

“Speaking Freely and Freedom of Speech: Feminists Navigating the ‘New’ Right”

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At the end of October 2018, posters appeared on campuses across North America that read: “It’s OK to be White.” The message bore similarity to previous messaging and graffiti left on university campuses stating “White Lives Matter” as direct backlash to the Black Lives Matter movement in 2016 and 2017. The ‘alt-right,’ ‘alternative right,’ or ‘new right’ as it has come to be known, is a largely online ideology that unifies a variety of smaller movements opposed to mainstream conservatism and roughly attempts to consolidate values and ideas that seem to them to be lost under an evermore liberal society (Hodge and Hallgrimsdottir 2020). As many students of feminist thought will contend, even as voices of the so-called alt-right spill out onto university campuses, the content of their ideas are not new. Feminist thinkers will add these public expressions of white racial anxiety to feminist analyses of those documented during the abolition and civil rights eras, and the aftermath of 9/11, among other examples. In conjunction with white nationalist statements, some of these messages have also included anti-Semitic, anti-immigrant, anti-feminist, and anti-2SLGBTQ+ language, and in some cases mention direct links to white nationalist organizations. Thankfully, such affirmations of white supremacy and misogyny stand in contrast to the vocal documentation and protest of a range of injustices in Canada (and the United States) today.

These injustices include the loss of life, physical injury, and psychic violence caused by police brutality against Black and Indigenous people, as well as very public attacks led by white men against racialized people and Indigenous women (Gillis 2020, Globe 2020, Ibrahim 2020, Porter 2017). The past decade has also seen brutal attacks on large groups of people or individual women by men who identify as incels, whose social media activities often reveal links between misogyny, xenophobia, and racism and identify women, immigrants, and Black, Indigenous, and people of colour as the

source of their aggrievement (Boisvert 2020, CBC News 2020a and 2020b, Pickard 2020). The restrictions placed on the arrivals of refugees by the Canadian state, and particularly refugees who are people of colour, may well galvanize a new generation of human rights activism on a global scale (Humphreys 2020). The totality of these hostile messages aimed at ‘others’ signals the need for attention to systemic and everyday gendered, racialized, and sexualized violence in Canadian society. The dismantling of normative investments in white supremacy in North America is slow and by no means a given.

A common thread that connects these acts of violence is the idea that Canadian institutions—including universities—have become places that actively exclude and silence “white men,” to use Sara Ahmed’s shorthand (2014), and that violent retribution is justified as a response. With varying levels of visibility and commitment to change, many Canadian universities recognize the importance of acknowledging and making amends for historical and contemporary harm wrought by their racist practices as part of the Canadian state—at least in universities’ supportive public statements and public relations. Institutions like universities may have acknowledged racialized violence through special lectures, teach-ins, and vigils, as many did after Barbara Kentner was fatally struck in Thunder Bay, Ontario, on January 29, 2017 (a crime for which the charges were downgraded from murder to manslaughter in 2020). Public commitments to combating racism—and especially anti-Black racism—by universities most recently proliferated after the mass public demonstrations of protest in North America in response to the murder of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis, Minnesota on May 25, 2020, and Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky on June 13, 2020, and in Canada, the violent deaths of Regis Korchinski-Paquette in Toronto, Ontario on May 27, 2020 and Chantel Moore in Edmundston, New Brunswick on June 4, 2020.

However, these public declarations of opposition to racism and expressed commitment to developing better internal procedures and policies could be considered a part of what a diversity practitioner interviewed by Sara Ahmed for *On Being Included: Racism and Institu-*

tional Life aptly characterizes as “doing the document rather than doing the doing” (2012, 86). Public statements and policy-making risk becoming practices that stifle dissent and critique (especially internally) while presenting an inclusive anti-racist public face that does not represent the reality for those studying and working in those spaces. As Frances Henry, Enakshi Dua, Carl E. James, Audrey Kobayashi, Peter Li, Howard Ramos, and Malinda S. Smith and many others have documented, Indigenous and racialized faculty are underrepresented across the ranks of these institutions, and face overt racism and microaggressions at work. Their work is undervalued in tenure and promotion processes; at the same time, the internal procedures and policies to address racism at work are inadequate and often fail (Henry et al. 2017, 297-8). Like university faculty, racialized and Indigenous students face conditions similar to those described by Black at Western, a group of alumni who graduated over decades from Western University. They record traumatic exposure to racist professors and an unsympathetic university administration (Rodriguez 2020). Black at Western refer specifically to the white supremacist psychologist J. Philippe Rushton and also to white professors who insist on speaking the n-word aloud in class. Eternity Martis’s memoir *They Said This Would Be Fun: Race, Campus Life, and Growing Up* (2020) extends this picture through narrating her experience as a Black woman and undergraduate student at Western, where she faced racist verbal harassment, assault, and physical threats, as well as constant microaggressions, from other students and community members.¹

The tension between the public face of the university and the silenced experiences of oppression within creates impossible conditions for racialized and Indigenous faculty, students, and staff, and may compound the negative experiences of those who are queer, trans, feminist, and disabled. Institutional accountability is often circumvented through a public condemnation or statement of solidarity. Further, Ameil J. Joseph, Julia Janes, Harjeet Badwall and Shana Almeida astutely critique how these statements frequently expose racialized members of university communities to further harassment and threats, and that such statements are also often made alongside a proclamation of the value of free speech, freedom of expression, or academic

freedom (2020, 168). Despite robust evidence to the contrary, the alt-right claims a position of victimization and oppression for white men that has come about as the result of the small gains to increase equity in universities, small gains which are showcased by universities as evidence of their “progress.”

This collection of papers in *Atlantis* engages with a range of very public moments in which feminist teachers, students, and administrators have faced the type of hostilities described above. The violent ramifications of xenophobic and anti-feminist messaging occurring in educational institutions is not surprising given the ease with which anti-Black racism, anti-feminist positions, and violence continue online and in peoples’ everyday lives. Those working in postsecondary education will already have noticed that, predictably, research funding and resources have pivoted to COVID-19-related issues and rightly so. But also very troubling is that the productivity of certain groups of researchers, including women, and anyone with caregiving responsibilities outside of paid work, has declined noticeably (Dolan and Lawless 2020) and that existing inequalities between male and female-identified faculty in doing the service-work associated with academic life reinforces an even more inequitable future for existing and incoming faculty (Guarino and Borden 2017). These studies suggest that a less diverse range of academics and students will be around to receive funds that will shape who is allowed to help solve the problems of COVID-19 and who will be sidelined to the essential work of caregiving in the home, or other forms of caregiving and service within universities. Combined with the hostilities we reference above, the intersections of gendered carework with deep racial inequities in health could also further marginalize many of the people whose presence in universities has only recently become more common. As universities and colleges cope with the impacts of government responses to COVID-19, it is hard not to anticipate plans for more fiscal austerity that may under-fund some of the very educational fields in the liberal arts and sciences where women, Indigenous people, and Black people have made inroads.

To return to the scale of the classroom, hostilities characterized as free speech by proponents and even

some university administrations reveal policies that are ill-conceived to deal with the issues that arise from these hostilities. In *Living a Feminist Life* (2017), Sara Ahmed presents the illogic and disconnections among arguments about Women’s and Gender Studies as oversensitive to these problems. These arguments so often flung into the media, sometimes by our own colleagues, unfairly bait students to enter into debates that, for all intents and purposes, reduce peoples’ struggles to academic exercises. Those who find themselves the targets of such acts of so-called free speech are frequently under-represented in official responses and are described as censorious and oversensitive when they protest. As Janet Conway argues, the invocation of “free speech” is a deliberate—and easy—attempt to discredit the scholarship, teaching, and expression of marginalized people through what has been a liberal claim (2020). Administrations in Canadian universities have attempted carefully reasoned responses that all too easily ignore the unreasonable conditions in which minoritized students and faculty and their supporters must study and work.

The contributors to this section analyze the barriers, violence, and harassment experienced on a daily basis by feminist university students, faculty, and staff, especially those who are Black, Indigenous, or people of colour, queer, trans, and disabled, which exposes the fallacy of alt-right claims that feminists are oversensitive and unable to tolerate being challenged.

The section opens with an essay by **Robyn Bourgeois**. “Hostility, Harassment, and Violence: On the Limits of ‘Free Speech’ for Minority Feminist Scholars” un-masks the opportunistic and hollow character of most free speech defences that occur in the popular media, which tend to defend free speech only when it supports the status quo. Bourgeois begins with the response to her public scholarly analysis of the mass murder of 22 people in rural Nova Scotia on April 18-19, 2020, an analysis which named the murderer’s white masculinity as central to understanding this massacre and to disputing an emerging narrative of its ‘senselessness.’ Predictably, the response was violent and dedicated to silencing her analysis—which is grounded in scholarship and experience—through personal attacks that targeted her as an Indigenous

woman and mother, threatening physical and sexual violence and calling for her to be fired. Her essay published in this collection guides readers through ten vignettes that explore different facets of the reality that is obscured in right-wing politics and punditry, which is that professors and students who are not white, male, able-bodied, heterosexual, and cisgender are subject to extraordinary scrutiny within and outside of the university, scrutiny that has silencing as its aim. These stories demonstrate the unequal application of so-called free speech principles within the university as well as the popular media, particularly for feminist scholars who are Indigenous, Black, or people of colour.

Elizabeth Brulé's article shares a similar interest to Bourgeois's essay, as it examines how marginalised students' activism and speech on campus are regulated and curtailed through student codes of conduct, civility policies, and, most recently, free speech policies in the provinces of Ontario and Alberta. Although a common assumption is that university students enjoy rights of freedom of expression and rights of assembly protected under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, universities in Canada have the right to establish their own regulations and policies for speech and conduct, a right outlined in universities' legislative acts and legal statutes. Again, the popular narrative that circulates is about universities obsessed with a political correctness that actively silences groups of students (e.g., white men, conservatives) or positions on social issues (e.g., anti-abortion) in order to maintain a sheltered environment. However, a closer examination of how student codes of conduct and civility policies are used shows that they most often quell marginalised students' activism and speech and do not protect students from discrimination and harmful speech. Brulé proposes that focusing on preventing "harm to one's dignity" over "free speech" is a useful way of balancing the necessity for an expansive vision of expressive freedom on campus with ensuring students are not subject to discrimination and harassment, because such a focus shifts attention from individualised rights to collective responsibility.

Madison McDonald picks up the thread of free speech policies that have been recently mandated by

the conservative governments of Ontario and Alberta and at individual universities. "Free Speech Rhetoric and Normalizing Violence" presents an analysis of campus free speech policies that conflate academic freedom and free speech. McDonald argues that heteroactivist, far-right, and alt-right discourses exploit universities' commitment to academic freedom and deploy a framework she calls "bridging rhetoric." Bridging rhetoric refers to the recasting of violent ideologies within more acceptable social norms and discourses; for example, framing a professor's refusal to use a student's requested pronouns as resistance to "compelled speech," rather than as an explicitly transphobic refusal to recognize the student's gender identity. Diverting the attention towards the issue of "compelled speech" stokes anxieties about authoritarianism, normalising the transphobia inherent in the refusal to use someone's requested pronouns. McDonald argues that serious consideration must be given to barring speech that normalises acts of harm, and she analyses the unintended consequences of free speech policies that do not take a position against discrimination and harassment.

Emily Colpitts's article, "Addressing Sexual Violence at Ontario Universities in the Context of Rising Anti-Feminist Backlash," is also engaged with questions about university policy-making and what can and cannot be said. In her article, she grapples with the difficulties in naming the root causes of sexual violence within a context shaped by anti-feminist backlash. Colpitts examines how the arguments of anti-feminist groups like Men's Rights Activists and incels shape media discourse about sexual violence on university campuses, creating moral panic about the persecution of white men and the unlimited power of prudish feminist censors at Canadian universities. However, once again the reality is that survivors of sexual violence face significant limits to speech through non-disclosure agreements, and campus sexual violence policies are often written so that systemic oppression (e.g., misogyny, white supremacy) is minimised in favour of individualistic and gender-neutral descriptions of sexual violence. As such, key campus community members—survivors, feminist faculty, and students—are excluded from policy-making, and sexual violence prevention activity is disproportionately directed

at presenting its messages in a palatable way that will not trigger anti-feminist backlash. Through her analysis, Colpitts explores how anti-feminism limits and shapes how anti-violence work is being done, and argues that concerns about how to deliver these messages to cisgender men have diluted these efforts.

Lindsay Ostridge's "Speaking Freely and Freedom of Speech: Why is Black Feminist Thought Left Out of Ontario University Sexual Violence Policies?" dovetails well with Colpitts's analysis, although Ostridge focuses on a different dimension of sexual violence policies: the theoretical framework that guides the policy-making process. Ostridge offers a detailed analysis of the ways sex and sexual violence continue to be hived off from racialized violence in what would otherwise be a practical application of feminist ideas to making educational institutions freer from violence. In a case study of a standalone campus sexual violence policy, the author examines what administrators hear when mandated to act upon high rates of sexual violence on campus. Specifically, Ostridge argues that decades of Black feminist theorizing and activism that articulate an intersectional approach to challenging violence are ignored in these administrative responses to pressure from feminists themselves. Instead, critical Black feminist concepts like intersectionality are hollowed out to describe individual identities, and administrations are resistant to acknowledging that systems of oppression are interlocked and reinforce one another (Combahee River Collective, 1986). Consequently, administrations continue to criminalize Black people on campus; for example, Ostridge rightly highlights the separation of "women" from "marginalised groups" in the University of Ottawa sexual violence policy, a discursive move that positions white women as reified survivors of sexual violence and "marginalised groups" as other to the campus community.

Heather Latimer's article, "Snapping: Feminist Pedagogy and Navigating the 'New' Right," returns us full-circle to theoretical analysis and reflection on one's experience, this time grounded in affect theory and anecdotal theory (Gallop 2002). Through a critical reflexive analysis of four moments in the classroom, Latimer pushes readers to engage with the affect of "shock" as a response to the contemporary rise of the

alt-right and Trumpism as well as the feminist pedagogical challenges of encountering students with passionate attachments to ideas and movements that oppose what they are learning in the Women's and Gender Studies classroom. In her analysis, Latimer argues that reacting with "shock" to evidence of the rise of alt-right ideologies—for example, the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States—is an affective response structured by whiteness, but for students who are Black, Indigenous, and people of colour such events are all too predictable. She considers the consequences of investing time and energies—guided by a feminist pedagogical approach that positions students as responsible for their learning and positions—into supporting privileged students through their exploration and questioning of alt-right ideas and arguments while other students continually crash up against institutional brick walls (Ahmed 2017). Through Sara Ahmed's concept of the "feminist snap," Latimer advocates for a reflexive process that works with the brokenness of the university, not for a naïve optimism but rather for critical engagement that the invitation to snap provides for feminist educators.

The issues and debates broached by contributors to this section are not new. Feminist thinkers have already equipped readers to respond to the alternative right. For generations, the production of ideas, responses, positions, and critical thought about sex, race, sexuality, and power has shaped the field of Women's and Gender Studies, and feminist thought more broadly. The work of Audre Lorde, Sherene Razack, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and so many more equip teachers and students to respond very well. Readers will also be familiar with the work of Himani Bannerji, Linda Carty, Kari Dehli, Susan Heald, and Kate McKenna in *Unsettling Relations: The University as a Site of Feminist Struggles*, published almost thirty years ago in 1992. This important book also critiqued the permeability of the university to racist and misogynist movements that scaffold and embolden people within higher education to limit the expression of people of colour in particular. In *Unsettling Relations*, the authors analyzed harassment and discrimination as taking place in classrooms, through labour conditions for faculty, and within the structures of the university, all of which negatively impacted the authors' lives and professional

security. However, one thing that we observe when reading these still-salient essays in 2020 is that thirty years ago the harassment and discrimination was in many ways contained at the scale of the university and its actors, and at the classroom level in particular. When we reflect on Robyn Bourgeois's essay, we note the significant ways that alt-right groups in the US and Canada can reach directly into the university through the Internet, social media, and email. A recent example of this occurred shortly after North American universities transitioned classes online in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Online classes were interrupted by misogynist, racist, and violent "Zoombombing" attacks and alt-right leaders encouraged students to record their classes to expose their professors online (Redden 2020; Sommer 2020). Thus, what is new about this particular moment is that the public intimacy of online spaces creates exponentially greater opportunities for harassment and violence that redirects the energies of faculty, staff, and students towards disputing specious and bad faith critiques and away from their research and teaching programs.

Among the visible outcomes of people's reactions to the pandemic was an immediate turning inwards of social relationships for essential information. The World Health Organization's exhortation to physically isolate in order to survive COVID-19 risks over-reliance on the consumption of tailored social media messaging for current news. Those already inclined to believe the messages of social conservatives, conspiracy theorists, and white nationalists may be more vulnerable than ever to both mis-information and dis-information during the global pandemic. Given the necessarily delayed reaction of mainstream journalism to covering emerging news under COVID-19 (due to the need for physical distancing), a void has been created in which hatemongering has thrived.

While those who overtly claim membership to white nationalist movements may be fewer in number, those who express degrees of support for these ideas or latently approve of their presence in social media are increasingly emboldened. In online spaces, students, faculty, and staff who are Black, Indigenous, people of colour, feminist, queer, and trans may find themselves

subject to verbal and physical hostility. A series of intersecting gendered, racial, and class inequities have been laid bare through different countries' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this special section of *Atlantis*, we collectively ask: What are the implications of these inequities for feminist research and teaching in the era of free speech debates?

Endnotes

1. We should note that although the summer of 2020 has seen heightened public attention about racism at Western University, we do not consider Western to be an outlier; indeed, what is remarkable about Western is that students and alumni have been successful in drawing attention to racism on campus in the national media. As we finalize this special section, a group of 34 University of Ottawa professors have signed a public letter defending another professor who used the n-word in class and was suspended. The signatories claim that her suspension is a threat to academic freedom and critical thinking, while Black and Indigenous students are organizing to challenge this claim and draw attention to the racism they face at uOttawa (Glowacki 2020).

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Hostility, Harassment, and Violence: On the Limits of ‘Free Speech’ for Minority Feminist Scholars

Robyn Bourgeois is a mixed-race nêhiyaw iskwew (Cree woman) currently residing in Haudenosaunee/Anishinaabe territory. She is an associate professor in the Centre for Women’s and Gender Studies at Brock University where her work focuses on violence against Indigenous women and girls and other forms of gender-based violence.

Abstract: Following the rich tradition of Indigenous and Black feminists and authors, this article makes use of storytelling to explore the limits of freedom of speech in the academy for feminist scholars belonging to socially marginalized groups and, particularly, Indigenous feminist scholars. Through autoethnography, I expose the ways that freedom of speech was been weaponized against me by people with power to silence and suppress my freedom of speech. Moreover, I draw attention to the ways this has been done to me in order to secure the freedom of speech of other dominant and powerful people. This paper concludes with some recommendations about disrupting this violence and better supporting feminist scholars from minority groups.

Keywords: Indigenous feminism, power, privilege, silencing, suppression, violence in the academy, weaponizing freedom of speech

In the aftermath of one of Canada’s deadliest mass shootings by a civilian this past spring, I dared to publicly name this violence as the inevitable outcome of white heteropatriarchy—and paid the price.

On April 18th and 19th, 2020, a lone white man travelled between rural communities in western Nova Scotia in a replica police car and murdered 22 people before being shot and killed by police during a brief confrontation. As someone who lived for several years in Nova Scotia—or more appropriately, Mi’kmaw’ki, as the local Indigenous peoples refer to this territory—and also as an Indigenous feminist scholar whose career has focused on gender-based violence, I followed the developments of this case intently. While the gendered and racialized aspects of this violence were painfully evident for me, they were largely being ignored in mainstream Canada media; and after many frustrating days of not seeing such analyses included in this coverage, I successfully pitched an article to the scholarly online media site *The Conversation*, which was published on 24 April, 2020. Titled “Let’s call the Nova Scotia mass shooting what it is: white male terrorism,” this article drew attention to the regularity with which white males have committed mass murders in Canada and explained this violent propensity as being rooted in whiteness and heteropatriarchy. In line with *The Conversation’s* commitment to the free flow of information, the article was republished on multiple sites and, by the end of April, had been read in excess of 67,000 times. By comparison, the most frequently read *The Conversation* article from my institution up to that point had been read 33,000 times.

The response from white men was immediate and vicious: within hours of the article being published, I was inundated with emails from angry white men—and I know this because most of them claimed their white masculinity in their responses. Even after I removed the direct contact option through *The Conversa-*

tion website, they hunted me down, like the mass murderers I had written about, on email and social media to attack me. They accused me of misandry and racism against white people and dismissed my knowledge, my training, and my ability to conduct research. They claimed I didn't know what I was talking about and mansplained to me why I was wrong in my thinking, never with any meaningful evidence to support these claims. They referred to me as a disgusting human being, both in terms of my ideas and my looks—because, of course, my looks have everything to do with reinforcing heteropatriarchy and nothing to do with my ability to theorize and conduct research. I mentioned my son in the article and was told multiple times that I was an inadequate mother who would scar my son for life. These responses also included threats of violence which scared me so much that I walked my neighborhood with a pocket knife for weeks after publication. While some of these men owned their hate by emailing from their personal email accounts and signing off with their full names, others created anonymous accounts to hide their identity behind their hate.

As if these personal attacks weren't enough, these angry white men reached out to my colleagues and supervisors at Brock University. A white male community researcher documenting acts of terrorism involving Muslim men repeatedly emailed me and many of my colleagues demanding I respond to his Islamophobic research, which he claimed disputed my arguments about white male terrorism. Some of the men who harassed me indicated that they had emailed my Dean and the President of our university to demand my immediate dismissal. Fortunately, my Dean was entirely supportive and a large contingent of my colleagues signed a letter of support sent to our President. While I am so grateful for this support, it doesn't negate the violence of these attempts to have me fired for voicing my well-founded and well-documented opinion, nor the trauma of being targeted for hostility, harassment, and threats of violence for voicing my perspective on systematic privilege and violence.

Neither does it negate the regularity which I experience attacks for voicing my opinions: as an Indige-

nous feminist scholar of mixed-race ancestry (nêhiyaw (Cree) and white settler) living and working in colonial Canada, I have rarely experienced the freedom of speech nor the protection of my freedom of speech enjoyed by other academics, especially those belonging to dominant social groups. Throughout my scholarly career, which has focused on naming, confronting, and disrupting dominant social systems of oppression and their violence, my perspectives are regularly met with hostility, harassment, and violence. I am regularly portrayed as a troublemaker whose knowledge is deemed too emotional, inherently biased, and inferior and, consequently, dismissed. While this suppression has included violence and threats to my employment, it also regularly includes microaggressions directed at undermining my knowledge, my capacity for creating knowledge, and my right to share this knowledge with others. As a result, I rarely experience the level of institutional support directed at protecting my freedom of speech—and specifically my freedom to name, expose, and dismantle power, privilege, and violence—as I did from Brock University in the aftermath of my article in *The Conversation*.

Using autobiographical storytelling, this current article is organized around ten stories demonstrating lack of freedom of speech I've experienced as an Indigenous feminist scholar in Western colonial academia and beyond. My purpose in telling these stories is to expose the range of tactics used by people with power and privilege to silence and suppress the knowledge of marginalized people, especially when those perspectives challenge this power and privilege. In other words, I demonstrate how freedom of speech is weaponized against scholars from socially marginalized groups in support of systems of social and individual power and privilege. I employ this approach because storytelling is a fundamental component of nêhiyawiwana (Cree culture) and, thus, reflects our ways of knowing and doing. While dismissed as biased within Western colonial knowledge systems that falsely claim objectivity, my nation treats these stories as authentic and important knowledge worthy of consideration. Indeed, this is the same for many other Indigenous nations and storytelling is considered an essential component of Indigenous methodologies and pedagogies (Archibald 2008; Kovatch 2009; Smith 1999).

Moreover, autobiographical storytelling has frequently been employed by Indigenous (Campbell [1973] 2019; Elliot 2019; Maracle [1973] 2017) and Black (Gay 2014, 2017; hooks 1997; Lorde 1982) women writers in unpacking and articulating their experiences with power, privilege, and violence. While related to our ways of knowing and doing within the Indigenous context, Indigenous women's use of autobiographical storytelling in print, argues Cree/Métis feminist literary scholar Emma LaRocque (1990), has also been shaped by racism, colonialism, and white supremacy. In response to white audiences who "resorted to racist techniques of psychologically labelling and blaming" Indigenous writers for being bitter, emotionally incapacitated, militant, and biased, Canadian publishers have refused to publish anything they considered Indigenous "protest literature"—writing that was perceived as "blustering and bludgeoning [Canadian] society" (LaRocque 1990, xvii). According to LaRocque, "we were directed to tell our 'stories' ... in a manner reminiscent of archival descriptions reflecting earlier colonial attitudes [and not] to be so 'arrogant' or so daring as to analyze or to call on Canadian society for its injustices" (1990, xvii). Thus, from the mid-1970s onward, publishers favoured what they considered "soft-sell Native literature" including personal narratives and autobiographies (LaRocque 1990, xvii), making them an important site where Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences could access Indigenous women's theorizing around race, gender, and colonialism, albeit within limits established by publishers that curtailed their freedom of speech. For example, in 2018, it was announced that Métis author Maria Campbell's influential 1973 autobiography *Half-Breed* would be reissued and include an account of the author being sexually assaulted by an RCMP officer at age 14, a story that publishers removed from the text for the publication of the book. Consequently, in addition to exposing dominant social systems of oppression, my purpose in this article is to present a decolonial challenge to Western ways of knowing and doing.

The next section of this paper includes 10 stories, which in addition to describing my experiences with the weaponization of freedom of speech and silencing, contain reflections about the impacts of these experi-

ences on me and others, and unpack how these experiences reinforce dominant social systems of oppression within the academy and beyond. This is followed by a discussion and recommendations section where in addition to theorizing what contributed to the institutional support I received after the attacks in April 2020, I suggest some wise practices for supporting minority scholars and disrupting the violence of weaponized freedom of speech. Finally, this paper concludes by considering the importance and power of storytelling.

1.

"You should be grateful for residential schools."

This comment came from a young white man immediately after I had vulnerably shared my family's violent experiences with residential schools and the subsequent effects of intergenerational trauma on our lives in a second-year sociology course focused on race and ethnicity. He then white mansplained to me, despite evidence to the contrary, that residential schools provided Indigenous children with a necessary education that would prepare them for success (and thus, assimilation) in colonial Canadian society and that these schools protected us from tuberculosis and violence.

A white woman student trying to be sympathetic joined the conversation: "I'm sorry about your family's experiences, but it's important to remember that white people never intended for this to be violent. They acted in a way they saw as being in the best interest for Canada and for Native people."

"But also," added another white man, "Why should I be held responsible for something I didn't do? I didn't send Indians to residential school."

Neither the instructor nor other students intervened; instead, more white students joined the discussion to dismiss the colonial violence myself, my family, and all other Indigenous peoples have experienced as a result of residential schools and exonerate themselves from any culpability in this violence. After sitting through an academic debate predominantly conducted by white students on why I, an Indigenous person, was wrong and should be grateful for Indian residential

schools, I never attended this class again and ended up failing it. Failing this course and jeopardizing my academic future was better than sitting in a classroom of white supremacists exercising their scholarly right to debate my lived reality and reinforce colonial domination.

2.

I was in the Yukon when I found out. A student I was visiting in Whitehorse told me that a man charged with sexually abusing intoxicated women through his taxi service was transporting the students from my program for Indigenous women leaders. While the university had banned him from being on campus, the on-campus organization I worked for continued to use his company for transportation. In addition to personally transporting our students between the airport and our university before handing off to another driver to bring the students on campus, he was providing in-town transportation, including a discounted limo with champagne service.

Upon hearing this news, I immediately emailed my supervisors, including the white, woman director, my immediate white, woman supervisor within my department, and the white man overseeing finances and travel arrangements for our organization. Leveraging my expertise on violence against Indigenous women and girls, I begged them to prioritize the safety of our students and stop using this accused rapist's services. The white man responded first: "We can't because there's no other option."

Enraged by this outright dismissal of Indigenous women's safety, I wrote an impassioned email back and called this white man out: I challenged him as a father of a daughter. I challenged him to think about holding her hand if something like this happened to her. And then I challenged him to think about holding the hand of one of our students who had been sexually assaulted by a predator known to us, making this attack something we could have prevented.

While my immediate supervisor arranged for other transportation for my students, she also scolded me as though I were an impertinent child when I returned: I had been too hard on this white man and he was

deeply hurt by my comments. She warned me against being confrontational and suggested I soften my tone. Because clearly, how I confront white people about their complicity in colonial violence and their feelings outweigh the right of Indigenous women to live lives free from violence.

3.

"Thank you, Robyn. That's enough. I think we get your point."

This is how the white woman director of a community development institute I worked for shut down my attempt to intervene in the university's disturbing decision to co-host Marie Henein, the defense attorney for accused woman abuser Jian Ghomeshi, as a guest speaker, but also the director's equally disturbing attempt to raise this issue in an open staff meeting.

After discovering that Henein, a woman lawyer who not only defends men who are perpetrators of violence but is also infamous for engaging in "whacking"—repeatedly asking purposefully embarrassing questions that draw on highly problematic stereotypes about sexual violence (Rizvic 2018)—was being co-hosted by our university as a featured guest speaker, local feminist scholars, educators, and community members organized to intervene. Our position: providing Henein with a public platform normalized her inappropriate behaviour and traumatized survivors of sexual violence.

Prior to an upcoming staff meeting, our director emailed the women team members of the institute's International Centre for Women's Leadership for guidance, asking if it was appropriate to address the issue of Henein's guest speaking at this meeting. We unanimously agreed that a staff meeting wasn't the appropriate place to discuss this issue and several of us sent individual emails to the director discussing why this was the case. Despite our recommendation, the director decided to raise the issue at this meeting. While acknowledging concerns about hosting Henein, she dismissed them on the basis of freedom of speech and the right of Henein to be heard. Upon observing distress among members of our team, the director put one woman on the spot by asking if she had something to say. Forced to respond, this individual challenged the dir-

ector's "freedom of speech" position and ended up outing herself as a survivor of sexual violence. Observing this violence against my friend, I intervened: Referencing my own experiences of sexual violence but also my scholarly knowledge of the topic, I attempted to expose the hypocrisy of privileging Henein's freedom of speech over the perspectives of sexual assault survivors, and how this position privileged freedom of speech over preventing further trauma among sexual assault survivors. I challenged her claims that it was possible to have objective and dispassionate debates about sexual violence, especially for survivors, and I challenged her right to force survivors of sexual violence to debate their trauma against Henein's freedom of speech.

In a power move designed to protect the freedom of speech of two privileged women—her's and Henein's—this director interrupted to silence me and foreclose my freedom of speech. She dismissed my experiential and expert knowledge of sexual violence but also the perspectives of other sexual assault survivors in favour of her opinion and freedom of speech with a single sentence: "Thank you, Robyn. That's enough. I think we get your point."

4

White students, especially white men, regularly challenge my assessment of their assignments for the Indigenous studies courses I teach. They email and/or come to my office and claim that another white person, usually someone close to them with a university degree, has reviewed their assignment and declared it sound. They claim this person knows better than I do and, as a result, I need to review my grading of this assignment. Apparently, as an Indigenous person with lived experience and advanced training and research experience in Indigenous studies, my perspective is inadequate and inferior to this white person. While deeply enraged by this sexist and racist violence, I have to hold my tongue or risk escalating the situation and opening myself to more verbal and potentially physical abuse from these white male students. As someone with expertise in racialized gender-based violence, I know that challenging white supremacy and hegemonic masculinity frequently results in violence and I'm honestly afraid of these white men in

these moments. So instead of calling them out for the racism and sexism, I'm polite and try to reiterate my assessments gently. When they don't get the response or grade they believe they should receive, they write racist and/or negative reviews on my course evaluations and ratemyprofessor.com which, in turn, negatively impact my employability and, thus, ability to have my voice included in the academy.

5

After completing a two-year study and authoring an almost 160-page report on the findings, I was told by the funder that they were unhappy with the report and wouldn't be releasing it. Despite recruiting me on the basis of my training, scholarship, and experience working with socially marginalized communities and directing me to critically explore the ways that oppression operates within the funding organization, they claimed my analyses were unfair and deemed my language "inflammatory." Moreover, despite being a highly qualified researcher with extensive training and experience and having co-developed the research strategy with the funder, they questioned the methodology and challenged the veracity of the findings. Finally, they claimed, because I was an outsider to the organization, I wasn't qualified to make the recommendations I had in advancing their commitment to equity. That report never saw the light of day, and while we jointly own the data and our contract provides me with the ability to publish on the findings, the organization is trying to prevent this from happening through threats of legal challenges.

6

When challenging the right of white settler scholars to use Indigenous ways of knowing and doing responsibly in their curriculum and pedagogical practice, I regularly encounter dismissals of my concerns on the grounds that some other Indigenous person this white person knows agrees with them. For example, after learning that a white colleague teaching Indigenous knowledge systems was using sweat lodges in his pedagogical practice, another Indigenous colleague and I raised concerns about this practice with our institute. Not only did we question the right of this white colleague to use this sacred Indigenous practice as a pedagogical practice with mostly non-Indigenous

students, we also alerted this colleague and our institute that we were aware that Indigenous Elders across Canada were questioning the appropriateness of using our ceremonies in Western post-secondary institutions. In fact, I had just come from a conference hosted by the Canadian Association of University Teachers where this very topic had been debated among Indigenous attendees.

Our concerns were met with claims from this white instructor that a local Indigenous Elder approved of this practice and, in fact, our opposition was hampering this mutual settler-Indigenous collaboration. As a result, this white person's right to use sweat lodges as pedagogical practice was secured against our concerns about appropriation, colonial racism, and potential harm to participants.

7

As I prepared to confront management about an unjust and discriminatory workplace, a racialized man who was a colleague pulled me into his office to offer advice. "You're too emotional," he said. "You need to get your emotions under control because they think you're crazy." He advised me that my perspectives would only be valued if I divested them of any feeling. In this moment, he reinforced the Western colonial notion that only objective knowledge devoid of emotion is worthy of consideration and, consequently, dismissed Indigenous ways of knowing and doing that value the gift of emotion. Moreover, he reinforced that patriarchal notion that women are too emotional and, thus, their knowledge is suspect.

I would have been more hurt except this wasn't the first time I've heard this: colleagues—particularly white men and women—regularly dismiss my knowledge because it comes infused with emotion. While this emotion is viewed in Indigenous ways of knowing and doing as a gift from Creator, they view it as a sign of weakness and dysfunction, and a reason to delegitimize and ignore my knowledge. It's awfully hard not to be emotional in the face of colonial racism and heterosexism—to sit in rooms where your very existence and access to basic human rights are debated among mostly white privileged colleagues. It's a position of privilege to not be impacted

—whether physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually—by discriminatory hierarchies of power and privilege and get to debate issues dispassionately. It's also a position of privilege and social policing to demand that I respond to these threats sans emotions, denying my pain for the benefit of others. Hiding my pain allows these people to avoid feeling negative emotions related to confronting their own complicity with oppression and violence.

8

Journal article status: *approved with revisions*.

Revisions: "this article needs to conform to standard [Western, white, colonial, academic] scholarly reporting practices."

This response not only privileges Western, white, colonial, academic approaches to knowledge production and dissemination over Indigenous ways of knowing and doing, but also forces me to alter and, thus, subvert my authentic scholarly voice. It diminishes my ability to be an Indigenous scholar and employ Indigenous ways of knowing and doing in my research. In other words, it colonizes my scholarship by forcing me to conform to dominant, Western academic standards.

9

To mark December 6, Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action of Violence Against Women, in 2018, our Centre for Women's and Gender Studies (WGST) decided to host an event examining violence against racialized people. While not wanting to erase the murders of the 14 white women at Ecole Polytechnique in 1991, whose deaths are the reason we have this day, we sought to expand discussions of this violence to include racialized women and 2SLGBTQQIA (Two-spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual) people. Consequently, we hosted a panel featuring a Black feminist scholar, a South Asian queer activist, and an Indigenous scholar (me).

After completing our panel, we opened the floor to questions and the first eager hand came from a white woman who is an assistant professor at our university.

