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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In This Issue

The Gender Identity Debate and Academic Freedom at Simon Fraser

Rachel Altman and Mark Collard

On November 2, 2019, a panel discussion entitled "How Media Bias Shapes the Gender Identity Debate" was held at the Pan Pacific Hotel in Vancouver. The event was originally a collaborative endeavour involving Mark Collard and a group of local feminists that was supposed to be held at Simon Fraser University (SFU). However, the reaction to the proposed event escalated to the point that Mark decided he had no choice other than to cancel the room booking at SFU. That a professor was forced to abandon an event on campus due to safety concerns raises important questions about the exercise of academic freedom at SFU. Here, we discuss the event and the reactions to it, and outline actions that we think SFU's senior administrators need to take to shore up academic freedom at the university.

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We first want to point out that academic freedom is supposed to be a core value at SFU. In a statement released in 2011, the current president explained that "when disputes arise in our university around major social and political issues, we should err on the side of tolerating free speech. Provided such speech does not overstep legal boundaries, it should not be censored even though it may be provocative or offensive." In line with this statement, the collective agreement that governs the employment conditions of faculty members guarantees academic freedom. SFU also has an annual award that is intended to "honour and encourage work that provokes and/or contributes to the understanding of controversy". However, as we hope will become clear, the reaction to the event

has revealed a gap between SFU's stated position on academic freedom and the reality of attempting to exercise that freedom.

"How Media Bias Shapes the Gender Identity Debate" featured three writers who have covered the gender identity debate: Meghan Murphy (SFU alum, journalist, and founder of *Feminist Current*), Jonathan Kay (current Canadian editor of *Quillette*), and Anna Slatz (reporter for *The Post Millennial*). The panel was moderated by Lindsay Shepherd (SFU alum, Campus Free Speech Fellow at the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms, and Investigative Journalism Fellow at the True North Centre for Public Policy). The goal of the event was to consider the way the media have dealt with the discussion about gender identity and transgender rights, especially the impact of gender self-ID legislation on the rights and interests of natal women.

Opposition erupted soon after the event was announced. Various SFU groups called for its cancellation, including the Simon Fraser Student Society, the Graduate Student Society, the Teaching Support Staff Union, and Out on Campus. Some SFU faculty also demanded cancellation via an online petition. In addition, the student newspaper ran an article arguing that the event should be shut down. The main argument for cancellation was that, by hosting the event, SFU would be amplifying and bolstering anti-trans ideology and thereby supporting hate speech. Some individuals further asserted that academic freedom does not oblige a university to host speakers invited by a faculty member or student group; de-platforming, they claimed, is not censorship but rather "responsible curation". Others claimed that academic freedom should cover only a professor's area of expertise and suggested that Mark is not sufficiently qualified to host a panel on gender identity.

Other disturbing reactions occurred as well. For example, discussion about the event was censored on the primary email list of Academic Women, a university-funded organization that is supposed to represent the hundreds of female academics at SFU. Specifically, the head of Academic Women initiated and allowed messages that condemned the panel discussion but then shut down the list when some members replied that they favoured the event's taking place, or simply supported academic freedom. Her rationale was the non sequitur "[t]rans lives are not up for debate". Equally worryingly, the leadership of the faculty union released a statement expressing solidarity with SFU's trans faculty members but did not publicly express support for academic freedom.

Despite the activists' pressure, SFU's senior administrators remained firm in their commitment to academic freedom, and the event was set to go ahead as planned. In response, a number of groups planned to demonstrate outside the building in which the event was to be held, including Out on Campus, the Coalition Against Trans Antagonism (CATA), and UBC Students Against Bigotry. In total, several hundred people were expected to protest the event.

For several weeks, SFU's campus safety unit believed that the event could proceed safely. However, two days prior to the event, Mark was informed by the

unit's director, Tim Marron, that his team's assessment had changed. Mr. Marron reported that, at a meeting the previous day, CATA had stated that they intended to engage in direct action, including physical disruption, property damage, and fire alarm activation. Mr. Marron explained that his team had concluded that the probability of the event's ending in violence was now very high. Based on this revised risk assessment, Mark decided to cancel the room booking, which meant that the other organizers had to scramble to find a new venue. Meanwhile, the head of Academic Women publicly celebrated, euphemistically tweeting about the "fantastic organizing on the ground" that led to the cancellation of the event.

Fortunately, the Pan Pacific was able to provide a room at short notice and the event took place as scheduled. Contrary to the advance scaremongering, none of the panelists incited hatred or violence against trans people. Rather, as is clear from the video recording of the complete event, they presented reasoned positions on the sometimes conflicting rights and interests of natal women and trans women—for example, in the context of sports, washrooms, change rooms, rape shelters, and prisons. Ironically, the only hate on display in connection with the event was directed towards the panelists, attendees, and police by the individuals who protested outside (see, for example, the accompanying photo and the video in this tweet). Indeed, one of the panelists, Meghan Murphy, was surrounded at all times by three bodyguards because of the threats she had received.

We are pleased that the event went ahead in the end. However, we are deeply concerned that it could not be held at SFU, especially given that one of the central missions of a university is to foster open, respectful debate. SFU's senior administrators must take steps to reduce the likelihood that future events have to be cancelled on safety grounds and commit to taking active measures to support academic freedom in the face of threats. Specifically, an audit of the buildings on SFU's three campuses should be conducted to identify rooms that can be adequately secured if protests are threatened and the resulting list should be made available to university members so that they can make an informed decision when organizing events. Furthermore, a review of SFU's policies regarding the remit of its security staff and the circumstances in which other security personnel and the police can operate on campus is required. Based on Mark's conversations with the campus safety unit, we understand that SFU security staff are not allowed to use force and that outside security professionals are not allowed to operate on campus. Meanwhile, the police will not enter SFU premises unless an incident is in progress and they have been notified. The problems with these arrangements are obvious and need to be addressed.

SFU's senior administration must also ensure that all individuals occupying positions of institutional power act in ways that respect academic freedom. While the President and Vice-President Academic publicly supported academic freedom in relation to the event, other individuals in official positions did not. The most obvious example is the head of Academic Women, who, as we explained

earlier, censored discussion about the event on the group's primary email list. We call on the senior administration to issue guidance to office holders on upholding academic freedom in practice. For instance, moderators of all SFU-sponsored online groups must ensure that members are free to express their opinions (within the limits set by the law).

Finally, SFU's senior administrators need to address a problem that was revealed by the on-campus reaction to the event—namely, that many of the university's professors and students appear not to understand the principle of academic freedom. Academic freedom is often framed solely in terms of the right of academics to research, teach, or communicate about topics that interest them without fear of reprisal by university officials or the government, but this picture is incomplete. Crucially, academic freedom also involves tolerating opinions different from one's own and expressing disagreement with those opinions via debate rather than calling for the cancellation of events or threatening violence. SFU's senior administration needs to identify ways of encouraging all members of the university to (re)embrace this norm.

The open exploration of ideas is one of the fundamental purposes of a university. Those who believe their views are the only ones that are moral or legitimate are operating in direct opposition to this purpose. As we have seen, allowing this attitude to prevail can lead to mobbing and even threats of violence. Instead, to preserve the value of universities, we must defend plurality of opinion and resist censorship.

Rachel Altman (rachelm@sfu.ca) and Mark Collard (mcollard@sfu.ca) are professors at Simon Fraser University, in Burnaby, BC. Rachel is in the Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science. Her research involves the application of statistical methods to medicine. Mark is the Canada Research Chair in Human Evolutionary Studies in the Department of Archaeology. A third author wishes to remain anonymous.

Protester outside the Pan Pacific Hotel in Vancouver inviting "TERFs" (trans-exclusionary radical feminists) and SWERFs (sex worker exclusionary radical feminists) to "step right up" to a mock guillotine.

Is Free Speech Binary?

Christina Behme

In recent years Freedom of Speech has become a hotly debated topic. Yet, despite an increasing number of reported threats to freedom of speech (e.g. Laframboise, 2019; Mercier, 2019; Hecht, 2019), there are also a number of academic freedom experts (Dea, 2018; Gill, 2019; Moskowitz, 2019; Rangwala, 2019) who deny that we are in a 'free speech crisis'. I previously argued that some of those who deny there is a free speech problem might feel this way because they have never encountered a problem expressing their own views. However, this hypothesis cannot explain the puzzling differences in content between what is found to be offensive by the thought police and what isn't.

On the one hand, we have the by now familiar outrage about even the most innocuous forms of expression. For example, one executive of the Ryerson Student Union had to resign because a non-indigenous student performed the song "Colors of the Wind" from Disney's *Pocahontas* at a campus event (Shepherd, 2019). On the other hand, violence-encouraging tweets from Dr. Rachel McKinnon (Charleston) have been met with little criticism. To the contrary, her notorious 29/03/20019 Tweet saying "... I want them [TERFs] die in a grease fire" (Robertson, 2019) has been widely celebrated among her Twitter and Facebook followers. How can this be? It appears that, at least in part, the issue is not "what is being said" but "who says it".

Trans-activist McKinnon (who recently changed her social media name to Dr. Veronica Ivy) has a long history of violent outbursts against anyone she smears as TERF (Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminist). The extensive use of such a slur against an ill-defined but rapidly growing group of fellow academics and members of the public should be reason for concern. Instead of engaging with arguments McKinnon tries to invalidate *any* position she disagrees with as transphobic. But, seemingly, McKinnon's status as Trans-activist immunizes her against the kind of criticism that is freely applied to others.

What may have started in academia no longer stays in academia. Recently, more than 20 immigrants to British Columbia were targeted by Trans-activist Jessica Yaniv. Yaniv specifically sought out mostly young, non-Caucasian women, who were offering aesthetician services to female clients. Yaniv attempted to force those women to wax her male genitals. When the women declined to provide services they were not trained to perform or for personal or religious reasons did not feel comfortable providing, Yaniv filed complaints at British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal.

In addition, Yaniv went on numerous racist, xenophobic, and anti-immigration rants on social media. In one series of Tweets, Yaniv called for the deportation of women who had declined to provide the requested service. For example, on May 26, 2019 Yaniv tweeted "No one forced those TRANSPHOBES that may

be IMMIGRANTS... into this line of work ... They break the law, they should be deported" and on May 28, 2019 "Telling unlawful immigrants ... who break our laws that they need to be sent away due to crimes against citizens of Canada isn't racism, at all...". In July 2019 "Yaniv was calling for immigration raids on "120th street in Surrey," an area known to have a lot of residents who are brown and black people with immigrant backgrounds" (Slatz, 2019).

Even though there were regular media reports on Yaniv's racism and xenophobia, the case was virtually ignored by academics who regularly advocate for an inclusive Canadian society. One has to wonder why. Some might be tempted to argue that the Yaniv case was ignored by academics because Yaniv isn't an academic. But academics regularly discuss instances of racism or xenophobia outside academia.

For example, on the widely read academic blog *The Conversation*, W.Y. Alice Chan discussed in detail the implications of Quebec's *Bill 21* and specifically cautioned "When ... western [countries] have experienced ... hate crimes and white supremacist acts of terror, failing to draw links between interpersonal acts of aggression or violence and larger contexts is negligent" (Chan, 2019). Yet, when Yaniv expressed her xenophobic racism by calling a Sikh man a "turban f*cker" (an incident widely discussed on social media and reported by Drayton, 2019), the academic outrage machine once again remained strangely silent.

Many academics criticized Faith Goldy's views on immigration even though Goldy is not in the academy. She has been called "white nationalist" (Dea, 2018), "far-right media personality with documented links to white nationalism" (Gosine, 2018), and "alt-right" activist (Budd, 2019) for expressing views that seem less radical than Yaniv's. Last but not least, Yaniv's insistence that women touch a penis against their will is in stark contrast to the tenets of the #metoo movement that have been supported by virtually all academics. One commentator pointed out that "the usual defenders of the women who refused to provide Ms Yaniv service have remained silent" (Levitt, 2019).

Levitt speculates that "the usual defenders ... [have been] cowed at the altar of transgender rights". But, given that many Trans-people have distanced themselves from Yaniv and insisted Yaniv is not speaking for them, this explanation seems incorrect. The issue is not transgender rights proper but rather the personal interests of individuals who happen to be Trans and cleverly are using this status. And here we need to return to McKinnon.

Like Yaniv, McKinnon represents a small minority within the Trans-community and most of her recent activism focusses on a right specific to her: the right to participate in elite competitive sports as female. With the ingeniously coined slogan "Sport is a Human Right," McKinnon makes it appear as if she were the representative of a large group of Trans-athletes. But, if McKinnon's claim that absolutely no-one would transition to compete in sports is correct, then only a tiny minority of Trans-women will ever benefit from the right McKinnon is fighting for.

It appears that when we discuss transgender rights, we need to listen more to the voices who have been silenced by vocal activists of narrow interests like McKinnon or Yaniv. And, as academics, we need to be able to express disagreement with some of the views of those activists without being dismissed as TERFs or threatened with lawsuits. We need to get better at distinguishing between transphobia and justified criticism of views or behaviours of individuals who happen to be Trans. Last and not least we need to work harder to ensure that living conditions improve for those Trans people who "are denied material necessities of life like health care, housing, and employment" (A.W. Peet, quoted by Dea, 2019).

Christina Behme (Christina.Behme@kpu.ca) teaches philosophy at Kwantlen Polytechnic University, in Surrey, BC. She works mainly in philosophy of mind and philosophy of language. Her research focusses on language acquisition, language evolution, and language politics.

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The Mark Hecht Case: Was the Diversity, Inclusion and Equity (DIE) "Loyalty Oath" Violated?

