability of contract work, others argue that these positions reproduce injustice, creating more hierarchies where equality should obtain. Another concern is that teaching-intensive tenured faculty members are meant to perform service. Bérubé and Ruth’s solutions do not erase the worrying conclusions generated by Cary Nelson’s argument in *No University is an Island*: “the rise in research expectations has contributed to a culture in which involvement in shared governance activities are low on [tenured-track] faculty’s list of priorities” (p. 77). Might this disease not infect the new teaching-intensive tenured faculty?

Furthermore one might worry that teaching-intensive positions do not confer true academic freedom on such faculty, who may find their tenure contingent upon subjective views. Teaching evaluations might play a greater role in tenure decisions where the appointments are teaching-intensive than they do in cases of “regular” tenured positions. Ironically, in an effort to improve the working conditions at Ruth’s own college, where there had been no path to promotion for those off the tenure-track, the committee decided not to promote on the basis of teaching, but to give everyone research time. This decision is rather telling, yet Ruth drops that thread.

The weight of the evidence in this book seems to me to argue that deprofessionalization undermines the academic freedom of the tenured faculty, and consequently the autonomy of universities. If tenured faculty members do not form a large complement of instructors, they will have little power to shape decision-making about contentious administrative issues,

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Thank you,
Mark Mercer, SAFS president

such as how money is spent, or to hold administrators accountable. Governance is contingent upon tenured positions. The collective autonomy of the tenured faculty is fundamental to the individual professor's negative freedom.

All university stakeholders have a role to play in rescuing the collapsing tenure infrastructure. But Bérubé and Ruth leave some options unexplored. One is Acadia's provision for half-time tenured positions; the AAUP itself recommends half-time positions as one solution. In Canada and in the U.S., many unions argue for converting positions from contract to tenure-track, but Bérubé and Ruth understandably argue that this won't work in the United States, where 70% of faculty is contingent. Canadian contract faculty unions are developing their own portrait of improved material conditions, such as long-service teaching appointments. Some tenured faculty unions include the contract faculty members within their unit. The Canadian Association of University Teachers has proposed a pro rata model. There can be no single resolution to the crisis in employment. But improvements in stipend, benefits, and security are, at the very least, a start for contingent faculty.

Canadian universities are also already burdened by the consequences of underfunding. But, since underfunding affects academic freedom, there will be difficulties rebuilding academic freedom for faculty unless our governments reinvest in higher education. Politicians, journalists, and the tenured class should devour this book. Somebody, somewhere (everybody everywhere) should be re-seeding the strongholds of tenure and academic freedom.

Carmel Forde holds a doctorate in philosophy from York University. She has for many years taught courses on a contract basis in philosophy, political science, and women's studies. She is a contingent faculty member at Dalhousie University, Saint Mary's University, and Mount Saint Vincent University, in Halifax.

THE POLITICIZATION OF NATIVE STUDIES STUDENTS: FOOTSOLDIERS IN SOMEONE ELSE'S WAR

Jeff Muehlbauer

If you ask around a Canadian University, you will find professors who have painful memories of aboriginal students shouting at them, threatening them, or otherwise making a scene in their classes. The outrage may begin over grades or a dislike of an assignment, but it quickly slides into the language of racial cleansing: young revolutionaries demanding that the university build a Safe Space for them at the cost of nearly everyone else. Faculty who find themselves the target of these attacks quickly discover that Human Rights, as defined in the Charter, do not exist for them.

These conflicts can range from a single instance to a full-scale war. While the majority of faculty have only isolated disruptions, some faculty end up regularly needing campus security to escort students out of their classes. Others are driven out of their field of expertise, prevented from doing their most basic job functions. Still others are driven out of their jobs altogether, forced out by harassment and petitions. It is not uncommon to find students marching proudly to the Dean or the President, demanding that a faculty member be purged, a whole department be laid waste, simply because they are White or Chinese or South Indian or, simply, Not Aboriginal Enough.

My own experience fits somewhere down in the bowels, among the terminally mobbed. What started as theatrical classroom exits and veiled threats eventually turned into a full-scale, concerted assault on my right to exist, to do my job, to say anything at all. Now on the other end, out of academia entirely, I sometimes ask myself, "How did I get here?"

I have had two years to think about it. The better a grip I get on it, the more the answer sounds like "The same way it happens everywhere else." The general sketch is one we see everywhere within the university. There is nothing particularly warped or twisted about Native Studies, so that it would inevitably lead

to this situation. I just happen to have been unfortunate enough to intersect with Native Studies at a particular transformative moment - the moment when they discovered how much power they now have.

Too much data makes for a tough model

In linguistics, we often say that the hardest language consultant is yourself. With the entire grammar, all the contexts, everything you've known since childhood, all that running around in your head, it's very difficult to pick out what are relevant data and what are not. The depth of experience, paradoxically, can choke off rational understanding, and our models become sand castles swallowed by the waves of experience, over and over again.

So it is that I approach the issue of politicization of Native Studies with much uncertainty. Every time I try to write, whenever I try to explain, I end up with this torrent of experiential data - awful experiences, traumatic sequences, the waves come rushing in and drown everything else out. I have rewritten this article six times. I never have to do that.

Hence, it may be that my understanding is convoluted or mangled or incoherent. If you read a news site or a popular social media platform, you'll find plenty of more satisfying takes on this situation, written by people who don't let data get in the way of a good model. As in linguistics, they tend to be the most popular sorts of writers.

Native Studies redraws the map

Academic departments function like the old feudal estate systems of Europe. This is a fairly commonplace analogy, and could be talked about in many ways. For present purposes, what is relevant is the way feudalism constructs conflict. In such a system, the leaders of an estate will typically expend their energy either trying to protect their estate from encroachment by others, or they will work to expand their estate at some other's cost.

In the University version of feudalism, academic departments function as quasi-estates, divided into two basic types. Some departments are so crippled by

internal squabbling that they can't manage much in the form of expansionism - the "Polish" university department. In contrast, other departments function with a totalitarian cohesion that gives them great expansionist potential - the "Russian" university department. A department that gains internal cohesion and sets its face against all enemies only needs to wait until it gains enough of an advantage in arms. Then it is time to redraw the map, to run the cavalry roughshod over the hapless squabblers in other departments, to take their meadbenches, to hear the lamentations of their womenfolk.

Today, Native Studies is typically one of the "Russian" departments in a university. In recent years, no greater chance for expansion has become available to anyone than that for Native Studies. As a university department, Native Studies is now the jewel in the Canadian University's crown - the symbol of the President's Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion. Where once Native Studies struggled to get any funding, find any space to work, these departments now sit in central, posh buildings on most campuses. They swim in major funding, have special facilities allocated, enjoy breathless media attention, and acquire growing numbers of faculty. Even further, universities are now making Native Studies components mandatory in all other programs. Even further, this is usually mandated for all other courses in all other programs. Even further, Native Studies often gets direct say over this content. With such venues open, these faculty can hardly be expected to be demure. What would Ivan the Terrible do with such an opportunity, after all?

