



SAFS Newsletter

Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship

Maintaining freedom in teaching, research and scholarship
Maintaining standards of excellence in academic decisions about students and faculty

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INTERNET SWARMING IS THE NEW SCHOLARSHIP IN IDENTITY POLITICS STUDIES

Dale Beyerstein

If anyone is in doubt that the “---- Studies” departments in universities (fill in the blank with “Women’s”, “Queer”, “Trans”, “Gender”, etc.) are centres of politics—especially of the identity sort—rather than scholarship, the infighting that began last April over the publication of an article in *Hypatia*, one of the most respected feminist journals, settles the issue.

Social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook have been full of recriminations against the author of the paper, the journal that accepted it, its editor, and the reviewers who recommended its acceptance.

According to posts on these sites, the very existence of the article constitutes violence toward transgender people (Weinberg, 2017), and defence of the article and calling for open debate about its claims is responsible for triggering PTSD (Oliver, 2017). An open letter to the journal that published the paper was signed by over 800 academics (mostly American, but several international academics including, by my count, forty-one Canadians, including Alexis Shotwell, of Carleton, one of the primary authors), calling for retraction of the paper (Shotwell, 2017).

The article in question, by Rebecca Tuvel (Tuvel 2017), a Canadian trained (BA, McGill) untenured assistant professor (at least for now) at Rhodes College, in Memphis, Tennessee, caused an uproar on social media after it appeared in *Hypatia*—one of the first feminist philosophy journals, and arguably

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the most prominent one in feminist philosophy and women's studies.

The argument of the paper is in a style familiar to anyone in philosophy, especially those who do moral philosophy, called argument from analogy. It goes like this: Suppose you are wondering whether *X* is right or wrong. You compare it to *Y*, about which you have clear intuitions, or can appeal to principles about which you are confident, and which show *Y* to be right. If *X* is like *Y* in morally relevant respects, simple consistency would require you to say that *X* is right too. (Of course, the same would apply *mutatis mutandis* if you found *Y* to be wrong.) For the conclusion about *X* to follow, you need to show that *Y* really is right, and (more contentious) that *X* and *Y* are similar in the morally relevant respects – i.e., the respects that make *Y* right. Not just any old difference between the two is relevant; because of course there will be many dissimilarities between *X* and *Y*, unless the two are identical. In fact, the bulk of the argument centres around considering different features of *X* and *Y* and arguing why they are or are not morally relevant, because establishing a morally relevant difference weakens the conclusion.

Tuvel uses this argument strategy to argue that transracialism (a person widely recognised as being of one race identifying herself as a member of another race) should be acceptable, given that transgenderism (identifying as a member of a different gender)

is acceptable.

The particular case considered by Tuvel is that of Rachel Dolezal, the President of the NAACP in Spokane, Washington from 2014 until her ouster in 2015, after it was revealed that she was not black, as she claimed, but white. Dolezal's position is that although she was born of white parents, she identifies as black. It is important that Tuvel not only asserts that transgenderism is acceptable, but needs this as a premiss in advancing her argument about transracialism. So, the furore against Tuvel is directed at an upstart in a philosophy department drawing a politically incorrect conclusion, given that her seniors in "---- Studies" departments and righteous feminists in Philosophy departments have ruled that Dolezal has no right to call herself black, despite their firm conviction that race is a construct and there is no fact of the matter determining who is black and who is not.

No one in an academic institution wants to be accused of advancing political correctness over academic freedom and scholarship, thus much of the criticism of Tuvel's paper, and *Hyptia* for publishing it and not retracting it, was couched in terms of claims that the paper did not meet the minimal standards of academic scholarship, in that Tuvel failed to cite relevant scholarship. But in order to accept this exceedingly charitable account of what is at the heart of the criticism, we would have to conclude that it is the result of the intellectual weakness of the interdisciplinary "---- Studies" programs. When members of such departments who were trained in widely divergent academic disciplines try to understand what their colleagues are up to, it is not surprising when they entirely miss the mark. None of the signatories of the petition or the trolls on social media cited a single author that Tuvel missed that had anything useful to say about a relevant difference between transgenderism and transracism. Thus, on this account, the criticism about citations was based on ignorance of how arguments from analogy work.

But even this exceedingly charitable interpretation does not fit the facts. The open letter calling for the retraction of the paper puts the point about insufficient

references to the scholarly literature this way: “Our concerns reach beyond mere scholarly disagreement; we can only conclude that there has been a failure in the review process, and one that painfully reflects a lack of engagement beyond white and cisgender [i.e., not transgendered] privilege.” (Shotwell, 2017.) Mere scholarly disagreement?

And the reason given for why the references are inadequate is even more disturbing: “[I]t fails to seek out and sufficiently engage with scholarly work by those who are most vulnerable to the intersection of racial and gender oppressions (women of color) in its discussion of ‘transracialism’.” (Shotwell, 2017.) The reason for the sneer quotes around “transracialism” points to one of the ways in which Truvel supposedly perpetrated violence: Such people are to be called “Trans” now. Such obsessiveness about words, rather than the things to which they refer, is a symptom of what Richard Feynman identified as “cargo cult science” (Feynman, 1999). But more disturbing is the view expressed here that the only views on a subject worth listening to are those of members of the oppressed identity group in question. These, after all, are the ones who have had the personal experiences, and only personal experience counts as evidence for anything. All others outside the oppressed group simply have to take the word of those inside, and preferably should not write on the subject at all.

One of the more serious harms perpetrated by Tuvel, according to her critics, was to “deadname” the person named as an example of a transgendered person, Caitlin Jenner. Deadnaming is the act of using the name of a transgendered person that they used before they transitioned to another gender. Tuvel is blamed for this despite the fact that Jenner herself isn’t concerned about it. As she has pointed out, she has lived 60/62 of her life with her deadname. And the only reason the media paid any attention to her identification as a female is that her celebrity came about because she (as she then wasn’t) was an Olympic athlete. Nevertheless, *Hypatia* has revised the online version of the paper to remove the deadname, with the approval of Tuvel.

The brightest part of the story is that the editor of

Hypatia, Sally Scholz (Scholz, 2017), has stood by Tuvel and the paper: “I firmly believe, and this belief will not waver, that it is utterly inappropriate for editors to repudiate an article they have accepted for publication (barring issues of plagiarism or falsification of data). In this respect, editors must stand behind the authors of accepted papers. That is where I stand.” However, she will be resigning, along with the editor of online reviews, Shelley Wilcox, effective once the next issue has gone to press. The journal’s Board of Directors backed Scholz and have refused to retract the paper. Also they have suspended the authority of the journal’s Associate Editorial Board. In *Hypatia*’s Byzantine governance structure, this body’s primary responsibility is to appoint the editor of the journal, not to oversee the editor and reviewers in their decisions about which articles to publish. This body had issued a statement when the social media storm first appeared, profusely apologising for the publication of the article, admitting to all the harms charged by the critics of the article, and stating “Clearly, the article should not have been published . . .” (A Majority, 2017). They did not make it clear that they were not speaking for the journal, but as individuals. The journal’s publishers, John Wiley & Sons, referred the *Hypatia* situation, with special emphasis on the behavior of the Associate Editorial Board, to the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), an international body of academic journal editors, for review. In their report they agreed with Miriam Solomon, President, and the other members of the Board of Directors of the journal, that the Associate Editorial Board’s apology to the social media critics was inappropriate (Zamudio-Suaréz, 2017).

Another bright spot in this saga is that there have been a few feminist voices speaking out from the wilderness, calling for those who are critical of Truvel’s conclusions to publish their objections in an academic journal, rather than to vent ad hominem on social media. Kelly Oliver, Professor of Philosophy at Vanderbilt University and Tuvel’s PhD thesis supervisor, summed up the situation best: “**Outrage has become the new truth.** At one extreme, we have Trump and his supporters proudly embracing political incorrectness, and at the other, we have the political correctness police calling for censorship of a

scholarly article written by someone working for social justice.” (Oliver 2017, emphasis in the original.)

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Dale Beyerstein (dbeyerstein@langara.bc.ca) is a retired instructor and Chair of the Philosophy Department at Langara College, in Vancouver. He is a past member of the Board of SAFS.

INTELLECTUAL EUGENICS

Christina Behme

The term “eugenics” (from Greek for “well-born”) was first used by Sir Francis Galton, in 1883. Galton believed that desirable character traits are heritable and that selective breeding could improve the human race.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, eugenics movements spread throughout Europe and North America. While Galton’s focus was on propagating positive character traits, subsequent eugenicists focussed on eliminating the undesirable ones. The

most pernicious of the resulting policies lead to forced sterilizations of “unfit” individuals, meant to prevent them from passing on their negative traits. At one time, a total of thirty-three US states and two Canadian provinces had sterilization programs.

Early supporters of the movement included Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung, and Irene Parlby. They might have had good intentions. However, the inherent paternalism and the erasure of the basic human rights of those affected made the programs morally reprehensible long before they were taken to the horrible excesses in Nazi Germany, where Hitler used eugenic principles to justify the Holocaust. That terrible “wake-up call” put an end to most eugenics movements. Seventy-five years after WWII, most informed people agree that the science behind eugenics was deeply flawed. Furthermore, most of us agree that, even had the science been correct, sterilizing people against their will can never be justified.

Nowadays, virtually no one has to worry about eugenics. Yet in recent decades, a movement I call intellectual eugenics (because of some alarming parallels it has to genetic eugenics) has swept academia. Evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins might have inadvertently provided the impetus for this movement when, in his 1976 book *The Selfish Gene*, he coined the term “meme.” Dawkins proposed that ideas spread through (intellectual) populations based on meme-transfer, which, he said, is similar to gene-transfer.

The idea is that in the age of mass media, and now social media, good memes will out-compete bad memes and quickly propagate throughout large populations. But while the natural environment provides the competitive battleground for genes, it is less clear which ideas, if any, are inherently good. One might assume that the intellectual elites are best equipped to determine which ideas are worth spreading and which ought to go extinct. Indeed, universities have always been places where ideas (or memes) battled for supremacy and the winning ideas were passed on to the next generation of students, and then often propagated in the wider population. Selection by university processes might be seen as roughly anal-

ogous to Galton's idea that guided selection would increase positive traits in a population.