She decried our efforts to bring race to the forefront of this event as undermining the deaths of the 14 white women at Ecole Polytechnique, grounding her perspectives in a relationship with one of these women. She also claimed that after hearing our presentations that she knew less about the experiences of Black and South Asian people and “even less about the experiences of Indigenous peoples.” Apparently, we had presented so poorly that we had decreased her understanding of the lived experiences of Black, South Asian, and Indigenous peoples. After one of my co-presenters attempted to challenge her, I took this person to task, indicating that her preference for remembering violence against white women only is part of the problem and amounts to reinforcing white supremacy. While we had patiently listened to her perspective, she refused to listen to ours: I had to remind her multiple times to not disrupt me and listen respectfully to what I had to say. Instead of acknowledging our comments and owning her own complicity in colonial racism, this person loaded up her stuff and walked away. In doing so, she used her white privilege to dismiss our knowledge, foreclose discussion, and avoid taking accountability for the racism we named.

This scene repeated itself a year later. For 2019, we in WGST again wanted to create space for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and other people of colour) perspectives, so myself and a Black female author shared the stage. I presented a new paper I was preparing for publication about how the #MeToo movement had been co-opted by white women in ways that undermine the movement’s roots in Black intersectional feminism and, I argued, decolonization and ending sexual violence against Indigenous women and girls. During the question and answer period, a white woman, who had come into my presentation near the end, interrupted and disrupted the discussion about the lack of awareness and response to sexual violence perpetrated against BIPOC people to let us know that as a white woman she had also experienced this dismissal of violence after being raped. Additionally, she referenced a white woman as a founder of the #MeToo movement. Shocked into silence by having to confront the exact issues I was writing and speaking about, a racialized woman in the audience intervened

and challenged this woman for inserting her whiteness into this conversation and, thus, undermining everything I said in my presentation. Again, instead of staying, acknowledging these comments, and owning her complicity in colonial racism, this woman packed up her belongings and exited the room. However, instead of this situation ending there, she took to social media, tagged our event, and publicly declared that she had been discriminated against at this event.

10

“Do you remember *Gorillas in the Mist*?” my brother asked me.

Of course, I did: as kids we have watched this 1988 Academy Award nominated film starring Sigourney Weaver as Dian Fossey, the American primatologist who was murdered in her fight to save the mountain gorillas of Rwanda against poachers. I nodded, to which my brother, now choking back tears replied, “I’m so scared that’s what’s going to happen to you because of the work you do.”

And I couldn’t reassure him and tell him he was wrong—because the truth is threats of violence and death have always been a normal part of my experience as an Indigenous feminist activist, academic, and author committed to exposing and eliminating dominant social systems of oppression. In a colonial nation state whose existence is predicated on the elimination—whether through assimilation or violence—of Indigenous peoples, my existence and also my efforts to name and dismantle colonial domination and violence pose a significant threat to the colonial order of things in Canada and, as such, are regularly met with innate hostility and threats of violence, especially among white people and, more specifically, white men. In fact, threats of violence have come exclusively from white men. Sometimes these threats occur in person, such as shouted threats of physical and sexual violence by white male bystanders at rallies, but also the more sinister threats whispered in my ear as a white man invades (colonizes) my personal space: “Be careful: Speaking out will lead you to the same fate as your missing and murdered sisters.”

These threats have also come via social media and

email. Sometimes these are anonymous but more commonly, as in the case of the attacks following my article in *The Conversation*, owned by the author who exposes his name and whiteness. They weaponize their white masculinity against me without fear of consequences because of the privilege and entitlement they experience in our colonial white settler heteropatriarchal society, including their right to abuse Indigenous women with impunity. They demand my silence by threatening acts of violence, mostly directed at me but also my family when I have mentioned them. We have been threatened with rape, physical assault, torture, and death. Several times, I've been threatened with being "disappeared."

Discussion and Recommendations

The 10 stories I share expose the ways that people, especially those with power and privilege, weaponize freedom of speech against minority scholars. These tactics range from microaggressions to public "calling out" to physical and sexual violence. While frequently used by people in positions of power, these techniques of power and privilege are accessible to anyone and have been employed against me, albeit infrequently, by other socially marginalized people. This being said, these attacks come most frequently from white people and occur when I'm naming and challenging oppression and violence. While fighting tooth and nail to protect their freedom of speech, their actions work to actively suppress my right to speak and be heard.

The difference in institutional responses between what happened to me this past April and some of the incidents covered in these stories raises some important questions: what made Brock University different? Why was Brock's response one of support instead of suppression of my freedom of speech? While by no means perfect, Brock University has made significant commitments to social justice. Our current strategic plan (2018-2025) prioritizes "fostering a culture of inclusivity, accessibility, reconciliation and decolonization" as one of its four pillars (Brock University 2018, 23-24). This commitment has been met with concrete action including, for example, the creation of the President's Advisory Committee on Human Rights, Equity, and Decolonization (PACHRED), the estab-

lishment of a funded and well-staffed Human Rights and Equity Office, and completion of a climate survey meant to explore the diverse experiences of students, staff, and faculty. Brock also has academic commitments to social justice, including its Master of Arts program in Social Justice and Equity Studies, and the Social Justice Research Institute which is home to the scholarly peer-reviewed journal *Studies in Social Justice*. The university is also home to academic/activist faculty, staff, and students committed to addressing social justice issues, many of whom come from socially marginalized groups. I believe this institutional commitment to equity and social justice—a commitment that is not only stated, but actively pursued—and our community of social justice-oriented people lay at the core of my supportive experience this past April. Notably, while I've experienced support as an Indigenous scholar targeted by racist and sexist attacks, Brock has also actualized its commitment to equity by publicly denouncing white professors who've made racist comments online and in their scholarship. For example, in the summer of 2018, Brock stripped a retired political science professor of his emeritus title after he made racist comments about Indigenous peoples and issued a death threat on social media (Canadian Press 2018); and in June 2020, Brock's provost issued a statement against one of its chemistry professors for a journal article (published and then retracted by the journal) containing misogynist and racist statements (Benner 2020).

At the same time, I can't ignore how power and privilege may have been involved in this response. While my colleagues may have acted genuinely as allies and accomplices, it's always important to consider how power and privilege may operate in any system, as well as critically examining my own privileges and complicity with oppression. While Indigenous, I'm white-passing and, therefore, benefit from white privilege and don't share the same experiences with racism as many Indigenous and racialized scholars. For example, I have observed how my whiteness along with my overtly happy and friendly personality prevent me, for the most part, from being labelled angry and confrontational—terms commonly used in racist ways to silence racialized, and especially Black, scholars (Williams 2001; Daniel 2019). Brock's strategic commitment to

decolonization has created a sort of reverence around Indigeneity that offers me privileges and protections as an Indigenous scholar. For example, all of the Indigenous-centred initiatives I've put forward have been well-supported, both in terms of funding and widespread institutional support. At the same time, as the only tenured female First Nations professor at Brock University, my departure could undermine the university's stated commitment to decolonization. Thus, the University's efforts to make me feel supported and safe can reduce this risk. Again, I want to believe that my colleagues acted as genuine allies and accomplices, but we cannot ignore the ways in which power and privilege may have influenced their supportive response.

Action is critical aspect of *nêhiyaw* ways of knowing and doing and to assist with this, I want to offer some recommendations on how individuals and institutions can address the weaponization of freedom of speech and the violent silencing of scholars from socially marginalized groups. In addition to drawing on my own experiences, these recommendations arise from years of working with people—educators, scholars, and community members—to address oppression in various contexts, and the many things I've learned from these people and through these processes inform these recommendations.

1. Support Indigenous and other minority scholars who are being attacked and having their freedom of speech denied. This is an important way that Brock University's response differed from my previous experiences: all levels of the university stepped up to support me. In addition to the support of my Dean, 54 of my colleagues signed a letter of support sent to our President defending my freedom of speech and decrying the threats made against me. Many of these individuals also reached out to me individually to check in, offer advice, and reiterate their support. My union president connected me with campus security who not only documented the harassment and threats but also worked with me to create a safety plan me. This support was essential to me surviving and moving forward after these vicious attacks. It bolstered my confidence as an Indigenous scholar and my right to expose and challenge oppression and violence. It also made me feel less alone.

2. Don't be a bystander—intervene when you see someone shutting down an Indigenous scholar or scholars from other minority groups. So many times, people have come to me after to let me know they agreed with me and/or thought how I was treated was wrong. While I appreciate this support and understand the risks involved with intervening, the times that colleagues have stepped forward to publicly support me, including naming and challenging racist and sexist behaviour, have been fundamental to my survival as an Indigenous feminist scholar. In addition to bolstering my spirits in the face of such violence and making me feel less alone, this support has alleviated some of the burden and work required of me to address this violence. While you shouldn't try to speak for or over the individual being targeted, feel free to name the racist, sexist, and other forms of oppression at work and demand an end to violent censures and other acts of silencing. Also make efforts to assist colleagues with understanding how access to freedom of speech is shaped by oppression and how its weaponized as a mechanism for silencing scholars from socially marginalized groups.

3. Address institutional inequity because it's foundational to the silencing of minority scholars. As noted above, Brock University's stated and actualized commitment to addressing equity, human rights, and decolonization played an important role in the support I received when I experienced backlash in April 2020. In pursuing this process, it's essential that people from socially marginalized groups be included at all levels of decision-making, be involved in all processes, and have their voices/perspectives centered.

4. Remember, if scholars from socially marginalized groups are having these experiences so too are students and staff; and its essential that institutions address this kind of violence for everyone.

5. Given the regularity and viciousness of this violence, it's important that institutions have appropriate supports available. In the case of Indigenous scholars, this means having Elder and other culturally safe supports, such as an Indigenous support worker. It's also critical that these supports don't replicate racism, sexism, heterosexism and other forms of oppression.

This is by no means an exhaustive list; instead, it's a starting point for future discussions of how best to support minority scholars against weaponizations of freedom of speech. This being said, it's important that these discussions centre the perspectives of minority scholars. Borrowing the famous feminist mantra: nothing about us without us.

Conclusion

“Stories,” as Cherokee writer Thomas King proclaimed in his 2003 Massey lecture series, “are a wonderful thing” but “they are dangerous” (9). For once they are told, he explains, stories cannot be called back and remain “loose in the world” (King 2003, 10). While likely to be dismissed as emotional and subjective within Western academia, the stories I've shared are dangerous because they not only speak truth about the limits of freedom of speech for scholars from marginalized social groups, but also expose how, far from being a universal human right accorded to all, freedom of speech as it currently exists in academia but also Western societies operates to secure social and individual power and privilege. Powerful, privileged people fight for freedom of speech insofar as it secures their right to spew hate and, at the same time, actively works to suppress the perspectives of marginalized people, especially when these perspectives challenge this power and privilege. These two strategies, as such, work in tandem to ideologically and materially secure a global elite through the weaponization of freedom of speech aimed at eliminating resistance and, thus, sustaining the dominant interlocking social systems of oppression—heterosexism, racism, colonialism, ableism, and economic exploitation and marginalization—that underpin their power and privilege. By sharing these stories, I expose this truth about freedom of speech.

The stories I've shared are dangerous because they expose some of the tactics by which freedom of speech can be weaponized against scholars from socially marginalized groups. In addition to acts and threats of physical and/or sexual violence which can easily be dismissed as the demented acts of extremists or a few “bad apples,” these stories expose the everyday micro-aggressions—the shushings, scoldings, and claims to

superior authority—perpetrated by people who, while not necessarily feeling powerful nor privileged, have nonetheless, used their freedom of speech and/or suppression of speech to silence and suppress me and other marginalized people in the service of power and privilege. In fact, it's my hope that some of you might see your own complicity in such weaponizing of freedom of speech through these stories and strive to do better.

These stories are dangerous because they expose the severity of these attacks for scholars from marginalized social groups. Consider this: as an Indigenous person with white privilege, my whiteness has afforded me certain protections against regular and severe acts of racism inflicted on racialized academics—and yet, it's still this bad. And if it's this bad for me as a white-passing Indigenous feminist scholar, you can only imagine how much worse it is for visibly racialized feminist scholars. At the same time, these stories expose the limits of privilege: our hierarchically ordered global society is intolerant to perceived threats from anyone and, as such, no amount of privilege can protect you from being targeted if you choose to expose and dismantle it. However, if devoted to this work, those of us with privilege have a responsibility to examine and end our complicity in weaponizing freedom of speech against other socially marginalized people—otherwise we are no better than the privileged people who have silenced and suppressed us. In addition to making use of your unique skill sets to better support scholars, faculty, staff, and students belonging to socially marginalized groups, this work must include efforts to dismantle forms of privilege operating within our educational institutions that unfairly target and exclude Indigenous and other minority scholars. This is not a call for privileged people to “rescue” these scholars but, instead, a demand for active dismantling of the educational systems that we have unfairly benefited from at the expense of others.

Finally, these stories are dangerous because they resist these attempts at silencing and, in turn, create the potential for community and collective action against this weaponization of freedom of speech against scholars from socially marginalized groups. For a long time, I kept these stories to myself out of fear that exposing this violence would negatively impact my academic ca-

reer; and as someone who has only every dreamed about being an academic, has gone into significant debt to fund my education, and as the sole “breadwinner” for my family of five, I’ve never felt safe telling these stories as long as my employment was at risk. In doing so, I carried the burden of this violence on my own shoulders: instead of holding privileged people accountable, I swallowed this pain out of survival and made myself sick. Moreover, this silence hindered my ability to connect with other marginalized feminist scholars and, thus, mobilize against this violence. Becoming tenured has reduced the threat to my employment and I choose to use this privilege to name and expose this violence and find ways to create community and promote collective resistance among marginalized scholars. For those of you who share these experiences but aren’t in a position to tell your own dangerous stories, please know you’re not alone. Please know there are lots of us out here who share these experiences and we are here to support you.

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Speaking Freely vs. Dignitary Harm: Balancing Students' Freedom of Expression and Associational Rights with their Right to an Equitable Learning Environment

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Abstract: In this article, I examine the difficulty of using student codes of conduct and civility policies as a way to restrict harmful speech. I argue that policies used to monitor students' non-academic behaviour provide administrators with a means to restrict and surveil students' political advocacy work, especially marginalized students' advocacy. Rather than providing a 'safe' learning environment, codes of conduct curtail students' opportunities for freedom of expression and limits their ability for critical pedagogical engagement with controversial ideas. Drawing on case studies at Canadian universities, I illustrate the contradictory challenges that student activists encounter when attempting to balance principles of freedom of expression and principles of equity on university campuses. Rather than use codes of conduct, I argue that administrators should adopt criteria that help students identify and limit dignitary harms. In doing so, students will be better equipped to assess their expressive freedom and associational rights with the rights of others to an equitable learning environment. Moreover, such an approach represents a decolonial shift and promises to expand our narrow liberal conception of rights and ensure marginalized peoples' voices and worldviews are heard.

Keywords: codes of conduct, equitable learning environments, freedom of expression, harmful speech

Upholding both liberal principles of freedom of expression and the principles of equity as protected respectively in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Canadian Human Rights legislation presents real political challenges. With the rise in extreme right groups that espouse white nationalism on campuses in the last decade, the desire to create a safe learning environment for all students and, in particular, for marginalized students, has resulted in concerns about whether the speech of the former and their associational rights should be increasingly regulated (Masri 2011; Moon 2014; Palfrey 2017; Spencer, Tyahur, & Jackson 2016; Waldron 2012). Still, others argue that students' rights to free speech and associational rights should have the same status on university campuses as they would off campus (Cameron 2014; CAUT 2018, 2019; Chemerinsky & Gillman 2017; Cloud 2015). They contend that restrictions on academic freedom and freedom of expression through student codes of conduct and civility policies are problematic. While acknowledging the undeniable harms of hate speech, they nonetheless counter that the risk of censoring legitimate political speech outweighs such harms.

In this article, I examine the current debate around the use of student codes of conduct and civility policies to restrict harmful speech and their effects on marginalized students' political advocacy work on Canadian campuses. I argue that the use of codes of conduct and civility policies for non-academic behaviour to monitor students within the Canadian post-secondary system provides administrators with a means to restrict and, indeed, surveil students' political advocacy work, especially marginalized students' advocacy. Rather than providing a 'safe' learning environment, such policies and codes of conduct cur-

tail these students' opportunities for freedom of expression and limits their ability for critical pedagogical engagement with controversial ideas. Moreover, such restrictions have provided the impetus for conservative provincial governments such as Alberta's United Conservative Party and Ontario's Conservative Party to compel universities to adopt free speech policies. While seeming to uphold students' *Charter* rights, such directives also require that student conduct rules be in place to penalize groups that 'disrupt' (or rather, counter-protest) the free speech of others. In this article, I draw upon case studies at Canadian universities to illustrate the contradictory and often precarious challenges that student activists encounter when attempting to balance principles of freedom of expression and principles of equity on university campuses, and how administrators apply student codes of conduct in often discriminatory ways. While universities are exempt from upholding *Charter* rights due to institutional self-governance and academic freedom, I contend that administrators should move away from student codes of conduct and civility policies and, instead, adopt criteria that helps students identify and limit dignitary harms whilst balancing their right to associational and expressive freedoms. In developing such criteria, students will be better equipped to assess their expressive freedom and associational rights with the rights of others to an equitable learning environment. Moreover, such an endeavour may help foster students' sense of collective responsibility in upholding dignitary rights on campuses and encourage critical consciousness.¹

Hate Speech in Ontario Universities

In the past decade, there has been an increasing number of reports of racist propaganda at Ontario universities. Steven Zhou reported in *Academic Matters* that:

In the fall of 2015, "White Student Union" posters were found at Ryerson University, York University, and the University of Toronto's St. George Campus. A year later, flyers decrying "anti-white racism" were found on the McMaster University campus in Hamilton, while a study room in McMaster's Innis Library was booked with the note: "McMaster KKK meet-

ing." And at Western University, some students posed in front of a giant #WesternLivesMatter banner. (2017, 1)

More recently, in the fall semester of 2019 at Queen's University, a racist, homophobic note that threatened violence against its student residents was posted in Queen's University's Chown Hall residence common room. A day prior, a Métis and an 2S-LGBTQ+ flag was stolen from the same fourth-floor room—a floor designated for Indigenous students and their allies. As a social justice advocate of Franco-Ontarian and Métis heritage, and a gender studies faculty member, I was concerned for my students' safety and the impact that such violence would have on them and their families. I was not alone. From the university's principal, Patrick Deane, to a majority of students, staff, and faculty, the reaction was one of shock and disgust (CBC News 2019). Over 1,000 students, staff, and faculty along with the broader Kingston community took to the streets to protest the hateful note and to support our Indigenous and 2S-LGBTQ+ students. Organized by Four Directions Indigenous Student Centre, the march called on all members of the Queen's community to stand up against racism, homophobia, and transphobia on campus. Flags representing the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Métis Nation, the Pride flag, the Trans Pride flag, and the Two Row Wampum were hung outside Four Directions in support of our Indigenous and 2S-LGBTQ+ students, only to be vandalized the last day of Pride Month in June of 2020. A month later, on July 29th, staff discovered damage to the Four Directions' Tipi.

Unfortunately, such hate speech acts are not uncommon at Queen's. Prior to the Chown Hall incident, in September of 2019, buildings, a sidewalk, and an Indigenous banner were covered in racist and anti-Semitic graffiti (Svonkin 2019). And in 2016, Queen's students held an off-campus Halloween party that became infamous for its racist costume attire as reported in major news outlets across the country (Journal Editorial Board 2020). While the Queen's administration has taken such acts quite seriously, calling in local police to investigate and publicly denouncing these hateful speech acts, we are nonetheless left with the question: How can the university community foster a

more inclusive campus environment, free from discrimination and hateful speech, while at the same time ensuring the expressive and associational rights of its student population?

A Devolution of Students' Rights Under the Provincial Ontario Conservative Government's Free Speech Directive

Up until recently, a post-secondary student's constitutional rights to freedom of expression and the right to assembly have not been protected.² In Canada, legal statutes and legislative acts have maintained a university's autonomy vis-a-vis the state and its right to set its own rules and regulations regarding students' academic and non-academic conduct in fulfilling its educational mission (Cameron 2014; Moon 2014, 2018; Stewart 2010). As Richard Moon notes: "Since the university is not (as a general matter) a government actor, subject to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, this is significantly a political or institutional question about the kinds of speech that advance the university's educational mission or are consistent with its operation" (2014, 185). In upholding notions of institutional self-governance and academic freedom, administrators further define the codes of conduct that students within the institution must abide by (Brulé 2015). They also determine the disciplinary procedures and processes that dissenters are subjected to; speech codes, codes of conduct, restrictions on use of space, disciplinary tribunals, appeal processes and the like all come under university administrators' jurisdiction (Brulé 2015). While universities are exempt from upholding a student's *Charter* rights, they have nonetheless purported to support a student's expressive and associational rights, albeit on a limited case by case basis (Brulé 2015).

Since the 1960s, university administrators have had to grapple with how to address questions of freedom of expression and equity. Prior to this time, *in loco parentis* (in place of the parent) rules were used to regulate all aspects of a student's life on campus (Brulé 2015, 2020). With the rise of the left counterculture and the Free Speech Movement (FSM) of the 1960s, students challenged the paternalistic rules of *in loco parentis* (Post 2002). Student codes of conduct have since re-

placed these rules and evolved to "resemble a quasi-judicial framework that is used to monitor, discipline and control political dissent on campuses" within a corporatized university context (Brulé 2015, 161).

In recent years, such policies on non-academic behaviour have been met with accusations of 'political correctness' and a stifling of free speech by right-wing extremists and the far right in order to discredit human rights and social justice advocates. The abuse of free speech as a regulatory discourse by the conservative far right, while reminiscent of the 'cultural war' of the 1980s, is again evident in recent provincial government directives to post-secondary institutions. Last year, the conservative governments of both Alberta and Ontario instituted new free speech directives for colleges and universities. Modelled after the Chicago Principles of Free Expression developed at the University of Chicago in 2014, the Ontario Ford government introduced a new directive in August of 2018 requiring colleges and universities to develop a freedom of speech policy by January 1, 2019. The directive states that:

- The universities/colleges should not attempt to shield students from ideas or opinions that they disagree with or find offensive;
- While members of the university/college are free to criticize and contest views expressed on campus, they may not obstruct or interfere with the freedom of others to express their views;
- Speech that violates the law is not allowed. (Ontario, Office of the Premier, August 30, 2018, 1)

The Ford government's directive also compels universities and colleges to use their existing disciplinary measures to punish students "whose actions are contrary to the policy" (Ontario, Office of the Premier, August 30, 2018, 1). For instance, any "ongoing disruptive protesting that significantly interferes with the ability of an event to proceed" should be considered grounds for disciplinary action by university and college administrators (Ontario, Office of the Premier, August 30, 2018, 1). Such a requirement obliges administrators to discipline students who peacefully contest the presence of public speakers they find offensive. Moreover, in order to receive institutional

funding, student unions and clubs must comply with the Ford government's 'free speech' requirement. The directive further compels administrators "to use their existing mechanisms to handle complaints and ensure compliance" (Ontario, Office of the Premier, August 30, 2018, 1).

Of further significance is the use of the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) to monitor conformity with the new directive. The government's news release states:

If institutions fail to comply with government requirements to introduce and report on free speech policies, or if they fail to follow their own policies once implemented, the Ministry may respond with reductions to their operating grant funding, proportional to the severity of non-compliance. (Ontario, Office of the Premier, August 30, 2018, 2)

Seemingly in line with freedom of expression policies already in place in most colleges and post-secondary institutions, critics contend that these types of free speech directives represent an effort to normalize right-wing extremist discourse on campuses (Ben-Porath 2018; Cohn 2019; James 2018; Rangwala 2019; Zachariah 2019). Moreover, such free speech policies have not been evenly upheld within the collegium. For instance, marginalized students have been disproportionately subjected to campus regulatory and quasi-judicial policies and procedures, which has resulted in restricting rather than increasing their ability to express political views on campus (Brulé 2015; Carey 2016; Nadeau & Sears 2011; Smeltzer & Hearn 2015; Stewart 2010; Turk 2014, 2017; Turk & Manson 2017).

The Uneven Application of Student Codes of Conduct Policies for Non-academic Student Behaviour

The disjuncture that marginalized students experience between their expressive freedom and associational rights within the quasi-judicial framework of codes of conduct are contradictory, with few institutional processes in place to protect students from discriminatory or unfair practices (Brulé 2015; Nadeau & Sears 2011; Smeltzer & Hearn 2015; Stewart 2010). Such was the

case at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia in 2017 when student leader and social justice activist Masuma Khan was charged under the university's student code of conduct for having posted an 'offending' Facebook post in the summer of that year. As vice-president academic external of the student union, Khan had tabled a motion to opt out of Canada's celebration activities of its 150th anniversary of Confederation, arguing that such activities were an act of ongoing colonization (Rahr 2017). Young Progressive Conservative students denounced the policy on the Student Union's Facebook page, which prompted Khan's comment, "White fragility can kiss my ass" (Rahr 2017, 1).

It was this comment that compelled Progressive Conservative member and graduate student Michael Smith to submit a formal complaint against Khan and write an opinion piece condemning her comments in the *National Post* (Rahr 2017). Khan was subsequently brought forward for violations to the student code of conduct policy for behaviour that could be "reasonably understood as demeaning and intimidating" (Chiose 2017, 1). While the disciplinary action against her was eventually dropped due to the overwhelming support from staff, students, and faculty for her right to political speech, she was nonetheless subjected to violent threats and hate speech following the student conduct charges (Rahr 2017). In this case, political speech used to contest Canadian colonial institutional practices had been considered "demeaning and intimidating" by university administrators.

Yet, months later, at Ontario's Wilfrid Laurier campus, a debate about the legitimacy of using gender-neutral pronouns was considered a matter of freedom of expression. Graduate student Lindsay Shepherd, who leaked a secretly recorded tape of a meeting convened by her professor for having shown an episode of a TVOntario current affairs program, *The Agenda*, to her tutorial class, called foul play when challenged for her potentially transphobic behaviour. *The Agenda* had featured controversial University of Toronto psychology professor Jordan Peterson in a debate on his objection to the use of gender-neutral pronouns. Shepherd aired a five-minute clip of the debate in her tutorial lesson on grammar, which introduced a very controversial

topic, especially in the wake of Bill C-16 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (2017), prohibiting discrimination against non-gender conforming individuals (Chaudhury 2017). As a teaching assistant, Shepherd was required to deliver the curriculum outlined by the professor of the course. In this instance, the course focused on “basic writing skills including grammar, punctuation, essay formatting and annotated bibliographies” (Chaudhury 2017, 1). As Chaudhury points out, the problem was not that the video was shown, but rather Shepherd’s invitation for students to critique whether or not alternative gender pronouns were acceptable when addressing trans and nonbinary people. Such an invitation not only deviated considerably from the course curriculum, but provided a forum for some students to ridicule trans and nonbinary individuals, diminishing their social standing within the classroom and the collegial environment in general and, as such, calling into question their human dignity.³ While students do not have academic freedom, they are the beneficiaries of their professor’s academic freedom within the classroom. In this case Shepherd had not adhered to the curriculum and was in potential violation of Bill C-16 of the Canadian Human Rights Act (2017).

The public controversy arose when Shepherd released the clandestine recording to the media, proclaiming that her right to free speech and academic freedom had been violated. The content of the recording sparked outrage on the part of the alt-right, which proclaimed that a culture of ‘political correctness’ was prohibiting open and free debate on campus. Christie Blatchford, journalist and right-wing pundit, argued that Shepherd’s free speech was under attack from “leftist authoritarian ideologues” (2017). Wilfrid Laurier’s president and vice chancellor, Deborah MacLachy, defended Shepherd’s right to freedom of expression within her tutorials,⁴ despite the professor’s objections and protests by 2S-LGBTQ+ students and allies who felt that their right to a safe learning environment had been violated (Chaudhury 2017; Murrel 2017).

Shepherd took matters even further. In the midst of the controversy, she co-founded the Laurier Society for Open Inquiry (LSOI) and invited Faith Goldy, a

former Rebel Media journalist and a confirmed white nationalist and white supremacist advocate, to speak on free speech on campus (Chaudhury 2017; Murrel 2017). In response, Laurier’s student Rainbow Group, along with gender non-conforming and supportive allies across campus, held a silent counter-protest (Chaudhury 2017). The event was eventually cancelled due to a pulled fire alarm, but not before Goldy and her supporters engaged in a physical altercation with the counter-protesters outside the university complex (Chaudhury 2017; Murrel 2017). After the protest, many members of this marginalized community reported receiving threats, harassment, and online trolling and became victims of doxing⁵ (Chaudhury 2017). Greg Bird, an assistant professor at Laurier, gathered over 450 faculty signatures demanding that the president denounce the resulting transphobic actions and develop measures to protect staff and students from such attacks (Bird 2017). Bird argued that the university did not address nor defend the rights of trans people to an equitable learning environment (Lam 2017). He posited that, by not speaking out on behalf of marginalized faculty, staff and students, the president further validated the discriminatory behaviour of the alt-right perpetrators (Bird 2017). In this case, trans students, staff and faculty’s right to be shielded from dignity harms within their learning environment was not upheld.

The Aftermath of Ford’s Free Speech Directives

The Ford government’s free speech directives have done little to resolve the issue of balancing principles of freedom of expression and principles of equity on Ontario’s post-secondary campuses. In fact, as the incidents at Queen’s University cited earlier indicate, fascist and far-right groups have been further emboldened to spread hateful speech since the directive was announced. At York University, similar events have taken place. On November 20, 2019, York was the site of a violent confrontation between Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA) and Israeli Zionists at an event sponsored by the student group Herut Canada. Undergraduate student Lauren Isaacs, Herut’s president at York, invited Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) reservists to speak on campus.

The event, which was sanctioned by the university's administration and approved by the Temporary Use of University Space (TUUS) staff and security risk management assessment personnel (York University 2019a), resulted in an unsanctioned "alternative security" presence by the Jewish Defence League (JDL) of Canada—a Jewish religious political organization that has been classified as a right-wing terrorist group by the FBI in the United States (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2001). While both student groups engaged in verbal and physical altercations during the event, university video footage shows individuals bearing the JDL crest assaulting SAIA members (Cromwell 2020, 14). Following the event, Lauren Isaacs thanked the Jewish motorcycle groups (Riders of the Covenant and The Deplorables) and Jewish Defence League for providing security "to help us stay safe" on the Herut's Facebook page (cited in Cromwell 2020 18). Lauren Isaacs' post states:

I personally appointed a security organizer who rallied many people in the community to come out and help us stay safe. He had connections to certain Jewish motorcycle groups like The Riders of the Covenant and The Deplorables, whose members came out and selflessly protected our community. Thank you guys! My security organizer also reached out to the JDL, who sent out a group of guys. We are very grateful to them as they helped keep the protesters away from our event, protected the Jewish students and Zionist community members, and helped to safely escort us home after the event. (cited in Cromwell 2020, 18)

York administrators subsequently banned Meir Weinstein, the head of Jewish Defence League of Canada, on March 2, 2020, under the trespass laws and removal from all three of its campuses, and they are now pursuing damages following the event (Canadian Jewish News 2020). In an e-mail to the Canadian Jewish News (CJN), acting chief spokesperson for the university Yanni Dagonas stated:

It is the right of all York community members to express their views within the law and without fear of intimidation or harassment. As such, external groups with the intent to cause potential disruption are not welcome on university

property. York reserves the right to issue trespass notices to anyone with similar intent. (Canadian Jewish News 2020, 2)

On December 3, 2019, the Vice-President, Finance & Administration and Vice-Provost, Students formally suspended both Herut and SAIA student groups' privileges. And on December 10, 2019 they announced the commissioning of a comprehensive independent external review that was to be conducted by the Honorable Justice Thomas Cromwell, former Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada (York University 2019b).

Justice Cromwell's external Independent Review, released June 2020, provides a comprehensive overview of York's TUUS policy and the security measures put into place and also the findings from his interviews with 22 student groups as well as individuals who participated in the event of November 20. In line with my own empirical research (Brulé 2015), the 85-page report reveals a fundamental lack of transparency in how administrators decide which student events are permitted to take place on campus and which are not (Cromwell 2020). Cromwell also found many of York's policies and procedures on racism, discrimination, and harassment to be in need of clarification for students. Many of the students he interviewed were unsure as to what constituted hate speech and harassment and what the university's responsibility and authority was in relation to student groups (Cromwell 2020, 16). In his report, he further posits that when freedom of expression and equity issues collide, freedom of expression should take precedence (Cromwell 2020). Justice Cromwell also counsels administrators to adopt a more robust security decision-making process for student events and suggests that they consider training special constables vested with the authority to arrest students that do not comply with student conduct rules. Last, he advises that York adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism (Cromwell 2020), a highly controversial definition that has been criticized as conflating anti-Semitism with legitimate political critic of Zionism and Israeli government policies (Sachs 2019).

While I concur with Cromwell's recommendation that York clarify the criteria used to determine how permis-

sion is granted to use university space and define more clearly what constitutes racism, hate speech, discrimination, and harassment, I take issue with his overvaluation of freedom of expression, adoption of the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism and his law and order approach to monitoring approved events. Such recommendations do not only discourage students from critically engaging with controversial political issues (Brulé 2015), but also contributes to the over-policing of marginalized people in Toronto, especially Black people who, according to an Ontario Human Rights Commission report (2018), are 20 times more likely to be the victims of police brutality than White people. As such, I argue that administrators should move away from punitive codes of conduct and civility policies and, instead, assess the potential dignitary harms of a student event in an effort to balance students' expressive freedom with their right to an equitable learning environment. Moreover, I believe that such an approach would help students identify their collective responsibility in balancing these principles. What follows is an overview of Canada's legislative restrictions on hateful speech, how they relate to dignitary harms, and how administrators and students alike might develop criteria with which to assess students' collective responsibility in ensuring that both principles of freedom of expression and principles of equity are upheld on our campuses.

Canadian Hate Speech Laws and the Harm to One's Dignity

In Canada, few legal restrictions exist to curb free speech: content restrictions on hate speech, defamation, and obscenity laws and false advertising are but a few, as are limits on speech that is considered intimidating or threatening (Moon, 2014, 185). While there are few restrictions on speech, the Criminal Code (1985) does prohibit hate speech that "incites hatred against any identifiable group where such incitement is likely to lead to a breach of the peace" (*Criminal Code of Canada* (1985), Section 319(1)). The *Criminal Code* further stipulates that:

[E]veryone who, by communicating statements, other than in private conversation, willfully promotes hatred against any identifiable group is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to

imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years; or an offence punishable on summary conviction. (*Criminal Code of Canada* (1985), Section 319(2)(a)(b))

The *Criminal Code* (1985) also includes any speech act that advocates or promotes genocide of any identifiable group by either: "(a) killing members of the group; or (b) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction" (*Criminal Code of Canada* (1985), Section 318(2)). Within this context, an identifiable group is defined as "any section of the public distinguished by colour, race, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression or mental or physical disability" (*Criminal Code of Canada* (1985), Section 318(4)).

Despite the fact that Canadian hate speech laws were enacted over two decades ago, students are often confused as to what constitutes hate speech. This is particularly evident with student groups' concerns with racist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, anti-Semitic, and Islamophobic views expressed by extreme right speakers on campuses in the province of Ontario. As illustrated earlier, conservative critics proffer the myth that these student groups are advocates and practitioners of 'political correctness' who are 'too emotional' and 'unable to take political criticism.' However, such fictions mischaracterize the problem of hate speech. Rather than a problem with ideas resulting in "hurt feelings," hate speech is dealing with what Jeremy Waldron characterizes as enduring "artifacts of hateful expression" (2012, 38). He states:

The issue is publication and the harm done to individuals and groups through the disfiguring of our social environment by visible, public, and semi-permanent announcements to the effect that in the opinion of one group in the community, perhaps the majority, members of another group are not worthy of equal citizenship. (Waldron 2012, 39)

Within a pluralistic society, with people of varying races, ethnicities, cultures, abilities, gender identities, and sexual orientations, there is a certain expectation that they can live alongside each other free from viol-

ence, discrimination, or exclusion by others (Waldron 2012). Waldron identifies this space as a public good that contributes to sustaining a good society. For Waldron, hate speech undermines this public good. For vulnerable and marginalized communities that have been subjected to hate speech, a good society provides assurances that they can live as its equal members. Waldron states:

[T]hey, too, are members of society in good standing; they have what it takes to interact on a straightforward basis with others around here, in public, on the streets, in the shops in business, and to be treated—along with everyone else—as proper objects of society’s protection and concern. (2012, 5)

This basic social standing he calls their dignity. He goes on to define hate speech as “both a calculated affront to the dignity of vulnerable members of society and a calculated assault on the public good of inclusiveness” (2012, 5-6).