Thus, I think that Native Studies is in its current state because it has become far too empowered. Faculty, being the typical bloodless connivers that they often are, cannot resist exploiting this power at the expense of other, less organized, less armed departments. In terms of the underlying, structural causes, it is really just that simple. Native Studies is exactly like every other university department - and you know what monsters those other departments can be.

If they're all the same, why is Native Studies winning?

One of the core differences between the feudal situation in Native Studies and that in Physics or Philosophy or Economics is the student population. For better or for worse, Native Studies is largely a program taught by aboriginal faculty for aboriginal students about aboriginal issues.

The weaponization of these students has been the key innovation for Native Studies in the past decade. Faculty in Native Studies can be easily induced to brag about how angry they make their students, how emotional, how unwound. A good Native Studies class results in crying in the hallway. A good Native Studies student learns that there are conditions to being Native - conditions that entail doctrines, behaviours, political positioning. With any luck, they will graduate with a degree in Native Studies, not being able to find their own tribe on a map, not knowing who Poundmaker or Big Bear were, not being able to speak a word of their heritage language, but yet being able to rattle off accusations about who is at fault for current controversies. They won't know what their own surname means, but they'll agree with every expansionist aim of their Native Studies faculty. They've undergone a conversion. From the perspective of conquest - that's the important part. The boots on the ground are what win these campaigns.

It's nothing new that faculty politicize their students. I saw it in every graduate program I visited. What is different about aboriginal students, however, is the way that the rest of us are forced to cope with their politicization. Non-aboriginal graduate students from a Formalist school whisper criticisms to each other during a Functionalist talk, and they are publicly scolded by faculty. An aboriginal student interrupts a conference talk to shout down the presenter with a string of slurs and condescensions, and we are all made to stand and look down at the ground, shamefaced, as though there is something somehow holy about being abused by a person with one kind of racial designation rather than another. With the aboriginal student, there is no fighting back. You must

stand at the plate and take the fastball to the face, again and again. And everybody knows it.

It would seem, then, that Native Studies has concocted an invincible army, capable of attacking and attacking, demolishing the Colonialist Heterodox Philosophy class, uprooting the Inherent Racism of English Literature, Holding the President Accountable for Past Colonial Practices, and generally allowing Native Studies to expand to every corner of the Academy. There is a minor problem, however - these students self-destruct. The same traits that make them able to be manipulated by faculty and willing to attack also make them very fragile.

These students are humans and have feelings and minds of their own. Most of them cannot manage the brutal Bolshevism of their faculty for too long. Eventually, these students break down - they do something that leaves the faculty exposed. They break a major rule, they put everything on paper or Facebook, or someone actually puts up a stiff fight. At this point, the Native Studies faculty take advantage of the inherent hierarchy in the university and discard the student. In meetings with administration, they shake their heads sadly. The whole thing was a fabrication. We never put the student up to anything. It was all lies. Mental illness is implicated. Betrayed, the student collapses in a heap, drops the program, ends up out of the university, perennially angry and confused. Native Studies has a new crop the next term, and they begin again. They lament the attrition rates, blame Colonialism, and wave to their former straight A student who is now directing traffic for the highway crew.

From the point of view of faculty, these burnouts and explosions are always wins. The faculty in other departments are shell-shocked, frightened - or purged entirely. Admin is frightened. Everyone else has either "learned their lesson," as my old Department Head put it, or they are excised from the university. Every faculty member, every department, every unit of the university that refuses to do what Native Studies wants will get this treatment. The process repeats until - well - until everything Native Studies wants is gotten. How much is that? It's technically an open

set, like it is for every other department.

It is an interesting paradox that the modern university system is purported to be trying to “give aboriginal people voices,” but it is organized in such a way that this can never happen. In the terrible calculus of Canadian aboriginal politics, the students who were thrown at me have to suffer a particular kind of fate - the invalidation of their agency. In a vulnerable time in life, they are manipulated into hurtful and ugly behaviour by people who stand to gain from it. When they hurt others, they are not given the credit for even doing this intentionally. They are treated purely as pawns in others’ schemes. Victims through and through, they shout and no one shouts back, they rage and are met with guilty silence. They are what Hannah Arendt terms “private” people - ones who cannot act or talk in the public sphere.

What should we do about all this? Try to understand it

My understanding of what happened to me, then, derives from two observations. First, academics are generally feudalistic, ambitious, expansionist obsessives who are keyed to look for weaknesses and opportunities. Second, racial politics in Canada has concocted a situation in which one group has no agency and the other groups have no defences. Native Studies exists at the intersection of these two issues, and I was lucky enough to work at the intersection of those intersections.

Having said what I think, I suppose I must answer the favourite question: How would I fix this situation? The truth is, I don’t think it can be “fixed.” It exists within a structural logic - the university - that would rather burn to the ground than change. This system is situated within a Canadian society that is extraordinarily emotional about aboriginal issues, cutting, as they do, into the raw nerve of how Canadians conceive of themselves. To explain how to “fix” this would be like trying to talk Catherine the Great back to Kiev. It’s more realistic to simply try and understand how she got so far into Poland.

Native Studies will inevitably collapse on itself -

these sorts of endeavours always do. In the process of expansion and collapse, its faculty will experience a particular kind of misery. People have a need to be circumscribed, to find themselves at the center of a system that keeps them from exploding out into the vacuum. Our reach should never too far exceed our understanding. Native Studies has lost these boundaries - it is exploding in size and shape, and has already become hideously disfigured. The contortions that this situation works on the faculty are terrible to watch. Most of them are trying to do the right thing, somewhere in there, once upon a time. They just want to be powerful more than they want to be good.

Jeff Muehlbauer is a linguist who specializes in Cree. Besides working as an independent scholar, he runs, together with several other linguists, a tech-startup—Verbulous Inc.—that designs algorithmic dialogue systems. At this year’s SAFS annual general meeting (Western University, 14 May 2016), Dr Muehlbauer will talk with Kenneth Westhues on Native Studies in Canada.

THE VIOLENCE OF THE SAFE SPACE

Brendan O’Neill

On 23 January 2016 I took part in a debate about free speech on campus at the University of California Irvine, during the conference “What Cannot Be Said.” These were my opening remarks.

The most striking thing about Safe Spaces on campus is how unsafe they are. How hostile and even violent they are towards anyone who has unpopular views, or who simply believes people should have the right to express unpopular views.

Safe Spaces are spreading across campuses in the US and the UK. They’re presented as happy-clappy therapeutic zones in which students, especially minority students, should not be subjected to gruff words or prejudicial ideas.

As one student union in Britain puts it, they’re spaces in which students must be “free from intimidation or

judgement” and should always “feel comfortable”. These spaces are justified in inoffensive, Oprah-like language: it’s all about providing a space in which people can be themselves without fear of ridicule.

But in practice, Safe Spaces are ugly, authoritarian places. They’re propped up by menace. They’re fortified by a simmering threat of force against any transgressors of the new cult of psychic safety and moral conformism.