However, the last few years have seen more and more parallels to the darker sides of eugenics. Forced sterilization, for instance, has its parallel in the forced elimination of bad ideas. Especially after the election of Donald Trump, many academics concluded that it is essential to silence ideas they deem dangerous. Those ideas are often lumped together as fascist ideas that will cause great harm if they spread from mind to mind. From the popular "Punch a Nazi" movement to the deplatforming of conservative speakers, any means, including physical violence, has become a quasi-legitimate tool to stop the spread of fascist or merely disagreeable ideas.

Just last August, in the *Globe and Mail*, University of Toronto philosopher Mark Kingwell took the analogy between bad ideas and physical illness to the next level. Alleging that there is "no rational engagement possible" with Trump supporters, Kingwell proposes that instead of debate our response ought to be akin to "inflicting benign behavioural modification," a technique that has been used in addiction treatment.

Kingwell seriously claims "that political belief is also an aspect of human behaviour in need of external control." For Kingwell, people who hold political beliefs he disapproves of suffer from "conviction addiction." They are susceptible to "gateway" drugs the use of which, "if unchecked," will lead to "deadly Nazi hatefests." He rejects the liberal idea that bad ideas ought to be challenged by better ideas because "[t]he mental market is far more irrational than the one governing wealth." Thankfully, Kingwell does not propose electric shock therapy or selective brain surgery as treatments for the conviction addicted. However, his actual proposal is chilling in its own right: "Let's recognize the conviction-addictive quality in all of us, and stop imagining that free public discourse will bend toward reason. Curbs on speech and strict rules of engagement – no interruptions, no slogans, no talking points – may be the right answer here. We already, in this country, ban hateful speech. Let's go farther and insist on discourse rules, limits on public outrage and aggressively regulated social

media. We could even ban media panel discussions ... let's have more constraint, less conversation."

It is unclear who the "we" Kingwell refers to is. But it would seem only national governments have the power to regulate social media or to ban panel discussions. It is also far from clear whose ideas Kingwell is targeting. On the one hand, he specifically talks of Nazism and names "Richard Spencer or David Duke ... [and] the Twitter feed of POTUS 45." On the other hand, he refers to "Americans who voted Trump" and those "on the other side." So potentially anyone who disagrees with Kingwell on anything ought to be constrained by law.

Of course, once even a democratically elected government has been given license to implement such hopelessly underspecified and far reaching censorship, it is impossible to predict where things will end. For example, the GDR government won roughly 60% of the votes in the 1946 elections and had broad support among the public to suppress fascist ideas. However, rather quickly the existence of a very small group of actual (and unteachable) Nazis was used as an excuse to impose censorship on the ideas of all political opponents. It did not end there.

Once the government places strong enough penalties on the expression of disagreeable ideas, those ideas will no longer be expressed in public. However, it is impossible to know whether ideas that are never expressed in public have been eliminated or continue to propagate in secret. For that reason, the GDR government felt the need to install a massively invasive surveillance system that constantly monitored what people thought privately. But even that seemed not enough, and, in 1961, the GDR government erected the Antifascist Protection Bulwark, better known as the Berlin Wall. In the name of protecting them from fascism, this wall imprisoned 17 million people for 28 years!

Kingwell is presumably sure this would never happen in Canada. Perhaps. But as late as the spring of 1961, East Germans were equally sure it would not happen to them—or they would have got out while they still could. And even once the wall was

in place, few believed it would be there for almost three decades. But this is what can happen when a government is given license to regulate what ideas citizens can express. There is no guarantee that, if so empowered, the Canadian government will never decide that Kingwell's own ideas are symptoms of a "conviction addiction" that needs to be eradicated.

The recent deplatforming of extremely vocal Trump critic Richard Dawkins should serve as a stark reminder that thought policing already extends to places extremely distant from hard-core Nazism. Unless we are willing to learn from history we risk repeating it.

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Christina Behme (christinabehme@gmail.com) teaches philosophy at Dalhousie University, in Halifax. She works mainly in philosophy of language, most recently on questions about the evolution of language, both biological and cultural. Her presentation at the SAFS Annual General Meeting last May, on the effects of censorship in East Germany, can be watched at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1OcBk3N27s>

DIVERSITY REPLACES MERIT AT CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES

Philip Carl Salzman

Academic merit results from the successful performance of intellectual tasks by individuals. But individuals are no longer considered valid units of evaluation in Canadian universities; only collective characteristics are now considered important: gender, sexual preference, race, religion, national origin, class, etc. This change of emphasis from individual to categories of people is justified in terms of oppressor victim status: men oppress women; whites oppress non-whites; heterosexuals oppress gay, queer, and trans; Euro-Canadians oppress Canadians from elsewhere; upper and middle class oppress lower class and poor; Christians, Jews, Hindus and others oppress Muslims, and so on. Consequently, the argument goes, treating individuals as individuals means accepting the status quo of oppression and victimization.

The proposed solution to oppression and victimization in Canadian universities is implementing, enhancing, and the rewarding diversity. What is intended by this is correcting social ills and unfairness by benefiting those who belong to victim categories, those who have suffered at the hands of the white, male, Euro-Canadian, middle class, heterosexual oppressors. Members of victim categories are by policy favoured and benefited. Academic merit, as it used to be regarded, is, the argument goes, an artifact of the advantages of the oppressors, and lack of merit the disadvantage of the oppressed. Negating academic merit as a tool of oppression is the virtue of the new, "social justice" university, which supersedes the unjust and outdated academic university. Advancing diversity is thus seen by its advocates as an anti-colonial and post-colonial strategy.

A good illustration of the social justice university is the new admissions policy for the Bachelor of Education program established by the University of Manitoba Senate.

The new policy reserves 45 percent of spaces in the

Bachelor of Education program for students who belong to the following categories: “Indigenous, Métis or Inuit (15 percent); having a [physical, mental, psychological, sensory or diagnosed learning] disability (7.5 percent); LGBTTTQ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual, two spirit, or queer] (7.5 percent); being a racialized minority (7.5 percent); or being socially disadvantaged [homeless, low levels of education, chronic low income, chronic unemployment] (7.5 percent).” (“[Then They Came for the Teachers](#),” *C2C Journal*, 2016.)

The purpose of this new diversity policy, according to its supporters, is to reduce the dominance of privileged white women in the province’s teaching profession. (“[Challenges Implementing Diversity Admissions Policy](#),” *University Affairs*, 2016.)

It is obvious, however, that whether the diversity admissions targets are filled or not, the objective is to exclude qualified white, straight, middle class women from the education program, and from any post-graduate employment opportunities in schools. But that is okay, because they are oppressors, so no sympathy should be directed toward them. (No mention is made of men, who, unless gay, queer, or trans-, homeless, or disabled, can pretty much forget about being admitted to the University of Manitoba B. Ed. Program.)

No concern is expressed about whether these diversity admissions, once graduated, would be capable of successfully teaching the children of Manitoba. (Do not worry about them graduating with their degrees; who would dare deny them the grades to qualify them to graduate?) Should it not give pause that qualifications of admittance to the education program include “low levels of education” and “mental disability”? Would these not suggest that the admittee might not be qualified for university level academic work? Spokespersons of the social justice university would explain that this is an inappropriate question, for the work of universities is no longer academic; its work is social justice. Social justice universities fulfill their purpose and goal by admitting, passing, and graduating students from oppressed categories, and thus advancing the ultimate goal, absolute equality

of result. We are told that talk about academic merit and achievement, never mind “excellence,” is talk of the oppressor, that “merit” and “achievement” are concepts used to sustain inequality and hold down the victims.

Universities across Canada have shifted to the social justice model. At McGill University, a university-wide program is directed toward admitting First Nations students and hiring First Nations professors. At issue is not an open admissions or open hiring policy, in which applications from all, including members of First Nations, are welcomed in the competition, and assessed by academic criteria. Open admissions and hiring policies have existed for many decades. (It has been a long time since Jews were restricted from entering McGill.) The new program is to selectively admit First Nations individuals due to their racial origin and current victim status. Efforts are currently in the works in at least one faculty to hire, without a competition, a First Nations professor, for the sole reason of racial origin. Just as the Manitoba program discriminates against qualified white, straight, middle class women, excluding them from eligibility for 45% of the places in the B. Ed. program, hiring without a competition a First Nations professor at McGill discriminates against all qualified members of other racial groups that might wish to apply for a professorship at McGill. Excluded would be potential applicants of Pacific Islands, and of Australian, Japanese, Chinese, Thai, Malay, South Asian, Middle Eastern, African, and European backgrounds. For social justice universities, individuals with individual characteristics and achievement, count for little; only oppressor or victim category membership is weighted seriously. Individuals are reduced to their category membership. Academic merit is disregarded.

Canadians of course share a great deal of culture with Americans. This is no less so with the evolution of the social justice university and social justice schools. A new trend is “Culturally Responsive Teaching”: As described in an article in an education journal, social justice must always be a motivation behind CRT research. Part of this social justice commitment must include a critique of liberalism, neu-

trality, objectivity, color-blindness, and meritocracy as a camouflage for the self-interest of powerful entities of society. (“[There Is No Culturally Responsive Teaching Spoken Here: A Critical Race Perspective](#),” *Democracy Education Journal*, 2012 and “[Montgomery County’s wrong tack on culturally diverse education](#),” *Washington Post*, 2017.)

For social justice advocates, “neutrality, objectivity, color-blindness, and meritocracy” are tools of the oppressors, and must be replaced by advocacy and special benefits for members of victim categories. A primary tool is reverse discrimination and preferential recruitment. We might object that reverse discrimination and preferential recruitment is a racism of low expectations, assuming that people in designated categories are incapable of achievement and successful competition. As for those excluded because they are in “oppressor categories,” such as male, white, and middle class students, they are regarded by social justice advocates as collateral damage, deserving no consideration.

So too at American universities. Barnard College, according to the Report of the President’s Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion, is pressing ahead with a “diversity” initiative, involving hiring a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO), and “promoting [mandatory] educational workshops around inclusion and equity to create a shared understanding of the distinctive challenges facing core constituencies, especially those from historically underrepresented groups; and focus on developing cultural competence with respect to race, ethnicity, gender, class, disability, sexuality, religion, and intersectionality. Students, faculty, administrators and staff will be expected to participate in order to create a community focus on diversity topics relevant to all at Barnard.” ([Recommendations from the Task Force](#), *Barnard*, 2017.)

