

# C2C JOURNAL

IDEAS THAT LEAD

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## The New Campus Rebels

University of Toronto professor Jordan Peterson

# The new campus rebels



Between the egg on my face and the crow feathers stuck in my teeth, it's been an unpleasant few weeks since the election of Donald Trump as the next president of the United States. I spent months loudly proclaiming his unelectability and unfitness for office and made numerous bets against him, including some offering recklessly generous odds. As a result I'm a few bucks poorer and my reputation and self-confidence as a political pundit are in ruins. My Trumpkin friends have been gloating mercilessly and hectoring me as one of the "media elites" who didn't see the revolution coming because we refused to look beyond the tips of our pointy little heads.

Well, mega mea culpa friends. Now let's see if we can find a silver lining in this big yellow-maned cloud of surprise and uncertainty.

There were a few things that initially attracted even squishy "cuckservatives" like me to the Trump candidacy. One of them was his vow to liberate the economy from suffocating taxes and regulation, particularly those related to climate change, which he deliciously called a "hoax" invented by China. He even promised to end the crucifixion of coal power, which was music to the ears of those of us who live in the newly socialist paradises of Canada and Alberta, where the demonization of carbon-based energy and the imposition of layer upon layer of taxes and regulations are killing tens of thousands of jobs and billions in investment and charting a course to economic ruin.

At least as enervating was Trump's contempt for political correctness. Sure the shots at Mexican judges and

fat beauty queens and handicapped reporters were cringeworthy, but it was awfully refreshing to hear a politician speak plainly about the link between Islamism and terrorism, and who could resist a giggle when he mocked Elizabeth Warren's claim to Cherokee heritage by calling her Pocahontas? And if Black Lives Matter called him a racist because he spoke some hard truths about crime in America, their outrageous inciting of violence against white cops gave ample reason to reply that it takes one to know one.

So, ignoring everything despicable about Trump – the lies, vulgarity, ignorance – and everything worrisome – protectionism, Putin admiration, the fudging between his business and the nation's business – many rational people calculated that there might be more upside than downside in a Trump presidency because they sensed that above all else he could be an instrument for reclaiming long-lost economic and individual freedoms.

Given the economic destruction that is occurring in the name of saving the planet, and the repression of free speech that's occurring in the name of protecting every two-bit minority with a grievance and entitlement narrative, that's not an unreasonable calculation.

Time will tell if Trump takes these threats seriously and is willing and able to do anything about them, but in the meantime others are doing what they can, and they are the focus of the Winter 2016 edition of *C2C Journal*.

It should be a source of everlasting shame to the people who run our universities that their institutions are the epicenter of authoritarianism in contemporary society. Bullied by radical academics and students drunk on hate-

filled mythologies about irredeemable racism and sexism allegedly embedded in the classical liberalism of the western cultural and philosophical tradition, the administrators capitulate to the radicals' demand for persecution of anyone who dares question their orthodoxies. Exhibit one is University of Toronto psychology professor Jordan Peterson, whose courageous pushback against gender identity creationists targeting anyone who refuses to speak their new, invented language has earned him ominous threats of dismissal from the U of T's cowardly and complicit administrators. This edition of *C2C* opens with a panoramic story by Jason VandenBeukel that puts Peterson in the centre of a renewed national and international culture war. It is accompanied by the transcript of an interview with Peterson by Jason Tucker that provides great insight into his motivations for taking on the gender fascists.

We are pleased to report that Peterson is not alone in this fight, as you will learn in stories by John Carpay about the 2016 Campus Freedom Index, Mark Mercer about the Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship, Aaron Gunn about Generation Screwed on campus, Vanessa Walsh about the student rebellion against Public Interest Research Groups, and much more.

If you're a student who can't express your ideas without fear of being attacked by PC bullies, a professor who can't teach the whole story without risking your career, or a politician terrified of becoming a negative headline, we hope you will find comfort and strength in this edition of *C2C Journal*.