Waldron sets out to make the distinction between undermining a person’s dignity and causing offence. For Waldron, hate speech undermines one’s dignity and the public good by calling into question a group’s right to be treated as an equal in their everyday lives (2012 39). That is, when a speaker portrays a particular group as less valuable, less deserving or less than equal, they are causing dignitary harms (Waldron 2012, 39). The purpose and thrust of restricting hate speech is to ensure that one’s dignity is protected from attack, especially against group-directed attacks which claim that all members of a given group are, by virtue of their race or some other characteristic, not worthy of being treated as equal members of society (Waldron 2012, 39). For Waldron, this type of harm necessitates legal regulation similar to the ways in which personal libel or defamation are regulated (Waldron 2012, 40).

Within Canadian jurisprudence, there has been little consensus about what kinds of behaviours diminish a group’s dignity and, as a result, the Supreme Court of Canada has determined that it is no longer useful as a referent in its equality jurisprudence (Schneiderman 2014, 224). Consequently, arguments about the maintenance of group dignity unfortunately do not

factor into criminal proceedings involving hate crimes in Canada. This said, several legal scholars use group dignity to argue that there is a need for policies that protect a student’s fundamental right to learn and participate in the collegium free from the exigencies of discrimination and harmful speech (Ben-Porath 2017; Masri 2011; Moon 2014; Palfrey 2017; Spencer, Tyahur, & Jackson 2016; Waldron 2012). Richard Moon argues that certain types of hateful speech, such as racist, sexist, and homophobic speech, are inconsistent with an institution’s educational mission and, as such, merit restriction (2014, 186). He states that, while:

[r]acial generalizations and insults may not breach the criminal ban on hate speech...when they occur in the workplace or in schools they may be considered unlawful harassment or discrimination under anti-discrimination laws.... The objection to sexist or racist speech on campus is not simply that it is irrational, sometimes vitriolic, and unlikely to contribute to thoughtful discourse; it is also that this speech seeks to undermine the standing of members of a community dedicated to learning and scholarship. (2018 3-4)

Scholars such as Sigal Ben-Porath (2017) agree. She posits that what is needed to ensure both expressive rights and the right to dignity is what she terms “inclusive freedom” within the collegium (2017). She asserts that “inclusive freedom demands that speech on campus be protected as broadly as possible while aiming to ensure that all members of the campus community are recognized—and know that they are recognized—as members in good standing” (2017, 56). Nevertheless, Ben-Porath does not support a restriction on speech based on identity and group affiliation, but rather encourages administrators to “fulfill their civic and educational missions by protecting and encouraging political and other forms of speech by individual students and student groups” (2017, 48). However, without clear criteria to guide administrators, students will nonetheless be vulnerable to the arbitrary application of ideals such as inclusive freedom.

So What Is to be Done?

So what is to be done to ensure the broadest exercise of freedom of expression and associational rights for student political advocacy while at the same time ensuring that their rights to equity free from dignitary harms are upheld? Drawing on the free speech and civil rights movements of the 1960s, Joy James (2018) argues that today a similar response is needed, that is, one that collectively takes responsibility for fighting against the onslaught of hate speech and far-right xenophobia. Alan Sears agrees. He believes the challenge lies in building long term resistance for “militant mass mobilization that can fight to transform colleges and universities from below into the kinds of educational spaces that meet student needs and serve as good places to work” (2019, 5). Reflecting on the syndicalist movement of student's and workers' solidarity struggles of the 1960s, Sears asserts that what is needed is mobilizing educational strategies, tabling counterdemonstrations, and building meaningful solidarity with marginalized folks to overturn the extreme right (Sears 2019). I concur.

While I believe it is important to maintain the broadest understanding of expressive freedom on campus, especially for public speakers, given the educational context within which post-secondary institutions operate, it is incumbent upon its members that all students are protected from dignitary harms. I believe that this balance can be achieved through an emphasis on our collective responsibility in ensuring that a group's dignity is not harmed—one that moves away from an individualistic understanding of rights, to one that emphasizes our collective responsibility to others beyond oneself. By adopting principles that protect one's dignity from harm—that is, harm to a group's reputation, their status and good standing in society, and the damage that hate speech may do to it (Waldron 2012, 139)—students will be better able to balance their right to freedom of expression with their fundamental right to learn and participate in the collegium free from the exigencies of discrimination and harmful speech. Moreover, in doing so, administrators will expand the narrow liberal conception of rights and ensure marginalized peoples' voices and world-views are heard. Such an approach represents a decolo-

rial shift and has the potential of expanding what counts as knowledge and truth in today's academy.

Endnotes

1. I adopt Sami scholar Rauna Kuokkanen's understanding of responsibility that links consciousness with conscience (2008). She states: “It is not enough to merely know one's responsibilities; one must also be aware of the consequences of one's actions. ... This starts by addressing one's privilege...It requires the critical examination of one's beliefs, biases, and assumptions as well as an understanding of how they have developed and become naturalized in the first place” (2008, 115).
2. While the Alberta Court of Appeal upheld a students' *Charter* rights to freedom of expression under Section 2(b) of the *Charter* in both the *UAlberta Pro-Life v. Governors of the University of Alberta* (2020 ABCA 1) and *Pridgen v. University of Calgary*, (2012 ABCA 139), the Supreme Court of Canada has yet to rule on a student's *Charter* rights.
3. See Murrell (2017) for firsthand accounts by students in Shepherd's tutorial class that were present when she introduced the TVO clip to the class.
4. Under the *Wilfrid Laurier University Act* (1973) the President has the right to make unilateral decisions regarding a student's non-academic behaviour (Universities Canada 2018). This said, all universities must comply with the *Canadian Criminal Code*, including hate speech laws and human rights legislation. In this situation, it would appear that President MacLatchy erred on the side of free speech to avoid conservative media pundits' criticism.
5. Doxing is when an individual's personal information is shared online and may be used to pose a personal threat to the individual.

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Free Speech Rhetoric and Normalizing Violence: Setting Higher Standards for University Guest Speaker Policies

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Abstract: In response to recent protests against controversial guest speakers, many Canadian universities have implemented new policies that conflate academic freedom and freedom of speech. The resultant free speech policies often protect speakers regardless of the content of their speech; this paper discusses the importance of barring speech that normalizes acts of harm.

Keywords: academic freedom, alt-right, freedom of speech, guest speaker policies, no-platforming, university policy

Recent protests against controversial guest speakers have reignited debates about freedom of speech on Canadian university campuses, raising the question: what restrictions—if any—should there be on campus speech? Many defenders of free speech oppose viewpoint-based speech restrictions, while others justify speech restrictions as a harm-prevention measure and insist that certain speakers be refused a platform entirely, a move sometimes referred to as 'no-platforming' (Levy 2019). A major challenge facing proponents of no-platforming is the lack of a clear and consistent understanding of exactly which types of speech should be considered seriously harmful (and therefore be refused a platform). Free speech advocates accordingly critique harm-based restrictions on the grounds that ethical limitations on speech become arbitrary when they fail to follow a consistent principle (Heinze 2018, 94). According to this criticism, restrictions on free speech risk being applied inconsistently at best and become tools for political gain at worst.

Though there are varied understandings of what ought to be considered 'seriously harmful,' this paper outlines one discernable type of speech that causes unquestionable harm and therefore should be restricted from campus platforms: speech that normalizes acts of violence. The first two sections of this paper discuss major themes in current debates about campus free speech and seeks to clarify points of ambiguity. After outlining the ethical, epistemic, and academic values underpinning both support for and opposition to no-platforming, I closely examine the meaning of harm. 'Harm' is frequently referenced in free speech debates, yet often remains ambiguously defined (when defined at all); in order to minimize confusion and inconsistency, I propose a clear and nuanced definition of harm to inform no-platforming decisions. The following two sections propose

specific criteria with which to assess university guest speaker policies, grounded through recent examples of controversial speakers and new campus free speech policies. I outline a framework for identifying speech that normalizes acts of violence, which I describe as *bridging rhetoric*. I ground this terminology with examples, including trends in heteroactivist, far-right, and alt-right discourses that strategically conflate anti-LGBTQ+ and free speech rhetoric. To ground my proposed framework for campus speech restrictions, I examine a recent case of no-platforming at McMaster University. Though Jordan Peterson has been invited to speak at several Canadian universities, the McMaster University case is examined here due to the immediate policy outcome triggered by his campus visit in March 2017. Persistent protests against Peterson's appearance at the University ultimately blocked the speaking event from proceeding, circumstances that spurred the creation of new Freedom of Expression (FOE) policies and outlining what would thereafter be considered acceptable forms of protest according to the University. Informed by a close look at McMaster's updated FOE guidelines, I argue that campus free speech policies should go beyond the legal limits on free speech. I propose restrictions on campus free speech that respect both academic freedom and an ethical responsibility to the safety of all community members. I do not claim that controversial or objectionable viewpoints should never be given a platform for fear of causing offence. Rather, I argue that reasonable limitations on campus speech should include restrictions on speech that crosses the line from offensive to normalizing violence and that thoughtful discussions of campus speaker policies should discern between the two. As university campuses are increasingly key sites where equity politics are debated (Nash, Gorman-Murray, and Browne 2019), it is essential to nuance the campus free speech debate in order to meaningfully resist oppressive ideologies.

The Campus Free Speech Debate

The free speech debate is often framed as a clash of epistemic reasoning against an ethical obligation to harm-prevention. When a speaker is known to promote hate, prejudice, or otherwise violent ideologies,

protestors may demand a disinvitation from the institutions, also referred to as 'no-platforming.' More specifically, no-platforming is the attempt to deny a platform to speech that will harm some or all of the audience (Levy 2019, 2) and has become an important consideration in university free speech debates. For the purposes of this paper, I use no-platforming and speech restrictions interchangeably to refer to viewpoint-based platform refusals and disinvitations.

Contemporary defenders of no-platforming justify their position as one of harm-prevention, where harm can refer to a range of outcomes: the proliferation of further bias arising from biased speech and harmed dignity (Ben-Porath 2019); the reinforcement of unjust social hierarchies (Simpson 2013); and an increased threat of violence for groups targeted by hate speech (O'Keefe 2016). Critics of no-platforming object to harm-based restrictions for a number of reasons. Given the fundamental importance of free speech rights to a liberal view on democracy, some argue that restrictions on freedom of speech pose a threat to democratic health. Heinze (2018, 88) argues that any ban on speech based solely on viewpoint-selective grounds is "always inherently anti-democratic, even when adopted on legitimate security grounds." While for some, speech restrictions based on legitimate security grounds may not be sufficiently justified, other defenders of free speech concede that harm-based restrictions are justified in certain cases. The liberal conception of free speech promotes the expression of ideas and opinions without coercive institutional censorship, with the exception of speech that is "seriously harmful or carries an imminent risk of harm" (Simpson and Srinivasan 2018, 191). The principal criticism of harm-based restrictions according to the liberal perspective, then, is not that they are inherently unjustified, but that the criteria for determining what types of speech are considered seriously harmful is flawed. One charge against harm-based speech restrictions is that they include speech that is merely offensive or not considered politically correct, neither of which ought to be considered seriously harmful according to this view. This line of argument, also referred to as the 'right to offend,' is frequently employed in debates about academic freedom, itself a reflection of the broader free

speech debate. Offence, it is argued, is not reflective of a speech's quality but instead characterizes the listener's reaction and, "the mere fact that what I say causes someone offence is not a sufficient reason to forbid me to say it" (Barrow 2009, 187).

Defenders of free speech also appeal to epistemic reasoning, arguing that in the pursuit of truth, the strength of one's argument can only be proven by encountering and refuting the views of one's opponents. Especially in the context of the university learning experience, exposure to divergent perspectives through free and open dialogue presents the opportunity to reassess one's own beliefs in the face of evidence-based arguments (Ceci and Williams 2018, 314). Stripping universities of all potentially offensive speech, it is argued, denies students the opportunity to practice defending their ideas and encourages them to claim they have been offended anytime their views are challenged (Dunt 2015).

Levy (2019) argues that though the campus free speech/no-platforming debate has been largely regarded as pitting appeal to reason against the duty to prevent harm and other values, there has been a recent turn to epistemically-based defences of no-platforming. Simpson and Srinivasan (2018) argue that in the context of the university, both defenders and critics of no-platforming mistakenly treat the debate as if it were about freedom of speech when it is more accurately an issue of academic freedom. By virtue of being a specialized institution (governed by principles of academic freedom), content-based restrictions are already ubiquitous in universities (Simpson and Srinivasan 2018). In addition to legal limitations on free speech, the university's commitment to academic freedom imposes restrictions on speech that are different from those that apply to the general public.

According to the 2011 Statement on Academic Freedom, adopted unanimously by Canadian university presidents, academic freedom is "the freedom to teach and conduct research in an academic environment ... [and] includes the right to freely communicate knowledge and the results of research and scholarship" (Universities Canada 2011). The Statement explicitly distinguishes academic freedom from other

iterations of free speech rights: "Unlike the broader concept of freedom of speech, academic freedom must be based on institutional integrity, rigorous standards for enquiry and institutional autonomy" (Universities Canada 2011). Additionally, academic freedom must be grounded in reasoned discourse and scholarly rigor, and is additionally constrained by professional disciplinary standards (Universities Canada 2011). Based on the criteria dictated by academic freedom, free speech on Canadian university campuses is already restricted based on epistemic quality.

If university administration and faculty are committed to academic freedom, do the same standards apply to guest speakers on campus? Though singular instances of speakers who base their claims on poor scholarship will not define the integrity of a given department, Simpson and Srinivasan argue that "the overall intellectual and disciplinary culture of a university is shaped by all of the public speaking activities that happen within the institution" (2018, 200). In order to take its epistemic purposes seriously, the university is justified in refusing a platform to speakers who do not meet disciplinary standards or ground their arguments in rigorous scholarship.

While in some instances it will be evident whether a speaker adheres to the academic standards, certain cases cannot be so easily determined. Disagreement about professional standards occurs both across and within disciplines; the resulting discord creates borderline cases in which it is unclear if no-platforming can be justified on epistemic grounds. Opinions about which topics are inappropriate for academic inquiry, which linguistic conventions are no longer acceptable, or whether a particular epistemic debate is settled or remains contested may differ amongst scholars and create disagreement about which disciplinary standards ought to inform speech restrictions.

The recent controversy surrounding Rebecca Tuvel's 2017 article "In Defense of Transracialism" is a prime example of both interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary rifts over professional standards. Tuvel's article was published in April 2017 in *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, and draws parallels between transgender and transracial identities; Tuvel argues that the

increasing acceptance of sex and gender transitions should likewise apply to racial transitions and include support for individuals who wish to assert a racial identity that differs from their birth (2017). Tuvel refers to Rachel Dolezal's self-presentation as Black (despite being born a white woman) as an entry point for her discussion, contrasting the widespread backlash against Dolezal's transracial identity and the more supportive public reception of Caitlyn Jenner's transgender identity. The publication sparked a frenzy of reactions, receiving both virulent criticism and support from scholars and the broader media. Critics claimed that the article included "egregious levels of liberal white ignorance and discursive transmisogynistic violence" (quoted in McKenzie, Harris, and Zamudio-Suaréz 2017), while supporters argued that the vicious attacks directed at the author were akin to a "modern-day witch hunt" (Singal 2017) and reflected the current "era of outrage" (Oliver 2017). The *Hypatia* staff themselves were divided in the wake of the erupting controversy. In the days following the article's release, an apology signed on behalf of the "majority of associate editors" was posted on Facebook, avowing that "[c]learly, the article should not have been published" (quoted in McKenzie, Harris, and Zamudio-Suaréz 2017). *Hypatia's* editor-in-chief, Sally Scholz, along with the journal's board of directors, defended the decision to publish Tuvel's article, with Scholz publicly affirming a belief that "*Hypatia* should publish on a wide array of topics employing a wide array of methodologies" (quoted in Weinberg 2017b). Philosophers were in similar disagreement about the article. An open letter signed by hundreds of academics, including philosophers Alexis Shotwell, Lori Gruen, and Shannon Winnubst, called for the article's retraction. The letter claims Tuvel's work falls short of scholarly standards, listing four principal criticisms including the use of language not in alignment with current academic conventions (such as deadnaming) and a failure to sufficiently engage with scholarly work by women philosophers of colour (Singal 2017). Other philosophers defended Tuvel: in a post on philosophy site The Daily Nous, academic Justin Weinberg claimed that the criticisms listed in the open letter were "plain false," unclear, or insufficient (Weinberg 2017a). Academics outside the philosophical discipline were also divided in the debate over

scholarly standards. Suzanna Danuta Walters, editor of *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* and professor of sociology, condemned *Hypatia's* associate editors for both insulting Tuvel and undermining the peer review process. Blaming toxic academic call-out culture for the widespread condemnation of Tuvel's article, Danuta Walters defends Tuvel's work as that of a committed feminist philosopher on the side of "progressive social justice" (Danuta Walters 2017). The deep rifts amongst academics in their responses to Tuvel's article shows that consensus on scholarly conventions cannot be taken for granted and therefore cannot be the sole basis for determining campus speech restrictions.

Epistemic standards can certainly serve as a starting point for creating campus speech restrictions, however, borderline cases may not be readily settled by this criterion alone. Rather than using epistemic or harm-prevention criteria, I argue that there is value in considering both when creating campus speech guidelines. In an effort to maintain the university's intellectual and disciplinary culture, guest speakers on campuses should, at minimum, meet the standards of reasoned argument and rigorous research set out by academic freedom. In controversial cases, especially those involving disputes over whether a speaker adheres to disciplinary standards, I believe that there is still value in using harm-prevention criteria to guide platforming decisions.

Defining Harm

What harms are being referenced by harm-based speech restrictions? The most powerful speech restrictions in Canada are the legal boundaries on speech defined by the *Criminal Code of Canada*. Subsection 319 of the *Criminal Code* prohibits hate propaganda (also referred to as hate speech), which includes the public incitement of hatred against an identifiable group "where such incitement is likely to lead to a breach of the peace." Though campus speech policies must abide by these legal restrictions, these boundaries on speech are not enough. University guest speaker policies must additionally refuse platforms to speech that normalizes acts of violence given its ability to reinforce systemic oppression. In an attempt to clarify exactly what speech these restrictions refer to, I will

define “acts of violence” using intentional misgendering as a timely example of normalizing harm. Misgendering can refer to addressing someone by the incorrect gender pronoun or denying someone access to their preferred gendered space, including washrooms (McLemore 2015, 53). While misgendering can certainly happen accidentally or unintentionally, I will explain why intentional misgendering is an act of violence.

In their 2002 “World Report on Violence and Health,” the World Health Organization defines violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood or resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation” (Krug et al. 2002, 5). The authors explicitly remark on their decision to define violence broadly and include non-physical forms of violence: “This [definition] reflects a growing recognition among researchers and practitioners of the need to include violence that does not necessarily result in injury or death, but nonetheless poses a substantial burden on individuals, families, communities and health care systems worldwide” (Krug et al. 2002, 5). Acts of violence can therefore refer to include both physical and non-physical threats, including psychological violence.

Intentionally misgendering trans people is a form of psychological violence. Riley J. Dennis outlines the psychological effects that misgendering has on trans people:

[Misgendering is] a way of invalidating their identity. It makes them feel disrespected, isolated, and uncomfortable, and hated simply because of their gender. It tells them that they should hide who they really are, that people will never fully accept them. Misgendering a trans person causes real psychological harm. (Dennis 2017, 2:29-2:43)

In a study on trans experiences of misgendering, McLemore found that the highest proportion of participants (34.8%) reported feeling very stigmatized when they were misgendered (2015, 57). Misgendering not only causes psychological harm, but also

affects an individual’s physical wellbeing. Misgendering is known to cause anxiety and can lead to significant distress, causing harm that, over time, can lead to suicide (Daley 2017); statistics from the Canadian Mental Health Association report that 77% of trans respondents in an Ontario-based survey had seriously considered suicide and 45% had attempt suicide (“Trans Mental Health” n.d.). Describing the impact that repeated misgendering has on their life, one genderqueer person discloses, “I felt erased, I felt like the message that I consistently got was ‘you don’t exist,’ and for me that line between you don’t exist and you shouldn’t exist can feel pretty similar a lot of the times” (Bown-Kai quoted in Daley 2017). Given the effects of misgendering on the lives and wellbeing of trans and gender variant individuals, repeated intentional misgendering is unquestionably an act of violence. In the following section, I use this understanding of violence to inform a case for restrictions on seriously harmful speech; more specifically, speech that covertly normalizes acts of violence. I use intentional misgendering as an entry point to discuss broader trends amongst heteroactivists and the far-right to normalize violent discourse. Using freedom of speech rhetoric, speakers create a rhetorical bridge from anti-LGTBQ+ ideologies to a defense of democratic rights, implicitly justifying their oppressive stance. I propose the term “bridging rhetoric” can be used to identify this particular type of harmful speech; additionally, I argue that bridging rhetoric as a framework can subsequently inform decisions about which types of speech are permissible on university campuses.

Shifting the Debate: Bridging Rhetoric

Though certain types of oppressive speech may be easily recognized, in most cases harmful speech is more challenging to definitively discern. In order to resist harmful ideologies, one must be able to identify them and suitable language is required to do so. Explicit threats and slurs can be clearly categorized as harmful; however, implicit oppression may need a more nuanced framework for assessment. Violent ideologies are sometimes reframed within more widely accepted discourses, a type of oppressive speech that I refer to as bridging rhetoric. Rather than defend an act of violence outright, bridging rhetoric covertly normalizes

acts of violence by aligning them with broader social norms. Consider Jordan Peterson's stance on personal pronouns as an example. The University of Toronto psychology professor gained notoriety in September 2016 for his three-part YouTube series called "Professor against political correctness," created in response to the University's new mandatory anti-bias training and a federal amendment to add gender identity and expression to the Canadian Human Rights Act (Lynskey 2018). Peterson states that his principal concern with the amendment is the requirement to address people by the pronouns of their choosing; this "compelled speech" is part of what Peterson calls a "radical collectivist left-wing game" in which compassion is used as a guise to "gain linguistic supremacy in the area of public discourse" (Peterson 2018, 2:00-2:23). Rather than taking an explicitly anti-trans position, Peterson uses free speech rhetoric and claims about his own linguistic rights to justify intentional misgendering. In a CBC interview, when asked about referring to his trans non-binary colleague using the correct pronouns, Peterson responds,

The mere fact that Professor Peet would like to be addressed by a particular pronoun does not mean that I am required to address him [sic] by that pronoun. That doesn't mean that I deny his [sic] existence or the existence of people who don't fit neatly in binary gender categories. I reserve the right to use my own language. (Peterson 2016)

Peterson strategically frames his resistance as a defence of his own democratic rights and sidesteps further comment on the harm that misgendering causes trans people. Peterson does not justify misgendering as an act of violence but positions himself instead as a defender of free speech, which, in Peterson's words, "is not just another value [but] the foundation of Western civilization" (quoted in Murphy 2016). Peterson bridges a discursive gap to present his arguments from a normatively acceptable position: using free speech rhetoric, Peterson reframes his arguments away from a defence of harm (a more challenging stance to take in Canada, where overt violence conflicts with the state's peaceful self-image) and toward a defence of democratic rights (which are protected by law in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*).

Peterson's reframing is characteristic of a broader trend in anti-LGBTQ+ resistive discourses: Nash, Gorman-Murray, and Browne (2019) argue that heteroactivists in Canada, Australia, and Great Britain—Peterson included—increasingly frame their oppressive discourses as claims to freedom of speech and freedom of religion. Heteroactivists, who seek to resist LGBTQ+ equalities and re-inscribe heteronormative gender relations, reposition their arguments within seemingly intellectual debates about rights, rather than making morality-based claims against LGBTQ+ equalities (Nash, Gorman-Murray, and Browne 2019). By reframing the debate and employing bridging rhetoric, anti-LGBTQ+ discourses are grounded within claims about freedom of speech; in the case of intentional misgendering, shifting the debate away from attacks on trans rights and towards broader free speech debates functions to normalize this particular act of violence.

Though Nash, Gorman-Murray, and Browne (2019) remark that heteroactivist discourses are taken up by individuals and groups across the political spectrum, the co-optation of rights rhetoric and claims of harm is also a tactic commonly employed by the far-right and alternative right, or "alt-right." Lyons defines the alt-right as:

[A] loosely organized far-right movement that shares a contempt for both liberal multiculturalism and mainstream conservatism; a belief that some people are inherently superior to others; a strong internet presence [...] [it] combines White nationalism, misogyny, antisemitism, and authoritarianism in various forms. (2017, 2)

When their inflammatory speech is denied a platform, alt-right and far-right speakers claim that their free speech rights have been infringed upon, co-opting freedom of speech rhetoric from leftists as a shield—following a similar pattern as the aforementioned heteroactivist discursive strategy. In 2017, Milo Yiannopoulos, right-wing provocateur and former editor at alt-right outlet Breitbart News, was scheduled to speak at University of California, Berkeley until protests caused his talk to be cancelled. Yiannopoulos is known for making incendiary remarks against trans people, Muslims, Black Lives Matter activism, feminism, and queer people and writing columns with titles such as

“Birth Control Makes Women Unattractive and Crazy” and “Would You Rather Your Child Had Feminism or Cancer?” (BBC News 2017). Following the cancellation of his talk, Yiannopoulos was quick to frame the incident as an attack against freedom of speech, claiming that “the Left is absolutely terrified of free speech and will do literally anything to shut it down” (quoted in Dearden 2017). Much like the way Peterson sidesteps discussions about harm-prevention in favour of debating democratic freedoms, Yiannopoulos strategically shifts the conversational focus away from his own inflammatory rhetoric and instead frames himself as a victim of leftist politics. In doing so, the discussion is no longer about far-right violence, focusing instead on a seemingly worthy debate about free speech.

This rhetorical defense is often referred to as the ‘weaponization of free speech,’ in which free speech and freedom of expression discourse is used to justify bigotry and white supremacy (Picazo 2017; Scott 2020; Zine 2018). This is particularly relevant to Canadian universities, as campuses have increasingly become targets for alt-right recruitment. In 2017, the CBC reported a rise in right-wing populist paraphernalia on university campuses across the country, promoting a “White Students Union” and displaying far-right references, slogans like “Make Canada Great Again” (Zhou 2017). In November 2016, posters were found around the McMaster University campus that included links to alt-right websites and messages such as “Tired of Anti White propaganda? You are not alone” (Hastie 2019).

Using similar freedom of expression discourse, alt-right speakers are invited to university campuses under guises of free and open inquiry. In 2018, alt-right figure Faith Goldy was invited by the Laurier Society for Open Inquiry to present a talk titled “Ethnocide: Multiculturalism and European Canadian Identity” at Wilfred Laurier University (Paradkar 2018). Goldy has said the ‘Fourteen Words’ neo-Nazi slogan on-air and was fired from Rebel Media after appearing on a white nationalist podcast during the 2017 Charlottesville riots (Brean 2019; Canadian Anti-Hate Network 2018). When asked about her decision to invite Goldy, the Society’s co-founder and president Lindsay

Shepherd told the CBC, “These views are out there no matter how despicable some people find them. Actually, the best thing to do is air them out and let them be publicly challenged” (quoted in Lam and Bueckert 2018). There is a significant difference, however, between challenging racist and xenophobic views and providing those views with a platform. No matter how the invitation to speak is justified, the very fact of the invitation suggests that the speaker’s ideas are worthy of debate. Challenging hate is essential to the pursuit of a more equitable society, nevertheless, providing platforms for harmful or violent viewpoints is not necessary to challenge them.

Freedom of speech rhetoric is used as a shield to protect the alt-right’s overt racism and bigotry and is likewise employed by heteroactivists to more covertly normalize acts of violence. Though the two groups may share some values and not others, both the alt-right and anti-LGBTQ+ rights advocates oppose advances in equity for marginalized groups. I propose that bridging rhetoric can be used as a term to identify speech that co-opts free speech discourse as a cover for normalizing violence. As demonstrated above, both groups see Canadian university campuses as viable platforms for their violent and harmful discourse. In light of these examples, I will now examine McMaster University’s policies as a case study and discuss why it is imperative that campus speech restrictions go beyond the limits required by law.

Bridging Rhetoric and University Speech Policies

McMaster University’s “Freedom of Expression: Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) webpage outlines the institution’s current restrictions on free speech. The page references the legal boundaries on speech set out by the *Criminal Code of Canada* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, as well as the University’s own “Policy on Discrimination and Harassment” which requires “all members of the University community” to “respect the rights and freedoms of others” (McMaster n.d.). According to the FAQ page, all members of the McMaster community are free and encouraged to invite speakers, with no further restrictions on the kinds of speech that are permitted. The page explicitly states

that the University administration does not endorse the views of invited speakers and that, while they do not tolerate hate speech, McMaster is “committed to freedom of expression” and does not shut down unpopular or controversial speaker events (McMaster n.d.).

One such event was Jordan Peterson’s invitation to speak at the University in 2017. Although Peterson was met with chanting and musical fanfare upon his arrival to the McMaster University Campus, it was not a celebratory reception. Peterson was scheduled to appear as part of a panel debate about free speech and political correctness in academic settings; however, protestors’ persistent sonic disruptions ultimately prevented him from speaking (Beatty 2017). In the wake of Peterson’s visit to campus, McMaster formed a committee on protest and freedom of expression and created a new document outlining what the University deems to be acceptable methods of protests against guest speakers and freedom of expression guidelines. The University’s “Freedom of Expression, Protest and Dissent: Guidance for Event Organizers and Participants” (FOE) policy document was finalized in June 2018 and remains the University’s most up-to-date guest speaker policy (McMaster 2018).

McMaster’s FOE document includes general principles and goals, as well as specific guidance for the audience members, event organizers, and moderators/facilitators of campus speaking events. Though a sub-heading is not included for guest speaker guidance, invited speakers are referenced in the guidelines for event organizers. Event organizers “are responsible for communicating this guidance and the expectations of the University to invited speakers or performers and for securing their agreement to them in advance of the event” (McMaster 2018, 3). Since the document does not include explicit guidelines for invited speakers, it must therefore be inferred that the guidance and expectations to which this line refers are the document’s “General Goals and Principles.” Within this section, there is no mention of speech restrictions for visiting speakers, however, quite oppositely, the document states that its policies are “intended to be applied without regard for the subject matter or content

of any particular speech, performance or event held on McMaster University property” (McMaster 2018, 2). Aside from the legal limitations on free speech outlined on their Freedom of Expression FAQ page, McMaster University guidelines do not include additional speech restrictions for invited speakers.

Though it may seem that McMaster’s FOE policy aims to encourage open inquiry through unhindered freedom of expression, these types of open speech policies can have unintended but harmful repercussions. Open speech policies often reinforce unjust social hierarchies, as the voices of the most powerful or privileged are those most likely to be heard. Conversely, dissenting voices, especially those from marginalized groups, tend to be read as insolent and defiant. As Hofmann-Kuroda (2017, 370) remarks, “When freedom of speech is framed as a universal right—without regard to the specificities of race, class, and gender—it can in fact work to consolidate the power of the ruling majority and thus reproduce the status quo.” University speech policies should reflect the ways that free speech rhetoric is employed to bolster harmful and violent speech that perpetuate systemic oppression. In order to meaningfully consider how open speech policies reinforce unjust social hierarchies, policies should include content-based speech restrictions that go beyond the legal limits on hate speech and refuse platforms for bridging rhetoric.

Concluding Remarks: Why Universities Must Take Responsibility for the Outcomes of Their Policies

In Canada, the responsibilities of the university are not limited to upholding rigorous academic standards. According to Universities Canada’s Statement on Academic Freedom, the institutional responsibility to uphold the principles of academic freedom must be balanced with other ethical duties:

Universities must also ensure that the rights and freedoms of others are respected, and that academic freedom is exercised in a reasonable and responsible manner [...] Faculty members and university leaders have an obligation to ensure that students’ human rights are respected and

that they are encouraged to pursue their education according to the principles of academic freedom. (Universities Canada 2011)

In order to uphold their commitment to human rights, university policies should reflect the potential impact of guest speaker events. Even if universities claim that providing a platform for a particular speaker does not equate to approval of that speaker's views, the offer of a platform speaks for itself. The university is a respected institution that plays a role in certifying expertise; as such, the very fact of invitation signals credibility and epistemic significance (Levy 2019, 11). The authority afforded by a university platform amplifies the impact of a given message. Much in the way that the academic integrity of an invited speaker contributes to the university's broader intellectual culture, an invited speaker's covert attacks on equality functions to re-inscribe broader oppressive structures. It is therefore not enough to only refuse platforms to those who make overt calls for violence or hate speech—taking inclusivity seriously requires a more refined policy. University policies should additionally refuse platforms to speech that normalizes acts of violence, in recognition of how open speech policies bolster the status quo, including unjust social hierarchies. Resisting oppressive heteroactivist and alt-right ideologies requires a recognition of how free speech rhetoric is co-opted to advance covert attacks against marginalized groups. By introducing nuanced restrictions to guest speaker policies, it is possible to balance the values of academic freedom, free expression, and the safety of university community members.

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Addressing Sexual Violence at Ontario Universities in the Context of Rising Anti-Feminist Backlash

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Abstract: In this paper, I argue that anti-feminist backlash at Canadian universities is fuelled by, and has a significant impact on, anti-violence efforts on campus and, in particular, whether and how they engage with male students and normative constructions of masculinity.

Keywords: anti-feminist backlash, Canadian universities, men's rights, sexual violence

Introduction

Over the past decade, sexual violence has become the subject of heightened public attention and calls for action in Canada and beyond, as evidenced by the popularity of #MeToo (Bogen et al. 2019) and the response to high profile cases such as Jian Ghomeshi (D. Phillips 2017). This momentum has been particularly visible at Canadian universities and, in the context of ongoing student activism, five provinces have recently passed legislation mandating the creation of sexual violence policies and expanded institutional response mechanisms. During the same time period, there has been a rise in anti-feminist and so-called “alt-right” backlash that also has a growing presence on Canadian campuses. Anti-feminist backlash exists on a spectrum and ranges from threats of violence against feminists (Hopper 2015) and highly visible examples, such as university professor Jordan Peterson’s characterization of Women’s Studies as an “indoctrination cult” (CBC Radio 2017, para. 8), to more subtle resistance in everyday academic settings that serves to maintain existing institutional inequities. In this paper, I argue that anti-feminist backlash is not simply part of the context in which contemporary anti-violence activism is unfolding in Canada but rather that it is fuelled by, and has a significant impact on, anti-violence efforts on campus, and, in particular, whether and how they engage with male students and normative constructions of masculinity. In other words, the threat of backlash shapes what can be said and done about the gendered nature of sexual violence perpetration at Canadian universities.

Conceptualizing Backlash

Anti-feminist backlash is not a new phenomenon. While misogyny and resistance to feminism are ongoing and persistent, the concept of backlash refers to periods of acute resistance that generally correspond

to the perception that specific feminist efforts are threatening the status quo (Faludi 2006). In this paper, I argue that contemporary anti-feminist backlash conforms to this definition to the extent that it responds, at least in part, to the perceived success of feminist activism in raising public awareness and passing provincial legislation on the issue of campus sexual violence. Sarah Banet-Weiser (2018) claims that while anti-feminist backlash is a reactive response to feminism, it is not linear or unidirectional. Instead, she conceptualizes this backlash as a form of popular misogyny, which she defines as a normative social and political structure that is networked across multiple sites and is in a constant dynamic relationship with feminism. According to Banet-Weiser (2018), both feminism and misogyny are continually reconfigured through this relationship. This paper explores this relationship with respect to efforts to address sexual violence on campus.

While there are ideological differences among anti-feminist groups, they are generally united by a sense of aggrieved entitlement rooted in the perception that feminist gains have eroded white male privilege (Ging 2019). These groups include Men's Rights Activists (MRAs), who have taken up a variety of issues, including divorce law, child custody, men's mental health, and domestic violence, and posit the suppression of feminism and revalorization of normative constructions of masculinity as the solution to what they perceive to be a "crisis of masculinity" (Blais and Dupuis-Déri 2012). By contrast, involuntary celibates, commonly known as "incels," are more concerned with violent retribution than with the recuperation of traditional masculine norms. Although incels often identify with subordinated "beta" masculinities and strategically distance themselves from dominant "alpha" masculinity, which they associate with sexual success, they simultaneously maintain hierarchies of power through their violence (Ging 2019).