Minority members will be recruited for ten new teaching posts, so that the “demonstrated benefits” of diversity will be made available through racial hiring, sexual preference hiring, and religion based hiring. (“[College pledges to hire professors based on skin color, mandates social-justice workshops](#),” *The College Fix*, 2017.)

As if to confirm at the highest level the replacement of merit by diversity, the Minister of Science of the Canadian Government, Kristy Duncan, “called the Canada Excellence Research Chairs, and required competing institutions to submit diversity plans along with their applications,” according to the *Globe and Mail*. (“[Ottawa to universities: Improve diversity or lose research chair funds](#),” *Globe and Mail*, 2017.)

Canadian universities must “ensure the demographics of those given the awards reflect the demographics of those academics eligible to receive them,” or else lose their Canada Research Chair funds. No mention was made of academic criteria, such as merit and excellence. The Canadian Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship has sent a [letter of protest](#) to the President of the Social Science and Humanities Research Council.

As author of this article, I do not speak as a defender of privilege. As it happens, I am a member of an oft-despised minority, two members of my four person family have validated special needs, and two members are visible minorities. It is not for privilege I speak, but for the liberal values of individuality, equality of opportunity, and merit, and for the academic virtues of intellectual achievement and the quest for knowledge and truth. These values and virtues are disappearing in Canadian universities, in favour, not of justice, but of reduction of individuals to members of census categories, of preferential treatment for some at the cost of excluding others, and an imposed equality of result obscuring relevant and legitimate differences among individuals.

As for the oppressed of colour, sex, religion, origin, etc., I have met many students of diverse backgrounds, races, and propensities in the classes I teach. Is the idea of “merit” their enemy? Success in my classes does not depend upon non-academic characteristics, but upon academic achievement. I grade student work “blind,” without knowing the names of the authors. The result? Some students of all backgrounds do well, some do average, and some do poorly. What a surprise! Individual people are different from one another, in experience, in intellectual capability, in motivation, in self-discipline, and in

creativity. How a student will do is not predictable from constructed census categories to which they are allocated. Categorizing students on non-academic criteria is unfair and counter-productive, a betrayal of academic responsibility, and a violation of human rights.

Philip Carl Salzman (philip.carl.salzman@mcgill.ca) is Professor of Anthropology at McGill University. His latest book is Classic Comparative Anthropology: Studies from the Tradition (2012). The above article was originally posted 28 July 2017 on the website of the Frontier Centre for Public Policy. It is reprinted here by permission.

A NEW FORCE ON CAMPUS: STUDENTS FOR FREE EXPRESSION

Matthew Foldi

American college campuses made headlines this year, from violence at Middlebury to riots at Berkeley. As awful as those events were, they exemplified what many of us across the US take as given: certain viewpoints are simply unwelcome on college campuses.

The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) has done an excellent job chronicling both successful and unsuccessful attempts to silence people. FIRE records that in past year alone, there were at least [thirty-four attempts](#) to disinvite speakers.

I've just begun my fourth year at the University of Chicago. Over the past three years, while busy supporting free expression on campus, I often wondered where the professors were. Faculty members regularly lead the way at Chicago, but why aren't their colleagues around the country supporting free expression?

At the beginning of the 2016 school year, soon after John Ellison, one of our deans, sent all first year students [a letter](#) staunchly supporting free expression on our campus, another University of Chicago dean asked me my thoughts. That simple conversation de-

veloped into the first-ever entirely student-run free expression conference (at least the first that I know of). Students from fourteen schools across America gathered last April at the University of Chicago to address, from every perspective, the matter of [free expression on campus](#). On the final day of the conference, we wrote a [Statement of Principles](#). Our newly formed organization, Students for Free Expression, has now sent that statement around the world. Within a month of the conference, we had obtained over 1,000 signatures.

Our Statement of Principles says, in part, that “the only way to achieve [a well-rounded education] is by cultivating a culture where all are free to communicate without fear of censorship or intimidation. While some speech may be objectionable and even hateful, constitutionally protected speech ought to be held and enforced as the standard and must not be infringed upon.”

Students for Free Expression has several broad goals, many similar to those of SAFS, but directed primarily at students. Like SAFS, we will work with “university administrations where we feel that academic freedom or the merit principle have been compromised.”

We've brought to dozens of colleges around the US a three step process. It begins with collecting signatures for our Statement. Students at the college then present a bill to the student government. Finally, students present school administrators with concrete evidence of the campus community's support for free

BEQUEST TO SAFS

Please consider remembering the Society in your will. Even small bequests can help us greatly in carrying on SAFS's work. In most cases, a bequest does not require rewriting your entire will, but can be done simply by adding a codicil.

Thank you,
Mark Mercer, SAFS president

expression.

Students for Free Expression is now active at over thirty schools in the US and Mexico. We firmly believe that free expression on campus is a universal principle that stretches beyond borders. We ask your help in expanding our reach throughout Canada. Sign our Statement, forward it to sympathetic colleagues, and tell your students that we exist. We want to assist them in advancing free expression at their own schools at a time when doing so could not be more important.

Matthew Foldi (MatthewFoldi@UChicago.edu) is in his senior year at the University of Chicago. He is a lead organizer of Students for Free Expression. One of Mr Foldi's favourite quotations is from Alexander Hamilton: "Those who stand for nothing fall for anything."

MY EXPERIENCE WITH PSEUDO-ARCHAEOLOGY: Why Universities Must Support Those of Us Willing to Dirty Our Hands

Myles McCallum

The good, the bad—and the pseudo. Sadly, despite the overwhelming presence in mainstream and social media of pseudo-archaeological theories, academic and professional archaeologists rarely deign to confront pseudo-archaeology. (For an overview, see Garrett G. Fagan, *Archaeological fantasies: How pseudoarchaeology misrepresents the past and misleads the public*, 2006.)

Pseudo-archaeologists do not engage in fieldwork or data collection. They start with a conclusion, a theory, or a model, and then locate evidence to explain and justify their prior beliefs. Actual archaeologists, on the other hand, typically apply proven methods to address specific research questions, methods that are linked to a diverse but thoughtful, adaptable, and dynamic body of theory. We collect data in a variety of ways, compare our data to those collected by others, and construct models to explain the data. These models may be modified when challenged by

evidence. The best models incorporate data collected synthetically, that is, through careful observation and recording of spatial, architectural, stratigraphic, and other relevant details, and through dialogue with colleagues. In all situations, context is key.

For pseudo-archaeologists, though, context gets in the way of the “truth”. Pseudo-archaeologists generally cherry-pick their supporting data, often from incompatible sets, to support their conclusions at all costs. In response to the hypotheses or theories of professional archaeologists that contradict their own, their only response is to openly denigrate as blind those traditional academic disciplines that study the human past. Because they cannot find respectable venues for their ideas, they tend to see academics as an international intellectual mafia carefully protecting its sanctioned version of historical “truth” by controlling access to publication.

The only time that I have dealt directly with the pseudo-archaeological community took place in the spring of 2015, when I was contacted by producers of the History Channel program *The Curse of Oak Island*. They wanted me to examine a purported Roman sword recovered at Oak Island, in Nova Scotia, and to capture my analysis on video.

I was sent a photograph of the sword and informed that it had been identified by an expert as once the property of a Roman general and dating to the second century CE. Looking at the photo, there was little to indicate that the sword was ancient. The casting technique and decorative elements appeared distinctly un-Roman, and the sword was made of Bronze at a time when Romans used steel swords, even when they were purely decorative. I could see no signs that the sword had been underwater for any length of time. Finally, there was also the question of provenience, which was preposterous.

Despite fears that my appearance on the show would be edited in such a way as to discredit me professionally, I agreed to participate in the program, in part because the entire proposition seemed so absurd that it appealed to my sense of adventure. At the same time, and to help cover my own professional ass,

I encouraged the producers to ask my colleague in Chemistry, Dr. Christa Brosseau, to perform chemical analysis of the sword. Perhaps, I thought, objective scientific data would be more convincing than my learned “opinion”.

The show aired in January 2016. Dr. Brosseau and I had concluded that the sword is a 20th century tourist trinket brought to Canada from Europe and doctored to look ancient. Not surprising at all. Far from discrediting Christa or me, when I watched the show (the first time that I had ever seen an episode in the series), I was struck by how seriously those involved took their job, and by the richness of the resources marshalled to prove that what was clearly not a Roman sword was in fact not a Roman sword. Surely their money could be better spent tackling archaeological and historical issues of real merit?

What surprised me even more was the level of interest generated by Christa’s and my appearance. I have never had so many hits on Academia.edu and Research Gate as in the weeks following the show’s airdate. Those who supported the theory that the sword was authentic and thereby proved the presence of a Roman ship at Oak Island (how could this not be true?), attacked Christa and me in blogs and other online fora. They accused us of incompetence, being in the pay of the show’s producers, and being unqualified to render judgment. Nonetheless, since they did not come from colleagues, these attacks left my psyche unscarred.

Christa and I were approached by Andrew White, a professional archaeologist in the US, who maintains a website dedicated to debunking pseudo-archaeological theories. He invited us to post on his site and to explain to those skeptical of our conclusions how we came to them, and to answer questions and concerns about our method, our qualifications, and our relationship to the show. Yet the attacks on us continued, and I stopped paying attention.

Christa, however, continued to monitor reaction and became convinced that our university, Saint Mary’s, should use its internet presence as a platform for us to present our results. After all, in seeking to discredit

us, the “believers” were also aiming to discredit the institution that employed us. She contacted our public affairs people and set up an interview and photo session, in which we both participated, with the understanding that something for the record would appear on the university’s website. This never happened and I have no idea why, so I will not speculate on motive.

The “debate” over the sword continues to take place outside the walls of the ivory tower. There is a lesson to be learned here, however. Archaeology is a minor discipline within the academy whose methods are poorly understood outside the professional community. Because of this, people on the street regularly fail to perceive the pseudo-quality of narratives such as those presented on *Curse of Oak Island* or *Ancient Aliens*. Regular viewers drink the Kool-Aid proffered by those responsible for these shows; they think that establishment archaeologists are trying to hide the “truth” espoused by charlatans, and they are unable to evaluate critically the method and theory behind the outrageous claims they hear.