Frances Widdowson

On September 6, 2019, Mark Hecht, an instructor in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at Mount Royal University, wrote an editorial entitled "Ethnic diversity harms a country's social trust, economic well-being. . . ".

Hetch's article unleashed a storm of controversy across the country. While a number of disturbing circumstances unfolded, perhaps the most alarming was the response of the faculty association that was supposed to be representing his interests.

I have been a member of the Mount Royal Faculty Association (MRFA) for over 11 years, and have found it to be one of the best in the country. The membership is very engaged, and historically the organization has been notable for its fairness and impartiality. In a number of controversies that I have been personally involved with, the MRFA provided much needed advice and was a reliable source of support.

Over the last few years, however, this principled foundation has been crumbling. Rather than seeing its role as representing all members, an increasingly vocal group of ideologues are demanding that the MRFA promote their particular political perspective. This also has been seen in the case of other faculty associations. At the University of British Columbia, for example, the faculty association demanded that a talk critical of sexual orientation and gender identity policies (SOGI 123) be cancelled. The Wilfrid Laurier University Faculty Association even took a stance against some of its own faculty members when they supported inviting me to their campus to critically discuss university indigenization.

The most significant failing of the MRFA has occurred with respect to the case of Mark Hecht. In commenting to the media about the "heated arguments" that had taken place about Hecht's views on the MRFA facebook page, the MRFA President stated that she stood behind our mission statement that requires members to "[uphold] the values" of diversity and equity. She implied that Hecht did "not speak for the entire academic body or reflect the beliefs and the value system of the faculty association". She then asserted that she wouldn't be speaking to Hecht about his article unless another member formally complained about it. With this public statement, the MRFA was potentially enabling a faction that was contemplating making such a complaint.

This faction became more emboldened in the weeks to come. At a meeting held to provide information to MRFA members attending General Faculties Council on September 19, 2019, the MRFA President made posters available that were produced by the Indigenous and People of Color [sic] Support Network. These posters featured the words WE BELONG HERE RACISM DOES NOT; they

were made in an attempt to pressure the administration to denounce Hecht's Op-Ed. Making these posters available at a forum that was intended to represent all faculty members again legitimized the mobbing efforts that were underway.

The brandishing of these posters in General Faculties Council followed an action, pursued the day before, whereby this faction sent a secret letter to senior administration. The letter expressed "ongoing concerns with discrimination on campus" and alleged that Hecht's editorial contained a "blatantly Islamophobic and xenophobic message". While Hecht was mentioned by name in this letter, he was not copied on the correspondence. In fact, Hecht only became aware of this letter because he made a Freedom of Information and Privacy request, and the copy received was almost completely redacted.

This sequence of events is perplexing until one considers that the MRFA's "Mission" includes the statement that it "upholds the values of diversity, equity and human rights". Affirming the "[value] of diversity", which seems to be innocuous on the surface, is being turned into what Abigail Thompson calls a "loyalty oath", where faculty are expected to show that they are committed to a particular vision of society. While such oaths historically concerned swearing that one was not a member of the Communist Party, similar demands are now being made with respect to "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion statements". They have become the new "political litmus test" at universities.

The vitriolic response of many faculty members to Hecht's views, as well as the MRFA's biased intervention, makes sense when one considers that the Op-Ed was perceived as violating a presumed loyalty oath concerning "diversity, inclusion and equity". Because of the continuous promotion of these concepts in all sorts of university documents, professors often affirm them without question. The ideology is so deeply engrained that the mantra "diversity is our strength" is perceived as axiomatic. When Hecht decided to challenge the assumptions of this ideology, therefore, he was perceived as being an immoral person, a poor scholar, and an incompetent teacher. It thus became a professed duty for many faculty to demand that Hecht be censured, and perhaps even fired.

Some readers will be inclined to interpret my criticisms of the MRFA's actions as an attack on faculty associations in general. Nothing could be further from the truth. Faculty associations create the collective strength needed to defend the university's academic mandate from various threats. In order to achieve their actual "Mission", however, faculty associations must resist being captured by a segment that is promoting an anti-intellectual agenda. For the MRFA to state that the views of a professor do "not reflect the beliefs and the value system of the faculty association" shows that it has become distorted into a vehicle that promotes "diversity, inclusion, and equity" over academic considerations. Faculty associations do not have particular "beliefs", or a value system that must be policed. They represent a community of scholars with diverse perspectives who engage in open inquiry to determine what values and beliefs deserve their support.

The case of Mark Hecht shows that "Diversity" no longer means a diversity of ideas, but the expression of an exclusionary ideology. It is time for all faculty associations to redefine diversity to refer to ideas, and not the agenda of a censorious group. Academics must oppose all "loyalty oaths," as they corrode our ability to think critically and pursue the truth.

Frances Widdowson (fwiddowson@mtroyal.ca), a member of the SAFS Board of Directors, is Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Justice, and Policy Studies, at Mount Royal University, in Calgary. The University of Ottawa Press has just published Dr Widdowson's book Separate but Unequal: How Parallelist Ideology Conceals Indigenous Dependency.

The Most Valuable Lessons from Rick Mehta's Recent Lecture Were Delivered by His Detractors

Matt Elliott

I had the fortune to attend Rick Mehta's lecture "Safe Space Culture in Canadian Universities: An Assault on our democracy" at the Halifax Central Library, on September 23rd. I brought my 16-year-old daughter along with me, as she will soon have to make the choice about what type of education she wishes to pursue, and I am less than confident that her high school will provide her with all of the information required to effectively make that decision. As we discussed the lecture afterwards, it became very apparent to me that the most important lessons came not from Dr. Mehta, but rather from his detractors who also attended the talk. Specifically, the audience was given a master class on how to, or more appropriately, how *not* to conduct yourself during contentious discourse.

The detractors were a group of six people who appeared to be guided by Dr. Eva Curry, who is a professor of mathematics at Acadia University, the institution that dismissed Dr. Mehta. They were mostly young adults. They came armed with all of the smugness and righteous indignation that normally afflicts the type that would rather disrupt a lecture than honestly engage with the material and presenter.

Before I itemize the lessons learned from this talk, I will give credit where credit is due. Dr. Mehta's detractors had some valid criticisms of his lecture. First, that he provided no source references for some of the statistics that he used to support his arguments. Second, his use of pictures and names of the people involved in his dismissal from Acadia was, in my personal opinion, in bad taste. Whether or not it amounted to criminal harassment or even a breach of library policy, as the detractors so loudly and vehemently argued, I am not sure, but I did find it to be unnecessary and at times, even a little uncomfortable. Unfortunately for the detractors, these points were all but invalidated by their own behaviour.

Lesson One – Avoid insulting the rest of the audience before the lecture even begins.

Prior to the lecture, Dr. Curry attempted to hand out copies of newspaper reports that were clearly biased and unsympathetic toward Dr. Mehta (the one I saw was from *Vice* news) as well as a copy of a letter from Acadia University to Dr. Mehta detailing the findings from the investigation into his conduct, which Dr, Curry erroneously referred to as his dismissal letter. Amusingly, rather than object to this, Dr. Mehta helped Dr. Curry distribute the materials, knowing full well that they were unfavourable to him.

The majority of those in attendance declined to take the material, and if I can assume that their reasons were similar to my own, it is because the audience for that lecture knew exactly who and what they were going to listen to. By printing and handing out literature, Dr. Curry must have assumed that those in attendance were somehow unaware or ignorant of the topic and the presenter. This, from a layman's perspective, was more than a little condescending. Perhaps Dr. Curry did not mean to imply that those in attendance had not properly done their own research prior to the event and therefore needed the help of somebody that was smarter or more informed, but that it is how it came off, and it was not a good look for Dr. Curry and her entourage.

Lesson Two – Avoid behaving like children

The most blatant example of childishness came from one of Dr. Curry's group who, while sitting in the front row of the audience, repeatedly yawned and belched loudly, obviously and obnoxiously trying to be disruptive. As a general rule, if the most intelligent argument you can come up with is a loud bodily function, perhaps you aren't mature enough to engage in an adult discussion.

Some within Dr. Curry's group further demonstrated their inability to engage constructively when Dr. Mehta displayed the names and pictures of those involved in the complaints that led to his dismissal. As mentioned above, the issue is not so much with their argument, but rather with the way it was presented. Members of Dr. Curry's group began to loudly and aggressively assert that what Dr. Mehta was doing amounted to "the definition of harassment" and was against Library policy and demanded that the lecture be cancelled right there. When Dr. Mehta continued on despite their protestations, a few of them got up and stormed out of the room, one specifically went to go alert library staff of the supposed breach. Alas, nobody from the library came up at any point to intervene, that particular member never returned to their seat, and the lecture continued.

This particular outburst from Dr. Curry's group was reminiscent of a child, who upon seeing something they think is wrong, runs to go tell on the offender. Further, getting up and storming out mid-lecture because you don't like or agree

with what you are hearing or seeing is akin to closing your eyes, plugging your ears and making a lot noise so as to avoid having to deal with anything that may offend your own fragile sensibilities. Again, this type of behaviour has no place in constructive discourse, particularly in a lecture where you have been explicitly told that there will be an opportunity to ask questions and engage with the lecturer.

Further, throughout the lecture, Dr. Curry and her entourage openly laughed, giggled, whispered and scoffed and any point or argument that did not meet their approval. Again, instead of being quiet and respectful of the presenter and saving their arguments for the period specifically allotted for such discussion, they behaved like obnoxious children, subject to disruptive outbursts at the mere suggestion of anything that may be outside of their own worldview.

Conclusion

In the end, whatever stain has been left on Acadia University as an institution after the Rick Mehta affair was only made worse by the childish behaviour of a current member of their faculty, Dr. Curry, and her group. As so often happens these days, an opportunity for frank and constructive dialogue was thwarted by a small yet disruptive group with a desire to restrict any dialogue whatsoever, condescendingly assuming that their purpose was to decide for everyone else what are acceptable topics for discussion.

There is a very big difference between *being in* a difficult conversation and *being difficult* in a conversation. Whether Dr. Curry or her group are aware of this distinction or if they just don't care is unclear; however, given their behaviour, I will assume the latter is true.

Matt Elliott (elliottmatt412@gmail.com) has a Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies from Athabasca University. He is a regular force member of the Canadian Armed Forces. He is currently pursuing a Juris Doctor at the Schulich School of Law, at Dalhousie University, in Halifax.

The Struggle for Free Speech on Canadian Campuses

Rodney A. Clifton

Free speech is under siege on many university campuses, including many here in Canada. Professors, administrators, and students are "deplatforming" invited guests or disrupting and disparaging their fellow academics who fail to toe the politically correct party line.

Commonly understood, and with precious little evidence, these speakers are said to be "sexist," "racist," or "Islamophobic." So, closed-minded enforcers, just like their hockey namesakes, try to prevent these guests from speaking—shouting them down, blocking entrances to lecture halls, setting off fire alarms, or physically attacking them.

In March 2017, Charles Murray, the justly-famous American political scientist, was prevented from speaking at Middlebury College. More recently, in August 2019, Amy Wax, the eminent law professor at the University of Pennsylvania, was demeaned by hundreds of her colleagues and students for publishing a well-reasoned op-ed in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Her "crime" was arguing in favour of bourgeois values and against what were once called "lower class values."

In Canada, the best known political attack has been against the University of Toronto psychology professor Jordan Peterson, who was told by senior university administrators to use "zur" and "zir" as gendered pronouns when speaking to students. Thankfully, Prof. Peterson rejected the demand.

Similarly, graduate student Lindsay Shephard was called into a kangaroo court of two professors and an administrator at Wilfrid Laurier University because, as a graduate teaching assistant, she showed a few minutes of a video—from TV Ontario no less—in which Prof. Peterson defended his rejection of some gendered pronouns.

As it turned out, both of these people won their battles, which is a rather surprising outcome. Surprising and infrequent, because many others have lost.

Consider, for example, the cases of Lecturer Paul Bali from Ryerson University, Prof. Ricardo Duchesne at the University of New Brunswick, Prof. Rick Mehta from Acadia, and Prof. Jeff Muehlbauer from Brandon University. These university teachers have suffered conspicuous repercussions for speaking out.

Nevertheless, some recent developments give renewed hope.

Most important, two Conservative provincial governments, those of Jason Kenney in Alberta and Doug Ford in Ontario, have passed laws requiring universities to establish free speech on campuses or suffer financial penalties.

Given the ideological standoff existing on Canadian campuses today, such draconian laws are, unfortunately, needed. Indeed, a law enforcing free speech is a serious dilemma because it is an attempt to *force* universities to *permit* free speech on campus.

Because of the dilemma, other provincial governments will probably wait to see what happens in Alberta and Ontario before acting themselves.

As well, a committee of very distinguished professors at the University of Chicago—truly a world class university—has written a report on free speech which has gone viral. This report reminds professors, administrators, and students that free speech is the Gold Standard for excellent universities.

Simply, this committee argues that professors and students need unrestricted freedom to study almost anything and to support or refute any idea, policy, or practice existing anywhere in the world. The value of free inquiry is the very reason for universities, and it is the foundation of free and democratic societies.

The truly fortunate part of this story is that some Canadian universities are beginning to implement the "Chicago Principles." In fact, policies supporting freedom of speech are slowly creeping through the hallowed halls of universities in Alberta and Ontario.

A few universities in other provinces even started to recognize free speech as an important issue. Recently, the Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship sponsored a panel discussion at Concordia University entitled "Freedom of Debate in the University: Confronting Contemporary Challenges."

As well, a group of students and faculty at UBC have established a free speech club with Ben Shapiro as the first guest speaker.

This is a beginning.

Even so, we need to remember what Jeff Muehlbaur said after a long and painful ordeal at Brandon University: "I am in the boneyard now," meaning that his academic life is over.