Rather than framing MRAs and incels as anomalous "fringe" movements, they must be understood as existing on a spectrum with more subtle mainstream expressions of popular misogyny (Banet-Weiser 2018; Dragiewicz and Mann 2016). Michael Messner

(2016, 16) points to the emergence of a more insidious version of anti-feminism that is grounded in neoliberalism and maintains male privilege by "skirt[ing] analysis of structural inequalities in favor of a common-sense celebration of individual choice for women and men." Neoliberal anti-feminism tends to be masked in depoliticized equality rhetoric and is the version that is most likely to resonate with educated, middle-class, white men and influence policy (Messner 2016). As Banet-Weiser (2018, 33) points out, because "the legacy of patriarchy legitimates misogynistic arguments as common sense," they can be converted into policy and legal discourse "with terrible efficiency." Examples of this version of anti-feminism abound, ranging from opinion columns in mainstream Canadian media (i.e. Kay 2014; Wentz 2019a) to public policy, as illustrated by the Harper government's restructuring of Status of Women Canada and the Family Violence Initiative (Mann 2016). As I will demonstrate in this paper, neoliberal anti-feminism influences Canadian universities' responses to sexual violence in ways that serve to maintain existing institutional power arrangements.

Anti-feminist backlash intersects with white supremacy, heteronormativity, and other systems of oppression to the extent that it has been called a "gateway drug to the alt-right" (Futrelle 2017, para.7). The term "alt-right" refers to those who ascribe to a variety of nationalist, conservative, and far-right ideologies and became popularized as a descriptor for a faction of Trump supporters (Perry, Mirrlees, and Scrivens 2018). While there are notable exceptions, the majority of MRAs and incels are generally understood to be white, heterosexual, cisgender men and, as such, their entitlement to power and sex is framed as emerging from normative constructions of white masculinity (Marwick and Caplan 2018). Racism is rampant in these communities; for example, in the manifesto released prior to his shooting rampage in Isla Vista, California, Elliot Rodger complains about Black, Mexican, and Asian men who date white women and argues that he "deserves it more" as someone who is "half white" and "descended from British aristocracy" (as quoted in Paradkar 2018, para. 10). These intersections also shape the impact of this backlash; as the Twitter attack on comedian Leslie Jones (Madden

et al. 2018) illustrates, women of colour often experience specific racist and misogynist backlash. Further, when backlash informs policy, marginalized women and trans folks generally bear the brunt of the impact (Faludi et al. 2020). As such, it is important to analyze anti-feminist backlash from an intersectional perspective.

Canadian universities are not immune to anti-feminist and alt-right backlash. In the remainder of this paper, I examine the specific ways in which backlash is circulating on campus, as well as how it has been fuelled by recent efforts to address sexual violence. I also delineate its impact on anti-violence efforts, ranging from threats and violence against individual activists to how it affects policy and prevention efforts. I conclude that this backlash shapes what can be said and done about sexual violence on university campuses, and in particular, about its gendered nature, in ways that may ultimately impact the potential effectiveness of anti-violence efforts.

Methods

This paper draws on the findings of a qualitative study that I conducted between 2018 and 2019, which analyzed how Ontario universities have responded to sexual violence through the theoretical and methodological framework of intersectionality (Hill Collins and Bilge 2016; Thornton Dill and Kohlman 2012). Under the leadership of the previous Liberal government, Ontario became the first Canadian province to pass legislation on campus sexual violence in 2016. This legislation requires post-secondary institutions to develop sexual violence policies and, as such, I conducted a discourse analysis of these policies at all of the public universities in Ontario. This analysis approached the policies as sites where “truths” about sexual violence—how it is defined, whose experiences are valued and in what ways—are (re)produced (Strega 2005).

To better understand how these policies translate into practice, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 31 stakeholders from three Ontario universities that I selected as case studies. The selected institutions are all located in urban areas in different geographic regions

of Ontario. Two of the institutions are large, while the other is medium-sized. The stakeholders that I interviewed included student activists, faculty and staff involved in anti-violence efforts on campus, and members of community organizations whose anti-violence work impacts the selected universities.

My recruitment strategy was informed by the desire to centre the voices of those who are typically marginalized in mainstream research and public debates about campus sexual violence. While I did not collect demographic data, many of my participants addressed aspects of their identities during our interviews. Of the 31 participants, 7 identified as male; at least 3 identified as Indigenous or Métis; at least 6 identified as Black; at least 10 identified as survivors of sexual violence; and at least 8 identified as lesbian, gay, or queer. As the following discussion of my research findings demonstrates, their experiences with anti-violence efforts and anti-feminist backlash underscore the importance of analyzing these topics through an intersectional perspective.

Findings and Discussion

How Backlash Responds to Anti-Violence Efforts

In the context of ongoing student activism, heightened public attention, and the recent provincial legislation directing Canadian universities to develop specific sexual violence policies, anti-feminist backlash appears in a few different but interrelated forms, including the characterization of this heightened attention as a “moral panic.” For example, Margaret Wente (2019b, para. 12) mobilizes a sense of moral panic to argue that the problem of sexual violence is being overstated “by lumping together genuine assault with trivial misbehavior.” Wente’s argument is certainly not new and echoes so-called “postfeminist” Katie Roiphe’s (1994) earlier assertions that feminist research exaggerates the prevalence of sexual violence by defining rape and sexual harassment too broadly. Similarly, Laura Kipnis (2017) characterizes campus anti-violence efforts as a moral panic that threatens to regulate sexuality and reproduce patriarchal notions of femininity as vulnerability. However, these arguments problematically assume that there is a consensus on the

nature and scope of sexual violence, and that current remedies are not only adequate but excessive (N. Phillips 2017). Sara Ahmed (2015, para. 49) cautions against framing student allegations of sexual violence against staff and faculty as a moral panic, as it “allow[s] a critique of power to be reframed (and dismissed) as an imposition of moral norms” and therefore risks reproducing dominant structures of power and the normalization of sexual harassment within academia.

Related to the notion that the prevalence of sexual violence is overstated is the argument that feminists have created an environment that encourages false reporting (Lonergan 2018). Lise Gotell and Emily Dutton (2016) argue that anti-feminist groups have strategically mobilized this argument to attract new members by capitalizing on young men’s fear of being falsely accused. For example, in 2013, Men’s Rights Edmonton launched the *Don’t Be That Girl* campaign in response to the *Don’t Be That Guy* anti-rape campaign, which was popular on campuses across Canada. The counter-campaign featured posters undermining the credibility of sexual assault allegations with statements such as “just because you regret a one-night stand, doesn’t mean it wasn’t consensual” (as quoted in Gotell and Dutton 2016, 67). This discourse is also visible in anti-feminist threats posted online in September 2015, which included: “next week when a feminist at the University of Toronto tries to ruin your life with false sex rape allegations, rent a gun from a gang and start firing bullets into these feminists at your nearest Women’s Studies classroom” (as quoted in Hopper 2015, para. 8). Although the false reporting discourse may succeed in mobilizing MRAs, it ignores the overwhelming evidence that sexual assault is grossly underreported (Conroy and Cotter 2017) and is more likely to be deemed “unfounded” by police than other crimes (Doolittle 2017).

Anti-feminist backlash also manifests in the argument that free speech is under threat on Canadian campuses. This argument is premised on the notion that in the era of “political correctness,” controversial perspectives, particularly far-right perspectives, are being censored by feminists and so-called “social justice war-

riors” (Pang 2017). In the Canadian context, University of Toronto professor Jordan Peterson is one of the most vocal proponents of the view that free speech is under threat. Peterson became (in)famous for arguing that being asked to use gender-neutral pronouns and protections against discrimination on the basis of gender identity and expression constitute threats to his free speech (Pang 2017). In a *New York Times* interview, Peterson reportedly questioned the existence of patriarchy and suggested that existing hierarchies are the natural result of differing levels of competence (Bowles 2018, para. 5). He has referred to Women’s Studies, Ethnic Studies, Sociology, Anthropology, English Literature, and Education as “indoctrination cults” (CBC Radio 2017, para. 8) that are invested in producing “the next generation of pathetic whining radicals” (Pang 2017, para. 22). He also discussed plans to create a website cataloguing all “postmodern neo-Marxist cult classes” (CBC Radio 2017, para. 8) to discourage enrollment, which is fairly hypocritical for someone so concerned with free speech. The characterization of feminists and student anti-violence activists as overly sensitive and censorious is a means by which their claims are dismissed, and existing institutional inequities are maintained (Ahmed 2015).

Anti-feminist and alt-right groups have deployed free speech arguments to legitimize their presence on campus. For example, in 2016, the Men’s Issues Awareness Society (MIAS) at Ryerson University filed a joint lawsuit with two anti-abortion groups against the student union for allegedly discriminating against their right to free speech after they were denied official student group status (Kivanc 2016). The Canadian Association for Equality (CAFE), a well-known men’s rights group, supported MIAS members in launching their lawsuit (Kivanc 2016). While the lawsuit was dismissed in early 2018, the MIAS founder warned that the verdict would not succeed in “silenc[ing] men” and that “it’s going to create even more people who are willing to fight for these causes and they’re going to be angrier than I am, so be prepared” (as quoted in Binning 2018, para. 7).

Student-led free speech clubs have also emerged at Canadian universities. While they tend to frame their

mission in politically neutral terms, this framing is quickly betrayed by their choice of invited speakers. For example, the Students in Support of Free Speech (SSFS) group at the University of Toronto has hosted right-wing speakers including Peterson, Lauren Southern, Ezra Levant, and Ben Shapiro (Pang 2017). They also held a rally in support of members of the white nationalist Proud Boys, which was attended by Paul Fromm, the director of the Council of Conservative Citizens, a white supremacist group with ties to the Ku Klux Klan (Pang 2017). These incidents must be contextualized within broader white nationalism at Canadian universities. In the wake of Trump's election, posters appeared on campuses nationwide bearing statements such as "it's only racist when white people do it" and "tired of anti-white propaganda? It's time to MAKE CANADA GREAT AGAIN!" (as quoted in Perry, Mirrlees, and Scrivens 2018, 59). As these examples demonstrate, the argument that free speech is under attack on campus is inherently linked to the same sense of aggrieved white masculine entitlement that animates anti-feminist backlash.

By contrast, there *are* serious limits imposed on what can be said about sexual violence at Canadian universities. For example, Clea Schmidt, an Education professor at the University of Manitoba, reported facing increasing pressure to resign after she critiqued the University administration's handling of sexual violence cases, including her own substantiated complaint of sexual harassment against a colleague (Botelho-Urbanski 2019). By drawing attention to the issue of campus sexual violence, Schmidt might thus be described as an "institutional killjoy," who "poses a problem because she keeps exposing a problem" (Ahmed 2017, 99). Meanwhile, high-profile faculty members may be protected from sexual assault allegations based their perceived value to the institution as "the patriarchal impulse to shield privileged men is intensified by the fact that the reputation of the perpetrator operates as a proxy for that of the university" (Phipps 2020, 234). For example, some Canadian universities have signed non-disclosure agreements as part of their settlements with faculty who perpetrate sexual violence to avoid long arbitration processes. These agreements often prevent survivors from knowing the results of the investigation and

allow the offending professor to seek employment at other institutions without disclosing this history (Ward and Gollom 2018). Workplace health and safety regulations may also limit institutions' ability to reveal information about complaints against faculty and staff, including the fact that they have been named in a formal complaint (Jones 2018).

Some institutions' sexual violence policies place restrictions on survivors' ability to discuss their complaints, which have been described as "gag orders" (Jones 2018, para. 14). While the policies also typically include provisions that prohibit retaliation, one of my research participants described experiencing "major bullying" after her complaint against a classmate was dismissed: "I have heard things behind my back: 'oh, we don't want to be in a group with her because [...] this happened.' I get looks. I'm the girl who cried wolf" (020). As a result, she said that she felt like she had no choice but to switch to a different major. Further, there is a risk that those who file complaints will be sued for defamation (Kingkade 2017). For example, after he was fired by the University of British Columbia, Steven Galloway filed defamation lawsuits against a former student who accused him of sexual assault and over 20 others who are alleged to have repeated the accusations (Lederman 2020). Unsurprisingly, these issues have not been taken up by the supposedly politically neutral campus free speech advocates.

How Responses to Campus Sexual Violence are Shaped by Backlash

While it may be tempting to dismiss expressions of anti-feminism on campus as fringe concerns, it is important to recognize their ability to influence how universities are responding to sexual violence. At the level of policymaking, debates about due process and the rights of accused students, which are legitimate concerns, can become a vehicle to advance anti-feminist interests. In the United States, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos invited MRA groups, including the National Coalition for Men, who have been accused of publishing the names and photos of sexual assault survivors and of promoting misogynistic violence (Kreighbaum 2017; Scheinman 2017), to participate

in a summit on campus sexual violence in 2017. Following the summit, the Trump administration introduced new Title IX regulations that, among other things, encouraged post-secondary institutions to adopt the higher “clear and convincing” standard of evidence and guaranteed the right of accused students to cross-examine their accusers (Green 2020). These American debates have the potential to influence how Canadian institutions respond to sexual violence. I noted, for example, that some Ontario universities’ policies avoid using the terms “victim” or “survivor,” which is consistent with the critique that the use of these terms pre-supposes the guilt of the respondent (Kipnis 2017). Three Ontario universities included clauses stipulating that “vexatious” complaints or complaints made in “bad faith” can result in sanctions against the complainant. While such clauses are not unique to sexual violence policies, their inclusion has the effect of reproducing the fear of false reporting. Further, Ontario’s Conservative Premier, Doug Ford, passed legislation shortly after taking office that requires all post-secondary institutions to implement free speech policies and threatened to cut the funding of noncompliant institutions, which was widely interpreted as a gesture to appease his far-right constituents (Jeffords 2018). These examples clearly illustrate the potential for anti-feminist backlash to inform policy.

The neoliberal university is deeply invested in preserving their public reputation as a means of securing scarce tuition dollars and research funding (Gray and Pin 2017). Allegations of sexual violence are therefore perceived as threats to the institution’s reputation that must be carefully managed or silenced (Phipps 2020). Yet as institutions’ sexual violence policies and responses are publicly ranked and evaluated in the media and by student activist organizations such as Our Turn (2017), they have become a significant measure of post-secondary institutions’ performance. As such, “university branding becomes entangled with sexual assault prevention [...] to further the public reputation of the university as proactive in enhancing student safety [...] as a component of institutional efforts to attract prospective students” (Gray and Pin 2017, 93-4). Post-secondary institutions must project the public image that they are committed to addressing sexual violence while simultaneously avoiding back-

lash and accusations of bias and infringement on free speech, particularly in Ontario.

My research suggests that some of the more subtle forms of backlash are present in institutional policy-making processes, particularly with respect to whose voices and perspectives are represented. At two of the three institutions that I studied, participants described these process as being driven by administrative interests, which caused tension among committee members who questioned their priorities: “are you working to support survivors or are you here to support the university and worry about liability and tuition dollars?” (018). One participant, who teaches in Gender Studies, felt that feminist faculty were excluded because “the university sees feminists on campus not necessarily as allies [but] more as people that they have to keep away” (029). Similarly, after being asked to join the policymaking committee at the third institution, a faculty member who researches campus sexual violence said that she felt “relieved because I know that at many universities, the people who actually had most expertise were not put on the committees” (025). Participants also raised concerns regarding the shallowness of consultations with students and community anti-violence organizations. Further, participants at one institution said that their policymaking committee was chaired by a “white male” administrator who exercised his privilege to silence other committee members: “it was a committee of strong women, strong voices, [and] sometimes those voices were not being heard, specifically racialized voices” (017). These examples illustrate the ways that subtle forms of backlash serve to maintain existing inequities and silence those who are perceived to be institutional killjoys (Ahmed 2017).

Given these dynamics, it is unsurprising that my analysis of universities’ sexual violence policies revealed a tendency to frame sexual violence as a depoliticized interpersonal issue. Of the 22 public universities in Ontario, 10 have policies that are completely identity-neutral. This depoliticized framing may represent an attempt to expand the definition of sexual violence to include the experiences of those who do not conform to the “ideal” survivor, who is typically understood to be a white, middle-class, heterosexual, cisgender wo-

man (Richie 2000). Nevertheless, this framing fails to address the gendered nature of sexual violence, as well as how vulnerability to violence and access to support are shaped by its intersections with systems of oppression (Harris and Linder 2017). By contrast, the other universities' policies include references to intersectionality and name those who experience heightened vulnerability, which is significant. However, my findings suggest that these references to intersectionality rarely translate into practice in a way that meaningfully addresses the experiences of marginalized survivors. As such, I conclude that these references must be understood as a reflection of the institutional incorporation of intersectionality rather than a genuine commitment to addressing the underlying power relations that give rise to sexual violence. Importantly, none of the policies explicitly address the fact that cisgender men perpetrate the overwhelming majority of sexual violence (Conroy and Cotter 2017) or how normative masculinities contribute to violence.

My research participants suggested that this depoliticized framing may be motivated, at least in part, by a desire to avoid backlash. As one participant explained, if university responses to sexual violence

...speak to these more political aspects, [...] the administration feel[s] like they are going to get a lot of complaints. They are going to be in the media. There's going to be a whole uproar about it because there are people who are very committed to upholding a cis, heterosexual, patriarchal structure. (031)

Similarly, another participant said that the recent free speech legislation "shifted the culture on our campus away from intersectionality in the sense that [...] it became this space that was so heavily focused on freedom of speech and not saying things that could kind of spark this contentious debate" (028), such as the confrontations that occurred at the University of Toronto in response to Peterson (Pang 2017). Adopting depoliticized anti-violence efforts may allow universities to avoid these heated debates and preserve their public reputation and image.

Beyond the content of these policies, my research suggests that the desire to avoid backlash also informs approaches to sexual violence prevention. As one

participant explained, when prevention efforts are explicitly linked to feminism, they risk being perceived as inherently "man-bashing" (019). Similarly, another participant argued that "because these issues are so visible and so contentious and so divisive, there's a lot of hostility at times to the idea that 'oh great, here comes a feminist' and [...] the notion of [the] 'social justice warrior'" (023). Again, this contributes to the implementation of depoliticized approaches.

Consent campaigns illustrate this depoliticized framing by (mis)representing sexual violence as an interpersonal issue resulting from miscommunication and a lack of knowledge about consent (Beres 2018), which fails to acknowledge the power relations inherent in sexual violence and, in so doing, resembles the insidious neoliberal version of anti-feminism that Messner (2016) describes. Representing consent as a negotiation between equal individuals who have the capacity to "just say no" (or yes) and have their "no" respected (Burkett and Hamilton 2012) leaves white masculine sexual entitlement unaddressed. It also fails to account for how certain populations are constructed as sexually available and always already consenting (Crenshaw 1991) while others are constructed as inherently threatening (Davis 1981) based on the intersections of privilege and oppression. As one participant explained, "it's not so much that this person didn't say no or that you thought that they had said yes or whatever, it's that in many cases people feel entitled to sex" (031). As this example illustrates, while depoliticized approaches may be less likely to attract backlash, their potential impact may be limited if they fail to address the underlying social and structural causes of sexual violence.

Despite the gendered nature of sexual violence perpetration, few Canadian universities have implemented prevention efforts focused specifically on masculinities. When male students are included in prevention efforts, there is a tendency to make them palatable by framing male participants as "real" men, "good" men, or as protectors while those who perpetrate sexual violence are othered (Masters 2010; Scheel et al. 2001). For example, as one participant explained, "some versions of the bystander [...] [are] about encouraging men to stand in their hero space with their capes and

these poor women who can't do anything for themselves and who need them" (025). While this framing is often deployed as a strategy to encourage male participation, it falls short of addressing the ways in which normative constructions of masculinity contribute to sexual violence (Katz 2018). As such, one of my participants said:

I want to see more initiatives targeting men [...] [that] talk about how they are a part of problem, whether they are perpetrators or not and how they have this opportunity, possibly the most opportunity, in different situations to prevent it from happening [...] There is a lot value in them being uncomfortable and acknowledging their complicity. (015)

This argument is supported by research that suggests that prevention efforts that target men and boys are most effective when they challenge normative constructions of masculinity (Jewkes, Flood, and Lang 2015).

The Impact of Anti-Feminist Backlash

While the examples discussed above illustrate how anti-feminist backlash shapes responses to campus sexual violence in policy and in practice, it is equally important to recognize its impact on individual anti-violence activists and practitioners. As one of my research participants explained,

I've never had death threats, but I would be lying to say that I'm not sometimes fearful of extreme right-wing men's groups. [...] There sometimes is a real fear of being branded or being the target of hate because it's real and the more I do this work, the more I see how vulnerable we are to that. [...] I probably don't dwell in that space for too long because it would be paralyzing. (023)

The fear of harassment compounds the emotional labour inherent in campus anti-violence work, which tends to be performed by those who are already marginalized within academic institutions (Ahmed 2017).

Moreover, a fear of harassment is well-founded (Wunker 2017). After Gotell publicly responded to Men's Rights Edmonton's *Don't Be That Girl* campaign, they circulated a poster featuring an illustration

of her face that read: "just because you're paid to demonize men doesn't mean rape is gendered. Don't be that bigot!" (Gotell and Dutton 2016, 68). In fall 2019, an instructor at the University of British Columbia, Marina Adshade, reported receiving threats of sexual violence after she tweeted allegations that several female students were drugged at a fraternity party and questioned whether fraternities should be permitted on campus (Pathak 2019). In 2014, a student who was involved in opposing an event held by the Men's Issues Awareness Society at Queen's University was threatened and violently attacked outside her home (Canadian Press 2014). After protesting against Peterson during a rally held by SSFS at the University of Toronto, trans students reported that their personal information was published online and that they were subsequently subjected to harassment (Pang 2017). At the University of Ottawa, a student journalist faced threats of violence after exposing the Science Students Association's pub crawl, which allegedly awarded participants points for performing oral sex and eating doughnuts off of a judge's penis (Schnurr 2016). In response, racist, sexist, and Islamophobic threats were posted to her social media accounts, including: "I will be laughing when your father murders you in an honor killing. You terrorist breeder" and "don't spoil it for everyone else, you filthy f***ing sand*****. I hope your imam rapes you" (Schnurr 2016, para. 7). These examples demonstrate not only the real and present threat faced by those working to address violence on campus, but also the importance of analyzing these threats from an intersectional perspective.

While these examples of harassment were targeted toward specific individuals, the impact of such backlash must be understood as an attempt to silence activists and discourage others from becoming involved in anti-violence efforts. This silencing directly contradicts anti-feminist groups' claims of being invested in free speech. By exacerbating the emotional labour required to address sexual violence within the neoliberal institution, this backlash may also contribute to the high levels of burnout and job turnover that I have observed among those working to facilitate prevention and support survivors. Ultimately, this turnover may impact the consistency of these efforts to prevent and

respond to violence. However, as one of my research participants pointed out, the existence of this backlash can also be reframed as a sign of progress. As she explained,

I would say that what we're doing is radical because most people would prefer that we just shut up and go away. In fact, the more traction we make in challenging social norms and getting institutional responses and getting people fired and showing them that this behaviour is unacceptable and won't be tolerated, the more backlash there is. (023)

Although it is unlikely to be of any consolation to those who are experiencing threats and harassment, the idea that backlash is an indicator of progress may serve as motivation to continue pushing to make these changes.

Conclusion

While this is by no means an exhaustive account of anti-feminist backlash at Canadian universities, this paper begins to unpack the dynamic relationship between backlash and efforts to address sexual violence on campus. I have argued that heightened public awareness of campus sexual violence and the resulting legislation has fuelled anti-feminist backlash, which is often disguised in the depoliticized rhetoric of due process and free speech. My research findings demonstrate that this backlash is impacting what can be said and done about campus sexual violence and, in particular, about the gendered nature of perpetration and how normative constructions of masculinity contribute to violence.

My research focused specifically on how Ontario universities are responding to sexual violence and, as such, my findings are not necessarily representative of universities in other provinces. Similarly, my research focused on universities and did not examine responses to violence or the presence of anti-feminist backlash at Canadian colleges. I am currently working to expand on these findings by researching anti-violence efforts explicitly targeted toward male students at Canadian universities, which, as I mentioned above, are relatively uncommon. By interviewing the facilitators of these programs, as well as male students who have

participated in them, I am hoping to better understand how they engage with constructions of masculinity and how this work is impacted by anti-feminist backlash. Because this backlash is diffuse (Banet-Weiser 2018) and often masked using depoliticized rhetoric (Messner 2016), it can be difficult to identify. As such, I am also planning to undertake research to map the scale and scope of this backlash at Canadian post-secondary institutions.

Ultimately, while the present moment must be characterized as one of significant momentum toward addressing campus sexual violence, it must also be characterized as one of substantial anti-feminist and alt-right backlash at Canadian universities. The overarching impact of this backlash can make any gains toward preventing or addressing violence on campus feel like a fragile victory. However, at a time when university community members who are racialized, Muslim, feminist, queer, and/or trans are being subjected to harassment and violence, this backlash only increases the urgency of ensuring that responses to sexual violence are intersectional and address the underlying social and structural roots of violence.

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Speaking Freely and Freedom of Speech: Why is Black Feminist Thought Left Out of Ontario University Sexual Violence Policies?

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Abstract: As of January 1, 2017, the Province of Ontario has required all post-secondary institutions to create and maintain a stand-alone sexual assault policy that includes clearly stated complaint and response procedures. This paper brings to bear the influence of Black feminist thought as an analytic tool and politics on the outcomes and omissions of the development of these policies. Analyzing the stand-alone sexual violence policy of the University of Ottawa as a case study, the author conducted a critical discourse analysis with an intersectional lens to determine if intersectionality influenced the policy creation. Findings reveal that policymakers conceptualize gender in a one-dimensional manner, without attention to intersections of sexualized violence with racism and other systems of oppression. A policy with an ill-defined focus on gender can result in a colorblind policy that suggests that the institution should treat all students the same, regardless of systemic disadvantages they might face on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, or ability. This avoidance can create barriers to disclosing. Neoliberalism and the changing university culture are discussed.

Keywords: campus sexual violence, critical discourse analysis, intersectionality, neoliberalism, sexual violence policy

Introduction

Violence against women continues to be a problem on Ontario post-secondary campuses. Researchers estimate that four out of five undergraduate women have experienced dating violence (Canadian Federation of Students 2015). Brennan and Taylor-Butts (2008) report that the highest-at-risk group for sexual assault is women between the ages of 15-24. Senn et al. (2014) report that out of 899 undergraduates surveyed, over 50% of young women experienced one or more forms of sexual violence after 14 years old. Since women are not a homogenous group, many Black feminist writers urge policymakers to use intersectionality as a framework to highlight how the power dynamics of race, gender, class, sexuality, and ableism interact in the everyday lives of women. Understanding how multiple systems of power interact within sexual violence can give the university a greater ability to give meaningful interventions to women on campus (Bourassa, Bendig, Oleson, Ozog, Billan, Owl, & Ross-Hopley 2017; Wooten 2017).

Despite widespread support for intersectional theory, there has been little change in some Canadian universities' approaches to sexual violence prevention and policy, leaving gaps and oversights that affect students' access to resources. The result can be gender-focused sexual violence policies, which tend to be colour-blind policies that aim to treat all students the same, regardless of any systemic discrimination they may face due to race, class, sexual orientation, and ability within an ever-changing university population (Wooten 2017). So, when prevention campaigns and policies focus on gender only, it negates the many voices of Black feminist writers who think of intersectionality as both a theory and politics (Collins & Bilge 2016; Crenshaw 1990; Gray & Pin 2017). The implication of ignoring multiple systems of oppression can be an inadequate

institutional response to survivors seeking meaningful resources and a safe university campus environment.

The University of Ottawa is a large bilingual research-intensive university. Using this university as a case study, I argue that Black feminist thought is not visible within the discourse of this stand-alone sexual violence policy despite decades of critical thinking. The University of Ottawa's negation of multiple systems of oppression co-occurring can have serious implications for students seeking help and resources. This paper explores the political, representational, and structural problems with a gender-only focused campus sexual violence policy. I suggest that the reason for this negation is due to a preference for neoliberal logic in the university's approach to sexual violence prevention and response, enabling the university to individualize sexual violence and personal safety, increase security measures on campus and sustaining rape myths (Gray & Pin 2017; Trusolino 2017). This course of action prevents the university from addressing the core issues at the heart of sexual violence, which involve investigating multiple systems of power and control, such as racism and colonialism, alongside gender.

Methods and Methodology

A case study approach allows for a more detailed, in-depth analysis that includes the policy creation process's developmental factors and the context of the campus environment (Flyvbjerg 2011; Stake 2008). The University of Ottawa has a student population of close to 43,000 students (58% female, 40% male, and 3% undetermined), is located in a prominent mid-size Canadian city, and has been considered within Canadian society as a pillar in the academic and research community since the mid-nineteenth century (The University of Ottawa, n.d.-a). Sitting on un-ceded and un-surrendered Algonquin territory, this university is a member of the U15, a Canadian research-intensive university collective which conducts approximately eight billion dollars' worth of research annually and is one of the largest French-English bilingual universities in the world (The University of Ottawa n.d.-a; U15 n.d.). The University of Ottawa is unique to other Ontario universities. There are 22 publically funded Ontario uni-

versities and this university was one of the few that had a stand-alone sexual violence policy before the provincial mandate came into effect (Bill 132 2016; Ontario Universities n.d.). Mattieu and Poisson (2014) report that in 2014, only four Ontario Universities had specific policies to address campus sexual violence, with the University of Ottawa in the process of reviewing their policies at that time. Also, this university does not have a student code of conduct, ensuring that students maintain their right to protest (University of Ottawa 2015). The student population at the University of Ottawa is comprised of 83% undergraduate students, 11% master students, and 5% doctorate students (The University of Ottawa n.d.-a). An independent survey conducted by the Ontario Government (2019) reveals that in the 2017-18 school year, 22% of students at the University of Ottawa experienced sexual assault and 62.4% experienced sexual harassment. In these incidents, 87% of the perpetrators were male and 49.5% was another student. Only 46% of survivors disclosed the incident of sexual violence to another person and 9.4% told an institutional member (Government of Ontario 2019).

Using an intersectional framework, I investigate how the power dynamics of race, class, gender, and ableism may factor into students' everyday lives on campus and how power is replicated in the discourse of the stand-alone sexual violence policy. In my analysis, I employ a feminist critical discourse approach to investigate the University of Ottawa's sexual violence prevention policy. I adopt the understanding that sexual violence is one form of gendered violence, and that law and policy is not equally applied to all persons within a community (Iverson 2016; Wooten 2017). Since the policy under investigation is named "Policy 67b: Prevention of Sexual Violence," I will be using the term "sexual violence" throughout this paper. I approach this document in a "policy as discourse" manner as defined by Bacchi (2000) and with an exploratory and inductive analysis. Investigating how the policymakers represent and create the social problem of sexual violence within the policy's discourse, I pay close attention to power relations.

Within the discourse of policy, I examine how the institution articulates its stance on the issue, setting lim-

its to the “problem,” shaping a solution, and demonstrating what is possible and what is not possible for a survivor who might seek help and resources within the wording of the document (Allan 2008; Iverson 2016, Wooten 2017). Since the policymakers do not exist outside of the campus environment's politics and the societal problem of gender-based violence, I view them as social actors acting within the social constructions of race, class, sexuality, ability, and gender within Canadian society. In this review of the policy's language, I have given additional attention to any taken for granted assumptions, metaphors, and absences within the text to isolate how sexual violence is both constructed and resolved to question further why the policy takes the shape that it does (Allan 2008; Bacchi 1999, 2000; Iverson 2016). After reading the policy numerous times, I identified themes, created links, and gave meaning to the discourse (Allan 2008; Iverson 2016).

The Case Study

When two high-profile cases of sexual violence involving the University of Ottawa students' came to public attention in 2014, there was a media and public outcry. In response, the University of Ottawa's President, Alan Rock, appointed a task force comprised of faculty, administration, students, and community members to review the problem of harassment and sexual violence and provide solutions to help create a respectful university community. The task force consulted with students, administrators, community-based experts, and other institutions during their investigation (University of Ottawa 2015). The task force operationalized sexual violence as defined by the Government of Ontario's 2011 Sexual Violence Action Plan, in *Changing Attitudes, Changing Lives* as:

any violence, physical or psychological, carried out through sexual means or by targeting sexuality. This violence takes different forms, including sexual abuse, sexual assault, rape, incest, childhood sexual abuse and rape during armed conflict. It also includes sexual harassment, stalking, indecent or sexualized exposure, degrading sexual imagery, voyeurism, cyber harassment, trafficking and sexual exploitation. (University of Ottawa, 2015, 7)

While this definition does not mention that the systemic forms of oppression like racism, colonialism, sexism, homophobia, class, or ableism can co-occur in sexual violence, the task force notes that they employed a survivor-centric, values-based, intersectional approach to their analysis of the campus environment as noted in the following statement: “Our task force was also informed by a recognition of the intersectional nature of sexual violence, in which individuals' ‘race’/ethnicity, ability, Indigeneity and socioeconomic status, among other factors, can render them vulnerable on multiple fronts” (University of Ottawa 2015, 7). The task force acknowledges in their report that systems of privilege and oppression could be shaped by “colonialism, imperialism, racism, homophobia, ableism, and patriarchy and interactions occur[ing] with connected forms of power” (University of Ottawa 2015, 7). The forms of power include “laws, policies, state governments and other political and economic unions, religious institutions and media” (University of Ottawa 2015, 7). However, the task force did not name universities as part of the interconnected forms of power.

As requested by the University of Ottawa's President, the task force created a series of recommendations. The task force recommended that the university create a stand-alone sexual violence policy, independent of older sexual harassment and harassment and discrimination policies. Other recommendations put forth included creating a statement of values which articulates the universities position on respect and equality and committing to providing awareness training to the senior administration, students, and other specified groups (i.e. Bystander Initiatives). The task force also recommended that the university develop an ongoing collaborative relationship with community-based organizations, commit to collecting and making annual metrics on complaints of harassment, sexual violence, and discrimination publically available and provide undergraduate courses exploring the topic of sexual violence. An action team was put in place to ensure that the recommendations were followed (University of Ottawa 2015). These initiatives comprise the university's current sexual violence prevention campaign.

While these recommendations seem like a positive move to creating a safer learning environment on campus, many stakeholders were outspoken about their lack of confidence in the administration to carry out the recommendations of the task force, having experienced the university acting unilaterally in previous efforts (University of Ottawa 2015). Stakeholders argue that the President was not transparent in how he selected and appointed members of this task force. In addition, the stakeholders expressed concern with the task force's use of sanitized language in official documents. For example, words like "equality" and "respect" are used rather than a more direct and appropriate term, such as "rape culture." These actions to disregard outside input seem to replicate the institution's failure to respond to a 2005-2006 Harassment Working Group's recommendations, made a decade before the formation of this task force. Since the Harassment Working Group's creation was in response to a student-led campaign, the institution's failure to provide more sexual harassment awareness, training, and better policies on campus disappointed many (The University of Ottawa 2015).

In 2016, the University of Ottawa completed the stand-alone sexual violence policy, apparently with the help of students, faculty experts, and community partners (The University of Ottawa 2015). The policy is 16 pages long and includes many definitions, such as "sexual violence," "consent," "sexual assault," "sexual harassment," and the "university community." It includes a statement of values and is survivor-centric. However, I did not find any mention of race, racism, or colonialism within the policy, and appears to me to be a colour-blind sexual violence policy. In other words, I find that the university appears to be framing sexual violence, along with other sexual violence-related terms, in a manner that is ahistorical, decontextualized, individualized, and mostly gender-neutral, by referring to a universal student within the university community. For example, the definition of sexual violence is:

"Sexual violence" means any sexual act or act targeting a person's sexuality, gender identity or gender expression, whether the act is physical or psychological in nature, that is committed, threatened, or attempted against a person with-

out the person's consent. It includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism, non-consensual condom removing (stealth), and sexual exploitation. For further clarity, sexual assault includes rape. (The University of Ottawa 2016, Section 3.2)

In reading this definition of sexual violence, it appears to me that the university defines sexual violence as something that exists outside of the interlocking power dynamics of gender, race, class, and ableism. Since the policymakers do not name multiple power systems within this definition, I suggest that the university is framing the social problem of sexual violence as an individualized problem. A possible reason for this specific framing could be because the University of Ottawa considers sexual violence to be an outlier-type event that occurs based on the specific characteristics or actions of the survivor or perpetrator (Quinlan 2017). I find that the individualized definition of sexual violence conflicts with the stated purpose of the policy which is to "reaffirm" the university's existing commitment to "a safe and healthy campus for work, for study, and campus community life for all members of the university community and its commitment to provide support to those members of the university community directly affected by sexual violence" (The University of Ottawa 2016; Section 1.1).