I was surprised by how many friends and acquaintances found the *Oak Island* show credible and, while they believed our conclusions about the sword, were clearly willing to entertain other bizarre theories that were presented (such as the “fact” that the Phoenicians had sailed to Nova Scotia; then why not the ancient Romans?). I was asked by co-workers, doctors, lawyers, and teachers when the show would reveal the true mysteries hidden on the island (the Holy Grail; the lost works of Shakespeare; pirate treasure; etc.). After all, they mused, people have been looking for a very long time; something is bound to show up soon. My reply, that perhaps there is nothing to find, was universally met with disbelief. When I elaborated on how, as a professional archaeologist, in my learned opinion and based on what I have seen, there is no evidence to support any of the wild assertions about Oak Island, I was politely dismissed.

This was a bit of a blow to my self-esteem, but it made clear to me one of the problems within my discipline: a parallel world of pseudo-archaeology exists alongside the professional and that world is the

focus of popular media. Self-anointed experts are perceived as better informed than actual experts. The disengagement academic archaeologists have with this parallel universe is problematic and potentially dangerous. The result is the creation and perpetuation of myths in the guise of historical narratives and models.

Sometimes these narratives are harmless, such as those of Romans or Knights Templar on Oak Island. Sometimes, however, they perpetuate cultural relativism and racism. The narratives wherein pre-Columbian cross-oceanic travel by Europeans brought literacy, lithic art, agriculture, and monumental architecture to Mesoamerica, or that without the presence of alien intelligence in ancient Egypt, the pyramids could never have been built, are clearly in this category. Archaeological evidence is often presented as the only support for these theories.

Academic archaeologists need to engage publically with such theories. We need to point out the clear deficiencies of pseudo-archaeological models, both with respect to their methodological underpinnings and their use of data, but also with respect to their views on race.

As intervention is not often expected of us as professors, it is important that we receive support from the institutions that employ us. Unlike pseudo-archaeology in an academic context, embedded as it is within a relatively free and open academic society, pseudo-archaeology in the popular media and imagination is not self-correcting. Without academics who see engagement as a professional responsibility, false and pernicious views can thrive. In Britain, happily, academics will intervene; there, archaeologists are public intellectuals who contribute actively to non-academic debates about human migration, technological innovation, and social organization. They are respected for this, both within and outside of the academy. Why couldn't this be the case in North America as well?

Should Christa and I have avoided contact with the producers of *The Curse of Oak Island*? Did our participation lend an air of legitimacy to a pseudo-archaeological debate?

In the end, and thanks in part to Christa's persistence, I see it as a professional duty to debunk pseudo-archaeological theories. In order to deconstruct such archaeological fantasies effectively, scholars need the full support of the academy and our professional and scholarly organizations. So, from my perspective, the unwillingness of Saint Mary's to support our intervention was disappointing.

Conclusions

Academic archaeologists ought to engage in the less intellectually rigorous debates that occur in popular and social media. We do this in the classroom as teachers, but we should also take to the streets. This is where archaeology, as a profession, has fallen down. The tendency is to retreat to the comfort of professional conferences, to engage in dialogue with each other and with our students, and to ignore what is going on in the world around us. We simply dismiss as fantasy theories such as Roman (or Carthaginian, or Chinese, or Templar) travel to and settlement in Nova Scotia. We should instead be presenting compelling counterarguments as part of a public debate.

I would argue that popular and social media define what archaeology is for the general public. For a relatively small discipline, this is unhealthy. We need to take an active part in self-definition by engaging critically with those who would sensationalize what we do and who engage in pseudo-archaeological practices. This requires that we have the support of our institutions and professional organizations, and that the academies in which we work dedicate some moderate level of resources to public engagement and outreach.

Myles McCallum (mylesemccallum@gmail.com) is Associate Professor of Classics and Chair of his department at Saint Mary's University, in Halifax. He spends much of his professional time digging in Italy, as director of the Basentello Valley Research Project.

WHY THE IDEA OF CULTURAL APPROPRIATION SHOULD BE CHALLENGED

Frances Widdowson

Last May, discussions of “cultural appropriation” resulted in a number of resignations, demotions, and obsequious requests for forgiveness.

The upheaval began with an editorial by Hal Niedzviecki in *Write* magazine, asserting that everyone should try to imagine and portray other cultures; Niedzviecki jokingly suggested people should seek to win an “appropriation prize”. Editor Ken Whyte offered to fund such a prize. The general thrust was to mock the notion of “cultural appropriation”, implying that worries about appropriating from other cultures threatened artistic expression. Nowhere did anyone express hostility towards indigenous peoples. There certainly wasn’t any denial of their “value as human beings”, as some critics claimed.

Defense of Niedzviecki has been tepid. *National Post* columnist Jonathan Kay, for example, referred to Niedzviecki’s editorial as “reckless”. A later article by Kay, about how writers, journalists and academics are self-censoring to avoid being mobbed with accusations of “colonialism”, makes his reticence understandable.

It is time to state the obvious. Arguments against cultural appropriation are silly and should be mocked. It would be intellectually dishonest not to say so – a cowardly avoidance of the “offence” that indigenous privilege-seekers and their “allies” might choose to invent.

The original opposition to “cultural appropriation” was commendable for its criticism of images that denigrated the racial features of a particular group. This concerned posters celebrating “blackface” minstrels, or mascots for sports teams with demeaning caricatures. Today, however, denigrating images are not the target of opposition to “cultural appropriation”. Rather, any non-aboriginal person who, no matter how “respectfully” or “sensitively”, portrays

something perceived to be indigenous will be criticized. Two recent cases of this concerned the fiction of Joseph Boyden and the paintings of Amanda PL (who was emulating the Woodlands Style introduced by the Anishinaabe painter Norval Morriseau).

While the heated rhetoric makes the reasons for opposing “cultural appropriation” difficult to summarize, there are generally two arguments that have been made, both of which are untenable. The first is what has been called “culturalism”, where culture is conflated with race. This argument maintains that only a person who is truly “indigenous” is entitled to engage with anything designated as belonging to this group. On the basis of this argument, Boyden is condemned for being unable to properly articulate the “indigenous voice”. Any expression, we are told, must come from one’s lived experience as an indigenous person, the absence of which inevitably results in inauthentic depictions.

Although what makes a person “indigenous” is also a matter of some controversy, the trump card in the determination is lineage. If Boyden had the requisite blood quantum, he would never have been subject to the severity of attacks that he endured. He would have had the required connection to “ancestral spirits” needed to legitimate his “voice”. This is also one of the reasons why the work of Amanda PL is criticized. PL has been accused of inappropriately using a style connected to indigenous teachings, whose “sacred” character cannot be channeled by a non-aboriginal person.

The second reason why the art of Boyden and PL is being criticized is rooted in neotribal rentierism – the process of incorporating economically marginalized indigenous groups into late capitalism through the provision of monetary payments. Preventing “cultural appropriation”, after all, is really about rent-seeking, as it puts up a barrier to entry to all non-indigenous artists. This is justified by the assumption that the reason to support the work of an indigenous artist is not the quality of the work or its ability to connect with an audience. It is, instead, that aboriginal people have been historically oppressed and ignored in artistic circles. “Social justice” demands an in-

crease in the number of aboriginally created books and paintings, as well as the grants and prizes that are given to support their production.

This is the other reason why people turned on Joseph Boyden. Boyden was not only celebrated because people liked his books; he was also seen as a member of an oppressed group to whom reparations were owed. When it was discovered that Boyden had little or no indigenous ancestry, many of his patrons felt that they had been duped into promoting the work of someone who was guilty of “ethnic fraud”. They had made amends to a person whose ancestors had not been colonized and dispossessed by the Canadian state.

Both culturalism and neotribal rentierism are indefensible and will not enhance artistic expression or reconciliation. Culturalist arguments actually destroy the idea of art by replacing artistic excellence with racial essentialism. They also ignore that there has never been an “authentic” indigenous artistic tradition. Most obviously, literature did not exist before the arrival of Europeans, and therefore all indigenous writers must have been influenced by non-aboriginals. Similarly, acrylic paints, paintbrushes, and even beads, are all post contact. In fact, if we want to create a ledger showing which group has “culturally appropriated” the most, the less technologically developed character of hunting and gathering and horticultural societies would mean that it is aboriginal people who owe the greatest debt.

Not that anyone should be keeping score. The idea that “cultural appropriation” is wrong is only taken seriously because of the hold that neotribal rentierism has on how aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations are conceptualized. Lawyers and consultants working for aboriginal organizations have inveigled us into believing that it is only by upping the amount of compensation that past wrongs can be righted. Yet it is not increased rent, but productive participation and integration, which will lead to reconciliation.

All people should “culturally appropriate” as much as they can from one another. This is what brings down barriers and reinforces our common humanity.

But actual “cultural appropriation” means valuing what is being appropriated, and this requires honesty in artistic engagement, not condescending forms of “inclusion” as atonement. The most deprived members of aboriginal communities are suffering because they remain isolated and marginalized. They have not absorbed enough of the global culture to participate effectively in a more developed economy and society. Ridiculous charges of “cultural appropriation” hide this reality.

Frances Widdowson (fwiddowson@mtroyal.ca) is Associate Professor and Coordinator—Political Science, Policy Studies at Mount Royal University, in Calgary. She is also the Coordinator, Membership Outreach, of SAFS. Dr Widdowson is currently working on book (with Albert Howard) on the social effects of religion.

“SUBSTANTIVE” APPARENTLY MEANS “INCOHERENT”: A Response to Stuart Chambers

W. F. Smyth & Marianne Walters

In “Free Expression: A Means to Substantive Speech”, published in the [April 2017 SAFS Newsletter](#), Stuart Chambers begins with an incoherent attempt at a definition of “genuine” debate: it is a “three-step process”, he says, then describes each step—the second step states in full that “one is open to debate surrounding the assertion”, whatever that means. The lack of clarity doesn’t matter, however, because he never again uses the word “debate”, genuine or otherwise, anywhere in his article. Furthermore, he makes no use of the three steps.