Unfortunately, academic life may be over at some Canadian universities. An institution without academic freedom is not a real university, and it should not be supported by either taxpaying citizens or fee-paying students.

Rodney A. Clifton (rodney.clifton@umanitoba.ca) is a Senior Fellow at the Frontier Centre for Public Policy, a Professor Emeritus at the University of Manitoba, and a former member of the SAFS Board of Directors. The article above was originally published on 13 November 2019 and is reprinted with the Centre's permission.

Finding a Point in Writing and Speaking

Robert Grant Price

John Warner, *Why They Can't Write: Killing the Five-Paragraph Essay and Other Necessities*, Johns Hopkins, Baltimore, 2018, 272 pages.

Joseph Clair, *On Education, Formation, Citizenship, and the Lost Purpose of Learning*, Bloomsbury, New York, 2017, 128 pages.

R.R. Reno, *Return of the Strong Gods: Nationalism, Patriotism, and the Future of the West*, Regnery Gateway, New York, 2019, 182 pages.

John Warner's *Why They Can't Write* is a better book than the title suggests. The main title plays around with the now-cliché title of Rudolf Flesch's famous 1955 book on reading incompetence *Why Johnny Can't Read* and its 1981 sequel *Why Johnny Still Can't Read*—and the dozens of books, articles, and reports with titles that have stated, with exasperation, that He/She/They Can/Can't Read/Write. The subtitle of Warner's book calls for the death of the five-paragraph essay, a demand that many writing instructors might view with some

perplexity, since the five-paragraph essay (or hamburger essay as hungry people prefer to call it) has been dead for a long time.

As I say, the book is better than the title suggests. Warner writes with clarity and wit, and he correctly identifies some of the difficulties facing teachers tasked with instructing students how to write. Students, Warner says, have been cultivated in an educational environment that emphasizes standardization and rubrics ahead of thinking and thoughtful expression. Students learn to behave like actors, rather than students; their writing instruction devolves into something like community theatre, with students putting on a show of what writing could be like—if only it were real.

Warner says these problems originate in an underlying problem: Students have nothing to say. And there can be no words if there is nothing to say.

Warner offers a range of possible solutions, some better than others. Give students more freedom to speak their feelings. Get rid of grading. Stop teaching grammar. Help students to become well-rounded readers. Treat writing as a process, and don't forget to edit. Let students lead the classroom. Kill the five-paragraph essay, of course. And also: Stop sequestering writing to the classroom, where it has an audience of one (the teacher) and find a wider audience for students. Writing that is never meant to be read can never be writing worth reading.

The diagnoses and prescriptions offered by Warner, a writer and professor of writing, are hardly original. Dozens of new writing textbooks authored by writers, academics, and writer/academics hit the market each year, each repeating much of what has already been said by authors in the year before. Warner is right when he says that the problem is not one of intelligence. Today's students are as capable as any generation. But they lack passion. Why write this crap?, they ask. Why does this matter? Who cares?

And who can blame them? Today, students study in an environment where attention is at a premium and distraction is sold on discount. They accrue massive debt to earn a credential everybody says they cannot find success without. Add to that the threat that the world will end if we don't reduce our carbon output and we can begin to understand why so many students suffer an existential malaise.

Nobody should be surprised if students write without soul if the spirit has been stripped from their education. This is not a call for theocratic revolution, but a plea for some spiritual water. Atheists have done their job too well. They washed metaphysics from the academy, and whatever residues were left progressive educators have ably dissolved with their harsh solvents.

This is tragic, since young people will always ask "What is the purpose of life?" It is a cruel thing to say to a student that they must figure it out alone; to say that I, your teacher, refuse to step into that thorny debate. If you can't find a way to the good life, that's your fault. And really, if you think about it, the

search for purpose doesn't matter, since, as we have already determined, there is no truth in the universe, no purpose in life, and no meaning in words. It's all an invention of the mind. Learn well, kids: Truth is for suckers.

Teachers unsure how to teach writing, and who have never read books on how to teach writing, will find in Warner's book a good starting point for conversations with colleagues. But the problems Warner identifies are deeper than what happens inside a writing classroom. The biggest challenges relate to convincing students that they should care (a point that Warner makes); that higher education can be relevant to their whole lives; and that there is such a thing as truth, reality, and "the good." Because, really, why search for knowledge if there is no truth and no point to the knowledge we find, other than to exert power?

Two books that diagnose and attempt to treat this malaise might be deserving of a teacher's time. The first—*On Education, Formation, Citizenship, and the Lost Purpose of Learning*, by Joseph Clair—taught me much about the deeper problems in academia. Clair roots through St. Augustine's works on education to show how a full education must form the spirit and morals of a student. An education that doesn't is little more than training for functionaries. Clair gives CPR to older understandings of liberal arts education, and he succeeds in getting a gasp out of me.

The second book—*Return of the Strong Gods*, by R.R. Reno—stands back from our current political climate and gazes at what has happened to the West since the end of the Wars. He argues that the impulse to dissolve strong beliefs—that is, to create an open society—made sense after the traumatic wars against fascism. Today, however, the constant undermining of shared systems of belief and the vengeful apparatus of skepticism operating in civil institutions and embodied by universities have gone too far and made communal living, nationhood, and happiness all but impossible. He warns that the strong gods—patriotism, religion, tradition—will return because, according to Reno, we need them in our lives. We face a "crisis of solidarity," we need a "we," and to find the harmony we seek, we will put limits on how open an open society can become. It is a battle that pits those who want to throw open the door on everything against those who want to close and lock it. It's already raging in our populist politics and it will intensify, particularly in academia, ground zero for battles over what should be taught and what can be said. And it could be ground zero, too, for compromise and honest language, if we could believe the truth of such concepts.

Robert Grant Price (robertgrantprice@gmail.com) is a Lecturer at the University of Toronto Mississauga.

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Review of Douglas Murray, *The Madness of Crowds*

Stephen B. Perrott

Douglas Murray, *The Madness of Crowds: Gender, Race and Identity*, Bloomsbury Continuum, 2019, 280 pages

A recent review in *The Guardian* characterizes Douglas Murray's new book as a diatribe based upon the "bizarre fantasies of a rightwing provocateur." One supposes that this is the least harsh criticism Murray might expect for challenging the received truths of the social justice left, especially when doing so with clear writing, persuasive argument, and compelling evidence.

Murray's latest book is organized into four chapters, each focusing upon a particular grouping of oppressed persons: Gay, Women, Race, and Trans. The chapters are interspersed with what he refers to as interludes, mini chapters which provide further explanation and/or context for the content in the four main chapters. The first interlude focuses on where Murray believes the madness—of the book's title—originates. Like notable others, he favours the contested view that our current illiberal and identity-obsessed times are the result of a combination of postmodernist and neo-Marxist forces.

In short: postmodernism, with its rejection of "grand narratives," created a vacuum ready to be filled by a new, albeit secular, religion. The new narrative filling the void centres on multiple identity groups, replacing Marx's singular proletariat, each jockeying to claim the greatest level of oppression. The drivers for this unstable mass of the oppressed are the trinity of social justice, identity politics, and intersectional theory.

The second interlude addresses how the social justice phenomenon was enabled by, and indeed required, rapidly evolving technology, most particularly by social media. Platforms such as Twitter ensure that news about transgressions of social justice dogma spreads quickly and that the identified rule breaker is mobbed and shamed (or faces demands to be fired from her job) in massive numbers.

Murray also outlines how social media have been central to the launch of fourth-wave feminism. The final interlude addresses how the Internet, and social media specifically, ensures that one can never put an event behind them and therefore cannot gain a foothold on the pathway towards forgiveness and redemption.

For those closely following social-justice activism, the content will mostly be familiar, though one is likely to learn of events and actions not previously encountered (this reviewer was especially taken by how algorithms have been written into the Google search engine to distort results in the pursuit of diversity). The book's strength, however, is not in the recitation of "mad" events, like the Evergreen College revolt, but rather in the thoroughness, synthesis, and clarity of the coverage. If one were to assign a single book to bring a Rip Van Winkle up to date with the seeming inexplicableness of the last decade, *The Madness of Crowds* would be the choice.

The reader is also likely to see in print one's unarticulated, but long-simmering, confusion when trying to understand from where, and how, all the social justice demands emanate. Murray emphasizes how these new arbiters of morality have decided that clinging to "what was common belief until yesterday" makes you a racist, misogynist, homophobe, transphobe, and so on, and demand that it be replaced by "things which we cannot believe."

It is unclear how to challenge this new orthodoxy because it is unresponsive to argument and evidence and lives on through contradictions. Murray makes much of what he refers to as the hardware versus software question: to what degree are certain human characteristics constitutionally fixed as opposed to malleable? Modern science, especially psychology, is unable to answer such questions conclusively, yet the social justice gang does so without equivocation.

Consider, for example, how Lady Gaga's LGBT anthem, "Born this Way," underscores an essentialist argument for Trans individuals who find themselves trapped in the wrong body. Although scientists have no explanation for why some people identify as members of the opposite sex, and often do so in a stereotypically gendered pattern, the "born this way" position has considerable intuitive appeal. Notably, it is an argument premised on the reality of biological sex (one of those *common until yesterday* beliefs). It is more than odd, then, that the very same people most vociferously making this argument would otherwise have us believe that there is no such thing as sex, especially when it comes to considering the circumstances of those who identify as non-binary or gender fluid.

The real audacity of the social justice enforcers on these complex questions is not the absolute certainty with which they hold to each of these contradictory beliefs, but in the ferocity they direct towards others even considering anything other than their flip-flopping orthodoxies. To question their assertions is not just transphobic but tantamount to denying the very humanity of Trans persons which, by mechanisms never made clear, increases the likelihood that they will be murdered or take their own lives.

Another common contradiction involves judging the message differentially on the basis of the messenger. Should you not be a member of the Social Justice Church and, better still, a member of a protected group, even innocuous utterances, after being twisted out of context, can serve to damn: claims of sarcasm, irony, or alliance to the cause will not save you. If you are a Church member, however, any and all utterances, including "kill all men," for example, will be defended and justified. A particularly stark example of this latter phenomenon involves the defense of *New York Times* editorial board member Sarah Jeong, a woman with an especially vile and protracted social media history.

The Madness of Crowds takes away any residual reason to believe that the social justice madness is restricted mostly to university campuses. The madness has escaped the walls of the ivory tower and spread to all public affairs.

Where Murray falls short is in his conclusions and suggestions for remedies, which are not particularly convincing. He is clear that we are on a pathway towards even greater divisiveness and tribalism but offers no clear ideas about what might be done. One supposes that he faced some pressure to advance a way forward; that he largely fails to do so is not so strong a criticism of the book as it is recognition that there are no obvious ways to address the madness.

One of Murray's conclusions refers to the *impossibility problem*, whereby the contradictions in the demands of the social justice movement are such that it is impossible to meet them or, indeed, to sort out competing claims of oppression within the intersectionality paradigm. Although Murray doesn't propose this as a solution per se, this reviewer sees potential for a way out that is based in this quagmire. It is hard to imagine that the madness can proceed much longer without being overcome by the weight of its own contradictions or by the penchant of the "woke" to keep devouring their own.

Consider, for example, the *Hypatia* furor of 2017 when an earnest junior feminist philosopher had the temerity to ask, since we can change our gender from our natal sex, then why can we not do the same when it comes to race? An even better example comes with the ascendance of (and attack on) gender-critical feminists, many of whom are lesbian, in their refusal to believe that a man becomes a woman simply by saying so (or even, for that matter, after undergoing sex-change surgery). Trans-rights activists have labelled these feminists Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists (TERFs), with the acronym added to the list of pejoratives directed at those who breech church doctrine. Among those so labelled are tennis star Martina Navratilova and, too recently to be mentioned in this book, *Harry Potter* author J.K. Rowling. There is more than a little irony that most so-called TERFS would have been close to the top of the intersectional oppression hierarchy "until yesterday," but are now villains.

Murray finishes his book with two sentences that convey his sentiment about how certain identity groups may now be seen within society that, until yesterday, might have seemed eminently sensible: "*to assume that sex, sexuality, and skin colour mean nothing would be ridiculous. But to assume they mean everything*

will be fatal." However, this is today, and such a view is heretical to those who find themselves to be suddenly woke.

We are fortunate that Douglas Murray is unafraid of being seen as a heretic and has reminded us of where we were—just yesterday.

Stephen Perrott (Stephen.Perrott@msvu.ca) is Professor of Psychology at Mount Saint Vincent University, in Halifax.

Review of David Horowitz, *The Left in the University*

Kris Larsen

David Horowitz, *The Black Book of the American Left, Volume VIII: The Left in the University*, Second Thoughts Books, Los Angeles, 2017, hardcover, 392 pages.

David Horowitz, president of the David Horowitz Freedom Centre and a prolific conservative polemicist, was a "red diaper baby" and former sixties Marxist radical who became disillusioned with the extreme left in the seventies, and for good reasons. One tipping point was when Black Panthers, supposed allies in the left's "revolutionary cause", murdered one of his female colleagues at *Ramparts* magazine. (See Peter Collier & David Horowitz, *Destructive Generation*, Summit Books, New York, 1989.)

His atonement has been to produce numerous well written and revealing books delineating the transgressions of the radical left from its sixties version to its more recent politically correct and intolerant postmodern reincarnation.

Volume VIII of his *The Black Book of the American Left* series, published in 2017 and comprising a collection of essays written between 1993 and 2016, takes aim at the left wing dominance found in today's universities. The problems Horowitz cites on US campuses are also evident at Canadian universities and no doubt others throughout the western world. Horowitz gets it and does not disappoint with his summaries of what ails the postmodern campus. It is depressing to be reminded that pc perniciousness has persisted for so long with no evidence of it coming to an end. If anything, it may be gathering more and more momentum with each passing year.