Consider some recent examples from Britain, where students have built what they call Safe Spaces but which look to me more like Unsafe Spaces for those judged to hold the wrong views or to have the wrong attitudes.

Last week at King’s College London, a meeting of pro-Israel students was invaded by anti-Israel activists. They smashed windows, set off a fire alarm, threw chairs around. They chanted “Nazis!” at the attendees of the meeting. Oh, the irony of activists shutting down a meeting of largely Jewish students while shouting “Nazis”: a serious self-awareness failure.

A key justification given by student radicals for shouting down pro-Israel meetings is that such events are “offensive” or “distressing” to certain students. That is, they violate the Safe Space. So in the name of maintaining safety on campus, certain events can be violently interrupted. It’s Orwellian: war is peace, freedom is slavery, violence is safety.

On two campuses in Britain — Cambridge and Goldsmith’s — feminist students have burnt the literature of far-left groups whom they accuse of rape apologetics and of contributing to a hostile climate for female students. That is, these far-left groups make women feel unsafe and therefore their pamphlets must be publicly burnt. The use of fascistic menace to make students feel comfortable — the Orwellianism continues.

At a London university last year, the Iranian secularist Maryam Namazie was harassed by members of the Islamic Society who shouted at her: “You are violating our Safe Space!”

Namazie is a stinging critic of Islamism. Some big Islamist guys turned up to her talk and hectored her, switched off her powerpoint, and created what could really be described as a hostile environment. And their justification was that they were maintaining their Safe Space against someone with problematic views. We have the Kafkaesque situation where a bunch of blokes can physically intimidate a woman in the name of saving students from feelings of intellectual intimidation.

In 2014, I was prevented from taking part in a debate about abortion at Oxford, on the basis that I am a “person without a uterus” and therefore have no right to discuss women’s bodies. As it happens, I was due to make the pro-choice case, to say that officialdom has no business limiting a woman’s sovereignty over herself.

More than 300 feminist students said the discussion would harm their “mental safety”, so they threatened to turn up to the debate “with instruments” to disrupt it. They couldn’t see the dark, twisted irony of threatening the physical safety of a campus debate in the name of defending students’ mental safety. Shamefully, the Oxford administration caved to the students’ demands and banned the meeting.

And on it goes. Things are burnt, people are harassed, and books, newspapers and songs are banned in the name of “safety”. Menace, fire and threats are used to create “safety”. Discomfort is deployed in the name of comfort. Intimidation is used to tackle alleged intimidation. Violence is safety.

Student unions in Britain have crushed all sorts of things in the name of safety. Robin Thicke’s song “Blurred Lines” has been banned on more than 30 campuses because it apparently makes female students feel unsafe. Mexican hats are banned on some campuses because they create a hostile environment for Latinos. Some unions have banned the making of sexual noises in the student bar, because it makes women feel unsafe.

On American campuses we have seen professors being screamed at and journalists being manhandled

2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND SCHOLARSHIP

Saturday 14 May 2016, 9:00 am-3:15 pm

Western University, Somerville House, Room 3317

9:00-10:00 Registration and Conversation

10:00-10:45 Mark Mercer, SAFS President, “Academic Freedom 2015 – 2016”

10:45-12:00 Jeff Muehlbauer, Verbulous Inc, and Ken Westhues, University of Waterloo: “A Conversation on Native Studies and Academic Mobbing”

12:00-1:00 Buffet Lunch (in Somerville House – The Garden, Room 3320)

1:00-2:15 Keynote Address: **Donald Alexander Downs, “Challenges to Academic Freedom: Anything New Under the Sun?”**

Dr Downs is Alexander Meiklejohn Professor of Political Science, Law, and Journalism at the University of Wisconsin—Madison and the director and co-founder of the Wisconsin Center for the Study of Liberal Democracy (2007-present). He is the author of six books, including *Restoring Free Speech and Liberty on Campus* (Cambridge University Press/The Independent Institute, 2004) and *More than Victims: Battered Women, the Syndrome Society, and the Law* (University of Chicago Press, 1996).

2:15-2:30 Refreshment Break

2:30-3:15 Annual Business Meeting (SAFS members only)

Registration Fee: \$30.00 per person, may pay at the door. (Registration includes coffee and lunch, but not parking.)

To confirm attendance (please reply by 1 May) or for further information about the meeting contact Mark Mercer: president@safs.ca.

To register in advance, send your cheque for \$30 to SAFS, PO Box 33056 Quinpool Centre, Halifax, NS B3L 4T6.

For further information about parking or Western University contact Daniella Chirila: e-mail: dchirila@uwo.ca; or by phone: 519-661-2111, ext. 84690.

Accommodation: On-campus rooms at Western Bed & Breakfast are \$62.00 per night including continental breakfast. The rooms are in a modern, air-conditioned residence, located in Elgin Hall on University Drive, off Richmond St. North (www.StayAtWestern.ca). Also, The Station Park on Pall Mall (1-800-561-4574), and Windermere Manor (1-519-858-1414), have UWO rates at ~ \$120.00 per night.

Getting there: From the 401, take Wellington Road North to its end, then jog one block west to Richmond Street, go North to University gates (on your left), just North of Huron Street. On campus, follow this road over the bridge, turn left at the light and continue to traffic circle. Visitor parking is on your right next to Alumni Hall once you are almost around the circle. Rate: \$7.00 flat rate. From Highway 7, take Highway 4 South (it becomes Richmond Street). At the fork after Fanshawe Road you can either stay left on Richmond to University gates (now on Richmond Street) as above, or stay right and go down Western Road, turn left at 3rd light (Lambton Drive). Visitor parking is on your right as you enter traffic circle. Somerville House is across the traffic circle. On Saturday there is usually no one at the Information booths.

by mobs of students rallying under the banner of the Safe Space. “You make us feel unsafe and therefore we will destroy you” — that is the perverted rallying cry of today’s student radicals.

That Safe Spaces can generate so much unsafety is revealing. It exposes the iron fist of authoritarianism that lurks within the velvet glove of the self-esteem movement. It exposes the dark side to the cult of therapy and the idea that an individual’s feeling of self-worth should override other people’s right to express themselves as they see fit.

The motor of campus censorship is a profound feeling of psychic vulnerability among students. They see everything as a threat to their mental security. Statues of old dead white men, novels that feature sexual violence, pop songs... everything is considered potentially wounding.

This is best summed up in the idea of microaggressions, where even innocent, everyday conversation is reframed as a peril. The Oxford students currently trying to have a statue of Cecil Rhodes taken down describe the statue as an “environmental microaggression”. Even inanimate objects are experienced as an attack on the self.

This extreme psychic vulnerability confirms that we’re entering a new and quite terrifying era of censorship. Once we had ideological censorship, designed to elevate a particular political outlook by suppressing others. We had religious censorship, designed to protect a certain belief system through crushing blasphemy. Now we have therapeutic censorship — censorship which aspires to squash or at least demonise anything that any individual finds aggressive, uncomfortable, or wounding to their worth. It is a tyranny of self-regard.