Piling confusion on confusion, Chambers then goes on to tell us that “new tactics” are being employed—“shouting down”, “censoring deliberations”, “dismissing rival commentary”—so that “free expression never realizes its full potential as substantive speech”. But he does not tell us how “substantive speech” relates to “genuine debate” and “free expression”, not to mention “dialogical exercise”, which turns up later. Nor does he explain what he

means by “censoring deliberations”—whose deliberations, who censors? The phrase is not used again. And what does he imagine is “new” about these tactics? —has he never heard of Hitler’s Brown Shirts, Mussolini’s Black Shirts, Stalin’s purges? Does he think no “shouting down” occurred in Athens and the hundreds of other poleis of ancient Greece? There is nothing whatever “new” in attempts to silence opposition by those seeking power or those already in power, whether in democracies or not.

However, more worrying than all this muddle is the disparity among his list of tactics, and the disingenuous use he makes of it. On the one hand, the “shouting down” that, as he observes, occurred recently at various universities—Ottawa (2014), McMaster and UC Berkeley (2017)—, is serious, a significant affront to the values of our society, variously involving violence, denial of free speech, destruction of property. (Two articles in the May 2017 SAFS Newsletter discuss the McMaster incident, pointing out the pusillanimous ineffectiveness of the administration. See [W. F. Smyth’s](#) article and [John Carpay’s](#).)

On the other hand, the same cannot be said of “demonizing rival commentary”. Wouldn’t it be lovely (or perhaps boring) if we could always engage in calm dispassionate debate about issues on which there is violent, passionate disagreement? But that is simply not the nature of the beast: argument will inevitably become heated, personal, nasty, especially on matters seen to involve fundamental principles of our lives and our society. In fact, sometimes, perhaps not infrequently, the passion with which a view is expressed will induce a listener to consider changing his position. Certainly, unless any of violence, physical intimidation, libel, slander are involved, there is nothing illegal about such behaviour. (Or rather, there should be nothing illegal: in Canada “Human Rights” Tribunals routinely criminalize speech, as Ezra Levant and many others know to their cost.)

By equating these two tactics—“shouting down” and “dismissing rival commentary”—, Chambers’ article pretends to be even-handed, criticizing the political left and right alike. It is no such thing. All the examples he gives of “shouting down” are of left-wing

mobs violating the law by shouting down speakers—and one of these mobs, the worst one, he makes excuses for, on the grounds that at some point in the past the speaker engaged in “mean-spirited” rhetoric! On the other hand, every example of “dismissing rival commentary” by those on the political right involves no infraction of the law: they are simply vigorous expressions of opinion, often merely responding, though Chambers does not point this out, to equally fervent statements from their left-wing opponents.

Indeed, Chambers himself is repeatedly guilty of the contempt for opposing views that he deplores in others. He speaks of the “entrenched positions” of the “alt-right”—as if only those people, whoever they are, hold firm views. For example, they dare to support the “illegal” invasion of Iraq, they are guilty of “caricatures” of Islam and “attacks” on multiculturalism. Horrors! If such views are not illegal, surely they should be! He even criticizes as “evasive” a writer who says “Islamophobia is a myth”—apparently ignorant of an instructive article on this subject, hopefully in accordance with the law, in the [September 2016 SAFS Newsletter](#). (Not to mention Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who, in her most recent book, *Heretic* (2015), pointedly states, with good reason to know, “Islam is not a religion of peace.”) Providing no relevant evidence or argument whatever, he tells us that Ezra Levant’s views, and for good measure “those of other far-right pundits”, are “void of any real substance”.

Thus it is difficult to conceive of Chambers’ article as anything other than a rant posing as a plea for calm; equally difficult to avoid the conclusion that he has deliberately chosen his examples in order to establish a false equivalence between “shouting down” by the left and “dismissing rival commentary” by the right. Whatever the truth of these assertions, it is surely not possible to imagine that these incoherent unsubstantiated maunderings constitute an example of “substantive speech”, however defined.

Bill Smyth (bill@arg.cas.mcmaster.ca) is Emeritus Professor in the Department of Computing & Software, McMaster University, in Hamilton. Marianne Walters (waltersm@cogeco.ca), a psychologist, is

also a retired McMaster professor.

DISMISSIVE RANT HARDLY CONSTITUTES SUBSTANTIVE SPEECH: A response to Smyth & Walters

Stuart Chambers

By the way they responded to my article [“Free Expression: A Means to Substantive Speech,”](#) published in the April 2017 SAFS Newsletter, retired McMaster professors W. F. Smyth and Marianne Walters made it clear that they were not interested in an exchange of ideas; instead, they penned a dismissive rant to vent their frustrations over claims made in my commentary.

The main thrust of my piece was straight-forward: left-wing and right-wing extremists use similar tactics to avoid serious debate and to prevent substantive speech (higher truths) from emerging. Since truth can only be found in dialogue with others, both the hard left and hard right “limit truth telling and diminish our capacity as critical thinkers” by shouting down opponents, censoring their opinions, and rejecting their views outright. Smyth and Walters, however, remain unconvinced.

First, the authors found the idea of being “open to debate” regarding assertions (claims) difficult to process, ending their comment with “whatever that means.” Second, they appear confused about what “censoring deliberation” entails, adding “whose deliberations, who censors?” My article outlines methods of censorship in detail, as well as the players involved, but this nitpicking by Smyth and Walters serves only to distract readers from the core issue.

The authors are mainly upset by my argument that extremists on both ends of the political spectrum use similar strategies to halt deliberation. Smyth and Walters want SAFS members to believe that left-wing extremists are the real villains by way of their “illegal activities.” The authors accuse the left of shouting down opponents—an “infraction of the law”—whereas the right merely dismisses rival

commentary. Left-wing protestors are lawbreakers; right-wing activists are just rude and obnoxious.

The authors neglect to mention my reference to Bill O’Reilly, Fox News’s former star polemicist, who made a habit of telling his guests to “shut up,” interrupting them constantly from his bully pulpit whenever their views ran contrary to his. Ultraconservatives also employ an echo chamber of propagandist media outlets—Breitbart, Fox News, TheBlaze—as well as an abundance of strident radio screamers, insane bloggers, and fake news tweeters to drown out any opposition. The histrionics of Glenn Beck, Ann Coulter, Laura Ingraham, and Rush Limbaugh speak for themselves. That said, the far right knows a thing or two about inciting violence. At various Republican campaign rallies this past year, Donald Trump encouraged his followers to “rough up” protestors, “knock the crap out of them,” and have them “carried out in a stretcher.” ([“Trump’s history of encouraging violence,”](#) *Times Video*, election 2016.) The recent events in Charlottesville, Virginia, in which a white nationalist killed one woman and injured nineteen others at a “Unite the Right” rally, also speak for themselves. So much for civil discourse.

Smyth and Walters do not help their cause by becoming apologists for Ezra Levant. For example, they claim that I presented “no relevant evidence or argument whatsoever” that Levant’s views were “void of any real substance.” In fact, I did offer clear and convincing evidence. Levant was found by a judge in a libel suit to be motivated by “ill will”; the judge said he “showed a reckless disregard for the truth.” (See [“Ezra Levant loses libel case, must pay \\$80,000 to man he defamed as ‘illiberal Islamic fascist,’”](#) *Nationla Post*, 2014 and the [court’s judgement.](#)) By reasonable standards, pronouncements by judges constitute credible evidence. Anyone acquainted with Ezra Levant knows that slander, an “illegal activity,” has become his modus operandi. ([Jonathan Kay, “The weirdest thing about Ezra Levant is he still thinks he’s right,”](#) *National Post*, 2014.) It’s safe to say that slander represents a “significant affront to the values of our society,” chief among them, truth telling.

Smyth and Walters were again rattled when I men-

tioned how caricatures of Islam demonstrate a lack of nuance. They remarked how I was “ignorant” of a more “instructive article” in the SAFS 2016 Newsletter concerning Islamophobia. ([SAFS Newsletter](#)) Not surprisingly, they recommended their own article, even though neither author possesses any background whatsoever in Islamic or religious studies (Smyth is a mathematician and computer scientist; Walters’s expertise lies in psychiatry and behavioural neurosciences). Relying on the usual repertoire of anti-Islamic memes, Smyth and Walters label Islamophobia an “oxymoron” and come to the defense of right-wing critics who view Islamophobia as a “myth.” What they fail to discuss is how the far left and far right use the same tactic—deliberate misinformation—to spread anti-Muslim attitudes.

For instance, following the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris, conservative columnist Mark Steyn remarked in the *National Post* that most Muslim immigrants in Europe support terrorist attacks, claiming they “either wish [for] or are indifferent to the death of the societies in which they live.” ([Mark Steyn, “The barbarians are already inside. There’s nowhere to get away from them,” National Post, 2015.](#)) This is patently false. The most extensive research of British Muslims ever conducted, a 2016 report titled “What Muslims Want,” found that the vast majority of British Muslims reject terrorism outright. (“[What Muslims Want,” ICMUnlimited](#) (see page 529).) When asked “to what extent do you sympathise with or condemn people who commit terrorist actions as a form of political protest,” 90% condemned such actions, 5% didn’t know, and 3% neither condemned nor condoned political acts of terror. That’s hardly “most Muslims,” as Steyn asserts.

So-called principled liberals are also guilty of baseless claims against Muslims. (“[Maher embodies anti-Muslim left,” Winnipeg Free Press, 2017.](#)) For example, Bill Maher, host of *Real Time*, [suggests](#) that a “connecting tissue” binds 1.6 billion Muslims to terrorist organizations such as the Islamic State group (IS). Yet according to [recent surveys](#), most people in countries with significant Muslim populations have an unfavorable view of IS, including virtually all respondents in Lebanon, 94% in Jordan, and 84% in

the Palestinian territories. (It is important to note that of those interviewed in the Palestinian Territories, 10% had no opinion on ISIS.) Since these caricatures originate from prejudice, wilful ignorance, or fear, Islamophobia is undoubtedly an appropriate neologism to describe the anti-Muslim sentiments of extreme liberals and conservatives alike. Smyth and Walters are in deep denial if they think otherwise.

To reiterate, the central thrust of my piece is that that left-wing and right-wing extremists use similar tactics to prevent higher truths from being discovered through civil discourse. Dismissing my entire article as “incoherent,” Smyth and Walters made a conscious decision to use this edition of the SAFS Newsletter as a platform to rant and rave about how left-wing extremists pose a more insidious threat to free speech and truth telling than right-wing extremists. The reality is, the extreme left and right are flip sides of the same coin.