Horowitz, quite rightly, I think, attributes much of today's problems to sixties radicals navigating their way through the universities (to this, let's add their navigation through other institutions, including the public school system), eventually working themselves into positions of authority, along the way indoctrinating generations of their students and, upon attaining positions of power, hiring others of like mind. Today the left reportedly represents an overwhelming majority of university faculty, some of whom indoctrinate their students in a left wing echo chamber where conservative voices are few and far between, and where there is significant intolerance (including intimidation and bullying)

from professors and students towards those who don't share their pc views. Examples, some of which Horowitz experienced firsthand, include deplatforming, disinviting and shouting down, even committing physical violence towards those with disparate views, plus vandalizing venues where "undesirables" are scheduled to speak.

Much of the book discusses Horowitz's Academic Bill of Rights, which has generated controversy, but appropriately addresses coercion concerns. For example, a young pro-life student was reduced to tears when the professor in her women's studies class ordered her and her classmates to stand and chant "abortion abortion". This goes well beyond freedom of expression rights and crosses the line into evil psychological abuse. Such behavior merits a severe reprimand and, if not a firing for a first offence, at least a threat of being fired if it happens again. Of course, such a policy should also protect professors from excessively zealous students.

Yet Horowitz's goal to achieve a more left - right ideological balance in the classroom is potentially problematic, even though he stresses that his Academic Bill of Rights will ban discrimination, including that based on ideological belief. But should universities *force* their professors to guarantee balance when discussing, lecturing, or assigning readings about certain topics? Hypothetically, what if there is only information on one side of an issue (admittedly rare in the humanities and social sciences), but not the other? Should this mean shelving the topic altogether in the name of balance? Despite Horowitz's claims that professors will remain free to express their opinions, one still comes away concerned that his Bill of Rights will dictate what professors must teach or even say outside the classroom, at least to a significant degree. Here the devil that lurks (hides?) in the idea may persist through its implementation phase straight to the ultimate real world end product (never as good as the theory!), aided and abetted by flawed people, perhaps overcome by excessive zeal in their efforts to enforce yet additional sets of regulations. Alas, we all know which road is paved with good intentions. Might this not potentially make the right just as dictatorial, just as disrespectful of free speech and academic freedom, as the left?

As a case in point, Horowitz's objections to professors expressing (controversial?) political views or posting politicized messages on bulletin boards or on their office door will, if implemented, violate their freedom of expression rights. One can argue that such behavior is unprofessional. But students often (assuming the course isn't mandatory for one's degree) have freedom not to take a course if they find the individual teaching it objectionable. Otherwise, best to live and let live. You don't have to like or agree with another's message, but you ought to learn to tolerate it, ignore it, or construct a counterargument; just as that individual has an equally important duty *not* to suppress your views or oppress you for expressing them, while always enjoying the right to offer other perspectives.

Indeed, speech can be counteracted with more speech, perhaps through course essays or term papers. Contrary to Horowitz, Jordan Peterson maintains that,

from his experience, any student who writes well and makes good arguments will earn good grades even when his or her professor does not share the same ideological bias. We hope his takeaway is more accurate more often, although Horowitz does document abuses, including bigotry towards (indeed, the disparaging of) students who are veterans, plus a case where a conservative political science major's leftist professor gave him an "F" on his paper discussing the Iraq war, but changed the grade to an "A" when said student resubmitted an altered paper more reflective of his professor's biases.

The *ideal* solution is for professors to present all, or at least several, sides of an argument while treating everyone fairly and, indeed, many do. We must always be careful not to tar all educators with the same brush and, in fairness, Horowitz doesn't target *absolutely* everyone this way.

Also, while it may be beyond the scope of his book, it is regrettable that Horowitz does not stress that university is a rite of passage into adulthood for those choosing to attend. It is therefore incumbent upon each student to take responsibility for his own education, perhaps with outside reading about people and ideas discussed in class. If Thomas Hobbes, John Locke or Edmund Burke is maligned in the classroom, perhaps the student should read some of their works so they can better ascertain whether they are as bad as left wing academics claim. Of course, this will not work if courses make no mention of these masters to eighteen year olds arriving with no prior knowledge of them and who are instead fed a steady diet of Marx, Gramsci, Marcuse, and people of that ilk. But even here, students can certainly use Google or campus libraries to research critiques of these people, as well as of Marxism, communism, socialism, postmodernism and other fashionable ideologies. If such systems are so good, why have the ones with track records been such abject failures?

Furthermore, perhaps parents of kids nearing high school completion should familiarize themselves with what is going on in universities and make it known that they will not fund politically correct indoctrination programs, but will happily help their teens with two year community college courses, which may better prepare them for the job market, perhaps with diplomas qualifying them to pursue lucrative trades. Of course, much of this is presupposed on parents not having bought into the same cultural Marxist dogma as their kids.

Finally, and despite critiques cited above, David Horowitz's courageous works are important counterweights to what ails postmodern society and the postmodern campus. After all, airing dirty laundry is the best disinfectant. And don't automatically believe what you are hearing or reading about him in the echo chamber. Read him for yourself (starting with *Volume VIII: The Left in the University*) and draw your own conclusions. You might actually find validity in much of what he writes and agree that he is certainly right to delineate and criticize the significant chill and intolerance found on many of today's campuses, courtesy of administrators, faculty and students alike.

Kris Larsen (larsenke57@gmail.com) is a retired Nova Scotia civil servant with a background in adult education and social services. He and his wife live in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Review of Paul Gooch, *Course Correction*

Patrick Keeney

Paul W. Gooch, *Course Correction: A Map for the Distracted University*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019, 291 pages.

The past few decades have borne witness to a radical alteration in how we think about the university. There are, of course, multiple complex reasons for this transformation. In this commendable volume, Paul W. Gooch lays out the genesis of many of our present discontents and guides us through the conundrums facing higher education and the modern Canadian university. As he writes in the preface, "... we need to understand again what the university is – what it's for, how it works, and why it works the way it does" (xiii).

Paul Gooch is president emeritus and professor of philosophy at Victoria University in the University of Toronto. Unlike some critics who despair of repairing the current model of university education or actively urge its demise, Dr. Gooch is a reformer. For him, the university is an indispensable institution, but one which requires constant tending and care, particularly in an age that has been so radically altered by technology. He is quick to point out that while our current age has produced unprecedented challenges, we can still call on ancient principles to guide us.

The last forty years or so have precipitated a sea-change in our views about the university. Before proceeding to the substance of Professor Gooch's book, it is important to grasp how dramatic the changes have been to the university, to how we think about higher education, and to what society expects from its scholars. Let me draw on an analogy from intellectual history to emphasize just how profound these changes have been.

When I was an undergraduate, there was a fashionable view that held that philosophy should properly be seen as a "handmaiden" to the sciences. Henceforward, all serious questions would be scientific ones. After a couple of millennia of fruitless enquiry, we could now safely consign those musty old philosophy books (along with their teachers) to the dustbin. What was demanded was scientific expertise rather than philosophical *nous*. Philosophers could still play along, but their role was secondary: it was to lend the scientist a hand in clarifying some of the conceptual muddle attendant on research, or perhaps help with some of the vexing technical questions having to do, say, with induction or verification. The philosophical task had been re-thought, and a new, more "useful" and practical philosophy had emerged. Or so went the tale.

At about the same time, something similar was happening to how we thought about the university. For a thousand years or more, universities were institutions designed for learning and teaching about the highest things. Scholars, gathered together in the *collegium*, were provided with the quiet and leisure to pursue perennial questions about the human condition: What constitutes the good life? How best can we live with our fellow creatures? How do we reconcile our human nature with the social world? What is justice?

These and similar questions were at the heart of the university's mission. They were iterated over time in different voices and across the various branches of learning. Of course, the answers to these questions varied dramatically, and there was never a consensus. But it was these seemingly impractical questions – not the answers – that formed a coherent, common thread and allowed scholars from across the disciplines and through the centuries to converse with one another. Charles Darwin neatly captures the ancient mission of the university:

"The presence of a body of well-instructed men, who have not to labour for their daily bread, is important to a degree which cannot be overestimated, as all high intellectual work is carried on by them, and on such work, material progress of all kinds depends, not to mention other and higher advantages." (*Descent of Man*, second edition, pp. 207-208.)

Zhuang Zi, a Daoist philosopher of the third century B.C., memorably captures the function of higher learning in a famous paradox: "People all know the usefulness of what is useful, but they do not know the usefulness of the useless." Until recent years, it was broadly understood that the superior utility of the university rested not on the teaching of skills and abilities the world considered "useful," but on the utility of those understandings the world condemned as "useless."

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Around 1980, and in stark contrast to views such as Darwin's and Zi's, we started to hear that the irrelevant and "useless" knowledge produced by the university had no place in a progressive, egalitarian, democratic age. The university, like the rest of us, needed to live and thrive in the real world, and not retreat to some escapist, elitist, ivory-tower la-la land which had little or nothing to do with the business of the world, or more accurately, the world of business. Gooch neatly captures this move to the new commercialism:

"Having disowned their identity as places removed from the distractions of quotidian life, universities now seek to emphasize their accessibility and relevance. That means a new vocabulary, the more succinct, the better. Hence the current watchword: engagement. It turns out to be linked to the current watchword of society and government in particular: employability" (43).

In a word, the university became a servant of business and industry. Universities had always faced pressures from commercial interests – the long-noted tensions between "town and gown" – but had historically resisted the siren call. Sometime in the latter part of the last century, however, universities began to capitulate, and the corruption started to settle in.

That the university is so transformed cannot be doubted. Today, to speak of universities in any but pragmatic and utilitarian terms is to court derision as a wild-eyed romantic, or worse, perhaps, as the sort of philosopher who descends from the clouds, like the comical and unworldly Socrates portrayed by Aristophanes. In the brave new university, the economic imperative dominates, so that the vocational and educational missions of the university are hopelessly confused. "The one thing needful" (as Dickens might have put it), are professors who can make their students job-ready on graduation.

Professor Gooch is clear-eyed, and it is with this modern iteration of the university that he contends. Over a career of almost fifty years, he has witnessed this transformation first-hand, and he wants universities to remember that which is central to their enterprise and, indeed, to their very existence. He writes, "What's been happening to the university over the past four or five decades has sometimes clouded that focus, so I want to recall the university to its fundamental vocation" (xii). His central task is that of recalling rather than of innovating. He tells us that, "Those looking for brand-new ideas about universities will be disappointed. . . " (xiii).

The apt subtitle of the book is "a map for the distracted university." Amongst the distractions are those occasioned by technology. As I write this, my laptop pings with the arrival of a new email. My iPhone buzzes, announcing a new message. Do I interrupt my writing to check my mail or answer my messages?

Everyone, including professors and their students, must now contend with these sorts of diversions, and it is one of the merits of this book that the author engages so directly with the unprecedented issues wrought by technology.

One of the recurring themes in the book is that the method of teaching in universities should be what Gooch calls "interrogative conversation," a deeply personal method that recognizes the embodied student in time and place. The author notes that "the internet ... is indifferent to human embodiment, oblivious to the frailties of the flesh" (213). In the age of two-way connectivity, human bodies are irrelevant, and you "might as well be nothing more than a brain in a vat" (214).

Professor Gooch is advocating an education that recognizes the physicality of learning and the anodyne (if frequently neglected) fact that human minds exist in bodies. He argues for what a friend calls "full-frontal learning" and against the notion of a "placeless" virtual education that can happen anywhere with the Internet and a screen: "a well-placed university should embrace *embodied education*, using technology only in its service. Embodied education respects place and somatic presence, rejecting the mentality of info-technocracy" (215, emphasis in original).

Technology and its products are, of course, only one among some distracting voices the university must contend with. Additionally, one might cite the distracting voices of government, and industry, both of which want different things from universities. In the book's early pages, we are told, "What follows... takes on these distractions, not case by case, but by recalling the institution to its central purposes" (9).

What then are the central purposes of the university? Gooch argues that the university should inculcate "the fundamental habits of mind... that mark what Northrop Frye called the 'educated imagination,"' and this task can only be achieved through the passing on of knowledge, hence "the university's raison-d'etre is knowledge" (13).

What knowledge we should teach undergraduates is the oldest question of the academy. Gooch wisely avoids the partisan wars in this debate and instead argues for learning "that takes account of what it is to be fully human" (7). His educational ideal echoes the great Renaissance scholar Erasmus, who defined the essence of the humanist endeavour: *Homo fit, non nascitur* – one is not born a man, one becomes it.

Professor Gooch elaborates on undergraduate education in Chapter Seven, "What Knowledge Should Undergraduates Gain?" He argues for liberal education modelled on Plato's Socrates. Just as Socrates constantly questioned the citizens of Athens about their beliefs, Professor Gooch maintains that "there's an academic form of life characterized by dissatisfaction with the current state of knowledge claims, and driven by intellectual curiosity. Its mindset manifests epistemic restlessness" (173).

Rather than setting out a series of specific curricular recommendations, Gooch instead presents a series of seven Socratic-inspired propositions which should be woven into undergraduate education. These propositions stress the defeasibility of knowledge claims, the need for scholars to remain humble, warnings against inflated epistemic confidence (which leads to hubris), and the quest for a properly constructed and flourishing human life. These are "foundational convictions on which to construct an understanding of the types of knowledge that undergraduates in the twenty-first century should gain" (174). These seven propositions provide an answer to the "epistemic restlessness," which Gooch claims is the hallmark of the scholar and the line of demarcation between genuine education and vocational training. What liberal learning most needs to instil in undergraduates is this sense of dissatisfaction, a refusal to accept what Orwell called the "smelly little orthodoxies."