This censorship is more insidious than the old censorships. It is vast and unwieldy and can turn its attention to almost anything: magazines, clothing, monuments, jokes, conversational blunders. It’s as if students feel they deserve their own personal blasphemy law to protect them from scurrilous comments or images or objects. We have a generation

of little Jesuses, threatening menaces against anyone who says something that stings their psychic health.

Campus censors can’t be held entirely responsible for this therapeutic censorship. In fact, in many ways they are the products of a culture that has been growing for decades: a culture of diminished moral autonomy; a culture which sees individuals as fragile and incapable of coping without therapeutic assistance; a culture which treats individual self-esteem as more important than the right to be offensive; a culture that was developed by older generations — in fact by the fortysomethings and fiftysomethings now mocking campus censors as infantile and ridiculous.

Yes, we should mock these little tyrants who fantasise that their feelings should trump other people’s freedom. But we must go further than that. We must remake the case for robust individualism and the virtue of moral autonomy against the fashion for fragility; against the misanthropic view of people as objects shaped and damaged by speech rather than as active subjects who can independently imbibe, judge and make decisions about the speech they hear.

The Safe Space is a terrible trap. It grants you temporary relief from ideas you don’t like, but at the expense of your individuality, your soul even. If you try to silence unpopular ideas, you do an injustice both to those who hold those unpopular views, and also to yourself, through depriving yourself of the right and the joy of arguing back, taking on your opponents, and in the process strengthening your own mental and moral muscles. Liberate yourself — destroy the Safe Space.

Brendan O’Neill is the editor of spiked and is a columnist for both The Big Issue and The Australian. The above article appeared 24 January 2016 on O’Neill’s blog (<http://brendanoneill.co.uk/post/137934715274/the-violence-of-the-safe-space>) and is reprinted by permission.

FACULTY STATEMENT REGARDING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND OPEN DEBATE AT YORK UNIVERSITY

We are Jewish and non-Jewish faculty members at York University in Toronto who are deeply troubled by the threats to freedom of expression that have appeared on our campus. These threats promised and enacted the withdrawal of donor funding for students in reaction to a painting (wrongly labelled a “mural”) that hangs in an area of the Student Centre transit-ed primarily by students. Thanks to Paul Bronfman, this painting has gained worldwide prominence.

The painting, which was chosen by a university jury, depicts the back a young Palestinian who is looking at an Israeli bulldozer destroying an olive tree and pondering whether to throw the rocks [they are] holding in their hands. It conveys one artist’s response to the ongoing dispossession of Palestinians under Israeli occupation and the feeling that there is no end in sight. The issue is not whether we like or approve of the painting. Indeed, controversies around freedom of expression often concern ideas which we disagree with, ideas that make us feel uncomfortable, or ideas that we would prefer not to see. Legal limits on freedom of expression are acceptable only in relation to hate speech or calls for human rights abuse. Nothing in this painting conforms to that definition; it depicts an individual opposing a military force invading their community and destroying its land. Nothing in this painting should make anyone in the York campus feel unsafe.

There are many people in the Jewish community in Canada who believe that all people should be accorded respect and basic human rights, and that safety, self-determination, and justice should apply to all. Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of racism are all too real and must be tackled head on. But it is not credible to label all expressions of concern about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as “hate speech” or “anti-Semitic.” This tired alibi for attempting to censor a painting that made some people feel uncomfortable is speech suppression and intolerance, which has no place in a university. Furthermore, York has a notable history of mounting public

art by students which has greatly contributed to the vitality of the campus. We strongly urge the university to maintain and protect the public spaces and traditions of student and faculty engagements that have so enriched this university.

We applaud that in its response the university “remains firmly committed to the values of freedom of expression, open dialogue, and constructive discussion” and we certainly “must do everything we can to ensure that all of our students feel comfortable and safe on campus.” This is not, however, a reason to narrow the scope for free expression, political activism, or public art on campus. In this regard, we note with grave concern that, as reported in the media, the university said it has “consulted widely with experts” and concluded that it “cannot compel its (the painting’s) removal.” President Mamdouh Shoukri informs us that there will be a review of regulations regarding student groups and the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Does this announcement imply that the university might seek to widen its powers so that in the future it can compel the suppression of “unsafe” artistic and political expression in the name of “inclusion” and “safety”? The last sentence in Shoukri’s statement, “we will not tolerate actions and behaviours that are contrary to our values” seems to contradict his call for tolerance.

Finally, there are lessons about reliance on philanthropic funding in universities. Mr. Bronfman has provided a powerful argument for why Canadian universities should be publicly funded and not be dependent on the goodwill and personal agendas of the affluent in our society. We must continue to demand adequate public funding for public universities to preserve them as spaces for open expression, thought, and civic debate.

The above statement was signed by ninety-one current and nine former members of the faculty of York University. It was published in Excalibur, the York campus newspaper, 10 February 2016 <http://www.excal.on.ca/faculty-statement-regarding-freedom-of-expression-and-open-debate-at-york/>

**TAKING OFFENCE: A NEW PANDEMIC?
FROM RHODES' STATUE TO RADICAL
SPEAKERS, THE YOUNG AND OLD
UNDERSTAND, AND COPE WITH, OFFENCE
DIFFERENTLY**

Felipe Fernández-Armesto

I like to be hated. It is – to paraphrase Mae West – better than being overlooked. I like insults. The indignation of an enemy is flattering. Nasty observations about my work or character shake me out of complacency and may even suggest room for improvement. I am grateful when lampoons, satires, mimicry and mockery target me, especially if they are amusing. I can do nothing about it, of course, if someone makes rude remarks about my religion, or the legitimacy of my birth, or the charmlessness of my face (which, I must confess, does resemble a frog's). Even so, I never take offence, but silently, secretly relish my power to provoke an interlocutor to a disclosure of his or her own idiocy. To be offended would merely be to match one folly with another.

I find it baffling, therefore, that giving offence – even unintentionally or, in Cecil Rhodes' case, through the mists of time – has become a cause of scandal in modern universities. A university teacher's career can be interrupted or ended by the mere imputation of offence by absurdly oversensitive audiences. In a notorious recent case, Erika Christakis withdrew from lecturing at Yale University because, explicitly disavowing any desire to provoke, she had the temerity to suggest that the university did not need to ban turbans, grass skirts, Mohican haircuts, or other ethnically resonant forms of disguise at fancy dress festivities. Apparently, however, some people in need of grievance misinterpret costume-party motley as conscious mockery. Don't wear a pirate outfit in case there's a one-eyed guest to take it personally. Don't don ginger whiskers, which may seem insulting to the ruddy-visaged and hirsute. Don't dress up as a Flower Fairy in case homosexuals mistake the homage to Cicely Barker. Avoid a Harlequin mask, which may be simultaneously injurious both to black guests and white. Take off that Donald Duck suit, which is disrespectful to ducks. No stetsons or cow-

boy boots, please: we mustn't appropriate the cowboys' culture. No red noses unless you're a card-carrying clown or approved alcoholic. James Ramsey, the president of the University of Louisville, in Kentucky, apologised to Latino students after he attended a Halloween party in a stereotypically Mexican poncho and sombrero.