Stuart Chambers (stuart.chambers@sympatico.ca) has a doctorate in religious studies from the University of Ottawa, where he teaches in the faculties of arts and social sciences. Dr Chambers recently defended freedom of expression in the pages of the Winnipeg Free Press.

DISCIPLINING EMPLOYEES FOR EXPRESSING THEIR VIEWS: The Case of the Halifax Proud Boys

Stephen Perrott

Those intent on stifling expression will sometimes, quite correctly, insist that though you have the right to free speech, you do not have the right to escape the consequences of what you say.

Should those consequences include being fired? Increasingly, people are finding themselves out of work for public utterances having nothing at all to do with their job. Firings proceed on the basis that the utterance has brought one’s workplace into disrepute simply by speaker association. Such was the case with the Ontario Hydro One worker who, in 2015, made

light of the “FHRITP” epitaph directed at a reporter. There is a legitimate point here and it seems reasonable that one should remain cognizant of one’s role as a paid employee before expressing views that may harm the employer. During my time as a police officer I was acutely aware that indiscrete political utterances made publicly would quickly land me in hot water. Surely, however, this should not mean that employers may police the political expression of their employees at will. It seems to me that the criteria to be examined in such matters are the degree to which the utterance 1) compromises one’s ability to perform one’s work-related functions, 2) interferes with the ability of others in the workplace to fulfil their job commitments without reasonable perceptions of harassment, and 3) brings the entire workplace into a state of real (as opposed to imagined or fanciful) disrepute.

A case in point is the recent brouhaha involving the counter-protest by five Proud Boys, all members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), against those protesting the presence in a Halifax park of a statue of Edward Cornwallis. The onslaught from both mainstream media and social media was immediate and severe with the Proud Boys denounced as racists and white supremacists. Under such circumstances the distraught handwringing of military brass about diversity and inclusiveness was predictable. Even the Minister of Defense deemed it appropriate to weigh in. Currently the Proud Boys remain suspended facing possible dismissal or, at the very least, an extended program of “re-education.”

So, did the “boys” compromise their ability to function as members of the CAF? Nothing that I have read on the matter reveals any behaviour even remotely suggestive that they are unfit to serve. Well, then, what about the impact on military personnel, especially on Indigenous and minority personnel? Will these actions of the Proud Boys create a hostile work environment? Well, despite the casual labeling of these men as racists, neither the video of the event nor news reports provide any evidence that they employed racial epithets or said anything pejorative about Indigenous people. One did claim that Canada was a British colony while another carried, inciden-

tally I understand, a Red Ensign but, to my knowledge, Canada’s former national flag has yet to take on the connotations of the Confederate flag south of the border. The Proud Boys organization explicitly disavows racism and homophobia, and some reports indicated that the group of five included two Indigenous people and one gay man. One worries about the fragility of any CAF member who would genuinely feel harassed merely because a co-worker has expressed a disagreeable opinion.

Finally, there is the question about the degree to which these Halifax Proud Boys brought the CAF into disrepute. By all accounts the manifestation of their protest was mild and their behaviour civil, even when faced with a markedly uncivil reception. Beyond the reality of their very presence (which they should have known would be provocative), they were not disruptive and their visit was short.

Although some have equated the position and actions of these five young men to the racists in Charlottesville, such a comparison should be viewed as the product of less than reasoned thought. It is true that Proud Boys founder Gavin McInnis, despite contentions to the contrary, has in the past crossed the line between anti-Islamic and anti-Israeli commentary, on the one side, and anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic speech, on the other. It is also true, however, that he strongly disavowed the actions of the far-right groups in Charlottesville well prior to the event and he has thrown Proud Boys out of the organization for expressing racist sentiment. Although they are ethnocentric and chauvinistic nationalists, the Halifax Proud Boys are not White nationalists.

The aspirations of the Proud Boys provide ample reason for many to take offense and their customs are decidedly juvenile. However, there is nothing that these five men did to garner such a regressive and punitive response and, along with freedom of expression, this is a country purporting to respect freedom of assembly and association. With hyperbole stripped away, the Proud Boys provided a political counterpoint to the political gesture being made by the Cornwallis protestors, albeit in a more subdued and civil manner.

Employers should only rarely and with regret limit expression out of concern for their workplace. Furthermore, when employers decide to embark on such an extraordinary incursion, they must do so with an even hand. They need to apply the same principles to all their employees and not punish people simply for expressing unpopular positions.

By challenging an activity presenting itself as a form of First Nations activism, the Proud Boys committed a sort of secular blasphemy. That such a storm could be generated by such mild expression can only be explained on the basis that these five men dared to stick their collective finger into one of the matters that Officialdom in Canada (and too many Canadians at large) has deemed off-limit to debate. Such selective outrage not only makes the Halifax Proud Boys the target of unfair discrimination but threatens the very nature of a supposedly mature, secure democracy.

Stephen Perrott (stephen.perrott@msvu.ca), a former member of the Halifax Police Department, is Professor of Psychology at Mount Saint Vincent University, in Halifax.

CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES ARE FAR TOO TOLERANT OF OBSTRUCTIONIST BEHAVIOUR THAT SHUTS DOWN FREE SPEECH

John Carpay

It seems there is a new doctrine rapidly gaining acceptance at universities across Canada: Silencing people you disagree with is OK, as long your tactics of disruption and obstruction are not violent.

In recent months, there have been a growing number of incidents of university presidents blithely condoning the silencing of speakers who have unpopular views (or at least views that are unpopular with a vocal minority).

To cite just one example, this past March a mob of loud protesters effectively shut down a presentation at McMaster University by University of Toronto

psychology professor Jordan Peterson. They rang bells and beat drums, chanting “Shut him down!” and “Transphobic piece of s-t!” Peterson could not be heard in the classroom. He eventually went outside, and the loud mob followed. Peterson had been invited to speak at McMaster about freedom of speech and political correctness.

More worrisome than the noisy mob was the response of Patrick Dean, president of McMaster University. Dean characterized the loud bell-ringing, drum-beating and disruptive chanting as “peaceful protest.” He said McMaster should allow such activities, and will continue to allow them in future.

This same thinking clearly prevails at the University of Alberta. In the case of UAlberta Pro-Life v. University of Alberta, heard in Edmonton June 8 and 9, 2017, the university argued before the Alberta Court of Queen’s Bench that a loud, unruly, physically disruptive mob should be entitled to shut down campus events, as long as the mob is non-violent.

The U of A is defending its decision not to discipline any of the students who blockaded a pro-life display on campus in March 2015, notwithstanding that provisions in its Code of Student Behaviour expressly prohibit disruption, obstruction and inappropriate behaviour. The code states that its purpose is upholding the freedom to speak, study, learn, write and publish in the pursuit of truth. The code states that for these freedoms to exist, “it is essential to maintain an atmosphere in which the safety, the security, and the inherent dignity of each member of the community are recognized.”

Nonetheless, the U of A maintains that students who physically obstructed a stationary display with sheets and banners, making it nearly impossible for a campus club to express its opinions, were legitimately exercising their own freedom of expression. This position is especially disingenuous given that, in March of 2015, campus security repeatedly told the blockaders they were violating the code, and then-university president Indira Samarasekera had previously publicly stated that the suppression of unpopular views would not be tolerated.

In court, the U of A argued that freedom of expression encompasses all behaviour short of violence. But the university's own code bans not only violence, but inappropriate behaviour, such as disrupting classes and obstructing university-related functions. The code serves to curtail "behaviours which if left unchecked would, to an unacceptable degree, infringe upon the freedoms described above and thus threaten the proper functioning of the University."

Adding insult to injury, after condoning the violation of the code by blockaders, the U of A went on to demand a \$17,500 security fee of the pro-life students if they wanted to set up a display again in the future. The university is effectively censoring students who wish to peacefully convey a controversial message that no person is required to accept or agree with. Yet nothing stops the university from demanding \$17,500 from the blockaders, whose behaviour and identities are well known to campus security, and who boasted publicly on social media about their "success" in silencing their opponents' expression. Rather than enforcing the code's provisions against students who physically obstruct campus events, the university blames the victims of this misconduct.

Would the U of A condone holding up sheets to prevent students in a classroom from seeing a professor's power-point presentation about an unpopular theory? Should the professor be required to pay security fees because of his ideas? Why should it be any different for a student club that has the university's approval to set up a display on campus?

If the U of A wins in court, its victory will almost certainly come back to haunt the university. Students will realize they can violate the code with impunity and silence those with whom they disagree.

Calgary lawyer John Carpay (jcarpay@shaw.ca) is president of the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms (www.jccf.ca), which represents the students in their court action against the University of Alberta. The above article originally appeared 12 June 2017 in the [National Post](#).

WHEN FIREBRANDS AND CHARLATANS COME TO CAMPUS

John MacNeil

Social and political frustrations are causing a rise in hostility to freedom of expression, and we're seeing the effects on campuses. Protests at universities have become increasingly disruptive, and the response from administrators has been less than reassuring. Professors are right to be mortified when they see students try to shut down panel discussions or de-platform speakers—mobs behave this way, but students are supposed to be training to engage with ideas as intellectuals. Whenever students abandon reason, universities and their administrators should do their best to uphold academic values and to preserve the culture of academic investigation and discussion.

One doesn't need a lengthy and expensive education to abandon discussion and march in the streets, or to intimidate or shout down one's opponents, and marching and shouting obstruct the lengthy and expensive education that students wish to receive. One purpose of education is precisely that of avoiding tribal conflicts. If you cannot argue your position convincingly, it's harder for your ideas to win out without killing or subjugating the people who subscribe to the ideas you reject. The value of an education can, therefore, not only be counted in dollars, but also in human bodies.

The way to engage as an intellectual with what is false or pernicious is not by violence, but through critical discussion. If the academy and its students cannot maintain their composure in the presence of dangerous ideas or stubborn adversaries, it does not bode well for the future of academic research or democratic society. Research and democracy depend on clear-headed judgement and intellectual courage. People are often biased, prejudiced, and ignorant—that's how we are. Anyone who promotes reason will face an uphill battle. If enlightened society has any hope, it won't do to have intellectuals abandon discussion at the first sign of resistance.

It's not surprising that some students view controversial speakers and their ideas as an existential threat. It is particularly difficult to engage an opponent as an intellectual when the outcome of the discussion isn't merely a theory about how to view or treat others, but affects how others will view and treat you. This can have serious consequences for one's personal rights and liberties, or even one's safety and survival. Indeed, to engage only as an intellectual can threaten one's own future.