*Paul Bunner is the editor of C2C Journal.*

## C2C Journal's editorial advisory board:

Ian Brodie, Peter McCaffrey, Andrea Mrozek and Kathleen Welsch

## Canadian Journal of Ideas Inc.

Website: [www.c2cjournal.ca](http://www.c2cjournal.ca)

Email: [editor@c2cjournal.ca](mailto:editor@c2cjournal.ca)

## Media Inquiries

Paul Bunner Email: [editor@c2cjournal.ca](mailto:editor@c2cjournal.ca)

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## Editor: Paul Bunner

Associate Editor: Kathleen Welsch

Designer: Dean Smith



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The *Economist* magazine recently called Canada "the last bastion of liberalism. While the rest of the world was embracing reactionary populism, we were a progressive light in the growing darkness. What the *Economist* missed, though, was a YouTube video by a University of Toronto professor declaiming new laws banning old words in the name of transgender rights. Millions of hits later, Jordan Peterson looks like the vanguard of a counterattack on political correctness and the spark that reignited the culture wars in Canada. Jason VandenBeukel pokes the fire for *C2C*.



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from mandatory student fees. But now, tired of seeing their money used for politically correct causes, some Canadian students are organizing successful "NOPIRG" campaigns to end those fees. Queen's University anti-PIRG activist Vanessa Walsh reports from the front lines.



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protections. But he's had it with the militants in the modern transgender rights movement. In their rejection of biological reality and nonsensical demands for social and legal accommodations, writes Litwin, they are corrupting medicine, undermining free speech, and threatening the legitimacy of the mainstream gay rights movement.



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people who are being saddled with a massive intergenerational debt by their elders. The message is going over really well with most students, writes campaign executive director Aaron Gunn, despite concerted resistance from some students' unions, school administrators, and the usual suspects in campus social justice crowd.



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The tribunes of the social justice movement want two things above all else; protection from hurt feelings and the overthrow of Western Civilization. Those objectives are not as incongruous as they seem. A core value of Western Civilization is, or was,

stoicism – the wellspring of virtues like courage, sacrifice, and loyalty. Without stoicism, we are a society of grievances competing for state protections and entitlements. This way lies ruin, writes Daniel Bezalel Richardsen, in an essay informed by the *Meditations* of second century stoic philosopher and Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius.



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One of Donald Trump's blustery campaign promises was "if I'm president, you're going to see Merry Christmas in department stores again, believe me." A slap at Christophobes, it was typical of his politically

incorrect comments on everything from feminism to climate change, terrorism to refugees. With President Trump setting the tone, writes Nigel Hannaford, the public square will become a much noisier, ruder and freer place.

# ‘We’re teaching university students lies’



*University of Toronto psychology professor Jordan Peterson was interviewed at his home on November 13 by Jason Tucker and Jason VandenBeukel on behalf of C2C Journal. What follows is a transcript of their conversation, edited for length and clarity, in which Peterson explains why he launched a one-man campaign this fall, via YouTube and other media and in public debates, against legislating protection for gender identity and expression into federal and provincial human rights codes and hate crime laws. Through his videos and numerous news stories, Peterson’s ideas have reached millions of people and precipitated a vigorous public debate about gender identity and free speech.*

*(Image: Marta Iwanek)*

**by Jason Tucker and Jason VandenBeukel**

## **Can you give us a brief background of your academic career and your interests?**

My primary interest is the psychology of ideology as a sub-category of religious belief. In a sophisticated religious system, there is a polarity – positive and negative. Ideologies simplify that polarity and, in doing so, demonize and oversimplify. I got interested in ideology because I got interested in what happened in Nazi Germany, and the Soviet Union, particularly in what led people to commit atrocities. People don’t understand the Holocaust, and they

don’t understand what happened in Russia. Everyone thinks “Not me,” and that’s not right. It was ordinary people in most regards who committed the atrocities that characterized Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.

Part of the reason why I got embroiled in this particular controversy is because of what I know about how things went wrong in the Soviet Union. Many of the doctrines that underlie the legislation that I’ve been objecting to share structural similarities with those ideas. What I object to is the insistence that people use made up words that are the construction of authoritarians. I’m not going to use their language, because I know where that leads.