"I wonder," Christakis wrote, according to *The New York Times*, "is there no room anymore for a child or young person to be a little bit obnoxious, a little bit inappropriate or...offensive?"

Students protested. Christakis resigned. Even her husband, who is master of Silliman College at Yale, has had to take a previously unscheduled sabbatical. A video posted on YouTube shows a female student – who became known as the "shrieking girl" – apparently blaming him for not controlling his wife: she shouts down his courteous attempts to explain, abuses him with a shrieked series of vicious expletives, calls him "disgusting" and tells him that he "should not sleep at night". He listens with clasped hands and polite impassivity.

The young, it seems, can give offence without hesitation, even if they are incapable of taking it. The difference in standards of civility across the generations is bewildering. A recent Pew Research poll revealed that 40 per cent of millennials (those aged 18 to 34) want controls on speech "offensive" to minority groups. The University of Ottawa Student Federation's Centre for Students with Disabilities recently announced that it would reinstate yoga classes after suspending a course over concerns that "cultural issues" relating to the class could offend students. The issues, the students explain, arise because people in yoga's lands of origin "have experienced oppression, cultural genocide and diasporas due to colonialism and Western supremacy". A student at Oklahoma Wesleyan University felt "victimised" by a college sermon that "made him feel bad for not showing love". And a class at Washington State University will not tolerate "offensive language" including "referring to women/men as females or males". Guest speakers are often banned or "disinvited" on the often unwarranted assumption that they may say some-

thing to offend somebody.

The UK is not exempt from the pandemic of offensiveness. Prior to the recent furore over the statue of Cecil Rhodes at Oriel College, Oxford, the University of Warwick's students' union withdrew an invitation to the human rights campaigner Maryam Namazie, in case she should offend Islam.

Persecutions for offensiveness are pernicious because alleged victims are arbiters. With every other kind of supposed transgression, there has to be *dolus* or *mens rea* – a malign intention on the perpetrator's part. If I strike you unintentionally in the course of an expensive gesture, you make allowances. But if you take unmeant offence at my yoga or sombrero you can smother my freedom of expression and hound me out of my job. How can we understand the inconsistency?

A historic transformation, a revolution in sensibilities, has happened, undetected, in recent years, opening a chasm of culture between my generation and the teens and twentysomethings in the classrooms. We understand offence differently and cope with it contrastingly. Oldies don't take offence where none is intended, and make light of insensitivity when we meet it. We don't respond with vengeful offensiveness of our own, or vilify, in outraged self-righteousness, those who fail to anticipate our expectations of respect or deference. We need to recommend our behaviour as consistent with justice and conducive to peace, so that in future, when insensitivity meets oversensitivity, the oversensitive do not overreact, and the insensitive do not lose livelihoods or liberty.

Felipe Fernández-Armesto is William P. Reynolds professor of history, University of Notre Dame. This article originally appeared in Times Higher Education, 18 February 2016 (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/comment/felipe-fernandez-armesto-taking-offence-a-new-pandemic>). Reprinted with permission.

PARLIAMENT, NOT STUDENT UNIONS, SHOULD VOTE ON BOYCOTTING ISRAEL

Michael Kennedy & John Carpay

Students at McGill University will soon vote, once again, on whether the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) should endorse the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign, which seeks to place an economic boycott on the state of Israel over its treatment of Palestinians. Members of Parliament will soon vote on the same issue. For Parliament, this is an important international question, entirely within the federal government's responsibility over foreign policy. For a student union, it's juvenile grandstanding.

McGill is not alone. Student unions at York, Ryerson, Concordia and others have all passed motions endorsing BDS, thus diverting student union money and resources towards ideological goals that not everyone agrees with.

BDS is not the first issue to be taken up by Canada's student unions. In recent years, student unions have also endorsed positions on bottled water, abortion, "Silent No More," Pride, "misandry," fossil fuels, "No Olympics on Stolen Native Land," and a not-so-diverse collection of other issues. Some student unions go even further by placing an outright ban on groups, lectures or events representing alternative views that don't align with the views of student politicians. This has made it necessary for two university campus clubs, Speak for the Weak and Students for Life, to sue their respective student unions at the University of Toronto Mississauga and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. In both cases, the student unions denied club recognition to these student groups because of their pro-life stance on abortion.

Successful endorsements enable activists to claim that they represent the entire student body in wanting to boycott Israel, or ban water bottles, or support Pride. They obtain a form of "democratic legitimacy," in spite of the fact that fewer than twenty percent of students actually vote in student union elections.

The result is that a very small, very vocal and often very radical sub-section of the student population can easily sweep elections with as little as ten per cent of the vote, or even less, and thereafter claim to represent the majority.

Our public universities have a special obligation to foster the free exchange of ideas on campus. In order to attend these institutions, students must pay student union dues. Student unions therefore also have this responsibility to facilitate a safe space for free expression, where all views can be presented and debated, and where dissent is recognized as valuable. Taking stances on political issues like BDS necessarily excludes those fee-paying members of the student union who do not share the same views, but are still required to support it through their student fees.

The Justice Centre's annual Campus Freedom Index grades Canada's public universities and student unions on the extent to which they uphold free expression on campus. Student unions earn lower grades when they take political stances on issues outside of their mandate, such as BDS. Rather than creating an environment where all students feel free and welcome to voice diverse opinions on campus, endorsements like these create an environment of fear, isolation and exclusion for students harbouring "unendorsed" views about important issues.

The Queen's University Alma Mater Society (AMS) provides a refreshing alternative through "a general policy of political neutrality" on issues that do not directly affect students' interests. In doing so, AMS can "better foster openness and inclusivity than a politicized [student union]," reads the policy.

"We've made a conscious effort to ensure that we focus on issues where we can obtain results for our students" said Kanivanan Chinniah, President of the AMS.

"The AMS serves to represent the diversity of students at Queen's, and we know that students have a wide array of personal beliefs... We owe it to the students who pay our salary to remain politically neutral on divisive political issues," Chinniah added.

To support the diverse views of students on campus, student unions must refrain from taking sides, and instead encourage all students to speak up about the issues they care about. Otherwise, student unions risk alienating young minds at a critical point in their intellectual and social development.

Michael Kennedy and John Carpay, a member of SAFS, are co-authors of the Campus Freedom Index, produced annually by the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms (JCCF.ca). The Justice Centre acts for Speak for the Weak and Students for Life, in their court actions against their respective student unions. This article originally appeared in The Prince Arthur Herald, 20 February 2016 (<http://princearthurherald.com/en/politics-2/parliament-not-student-unions-should-vote-on-boycotting-israel-812>). Reprinted by permission.