Central to the idea of a liberal education is the freedom to make public our convictions. If, as Gooch argues, a liberal education is an appropriate education for free and democratic citizens, then the "overarching aim of a university education is the honing and responsible exercise of freedoms fundamental to human flourishing" (175). In an era of microaggressions, trigger warnings, and deplatforming, academic freedom needs to be vigorously asserted and defended. In the author's view, academic freedom is not merely just another feature of academic life, but is constitutive of the university: "A university that doesn't safeguard its faculty's freedom to discover, teach and publish is not a proper university" (175).

Professor Gooch tackles the thorny issues surrounding academic freedom in the aptly-titled Chapter Four, "Academic Freedom is Necessary and Messy." He notes that while "No one seriously believes that academic freedom gives licence to irresponsible behaviour" (86), universities must nonetheless provide space for airing disturbing or unpopular ideas:

"... the university is just the sort of place where ideas and beliefs need to find expression *in order to be assessed*. Even if there's a firm conviction in one group that the ideas in question are unworthy of consideration, others will disagree, wanting to hear the case for themselves" (96, emphasis in the original).

On the fraught question regarding the tension between academic freedom and freedom of conscience and religion, Gooch is admirably succinct: "Where there is academic freedom, however, there can be no reigning orthodoxy dictating the consciences, ideas, and expression of faculty members. How could there be?" (97).

Professor Gooch has drawn on a lifetime of experience as a university teacher and administrator, and there is much to recommend this volume. He writes knowingly about university governance, the autonomy of the university, the authority of peers, student life, the distinction between research and scholarship, and many other topics. One is hard-pressed to think of an aspect of university life that has escaped his attention.

On the matter of style, Professor Gooch expresses himself in prose that is simple and direct, the clarity of his writing ensuring that his ideas are accessible to a wide audience. This is commendable, for the state of the university is a topic that should be of interest to the broad public and not just academics.

But what impresses most is that in an age of culture wars, offence-taking and ideological posturing, the good doctor approaches his subject with an even temper and good humour, the sure mark of genuine humility. His analysis of the contemporary university is accompanied by the Socratic understanding that while the truth is obtainable, our human grasp of it is tenuous and liable to misconstruction. Professor Gooch is a most congenial guide, whose book exemplifies the underlying values, commitments and principles which are the *sine qua non* of university life.

Patrick Keeney (pkeeney774@gmail.com) is a Visiting Scholar at The Centre of Multiculturalism and Education Policy at the University of Chiang Mai, and the Education Advisor to the House of Mercy Foundation, both in Thailand. He invites readers to visit the Foundation's website.

Review of Raewyn Connell, *The Good University*

Malcolm G. Bird

Raewyn Connell, *The Good University: What universities actually do and why it's time for radical change*, Zed Books, London, 2019, 233 pages.

Universities are vital contemporary institutions. Raewyn Connell, a retired social science professor from the University of Sydney, offers her perspective on what they should, and what they currently are, doing. It is her fourth book, and in it she examines the institutions tasked with creating knowledge (research) and its transmission (teaching), and sets out to provide a brief history of their evolution into the contemporary era, with a particular concern for the plight of their workers, both academic and administrative. Coming from a humanist, left-of-centre viewpoint, she deeply laments the increasingly "neoliberal" and business-like character they have adopted over the last forty or so years. For her, universities have lost touch with their collective, public-good roots of teaching and conducting research, and instead are serving to perpetuate economic and social inequalities as tools of the globalized, capital order. Modern universities, in her eyes, more closely resemble large corporations, run by executive managers, not their workers, as they have rushed to embrace competition, privatization and individualization as their core values. She then provides a path to rectify these problems through, among many suggestions, the empowerment of students; the destruction of universities' hierarchical characters and the de-privileging of dominant identity groups within them; the elimination of the hegemonic role Northern universities have over their Southern contemporaries and the "de-colonizing" of knowledge more generally. Her remedies would

be all too familiar to anyone employed or attending a contemporary Canadian university.

Connell provides a good general analysis of universities in an easy-to-read format. She offers an excellent historical background on universities in the western world and includes an insightful discussion as to the inherent messiness and complexity of conducting research, paying attention to the social and collective dynamic of modern research projects especially in the social sciences and humanities. Other pertinent issues she addresses include the increasing casualization of teaching work (reaching over 70% in some places); the increasingly corporate character of university's management styles that often includes heavy reliance on performance indicators for all staff, including professors; the growing reliance on MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) for undergraduate teaching; and escalating student debt levels as tuition fees have risen significantly, among a host of other troubling observations. She pays specific attention to the plight of workers, and their employment conditions, pointing out the inequalities between and within various employment categories and noting that differences often follow class, racial and gender lines. Problematic corporate and external interference in university-based research and teaching are noted throughout her work. She raises a host of worthy and worrying trends regarding contemporary universities and their operations occurring throughout the world.

But, the inconsistencies in her analysis, and the failure to engage in any real self-examination of herself and her views, combined with her inability to recognize the enormous pressures on all public institutions today, are all too apparent. As one might expect, she decries the "post-truth" politics of our current age and the emergence of climate change "deniers", for instance, since for her universities are places that should strive to reveal "truths" about our world. Yet, it was her post-modernist contemporaries, now dominant throughout much of the humanities and hegemonic in many disciplines, that have sought to discredit the very concept of "truths" and, indeed, the entire western project of modernity, including the legitimacy of universities themselves. For someone deeply concerned with diversity and academic freedom, she shows astonishingly little concern for intellectual minorities at contemporary universities. Nowhere in her book does she lament the challenges faced by academics of faith, particularly devout Christians, or (C)conservative thinkers, among a host of many others. As so often is the case, the term "minorities" has a very limited meaning and does not extend to include divergent ways of thinking. At the core of the inconsistencies in her arguments is the fundamental fact that the role of universities is to propagate social and economic inequalities by creating and, in the case of professors, employing a professional and intellectual elite. Universities at their heart are credentialing factories turning our future members of the professional class. For people such as Connell, post-secondary education has a more abstract noble and collective value (and should promote "social justice" causes, of course), but for (almost) all students, universities are the means to learn about the world and acquire key skills, in order to differentiate themselves in the labour market in the quest to earn premium wages. This tension is en-

demic within all universities. Of course, recognizing this component of their character would fundamentally alter, and undermine, her entire thesis. Free or heavily subsidized tuition, one of her core suggestions, has the perverted effect of subsidizing the children of the middle and upper classes many of whom go on to become high-income wage earners. Finally, she has no appreciation for the enormity of the challenges public institutions such as universities face. Growing demands for their services, reduced public funding, powerful and deeply entrenched interests within them, and significant external pressures from a host of sources makes running them a rather difficult endeavor. Senior university executives are not mustachio-twirling villains who get up in the morning set on "neoliberalizing" their workplaces, but rather are men and women who must manage exceedingly complex public institutions that are saddled with meeting divergent and, in many cases, contradictory goals.

If there is a core take away from this book, it is a renewed appreciation for how good we Canadian academics have it. I realize that our schools face many serious problems – academic freedom is always under threat, corporatization is a real concern and the growth of precarious employment is occurring, among other challenges – but when I read a book like this or talk to my contemporaries in other Anglo-western nations, I'm eternally grateful for my professor job at a small Canadian university on the snow-swept prairies. Canadian professors are well paid, enjoy wonderful benefits and are, almost exclusively, represented by strong (some might argue, too strong) labour unions. We have teaching loads that are reasonable, research requirements that are manageable, administrative duties that are fair and, perhaps most critically, we've escaped (so far) the performance management methods and intense pressures to bring in research monies and to publish that are ubiquitous most everywhere else. (Many professors are not only micromanaged in having to quantify their outputs but must also account for the "impact" of their work as well!) While precarious employment is growing, it is not at the heights seen in many other western nations. Our universities continue to be well funded by our provincial governments and our tuition fees are reasonable. Despite the perpetual complaints of my colleagues as to the hardships they face as academic workers, we've got it really good here. I suppose this view goes ultimately to support Connell and her observations that things are changing for the worse for workers at many universities throughout the western world, but for the time being, Canada has largely avoided this fate. We'd better enjoy it while it lasts.

Malcolm G. Bird (m.bird@uwinnipeg.ca) is an associate professor of political science at the University of Winnipeg, in Manitoba. Dr Bird studies the evolution of Canadian public institutions, including public universities. His book Modernizing the Crown: Reforming the Liquor Control Board of Ontario, 1980-2019 *will be published by U of T Press.*

The Campus Tendency to Extremism

Philip Carl Salzman

Robert Boyers, *The Tyranny of Virtue: Identity, the Academy, and the Hunt for Political Heresies*, Scribner, 2019, 192 pages.

There is a common cultural dynamic in which competition among members of a social or political movement for the prestige of ideological purity and group leadership leads to more and more extreme substantive positions. Examples are countless: Christianity, based on a Jewish Messiah and his Jewish Apostles, soon enough came to disparage Jews who did not follow Jesus, claimed that "the Jews" had murdered Jesus, and that they would burn in hell. Centuries of Christian attacks on Jews followed, from the Crusades to pogroms, ending in a half-successful attempt at genocide. Islam, which drew heavily upon Judaism and Christianity, declared Jews and Christians stubborn holders of corrupt faiths who would burn in hell, and that the end days would not come until all Jews on earth were murdered, an objective proudly declared by Hamas.

Attempts to ameliorate poverty and economic exploitation led to movements of reform, then socialism, then communism, which, when implemented in the Soviet Union, Peoples Republic of China, and Khmer Rouge Cambodia led to the murder of a hundred million people from incorrect social categories. Recent attempts in the West to remove prejudice and discrimination against females and people of color led rapidly to the vilification of males and whites, and the implementation of systematic institutional discrimination against males and whites. Attempts to come to the aid of females in distress led to the institutionalization of abortion, which was going to "safe, legal, and rare," but in fact led the millions of "terminations," on-demand abortion, "a woman's choice," and the demand to murder babies at all stages of pregnancy and also newborns, this demand the highest priority of feminists.

This tendency to extremism is quite familiar to anyone observing the domination of "higher education" institutions by "social justice" ideology. "Social justice" warriors on campuses make more and more extreme and outrageous demands daily. These demands do not sit well even with confirmed "progressives" such as Robert Boyers, a long-time Professor of English at Skidmore College, author of *The Tyranny of Virtue: Identity, the Academy, and the Hunt for Political Heresies*. Boyers criticizes "the new fundamentalism" that requires that "all are expected to speak with one voice about the right and the true," a demand that he characterizes as "intolerant and illiberal." He regards it as "bizarre that of all places the liberal university should now be the one where strenuous efforts are most emphatically made to insure consensus," reflecting "a new wave of puritanism and a culture of suspicion." As a result, he says, "the university is, in many ways, an increasingly toxic environment."

In the main chapters, Boyers interrogates, with grace and literary depth, a number of prominent concepts. The first is "privilege," heavily used in discourses about "sexism" and "racism," which Boyers says "is at present promiscuously (and often punitively) deployed to imply a wide range of advantages or deficits against which no one can be adequately defended." Boyer rejects this usage on the grounds that "to consider either of us *primarily* as white people, deliberately consigning to irrelevance everything that made us different from one another—and different from the kinds of white people who regard their whiteness as an endowment to be proud of—was to deny what was clearly most important about each of us." He points out that "privilege is increasingly hauled in as a weapon" by people who "are mainly interested in drawing hard lines separating the guilty from the saved, the serenely oblivious from the righteous, fiercely aggrieved, and censorious."

Boyers then addresses what he refers to as "the academy as total cultural environment," as in—it appears to this reviewer—"total" meaning totalitarian. He addresses the hiring of political commissars, particularly: diversity officers. "Diversity officers are often appointed chiefly to ensure that a party-line be promulgated and enforced." In other words, diversity officers were charged with ensuring that incorrect ideas would be suppressed, and to guarantee what was deemed by many professors and administrators to be "an indisputably correct consensus." Diversity officers were hired to ensure "subordination—of students and faculty alike—to an entrenched dogma." Many self-identified "liberal" professors, in fact, are supporters of a "deep and pervasive . . . regime of intolerance. For many academics, the desire to cleanse the campus of dissident voices has become something of a mission."

Boyers criticizes "willing what cannot be willed," the attempt to impose ideological principles on an uncooperative reality. He argues that both conservatives and progressives "have been seduced by ill-digested ideas that have led them to deny the obvious, or to refuse to so much as consider what may be entailed in their principles or avowals." In other words, ideology has been substituted for the reality principle, with satisfying ideas never tested by experience and evidence. One example is "the will required to uphold the proscription against blaming the victim." This will requires "a strictly managed effort not to acknowledge things that may threaten our principled benevolence." Thus, "the characterization of entire groups as victims has underwritten the conviction that such groups may never be subjected to criticism of any kind." By treating groups as beyond criticism, we will that they will be beyond criticism by acting as we would like, which they do not. Once again, we will what cannot be willed.

Reducing people to characteristics based on gross census categories is, according to Boyers, "'unwarranted by or echoed in the actual moral-psychological economies of ordinary citizens,"' quoting Akeel Bilgrami. "We. . . grow too comfortable with categories that make of identity a baldly obvious and undifferentiated fact." But this is not an innocent oversimplification, but a politically motivated one. "There are countless . . . voices sowing pointless triumphalist

rage and flattening our common view of identity." But this "suits those who want to make of identity a weapon in a war that pits oppressors against victims."

Boyers criticizes the "diversity" culture because its advocates do not like or tolerate real differences, especially differences of perspective and opinion. It does appear that what diversity advocates, seen in "the lockstep march of the new commissars setting up to take control of our cultural institutions, from the universities to mainstream media," really mean by "diversity" is many people looking different all saying the same thing. This undermines intellectual inquiry, substituting for it enforced conformity and unthinking uniformity.