However, at a university, we should regularly be challenged to deal with dangerous ideas and discoveries. Each and every intellectual will enter discussions that threaten, though usually only to a small degree, his or her own welfare. Students, given that they are still in the process of learning, will typically respond with trepidation or hostility to what offends or upsets them. Nonetheless, it's the university's responsibility to ensure that discussion occurs and that people remain physically safe.

It's important for us, as intellectuals, to recognize and acknowledge the gravity of the situation. We must seek to become aware of the unintended consequences of our ideas and we should be considerate when we discuss them with others. We must resist the temptation to become contemptuous of discussion, whatever frustrations we encounter. When upper-level students and professors respond to mob-like behaviour by saying, "You were right to behave this way," and, "Yes, this is what we're teaching you," it reflects poorly on their institution. De-platforming, the heckler's veto, intimidation, and violence? That is not how we as intellectuals engage with speakers and ideas we don't like, at least not while there are opportunities for critical discussion.

There is no better place than a university to talk about racism, fascism, white supremacy, or any dangerous idea. It's a university administrator's job to ensure that that remains true. Protecting students' rights is extremely important, but doing so does not preclude critically discussing those rights, or even talking about modifying them. Part of the reason we have rights at all is that intellectuals like ourselves sought to critique customs and institutions and find better

ones. That is precisely the sort of difficult critical investigation that must remain possible. If we, as intellectuals, cannot engage with ideas that disturb us, we will have surrendered them to the demagogues and the mob.

Some academics take the view that the intellectual battles for rights and tolerance have already been won; rehashing them is not worth the effort or pain. If anyone actually wishes to rejoin the fight, they should do so on the internet or in a private forum.

Perhaps these academics are unfamiliar with the complexion of internet discussion. Social media are not better places than universities to discuss civil liberties or dangerous ideas. Moreover, how can we say that these issues are settled when they clearly rage unresolved in the hearts and minds of a large segment of the general population? For whom are these issues settled? The majority of administrators and professors, perhaps? Some leftist students? They're not settled for students who wish to invite to campus political firebrands or charlatans dressed as scholars. In any case, among academics themselves are many champions of the most dangerous and preposterous ideas.

Having settled the issues in their own minds, and recruited a handful of activists, are professors and administrators then content to abandon the education of their colleagues and students? Doing so will make differences irreconcilable. If we abandon discussion, we're left with two possibilities: tolerance or violence, and tolerance is being stretched to its limits.

Some thinkers frame the problem of ideological divides in terms of the limits of reason. But why not frame it, instead, as a failure of pedagogy? What reason do we have to assume dogmatism is the cause of intransigence and ill feeling, rather than our failed attempts to reach our opponents? Yet if the problem has to do with teaching and discussing, rather than with striking against the limits of reason, we should consider that our own claim to well-founded truth is not certain. Perhaps our own dogmatism is the problem.

When a speaker is willing to promote her ideas, and you dismiss her with contempt, what are outsiders left to conclude? That the speaker really is incompetent, or that you are stonewalling to conceal the weakness of your own position?

Students entering university are trying to catch up to the current academic conversation. As part of their training, students are allowed some freedom of inquiry. Inside the classroom, professors control the discussion. However, outside the classroom, students will apply their training by engaging with whatever thinkers or ideas they find interesting. This is a taste of the academic freedom they will enjoy once their apprenticeship is complete. Professors must help students to engage profitably with speakers who don't meet the standards of the academy. Students have that freedom anyway, and they are at most just a few years away from leaving the university, so educators might as well provide them with some guidance while they have the opportunity.

Ideas rejected by academics are often popular among demagogues and their audiences. This fact is reflected in the attitudes of students; their views have been shaped by the background culture and the current political climate, not by rigorous discussion. Academics have a responsibility to engage with ideas circulating in their culture and to raise the level of discussion—it is part of their contribution to society.

Moreover, intellectuals can often be mistaken, even long after we thought an issue had been settled. If the general population rejects the conclusions of the academy, it can be worthwhile to re-examine research in search of flaws and in light of new evidence and arguments.

The university should always strive to be the best place around for intellectual discussion. So long as there are people who want to speak on a given topic, the university should welcome discussion with open arms, particularly when it's the students who crave the conversation. We might not have time for ill-conceived or outdated ideas in the classroom or in academic journals, but the same rules don't apply to

guest speakers students want to hear. Curious minds will seek truth from anyone willing to converse. It should never be the case that university people prefer that dangerous ideas be discussed in forums other than a university.

John MacNeil (jd_macneil@hotmail.com) has a B.A. in philosophy from Saint Mary's University, in Halifax.

REASONS FOR PESSIMISM

Mark Mercer

Universities should be places of free and open discussion, places at which no topic, and no thought or judgement on a topic, is barred. Or, rather (because I am a pluralist about institutions of training and education), everyone should have easy access to a public university at which any topic may be pursued and any thought on it spoken. (People and democratic governments should be free to organize institutions as they see fit, and if some group wants a place heavy with rules and regulations about what may and may not be said, well, that's their business. But all Canadians should have the option to associate themselves with an honest-to-God institution of liberal study.)

One of the questions we panelists were asked was whether speech really is all that regulated and fettered at Canadian universities. Yes, we've seen in the past few months and years one or another invited speaker shouted down or panel discussion cancelled, but maybe such incidents are rare. Perhaps there seems to be a problem only because disruptive protests, though rare, draw lots of media attention.

I think the problem is actually quite widespread. It seems to me that much more disruption, censorship, and suppression is happening than gets reported. Any case at all of disruptive protest on campus is one case too many, and now we're seeing that even the vague threat of disruptive protest is enough for a university to back away from its responsibility to honour and protect expression and discussion. Vague threats of disruption were enough recently for Ryerson to

cancel a panel discussion. And disruptive protest is hardly the only source of interference with free expression on campus today.

Let me list a few of the other ways in which campuses make themselves inhospitable to freedom of expression and the free exchange of ideas: speech and behaviour codes; student association regulations on student societies; student association rules governing elections; safe and respectful campus initiatives; committees charged with overseeing who gets invited to campus; senate regulations regarding course syllabi; even oversight by building and grounds of what goes up on university walls.

Western University used its student code of behaviour last year to investigate students who had created a “Western Lives Matter” banner; the students might have been suspended had they been found to have violated the code. Dalhousie’s student association once required that the student atheist society not speak ill of religion; the society was free to celebrate atheism, but not to criticize religion. The student association at my university once removed from a student pro-life display a sign reading “women regret abortions.” Student associations typically vet campaign posters and literature, thereby potentially preventing students from hearing a candidate’s real message. Safe and respectful campus initiatives are part of the systems of pressure brought to bear on students and professors not to speak candidly. Senate directives to include learning outcomes on syllabi force professors to mould their courses in ways they might not want, if they reject the “learning outcomes” ideology. I once wanted to put up a bulletin board on the wall outside my office to display arguments; Facilities Management, which has jurisdiction over walls, opposed my plan on the grounds that wall clutter detracted from the business-school tone of our institution.

The most serious chain of violations of academic freedom in Canada in at least the last few years was directed against Anthony Hall, at Lethbridge University. In October 2017, Lethbridge suspended Dr Hall for allegedly anti-Semitic internet posts. Indeed it tried to fire him. (In August, 2015 Rick Coupland

was in fact fired from St. Lawrence College for an internet posting.) Then Lethbridge took the step of lodging a complaint against Dr Hall with the Alberta Human Rights Commissions. Universities should be actively opposed to violating civil liberties in the name of human rights; they shouldn’t be calling on government to punish people for the peaceful expression of opinion or emotion. Bad as the case of McGill’s behaviour toward Andrew Potter was, it was nothing compared to Lethbridge’s actions against Anthony Hall.

Things are not good, I would say, right from the fear students have on campus and in classrooms that they will be called out or worse for saying what is on their minds, all the way to the failure of academic freedom to protect extra-mural utterance. (Documents connected to specific cases are available on the SAFS website under Issues/Cases: <http://www.safs.ca/issuescases/index.html>.)

We don’t hear much about these things for two reasons. One is that in Canada we lack reporters and newspapers committed to reporting on higher education. We don’t have *The Chronicle of Higher Education* or *Inside Higher Ed* or the *Times Educational Supplement*. The other is that too many of us are too accepting of restrictions on expression. We in Canada don’t much care about civil liberties and so violations of them aren’t newsworthy. (A third might be that the people who do get outraged about attacks and limitations on freedom of expression seem to be on the right politically, and who wants to be associated with those people?)

A second question the panel was asked was whether things are worse now than they were. I don’t know, though certainly things have been bad, at least now and then, for a very long time. I suspect that threats to and violations of expression have marked campus life ever since there’s been any such thing, though some periods must have been worse than others.

Yet I feel that things are different now from how they were just three or four decades ago. It seems to me that the ideal of free and unfettered discussion resonates with fewer people nowadays, both within and

outside the universities, than it used to. I fear that the defenders of liberal study are now outnumbered even within the university itself, certainly within the administration of universities (that's because administrators are chosen by administrators), and that the forces of oversight, management, and control have won.

I mentioned above Anthony Hall and his university's attempt to fire him for things he said (perhaps also for things he didn't say, which certainly makes the story even more dismaying and frightening). Universities, though, have been firing professors for their comments since the beginning of time (Rick Coupland, again; Vesselin Petkov, Concordia, 2010, is another example, and it's hard to see that Petkov said or did anything at all wrong), although my impression is that that particular violation of academic freedom is becoming more common.

So, for an example of how things really are different now, let me recall the reaction to *Hypatia's* publishing "In Defense of Transracialism," by Rebecca Tuvel. Over eight hundred academics signed an absurd and obnoxious open letter to *Hypatia*, demanding that *Hypatia* retract the article and revise its editorial and refereeing procedures. The letter was absurd because Tuvel's paper was a perfectly fine, often illuminating, discussion of a matter of social or ethical importance. The letter provided no critique of Tuvel's theses or arguments. It was obnoxious because of its explicit disdain for dispassionate inquiry. Those who signed the letter would have scholarship not only serve particular social or political ends, but be entirely subservient to them. I cannot imagine scholars of a previous generation coming together *en masse* to disparage liberal study, let alone with such zeal. *Trahison des clercs*, indeed.