QUOTAS ON CAMPUS

Peter Shawn Taylor

The next generation of teachers of Manitoba will be a shining rainbow of diversity. As colourful as they may be, however, don't expect them to represent the world as it actually exists. Or to be the best of all possible candidates.

Beginning in 2017, applicants to the University of Manitoba's faculty of education will face an entirely new set of entrance requirements: 45 per cent of incoming spots are to be allocated to "self-identified diversity categories." At nearly half the entire enrolment, the list of who qualifies for special consideration stretches the definition of minority group accommodation to the breaking point.

Native candidates are to be awarded 15 percent of all spaces at Manitoba's largest teachers program. Non-whites get a 7.5 percent share. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual, two-spirited or queer receive another 7.5 percent. Persons with disabilities, 7.5 percent. Finally, disadvantaged persons will receive another 7.5 percent of spots available. If this last category sounds somewhat vague, the universi-

ty explains it includes those who have “experienced systemic barriers and/or inequalities on the basis of their religion, creed, language or state of social disadvantage.” That is to say, anyone who’s ever complained about someone else’s privilege.

A mere 55 percent of available spaces will be allocated on the basis of merit alone. Like LP-of-the-month clubs and toe socks, relying solely on effort and high marks to become a teacher is now embarrassingly out-of-date.

The new quotas are, quite obviously, arbitrary and unfair. And given a 2014 report from the Council of Ministers of Education that found Manitoba’s test scores on math, science and reading to be the lowest in the country, putting greater emphasis on identify over ability when selecting potential new teachers seems unlikely to make things better. Manitoba, by the way, also boasts Canada’s most expensive teachers.

The school loudly proclaims it’s not running a quota system: every student must still meet minimum entrance standards (a C+ average). Maybe so, but the rules also state that if any particular diversity category goes unfilled, those spaces are to be offered to other groups within the overall ‘non-quota,’ rather than opened up to merit-based applicants. Candidates can also self-identify in as many categories as they wish. The new system is clearly arranged to ensure those diversity spots don’t go unfilled.

And yet if the overall goal of this process, as the University of Manitoba states on its website, is to ensure future crops of teachers “reflect the diversity of the communities we serve,” it seems the school has somehow overlooked another category of student who are also grossly under-represented as teachers.

As is common at teachers college across the country, there’s a distinct lack of men at the University of Manitoba. Enrolment in the faculty of education is 72 percent female, and has been that way for decades. Across the country 75 percent of all education degrees are earned by women. If teachers colleges are meant to mirror society, it can’t be overlooked

that half the population is male, especially given the well-established importance of male role models in combating high drop-out rates among boys. China is now aggressively recruiting male teachers, according to a recent New York Times report, in order to “salvage masculinity in schools” and improve the consistently poor performance of boys in college entrance exams.

While statistical imbalances have long been used as *prima facie* evidence of systemic discrimination when alleging gender wage gaps or racially-motivated hiring practices, this sort of proof apparently only holds when the aggrieved party fits an approved narrative. In explaining away its complete lack of interest in correcting a massive gender imbalance within its walls, the faculty of education’s website claims “While classroom teachers are predominantly female, those in positions of power within the teaching force (principals and superintendents) remain predominantly male.”

Such an excuse puts the lie to any claim the new policy is meant to ensure classrooms more accurately reflect society. While it is theoretically possible more males will apply through the various new diversity categories, it seems readily apparent there’s no administrative interest in furthering this sort of fairness. It’s about power, as defined by gender and identity. Consider it another blast of the trumpet against the monstrous regiment of white, straight men.

The fate of the unloved minority of men at the University of Manitoba’s faculty of education is indicative of the broader disappearance of male students across all Canadian universities. Women now make up 56 percent of university enrolments, and 58 percent of graduates. As with education, 75 percent of health science students nationwide are female. Social sciences and law are 67 percent distaff. Business studies are also majority female. Today the only degrees with reliable male majorities are the sciences, technology, engineering and math: STEM subjects.

Curiously enough, everyone seems hard at work trying to eliminate these last few redoubts of maleness on campus. Countless scholarships, outreach

programs and other special programs aim to lure, cajole and frog-march more female students into STEM degrees in the name of greater diversity. At the University of Waterloo, renowned for its high tech success, administration has endorsed a United Nations Women campaign called HeForShe that aims to boost female enrolment in STEM subjects by, among other things, requiring “mandatory gender sensitization programs for first-year students;” male students will thus be informed they’re to blame for a lack of women in their courses.

In all likelihood, however, women with an aptitude for math or science are already at university, and enrolled in health sciences, medicine and other related disciplines – all of which offer career paths every bit as lucrative and secure as traditional STEM pursuits. The ultimate effect of female-only science scholarships and other inducements may well be to cause men to lose their current majority status in the STEM subjects and become an even smaller minority of overall university enrolment. To what end?

To be clear, none of the above should be considered a counter-revolutionary argument for pro-male affirmative action campaigns. If men and women freely express differing educational preferences, why should schools or society attempt to reverse such decisions? Sex, race and a whole host of other identifiers ought to be completely irrelevant to getting into university. As with justice, acceptance decisions should be blind. And every student in Manitoba deserves a teacher who earned their spot on the basis of ability, not strategic self-identification.

Peter Shawn Taylor is editor-at-large of Maclean’s magazine. He lives in Waterloo, Ontario. This article originally appeared in The National Post, 2 March 2016 (<http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/peter-shawn-taylor-quotas-on-campus-forget-one-part-of-society-men>). Reprinted by permission.

AGAINST CORRECTNESS AND THE TAMING OF PEOPLE

Joseph Hickey

Correctness is a set of rules and mores constraining the form of public discourse and social behaviour. There is no place in a democratic society for “correctness” of any sort, least of all a correctness regarding politics: political ideas, speech and other expression. Let us reject standards of form in our debates, exchanges, interventions, and criticisms.

The goal of political life is to influence society and be influenced by it. This can only happen through free exchange between individuals, where the form and content of the expression is decided by the speaker, for the speaker’s own purposes as an individual. For example, if a speaker’s goal is to provoke, enrage, excite, or otherwise move his or her audience, it is the individual’s right to attempt to do so. (That such communication tactics may or may not be effective in achieving some desired influence is a separate matter.)

Individuals who hold views that are not the same as dominant views often say things that are perceived to be insensitive or “hurtful.” These individuals may then be sanctioned under the rubric of political correctness with punishments such as public shaming, banishment from social groups, loss of employment, criminal charges, or extravagant lawsuits. The notion that societal correctness must not be breached is so strong that public institutions are permitted to take part in the punishments through public condemnations, enforcement of laws that criminalize expression of ideas, and use of public resources including financing lawsuits or refusing to provide services to individuals who choose to confront or who run afoul of the dominant standard.

One effect of this widespread imposition of correctness is a taming of the people – like the trained house pet that waits at the open door, not stepping outside until the master attaches the leash, people become trained not to step out independently into the wilderness of ideas and expression. Whereas once we

may have spontaneously expressed our emotions and spoken our minds in public, to the community, now we tiptoe around potential sensitivities and threats of repercussions for being incorrect. We are chilled to the bone.