While the policymakers do not mention race and ethnicity in the wording of this document, I find they use other words that might reference race, culture, or ethnicity in the policy, words like "marginalized," "discrimination," and "prejudice." For example, the term "marginalized" appears once in the document as part of the institution's values: "The University acknowledges and combats broader social attitudes about gender, sex and sexuality that normalize sexual violence and undermine women and marginalized group's equality" (The University of Ottawa 2016, Section 4.7). I consider the term "marginalized group" to be quite broad, especially since the policymakers do not define what the institution considers a marginalized group within this policy. Furthermore, I find the wording of this portion of the policy suggests that women and marginalized groups are two separate entities that do not exist concurrently, like in the everyday lives

of women of colour. Also, there is no elaboration on what specific attitudes undermine women and marginalized groups, which is essential since this is the only instance that the words “women” and “marginalized groups” appear in the policy.

The term “discrimination” appears in reference to related policies. The stand-alone sexual violence policy works within a framework of policies, including harassment, discrimination, accessibility, and inclusion (The University of Ottawa Human Rights 2019). At the University of Ottawa, the human rights office manages all complaints of sexual violence, harassment and discrimination, and they report to higher levels of the university administration. The purpose of the stand-alone sexual violence policy is to provide students with transparency, accountability, and reliable and consistent procedures (Shen 2017; The University of Ottawa Human Rights 2019). As stated within the policy, the related policies include the policy on the prevention of harassment and discrimination, the policy on violence prevention, a health and safety policy and a policy on professionalism for the Faculty of Medicine. In terms of which policy to use, the sexual violence policy is only valid when sexual violence occurs. For example, if harassment or discrimination occurs along with sexual violence, the policy advises:

Harassment and/or discrimination: [The sexual harassment policy] and [the policy on harassment and discrimination from students] and [policy on harassment and discrimination for employees] apply to complaints of harassment and/or discrimination that do not involve sexual violence, sexual harassment or workplace sexual harassment. However, only this policy applies if the circumstances of a disclosure or a complaint of sexual violence also encompass harassment and/or discrimination. (The University of Ottawa 2016, Section 6.3)

From this section of the policy, I understand that the stand-alone sexual violence policy is valid if complaints involve sexual violence and the policies within this framework cannot be layered. So, if the university finds that the perpetrator's actions fall within the parameters of the institution's definition of sexual violence, the complainant can file their complaint under the

stand-alone sexual violence policy and the response workers will follow this policy in response. However, I find this potentially problematic since there is no anti-racist commitment within the stand-alone sexual violence policy. This absence may permit the university to treat the complaint of sexual violence in a decontextualized manner, devoid of consideration for the ongoing racism and colonialism that women of colour may face on campus.

The policy on the prevention of harassment and discrimination (Policy 67a) includes many important factors that create the context in which sexual violence occurs. For example, discrimination can include:

- a) a distinction—intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect—because of a person's race, ancestry, ethnic origin, creed, place of origin, colour, citizenship, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, pregnancy, marital status, family status, a record of offences, political affiliation, religious belief, disability or means to accommodate the disability and
- b) that has the effect of erecting barriers, or creating obligations, disadvantages or situations of unequal treatment that withhold or limit access to privileges, advantages or political, social or economic rights available to other members of society. (The University of Ottawa 2012, para. 23-24)

I find the University of Ottawa's definition of discrimination includes a wider scope of power inequalities that women on campus may experience. I can imagine that by layering Policy 67a with Policy 67b (the stand-alone sexual violence policy), a more nuanced understanding of how and why sexual violence happens on campus occurs can be developed. Furthermore, other key aspects of harassment and discrimination are essential in providing context to sexual violence on campus, such as systemic discrimination, harassment, poisoned environment, and workplace harassment. For example, the University of British Columbia's Sander School of Business students singing Y.O.U.N.G. rape chant and Pocahontas' chants during frosh week can provide the context and potential motivation for sexual violence (Solinsky 2013). I consider these chants to be examples of a poisonous environment and systemic

discrimination since women are targeted based on gender, race, and age, resulting in unfair treatment, thus making the environment one which is unsafe to work and study.

Colour-blind policies negate a complainant's ability to have the university consider the historical markers of inequality, like gender and race. These policies falsely assume that everyone is treated equally (Collins 2000; Wooten 2017). Critical race theorists argue that these policies normalize Whiteness and camouflage racism (Collins 2000; Wooten 2017). Colour-blind policies remove the historical markers of inequality and the purposeful degradation of women of colour. Collins (2000) notes that the emerging colour-blind philosophy constitutes a new form of racism within institutions:

A new rhetoric of color-blindness that reproduces social inequalities by treating people the same (Crenshaw, 1997) makes it more difficult to maintain safe spaces at all. Any group that organizes around its own self-interests runs the risk of being labelled "separatist," "essentialist," and anti-democratic. The protracted attack on so-called identity politics works to suppress historically oppressed groups that aim to craft independent political agendas around identities of race, gender, class, and/or sexuality." (121)

Colour-blind policies are detrimental to women of colour's safety and security because they make it difficult for women of colour to organize within the institution politically and suggest a different narrative to an ill-defined gender-only narrative. Colour-blind policies suppress racialised perspectives by avoiding them (DiAngelo 2011). Racialised women can face unique challenges to disclosing sexual violence, such as cultural shame surrounding discussions about sexuality and sex, meanwhile disclosing sexual violence is very important to positive educational outcomes (Stermac, Horowitz & Bance 2017).

Top-Down Approaches to Policy Creation

When policymakers use a top-down approach to policy creation instead of responding to students' needs, the result can be a limited response for surviv-

ors. More specifically, a gender-focused approach to a university response can inadvertently set the standard of care based on a universal woman's needs, concealing the interconnecting power dynamics of race, class, gender, and ableism. A universal woman tends to be White, straight, cis-gendered, middle-class, Western, and non-disabled (Gray & Pin 2017). The outcome of this standard of care is an inadequate response for those needing services that go beyond this universal woman. For example, the policymakers offer little discussion on the complexity of consent and the taken-for-granted norms about who is afforded the right to consent. The policymakers define consent as:

"Consent" means an active, direct, voluntary, unimpaired, and conscious choice and agreement to engage in sexual activity. These elements of consent must be present, even if alcohol or drugs have been consumed. Consent cannot be given by a person whose judgement is impaired by drugs or alcohol or by other forms of impairment. It is not acceptable for a person who is said to have engaged in sexual violence to use their own consumption of alcohol or drugs as an excuse for their mistaken belief that there was consent. For further clarity, consent: cannot be assumed nor implied; cannot be given by silence or the absence of "no"; cannot be given by an individual who is impaired by alcohol or drugs, or is unconscious; cannot be given by an individual who is asleep; cannot be obtained through threats or coercion; can be revoked at any time; cannot be given if the person who is said to have engaged in sexual violence has abused a position of trust, power or authority; might not be given properly if an individual has a condition that limits his or her verbal or physical means of interaction—in such instances, it is extremely important to determine how consent will be established. (The University of Ottawa 2016, Section 3.2)

From this definition, I interpret consent as an isolated act that is independent of the interconnected power dynamics of gender, race, class, and ableism. I understand that consent is an individual conscious choice, an agreement between two people, that can be given either verbally or physically, and if there is a "condi-

tion,” then the University expects that consent is negotiated between the individuals involved. However, the term “condition” is not elaborated on within the policy and could mean a variety of things. More importantly, this statement might mean little to women in their everyday lives on campus, as this definition does not provide clarity and transparency as the policymakers aim to do. If “condition” refers to a disability, then this is the only time the policymakers mention it in this policy.

Simplistic depictions of consent within a stand-alone sexual violence policy avoids the complexity and the frequency of normalized hegemonic social norms towards who is afforded the ability to consent. For example, Martino (2019) notes that able-bodied people frequently dismiss people with disabilities as not having a right to consent to sexual activity and manage their sexual relationships. In addition to disabled women, women who engage in sex work frequently face ignorant attitudes towards their ability to consent to sex or violence (Martino 2019; Ralston 2019). Since many students engage in sex work as a means to pay for their education, this gap in the policy discourse can make it difficult for a survivor to come forward out of fear that responders might be misinformed or uneducated on the realities of sex workers rights (Josic 2020). The university’s avoidance of language that speaks to the complexity of consent within the policy discourse can create more problems for survivors seeking resources than resolving them.

Moreover, I learn little about women's needs by reading the public annual metrics on complaints of harassment, sexual violence, and discrimination on campus. For example, from September 2018-April 2019, the University of Ottawa’s Human Rights Office reports 52 complaints of harassment, 13 cases of discrimination based on disability, 9 cases of discrimination based on race, 71 complaints of sexual violence, and 173 students requested information regarding accessibility (The University of Ottawa Human Rights 2019). The report provides no further details about the survivor in terms of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation.

Providing minimal survivor demographic information to the general public appears to be a common practice

among post-secondary institutions in Canada. In 2015, Bourassa et al. (2017) investigated 44 English speaking Canadian universities’ websites by conducting an environmental scan to determine if institutional on-campus violence policies were available and whether or not each institution had a reporting system that acknowledged the survivors’ ethnicity. The authors found that few universities had that system in place. Only six universities recorded the gender and/or ethnicity of the survivor, and this information was not publicly available. The University of British Columbia was the only institution in Canada that addressed violence against Indigenous women and had an intersectional response system (Bourassa et al. 2017).

The Influence of Neoliberalism on Canadian University Campuses

Many of the gaps and oversights could be due to the ongoing corporatization of Canadian universities (Quinlan 2017). Some argue that the administration has begun to use corporate strategies to organize the university, using top-down approaches such as lean management and performance indicators such as graduation and student employments rates as a focus (Gray & Pin 2017; Quinlan 2017; The University of Ottawa n.d.-b). These choices are changing the university from a governance structure to a corporate structure where collective bargaining is difficult, strikes occur more often, and the university offers few meaningful resources to survivors (Gray & Pin 2017; Haiven 2017; Quinlan 2017).

A corporate university comes as a result of reduced government funding (starting in the mid-1990s). The need for funding has created a client/supplier relationship with students, where administrators tend to view students as “revenue-generating agents” (Quinlan 2017). At the University of Ottawa, in 2019, tuition and other fees account for \$453.1 million out of the total \$1,350 million in funding sources (The University of Ottawa n.d.-a). Operating grants (\$317.7 million), research grants, and contracts (\$285.7 million) bring much less money into the university (The University of Ottawa n.d.-a). In order to remain competitive in the marketplace, universities are creating attractive high-fee boutique programs and mass

marketing these programs to attract and maintain students. Some leading academics argue that the campus administrators may be working to generate a perception of a university community comprising of affluent White students, which, in turn, maintains the university space as a colonial site (Bourassa et al. 2017; Quinlan 2017). Part of these high-fee boutique programs include specialty business programs, where at the University of Ottawa's Telfer School of Management costs between \$28,000 for the one-year program and \$30,350 a year for a two-year program depending on the length of the program for domestic students (Telfer School of Management n.d.). This same program is between \$64,000 and \$68,000, respectively, for international students.

The University appears to be taking a neoliberal approach to sexual violence by individualizing trauma, preferring to place the responsibility of women's safety in students' hands (Gray & Pin 2017; Quinlan 2017). According to this logic, sexual violence can be reduced by implementing sexual violence prevention programs that aim to motivate bystanders. One example of such a program is the Bystander Initiative (Gray & Pin 2017; Quinlan 2017). Gray and Pin (2017) argue that these programs of securitization technologies tend to prey on women's fear without fully engaging in an analysis of the multiple power structures and dynamics co-occurring on campus. Some university administrators prefer these programs because they can give the institution a visible and tangible way to respond to sexual violence (Gray & Pin 2017; Quinlan 2017). For example, administrators can rationalize the financial cost of implementing the program against a predictive and expected decrease in the rates of sexual violence post-program. However, an increase in reporting rates suggests a safer campus community and an easy campus disclosure system (Gray & Pin 2017; Quinlan 2017).

Stranger Danger and the Racialised Other

Gray, Pin, and Cooper (2019) argue that after a public incident of sexual violence, the university administration can create a perception of safety on campus by co-opting feminist language within their prevention campaign and sustaining rape myths based on “stranger

danger” and the “racialised other.” In turn, the University places the focus on women to protect themselves, while reducing the onus on the university to provide meaningful resources and interventions for a safer campus.

Campus officials tend to ignore racism and misogyny within the university community and reinforce these systems of oppression by asking survivors and students to work together to create safety on campus, making individuals responsible for their safety. For example, in 2007, after the Vanier Rape at York University, where two men illegally entered Vanier College dormitory and raped a female student, university administrators and the Toronto Police engaged in messages of securitization (Trusolino 2017). Campus officials created fear among women by telling them to “lock your doors” and “protect yourself” while doing little to prevent male students from engaging in sexual violence (Trusolino 2017). In this case, the university administration capitalised on a nearby low income racialised neighbourhood, emphasizing rape myths such as “stranger danger” and the “racialised other.” The focus on racial fear removed the institution's responsibility to provide a safe place for all students to work and study and undermined the collective efforts of autonomous women. Instead, the university increased campus security measures and reified a universal sexual assault victim by avoiding the vital work of investigating the power dynamics of race, class, and gender on campus that are often at the heart of sexual violence.

Furthermore, these messages of the “racialised other” effect racialised male students' ability to live and study on campus without harassment. For example, at the University of Ottawa, media reports brought two separate racial profiling incidents to public attention in 2019. In these incidents, the university's paid security force engaged in racist carding practices, apparently upholding “outdated” policies and procedures (Gergyek 2019). In the first case, security asked a racialised student skateboarding on campus to produce his student I.D. on the spot. When he could not, he was detained by security for police, as if to suggest that his racialised presence was enough for the security personnel to assume an “outsider” status and that he could not be a student at the university (Ahmed

2012). In a separate incident, a second racialised male student was asked to provide proof of address by the University of Ottawa's paid security force when he used his security card to gain access to his residence. The security personnel did not card a White student who entered the residence only minutes before. Bystanders witnessed this incident, verifying the university's racist security measures (Dutil 2020). In response to ongoing racism on campus, the University of Ottawa created an anti-discrimination committee. Campus officials held two town hall meetings, one with undergraduates and another with graduate students to discuss the prevalence and impact of institutional racism on campus. Since the University of Ottawa is located in downtown Ottawa, close to a shopping centre, multiple hotels, and a men's shelter (Codjoe 2019), some could easily rationalise these security measures due to the physical location of the university.

The state also employs the rape myths of "stranger danger" and the "racialised other" in response to sexual violence. By using a neoliberal logic that views individuals as responsible for their own safety and well-being, the state obscures its ongoing racist and colonialist actions within the legal system, family services, and law enforcement, systems that continue to fail countless women (Maynard 2017; Razack 2016). Police officers tend to treat women who report sexual violence with skepticism and distrust, often with a misunderstanding of the effects of trauma (Johnson 2017). Many officers maintain a very narrow idea of what "real" rape is, preferring to investigate stranger rape over acquaintance rape. The police often act as gatekeepers, providing care and protection to some, while neglecting and abusing others (Razack 2016; Ralston 2019). As contemporary agents of the state, the police enforce systemic oppression based on race, gender, sexual identity, and immigration with the threat of forcing "undesirables" into the prison-industrial complex (Incite! 2016, Jones & Whynacht 2019; Maynard 2017).

Black feminist thinkers argue for an anti-violent, anti-colonialist, anti-racist approach to sexual violence. In order to achieve that, a policy and response system should incorporate a consideration for multiple sys-

tems of oppression that occur simultaneously in the everyday lives of women. However, the government and some university policymakers tend to dismiss this approach (Jones & Whynacht 2019; Maynard 2017; Samaran 2019). Moreover, while many institutions report to involve students and sexual violence experts in the creation of the stand-alone sexual violence policies, as stipulated by Bill 132 (2016), Gray, Pin, and Cooper (2019) argue that some institutions engage in avoidance tactics making it difficult for representatives to attend important consultation meetings. In sum, some administrators fail to consider and incorporate student needs, making student inclusion illusionary. In order to move forward, the university must reconsider this approach.

Conclusion

In this paper, using a large bilingual research-intensive university's sexual violence policy as a case study, I have demonstrated that the policy is colour-blind and that attention to the multiple intersections of oppression such as gender, race, class, and ableism, while very important, has been negated. Furthermore, I have demonstrated how a colour-blind gender-focused policy can have detrimental implications for many women and men of colour on campus. As the discourse of the policy articulates the university's stance on sexual violence, it appears to me that this university chooses to ignore the interconnected forms of oppression that women face on campus, preferring to use a neoliberal logic to sexual violence prevention and response. I argue that this logic can result in actions such as implementing bystander training and increasing campus security, which sustains rape myths, such as "stranger danger" and the "racialised other." This course of action enables the university to appear to be responding to sexual violence without having to respond to ongoing racism, colonialism, classism, and ableism on campus.

Since rates of disclosure about sexual assault tend to be low at post-secondary institutions, I think it is doubtful that they will improve if the policymakers continue to write policies that are colour-blind and individualistic. University administrators must understand students' experiences to improve the disclosure process for

survivors and help change the university culture to a truly safe and equitable space for all.

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Snapping: Feminist Pedagogy and Navigating the “New” Right

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Abstract: This paper uses anecdotal and affect theory to think through the repercussions of feminist pedagogy while navigating the “new” right. It extends Sara Ahmed’s metaphors of the feminist snap and the feminist ear as pedagogical and epistemological tactics.

Keywords: affect theory, anecdotal theory, feminist pedagogy, Sara Ahmed, the “new” right

I teach four classes at the University of British Columbia (UBC) the day after the 2016 United States (US) election of Donald Trump. Students openly weep in all of them. Some students are inconsolable and one has a panic attack. The despair is palpable. For some students this continues for weeks, and one student, a young, queer American, stops coming to class. She eventually drops out. When I give first-year students time to journal anonymously about the election and ask them to hand in anything they want or need me to see, I am shocked and dismayed when two students hand in entries in support of Trump. These two students tell me they are hesitant to share their feelings in class, which are that Trump is a much-needed corrective to “reverse sexism,” that they believe “political correctness” is out of control, and that they are worried they will be punished for standing up for their values in class.

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In an upper-level class an Indigenous student becomes increasingly upset at the emotional reactions other students are having to the Trump administration. She rolls her eyes and crosses her arms as other students cry when talking about their fears for the future. I invite the student to speak. Somewhat reluctantly, she tells the class that her exasperation comes from the all the “white tears.” She says, “I’m sorry you don’t feel safe right now, I’m sorry this is hard for you. But we’ve always known we weren’t safe.” She invites students to a protest for Standing Rock. There is little uptake. It is almost as if the student had not spoken. Suddenly she shouts: “We don’t need your tears. We need your bodies.”

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In a course focused on intersectional approaches to health disparities, the class strategizes about what we can do to feel more engaged in our communities. We

make a list on the board. I talk about supporting local reproductive justice groups and movements. Unbeknownst to me, a student is recording me. Later, she will tell other students that I acted unprofessionally. She will also write this in her student evaluations. I will only find out she was recording me after she and another student get into a physical altercation at an anti-abortion demonstration. I am told the recorder has been collecting evidence against me. In my course evaluations she will write that I “coerced” students into donating to political organizations of my choice, and that I made the classroom an “unsafe space” for white, conservative, pro-life Christians.

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A first-year student hands in his final paper proposal. He wants to write about Jordan Peterson, Bill C-16, and “compelled speech.” He is interested in UBC’s Free Speech Club, which, in the club’s own words, “seek[s] to promote an open debate stage, where political correctness no longer holds sway” (UBC Free Speech Club 2020). The club is part of a larger trend across campuses in North America to embrace the Chicago Principles, a set of guidelines for universities regarding “free speech,” which claims “it is not the proper role of the University to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive” (Stone et al. 2014). As part of this mandate, UBC’s Free Speech Club has gone out of its way to invite controversial, conservative speakers to campus, such as Ben Shapiro, Andy Ngo, and Jordan Peterson, some of whom are seen as heroes by the alt-right.¹ I remind my student that he needs at least five peer-reviewed articles or book chapters for his research paper. I also request he read the *Canadian Charter*, Bill C-16, and the corresponding sections of the criminal code that it amends, if he wants to take up this topic. We meet several times, I review and reject two paper proposals, we share countless emails, and I help him access and evaluate scholarly sources. Eventually, he hands in a paper that is exceptional, not because of its content but because of its tone, which is defeated and frustrated. He was unable to find evidence to support his position that using someone’s preferred pronouns is a form of compelled speech. He concludes that Bill C-16 is not

the threat to freedom of speech that he thought it was and is instead, in his own words, “appropriate.” I feel a mixture of relief and pride in how I handled this situation until I realize that I have spent as much time mentoring this single student as sixty-five other first-year students, combined.

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I share these anecdotes as a way to provide a sense of the scenarios that spurred my thinking in relationship to this special issue, and to provide context and structure to the comments I want to make. In doing so I engage in what Jane Gallop calls “anecdotal theory,” as a way to privilege my students’ and my own experiences as the foundations of my knowledge. As Gallop explains, anecdotal theory involves recounting an incident and then attempting to read that account for the theoretical insights it affords in the present (2002, 2). While some might think the terms “anecdote” and “theory” may have opposing purposes or connotations, Gallop suggests it is precisely anecdotes’ “ability to intervene in contemporary theoretical debates” that makes them interesting, because they honour “the uncanny detail of lived experience” (ibid.). They therefore contribute to the “project of making knowledge that better opens to the real” (ibid., 9). The anecdotes I share, then, are “meant neither as confessions nor simply as the representation of experience,” but are a way to bring these events into new light through writing and reflecting on them (Feigenbaum 2007, 340). While I am hoping that some of the scenarios might resonate with readers, and provide an entry point for shared thinking about pedagogical strategies for teaching social justice at the present moment, I realize that anecdotes are encounters in and of themselves, telling stories of partial perspective, while hopefully opening up lines of thought (ibid., 346). This is why Gallop describes anecdotal theory as situated, or as “theory in the flesh of practice” (Miller qtd in Gallop 2002, 158). It requires an embedded and responsive movement between the seemingly particular (the experience) and the generalizable (theory) (Loveless 2011, 27). Anecdotal theory requires looking at a series of events with a reflexive engagement not only with the incident itself, but with the occasion for theorizing.

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These shared memories are moments of pedagogical crisis, but they are different kinds of crisis happening with different kinds of students. At first, I struggle to find a common thread. I know the first scenario is the one that fits best into the dominant discourse on teaching right now, in what is being described as the post-truth era: students and faculty expressing shock and horror about the election of Donald Trump, and about government platforms and policies that so blatantly support white supremacy, misogyny, and xenophobia; a feeling that the ground has shifted beneath us in ways for which we were unprepared; and a simultaneous realization that this shift has begun to have everyday consequences in our classrooms. Students, for instance, suggesting that a professor is biased because they teach about structural oppression in a class focused on social justice. The fourth scenario, the first-year student who has been swept up in the alt-right rallying cry to protect free speech, also fits into this reading, as does my investment in them, and my hope and desire that they will overcome their biases and assumptions through scholarly reading and writing.

There is much evidence to support reading all of these scenarios as directly informed by our current political moment. From the vicious harassment and attacks directed at UBC's Mary Bryson after their debate with Jordan Peterson, to the rise of so-called free speech clubs and white student unions at Canadian universities, to the creation of the "Professor Watch List" in the US, to the United Conservative Party's recent announcement that they will soon require post-secondary institutions in Alberta to adopt the Chicago Principles—it is clear that the atmosphere on our campuses has shifted. Even further, the alt-right is a real presence in our classrooms, recruiting by following Richard Spencer's strategy to "get them while they are young" because "people in college are at this point in their lives where they are actually open to alternative perspectives" (qtd. in Harkinson 2016). And, this rise in white nationalist, xenophobic, and sexist thinking has serious risks and consequences for those of us engaged in social justice pedagogy. Yes, it is possible that a student may have recorded me and complained

about me a decade ago, but I don't think I am alone in seeing that kind of behavior as part of a larger trend to monitor the conduct of Women's and Gender Studies faculty members. Nor do I think I am alone in seeing this kind of behavior as also increasingly being understood as what one should or might learn to expect when teaching social justice. We need only think about the situation with Lindsay Shepherd and Dr. Nathan Rambukkana at Wilfrid Laurier University, in which Dr. Rambukkana was recorded without his knowledge, to see this new normal at work; networks exist to circulate recordings of professors in order to harass them or attempt to get them fired. Indeed, as Shama Ringwala has recently argued, the "free speech issue" on our campuses is really a smoke screen for a larger trend. It is part of "a global mobilization of institutions for the right," which use the free speech issue to provide "rhetorical cover" to actually suppress critiques of power (2019). This also explains why the alt-right is so focused on being given a platform at universities, as such a platform simultaneously "provides legitimation of their ideas and delegitimization of the academy" (ibid.). As bell hooks wrote more than thirty years ago, if the work of our discipline is to question "the ideological structures of the prevailing white-supremacist, patriarchal hegemony," it is "fitting that the university be identified as a useful site for radical political work," and we must therefore assume "our work can be and is undermined" by those with an interest in maintaining hegemonic structures (1989, 36). In other words, if the university's purpose, in its own words, is to pursue "excellence in research, learning, and engagement to foster global citizenship and advance a sustainable and just society" ("UBC's Vision, Purpose and Values" 2020), then no wonder it is a target.

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Several cultural critics would likely support an analysis that these anecdotes are reflective of the times. For instance, Henry Giroux, perhaps one of the best-known international scholars of critical pedagogy, claims that we have now entered an "emerging political-social formation in which fake news becomes the accepted mode of shaping public discourse, inexperience and incompetence become revered criteria for holding public office, and social responsibility is removed from any

vestige of politics” (2016). As neoliberal regimes wage “a major assault on critical education and the public spheres in which they take place,” he further claims that “thinking has become dangerous” (ibid). Other educators agree with Giroux, pointing out that the educational implications of radical right discourse for the broader public is that the alt-right is shaping how people think and act inside and outside of the classroom (Miller-Idriss & Pilkington 2018). These critics claim that in the face of white supremacy and a rise in populism, we must develop and reclaim a radical pedagogy, “as a form of educated and militant hope,” beginning, as Giroux suggests, with recognizing that education is about “the capacity for liberatory change,” and is “a cultural, political, and moral force” (2016).

However, as the student in my second anecdote, the one who became fed up with their classmates’ tears, importantly demonstrates, not everyone is shocked by the “sudden” onslaught and resurgence of sexism, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, and transphobia we are witnessing. For instance, the long, thorough, and structural inhospitability of colleges and universities to racialized, Indigenous, queer, and gender non-conforming people is not new (Kuokkanen 2007). Nor is having racialized faculty members unequally share the affective risks in the course of critical reflection, when “discovering” or “debating” structural inequalities in our classrooms (Razack 1998, 50). Thinking has always been dangerous. Some people have always been vulnerable. And, despite what Giroux claims, we already know that education is “a cultural, political, and moral force,” and one that is not always used for liberatory purposes. Returning to bell hooks, for example, she has repeatedly demonstrated that systems of domination, always at work in the academy and in the classroom, silence marginalized voices: “Racism, sexism, and class elitism shape the structure of classrooms, creating a lived reality of insider/outsider that is predetermined, often in place before any class discussion begins” (hooks 1991, 176).

To acknowledge this isn’t to claim that everything is the same as it was thirty years ago, nor is it to downplay what is currently happening. It isn’t to ignore the horrific, vicious harassment of those targeted by alt-

right trolls. It isn’t even to say that thinking isn’t more dangerous right now, nor is it to cynically claim that this is just the way things are. Rather, it is to say, much like my student attempted, that we need to historicize this specific political moment as part of the ongoing project of settler colonialism, as shaped by the failings of neoliberal globalization, as connected to a racial ontology that is deeply rooted in modernity, and as related to what Harsha Walia has termed “border imperialism,” or the contemporary practices of empire (2014). And, that we therefore need to reframe our affective response of “shock,” accordingly. As Aimee Rowe and Eve Tuck argue, we need to turn to “where we already were” in order to analyze this moment (2017, 6). What they mean is that as we examine the “new” ways gendered and racialized systems of power are taking shape inside and outside our classrooms, for example, we need to attend to how those systems of power came into being, and continue to operate at a foundational level through the logics of the past; for instance through the racialized system of settler colonialism, or through a long history of anti-Black racism, or through contemporary practices of imperialism, as mentioned above.

Indeed, as Rowe and Tuck suggest, the past not only shapes our everyday practices and politics, but also haunts “our intellectual projects” in a manner they describe, following M. Jacqui Alexander, as “a ghostly shape” that “must be interrogated to show its form” (ibid., 6). We can see this ghostly shape in the “social, material, and rhetorical practices” of universality, which construct the universal subject (read: white) “as a *settler* subject” (ibid., 9). We can also see this ghostly shape in the “unwitting reproduction of settler logics,” which Rowe and Tuck describe as so foundational to knowledge production that we can’t even imagine the “sovereign subject”—the human being who can understand themselves as a self, the very subject we imagine we are teaching—without these logics (ibid., 7; 9). We can also see it in how we determine who is conceptualized as fully human (affecting, self-determined, legitimate) inside our classrooms, a determination that is based on a process of racialization, whereby being seen as the sovereign subject is contingent on the “the capacity to ‘affect’ and not be affected by others,” a capacity that is often difficult for racial-

ized peoples because of the ways that sovereignty is organized and experienced (ibid., 9). Paying attention to how this ghostly shape continues to haunt our classrooms, therefore, requires “attention to the uneven distribution of affects and affective processes—the very constitution of some subjects as always-already affecting, while ‘others’ are slotted as ‘affectable’” (ibid.). It requires acknowledging that we operate on an uneven playing field in our classrooms, historically, materially, and affectively, and that what might seem newly ghoulish about the present moment to some is a reanimation of the past for others. However, this difference is hard to grasp when you have been slotted as affecting, as in control, as sovereign rather than as affectable. This is why it really should not come as a surprise that my student was not shocked by Trump’s election, nor that her lack of shock was not acknowledged by the other students. It is often hard to hear someone who challenges the unwitting logic of sovereignty that Rowe and Tuck outline. It is hard to hear someone who insists that what feels new is actually old again.

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My student’s refusal to allow shock to be the communal response to Trump’s election was ignored. She was not heard. Instead, she hit what Sara Ahmed describes, in *Living a Feminist Life*, as an institutional “brick wall” (2017a, 136). As Ahmed outlines, such a wall “is not real in the sense of a tangible thing, what is perceptible through touch,” but the metaphor of the wall conveys the experience of attempting to challenge or change norms: “a wall is what you come up against. It is a physical contact; a visceral encounter” (ibid.). Being unheard is like hitting a brick wall. “When you bring up walls, some people just blink” (2017a, 147). She further elaborates:

Making feminist points, antiracist points, sore points, is about pointing out structures that many are invested in not recognizing. That is what an institutional brick wall is: a structure that many are invested in not recognizing. It is not simply that many are not bruised by this structure. It is also that they are progressing through the reproduction of what is not made tangible. When we are talking of sexism as well as racism, we are talking about systems that sup-

port and ease the progression of some bodies. (ibid., 158)

My student did not progress. The non-response of the white-majority students in the rest of the class acted as a brick wall. In fact, even as a teacher with years of experience listening to students, it was only later that I was able to sense the materiality of that wall: “materiality: if we are hit by something, we become conscious of something” (ibid.,138). And becoming aware was not due to my effort, but hers. As Ahmed argues, when we finally notice a brick wall that was previously invisible to us, “it is the effort of a diversity worker; of her blood, sweat, and tears” (ibid.,139).

I wonder how many times my student hit that wall before I noticed. I wonder how many other walls I don’t notice today. I wonder how many times I have capitulated to what Stefano Harney and Fred Moten describe in *The Undercommons* as the university’s “desperate business” of upholding the sovereign subject that Rowe and Tuck criticize (2013, 37).

*

Another thought: I assume if you are reading this that you are likely committed to some form critical pedagogy, whether you engage in pedagogies of discomfort (Henry 1994), oppositional pedagogies (Mohanty 2003), or post-oppositional pedagogies (Keating 2016), all of which rely on allowing teachers and students to experience discomfort, and on questioning students’ political beliefs, as well as dominant institutional and social structures. Perhaps you already see the classroom as a potential space of intellectual and political struggle, and expect moments of crisis. As world-views and ideological groundings are destabilized and rebuilt, students can become frustrated, defensive, angry, and anxious. Maybe you understand yourself as a learner and not just a teacher, take a student-centered approach, or try to move beyond “either/or” thinking.

Are the above anecdotes really an indication of just how much the ground has shifted, then? Or, has the shifting ground simply uncovered or exposed cracks that were already there, revealing the limitations present in the kind of pedagogy we are able to enact in

any university, as Rowe and Tuck suggest. In other words, perhaps these moments are a reminder of what Robyn Wiegman has pointed out about the investments in our own discipline, and its reliance on progress narratives. As Wiegman outlines, in our desire for the field of Gender and Women's Studies to be understood and seen as inclusive and progressive, as knowable and representative, we are driven to find and to locate the "right" object of study, in the hopes that our analyses will be "adequate to the political commitments that inspire" them (2012, 3). We are desperate "for feminism to offer us the means to manage the incommensurable and the inexplicable, to overturn pain and indifference, to move us beyond the agony of our own unknowing, and thereby to provide us with some words that we can learn once and securely for all" (Wiegman 2004, 164). The cruelty of this investment, however, as Lauren Berlant has shown us, is that we are bound to be disappointed by our optimism. As Berlant states, "deep in the ambitions and socialization of the feminist teacher" is the promise "to make learning personal, socially transformative, and generationally supportive" (1997, 153), something that "motivates taking on all kinds of therapeutic and mentoring functions that are way beyond our expertise" (ibid., 154). Even further, implicitly promising the defeat of racism, xenophobia, misogyny, and homophobia, goals which are impossible to attain in the space of one semester together, often leads to "puzzlement, exhaustion, and feelings of domination, isolation, and abandonment for students and teachers both (ibid., 153).

Yes.

Yes.

I want students to feel, to act, to transform. This is the critical pedagogy I want to practice. I want to enact what hooks describes as "the feminist classroom," a place where there is a sense of struggle, yes, but also "a visible acknowledgement of the union of theory and practice, where we work together as teachers and students to overcome the estrangement and alienation that have become so much the norm in the contemporary university" (1989, 51). This is a place that hooks describes as relying on conversation, on sharing information, and on exchanging ideas (2013, 44). But, following Wiegman and Berlant, I realize that there are

aspects of the feminist classroom that I cannot manage, that I don't have the institutional support to enact, that involve taking on therapeutic and mentoring functions beyond my expertise, and that lead to those feelings of exhaustion that Berlant describes, for me and my students both. And, to this I want to add that while I am attached to a pedagogy in the manner hooks outlines, there are also some conversations I don't want in my classrooms. And, I'm not sure I *should* want them, such as when a student is racist, or transphobic in the name of "free speech," or because they like to "play the devil's advocate," or when the feelings, words, or actions of one come at the expense of sixty-five others—even if there is the promise of a transformation, such as I recounted in my fourth anecdote.

*

These are serious questions: Should I care if my classroom is an unsafe space for anti-abortionists? Is it okay if I create an environment where students are fearful of sharing transphobic, racist, and sexist thoughts and opinions? Does the present political moment require that I let go of the fantasy of a liberatory pedagogy? How do I remove brick walls for some students while setting up boundaries for others?

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In a chapter titled "Pedagogy," from *Rethinking Women's and Gender Studies*, Susanne Luhmann grapples with similar questions. She asks:

What if the classroom does not feel liberatory to the teacher and/or to the students? Indeed, what do we make of students who complain of the "oppressiveness" of WGS [Women's and Gender Studies]? How do we make sense of students who refuse the emancipation WGS teaching proffers? Is this the sign of the failure of the teacher, the curriculum, the students, the institution, or of all of us? (2012; 67)

Luhmann claims that students' refusal to identify with a feminist curriculum "can tell us something about the complex process that is learning (that is, if we understand learning as exceeding the realms of both the soci-

ological and of consciousness)” (ibid., 76). Following this, she suggests that obstacles to learning in the feminist classroom can be “of a social nature: a repressive institution, insufficient curricular representations, a patriarchal knowledge culture that silences women’s voices, experiences, feminist critiques, and so on,” but they can also be internal in that “the inner psyche—affects such as love and hate—and their histories, also affect how students attach to knowledge” (ibid., 78).