Two further issues taken up by Boyers are, one, the campaign on behalf of the disabled (or otherwise abled) to forbid any reference to physical capability, such as seeing, hearing, walking, running, etc., and, two, the ban on "cultural appropriation," which is any cultural borrowing from anyone other than oneself. Boyers sees these as an illegitimate suppression of imagination, and a violation of freedom, especially of artists. These discussions, as all of the previous ones mentioned, are interrogated for their complexities with considerable subtleness and literary enhancement. Boyers presents many relevant anecdotes from his academic milieu and refers to many significant authors, such as Mill, Marcuse, and Said. The summary of Boyers' views presented here do not, of course, do justice to his complex explorations.

Boyers is worried about "the revolution of moral concern, driven by people in the grip of delusions." In his conclusion, he largely abstains from telling us what should be done. Rather, he focuses on what is "not to be done":

- The promulgation of ideas entertained without seriousness, that is, without any corresponding consideration what would be entailed were they actually to be effected.
- The use of ideas such as privilege, appropriation, ableism, and mircroaggression to sow hostility, persecute other members of a community, and make meaningful conversation impossible.
- The use of the classroom and the seminar to indoctrinate students and thus to send them off parroting views that they have not adequately thought through or mastered.
- The creation of an "us versus them" orientation, underwritten by enemies lists and fueled by a sense that on matters for which a consensus has been reached no dispute may be tolerated.
- The weaponization of "virtue" for ... "class advantage," with zealots adept mainly at trumpeting their own superior status and making a "fetish of indignation."

Boyers is primarily worried about "a liberalism increasingly drawn to denial and overt repression." But, at the same time, Boyers is not shy about providing his progressive bona fides. He rails against President Trump and conservatives.

"The political Right has Fox News to purvey lies, misinformation, and sheer ignorance." Another progressive shibboleth is condemning "the fanaticism and cruelty of Jewish settlers" in Judea and Samaria. More basic, Boyers brags that he has "bought into the logic of diversity, and fully supports the imperative of restitution," and enthusiastically supports "affirmative action" discrimination.

Boyers' progressivism is why he never questions the foundation of "social justice" ideology; in fact, he accepts its validity. He never discusses or criticizes the theoretical bases of "social justice" ideology, its genealogy of Marxist class conflict theory, feminist neo-Marxist gender class conflict theory, race, sexuality, and ethnicity class conflict theory, postmodernism and its rejection of truth, evidence, and reality, Leninist postcolonial theory which ahistorically blames all of the world's problems on Western imperialism and colonialism, and intersectionism, which demands unity among the world's victims.

Boyers buys into social justice ideology but does not like the results when it is taken to its logical extreme, as it is in contemporary "higher education," the media, large corporations, and progressive governments such as those of Obama and Trudeau. He wants to "will what cannot be willed": moderate and tolerant progressivism.

Philip Carl Salzman (philip.carl.salzman@mcgill.ca) is Emeritus Professor of Anthropology at McGill University, in Montréal, and a Senior Fellow at the Frontier Centre for Public Policy. This article, originally published in Minding the Campus*, is republished here with permission.*

Review of Jason Brennan and Phillip Magness, *Cracks in the Ivory Tower*

Darren Abramson

Jason Brennan and Phillip Magness, *Cracks in the Ivory Tower: The Moral Mess of Higher Education*, Oxford University Press, 2019, 322 pages.

The academic book is in the process of becoming an echochamber of anti-science, projects that are funded by professional manipulators to confuse others or serve selfish ends (or both). Or at least that's my impression after trying to read *Cracks in the Ivory Tower* (Oxford University Press (!)). This work drove me to ask, 'what is going on with books as a form of academic publication in the age of the Internet?'

Luckily, there is good, free research being conducted on this question. Below are three visualizations from a study of large scale academic citation data.

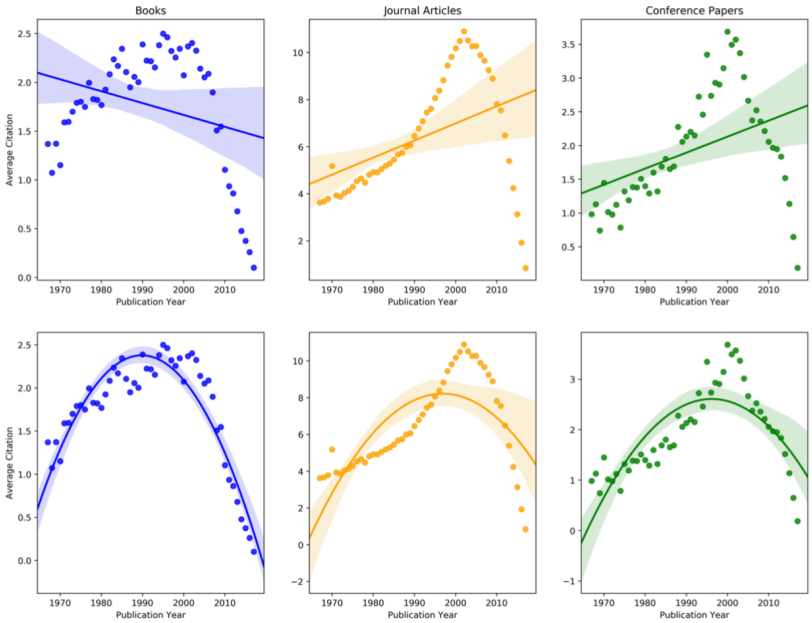

Figure 3. Relationship between Publication Year and Average Citation Count

Figure 3 above shows that as we enter the third decade of the 21st century, academic books are on average being cited almost no times in academic literature. All forms of academic content is being cited less and less, but books are the most expensive to create. To my mind the most plausible explanation for the drop in citations is a flood of academic publishing overall, as digital technologies drive the cost for publication and distribution to 0. This picture emerges clearly from the data. Overall academic publication since the early 2000s went from linear to geometric growth.

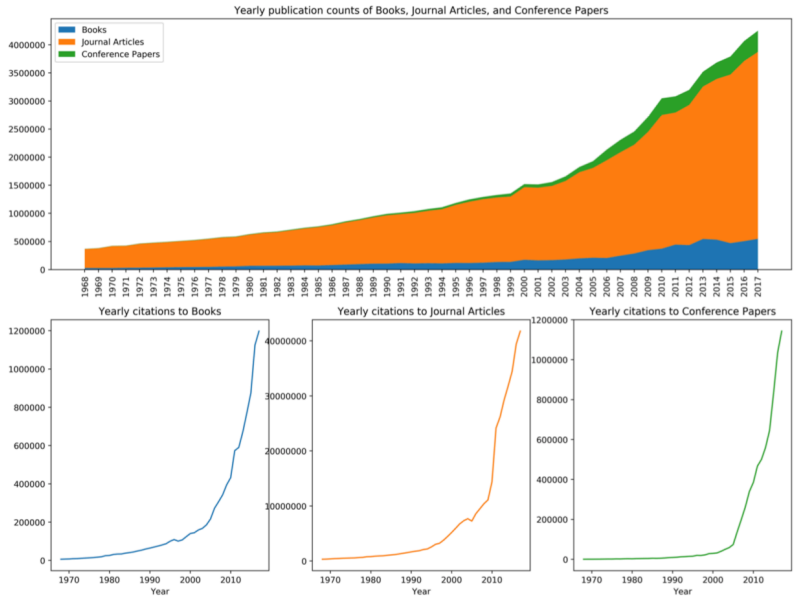

Figure 1. Yearly Publication and Citation Counts

Cracks gives me the impression that desperate publishers, trying to derive revenue for a dead wood product in an open access academic publishing world, are both cutting editorial costs and courting sensationalist nonsense that, they hope, will produce Amazon clicks. The next visualization shows that, although overall citations per publication are approaching zero across three major categories of academic publications, there are differences between formats emerging recently in terms of what other format cites them.

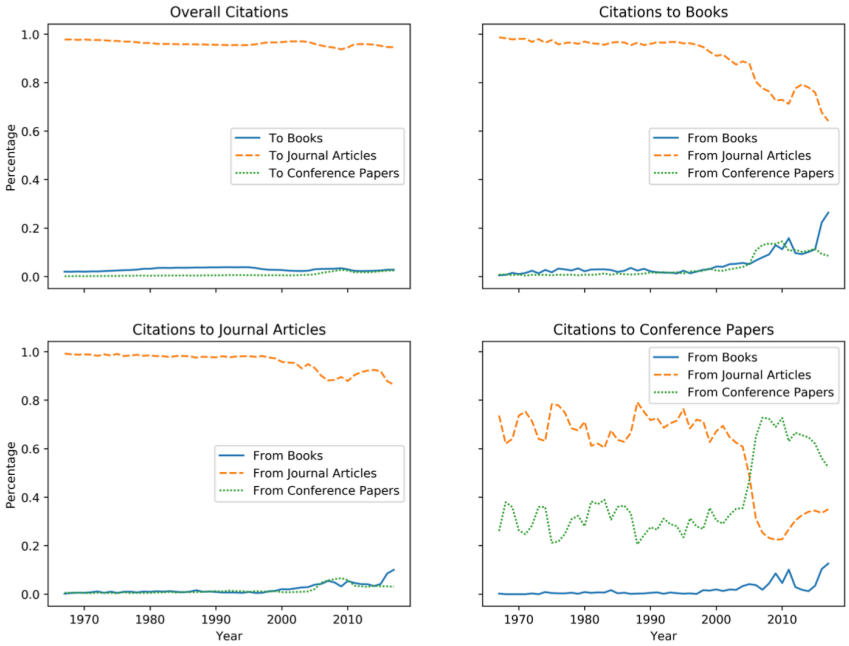

Figure 2. Citation Changes in Percentages Between 1967 and 2017

Citations to books are dropping off from journals and conference papers, while the percent of all citations to books that are from books is growing rapidly. My own sense is that the peer review associated with journal articles and conferences is a better protection of academic significance and quality, but this is arguable.

Now let me give you evidence from the book itself for my strong, initial conclusion. First, since this is a book that is trying to convince you of immorally deceptive promises made by the post-secondary academic industry, let's get a look at what the authors think of students: "every hour spent studying is not an hour spent playing video games, working out, partying, or hooking up" (35). It is revelatory that it doesn't even occur to the authors that, due to tuition that has for decades been rising faster than inflation,[2]students might be balancing part-time jobs with their educations. The authors seem to be thinking about undergraduate students through the lens of their own experiences: "When we the authors were in college, study groups were for scoping out potential girlfriends" (50).

Given the contempt that the authors have for undergraduate students, perhaps you might think they think better of their readers. Unfortunately, that's not the case. Simple ideas get muddied every few pages with bizarre, almost unreadable examples and thought experiments. Did an Oxford University Press editor sign off on the attempt to explain reliability vs. validity by asking the reader to "suppose you ask the character Hodor from *Game of Thrones* to read a bunch

of flash cards" (87)? We are also told of the "diamond-water paradox... Early in the development of economics, economists were puzzled why water costs more than diamonds" (31). No, there is no error in my quotation from the text.

This last bit of nonsense is inserted to explain why (I think) the authors' view that universities are filled with terrible teachers. This factoid is presented, like so many others in this 'book', with sarcastic anecdote, but no data: "Students and academic outsiders often gasp when they discover that many professors, including world-famous scholars, can't teach and show no interest in learning how" (30). I think that the authors are talking about large introductory classrooms, which is of course a single part of education in the post-secondary context. Research supervision doesn't appear as a topic of the authors' scorn.

Luckily, as early as Chapter 3, *Cracks* gives us what the authors view as their most important contribution. In their words, "[the] chapter [Why Most Academic Advertising Is Immoral Bullshit] may be the most damning in the entire book" (48). This chapter begins by quoting the marketing material from a handful of universities, and then lazily gets to the point:

"Why study the liberal arts? Insert joke here about art history majors flipping burgers" (52).

Pages 55-81 have the following structure. First, they cite data according to which philosophy majors earn more and do better at a variety of standardized tests than other majors. Then they offer pages and pages of weak sources for doubt that maybe, just maybe, the education had nothing to do with the successes of these students. Sources of doubt include

- an endless, pedantic presentation of the concept of a selection effect, without any evidence of its operation in this case;
- whining that universities don't conduct randomized clinical trials to justify claims about the value of a liberal arts education;
- weak data that, across all majors and some standardized tests, some students don't improve scores after a four year degree; and,
- weak evidence that, for some definitions of "transfer learning", this psychological effect is small.

The "most damning chapter" is excellent evidence that this book can be dismissed outright by anyone interested how to improve post-secondary education, with one suprising exception: the recognition by the authors in a few places (e.g. p. 41) that administrators, as a percentage of university expenditures, are outpacing academics.

Darren Abramson (da@dal.ca) is an associate professor of philosophy at Dalhousie University, in Halifax. He works mainly in cognitive science, philosophy of computing, and philosophy of mind.

Footnotes

1. Zhu, Y., Yan, E., Peroni, S., and Che, C. (2019). Nine Million Books and Eleven Million Citations: A Study of Book-Based Scholarly Communication Using OpenCitations. arXiv preprint arXiv:1906.06039. Note that the creative commons license associated with this publication permits reproduction of figures.

2. For a review of tuition over time in the Canadian context, see the RBC report For the American context, see Market Watch

Review of Anthony Kronman, *The Assault on American Excellence*

John MacKinnon

Anthony Kronman, *The Assault on American Excellence*, Free Press, 2019, ISBN-13: 978-1-5011-9948-6, 272 pages.