Who or what is the master? Societal (including “political”) correctness appears to be directed by peer-group mobbing that gets amplified in the media and is tolerated and encouraged by employers, lawmakers, and courts. Employers respond to and encourage mobbing by firing targeted employees, lawmakers respond through the passing of new laws to sanction incorrect expression, and the courts apply these laws to convict and sentence correctness offenders, thus sending a message to the entire society informing individuals of the limits, beyond which mobbing can be sure to draw blood. In addition, special interest groups lead the development of new taboos or act to reinforce old ones, by influencing public opinion at all levels.

Individuals who would participate in this type of mobbing by enforcing correctness standards in their political interactions should have regard for the harmful response of power (employers, government, courts, etc.) to the movements of the mob. Power today is happy to enforce contemporary correctness standards, just as it was happy to impose other correctness standards at other times (e.g. Victorian, religious, racist, homophobic), because such enforcement of the evolving superficial status quo permits the maintenance of the structural status quo and all its essential features (wage slavery, class hierarchy, military capability for war and conquest in other territories, etc.). Importantly, tamed and trained pets don’t bite the master’s hand. Rather, trained pets learn to accept and love the master, and to defend him to the bitter end.

Societal “correctness” is a control mechanism that maintains unjust hierarchy and precludes democratic social organization. Acts of incorrect expression are vital to challenging this societal ordering, and reveal the degree to which powerful groups have control over individuals’ lives. No individual expression can be taboo, off limits or “incorrect” in a real democ-

racy. Likewise, a population tamed by the enforcement of correctness cannot create democracy.

Joseph Hickey is a PhD student in Physics and the Executive Director of the Ontario Civil Liberties Association (OCLA). This article originally appeared in Dissident Voice: a radical newsletter in the struggle for peace and social justice, 23 February 2016 <http://dissidentvoice.org/2016/02/against-correctness-and-the-taming-of-people/>. Reprinted by permission.

PARANOID PARENTING MEANS UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ARE TREATED AS KIDS

Frank Furedi

In the 21st century answers can range from 18 to 21 through to 26 and all the way up to the early 30s. Sociologists have invented an intermediate phase between childhood and adulthood, a stage of extended adolescence that is said to last until the late 20s.

Once upon a time there was a clear distinction between the way schools and universities treated their students. Unlike schoolchildren, university students were treated as young adults, capable of independent living and learning.

This distinction gradually has eroded as institutions of higher education have become reorganised around the expectation that their students require paternalistic support.

This cultivation of emotional dependency among undergraduates is the hallmark of what psychologists label infantilisation — a label that once applied only to the phenomenon of maternal overprotection of children at a young age.

One symptom of this on campus is the growing involvement of parents in their children’s higher education. There was a time young people going off to university left their parents behind. Today universities produce promotional material that explicitly is

addressed to parents.

University websites often address the parents of would-be applicants. Such communications assume it is the parents who are taking the initiative in the application process.

The University of Adelaide's website features stories from parents who have approached the institution for help. The university organises "regular parent and guardian events" and publishes a parents' newsletter. One wonders how soon it will be before it organises parents and teachers evenings.

The infantilisation of higher education is based on the premise that undergraduates are emotionally vulnerable and lack the psychological resources for the conduct of independent life. Universities throughout the Anglo-American world portray the transition from secondary to higher education as a variant of the psychological upheaval that primary school pupils experience when they enter high school.

A brochure targeting parents, published by the University of Tasmania, states that the "type of support you provided for your child during earlier transitions, such as from primary to high school, is still just as important in making decisions about going to university".

Indeed, the literature universities publish for parents often sounds as if they assume that potential undergraduates are biologically mature children.

One of the consequences of the infantilisation of the academy is that the normal existential problems of students frequently are recast as psychological issues.

Throughout history students have been anxious about preparing for and writing their exams. In recent years worried students are treated to a variety of stress-busting therapies. Universities provide chill rooms and soft toys to help students relieve their stress.

During the lead-up to exams last year, the University of Canberra provided a petting zoo as part of its

"stress less week". This initiative gave students an opportunity to bond with cuddly animals. Students also were provided with sumo suits and bubbles to help ease their levels of stress.

Unfortunately, these well-meant initiatives by university administrators, designed as they are to insulate students from pressure, do little to encourage the habit of independence among young people.

The transformation of exam stress into a stand-alone emotional problem has the effect of encouraging students to believe they have a problem they cannot surmount on their own.

Many university administrators argue that their role as quasi-parents is necessitated by the fact undergraduates are no longer as independent minded as in the past. Back in 2003, an American study, *Millennials Go to College*, by Neil Howe and William Strauss, noted that this generation born between the early 1980s and 2000 is characterised as "closely tied to their parents" and insistent on a "secure and regulated environment".

They predicted that in the future parental involvement in higher education would increase and would lead to an explicit partnership between students, parents and university authorities. Their assessment was based on the assumption that, unlike baby boomers and generation X, the millennial cohort of students would find it difficult to flourish in the less structured environment of higher education.

What has changed? Arguably, one of the most significant drivers of delayed adulthood is the precautionary child-rearing practices that prevail in Western societies. Preventing the exposure of children to the risks of everyday life now is perceived as the hallmark of responsible parenting.

As numerous scholars have noted, the widely held perception that children need constant supervision and protection has led to what I term paranoid parenting and others characterise as intensive or precautionary parenting.

Thirty to 40 years ago it was still possible to read

criticism of some parents for being over-protective towards their offspring. But how often do we hear parents criticised for being overprotective today?

Mothers and fathers who allow their children to roam around the streets and parks on their own frequently are reproached for this practice by other parents and sometimes reprimanded or face sanctions from officialdom.

Many of the traits associated with the classic overprotective father or mother are likely to be celebrated by today's experts as responsible parenting. Youngsters are frequently described as at risk. The question "At risk of what?" invites the response: "Of everything."

Such a risk-averse orientation towards managing the life of young people is underpinned by the belief that children are innately fragile and vulnerable.

It is remarkable how public attitudes towards childhood are so rapidly drawn towards worst-case scenarios. So a playground is seen not as an open space where children can run around, mess about and have fun but as a hostile territory where youngsters face accidents, bullies and pedophiles.

Parents, of course, have always been concerned about the need to protect their children from harm. Asking what can go wrong is a sensible way of dealing with the numerous experiences that children encounter.

But asking what can go wrong is different from acting on the assumption that things will go wrong. Such an approach accomplishes the opposite of what it sets out to do.

When youngsters are constantly discouraged from engaging with the risks of everyday life, they miss out on important opportunities to learn sound judgments and build up their confidence and resilience.

The complex emotional tensions that are integral to the process of growing up are how young people learn to manage risks and gain an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses.

Sadly, the process of infantilisation is good for nei-

ther our young people nor for higher education.