I like this idea—that obstacles to learning are internal as well as external. It’s an idea that helps explain the defeated, frustrated tone of the student who wanted so badly to find scholarly research that supports Jordan Peterson. It also helps explain the fury of the student who recorded me, as well as my own astonishment when I realized I had Trump supporters in my class. It even helps explain why the student who recorded me called me “unprofessional”: as Harney and Moten assert, we are unable to enact a radical pedagogy in the corporate university without being seen this way (2013, 68). Finally, Luhmann’s idea helps me see that what we often label as “feelings” in the classroom are not just emotions, but thoughts, experiences, and phenomena, and external as well as internal frameworks. As Sarah Chinn explains, “emotion is not just evanescent or situational, but part of larger experiential frames through which we understand the world in which we live. These frames shape and are shaped by not just material conditions; they are also the building blocks of ‘affective elements of consciousness and relationships: not feeling against thought, but thought as felt and feeling as thought” (2012, 16). For instance, unlike discussing “social and political structures that, once recognized, can be analyzed and anatomized” feelings “both explain those structures and can obscure them” (ibid.). This is perhaps why all of us, not just students, have trouble separating our emotions from the politicized thinking and writing that informs much of our discipline, and much of our course content; they are deeply intertwined. But maybe this also means that we can evaluate our feelings like we do our thinking, and make judgements about which ones need revision, development, or further reflection, about which ones are the external and internal obstacles to learning that Luhmann describes.

*

Speaking of feelings, it is the student in scenario two that I think about most often, the one who took on the role of what Sara Ahmed describes as the feminist killjoy: the person who points out structural inequalities at an inconvenient time and is often punished. In this case, we can call my student a killjoy because she stopped her classmates from enjoying a good cry. She tried pushing back against their feelings.

Ahmed describes the consequences of being the killjoy—how the resistance to the killjoy’s presence presses against the body like a physical force, how it feels like coming “up against something that does not move, something solid and tangible” (2012, 26). As I described above, it is like hitting a brick wall. It reminds me of Ahmed’s line that “if you have to shout to be heard you are heard as shouting. If you have to shout to be heard you are not heard” (2017b). Ahmed describes moments like these as a snap—like the harsh snap of a twig, or the sound of breaking: “Sharp, brittle, loud” (2017a, 189). For her, the sharpness matters, as well as the temporality. The snap must be “a sudden quick movement. The speed of snapping might be how a snap comes to be apprehended as a movement at all” (ibid., 188). What she suggests is that in this movement—quick, loud, harsh—the killjoy registers the loss of what others wish to retain. Similarly, Erin Wunker describes the killjoy as someone who will not be contained or coerced into “the social narratives that are prescribed for her” (2016, 46). The response to the killjoy’s refusal to play along, however, is that she is seen as snapping, as out of control, as the problem.

But, it can also be that the killjoy creates a break, a snap with what was there before, by opening up opportunities for others to snap: “by snapping we become feminist ears; we become willing to receive” (Ahmed 2017b). That is, by snapping we allow others to snap too, because “a snap sounds like the start of something, a transformation of something” (Ahmed 2017a; 188). It is a “feminist communication system” (ibid., 211). Snapping is not just an individual action, therefore, although it often starts with an individual, but is what happens when an “irritation” comes to the social surface, “as some tan-

gible thing, as a situation that should not be patiently endured, as a situation that demands our collective impatience” (ibid., 211). Like my killjoy student’s outburst, then, snapping happens because of a sudden feeling of “too much.” It is “about the intensity of a situation: when you are asked to do something and you experience that request as too much, this time, even if you have done it before” (ibid., 200). In this case, maybe watching the majority-white students cry in shock and dismay at Trump’s election was too much, even if she had been able to watch such behavior before in similar circumstances.

Ahmed suggests that in his moment of “too much” we can be reoriented towards what she describes as new kind of optimism, different than the Berlant’s cruel one, in that it is “an optimism without a future, an optimism that makes a break of something the start of something without knowing what this something is” (ibid., 200). This is an optimism that does not hang its hope on what comes next, but on recognizing that the present situation is impossible to sustain. This is an optimism that relies on us realizing we are sometimes part of institutions that make others snap. In a similar vein, in the introduction to *The Undercommons* Jack Halberstam asks: “If we do not seek to fix what has been broken, then what? How do we resolve to live with brokenness, with being broke...?” (2013, 5). While Halberstam is questioning the university as an institution, wondering what is salvageable, if anything, I think these questions are applicable to Ahmed’s idea of snapping, as well as to my observations here. How do we resolve to live with brokenness?

Well, Ahmed suggests that “to be complicit should not become its own reproductive logic: that all we can do is to reproduce the logics of the institutions that employ us. In fact, those who benefit from an unjust system need to work even harder to expose that injustice” (Ahmed 2017a., 263). What I think she means is that those of us who are in regular employment in the university system must learn to kill joy, even some of our students’ joy. Otherwise, we risk losing the potential for hearing and being part of a collective snap, and risk losing the potential for being open to this optimism that is not about the future, but about making a break with the present. I think she is

saying that we should start from this position and enact solidarity with the students who are snapping. We should cultivate a feminist ear.

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Perhaps, then, the metaphor of the feminist ear is one we might find useful right now. Maybe cultivating a feminist ear could allow us to break down, kill, or at least examine some of the very things we assume we should retain in our pedagogy, in order think about strategies for teaching in the face of the “new” right. As my anecdotes demonstrate—and this special issue indicates—many students are making noise. But not all of them are snapping. The difference is that snapping has the potential to give us “the energy to rebel” (Ahmed 2017a, 255). The difference is that snapping is an invitation to snap. In order to hear the difference between a noise and a snap, however, “one must slow down” and “bring to the surface what is around the story” (ibid., 200; 209). One must attend to those external and internal barriers to learning and how they are intertwined in feeling. And, one must attend to who is slotted as affectable and who is slotted as affecting in our classrooms. This has been my intention with this essay: to wade through the noise of the current moment and tune my ear to those whose snapping can reorient me. If, as Gallop suggests, an anecdote is a reorganization of time that allows for the creation of a new perspective, it is also my hope that by sharing these anecdotes I am enacting one strategy for learning to hear differently.

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Dis/Consent: Perspectives on Sexual Consent and Sexual Violence

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Book under review: Malinen, KelleyAnne, ed. 2019. *Dis/Consent: Perspectives on Sexual Consent and Sexual Violence*. Black Point: Fernwood Publishing.

Several books on the Canadian realities of rape culture and sexual violence have been released in the last four years (Busby and Birenbaum 2020; Craig 2018; Quinlan, Quinlan, Fogel, and Taylor 2017). KelleyAnne Malinen's (2019) *Dis/Consent* joins this important body of work by taking aim at the multifaceted ways that power and oppression are tangled up with rape culture, sexual violence, and erotophobia. The volume particularly excels in its fearless dive into the heart of the contradictions, messiness, and complexities of thinking through consent, survivor activism, agency, and autonomy typically absent in popular discourse surrounding sexualized violence and consent. The innovative title concept of dis/consent embraces this messiness and complexity and at the same time signals a politics of dissent and discontent. In the introduction to the volume Malinen argues:

The prefix 'dis' indicates a reversal or contrary force. 'Dis/Consent' can also be read as a critique of the notion of consent as it commonly presented in popular culture. Too often, consent is understood as a kind of currency, typically passed from women to men, in decontextualized exchanges. In reality, moments of consent or non-consent always occur in a social context, where power is at play. (8)

Here we find the clearly articulated point of departure from which the book re-introduces the very complexity, power relations, and context that are often flattened out or missing entirely in scholarly writing on the topic.

The book is inclusive of a wide range of perspectives, styles, methodologies, and politics embracing a democratic ethos that encourages the reader to be open to diverse and dissenting voices. By "wrapping" the volume in two chapters written by Mi'kmaw scholar Sherry Pictou, Malinen attempts to resist linear and colonialist conceptions of space/time by embracing cyclical thinking, to uncover "relationships of in-

debtedness,” and to enact a “standing together across communities” (10-11). Pictou’s chapters are grounded in “Indigenous teachings and interpretations” (19). At a time when Indigenous women’s leadership is breathing life into the global movements for planetary survival, Pictou’s chapters offer critical insight into a praxis that moves beyond survival and into resurgence. While Malinen’s decision to encircle the volume in an Indigenous worldview is novel and illuminating, one cannot help but wonder what it would be like if settler feminists were willing to extend more space in their scholarship and organizing in order to work through the implications of this colonial relationality. Settler feminists concerned with consent and sexual violence must endeavor to make clear and explicit links between broader rape culture and the colonial, capitalist judicial system which denies Indigenous peoples the rights to free, prior, and informed consent over development projects on their own territories. In the context of settler colonialism, the fight for the agency and autonomy of survivors and for other oppressed and marginalized peoples should be grounded in the struggle for Indigenous sovereignty. Malinen’s book stops short of recognizing these broader connections.

The inner circle of content in the book is divided into two broader themes related to the overarching concept of *Dis/Consent*: Legislation, Policy, and Government; and Dis/Consenting Agents. For example, the clumsy engagement of the legal system with sexual violence is made apparent in Chapter 4, where the Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU) Feminist Collective takes on the infamous Judge Lenehan decision in the al-Rawi sexual assault trial. The MSVU Feminist Collective asks: “What does this legal decision teach other men who view women as sexual objects and feel entitled to women’s bodies?” (53). Then, in Chapter 6, Mandi Gray, Laura Pin, and Annelies Cooper elucidate the ways that so-called “student consultation” is used by post-secondary institutions responding to sexual violence on campus to “appease stakeholders without substantively addressing their concerns” (65). By delving into their experiences advocating for survivors during the creating of York University’s government-mandated sexual violence policy, Gray, Pin, and Cooper argue that universities gain legitimacy for their policy decisions through processes of “student con-

sultation.” However, these same processes are often public relations exercises designed to manufacture consent for pre-written policies rather than genuine attempts at consultation made in good faith early enough in the process to gather and incorporate this feedback in any meaningful way. In this sense, students and survivors on campus are not positioned as knowledgeable subjects who can provide valuable input to the policy but rather as gate-keepers. This is similar to the feminized subject in traditional heterosexual scripts whose power is limited to the ability to grant or refuse the actions authored by the masculinized sexual actor.

The second half of this volume invites us to reimagine agency and autonomy for differently positioned survivor subjectivities. In Chapter 8, Malinen gives voice to survivors of “woman-to-woman sexual assault” (84). While in Chapter 9, Alan Santinele Martino advocates for the sexual decision-making rights of individuals with intellectual disabilities (98). Chapter 12, co-authored by activists, poets, and academics El Jones and Ardath Whynacht, is especially timely in the context of current activist movements denouncing police violence and advocating to defund the police. Jones and Whynacht welcome the reader into a dialogue on the “intersection of anti-rape activism and prison abolitionism” (142). Jones and Whynacht’s discussion is instructive in its exploration of how a carceral response to harm does not allow us to “resist rape culture because it avoids social responsibility in favour of individual blame” (148). At the same time they acknowledge and affirm that “those who have experienced harm should be free to be angry, to be resentful, to never forgive if that doesn’t feel right for them” (143). They powerfully assert: “Confronting sexual violence should be messy and disorienting, and we need to prioritize understanding lived experiences so that we can better our approaches to healing” (151). Jones and Whynacht’s discussion is a welcome departure from liberal feminist approaches that rely upon rates of incarceration as “a measure of how seriously society takes sexual assault” (143).

This book offers a fresh perspective on the structural, cultural, and institutional frameworks of consent, demonstrating the conditions of possibility and impossibility that shape sexual autonomy for differently

positioned agents in Canadian society. The book's biggest strength, the heterogenous texture and multiplicity of voices, is also its greatest weakness in failing to articulate a clear, over-arching theoretical framework. Without this framework to tie the diverse perspectives and approaches together, the reader may be left wondering: Where to go from here? However, there is plenty in this book to spark important conversations and transformative thought for many readers.

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Not All Dead White Men: Classics and Misogyny in the Digital Age

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Book under review: Zuckerberg, Donna. 2018. *Not All Dead White Men: Classics and Misogyny in the Digital Age*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

The field of Classics might seem far removed from the very online world of Men's Rights activists and reactionary misogynistic hate groups. But in this compact and readable book Donna Zuckerberg makes a compelling, and often chilling, case for a connection between the ancient world and modern misogyny. The main focus of the book is the "Manosphere," which Zuckerberg also often refers to with the catch-all term "The Red Pill community," "a group of men connected by common resentments against women, immigrants, people of color, and the liberal elite" (1) who use social media and online platforms to connect, recruit, and attack opponents. In particular, she traces the ways in which texts, ideas, and historical facts from Athens and Rome have been used by anti-feminist movements in the last decade, and how the lingering prestige of "Classics" is employed to bolster and validate extremist views. This can mean holding Greek and Roman writers up as exemplary and unimpeachable authorities whose anti-women, classist, and xenophobic ideas justify such views today. It can also appear in the selective and often incorrect use of history to present the ancient Greco-Roman world as white, homogenous, and heterosexual, with rigidly gendered societies that conformed to current ideals of "traditional" marriage and families. Zuckerberg also points out how the academic field of Classics, itself historically a site of sexism, classism, and racism, is still actively contributing to these damaging narratives.

The book is divided into four chapters, with a brief Introduction and Conclusion, extensive endnotes, a glossary, and a detailed bibliography. The first chapter, "Arms and the Manosphere," briefly explains the main communities and groups Zuckerberg is discussing. It also surveys the mechanisms by which ancient texts are deployed to "legitimize" misogynistic positions, often by highlighting the actual misogyny of some ancient works to show that modern misogynists are the true inheritors of the classical tradition. In doing so the

Red Pill community relies on the view of that tradition as high status and culturally supreme, so its members are vigorous in their defense of “Western Civilization” and attack those who challenge the canon or broaden the educational curriculum. This is one way scholars have (perhaps unwittingly) enabled extremist views when they defend the discipline of Classics as teaching about “the roots of Western Civilization” or extol the intrinsic virtues of learning ancient languages.

The other three chapters each focus on particular instances of the intersection between the Classical world and the Red Pill community: Stoic philosophy, Ovid’s poem *Ars Amatoria* or “The Art of Love,” and the story of Phaedra. Stoicism, first formulated by Greek philosophers, was particularly influential on Roman thought, with Seneca and Marcus Aurelius its most well-known proponents. Zuckerberg defines it briefly as teaching its adherents “that nearly everything usually perceived to be harmful (including hunger, sickness, poverty, cruelty, and death) is only harmful if one allows it to be. The only true evil is vice” (46) and that true happiness comes from “recognizing what is within one’s power and what is not” (45). She points out that these central messages directly contradict the manosphere’s belief “that feminism is causing the downfall of Western civilization” (46), but that the community is nonetheless fascinated by the philosophy and by Marcus Aurelius in particular. Zuckerberg uses this contradiction to demonstrate how ancient texts are used by the manosphere: instead of studying them closely and engaging with their context and content, the leaders of these movements reduce them to simplistic summaries celebrating what they consider “real masculinity” and then use those misreadings to validate their own beliefs. This is a balanced and important consideration of the ways that ancient texts can be manipulated to support hateful ideologies, and even more crucially, how seemingly innocuous interest in ancient philosophy and history can be used as a recruiting tool.

The chapters on Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria* and on the character Phaedra from Greek myth give contrasting examples of how ancient texts about gender relations and sexual violence are used by the manosphere.

Ovid’s poem is essentially a Roman seduction manual from the first century BCE, with advice on how to meet, woo, and keep women, though scholars tend to view it as humorous and literary rather than practical. Zuckerberg shows how the “Seduction” community treats Ovid’s advice as a serious guide to relationships between men and women. Her reading of the poem asks whether some members of Ovid’s audience might also have taken the work seriously, and suggests ways to re-examine the text’s underlying assumptions about women, sex, and gender relations. On the other hand, Phaedra’s story, about a false rape accusation that results in tragedy, retold in several Greek and Roman works, seems tailor-made for appropriation by the manosphere, which is fixated on the “problem” of false rape allegations. In fact, however, the story is rarely mentioned by them. Zuckerberg’s examination of the story, then, provides the kind of close reading and historical contextualization of the myth that the manosphere does not engage in, in order to undo “the Red Pill’s false and misleading narratives about the politics of gender and sexuality that produce false allegations” (146). This chapter is therefore the one which most explicitly models a strategy that classicists could use to combat the rhetoric of the manosphere.

Zuckerberg is clear in her condemnation of the misogynistic aspects of these movements, but she takes their ideologies and arguments seriously, as demonstrated by the depth and breadth of her research. She uses blogs, posts in online communities, articles, interviews, podcasts, ancient texts, Classical scholarship, and articles by classicists pushing back against alt-right appropriation of their subject. The only major weakness of the book is that it lacks an extensive engagement with the role of racism in these ideologies. Both the title and the opening vignette in the introduction about the white nationalist group Identity Evropa suggest the importance of race and racism in this discussion. However, Zuckerberg says she “decided to focus primarily on the gender politics rather than the racial politics of Red Pill communities” (5) because they are more coherent across the various groups and because the alt-right’s discourse about ancient race is less well developed. The frequency with which issues of race and white supremacy arise within the rest of the book, however, demonstrates that this non-intersectional ap-

proach leaves too much out, and her arguments would have been strengthened by more explicit discussion of the relationship between gender and racial ideologies.

For non-classicists, the importance of this book lies in its clear dissection of the mechanics of online misogyny. Her explanation of the “Red Pill toolbox” in the first chapter provides a guide to recognising, understanding, and responding to the strategies used by those arguing these (and other) hateful ideologies, and will be useful for scholars and students alike. The book’s exploration of the links between contemporary misogyny and the ancient world should also be instructive for feminists seeking to understand these movements and for those attempting to combat their rhetoric online or in their classrooms. It reinforces the message that no discipline is disconnected from contemporary social and political issues, and its call for scholars to address these connections directly will hopefully drive further research into the ways extremist ideologies use, and abuse, scholarly work.

Transnational Feminism

Amanda Ricci is an assistant professor in the Department of History at the Glendon Campus of York University. She is currently working on a book-length manuscript on the feminist movement in Montreal (1960-1990). Her next project, entitled “Global Citizens: Canadian Feminists at the World Conferences on Women, 1975-1985,” considers the ways in which Quebecers and Canadians imagined themselves to be part of a global community of women during the United Nations (UN) Decade for Women, 1975-1985.

Transnational feminism remains a challenging and highly fraught field of study. The questions are seemingly endless: How can we write histories that are attuned to, yet do not reify, hierarchies among women? Is a common, internationally minded feminist project possible or even desirable? What does a politics of solidarity look like across—as well as within—political systems, economies, and cultural contexts?

These are some, although by no means all, of the questions undergirding the conference *A Workshop in Transnational Feminism/Atelier sur le féminisme transnational*, which was held at the L.R. Wilson Institute at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, in May of 2018. The conference brought together an interdisciplinary group of scholars to discuss their research and the field of transnational feminism. Two papers from this conference are published in this special section of *Atlantis*.

To cite sociologist Marilyn Porter, broadly speaking, transnational feminism “refers to the coming together of non-governmental organizations to work across borders in coalitions and campaigns.” The term *transnational*, as opposed to *global*, “reflects a means of recognizing both the continued significance and particularity of nations *and* their transcendence by feminist movements” (Porter 2007, 44). By putting the state and grassroots social movements within the same analytical frame, transnational feminist analyses have the potential to shift nation-centric historiographies that make invisible the processes, frequently global in reach, behind inequalities among and between peoples. For Canadian social scientists, transnational feminist analyses can bring Indigenous, diasporic, and settler feminisms into conversation with one another, as well as situate the country’s social movements within the international political economy. The best ways to do so, however, are still in question.

There has been an explosion of scholarly work on transnational feminism since the 1990s, accompanying

the emergence of the field. Many within this initial cohort of academics who engaged in comparative and transnational analyses of women's activism also thoroughly deconstructed the category of "woman," pointing to the ways in which gender intersected with other social categories of difference, such as class, race, Indigeneity, nationality, sexuality, ability, and so on. As part of this broader intellectual project, a very loosely interconnected group of social scientists have simultaneously, and relentlessly, challenged white, middle-class narratives of feminism and imperial notions of "global sisterhood" (Fernandes 2013). After an initial lag, the field of Canadian history is catching up (Forestell 2005).

The two articles in this special section exemplify this trend. While the two papers rely on different types of sources and focus on different time periods, they will assist Canadian scholars in exploring the methods behind this type of research, in grappling with divergent activist priorities in feminist or women-dominated spaces, as well as in thinking about complicity with, and resistance to, white-supremacist national projects in the context of women's movements. We hope that gender studies specialists in and of other geographical areas will find the ideas and methodologies in these papers relevant for their own research.

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Modernity and Progress: The Transnational Politics of Suffrage in British Columbia (1910-1916)

Lara Campbell is a Professor in the Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia. She is the author of *Respectable Citizens: Gender, Family, and Unemployment in Ontario's Great Depression* (UTP, 2009) and *A Great Revolutionary Wave: Women and the Vote in British Columbia* (UBC Press, 2020). Her current research is on the history of Vietnam War and the transnational and gendered politics of the draft resistance and antiwar movements in North America.

Abstract: Canadian historians have underplayed the extent to which the project of suffrage and first-wave feminism was transnational in scope. The suffrage movement in British Columbia provides a good example of the global interconnections of the movement. While BC suffragists were relatively uninterested in pan-Canadian campaigns they explicitly situated provincial suffrage within three transnational relationships: the 'frontier' myth of the Western United States, radical direct action by suffragettes in the United Kingdom, and the rise of modern China. By the second decade of the 20th century, increasingly confident women's suffrage societies hosted international visits and contributed to global print culture, both of which consolidated a sense of being part of a modern, international, and unstoppable movement. BC suffragists were attuned to American suffrage campaigns in California, Oregon, and Washington, which granted female suffrage after referenda and situated political rights for settler women in the context of Western progress narratives. The emphasis on progress and modernity intersected with growing connections to non-Western countries, complicating racialized arguments for settler women's rights to vote. BC suffragists were particularly impressed by the role of feminism in Chinese political reform and came to understand Chinese women as symbolizing modernity, progress, and equality. Finally, the militant direct action in the British suffrage movement played a crit-

ical role in how BC suffragists imagined the role of tactical political violence. They were in close contact with the militant WSPU, hosted debates on the meaning of direct action, and argued that suffragettes were heroes fighting for a just cause. They pragmatically used media fascination with suffragette violence for political purposes by reserving the possibility that unmet demands for political equality might lead to Canadian conflict in the future.

Keywords: first-wave feminism, suffrage

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, suffrage victory in British Columbia seemed to be within sight as New Zealand, Australia, Norway, and several neighbouring American states granted female enfranchisement. Feminist historians have documented the promise and limitations of modern global suffrage organizing and traced the complicated connections of imperialism and colonialism with national suffrage movements (Baillargeon 2019; Brookfield 2018; Forestell and Moynagh 2018; Sangster 2018). Historian Nancy Forestell argues that as much as local suffragists were immersed in local and provincial contexts, it is important to understand how the movement was situated within a transnational framework (2005). Since most suffragists in British Columbia could not afford international travel, they learned about the global movement at lectures given by touring suffragists or by reading mainstream or specialist print culture.

Suffragists in British Columbia had advocated for the vote in reform, women's, and political organizations beginning in the 1880s (Gough 1988; Kealey 1998; Newton 1995; Strong-Boag 2015; Whelan 1980). But after 1910, newly independent suffrage leagues attracted thousands of women across the province to meetings, debates, plays, and lectures. The BC Political Equality League (PEL) was formed in the provincial capital of Victoria in December 1910, and by 1912 numerous affiliates had formed across the Lower Mainland and interior. By 1913, Vancouver suffragists had formed an autonomous Pioneer Political Equality League (PPEL) and Vancouver labour organizer Helena Gutteridge established the BC Women's Suffrage League, Canada's only suffrage group specifically for working-class women. As leagues flourished, the public could attend events on provincial family law, labour rights, the women's movement in China, and British suffragette militancy (Campbell 2020; Cramer 1980; Hale 1977; Howard 1992; Ihmels 2008; Strong-Boag 2018; Weppeler 1971).

Print culture was critical to building the movement. Mainstream newspapers and religious, labour, socialist, and suffrage periodicals reprinted stories of local and global suffrage battles, and covered debates in the Legislative Assembly and the British House of Com-

mons. Suffrage columns were penned by labour sympathizer Susie Lane Clark in the *Vancouver Daily World* (VDW), Helena Gutteridge in the *BC Federationist* (BCF), and social gospeller Florence Hall in the *Western Methodist Recorder*. The province's only suffrage periodical, *The Champion* (1912-1914; CH), was published in Victoria by the BC PEL, and co-edited by Methodist reformer Maria Grant and British-born Dorothy Davis. Print sources were shaped by the perspectives of the most active and literate settler women in the movement, and framed by the limitations of male-dominated media outlets. But by reading media coverage and participating in local suffrage cultures, suffragists understood local activism within a larger global context even if they never left their province.

Suffragists demanded political equality through differing languages of maternalism, socialism, and liberal humanism, but most shared an underlying value system rooted in progressive modernity. Suffragists identified as members of a global movement which understood the universe as a living organism gradually advancing towards equality and justice. Enfranchisement was imagined as a contest with nations around the world engaged in a competitive race towards achieving full modernity (Dalziel 2000; NWSPC 1917). This emphasis on progress and modernity intersected with settler-colonialism and anti-immigrant xenophobia in the North American "frontier" west, and complex sentiments of British superiority in the context of global empire and international suffrage successes (Bonakdarian 2000; Devereux 2005; Forestell and Moynagh 2018; Grimshaw 2000; Henderson 2003; Lake 2019; Mawani 2009; Perry 2001; Valverde 1992). This article takes two transnational sets of ideas—the frontier myth of an egalitarian, modern, and transcontinental North American West and the framing of the Chinese women's movement as symbolic of modernity and progress—and examines how autonomous suffrage organizations developed a consciousness of being part of a modern and global movement. Exploring these "transnational linkages" defies simplistic frameworks of sisterhood but helps historians parse how suffragists in British Columbia came to see their local movement through a global lens, and part of an unstoppable movement of modern progress (Daley and Nolan 1994; Fletcher, Levine and Mayhall 2000, xiii; Forestell and Moynagh 2011).

Suffrage Modernity

Drawing on arguments circulating in history, science, and political theory, suffragists in British Columbia embraced the idea that the “evolution” of humanity was one of inevitable progress toward a modern and civilized world characterized by justice and equality. The movement or the “cause” was understood as the march of enlightened reason away from “barbarism” or the “dark ages,” where women were subordinated to men (*VDW*, 2 July 1913, 7). To suffragists, advanced nation states embraced women’s political participation, while those that refused to grant suffrage were backward and old-fashioned—deeply out of step with the modern world. This rhetoric borrowed from multiple philosophical traditions, including utopian socialist Charles Fourier’s assertion that the status of a nation as “civilized” should be judged by the extent of women’s emancipation. This idea was taken up by multiple strains of feminist thought. But the idea of progress and civilization could not have existed without interpretations of Darwin’s theories of natural selection and evolutionary adaptation, which included the notion that societies evolved from simple and primitive to complex and civilized. This perspective also influenced socialists, who understood history as propelled “forward” by economic modes of production from primitive social orders, through to capitalism, and ultimately, to socialism (Angus 2009; Beecher 1990; Campbell 2000; Jones 2009; Rendall, 1994; Taylor 1993; Taylor 2003; Towns 2009).

Most suffragists mapped the idea of progressive evolution on to both race and culture, arguing that British civilization was the most advanced and that all “inferior” non-British and non-Christian cultures needed improvement. Within North American settler colonialism, the belief in progress and British superiority was instrumental in the attempt to frame British Columbia as a “white man’s province” (Edmonds 2010; Harris 2003; Mawani 2009; Perry 2001; Roy 1989). The modern political body of British Columbia was built on policies that restricted Asian immigration, dispossessed Indigenous men and women, and excluded Asian and First Nations people from formal political citizenship until the late 1940s. The federal *Indian Act* marginalized Indigenous governance structures, where

many women had held political power, and prohibited First Nations women from voting in band elections until 1951 (Barker 2006; Green 2017; Simpson 2013). The result was a suffrage movement that challenged gendered British cultural values preventing women from being treated the “same” as settler men, but otherwise left racial restrictions on the vote in place. Settler colonialism allowed suffragists to assert that Canada was a “young” country that was largely free from old prejudices—a “blank sheet” upon which progressive peoples could write a new history of equality and justice (Grant 1913; *VDW*, 22 June 1909, 11; 12 July 1909, 1; 22 May 1909, 5).

But suffragists did not have a completely linear idea of progress. The belief that British civilization was the most advanced in the world was complicated by historical evidence that women in previous generations had held power and influence (*Colonist*, 28 May 1895, 4, 7; *CH*, August 1912, 19). Suffragists struggled to explain why family law in “advanced” British societies subordinated women and children to the patriarchal authority of husbands and fathers. One of the PEL’s first publications was an educational pamphlet by novelist Alice Ashworth Townley which outlined the legal power held by men over the bodies, property, and lives of women and children. These inequalities—especially laws that restricted mothers’ guardianship rights—were difficult to accept for those who believed that British law was the highest achievement of civilization. Townley resolved this contradiction by arguing that while British law was generally the “best and fairest” in the world, provincial family law had not properly evolved in a modern “age of progress” (Townley 1911). Anti-suffragists had hindered British Columbia’s progress, and suffragists like Townley urged the government to reject “stone age” assumptions of the past and build a legal and political framework that would usher in a modern nation. Suffragists imagined the modernization of a fundamentally British system, and it was Indigenous women themselves, not settler women, who critiqued the race-based laws that regulated the families, intimate lives, and bodies of racialized and Indigenous men, women, and children (Robertson 2012).

The growth of an international suffrage movement,

however, somewhat complicated the easy rhetoric of the British Empire as the pinnacle of modern civilization. International news revealed that women outside of the British Empire desired political equality, and that “uncivilized” nations had given political rights to women. Sometimes the response to this information was used to racially shame anti-suffragists, who were seen as standing in the way of a modernizing society. Addressing the Men’s Society at St. James’ Anglican Church in Vancouver, for example, suffragist Rev. Henry Edwards argued that women in British Columbia “have not half the power held by the negro women of darkest Africa,” while socialist lawyer R.B. Kerr informed a Kelowna audience that “even in China” women enjoyed political representation at the provincial assembly (*CH*, October 1912, 11; *VDW*, 29 September 1913, 11). This information surprised some suffragists, but they were forced to address it. *The Champion* published a “Women of Other Lands” column which treated non-Western women as exotic others, but also incorporated awareness of women’s global progress, arguing that British Columbia was falling behind the Middle East, China, and some parts of the United States. Writers drew on Orientalist tropes of victimized Middle Eastern women in “harems” awakening to their oppression. But they also highlighted how Egyptian men and women used the Qur’an to argue that gender equality was an Islamic value, and how reformers in China understood the centrality of women’s equality to political transformation (August 1912, 19). Columnists followed news in Mexico, South America, Japan, and Eastern Europe, informing readers about countries unfamiliar to most women in the province. Some suffragists developed a theory of patriarchy: the belief that women had a shared experience of male domination that “meant the serfdom of woman, no matter what class she belonged to” (Bonakdarian 2000, 163; *VDW*, 18 August 1913, 8).

Beliefs about the progressive nature of modernity were articulated with spiritual language that understood the universe to be a living being with an inherent—and perhaps divine—force that propelled it toward greater justice and liberty. As British suffragette Barbara Wylie told a Vancouver audience, suffrage was a “fight of spiritual against physical force and spiritual always

wins... The victory is bound to be on our side” (*VDW*, 21 January 1913, 13). This belief in the power of the universe drew together a range of suffragists: social gospel Christians, Theosophists, and socialists shared a profound belief in the “perfectibility” of both the human individual and the collective social and economic order (Allen 1971; Marks 2017; Taylor 2016; Taylor and Knott 2005). While Christian suffragists like Florence Hall understood the universe as propelled by God, others embraced non-traditional belief systems that drew on the idea of a universal movement toward justice and equality (*CH*, September 1913, 14-15). Lynne Marks notes that Theosophy was a well-known alternative faith that viewed the universe as alive and divine, and emphasized global “interconnectedness” and human equality (2017, 198-200). It had few official adherents but Theosophists were popular lecturers, and the Vancouver PEL even held its founding meeting in the Theosophical Hall (*Province*, 14 January 1911, 1).

The faith attracted a number of leading suffragists including Gutteridge, who was involved prior to leaving England, and socialist Bertha Merrill Burns, who was agnostic but influenced by Theosophical thought (*WC*, 26 June 1903, 3; *Ibid.*, 24 July 1903, 3). In her later years, Maria Grant left Methodism for the Unity/New Thought Church, which embraced “positive thinking” as a way to improve the self and perfect the world. Grant’s philosophy influenced the tenor of the *Champion*, defining women’s enfranchisement as “the outcome of an internal process of unfoldment and development in harmony with the law of Life. This growth experiences itself in the demand for liberty and equality.” Grant believed that equality was a transformative awakening in which women realized their potential through the “annihilation of all that hinders the upward and onward winging of their way” (*CH*, December 1912, 20). Those who were “asleep” were not attuned to the divine mechanisms of the universe and were unable to develop, while those who were “awake” were moving forward towards greater justice and equality.

These beliefs mark the earliest use of the feminist “wave” metaphor, evoking the power of oceanic waves and the gravitational pull of the planets. Suffrage was a

“tide” that “could not be stayed”; it was a universal and powerful “great revolutionary wave” that would drown every person and institution in its way as it “swept” all nations into a better future (*Colonist*, 27 and 28 March, 1875, 4; *Ibid.*, 15 December 1910, 21; *VDW*, 6 May 1911, 5; *BCF*, 12 December 1913, 7; *CH*, November 1913, 3-4). This confidence gave suffragists a rhetorical power and sense of moral certainty that inflected their speeches and writing. But this certainty was shaken by anti-suffrage politicians, such as Conservative premier Richard McBride and Attorney-General William Bowser, who helped defeat seven suffrage bills between 1903 and 1916. The fallout from 1906 legislation, which inadvertently expanded the municipal vote to a wider range of non-propertied women but was rescinded in 1908, led Victoria’s Cecilia Spofford to wonder if she was wrong to believe “that the present is an age of most wonderful progression” (Cramer, 1980, 83). These failures led to the formation of independent suffrage leagues in 1910, and to increasingly vocal condemnations of provincial politicians.

The Progressive West?

The modernity imagined as animating the world took on a particular framework in British Columbia, where suffragists employed a discourse of North American Western “progressivism” to argue for settler women’s equality. Settlers in the Canadian and American west were separated by a national border but shared a powerful belief that white women and families were key to “taming,” “civilizing,” and modernizing the frontier. The promotion of an egalitarian and economically vibrant western region resonated politically in British Columbia. Rapid economic development and white settler population growth seemed evidence of what Patricia Roy calls the “boundless optimism” embodied by Premier McBride (Dawson 2005; Kulba and Lamont 2006; Roy 2012).

The celebratory frontier partnership between hard-working white settler men and women harnessed women’s political citizenship to the demographic and geographical expansion of the nation. The American West was deeply shaped by this value system and early legislative changes to white women’s voting and

homestead rights in the states of Wyoming and Idaho reflected the belief that white women’s bodies would “settle” the West through migration, marriage, and reproduction (Lewis 2013; Lewis 2011; Mead 2004). Adele Perry argues that similar concerns existed about attracting permanent white settlement to the colony (and later province) of British Columbia (Perry 2015; Perry 2001; Perry 1995). These concerns were enmeshed with gender and racial demographics: when British Columbia entered Confederation in 1871, for example, the majority of the population was Indigenous and white women were a small minority (Barman 2007, 429). Efforts to increase permanent white settlement through racially restrictive immigration legislation and ongoing colonization led to a demographic shift. In the decade after 1901, the population of British Columbia grew by 119 percent and by 1911, almost 68 percent of the population was British in origin (Barman 2007, 429; McDonald forthcoming; Census of Canada 1911). The discourse of a land sitting “unformed” until “hard-working” men and women transformed it explained rapid British settlement as affirmation of settler partnership and hard work, and allowed reformers and suffragists to proclaim that men and women with the “broadest vision” of gender equality settled and lived in the West (*Western Call*, 24 March 1911, 8).