In the summer of 2015, the "master" of Pierson College at Yale University decided to change his title in response to student complaints about the term's "offensive connotations," since it reminded them, they claimed, of plantation culture in the Old South (1). "I found it hard to believe he was serious," writes Anthony Kronman in his new book, *The Assault on American Excellence*, describing the whole "master" debate as "a ridiculous exaggeration of wounded feelings, anguished responses, and inflated moral concerns" (2). But there was more to come.

Later that same summer, Yale's president, in a traditional welcoming address delivered to the incoming class, revisited the long-simmering controversy over the name of Calhoun College, whose namesake, John Calhoun, had infamously defended slavery as a "positive good" almost two centuries before (198). In time, the president did "what those of an administrative temper often do," writes Kronman, striking a committee, which he christened the Committee to Establish Principles on Renaming, along with the Presidential Advisory Group on the Renaming of Calhoun College, thereby initiating "a blur of administrative legerdemain that did little to conceal the absence of intellectual or moral leadership that had characterized the entire affair from the start" (4).

As Halloween approached, Yale's Intercultural Affairs Council reminded students in an e-mail of the danger of committing acts of even well-intentioned "cultural appropriation" in their choice of Halloween costumes. When Erika Christakis, a scholar of early childhood development and Associate Master of Stillman College, e-mailed her own students, reassuring them that they were responsible enough to make their own decisions about such matters, angry students protested that she had violated Yale's commitment to inclusion. In the courtyard of Stillman College, her husband, a respected scientist and Master of

the College, was accosted for two hours by a mob screaming obscenities and denouncing him and his wife. Limp and tardy in his defense of the Christakises, the president ensured that their only reasonable option was to step down from their positions at Stillman. According to Kronman, the president's "empty words of peace and reconciliation skirted all the hard questions raised by the Halloween incident and covered the matter in an anodyne fog of pretended agreement" (5).

Had a comparable trio of controversies erupted on any other North American campus in recent years, it is doubtful that they would have been addressed with any greater clarity or courage than they were at Yale in 2015. But, as Sterling Professor of Law at, and former Dean of, Yale Law School, Kronman is particularly aggrieved at the intellectual shallowness and misjudgment of educational values on display in this series of halting responses by his own university.

However unrelated the controversy over the title of master, the Calhoun debate, and the Halloween episode may appear, all were expressions of what Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. calls "the effervescence of democratic negation," a kind of belligerent egalitarianism that, while perfectly at home in the world of politics and law, where equality has considerable, even decisive, weight, is not just misplaced, but often destructive, in an academic setting (11-14). Democratic negation is, for Holmes, a program of leveling, of knocking down what is "subtile" and "profound," and belittling what it ought to revere (14).

In this, Holmes follows Tocqueville, who, though an admirer of American democracy, was aware, too, of the pathologies to which it is prone. Foremost among these are, first, the threat posed to independent thought by the "tyranny of the majority" and, second, the loss of esteem for human greatness. For Tocqueville, says Kronman, the "master principle of American democracy is that of equality. Its triumph is to make the world more 'just."' But it also makes it "less exalted" (39). In order to temper such excesses, he urges the establishment and protection of various associations or "enclaves" devoted to the pursuit of excellence and beauty, including museums, literary societies, colleges and universities (43).

Kronman refers to the "obvious tension" between democratic values and the governing ideals of higher education. "But instead of seeing in this tension a needed and creative tonic," he writes, "many on campus today seem to want to make it disappear. Led by pious levelers, they strain to give the principle of equality, which is and ought to be the touchstone of our political life and a sacred legal value, a more rigorous application to academic relations as well" (20). Each of the Yale controversies, or "movements," that he recounts expresses "a democratic commitment. Each is motivated by a legitimate concern with injustice in the society at large and with racial injustice in particular. But each does great harm to our colleges and universities when this commitment is extended to their interior culture. . . " (15). Among the more grievous harms of this ill-advised extension is to cast "a pall of mendacity" over universities "by compelling them. . . to say one thing while doing another" and to consolidate in classrooms what he calls "the new masterless world of teaching and learning" (17, 217; also 133-136).

Kronman briefly discusses the important distinction Irving Babbitt draws between humanism and humanitarianism (51-55). Whereas the latter's "program of service" is ardently democratic, the humanist's training is invariably "aristocratic" (53). In fact, the assault on excellence to which Kronman's title alludes is "an assault on the aristocratic ideal that underlies the humanist tradition" (215). In our own time, of course, to defend aristocratic ideals is to invite howls of derision, as Kronman is well aware. For while egalitarians are prepared to accept (for the time being, at least) certain academic distinctions of rank (for instance, who deserves an A, and who a C or an F), just as they are willing to recognize different levels of achievement in "narrowly defined vocational pursuits" (like baking date-squares, throwing curveballs, or predicting the weather), they adamantly reject the assumption that certain people can out-perform others in what Kronman calls "the all-inclusive work of being human" (6, 17, 7, 13, 24, 30; also 154-162). According to the aristocratic ideal, however, since education is, or at least can be, not merely additive, but transformative, since a person's humanity, therefore, "can grow," such that her life exhibits "grades and distinctions of human fulfillment," standards of excellence clearly apply "beyond the realm of specific tasks" to include that of being human (30).

To egalitarians, this all sounds impossibly archaic. Nor does it help to insist, with John Adams, that "natural" aristocracy is a matter of neither lineage nor title, but of merit, or to deride, with Babbitt, the "fake" aristocracy of the "outer advantages of wealth, or power, or station," or to grant, with Kronman himself, that aristocracy, properly understood, is based on accomplishment, not status or race (36, 53, 72; also 100). For aristocracy of whatever sort requires the disposition and leisure to plant one's nose in books, and who is foolish enough to pretend that that makes anyone a better human being?

When Kronman describes aristocracy as a "spiritual condition," a "greatness of soul" that expresses itself in a "love of what is brilliant and fine," and aspires to "mastering the art of living," it cannot help but seem a privilege reserved for a pampered and insular few (48, 9, 10, 215). And yet, the essence of the aristocratic ideal, he maintains, is rooted in the belief that "there is such a thing as character; that a person's character can be better or worse; that character is shaped by education; and that one of the goals of higher education is to instill in the student a love of those things for which a person of fine character should care. . . " (63). While powers of observation and enjoyment, of expression and judgment, sympathy and self-understanding are universal, they are developed to a higher degree in some than in others (9, 52-53, 70). The "principal aim" of higher education may be, as Kronman argues, "teaching and learning for their own sakes," but he repeatedly concedes that it is also "an aid to the independent-mindedness on which the health of. . . democracy depends" (216, 15). After all, higher education aims to develop a habit of judgment "less vulnerable to the moods of the moment," to encourage self-reliance and a singular "spaciousness of outlook," to strengthen "the ability to subject one's own opinions and feelings to higher and more durable measures of truth and justice," and to enable one thereby to resist both the hollow appeals of sentimentalists and the flattery of

tyrants (10, 19, 45).

If the aristocrat is no egalitarian (and the humanist no humanitarian), nor is he a libertarian (113). This is amply confirmed in Kronman's discussion of campus speech, particularly concerning the widely invoked notion of the "marketplace of ideas." He imagines a place called "Speakers' Corner," where no holds are barred in the free exchange of ideas. Heckling, open protests, and the hurling of epithets are not just tolerated, but expected, even occasionally encouraged. No authority presides over, just as no topic or text anchors, the proceedings. People come and go as they please, attending to or ignoring contributions as they see fit. At Speakers' Corner, participants are concerned only with advertising their beliefs (91). They are self-centered, predatory, indifferent to the fate of those peddling other wares. Like competitors trying to increase their market share, they connive to defeat other competitors by discovering their vulnerabilities and planning the best avenue of attack. If collaboration occurs, it is only as an expedient (84). If truth and toleration emerge, they are unintended consequences (89). What matters at Speakers' Corner is simply "the external coincidence of belief, not its source or ground" (97). A market is not a conversation.

And yet, the "community of conversation" of which independent minds are, or of which they aspire to become, members is no mere "community of inclusion" (16). The idea of inclusion, Kronman says, "is essentially egalitarian," but it is "a bad egalitarianism that defeats the very purpose of the good one that welcomes everyone, without discrimination, to the strenuous and discriminating life of the mind," reinforcing "the infantile tendency that every Socratic conversation aims to reverse" (102, 103, 105). Away from Speakers' Corner, in a university seminar, for instance, there is rarely heckling. But there are other ways in which one can attempt to silence: appealing to a speaker's feelings; impugning the motives of the person addressed; invoking some special insight to which only members of a particular group have privileged access and that is presumed by itself to constitute a source of authority. All of these amount to repudiations of the conversational ideal, which requires the finding or building of a shared ground on which all can stand, a "space of reasoned argument" that can only be sustained "by those who seek a form of agreement that is unattainable by threats, intimidation, the emphatic demonstration of feeling, or a mere show of hands," ploys to which members of both the community of inclusion and the marketplace of ideas resort (92, 94).

Kronman is nowhere more animated than in his remarks about "diversity," the "most powerful word in higher education today," signifying a cluster of dogmas that are repeated with "uniform piety," a kind of "manic gusto," in the official pronouncements of virtually every college and university in North America (119, 121). While diversity is an estimable legal and political goal, it has come to be touted instead as a source of enrichment in instruction and study. This is the result, Kronman says, of a "terrible confusion" (123). Here, he launches into a lengthy and illuminating review of *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, the landmark case heard by the Supreme Court of the United States

in 1977 concerning the special admissions policy implemented by the medical school at UC Davis to increase the representation of minority students (123). In a starkly divided opinion, the deciding vote was cast by Justice Lewis F. Powell, Jr., an ardent individualist hostile to "the idea that affirmative action may be used to repair the effects" of so "amorphous" a concept of injury as that of "societal discrimination" (126). But while, on Powell's view, reverse discrimination could not be used "to cure an extracurricular wrong," it could be justified on the grounds that it provides "educational benefits" (128, 129). This single interpretive flourish has since "reshaped every aspect of educational policy and experience," writes Kronman, introducing changes to the culture of our universities "of a far-reaching and destructive kind" (130). He offers three main criticisms of this transformation. First, while "considerations of individual responsibility and political solidarity" strongly suggest that there must be a time-limit to whatever process of reparation is adopted, it is unlikely that programs designed to promote diversity, construed as an academic good "essential to the quality of higher education" and supported by a bloated bureaucracy, will ever come to an end (132). Second, as we have seen in Kronman's remarks concerning the controversies at Yale, Powell's characterization is "an invitation to bad faith." The dogma of diversity, that is, encourages universities "to say they are doing one thing while doing another. It breeds dishonesty in an environment where honesty should be at a premium." And it discourages reflection on whether the promotion of racial and ethnic diversity can be defended on educational grounds at all, as opposed to those of social justice (133-134). Finally, Powell's "forced conversion" of a political ideal into an educational one has the unsurprising effect of politicizing the academy by transposing political passion into the educational process itself. But once academic arguments "assume a political tone, shaming and the other tools of politics not only become more commonplace, they acquire a legitimacy" that undermines the conversational ideal and compromises the special character of academic freedom (137, 138).

The campaign to rename buildings and remove statues is motivated by the same commitment to equality that underwrites efforts both to limit speech in the name of inclusion and to promote greater racial and ethnic diversity. Like these, it "seeks to reshape campus life in the light of a political ideal." And, like theirs, its essential aim is "to flatten or level. . . " (165). In this case, it is memory that is flattened (186). Although renaming and removing may seem "a costless way of asserting our present values," writes Kronman, it nonetheless runs the risk of promoting "an evangelical confidence in the righteousness of our own beliefs," impugning "the humanity of those who oppose them," and destroying "the bridge of sympathy between the present and the past" (176). It presumes to know what people in the past "*ought to have* thought and believed," encouraging "the idea that all right-minded citizens have always been of *one* mind" (170, 174). When the physical reminders of the past "are removed or reshaped so that nothing remains of them except what conforms to the visionary ideal that directs the reshaping," the vital stubbornness of the past is compromised (173).

Instead, the past should be recognized as "a provocation to reflection on the changeability of mores and motives and on the complexity of human beings" (183). It provokes precisely because it "confronts us with the spectacle of men and women whose values, habits, instincts, and beliefs were wildly different from our own *and yet* were human beings like us" (180). This is "a fruitful tension," he says, which, like that between our democratic values and the governing ideals of higher education, must be sustained, not dissolved (181). The campaign to rename and remove, in fact, "draws attention away from the special responsibility that our colleges and universities have to cultivate the capacity for enduring the moral ambiguities of life," which counts as "a moral strength, . . . a species of moral imagination as valuable as it is rare" (165).

To those who would claim that this is simply a recipe for resignation or indifference, Kronman counters that it is, in fact, "a condition of moral maturity," the attitude "of a grown-up man or woman who knows that his or her ideals cannot be achieved simply by changing the name of a building or treating important parts of the past as a gallery of horrors that ought to be closed for good." It is what Hannah Arendt means by an "enlarged mentality" and what Kronman himself means by the aristocratic spirit. Summoning the will to live with a "morally mixed past," instead of "painting it over" or removing it to "the anaesthetized precincts of a museum" where it "no longer offends," is neither a skill nor an expertise, but a quality of character, an excellence of the soul, a better way of being human (184-185, 165).

Kronman writes with admirable passion, probity and erudition. Together with his earlier book, *Education's End* (Yale University Press: 2007), *The Assault on American Excellence* counts among the most trenchant and morally serious diagnoses of the beleaguered state of higher education today, and a call to arms to those determined to reclaim it.