Frank Furedi is emeritus professor of sociology at the University of Kent, United Kingdom. This article originally appeared in The Australian, 2 April 2016 and is on Dr Furedi's website at http://www.frank-furedi.com/article/paranoid_parenting_means_university_students_are_treated_as_kids. Reprinted by permission.

HOW I WOULD HAVE HANDLED JOHN DERBYSHIRE'S APPEARANCE ON CAMPUS

Peter Wood

In February, the president of Williams College, Adam Falk, sent an email to the Williams College community announcing that he was taking "the extraordinary step" of canceling a speech on campus that the freelance writer John Derbyshire was scheduled to make at the invitation of a student group.

Falk's decision was met by criticism from the student newspaper and by defenders of intellectual freedom from many points on the political spectrum. The conservative editor Roger Kimball declared that Falk had "disgraced himself" by writing "a chiseled, gem-like epitome of the self-righteous intolerance that has so blighted academic life for the last couple of decades." Henry Reichman, a liberal and chair

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of the AAUP's Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure, wrote that Falk's decision "paternalistically denies to students the right to hear controversial views and to determine for themselves what they think."

Within minutes of Falk's sending his email, a Williams faculty member forwarded it to me. I wrote to Falk to ask him to explicate one sentence in his email. He had said that he holds free speech "in extremely high regard," but "there's a line somewhere." With the prospect of a speech by John Derbyshire, "We've found the line."

I asked how he found that line and where it was. President Falk's answer accompanies this article. [<http://chronicle.com/article/Why-Williams-College-s-/235709/>]

Disinvitations to campus speakers, snubs that force speakers to cancel their talks, and organized actions meant to silence speakers are abundant. Rhetorical support for the ideals of intellectual freedom doesn't mean much when "the line" is drawn in such a way as to exclude people whose views rub against campus sensitivities.

I carry no brief for John Derbyshire's views on race, notably that white people have much to fear from black people and should therefore avoid them. It's a view that Williams College students have surely heard about or perhaps seen depicted in books or movies. But few at Williams have had the opportunity to hear directly from an intelligent and articulate proponent of "scientific" racism. All things considered, encountering the real thing in the controlled setting of a college lecture hall could be a very good thing.

Still, I understand what prompts a college president to go in search of "a line" that can't be crossed. President Falk found his line in Derbyshire's overt racism and hate speech. I doubt that is the right place to draw it. How much better would it have been if President Falk had turned to the Williams students and said something like this:

"The Williams community is going to be challenged

by our having on campus a speaker whom many of us regard as a purveyor of foolish and hurtful views on race. I would not have chosen John Derbyshire to be a speaker at Williams, but he has been invited by students, and I stand by the independent judgment of Williams students. We don't know exactly what Mr. Derbyshire will say on this occasion, but in the past he has said things that many of us regard as racist. The temptation will be to launch the kind of protest that would prevent him from speaking or, if he speaks, to prevent him from being heard.

"Protests of that sort would be a mistake. I would urge you instead to come to Mr. Derbyshire's talk and listen politely to what he says, without interrupting him. If you find yourself getting angry, exercise self-control. Listen. Take notes. Figure out what parts of what he says are true, and what parts are false. Frame good questions. Be prepared to learn from the event and to discuss it afterward. Seldom in life will you get another chance as good as this one to hear firsthand from someone who holds the views that Mr. Derbyshire holds. There are, however, many who hold such views, and it is important that you learn how and when to respond.

"Let's show Derbyshire and anyone else who is paying attention that the Williams community can rise to the occasion of dealing responsibly with provocative speech. That is what our intellectual freedom is all about."

President Falk lost the opportunity. I hope the next college president faced with a speaker who might rub against contemporary college sensibilities takes counsel.

Peter Wood is president of the National Association of Scholars. The above article appeared in the Chronicle of Higher Education, 16 March 2016, <http://chronicle.com/article/How-I-Would-Have-Handled-John/235708>. Reprinted by permission. It is an excerpt from an essay on the NAS website, at https://www.nas.org/articles/a_guide_to_disinvitation_my_conversation_with_williams_college_president_ad

ACADEMIC FREEDOMS AND THE CIVIL LIBERTIES

Mark Mercer

Should academic freedom protect a professor's exercise of her civil liberties?

On one view of academic freedom, professors must be left free only when they are acting in their professional capacity and comporting themselves properly as experts. They may not be disciplined for what they say when they are speaking from their positions as experts on a topic and speaking on that topic in a professional manner. In all other contexts, they may be disciplined for what they say or how they say it; and they should be, if, in the judgement of the proper university authority, sanctions or discipline would promote the university's interests.

There are two lines of criticism of this narrow view of academic freedom. The one is practical, the other principled. Practically, it is not always easy to tell whether a professor is speaking in her field of expertise. Administrators and colleagues asked to determine whether a comment falls within the area of professorial speech are apt to make mistakes, especially when pressured by a concern for their institution's reputation. Not only will the innocent (at least occasionally) be found guilty, but candor among professors and students will suffer, as people fear they might unwittingly step out of bounds. (I'd add that the time, energy, and emotion spent investigating and prosecuting allegedly bad speech or conduct could be better spent elsewhere.)

The principled criticism of the narrow view of academic freedom is that it rests on a pinched conception of the role of the professor. The professor might well be an expert on something or other (or not; I don't think philosophy professors, for instance, are experts on anything), but the professor's main role is being an intellectual, and that's not a role from which she can step aside at any moment without abandoning it completely.

The principled reason, then, for bringing all the civil liberties within the protection of academic freedom has to do with the idea that a university is a place of intellectual community. At a place of intellectual community, we leave each other free from all pressures with regard to beliefs and values save those of evidence and argument. To be prepared to punish someone for the content or manner of his expression is to show disdain for him as an autonomous thinker, one able and keen to respond to evidence and argument.

The response on a college campus to whatever words have upset people should consist simply in critical discussion. Whatever might be the false beliefs or unsound values involved can be exposed as false or unsound in discussion. And that's all that's needed in any community of dispassionate critical investigators. It's only a university lacking in intellectuals that need narrow its conception of academic freedom.

Mark Mercer, the president of SAFS, is Chair of the philosophy department at Saint Mary's University, in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

NOMINATIONS FOR SAFS BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2016-2017

The Nominations Committee this year consists of the SAFS president, Mark Mercer (Saint Mary's), the SAFS past president, Clive Seligman (Western), and two SAFS members not on the Board of Directors, John MacKinnon (Saint Mary's) and Stephen Perrott (Mount Saint Vincent).

Rodney Clifton, a member of the Board since 2008, has decided to step down and enjoy his retirement. SAFS thanks Rodney for his good work as a Director over the years.

The current members of the Board being re-nominated are: Andrew Irvine; Tom Flanagan; Steve Lupker; Mark Mercer; John Mueller; Clive Seligman; and Peter Suedfeld.

The Committee has received the nomination of Janice Fiamengo, Department of English, University of Ottawa.

Elections will be held at the business session at the end of the Annual General Meeting, 14 May 2016, at Western University, London, Ontario.

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