As in the American West, suffragists in British Columbia argued that that “frontier” spirit created a special kind of woman, whose work ethic set her apart from women of other regions and proved she deserved enfranchisement (Carter 2016; Carter 2006; Kulba and Lamont 2006). Vancouver suffragist Blanche Murison linked the “ambitious” modern Vancouver woman with the “tireless efforts of these indomitable women workers of the west, with their broad-gauged judgement.” Such women were part of the “progress that made the story of their Last Great West such wonderful reading” (1911, 188-90), valued for their independence, hard work, and pragmatism. The *Prince Rupert Journal* characterized the settler woman of the “Pacific Slope” as uniquely progressive in comparison to her “slower, eastern sisters,” describing her as a feminine and wise housewife who was simultaneously “strong, sweet and lovable” and full of the “western spirit” (2 May 1911, 2).

The argument that settler women had built the modern west was reflected by the increasingly xenophobic suffrage language as the federal government brought eastern, central, and southern European immigrants to farm prairie land and work in the expanding industrial and resource sectors (Avery 1995; Avery 1979). Anti-Asian racism was deeply encoded in provincial law and Japanese, Chinese, and South Asian men were disenfranchised at all three levels of government by 1906. While non-British and non-English speaking European men were “non-preferred” immigrants, they were enfranchised after meeting residency requirements (Dua 2007; Gouto 2007; McDonald 1996; Price 2007-8; Roy 2003; Stanley 2011). Western new women made political citizenship claims by emphasizing the unfairness of withholding enfranchisement from educated, literate, and respectable women while allowing “foreign-born” men—oppositionally positioned as uneducated, illiterate, and intemperate—to vote (Avery 1995; Valverde 2008; Valverde 2000). Alice Ashworth Townley argued that it was unjust to deny the vote to settler women of British background who had “stood by” their men to build homes in “a new land” while enfranchising those she described as “fresh-coming, ignorant foreigners” (Townley 1911). Although British Columbia did not rely as heavily on European immigration as did the prairies, European men’s increasing visibility sparked fears that the province was undermining its cultural superiority by allowing them permanent settlement and voting rights.

These resentments were central to Dorothy Davis’s 1912 tour of the BC interior, where European immigration was more visible. The British-born Davis, who promoted unmarried women’s immigration from Great Britain through the Colonial Intelligence League, claimed it was unjust to delay women’s enfranchisement while giving it to “any European immigrant...however far removed his traditions and ideals of life, social and political, from Canadian standards, who has happened to be born a male” (*KR*, 26 September 1912, 2). As capable and hard-working settlers, such women deserved the benefits of full political citizenship: “We are not content to see these foreigners being welcomed in at the front door of the house which the women of this island have borne their

share of building,” Davis wrote to the *Colonist* in 1912. “We are told to wait outside while we ask prettily through the windows for their permission to state our views” (18 September 1912). Her position was shared by Ontario-born Janet Kemp, who was elected British Columbia’s PEL president in 1913. Kemp and Davis shaped the language of the 1913 suffrage petition, which promised that women’s enfranchisement would increase the “British-born Electorate” and counter the “rapid influx” of European male immigrants. When Kemp met the premier, she informed him that “Anglo-Saxon” women with the vote would “safeguard the best interests of this province and its people,” and would temper the votes of male “aliens” (Kemp, 1913). The argument that settler women of British descent were unfairly denied rights given to foreign men persisted until suffrage campaigns ended in 1916.

The “Pacific Slope” woman who deserved enfranchisement was not dissimilar to the new women forged in white settler societies in North America and the British Empire (Dalziel, 2000; Grimshaw, 2000; Lake, 2019; Lake, 1994). But suffragists in British Columbia kept a particularly close eye on suffrage campaigns in nearby American states. After a series of referendums delivered suffrage wins in Washington (1910), California (1911), and Oregon (1912), Susie Lane Clark remarked that most of the Pacific Coast had achieved “political equality” and wondered if “the men of British Columbia [were] going to be less just[?]...we women...think not, and look forward to very soon getting the vote” (*VDW*, 16 June 1913, 5). The border between British Columbia and Washington state was fluid, with suffragists, politicians, and labour organizers often travelling across it to deliver public talks or attend rallies. When the Political Equality League was formed in Victoria in 1910, for example, it was supported by a financial donation from a group of anonymous American suffragists, likely from Washington state (*Colonist*, 15 December 1910, 21).

If new women were forged on the Pacific coast, then so too were new men. Suffragists flattered male supporters in British Columbia and the United States as visionary westerners who were “broad-minded enough to grant women political equality” (*Colonist*, 6 March

1914, 11). Seattle publisher and lawyer Adela Parker travelled regularly to Victoria and Vancouver, accompanied delegations to the legislature, and encouraged suffragists to believe that local men would follow the lead of “pioneer men” in the American West (*CH*, September 1913, 9; *VDW*, 24 June 1913, 13). Parker gave a series of talks in the Lower Mainland, telling audiences that women’s voting rights in Washington had emerged from western men’s unique respect for settler women: “The men of the West have a particular regard for women and their work. This not only includes the man who has been born here, but the man who has been here long enough to become imbued with the great spirit of the West” (*VDW*, 2 July 1913, 7). Leagues showcased allies like Seattle city councillor Max Wardell, described as “a splendid type of the ‘new man’ who today is espousing woman’s case by securing for her equal justice” (*CH*, December 1912, 11). The PEL’s first convention featured Vancouver Mayor L.D. Taylor, under whose direction Vancouver City Council had recently given property-owning married women the municipal vote, and Seattle Democratic Senator George F. Cotterill, who had sponsored Washington state suffrage legislation in 1910 (*VDW*, 6 May 1911, 5).

Instead of understanding the language of frontier equality as descriptive of actual practices relating to settler women’s political rights, it is best understood as a rhetorical device that served suffrage purposes and shaped claims to political citizenship. Sarah Carter (2016) shows that land and political power in the west remained in the hands of western settler men, and although women’s suffrage arrived first in the prairies, the majority of provinces had followed by 1919. But discourses of western modernity gave suffragists a powerful rhetorical frame to make demands of the state. Praising equality-minded “new men,” for example, was designed to both flatter and shame politicians. When the PEL pressed Vancouver Mayor Truman Smith Baxter to state his position on suffrage, his refusal led them to wonder if “the suffragists’ trusting faith in the generosity of ‘our big Western men’ is somewhat misplaced and that perhaps the vote will not come by crying for it” (*VDW*, 2 July 1913, 7). After multiple private members’ bills failed to pass in the legislature, the PEL presented the government

with a 10,000 name suffrage petition and urged McBride to live up to the masculine “Western spirit of progression,” and prove he was the “strongest man” of all the Canadian premiers (Davis, 1913). After their appeals failed, Vancouver’s United Suffrage Societies (USS) sent a delegation to warn McBride that the province was falling behind other world regions. After McBride insisted that women’s political equality was not “in the public interest,” the deputation challenged him in the language of modernity, calling him fossilized and out of place with the “progressive west” and other politicians in the “advancing” world” (*BCF*, 12 Dec 1913, 1; *CH*, March 1913, 5-6). Suffragists never abandoned attempts at legislative reform, but they were tired of asking for democracy and increasingly willing to demand it.

Transpacific Connections: British Columbia, China, and Suffrage

While British Columbia suffragists drew on transcontinental and imperial connections to inspire local activism, after 1910 they also turned their attention to the women’s movement in China. British Columbia’s demographic and economic ties to Asia created interest in Chinese political movements, and suffragists paid close attention to the Chinese women’s movement, which fought for political citizenship and access to the professions and higher education. While most suffragists supported racial restrictions on immigration and voting, they simultaneously admired Chinese women’s political leadership and by the second decade of the twentieth century, celebrated China as emblematic of political modernity.

With ongoing political upheaval in China, Chinese reformers and revolutionaries travelled to North America to win support from the diaspora and the larger public. With a significant Chinese diasporic community in British Columbia, the province was an important destination on this travel circuit (Barman 2007; Liu 2002; Stanley 2011; Stanley 2007-8). One of the earliest North American diasporic associations was established in Victoria in 1899 by Guangdong reformer Kang Youwei. The Chinese Empire Reform Association (CERA) (Baohuanghui) was transnational, growing to over 160 branches on multiple contin-

ents (Chen, 2014; Leung Larson 2014; Leung Larson, 2012). Kang Youwei made numerous trips to North America and his speeches to “large public” groups in Vancouver, Victoria, and New Westminster received extensive local press coverage (Owen and Wolf, 2008). CERA advocated for modern liberal reform in China, and its call for North American governments to remove immigration and head tax restrictions and create work mobility for Chinese labourers resonated with the merchant elites who provided local leadership.

Kang Youwei and his fellow reformers imagined women’s political citizenship as central to the development of a modern Chinese nation, and advocated for women’s financial independence, education, and enfranchisement. His feminist principles were reflected in the commitments of his second daughter, Kang Tongbi (1881-1960), and her elder sister Kang Tongwei (who published the women’s newspaper *Nü Xue Bao*), both of whom were active in the Chinese women’s movement. Tongbi began as her father’s interpreter and launched her own tour in 1903 with a two-week stay in Victoria and a series of public lectures about women in Chinese reform (*Colonist*, 23 May 1903, 5). To parallel the male-led CERA organized by her father, Tongbi founded the Chinese Empire Ladies Reform Association (CELRA), which had chapters in Victoria, Vancouver, New Westminster, and numerous American cities (Chen 2014; Lee 2003; Woon 2007-8). Members of CELRA were the wives and daughters of merchants in Vancouver and Victoria, and they made up the small numbers of first generation female Asian settlers.

There are two remaining CELRA posters in Canada, commemorating the Vancouver and Victoria branches (CELRA/BHH, 1903). They are visual and textual poetic celebrations of the important role women were expected to play in the political life of China and North America, and were designed to link local women to the larger Chinese women’s movement and to global and modern political reform (Campbell, 2020). A photograph of the reformist Guangxu emperor is featured at the top of the poster; below him are photographs of reformers Kang Youwei and Liang Qi Chao. Positioned below the two men are images of Kang Tongbi and local CELRA members. The images are

bordered by textual evocations of women’s political responsibilities in an evolving nation. Images of Chinese-Canadian women were placed alongside descriptions of “great women heroes” who had sacrificed their lives to challenge authoritarianism and achieve equality. The text celebrated the martyr Joan of Arc, who had courageously “sacrificed” her life for her country and had, by the twentieth century, been adopted by many suffragists as a powerful heroine symbolizing courage and righteousness (Mayhall, 2003). She was listed alongside militant women such as Sophia Perovskaia, who had assassinated Tsar Alexander II and “wiped out the tyrant,” and Feng Liao, a Chinese diplomatic envoy (Su, Ying, and Larson 2014).

Because only wealthy men could afford to bring their families to Canada under the head tax, many Chinese women living in British Columbia were of elite class status. Fragments of surviving evidence suggest that a small group of such women were involved in reform politics, including Mrs. Chan Sing Kai (Kate Chan), wife of Cantonese missionary and Methodist minister Chan Sing Kai, who founded Vancouver’s first Chinese Methodist Church in 1888. After moving to Portland Oregon in 1901, Chan and her daughters became active in the local suffrage movement (OR, 12 April 1912, 16). Kate Chan’s extended family in British Columbia remained committed to her vision of broader enfranchisement; her adopted daughter Eva Chan married Won Alexander Cumyow, an early leader for Chinese-Canadian political enfranchisement, and Eva and Won Alexander’s son Gordon Cumyow played a central role organizing against racial restrictions on the vote in the 1940s (Nicol, 2016; Roy, 2007; Stanley, 2007-8). Although there is no record of whether CELRA members discussed suffrage at meetings or with their husbands, Vancouver CERA members were interested in the question and debated women’s suffrage “with considerable animation” in a 1905 meeting. They ultimately decided that Chinese-Canadian women were not “ready” for suffrage because they had not developed “sufficient knowledge of the public questions,” a position that reflected arguments made by anti-suffrage men across the province and country (*Colonist*, 5 December 1905, 5).

Newspapers in British Columbia covered modern

politics in China and the travels of female reformers and journalists on the Pacific coast lecture circuit. The *Colonist*, for example, covered San Francisco lectures by “new woman” Sieh King, and the visits to Victoria by Kang Tongbi and Mai Zhouyi (editor of the *Lingnan Women’s Journal*) in 1903, and of Li Sum Sing, editor of the *Chinese Mail*, in 1908 (*Colonist*, 7 November 1902, 5, 10 June 1903, 5; 5 November 1908, 8). Press reports often ignored women’s long-standing activity in Chinese reform movements and assumed that every Chinese woman was speaking for the “first time” in public. The *Colonist*, for example, described Kang Tongbi’s lectures in typically Orientalist terms, declaring it the “first occasion on which any Chinese woman has been known to speak in public,” an assessment which ignored her extensive record of global public speaking (23 May, 1903, 5). But Chinese “new women” were also intriguing to audiences because they spoke in the language of progress and modernity familiar to North American suffragists. They shared the belief that women should play a central role in modern nation building projects, and the right to economic independence and higher education (Chapman, 2016; Chapman, 2014). Chinese women reformers drew on discourses of modernization to justify women’s political citizenship, and to further the political reforms they believed were necessary for a strong nation state, including democratic and responsible government. The text of one of the CELRA posters echoed the global suffrage value that women were central to modern political progress: “In the rise of the country or its fall, men and women share equal responsibility.”

As with politicians and labour leaders, members of the mainstream provincial suffrage movement constructed Chinese immigration as a threat to the wages of white male breadwinners and to racialized boundaries within the province. But by the second decade of the twentieth century, suffragists were coming to understand Chinese women as an example of national modernity and global progress. This shift retained what historian Mansour Bonakdarian calls the “cultural arrogance” of British suffrage leadership, which was sustained even as the movement developed more complex understandings of women’s global activism (2000, 157; Mukherjee, 2018). Suffragists in British Columbia, for

example, spoke paternalistically of how “even China” was granting political rights to women. But this attitude was accompanied by increasing respect and acknowledgement that Chinese feminists did not need Western women’s help to lobby for gender equality. By focusing their admiration on the activism of women in China rather than Chinese women who lived in British Columbia, however, suffragists were able to admire the Chinese women’s movement—and China itself as a modern nation—while simultaneously maintaining racial boundaries between settlers and racial restrictions on political citizenship (Mawani 2009; Perry 2009).

Suffragists were attuned to women’s political progress in China where, as in Canada, enfranchisement took place on the national and provincial level. Suffragists were particularly interested in Guangdong during 1911-1912, where the government removed gender, property, or education restrictions from the vote, and created a quota for women’s representation in the provincial assembly. Though these rights were removed by the National Parliament during the revolution, this initial success inspired both admiration and envy as well a sense that China was in the forefront of the competitive race towards modernity (Edwards, 2008; Edwards, 2002; Edwards, 2000; Yung, 1995). “Even China is ahead of us,” wrote the *Champion*, because it has “openly recognized the equity and advisability of calling upon her women as well as her men to take their share in the direction of national affairs, and China will therefore rise, not sink, in the scale of nations” (*CH*, September 1913, 9). This celebration of “advanced” nations was an important rhetorical device that took visual form in images, maps, and the iconography of public events. In 1913, the Victoria PEL entered a float rich with visual symbols of modernity, progress, victory, and justice into the Citizen’s Carnival. The float was pulled by a team of horses, on which sat women dressed in militant British suffragette colours of purple, white, and green. Beside the float marched male supporters, evoking the “new men” who supported women’s rights. And on top of the float stood a tableau representing the most “advanced” nations in the world. Six young women, each dressed in robes of suffrage white and victory crowns of laurel, posed in front of the door of her national “home,” which was labelled with the names of the world’s lead-

ing nations where women could vote: Australia, New Zealand, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Canton (Guangdong), China (*CH*, September 1913, 4). All the models were white settler women, however, and it is unlikely that organizers reached out to the Chinese-Canadian women living in Victoria. The practices of the mainstream suffrage movement remained racially segregated throughout the first decades of the twentieth century.

While most suffrage organizations across the country imagined themselves as part of a global movement, transnational politics took a unique shape in Canada's western-most province. British Columbia suffragists connected with suffragists in the Western United States to argue for political equality on the supposedly progressive and egalitarian Western "frontier," and interpreted the Chinese women's movement as an example of modern and progressive national reform. Suffragists understood the development of women's rights within the global implications of modernity and were confident that white settler population growth and economic development would help British Columbia progress into a modern, egalitarian, and prosperous future. The suffrage movement in British Columbia was steeped in the cultural and ideological values of race, modern nation state formation, and settler colonialism even as it challenged others related to settler women's capacity and right to political citizenship.

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Family Matters: Immigrant Women's Activism in Ontario and British Columbia, 1960s -1980s

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Abstract: This article uses oral history interviews to explore the ways in which different attitudes towards family and motherhood could create major tensions between mainstream feminists and immigrant women activists in Ontario and British Columbia between the 1960s and the 1980s. Immigrant women's belief in the value of the family did not prevent immigrant women from going out to work to help support their families or accessing daycare and women's shelters, hard fought benefits of the women's movement. However, these women demanded access to job training, English language classes, childcare, and women's shelters on their own terms, in ways that minimized the racism they faced, respected religious and cultural values, and respected the fact that the heterosexual family remained an important resource for the majority of immigrant women.

Immigrant women activists were less likely to accept a purely gender-based analysis than mainstream feminists. They often sought to work with men in their own communities, even in dealing with violence against women. And issues of violence and of reproductive rights often could not be understood only within the boundaries of Canada. For immigrant women violence against women was often analyzed in relation to political violence in their homelands, while demands

for fully realized reproductive rights drew on experiences of coercion both in Canada and transnationally.

Keywords: immigrant women, family, feminism, motherhood

By the 1980s the staff at the Rexdale Women's Centre (RWC) in Toronto surprised themselves by organizing their first men's group. "Would I have believed that we were having these services for men? Never, never, never. In my head it's a women's organization and women, women, women only. But I was wrong," laughs Fatima Filippi. Filippi is an immigrant herself who has been an immigrant women activist for almost 40 years and is now Executive Director of the RWC. "We did rights and advocacy particularly related to violence against women. And I remember one woman saying to me, 'I know my rights but I'm not punching myself in the face, it's the men who are doing it to us. Why aren't you doing something with them?' And so, she taught me, and we hired female and male facilitators to work with men and women in the immigrant communities to talk about violence" (Filippi 2016). Through this experience the staff realized that immigrant women's activism was distinct from other feminist activism of the 1960s through 1980s. Immigrant women were often concerned about the same issues as other feminists—paid work, violence against women, and reproductive rights. And yet, even when the issues were similar, the politics were organized in a manner that often centralized motherhood and family. This focus on motherhood and family was partly a result of the Canadian state's immigration and multiculturalism policies that defined and confined immigrant women's experiences. It also reflected other differences in experiences and perspectives between immigrant women activists and white feminists. This article explores how questions of family and motherhood were understood by immigrant women activists and shaped their politics.

In this article we examine the issues of paid work, violence, and abortion/reproductive rights primarily in the context of Toronto, Vancouver, and Victoria. This is our first article on issues related to feminism, immigrant women, motherhood, and family. It is part of a larger SSHRC-funded project that will examine these issues and related ones in five provinces.¹ As a result, we see the findings in this article as a preliminary overview of a complex topic. We plan to explore these questions in more depth, with more regional diversity, and a more fine-grained lens over the next few years. This research involved archival investigation and oral

history interviews. We conducted 50 oral history interviews, 25 with racialized immigrant women activists, and 25 with white feminists, all of whom were activists from the 1960s-1980s. The former were immigrant women who were active in immigrant women's services as social workers and organizational leaders. The latter included a few who defined themselves as immigrant women activists. The rest of the white feminists defined themselves as socialist or liberal feminists, active leaders in labour unions and/or local and national feminist organizations that we would now call "mainstream feminists" although they may not have defined themselves as such at the time.²

Our research is also based on liberal, radical, and socialist feminist journals, particularly *Kinesis* and *Broadside*, as well as in immigrant women's journals, including *Diva* and *Tiger Lily*. We also explored the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) newsletters and archival material, as well as archival material from other women's groups found in the University of Ottawa's Women's Movement Archives collection. We are grateful to the works by Tania Das Gupta (1986, 2007), Makeda Silvera (1989), Vijay Agnew (1996), Judith Ramirez, Roxanna Ng (1982), Micheline Labelle, and Martin Goyette (1993) and others for their important scholarly and political work about immigrant women's organizing. We are indebted to Canadian critical race scholars Yasmeen Abu-Laban (1998), Rita Dhamoon, Enakshi Dua and Angela Robertson (1999), Sherene Razack, Malinda Smith, and Sunera Thobani (2010) for addressing how the Canadian state and/or mainstream feminists have addressed race.³ We acknowledge that the first two authors of this article are writing this work from a place of relative privilege—while Lynne Marks immigrated to Canada in the 1960s as a young child, her South African Jewish parents were English speaking and middle class, her father an academic, and Margaret Little was born into an Ontario farming/settler family and the first generation to leave the farm and receive university education. We have been involved in some anti-poverty and feminist activism over the years, but recognize that we are relative outsiders to the story we tell here. In focusing on immigrant women's activism, we hope to contribute to work that is transforming our understanding of the history of

"second wave feminism" in Canada, challenging the version of this history that Chela Sandoval calls "hegemonic feminism."⁴

There has been significant work on the history of immigration by Canadian historians and increasingly good work on the history of immigrant women. But there has been less work on immigrant women's organizations, particularly in the 1960s to 1980s, the period which saw the emergence of the second wave women's movement in Canada (Epp and Iacovetta 2016; Iacovetta 2006). Little attention has been paid to the absence of immigrant women from mainstream feminist organizations in Canada. In the postwar era, with a significant increase in immigration from Europe, there was a growing demand for support services for new immigrants. Most of the support work with new immigrants in the 1940s to early 1960s was done by professional Anglo-Canadian social workers and Anglo-Canadian volunteers. This work helped affirm the burgeoning social work profession and its expertise. Simultaneously, as Franca Iacovetta has argued, this immigrant support work attempted to shape newcomers into the postwar Anglo-Canadian ideal of immigrant citizens.⁵

This article focuses on the period immediately following the post-war era, the late 1960s to the 1980s, when more immigrants began to arrive from Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, and the Middle East. Even though the post-war era saw the expansion of the social safety net for white citizens, immigrant women often did not benefit from these new policies. During the immediate post World War II era an explicitly race-based immigration policy ensured that the majority of immigrants arrived from Europe, first from Britain and northern Europe and then increasingly from southern Europe. But the introduction of the points system in 1967 based on education, ability to speak English or French and job skills, officially eliminated racial barriers to immigration to Canada and European-born immigrants slipped from 90% of all Canadian immigrants prior to 1961 to 25% by the 1980s (Iacovetta 2006).

Canadian state policies during this era shaped immigrant women's identities and relationships to mother-

hood and family. It is difficult to discern to what extent immigrant women actively chose their identities as mothers and the extent to which state policies deeply entrenched this familial identity. Either way, it is clear from our interviews and archival materials that immigrant women's activism during this era centralized motherhood and family. Both state policies of multiculturalism and immigration emphasized the maternal role of immigrant women. Multiculturalism became official Canadian state policy in 1971 and Canada reinvented itself as a welcoming nation for people of different races. But this multicultural policy was a new way of managing difference, transforming racial identities into cultural differences which contained and preserved "ethnic" cultures in a primitive and backward past while asserting whites as superior, tolerant and progressive (Abu-Laban 1998, 69-82).

Women of colour were always perceived as immigrants with distinctive cultures who were never fully, unquestionably accepted as full citizens (Ahmed 2000, 104). Consequently, multiculturalism defined immigrant women as preservers of culture through their familial duties. And the Immigration Act of 1976-77 defined immigrants into two main categories: the independent class and the family class. The independent class was designed to meet labour market needs and immigrants were approved based on a points system that calculated the applicant's level of education, occupation, and work experience. In contrast, the family class allowed immigrants already in Canada to sponsor family dependents into the country but he, and it was usually a he, was financially responsible for those he sponsored for up to 10 years. Thus, these sponsored immigrants had to rely upon their sponsor, rather than the state, for housing, food, clothing, and ultimately, survival. As such, the immigration rules reinforced the power of the male head of the immigrant family and ensured that most immigrant women were dependent within these families. Sponsored immigrants were denied welfare, housing, and old-age security and were restricted in their access to language and job-training programs (Thobani 2000, 134-138). The exception to these two immigrant types was immigrant domestic workers who, as independent workers, should have been defined under the point system but instead were in a separate category that defined them as temporary

workers with severe restrictions for their long-term status in the country as well as their working and living conditions. In previous decades, foreign domestic workers were mainly white Europeans who "suffered class subordination and middle-class paternalism but were welcome to Canada as central participants in nation-building and were treated as future 'mothers of the nation'" (Arat-Koc 1999, 215-221). Such was not the case for racialized domestic workers who arrived during the 1960s and onwards—their working and immigration circumstances were extremely oppressive.

Given the racist, sexist nature of immigration and social policies, immigrant women activists like Fatima Filippi began to demand specific improvements to these policies. While Anglo-Canadians continued to work in immigrant support services, over these decades immigrant women began to unite together to assert the need for services for themselves and for other female immigrants. These immigrant women activists, often racialized, asserted that they were best placed to help other immigrants from similar cultural and religious backgrounds and organized to provide much needed culturally appropriate services that had not previously existed. Many of these activists were feminists. Many came to Canada as feminists while others became active as feminists here. Other immigrant activists who did not identify as feminist (sometimes because of the Western connotations of the term), came with social justice perspectives developed in their countries of origin.

During this era there was a plethora of new services founded by immigrant women activists, including English language classes as well as other services intended to help immigrant women fit into Canadian society. In some ways these services were not that different from those offered to new immigrants in the 1950s and earlier decades. In other ways they were quite different in that even basic programs like English-language classes were much more shaped by activist efforts to determine the needs and interests of the immigrant women themselves.⁶ The services and advocacy provided by most of these organizations were also shaped by the issues of gender inequality and gender oppression raised by the broader feminist movement, such as the need for paid employment for

women, raising awareness and finding solutions to violence against women, and struggles for reproductive rights. At the same time, despite providing services and advocacy related to these issues, immigrant activists had quite different analyses of these issues, and of the solutions needed to solve them.

A range of feminist and anti-racist scholars have looked at certain elements of the conflicts between immigrant and racialized women and other feminists. These scholars have both identified and analyzed the inability of most white feminists at this time to recognize intersectionality, that other factors besides gender—such as racialization, class, immigrant status and sexuality—are intertwined with gender in the way they impact women's lives (see Agnew 1993; Dua and Robertson 1999; Razack, Smith, and Thobani 2010). They have identified, from early in this period, the differences in the concerns and socio-economic realities between many immigrant women and white feminists. The Leila Khalid Collective, a militant group formed in Toronto in 1970 to integrate women's liberation with those of colonized peoples around the globe, understood the complexity of multiple oppressions: "Women with little time, little education, with families and jobs, or women who have to fight hard to survive on welfare aren't interested in coming to weekly meetings to talk about sexuality and to read Engels" (Leila Khalid Collective in Agnew 1993).

There has been significant scholarly work by racialized and immigrant women on intersectionality. However, few works in the Canadian context have looked at the extent to which questions of family and motherhood might have been understood differently by white Canadian feminists and immigrant women activists, and the way these differences may have helped to shape different responses to and strategies around issues such as paid work, violence against women, and reproductive rights.⁷ Some scholars have explored these questions in the American context, but while we have been influenced by this work, the Canadian context was different in a number of ways, including the distinct nature of Québec, and the far greater levels of immigration to Canada in the 1970s and 1980s as compared to the United States.⁸

Toronto was a major receiving centre for immigrants between the 1960s and the 1980s, with many immigrants coming from Italy, Portugal, Central and South America, the Caribbean, China, and South Asia. As a result, many organizations emerged to serve immigrant women, particularly in the 1970s and 80s. Organizations that were founded in Toronto between 1969 and 1979 included: the YWCA Multi-Ethnic Women's Program, West End Assistance Program, the Centre for Spanish Speaking People, the Cleaners Action Group, Women Working with Immigrant Women, Women's Community Employment Centre, Cross Cultural Communication Centre, Immigrant Women's Centre, Centro Femminile, Immigrant Women's Job Placement Centre, YWCA West Indian Women's Program, and the Working Skills Centre. In the following six years the number of agencies serving immigrants doubled again in the Toronto area (Das Gupta 1986; 1999). While levels of immigration to Vancouver were not quite as dramatic, the city also saw a relatively large number of new immigrants over these decades, particularly from the Philippines, China, and South Asia, and some important immigrant women's agencies and organizations were founded, including the Pacific Immigrant Resource Society, the India Mahila Association, the Philippine Women Centre of BC, and the Vancouver Society of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women. Fewer immigrants came to Victoria in this period, but the city did witness the creation of immigrant support organizations in both Victoria and nearby Duncan, organized by local immigrant women activists.

Immigrant women who came to Canada over these decades faced a range of challenges. For some, who came speaking English or French, with some financial resources and with professional credentials that were recognized in Canada, the situation was somewhat less challenging. European immigrants from Portugal and Italy may have faced somewhat less racism than other immigrant groups, but poverty, language difficulties, immigrant status, and being racialized as "not quite white" still meant that they faced serious barriers. For the many racialized immigrants who came to Canada in this period, the racism of Canadian society posed major difficulties. All married immigrant women faced additional legal problems, particularly in the 1970s

and early 1980s, when as noted above, the sponsorship programs limited sponsored women's access to Canadian social programs. The "head of household" (the husband) had access to extensive government funded English as Second Language (ESL) training, but his sponsored "dependents" did not. Sponsored married women also faced the possibility of deportation if the couple separated. We realize that the situation of women from different immigrant groups (and within immigrant groups) cannot be homogenized and that diversity of culture, religion, and class was (and is) very real. While recognizing significant differences among immigrant women, we will also be focusing in this article on certain similarities, similarities that were identified by immigrant women activists.

There are many reasons why motherhood and family were crucial issues in immigrant women's politics. Multiculturalism policies reduced race and racism to cultural differences, defining immigrant families as a hearth to nurture and preserve linguistic and cultural traditions. Immigration laws defined most immigrant women as dependent wives and mothers. New welfare state policies often excluded immigrant women, thus making them even more economically dependent upon their male spouses. Together these multiculturalism, immigration, and welfare state policies encouraged both new immigrants and others to view immigrant women as economically dependent mothers whose main goal was to maintain and preserve the culturally distinctive family. To cement immigrant women's relationship to their families further, the family was often a bulwark in a racist society, a place where immigrant women, men, and children found shelter from a profoundly racist society. Thus, it is not surprising that immigrant women activists tended to shape their political issues around the familial and maternal needs of immigrant women. This did not mean that they were uncritical of the patriarchal oppression faced by many immigrant women—but it meant that they had a far greater recognition of the need to be sensitive to issues of family and motherhood than other feminists. Below we explore three key issues in immigrant women's activism: paid work, violence against women, and reproductive choice. While these were political issues that immigrant women and other feminist activists shared, the former shaped these issues differently,

in a manner that recognized and appreciated immigrant women's family demands and political realities.

Paid Work

Both immigrant women activists and other feminists were deeply concerned about paid work issues during this era. Paid work was an economic necessity for most immigrant women and their families. Even if poorly paid, working in exploitative conditions, immigrant women were critical wage earners to help ensure family survival in the new country. Consequently, employment was a central issue for immigrant women's politics. But immigrant women and white liberal and socialist feminists tended to approach employment issues differently. Whereas white liberal and socialist feminists were focused on pay equity, childcare, unionization, and paid work that led to economic independence from men, immigrant women activists tended to organize around employment issues that were shaped by family responsibilities. For most immigrant women, paid work was a necessity but it was also critical that this paid work complement unpaid caring work at home. Many immigrant women were life-long workers but had interruptions in this paid work due to family issues such as pregnancy, childcare, illness, or a husband's employment constraints. Consequently, our archival and interview data show that immigrant women activists prioritized the following employment issues: employment equity, workplace health, ESL training, accreditation, foreign domestic workers' rights, and in some cases, unionization.

While the wages they brought in were essential, most immigrant women needed their paid work to be secondary to their work in the home. As a result, many immigrant women worked as night-time office cleaners, home-based garment workers, or other paid work that allowed them to care for their children and prepare the meals for their families. "Janitorial cleaning was a good job for immigrant women because it's at night. And so, they would be with the kids all day, the husband got home from construction work, and the woman would leave for her job, so that someone was always there with the kids.... But they maintained the primary responsibility for household labour," explains Susan Miranda (2016), who both researched and ad-

vocated for Portuguese immigrant women in Toronto. A 1979 article in *Kinesis* noted that immigrant women were choosing to do industrial sewing at home, even though it was very exploitative, with low wages, so that they could remain at home with their children (17).

As wife and mother, immigrant women played a central role between the home and a racist society. They witnessed the male head of the household having little economic or social power in the broader society and they watched their children, who were often more fluent in English and the new country's values, challenge their father. While there were still unequal power dynamics at work in the immigrant woman's household, she often took pride in her position as the primary educator of cultural and religious values—as the person who sheltered her husband and children from the alienation they experienced outside the door. “It was always about the kids first,” explained Hortensia Houle, who helped run the Cowichan Valley Intercultural and Immigrant Society, north of Victoria, BC. “We never neglect the children. For us, the main goal wasn't to be employed but how we can raise our children...how we can be part of this community” (Houle 2016).

Scholars have echoed these arguments, noting that for various immigrant groups in this period, women's role in the home was considered crucial for keeping the family together.⁹ This has been discussed in relation to a range of different immigrant groups (Agnew 1996, 2000; Ng and Ramirez 1982). A study of Uruguayan immigrants in this period noted: “Motherhood is generally regarded as the ideal state for a woman. She may take a paid job, but if her family demands her presence at home there is no argument: her first obligation is to them” (Alberro and Montero 1976, 131-148). And Sunera Thobani suggests that some immigrant women would have gained status and power within their families and communities as the promoters and preservers of culture and language (2007, 167).

This primacy of family and home created tensions between immigrant women activists and other feminists. Judith Ramirez, a member of Toronto Wages for Housework, an international socialist feminist organization that advocated wages for homemakers, remem-

bers strains between immigrant women activists and other white feminist leaders. “In that period most of it was not only disagreement, it was virulent disagreement.... All the emphasis [from other feminists] was about women working outside the home. Anything about women in the home was almost by definition seen as retrograde” (Ramirez 2016). Meanwhile many immigrant women found the home and family a sanctuary from a racist and alienating society. As Ramirez explains, “The immigrant women had to think about the harmony within their families, and their children succeeding at school and any paid work had to work around what was happening in the home.” “Motherhood is very important for most of the immigrant families,” explains Tomoko Okada who was coordinator of the Immigrant and Refugee Settlement Program in Victoria. “They start thinking about children's education, they move to Canada, so the children's well-being was the most important priority issue for immigrant parents” (Okada 2016).

Immigrant women demanded the right to stay at home with their children, if that was economically feasible. Hortensia Houle challenged the women's movement's opposition to stay-at-home motherhood, which was seen as preventing women from gaining independence, arguing:

Isn't it better for us to support her while she nurtures her children for three, four, five years until they're in full-time school, and then send her to a job? I'm not saying I advocate women to stay on welfare all their life but you have to think about the timing. For a mom to leave her young child in daycare to go work at a minimum wage job, come home, have the same amount of money that she would get on welfare but is extremely tired...isn't it better for us that she spends that time with her children if that's what she wants? (Houle 2016)

And Ramirez explains, “They [immigrant women] wanted to say, look what we're doing is respectable. Don't treat us like second class citizens of the sisterhood” (Ramirez 2016).

Immigrant women's groups were less focused on women's economic independence from men through well-paid jobs. “We weren't focussed on equal pay,” ex-

plained Victoria organizer Amarjit Bhalia, “Our organization was about giving value to women, of making sure women have the chance to excel, just as men. [Both immigrant women activists and other feminists] wanted to value women but we did it in different ways” (Bhalia 2016). Ramirez who was advocating for immigrant domestic workers in Toronto agrees with Bhalia. “There was no opposition to equal pay. It wasn’t about divisions in that sense. It was more about focussing on the immediate needs and what’s most urgent in your life” (Ramirez 2016). Rather than pay equity, immigrant women activists interviewed about paid work spoke about their desire for homemaker pensions, increased welfare rates and services that recognized the very busy lives and multiple responsibilities of immigrant women. Some of these policies would allow women to do less paid work, not more. As one immigrant woman activist recalls with a chuckle, “I never got the white girls’ focus on the right to work. Work?! We [immigrant women] had work. We wanted less work” (Interviewee O-3 2017).