John E. MacKinnon (john.mackinnon@smu.ca) teaches philosophy at Saint Mary's University, in Halifax. *His article "Narrative Rhyme and the Good Life" appears in* Philosophy and Literature*, Volume 42, Number 1, April 2018.*

Review of Henry Reichman, *The Future of Academic Freedom*

Joanne Boucher

Henry Reichman, *The Future of Academic Freedom*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019, 357 pages.

Henry Reichman is very well placed indeed to tackle the troubling and complex issue of academic freedom. Since 2012 Reichman has been an elected officer of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the chair of its Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure. So, he has had a front row seat in probably the most dramatic and contentious decade of the AAUP's century-long history of defining and defending academic freedom. Given the

prominence and dominance of the American university system this book will undoubtedly be of interest to Canadian academics and members of the public concerned about the question. The book combines Reichman's theoretical insights and accounts of directly practical cases with which he has direct experience. In the book's ten chapters he explores a sweeping range of fundamental questions such as: What is the theoretical basis for the justification of academic freedom? What is the role of unions in universities? What is the distinction between academic freedom and freedom of speech? Do faculty members have the right to speak as private citizens? Do students have academic freedom? How has social media affected the question of academic freedom? What is the impact of on-line education? What effect do economic developments – cuts in governments funding to universities, aggressively sought-after corporate donations by university administrations, escalating tuition costs, the increasing and ubiquitous use of part-time faculty, the bloating of university administrations have on the question of academic freedom?

Reichman describes his approach as that of a scholar, advocate and activist. He is a committed defender of the foundational principles of academic freedom as conceived in 1915 by the AAUP. Academic freedom in this classic formulation comprises three key elements: 1. Freedom in research and in the publication of the results; 2. Freedom in the classroom in discussions of their subjects; and 3. Freedom to speak or write freely as citizens and professionals (p. xiv). Reichman champions academic freedom as a discrete good appropriate for the goals of higher education. But he also indicates that he supports the perspective that academic freedom as a value cannot be artificially separated from that of freedom of speech. In his view, the best position is to "embrace the internal tensions and paradoxes of academic freedom by rooting it in professional autonomy, but linking that autonomy to broader expressive rights in the service of the common good that provides the necessary justification for professional authority" (p. 50). Reichman's book grapples with the current tumultuous and divisive political climate and challenges posed by, for example, the rise of social media platforms. The scope of the book is vast. A short review cannot possibly do justice to its range so here I focus on the basic framework he uses to guide his exploration and defense of academic freedom. It should also be kept in mind that the American context ensures that the issue of constitutional rights is always in the foreground.

In the foreword, renowned historian Joan Wallach Scott concisely describes Reichman's position in the following way: "His approach is critical: he rejects the notion that the university is a 'marketplace of ideas,' insisting instead ... on the importance of professional expertise; he embraces the idea that education exists to advance the common good, measured not in economic terms but as an enhancement of the human spirit; and he is adamant about the importance of protecting the political rights of students and faculty alike to protest inequality and injustice on campus and in the larger society" (p. x). Reichman's analysis is broadly framed by the view that there are powerful forces intent upon undermining academic freedom. The greatest threat is from corporate capitalist

forces (enabled by university administrators hungry for financial support and prestige) that seek to replace the true mission of the university – the quest for the common good, human enlightenment, political protest against inequality and injustice – with the crass vision of the university as a profit making enterprise with a mission to produce elite workers committed to this vision of the world.

For Reichman, then, the deeper story, the real story about threats to academic freedom involves not the headline-catching episodes of campus faculty and activists protesting and de-platforming speakers. Rather, academic freedom is most threatened by "academic capitalism." In other words, the battle for academic freedom is one between right wing and left wing forces with the right posing the true threat. For example, in Chapter 5 he cites the aggressive efforts of rich Republicans such as the Koch family to tie donations to universities with the expectation of politically inflected results such as the foundation of right-wing research centres and the provision of platforms for right wing speakers. Reichmann also sees government cut backs to education and efforts to privatize the university system and institute economic imperatives into all university activities (e.g. conceiving of students as consumers, evaluating research according to market criteria, administering universities along business lines) as part of a right-wing assault. It is this orientation, in Reichman's view, that poses the most dire threat to the values of the AAUP. For Reichmann, the election of Donald Trump in 2016 is the ominous culmination of this trend towards academic capitalism. Indeed, the final chapter's title and discussion captures this anxiety, "What is the Future of Academic Freedom under the Trump Regime?"

In this way, Reichman tries to reclaim academic freedom as a central issue for the left against the right. Unfortunately, Reichman does not explain the basis of these categorizations and they are taken to be self-evident. To this end, he is at pains to debunk the idea that university faculty overwhelmingly skew left on the political spectrum. According to Reichman the media have simply pushed this false narrative (p. 200). He writes, "The charge that universities are somehow dominated by "the Left" is now and has always been false and fantastical. Repeating it over and over may comfort some ideological conservatives, but that doesn't make it true" (p. 106). But at another point he concedes the opposite, "To be sure, the widespread complaint from the Right that faculty in the humanities and social sciences are overwhelmingly liberal, while highly exaggerated, is not entirely without basis. And it would be foolish to deny that this preponderance may sometimes inappropriately narrow the scope of discourse in these disciplines" (p. 192). I am not sure what the reader is to conclude from these contradictory statements.

Reichman does recognize that the left has been associated with illiberal calls and actions, for example, to cancel talks, fire faculty, and suppress research deemed to be politically retrograde. However, his treatment of the left is rather gentler than that of the right. For example, he argues that the crisis in academic freedom on campuses has been grossly exaggerated by the right in order to

undermine the left. And when he does cite examples of repressive arguments emanating from left-wing students and faculty his tendency is to underplay their significance. For one thing, the attacks by the right are worse so the missteps of the left are cancelled out, as he says, "The left's attacks on free speech may endanger the academic project, but the greater threat to the free exchange of ideas comes from academic corporatization" (p. 164). Also he emphasizes that the left (students and faculty) are motivated by noble goals which mitigates their errors. So, in terms of the concerns of leftist students who seek to limit free expression on campuses Reichman states, "Are student demands to removed monuments or rename buildings more dangerous to free expression than the increasing power that donors, granting agencies, and governments have in how colleges and universities make use of the resources they provide? ... Do a small number of highly publicized efforts to silence racist and misogynist speakers, no matter how misguided pose a greater threat to free expression than well-funded blacklists of faculty members and orchestrated campaigns of racist and misogynist harassment?" (pp. 152-153). One of the problems here is that Reichman too readily accepts the tidy narrative that student activists (and faculty) simply identify the bad – sexism, racism, etc. – and valiantly protest it. Their missteps are minor but well-intentioned. We need only to think of the hysterical treatment and harassment of Lindsay Shepherd and Jordan Peterson to doubt this scenario.

However, what I think Reichman misses are the ways in which the commitments of activist faculty and students precisely coincide with the goals of universities. As many have noted, increasingly university administrations – in the United States and certainly in Canada – have embraced 'progressive' political agendas. For example, in Canada university bureaucracies have explicitly adopted the notion that universities should be "indigenized" in order to engage in a process of reconciliation with indigenous peoples. Frances Widdowson is one scholar who has carefully followed and analysed this development and argues that this policy is a threat to academic freedom. Widdowson consistently points out that it is entirely unclear what "indigenization" of universities means in any practical sense. But what is clear is that the federal government and university administrations across the country are committed to contributing considerable funds, hires (even explicitly race-based hires), and resources to ensure that this explicitly political process unfolds. This is but one case in which the political goals championed by faculty and students coincide with those of university administrations.

In the United States the case of Bret Weinstein may also be seen in this light. Weinstein was driven out of his tenured position at Evergreen State College in 2017 by mobbing and harassment by students who deemed him to be an enemy of all that is good. The super-woke students were directly enabled by the College administration as their political sensibilities coincided with the university's aspirational image as an anti-sexist, anti-racist, etc. etc. safe space university. Reichman does not mention this dramatic case.

The implementation of these political agendas in the university requires the expansion of its bureaucracy – human resources experts, diversity officers, counsellors are required to implement and monitor new policies to increase "diversity," to "indigenize" – often at the expense of open, academic enquiry. Reichman's failure to engage with these significant threats to academic freedom weakens his otherwise cogent defense of this basic principle.

Joanne Boucher (j.boucher@uwinnipeg.ca) is a member of the Department of Political Science at the University of Winnipeg. Her interests include early modern and feminist political thought.

Academic Philistinism

Mark Mercer

Most universities endorse the principle that the university itself is to make no official statement on matters of fact.

The General Faculties Council at the University of Alberta, for instance, recently approved a statement on Freedom of Expression that contains the following injunction: "It is for individuals, not the institution, to make those judgments for themselves. . . ."

Nonetheless, universities violate the principle regularly. One example comes from the University of Alberta itself.

On 20 November, U of A education lecturer Dougal MacDonald took to Facebook to post his view that Stalin was not responsible for the Holodomor (the 1932-33 famine in the Ukraine) and that the accusation that he was is anti-Soviet propaganda.

Deputy provost Wendy Rogers was speaking in her official capacity when she responded, "Mr. MacDonald's views do not represent those of the University of Alberta. As a private citizen, Mr. MacDonald has the right to express his opinion, and others have the right to critique or debate that opinion. It is

our understanding that he has not expressed these views in the context of his employment relationship with the university."

Lesley Cormack, Dean of Arts, and Jennifer Tupper, Dean of Education, issued a joint statement: "We, as the Dean of Education and the Dean of Arts, wish to state categorically that this (MacDougal's claim that the Holodomor is 'fictitious', 'a myth concocted by the Hitlerite Nazis to discredit the Soviet Union') is not true."

"As the Dean of Education and the Dean of Arts"—not as critics among interested peers putting forth their own view.

The University of Alberta took no action against Mr MacDougal, though Dr Rogers, as well as associating her university with a particular view, seemed to have been cautioning Mr MacDougal not to speak to his students about the Holodomor, or else.

The rationale behind the principle the U of A both affirms and ignores is that when universities as institutions take a stand on a matter of fact, they potentially inhibit professors and students from discussing the relevant issue openly and candidly. The university has spoken. Those who dissent (or remain unsure) are putting themselves at risk of censure. They are, at least, at risk of incurring the opprobrium of the orthodox at their institutions, for the orthodox may well think themselves justified by the institution's declaration in calling out the heretics.

Certainly anyone who wishes to join a university's administration in the future had better be sure to speak in line with their university's positions.

By staying quiet about the facts or their accurate interpretation or meaning, a university encourages the members of its intellectual community to investigate freely and to discuss things openly and candidly, for no one has to wonder what will happen to them should they run afoul of the view that has the university's imprimatur. As well, that the university has no official line reinforces the public's trust of the research that emanates from it. (Can Albertans now be sure that historians at the U of A who study the Ukraine are honest and independent researchers, free and keen to pursue the topic as they wish and to draw the conclusions they think warranted?)

The principle that the university itself is to make no official statement on matters of fact is not easy to formulate. The address of the university, the departments within it, the times and places of the scheduled classes, what the university policy on plagiarism is—these are all matters of fact on which the university can surely pronounce authoritatively. Formulating the principle in terms of controversial matters or matters of contemporary academic interest won't do, for anything at any time could become controversial or a topic of interest.

To interpret the principle as a live, structuring injunction within an academic institution, one needs to understand and appreciate its purpose. If the culture of a university is one of intellectual community in both research and teaching,

university administrators will not even think to associate their institutions with particular accounts of what the facts are in areas members of the community might want to investigate. They won't be inclined to have their universities say what is true and what isn't, because of their commitment to free, open, and candid research and discussion. That administrators don't mind having their universities declare the truth is both symptom and cause of their lack of commitment.

Now why would administrators, and professors and students, as well, want their university to take a public stance on one or another matter? Why wouldn't they leave taking stances to the individual professors and students, and let them inquire into the matter and criticize each other's methods, thinking, and findings? Why would they, indeed, risk narrowing and inhibiting the discussion?

Because, it would seem, there's more at stake than the academic mission and the academic culture that supports it. Failing to endorse a certain view of history or culture or a people's aspirations can intensify the hurt or offense caused by the original statement.

"The Ukrainian Students' Society is extremely disturbed and ashamed that a University of Alberta Faculty member has expressed this hateful behaviour. We are appalled to have these false beliefs associated with our campus and our organization and insist that immediate action is taken."

The university is "committed to ensuring a diverse, equitable and inclusive learning and working environment," Deputy Provost Rogers replied.

Whether the topic is rape culture, Trans, residential schools, race, bullying, feminism, vaccination, climate change, child pornography, immigration, men's rights, human rights, or civil liberties—diversity, inclusion, and equity, understood (only) as they are officially understood, require that discussion be monitored and guided.

Now, is this a bad thing? It isn't, one might argue, because one part of the university's mission is teaching, and teaching cannot occur when students feel unwelcome or undervalued, and hearing certain opinions expressed, and then not condemned by their university, can lead them to feel unwelcome or undervalued. But this is to misunderstand the purpose and nature of university teaching. University teaching is to help students to acquire a new, additional identity, that of scholars, researchers, and intellectuals. It is not to confirm them in an identity they already possess. Intellectuals wish to understand things as they are, and, further, to fashion and hold their understandings on grounds of evidence and argument. Interfering with the ethos of the university in order to avoid offense and hurt prevents students from coming to live by and appreciate intellectual autonomy.

In the end, then, universities that attempt to disassociate themselves from views held by members of their campus communities, and to associate themselves with the proper views (even when the proper views are the true and sound views),

are declaring that they value their academic mission much less than they value some social mission. They are, after all, seeking to promote the latter at the expense of the former.

Mark Mercer (mark.mercer@smu.ca) teaches philosophy at Saint Mary's University. He has been a member of SAFS since March 2005.

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