Liberal study has been central to many universities for many decades, if not for many hundreds of years. By "liberal study," I mean the pursuit of inquiry, interpretation, and appreciation for their own sakes. We engage in liberal study when we are intrigued by an intellectual problem and we set out to solve it, or at least to understand it, and do so simply for the joy of the work and of the insight we might achieve.

Liberal study requires freedom of expression and the other civil liberties because insight demands that all avenues be explored.

It is part of our endeavor as academics committed to liberal study to understand things and to value them appropriately, but that is not the only goal intrinsic to our calling. We want to believe the truth (and to disbelieve falsehood), but more importantly we want to believe the truth for good reasons. Further, while we want to value soundly, we want to value soundly also for good reasons. Good reasons are reasons of evidence and argument. We don't want to believe and value what we do because that's what's in the air or because of pressures to conform or fears of being ostracized.

And so in intellectual community we refrain from applying any pressures other than those of evidence and argument on our fellow inquirers. They must be left free to inquire where they will and to say what they want if they are either to be of service to us in our inquiries or themselves to find and hold their beliefs and values for good reasons.

Now the ideal of liberal study—dispassionate inquiry for its own sake, the coming to understandings for one's own good reasons—and the form of free and engaged community that it demands, has never been the sole reason intellectuals come together in universities and other institutions. Universities are also here to produce reliable knowledge for the world outside and to create a cadre of experts and professionals to run society. Members of that cadre need to have the right skills and knowledge to do their job, and they need to have the right values so that they will aim at the right ends when doing that job.

What worries me is that these other reasons for having a university have crowded out the ideal of liberal study. Indeed, many students, administrators, and even professors see the needs of liberal study as getting in the way of knowledge production and the training and socializing of professionals.

As a place of liberal study, a university is a culture of disputation. But when it is an institution charged

with creating experts and professionals, a university might prefer to be a culture of celebration, the celebration of cultures and identities and diversity. An identity, though, cannot be inquired into and be a centre of dispute while at the same time be protected and celebrated. Intellectuals gathered together in community are always putting their identities at risk; students and professors looking to preserve and celebrate identities, on the other hand, cannot afford to put them at risk.

Now the objection, of course, is that a university needs to be a well-ordered place in order to be a place of any community at all, including intellectual community. The order it takes must stem from the ways and needs of the actual people within it. And so, in order to include all, the rules must ensure that people are not hurt or upset by our behaviour or the content of what we say. Thus, we need to have officers charged with vetting syllabi and guest speakers, officers to oversee the campus newspaper and the Halloween costumes, and to watch what goes up on the walls. Not all these officers need wear uniforms or deal in any punishments other than shame and ostracism, though some of them will be officially designated and possess the power to suspend, punish, or expel miscreants.

I think a university can happily be a much more anarchic place than the objection presumes it can be. We need rules or, at least, patterns to keep things moving: a course is so many weeks, the class meets these times these days, a grade of C is required to move up to the next level in that study.... But if the people gathered are truly engaged in liberal study, inquiry for its own sake, they won't need many more rules at all. Customs will evolve and a sense of what the endeavour is all about will inform disputes about structures and responsibilities. Students, the aspiring scholars, will acquire informally an understanding of what is expected of them, and appreciate the role those expectations play within the community of scholars.

The final question put to us panelists was what is to be done, how to make things better.

The problem is one of culture, and cultures are always difficult to create or change. If a sizeable block among a university's students, professors, and administrators is not moved by the ideal of liberal study, then the institution will not be one of liberal study. The institution will be indifferent to dispassionate inquiry, inquiry for its own sake, if not actively hostile toward it.

A good way, maybe the best way, to create or change a culture is by example. Work and live in ways that express the values of your preferred culture and, if others are touched by one's example, those others, some of them, will follow one. This is especially true of students, who, despite their experience of high school and elementary school, might still feel a passion for understanding things as they are.

A central element in one's practice as a member of the culture of liberal study is to follow the injunction "always academicize" (that's how Stanley Fish puts it). We academicize when we take theses simply as theses, and not as the beliefs of particular people, and direct our talents of analysis, interpretation, and evaluation toward them. What is the contention, what reasons are there for thinking it true, what reasons for thinking it false? Doing this in our classrooms and in our writings and presentations shows our students and our colleagues what dispassionate inquiry looks like.

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Another element in our practice is to support campus groups, particularly student groups, in their academic or semi-academic endeavours. We won't criticize their choices of speaker or panelists, say, but engage only the thoughts that we hear expressed. Again, we academicize: even when hearing the inflammatory rhetoric of some alt-right or racist speaker, we analyze and evaluate dispassionately. Student groups will now and then, for good or bad reasons, invite to campus figures whose views are false and pernicious and whose arguments, if they even have arguments, are risible. We promote a culture of liberal study when we exemplify it, and we exemplify it when we refrain from savaging the character of these figures but attend critically to their message.

We should oppose any call for administrators, professors, or student governments to oversee or vet campus events, even those events that threaten to include people accused of denying someone's humanity. Vetting belongs to the culture of protection and celebration, not the culture of disputation. We should, of course, be concerned that resources (money, tables in the quad, poster space) are distributed fairly among campus groups. How the fairly distributed resources are used by campus groups is not our business. Our business is just the theses and arguments on offer.

Finally, we should never let an event be disrupted or a display be vandalized. If a university needs to invest in security, it should, and the costs should be borne by the institution, just as the costs of lighting, heating, and infrastructure are. There is no place for punishment in liberal study, and so students who shout down a speaker or tear up a display should not be fined or suspended or otherwise made to pay a price. Rather, they should be talked to, once, twice, maybe again, and if that doesn't work, expelled. Asking a person inclined to disrupt academic activities to go away isn't to punish that person for his behaviour. It's simply to protect the integrity of what the rest of us are doing.

Mark Mercer (mark.mercer@smu.ca) is Chair of the philosophy department at Saint Mary's University, in Halifax, and the president of SAFS. On 3 May 2017, he participated in a panel discussion, "Free Speech

at Universities," organized by Rick Mehta (Psychology, Acadia) and moderated by Diane Holmberg (Psychology, Acadia). The other panelists were Erin Crandall (Politics, Acadia), Marc Ramsay (Philosophy, Acadia), and Stephen Perrott (Psychology, Mount Saint Vincent).

SHOULD CANADIAN "INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE" BE OPEN TO CHALLENGE?

Rodney A. Clifton & Gabor Csepregi

Like post-secondary institutions in colonialized countries, the first Canadian universities had strong ties to religious institutions and to the alma maters of what their academics saw as their mother countries. By the late 1960s, secularity had become the norm, but the institutions were still dominated by academics and administrators from France, the UK, and especially (in Anglophone Canada), the US. Canadians believed, with some justification, that they were being frozen out.

There was, therefore, a movement to "Canadianise" academia and by the mid-1980s, the battle had been won; Canadians citizenship became a requirement for most academic positions.

Now, Canada is going through a similar transformation called "indigenisation". This is the process of ensuring that universities are sensitive to the culture, knowledge, history, and language of aboriginal Canadians. It is evident in three important areas.

First, Canadian universities acknowledge that they are situated on land ceded to the Crown by treaties signed by certain groups of indigenous people. Convocations and major meeting increasingly begin with words such as "We [at the University of Manitoba] acknowledge that this university is located on the original land of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Metis Nation."

Some anthropologists have pointed out that, at some point during the past 400 years, some of the "ac-

knowledgeable people” had actually migrated on to that land, displacing others who already considered it their territory. Scholars have even asked if these people were truly nations, as opposed to bands or family groups. The accusation is that ignoring historical evidence and sound definitions in order to appear sensitive to a particular indigenous group is not what universities are supposed to be about.

The second effect of indigenization is that aboriginal people are being hired to teach and to do research from indigenous perspectives. A recent Canadian advertisement “invites applications from Indigenous (eg, First Nations, Metis, Inuit) Scholars” and asks applications to include “Indigenous Canadian self-declaration verification”.

Undoubtedly, some very competent aboriginal academics have been hired through such affirmative action. But, as might be expected, critics have insisted that hiring committees should focus on applicants’ expertise, rather than their ethnic background.

Others have questioned the self-declaration of ethnic heritage. Throughout Canadian history, a number of people have falsely identified themselves as having indigenous backgrounds. For instance, Joseph Boyden, the well-known Canadian author who traded on his “aboriginal ancestry”, has recently been accused of having no discernible indigenous heritage. Undoubtedly, some applicants for hard-to-come-by university positions will make false declarations.

The third effect of indigenization is to infuse indigenous knowledge, values and ways of teaching and learning into a wide variety of subjects. The First Nations University of Canada, for example, states that its “science courses provide a balance between new findings and traditional [indigenous] knowledge.” Other Canadian universities are following this trend, and even if they don’t incorporate indigenous beliefs into their own courses, they give credit to transferring students who have completed indigenous science courses.

Many academics have pointed out that indigenization can have both positive and negative effects. It

opens the way for the much-needed recognition of different, often competing, perspectives, and it recognizes the value of what Canada’s indigenous people contribute to our understanding of the world and human affairs. And there was little objection when indigenous knowledge was infused into native studies and anthropology, even though some academics have commented that there is no such thing as knowledge that is peculiar to one ethnic group.

But the appearance of indigenous science has raised more concerns. This is because science is supposed to be a discipline in which all truth claims are open to experimental refutation. Yet, those who have acted on that assumption have often been given a very rough ride.

The result is that many scholars are afraid to publicly question the indigenization of knowledge for fear of being labelled neocolonialist or even racist. Current political thinking in both Canadian wider society and universities holds that indigenous knowledge comes from the elders, who respectful people – whether indigenous or non-indigenous – cannot legitimately question. Hence, although indigenous knowledge is so important that it must be taught, it is treated as so sacred it can’t be openly debated.

Rodney A. Clifton (Rodney.Clifton@umanitoba.ca) is professor emeritus of sociology at the University of Manitoba and a former member of the SAFS Board of Directors. Gabor Csperegi (gcsperegi@ustboniface.ca) is professor of philosophy at the Universite de Saint-Boniface in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The above article was originally published in [Times \(of London\) Higher Education](#), 9 March 2017.

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