Instead of pay equity, immigrant activists were more interested in employment equity, legislation to increase the representation of not just women, but people with disabilities, Indigenous peoples and racialized peoples, both women and men. As Debbie Douglas explains,

We knew that race was so central to a lot of the discrimination that we were facing. And the men in our lives were facing. So as Black feminists we organized around women’s equity but we also had to organize around our communities. And our communities tended to be our families.... So Black men’s realities were important to the work that we were doing in terms of the kind of societies we were wanting to build. (Douglas 2017)

Therefore, even when immigrant women activists and other feminists were talking about employment issues it was different employment policy, with different goals.

Because of the distinct nature of immigrant women’s work, child care was framed differently amongst immigrant women activists. Publicly-funded, affordable, high-quality childcare was often a central demand of white socialist and liberal feminist groups during this

era. They saw childcare as key to women entering the paid workforce (Pasolli 2015). Immigrant communities, on the other hand, were more mixed about child care issues. Daycare did not work for those immigrant women who worked nights and were at home with their children during the day. Other immigrant women preferred to stay home and raise their children, if economically possible, ensuring that their children had cultural and linguistic skills from their home country. Or, if not, they had extended family members provide care, or sponsored their parents to come to Canada as a way to provide informal at-home care for their children. “The practical realities of life often meant that many of the immigrant women would take care of these things within the family. You know, parents or aunts and uncles, because you have to solve the problem. You can’t wait for big policy changes to get to the factory the next morning,” explains Ramirez (2016). Some immigrant women also opposed the racist attitudes they experienced at child care centres. Miranda recalls, “the daycare sometimes brought in speakers to say, ‘This is how you should raise your child’.... They told [immigrant] mothers they can’t spank their kids... The women didn’t like it that much so there definitely were tensions with daycare centres” (Miranda 2016).

Whereas immigrant women activists were careful in how they advocated around public childcare, many of them strongly advocated for workplace health. Ramirez recalls the importance of the mobile health clinic van that parked outside the factories where the immigrant women worked.

When we set up the immigrant women’s centre the first thing we addressed was the fact that these women had a double work shift. Many of them were working outside the home at factories, and then they were coming home to the responsibilities of the family. Their children were in school. Their husbands came home tired. They had to cook and clean. So, what do we do? We set up a mobile health clinic, the van comes to the factory. We negotiate with the employer, you give them a half hour off during lunch and they come in, they see the doctor, the nurse. (Ramirez 2016)

The politics of the mobile health clinic makes clear

that immigrant women activists understood that health care and any other immigrant woman's issue had to be shaped around their family and work lives (Das Gupta 1986, 54-56). Through this concern about health emerged a number of immigrant health centres (Das Gupta 1986).

Immigrant women activists realized that their clients wanted ESL training for a variety of reasons. Government-funded ESL was provided for immigrant men but not for immigrant women, if they were dependents of their husbands. Immigrant women wanted these skills. In some cases, they wanted ESL to get or keep their jobs or to get better paid jobs. Deb Barndt (2016) who worked with Latin American immigrant women and was known for her Freire-inspired community participatory work, remembers offering ESL classes at the factories. "We would teach English to workers in their workplaces so we met with them after work in the cafeteria." Barndt was a photographer so they created photo stories to learn ESL: "There were stories of just trying to get through the transit system but as a metaphor for how you survive in a new context and also how to...[negotiate] your first job interview." Out of this emerged ESL survival kits, songs, radio soap operas, videos, books—all used as teaching and political organizing tools. "These women were seeing themselves in these materials and that their lives mattered and it gave them dignity," Barndt explains. Through these community-participatory educational projects emerged the Women Working with Immigrant Women coalition and the Working Women Centre (Barndt 2016; Marino and Barndt 1983).

Immigrant women who were staying home also wanted ESL because they wanted to be able to advocate for their children in the school system. Beverly Nann, who helped found Pacific Immigrant Resources Society in the 1970s, recalls they did a lot of outreach with immigrant mothers and pre-school children. For example, they offered a Head Start program that helped immigrant mothers and their pre-school children, simultaneously, get ESL skills before the children went to school (Nann 2016). Hortensia Houle, former president of the Cowichan Valley Intercultural and Immigrant Society, recalls that she advocated for ESL training for men as well. "We had ESL classes for wo-

men but then the [immigrant] men realized that they were relying on their children to translate for them. Some of them weren't learning English in their workplaces and they wanted the same training that their wives were getting." So, although Houle started by providing ESL classes for immigrant women she later applied for government grants to provide the same classes for immigrant men (Houle 2016).

Accreditation was another important employment issue for immigrant women. "We lobbied for years around accreditation," recalls Hortensia Houle. Many immigrant women arrived with post-secondary education and credentials that were not recognized in Canada. Houle helped women get accreditation in the health care sector and in translation. "They already had the skills, they just weren't recognized," she explains. Soon Houle had immigrant men coming to her asking her to advocate for their accreditation as well (Ibid).

An employment issue that was a rallying cry for many immigrant women activists was the plight of foreign domestic workers. This issue exposed the racist and elitist state immigration and employment policies which permitted middle class and predominantly white women to leave their homes for paid work and growing economic independence while relinquishing their caring work to immigrant and predominantly racialized women. Simultaneously, this issue bound caring work and paid employment together. Many immigrant women were brought to Canada on temporary work permits. They were forced to work in Canadian homes doing childcare and housework for many hours and were afraid to complain about their exploitative situations for fear of deportation. They were indentured workers with no mobility rights. Immigrant activists worked with them to try and organize domestic workers' unions in the late 1970s and early 1980s, with limited success. Immigrant organizers fought for these women to be included in employment standards legislation, to limit their hours of work, and to give them the rights of landed immigrants. Makeda Silvera's path-breaking book *Silenced* (1989) spoke about the struggles of working-class Caribbean immigrant women, many of whom were domestic workers. "Makeda really gave a profile to domestic workers' issues," explains Debbie Douglas. "These women often

only had Saturday night and Sunday morning off before they had to go back [to work]. And she [Silvera] would meet them at parks or any place where they could gather to talk about their experiences and she captured their stories in the book” (Douglas 2017). Silvera made it very clear that the situation of the domestic workers was the obverse of the mainstream feminist ideal of women’s employment. Many of the employers of the exploited domestic workers were professional women, whose independence in the workforce was at the expense of the immigrant women they employed at low wages to care for their children and do the housework. These immigrant domestic workers worked long hours to send their wages home to support their own children, left behind in their homelands (Bakan and Stasiulis 1997).

In 1979 Judith Ramirez played a central role in founding INTERCEDE, a major Toronto-based organization that defended the rights of immigrant domestic workers. Gradually, over the course of the 1980s, INTERCEDE won some victories, including changing the law in 1981, so that after two years of domestic work, these women could apply for landed immigrant status. However, many barriers remained, and INTERCEDE continued over this period to advocate to improve the rights of immigrant domestic workers. This issue was primarily of concern to immigrant activists but a number of high-profile white mainstream feminists also came out in support of immigrant domestic workers, helping to put more pressure on the government to change its racist policies (Agnew 1996, 180-191).

For Judith Ramirez, who helped found INTERCEDE, there was a direct connection between the plight of immigrant domestic workers and the international socialist feminist organization called Wages for Housework (WFH), which argued that women’s work in the home needed to be valued, and that those doing housework should be paid by the state. “Wages for Housework is an abstract analysis in a certain sense...a focus on the woman in the home. But with INTERCEDE it was very specific to the foreign domestic workers who were coming under these very harsh regulations,” explains Ramirez (2017). “It’s a very intractable issue, the undervaluing of women’s work in the

home, and outside the home when they’re doing housework like activities for others.... Immigrant women were being locked into double workloads that were so punishing.” Ramirez argued that other feminists:

had such a blind spot about the value of women’s work that was not in the paid workforce.... We were pushing against that view quite forcefully...I’m sure that if you asked those mainstream feminists they would at least pay lip service to “of course what happens in the home is also important,” “raising children is important” etc., etc. But that’s not quite the same as actually giving it the kind of weight that is necessary when you’re tackling issues and deciding what you’re going to fight for. (Ibid.)

Wages for Housework’s focus on supporting women’s work in the home in fact led to quite a negative reaction from mainstream feminism’s umbrella organization, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). As other scholars have noted, in 1979 the NAC rejected WFH’s application for membership in NAC (Marks et al. 2016; McKeen 1995; Vickers et al. 1993). In justifying this decision NAC President Kay Macpherson explained that while NAC and WFH agreed on short term goals such as childcare, job training, and improved services for women, the two organizations differed tremendously on long term goals. Macpherson wrote:

What NAC is aiming for in the long run—equal opportunities, equal pay and end to sex role stereotyping, appears to be in contradiction to the basic goal of the WFH groups, since the aims of Wages for Housework—pay for housework, even the housework done in keeping oneself clean and fed...ultimately reinforces the stereotype of women in the home. (Marks, Little et al. 2016)

The NAC’s refusal to admit WFH led to some push-back even from some white, professional women, who noted that WFH did important work with immigrant women, lesbians, and women on welfare, who NAC did little to support at that time (Ibid.). Certainly, WFH worked closely with immigrant women. In addition to Ramirez’s work with INTERCEDE she was

central in organizing a one-day event with Toronto WFH entitled “A View from the Kitchen: Immigrant Women Speak Out on the Value of Housework.” WFH newsletters argued that immigrant mothers often “carry the heaviest burden,” are “denied a basic sense of accomplishment for [their] role in the home,” and are then further exploited through low paid domestic work (Wages For Housework 1979).

WFH also played an important role in supporting immigrant workers in Vancouver. Under the leadership of WFH activist Ellen Woodsworth they allied with South Asian and Japanese Canadian women’s groups, and together organized activist Mothers’ Day events in East Vancouver in the early 1980s. These events celebrated the value of mothers’ unpaid work, as well as recognizing the particular forms of oppression facing immigrant women, women on welfare, and lesbian mothers.¹⁰ In 1980, the Mother’s Day event highlighted the oppression of immigrant domestic workers, while a speaker from the South Asian Indian Mahila Association talked about the many burdens immigrant women face: they suffer all the handicaps that white women suffer in Canada, and moreover, they face racism and have to fight back against domination and exploitation by the men within their own community (*Kinesis* 1980, 3).

Finally, unionization was a complex employment issue for many immigrant women. It was often difficult for immigrant women to organize into unions because of their poverty, their lack of adequate English, their focus on their homes and families, and their extremely long double days, both in the workforce and looking after their families. In the 1970s this sometimes meant that feminist trade union women ignored immigrant women in workplaces since they felt that these women did not take advantage of available opportunities. As a result, some immigrant activists organized immigrant women separately from feminist trade union women or the mainstream labour movement. Some efforts to encourage unionization were successful. Miranda recalls that immigrant women activists went to downtown buildings at night and handed out leaflets to the immigrant women cleaners, to help them understand their collective agreements and their rights as workers. They founded the Cleaners’ Action Program to sup-

port these women and their jobs as companies started contracting out the cleaning. Community centres in the downtown Kensington Market area of Toronto became quite political as the Cleaners’ Action Program and politicized English as Second Language classes were held there (Das Gupta 1986, 20; Miranda 2016). Immigrant women activists helped support immigrant women cleaners when they refused to work because they were given dirty or malfunctioning equipment (Interviewee O-2 2017). Miranda believes that the highlight of the Cleaners’ Action Program was the protest in 1985 at First Canadian Place in downtown Toronto on Bay Street when 250 women, mainly immigrants, were on strike (Miranda 2016). This was a pivotal moment of immigrant women’s politics: “They were on the picket line for six weeks.... It was a very grassroots kind of movement...but I think [it] definitely contributed to an immigrant women’s movement that kind of paralleled the formal women’s movement” (Ibid.). Another important political moment for immigrant women was a general strike of garment factory workers that shut down Spadina Avenue. As one activist recalls, “It was a massive strike for working conditions for that sector. It was an all-day, day-long strike; it was really exciting because there were immigrant women taking to the streets and fighting back and saying ‘We demand our rights’” (Interviewee O-2 2017).

Many immigrant women activists dedicated their political lives to employment issues. But because of state policies that enforced immigrant women’s economic dependence upon their spouses, immigrant women needed to shape their employment around the needs of their families. Thus, immigrant women’s political issues around employment were also affected by these familial demands. Consequently, employment equity, workplace health, ESL training, accreditation, and domestic workers’ rights were key issues for immigrant women’s employment activism. Sometimes this politics took place on the union shop floor but more often, these politics played out in places that were not traditionally considered political sites, such as immigrant women’s homes, in mobile health clinic vans, and in immigrant service and community centres.

Violence against women

Immigrant women activists and other feminists were both concerned about violence against women but they approached the issue quite differently. Whereas white liberal and socialist feminists tended to understand violence against women as rooted in male power and privilege, immigrant women activists nuanced this analysis to appreciate how racist state policies and police impacted both immigrant men and women. As a result, immigrant women activists saw the home as both a source of violence and also a haven from the racist violence of a hostile new land. In some cases, immigrant women activists and other feminists came together as they lobbied and staffed women's shelters. But shelters were both a site of collaborative politics and a site of racism. Vijay Agnew in her important book, *In Search of a Safe Place* (1998) has explained the challenges for racialized women when they engaged with women's shelters. She explains how social service agencies, including women's shelters,

have 'monocultural models' of delivering services, that European and North American cultural values and norms influence the way service providers define the problems of abused women and the solutions they offer. They often alienate women with vastly different cultural values, and the women withdraw from seeking services from these agencies. (Agnew 1998, 9)

The immigrant women activists interviewed for this research project agreed with Agnew's assessment of the challenges facing abused immigrant women at women's shelters. One immigrant woman activist who had worked at women's shelters explained the struggles within the shelter movement:

We were all working in the shelters and we were all young and gung-ho, going to bring a progressive feminist politics (what today we would call an intersectional feminism) to [the shelter] collectives but many of the women were entrenched in their own ways and wanted you to just come in and work relief and shut up. They were not into power sharing. (Interviewee O-1 2017)

Agnew argues that most women's shelters often neg-

lected the social, economic and political context in which violence is perpetrated, focusing instead on gender relations (Agnew 1998, 164). As Amarjit Bhalia, who was involved in the Indo Canadian Association in BC explained, some women, who were defined as dependents by the immigration laws, risked deportation if they admitted to abuse. "These women who didn't speak the language were terrified, thought they were going to be sent home." Because of the difficulties accessing women's shelters, Bhalia met abused immigrant women in their homes (2016).

Racism was also an issue that was not recognized in many of the shelters. Kay Blair from Jamaica left her abusive husband and went to a shelter in Toronto. However, at the shelter she had a "devastating" experience, in which the shelter workers reinforced racist ideas about Black men being particularly violent, and "stereotypes about Black women and the acceptance of violence" (Lior, 2012, 58). This experience was not unique to Blair, as immigrant women often faced racism at women's shelters, as well as comments regarding stereotypes of immigrant men being particularly likely to be abusers and immigrant women acting as passive victims (Agnew 1996). What shelter staff did not appreciate is how state policies (especially immigration and multicultural policies) helped produce this particular racist understanding of the immigrant family. Immigration laws ensured the male was the economic head of the family (Thobani 2007, 131). Multicultural policies that encouraged the celebration and conservation of cultures encouraged the belief that immigrant families were culturally backward and impervious to change (Ahmed 2000, 95-113; Thobani 2007 (esp. chapter 4)). These state policies shaped immigrant families, increasing the power of male heads of households and diminishing the power of women. Yet, shelter staff assigned full blame to immigrant men rather than acknowledging the role of the state and saw immigrant women as helpless victims of this hypermasculine domination.

As well as dealing with racism, non-Christian women often found a lack of sensitivity to religious and cultural traditions, as well as language issues in many women's shelters (Marks, Little et al. (n.d.)). Shelter staff associated immigrant cultures with oppressive values

and were ignorant of their own internalized cultural norms. They were quick to dismiss any cultural traditions other than their own and they did not recognize the depth of the barriers created for immigrants who did not speak English.

The racism and cultural and language barriers experienced in women's shelters prompted a group of immigrant and racialized women's shelter activists to found Shirley Samaroo House in the early 1980s, the first shelter in Toronto specifically catering to abused immigrant and racialized women. The shelter was named Shirley Samaroo after a Black woman who left a shelter and was subsequently killed by her husband (Agnew 1998, 100). At Samaroo House, the staff addressed racism when it occurred at the shelter. As one of Agnew's interviewees stated, "At Shirley Samaroo House we could not [overlook] racism—as some other shelters [might] gloss over it.... We would make it an occasion for conflict mediation or conflict resolution" (Agnew 1998, 138). The shelter collective was clear that they needed to do public education that reached far into immigrant communities. "I think we were probably one of the very few shelters who saw public education and policy as part and parcel of the work that we did.... It wasn't only about counselling and women's right to leave and all of that" (Douglas 2017). That's why Samaroo House staff went out into the immigrant communities, gave public talks about violence against women, left brochures in community and religious centres, and spent time meeting with community and religious leaders.

Other immigrant women activists explained how they would connect violence issues with other pertinent issues facing immigrant women. Fatima Filippi, another immigrant woman activist, recalls how "we would bring all the needs together, offer a variety of services. We had a Wen-do self-defense course for women.... We did counselling. We did English classes. We did rights and advocacy. It was a hodgepodge of everything" (Filippi 2016).

As part of this integral approach to violence against women, immigrant women activists learned to include men in the solution. At the request of immigrant women clients, these activists created men's groups and

individual counselling sessions for men. "It challenged our own biases and how we worked with immigrant women.... Here we were victimizing the women again [by deciding what services they needed and wanted]. We had to think about empowerment and how we create opportunities for empowerment, and recognizing that women do have power but helping them to address it, and to find it and to use it [in their own way]," explains Filippi (2016). Similarly, across the country, Hortensia Houle recalls creating men's groups to discuss violence at the Cowichan Valley Intercultural and Immigrant Society (Houle 2016). And so, over time these immigrant women's organizations offered services to men. They also incorporated violence against women into their other services. "It's a paradigm shift.... If we did English classes that included men, we did violence education in that group, you know, we have International Women's Day and we invited men, we talked about violence against women, about women's empowerment" (Filippi 2016).

While immigrant women activists did support women's independence, they also respected women's choices to remain or return to abusive men. They understood that racist state policies created greater economic dependency for immigrant women and explained the repeated use of shelters as necessary for immigrant women's economic survival. Tomoko Okada noted that, as a member of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women BC:

We had a joint conference with the transition house group, who helped abused women...we felt, for abused immigrant women, when they go to transition house, the shelter, it's not the appropriate service for immigrant women, because at transition house, many workers are kind of pro-women's movement advocates. So, they really actually focus on immigrant women to become independent, and just leave the husband. But most of the immigrant women, they just want to improve the home situation, to change the husband's attitude. So, I think, this is an...issue about transition house, just force the woman to leave the husband. (Okada 2016)

In many cases, the husband provided the majority of the family income and immigration laws ensured that

they, as immigrant women, may have been denied the English language skills to find a well-paid job to provide economic independence for themselves and their children. Also, immigration policies meant many immigrant women were sponsored by their husbands to immigrate to Canada and thus feared deportation if they left their abusive husbands.

Immigrant women activists also learned to frame the issue of violence in a way that incorporated an understanding of a violent state. Two of the immigrant women activists interviewed said their violence agenda needed to shift to include police violence. Black immigrant mothers desperately wanted to talk about and to organize against the police violence that their brothers, partners, and sons experienced (Douglas 2017; Kohli 2016). “There was violence against women and violence against young Black males because of police brutality. We couldn’t look at one and not the other,” explained Rita Kohli, who was involved in immigrant women’s and shelter politics. She explained that they needed to extend the politics of violence to address migration, crossing borders, carding, and other violence and harassment that Black immigrant women and their families experienced daily (Kohli 2016).

Some of the immigrant women activists said other feminists who worked on violence against women issues, focusing exclusively on gender oppression, did not appreciate their more broadly political and family-centred approach to violence. “We took a lot of grief for that, let me tell you. We were perceived as anti-feminist.... We just stuck by what was right for our clients” (Filippi 2016). Immigrant women activists appreciated that violence against women issues needed to be situated within an understanding of racist immigration and multicultural policies that reinforced immigrant women’s economic dependence upon men. They also understood that they could not address domestic violence and ignore all the other types of violence that occurred in subtle and aggressive forms when immigrant women and their families interacted with employers, landlords, welfare administrators, and the police.

Reproductive Justice

Reproductive justice was another issue that differed in how it was shaped by immigrant women activists. During this era there were many pro-choice marches and rallies. Feminists would come out in huge numbers to chant “Not the church. Not the state. Women must control their fate.” But although many feminists argued for reproductive choice they could be unaware of the complexity of choice for immigrant women. For many immigrant women, state policies and cultural traditions situated discussions of a woman’s rights to control her body within the context of family and community. One immigrant woman activist recalls differences between immigrant women activists and other feminists over reproduction:

There were some interesting tensions around the Morgentaler Clinic. I think a lot of it was a mainstream approach versus understanding how cultural communities would react to those things...some of these were Catholic cultural communities who were opposed to abortion... So yeah, there were some major tensions. (Interviewee O-2 2017)

For some of the immigrant women activists, they learned to keep their reproduction politics separate from their work with their immigrant female clients. As one activist explained, “I would go to the marches for the Morgentaler Clinic and was there when there was a huge protest and all of that, but that’s what I did with my mainstream relationships. I would never bring that issue to my [immigrant] communities because there wouldn’t be support for it” (Ibid.). And Ramirez who advocated for domestic workers explained, “The realities of life are such that people support things that they need, even if they’re not ready to advocate publicly for them, much less to fight in a march or be in a delegation to meet a politician who’s able to change the law” (Ramirez 2017). Working with immigrant women, Debbie Douglas recalls supporting young women, some of whom were pregnant. “We were trying to empower the women.... And so, we wanted to just support them through the process and giving them the message that, your life doesn’t end here at 17 because you have a child. And so, we were really fighting the system.... We wanted them to have choice—real

choice. [Not the feminist] choice which meant you had to have an abortion” (Douglas 2017).

In 1977 the Immigrant Women’s Centre in Toronto declined an invitation to join the Coalition for Abortion Rights. The Centre stated:

Many of us, both immigrant and native born, are forced to have abortions because we cannot afford to have the children we want. Immigrant women have always experienced coercion either by being forced to have children (by denying us birth control and abortion) or by being prevented from having children (through genocidal birth control practices in the Third World as well as against Black women in the USA and Native Peoples in Canada). For us, the “right to choose” can never be only the right to abortion, but must also be the right to have all the children we want. (Immigrant Women’s Centre 1977)

They were painfully aware that immigrant and racialized women often were prevented from mothering by a racist state. At the same time, they certainly wanted the right to choose when and whether to have children. They demanded free abortion on demand, and free and safe birth control, noting: “We want services that recognize that immigrant women often refuse contraception because our experiences have taught us to be suspicious of the methods available, and not because we are ‘backward.’” In order to be able to choose freely (whether or not to have children) they also demanded living wages, fully paid maternity leave without loss of seniority, and funding for 24-hour childcare “controlled by us with paid staff both in our neighbourhoods and in every sweatshop where we are forced to work” (Ibid).

Reproductive rights also had implications for the transnational lives of immigrant women activists. Immigrant domestic workers who were denied the ability to bring their children into Canada focussed on family reunification issues rather than abortion rights. These women wanted the right to reproduce, the right to live with and care for their children and they were very aware of how Canadian immigration and labour policies limited their reproductive freedoms.

What immigrant women activists learned, time and again, is that there was not one clear position on reproductive issues. Individual immigrant women activists made personal alliances with mainstream feminists but they often could not bring this politics into the immigrant communities they served. And reproductive rights could look very different for women who valued motherhood and had often faced a state, either in Canada or abroad, that used its power both to deny women the right to have children, and the right to live with and care for their children.

Conclusion

As we have seen, issues related to family and motherhood could create major tensions between immigrant women’s activists and other feminists, and at times between immigrant women and immigrant women activists. Canadian state policies such as immigration, multiculturalism, labour, and welfare policies reinforced immigrant women’s economic dependence upon the family. Thus, immigrant women’s politics were shaped by their familial and maternal responsibilities. While many immigrant women were life-long paid workers, their working careers were often distinct from their male partners and from other feminists. Sometimes their working hours were at night so they could juggle family responsibilities during the day. Sometimes they took several years off paid work when their children were young, because this was important to them, in part so they could teach their children linguistic and cultural values that were central to their family. Sometimes their children were in their home country while they toiled in a Canadian family’s home, caring for someone else’s children. As a result, immigrant women’s politics were shaped by their everyday lives. While they were often concerned about some of the same issues as other feminists—paid work, violence against women and reproductive rights—we see how they shaped these issues around motherhood and family concerns. In regards to labour, they demanded access to job training, English language classes, health-care on the job, and employment equity for racialized women and men. When it came to violence against women they demanded shelters, as did other feminists, but they exposed the racism they experienced in feminist shelters and began to build shelters specifically for

immigrant and racialized women. They also demanded domestic violence programs that included men. And they expanded their politics of violence to protest against racialized police violence. In regard to reproductive justice, immigrant women had different perspectives, but all supported their right to have children and to care for their own children. Thus, they embodied a politics that acknowledged and challenged the racism they faced, respected religious and cultural values, and acknowledged the fact that the heterosexual family remained an important resource for the majority of immigrant women.

Immigrant women had many different experiences and perspectives in Canada. But they all wanted more rights and more prosperous lives free of racism and inequality. They also knew that their everyday lives were deeply enmeshed with the needs of their families. They were conscious of the many racist state policies that made them economically dependent upon their families. And similarly, they were aware of how their families provided support and cultural continuity in a racist society.

Notes

We would like to thank Franca Iacovetta and the anonymous reviewers for their very helpful comments on this article.

For the interviews we conducted, some women wished to be anonymous, so are listed as O-1, O-2, etc.

Endnotes

1. "Alternative Visions: The Politics of Motherhood and Family among Indigenous, Immigrant, Racialized and Low-Income Activist Women's Groups in Canada, 1960s-1980s," SSHRC Insight Grant, 2018-2023. Margaret Little, Lynne Marks, and Sarah Nickel.

2. We use the term "mainstream feminists" cautiously. We are aware that many of these women would not define themselves or their activism as mainstream. Yet, more recent scholarship has defined the work of liberal

and socialist feminists of this era who challenged but did engage with the state as "mainstream feminists."

3. There are many more we could name but these are the Canadian critical race scholars who have left the biggest imprint on our understanding of race and racism.

4. We are aware of the slipperiness of the term "second wave feminism" and the imprecision with which it attempts to demarcate women's activism during the 1960s to 1980s in the global North. At the same time, from this preliminary archival and interview data it is clear that there are distinctions that need to be made between the women's activism that has been previously detailed in feminist politics texts and the activism of women who were advocating for less privileged women (Sandoval 2013, 41-42).

5. There are some publications produced by members of the immigrant activist community about immigrant women and organizing in the 1970s and 1980s. See, for example, Lior (2012) and Das Gupta (1986).

6. See, for example, Dian Marino and Deborah Barndt, *Immigrants Speak Out* (1983), which includes booklets immigrant women created to practice their English. In these booklets, women wrote stories and songs about their everyday lives, such as their work in textile factories.

7. Earlier work that does deal with motherhood and family among immigrant women in relation to some of these issues includes Roxanna Ng and Judith Ramirez (1982) and Agnew (1996). There are also differences between immigrant and mainstream feminists related to questions of religion, which we have explored elsewhere (Marks and Little et al. n.d.).

8. For American work on questions of difference related to motherhood and family between mainstream and immigrant and/or racialized women see, for example, Roth (2004), Baxandall (2001), Nadasen (2002), Thompson (2002), and Garcia (1989). For one Canadian work that addresses some of these issues see Billson (1995). Amanda Ricci (2015) has explored both immigrant and mainstream women's groups in

Montreal, but motherhood was not a central focus of her work.

9. This argument has been found in a number of important works. Angela Y. Davis begins with the crucial role Black women played in their Black families during slavery and discusses this legacy. Patricia Hill Collins in the US and Valerie Amos and Parmar Pratibha in the UK explore how women of colour find refuge and take on leadership roles within their families. See: Davis (1981) Chapter 1; Hill Collins (2000) esp. 50-51; and Amos and Parmar (1984).

10. By 1982 a range of these organizations had affiliated with the organization 'Women Workers in the Home,' a 'group of women and organizations concerned about the status of women in the home.' It seemed to have been organized primarily by local WFH activists. *Kinesis* (1982, 12-15); *Kinesis* (1982, 14-15); *Kinesis* (1980, 3). Also see interview with Ellen Woodsworth (2016).

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Feminist Praxis Revisited: Critical Reflections on University-Community Engagement

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Book under review: Dean, Amber, Johnson, Jennifer L., and Susanne Luhmann, eds. 2019. *Feminist Praxis Revisited: Critical Reflections on University-Community Engagement*. Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier Press.

More than ever, Canadian universities are giving civic engagement (CE) (i.e. service learning, internships, community-based research, field placements, co-op, practicum, etc.) a central role in their strategic plans. Given that one of the pillars of Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) has been "refusing to accept the sterile divisions between academy and community" (National Women's Studies Association 2002), it would seem that WGS is poised to be a leader in this higher education orientation. *Feminist Praxis Revisited* questions the supposed alignment between our field and civic engagement as an emerging priority within higher education. While activism, community engagement, and praxis are fundamental to WGS, what is the effect of these initiatives on the field, students, and communities? Are we achieving our goals of exposing students to feminist activism "on the ground" by allowing them to apply in-class learning? Do students leave these classes with an enhanced civic identity and commitment to dive into the "real" work of feminism? *Feminist Praxis Revisited* asks these and even more pointed, and difficult, questions. For instance, despite our best intentions, is WGS contributing to neoliberalism, white centrism, and colonial impulses, as well as class or regional chauvinism, through CE? Does WGS reinforce a town/gown divide by assuming feminist praxis must happen "elsewhere"?

Feminist Praxis Revisited contains a series of chapters edited by Amber Dean, Jennifer L. Johnson, and Susanne Luhmann, each of whom has an established publication record in feminist pedagogy and civic engagement. The book features substantive chapters by Canadian scholars who teach feminist CE courses within their home disciplines, and the editors have selected authors that are located at Canadian universities ranging from small teaching-focused institutions to larger research-focused schools. The book is organized into two sections: *Feminist Praxis/For Credit/Under Neoliberalism* and *Critical Approaches to Praxis/In*

and Out of the Classroom. In each, authors describe their forays into feminist CE against the backdrop of federal and provincial cuts to education. Usefully, the book contains some chapters by activist-academics who speak to how economic austerity harms social services, non-profits, and academia alike.

A critique of neoliberalism underlies the arguments of the book. In their chapters, Joanne Muzak, Lise Gottell, and Judith Taylor remind that governments have cut funding for both higher education and social services; feminist organizations are particularly vulnerable because they did not recover when the Harper government slashed support for the Status of Women Canada. CE mandates fill this gap in two ways: first, governments can frame CE as job training thereby concretizing the dream of a university-to-workplace pipeline; second, organizations may look to unpaid students to do the work of formerly paid staff. The irony is that once a student graduates, the job they supposedly “trained” for at an organization is not there. Muzak effectively argues that WGS professors are mistaken when they assume that students will learn or observe feminist activism through a community project; she reminds that the Harper government (as well as subsequent provincial governments) penalized organizations for their social justice motivation. In order to survive, many organizations drifted towards apolitical service provision. Taylor illustrates why this creates the ground for a failed experience: students enter these sites in a heightened critique mode that they turn on community workers for not doing feminism “right.” Taylor argues that students may not have the experience or humility to appreciate the messiness of feminist work. Catherine Orr’s conclusion to the book pulls these lines of argument together by advocating uneasiness—the not-quite-right feeling—that is productive for learning as well as dismantling privilege.

In addition to critiquing neoliberalism, *Feminist Praxis Revisited* re-thinks the assumption that feminist CE best happens outside university walls. This intervention unpacks where learning “should” to occur. Other CE scholars dismantle the deficit model that positions communities—often racialized, Indigenous, and/or poor—as in need of saving or fixing (Butin 2008;

Mitchell 2008). In this collection, chapters by Amber Dean, Sarita Srivastava, Ilya Parkins, Judith Taylor, and Jennifer L. Johnson offer a similar critique of academic saviorism. I was particularly struck by Dean and Rachel Alpha Johnston Hurst’s assertion that an us/them divide not only leaves the university unchecked as a site of harm but assumes that students do not have a role to play in addressing problems at the university itself. What if the best site for feminist praxis is not “out there” but right here? This question shifts what CE is supposed to be, and Jennifer L. Johnson’s rumination on the territorialization of feminist praxis/CE at the end of the book is a solid dénouement for this inquiry.

One of my frustrations with CE literature is how often it centralizes a privileged academic experience: the white middle class student who lives away from family on or near campus. As someone who teaches at a commuter school with a student population that is mostly racialized, working poor, from local urban neighbourhoods, and first generation to college, I appreciate that several chapters in *Feminist Praxis Revisited* acknowledge that students may be living in their own communities while attending university. I do wish, however, that at least one chapter focused on feminist praxis in this context because it is sorely lacking in CE research. Despite this absence, Srivastava and Johnson promote feminist praxis where students live. These authors remind that students have the potential to intervene, build, or shape communities where they already are, which may be more empowering and transformative for students (and communities) than sending students into an environment where they have no ties. In addition to engagement-in-place feminist praxis, deep learning can happen through self-reflexivity about social location and ancestral history. As explained in their respective chapters, Dean, Parkins, and Margot Francis ask students to examine how they are implicated in white settler colonialism. Feminist professors can activate relational responsibility by requiring settler-students to reckon with their lack of innocence in the colonial project of nation-building. This kind of praxis can instill life-long reflexivity that is lacking in the “one and done” CE model that assumes student transformation will occur through one CE class.

Notably missing from *Feminist Praxis Revisited* is engagement with Tania D. Mitchell's work on critical service-learning, a sub-field of CE that advocates redistributing power, social change, and developing authentic relationships through CE courses (Mitchell 2008, 53). Conversation with her work would heighten the book's usefulness for CE scholars. *Feminist Praxis Revisited* is best read alongside scholarly appraisals of the activist intention of WGS (Orr 2012). The chapters written by activist-academics who have one foot in each world are especially valuable to understand the misalignment between WGS and shifting terrain of grassroots work. Readers looking for a "how to" manual are better served by reading Karen Dugger's *Handbook on Service Learning in Women's Studies and the Disciplines* (2008). However, the descriptions in *Feminist Praxis Revisited* of what has been tried, what has worked, and what has not not worked in the classroom are helpful to those teaching feminist CE courses. In addition to CE scholars and WGS professors or feminist teachers, those in critical university studies will appreciate the book's critique of how neoliberalism shifts higher education.

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Being After Being Has Washed Away

by Daze Jefferies

will this ocean and its wave theory ever forgive us?

like any poet i have no anchored answers, only longings / and dreams of blue-green prisms that spin upon the surface as a precious address / floating for an era in our palimpsestic water-world / like sisyfish sharing a future-present-past / to begin and end with our encounter / i open my grey eyes and feel the hit of time form a language with my skin / when being after being has washed away / we are troubled by the ghosts of all the ruptured hope that ripples through our systemic nowhere / only in ruins and always an absence – you ask me to determine how i might keep resisting if i'm never all the way here, an overflowing body / wailing for the closeness of another holy soul / thank you, master mariner, for helping me emerge from the drone drone drone of sexual labour / blowing up my phone and taking every part of me / all my sisters left to make it on their own now / shucking the flesh, we refuse response-ability / forgetting unknown holders of outmigration's touch / who rise from the seaways of the southwest shore / feeding on dulse and lovelorn liquids / a hundred queer lovers with no mother before them / staying in the wake of your hyphenated kin-ship / disposable-desirable, too much to hold dear

Formative Texts and Further Reading

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Abstract: Thinking with an assemblage of Black Atlantic and trans feminist creative and theoretical work, this poem explores fishy felt knowledges of sex work, outmigration, colonial erasure, and archival absence in the lives of trans women from Ktaqamkuk/Newfoundland.