***There have been lots of cases where free speech has come under attack, why did you choose this particular issue?***

I think for me this became an issue because there is not a chance I'll use radical, authoritarian language. I was profoundly influenced by [Alexsandr] Solzhenitsyn's book *The Gulag Archipelago*. People say that real Marxism has never been tried – not in the Soviet Union, China, Cambodia, or in Korea. I find that argument specious, appalling, ignorant, and maybe also malevolent. Solzhenitsyn demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt that the horrors [of the Soviet system] were a logical consequence of the doctrines that were embedded within Marxist thinking. Nietzsche wrote about it extensively in the 1880s, laying out the propositions that are encapsulated in Marxist doctrine and warning that millions of people would die in the 20th century because of it.

***You've painted a pretty bleak picture for the future.***

There are bleak things going on. To start with, Bill C-16 writes social constructionism into the fabric of the law. Social constructionism is the doctrine that all human roles are socially constructed. They're detached from biology, and the underlying objective world. So Bill C-16 contains an assault on biology and an implicit assault on the idea of objective reality. It's also blatant in the Ontario Human

Rights Commission policies that pertain to the OHR Act. This act says that identity is nothing but subjective. So a person can be male one day and female the next, or male one hour and female the next.

***Do you believe that you or others could be imprisoned for refusing to comply with these laws?***

There's no doubt about that. The [human rights] tribunals have the right to hold people in contempt, and the final word in law is incarceration. When I made the video on September 27th I said, 'probably making this video itself is illegal'. Not only that, the university is as responsible as I am because I'm making it. As an employer, you're on the hook for everything your employees say, regardless of whether or not there was a complaint.

The other thing that's built into this law and the surrounding policies – and this is increasingly the case in sexual harassment tribunals on university campuses – they've changed two legal principles. It's not 'innocent until proven guilty', it's 'preponderance of evidence', and it's not intent, it's outcome. Those transformations are unimaginably far reaching.

***Are you suggesting they've altered the rule of law as we traditionally understand it?***

They have. They say 'what you said hurt my feelings' and your intent is irrelevant. The idea that they would dare to undermine the doctrine of intent is beyond belief.

***Are you surprised that almost half of the Conservative Party of Canada caucus voted in favour of C-16?***

Not only that, isn't there a leadership convention right now? Have any of the candidates commented on any of this? I think the fact that no one's commented on it is an indication of how this demand for orthodoxy has gone so far that even Conservatives are afraid to be conservative.

***Maybe some of them voted for it because they don't understand the philosophical issues and just didn't want to offend anybody.***

That's why I'm trying to take these arguments apart. First of all, pronouns are not marks of respect. They're the most casual terms possible. If I refer to someone as 'he' or as 'she', it's just categorization of the most simple and obvious kind. There's not anything about it that's individual. But [advocates for multiple gender



(Image: Marta Iwanek)

identities and laws to protect them] claim that identity is a social construct, and they've built it into the law. They say your identity is nothing more than your subjective feeling of what you are. That's a staggeringly impoverished idea of what constitutes identity. Your identity isn't just how you feel about yourself. It's also how you think about yourself, what you know about yourself, your educated judgement about yourself. It's negotiated with other people if you're even vaguely civilized because otherwise no one can stand you.

Your identity is also a vehicle that you use to manoeuvre through life. Your real identity – lawyer, doctor, mother, father – none of that's subjectively defined. To say that it is, is completely absurd, and philosophically primitive, and psychologically wrong. Yet it's built into the law, and the law makes discussions of biology and gender illegal. I think that we got a taste of that in the TVO Agenda interview I had where [U of T transgender studies professor] Nicholas Mack said 'the scientific consensus in the last four decades is that there's no biological difference between men and women.' That's an absurd proposition. There are sex differences at every level of analysis. There's literature looking at personality differences of men and women in many societies, [often based on] the hypothesis that if you equalize the environment between men and women, you eradicate the differences between them. In other words, if you treat boys and girls the same, the differences between them will disappear. That's not what happens. In reality, disparities get bigger. Those are studies of tens of thousands of people. The social constructionist theory was tested. It failed. Gender identity is very much biologically determined.

***Do you see any parallels between this issue and some of the other causes based on identity politics, like Black Lives Matter or IdleNoMore?***

It's all part and parcel of a war going on at the heart of our culture. Lots of people have talked about political correctness, and the fact that it's pernicious. What I did was different because there was something I said I wouldn't do. That took the general and made it specific – I drew a line. Now the price you pay for drawing a line with political

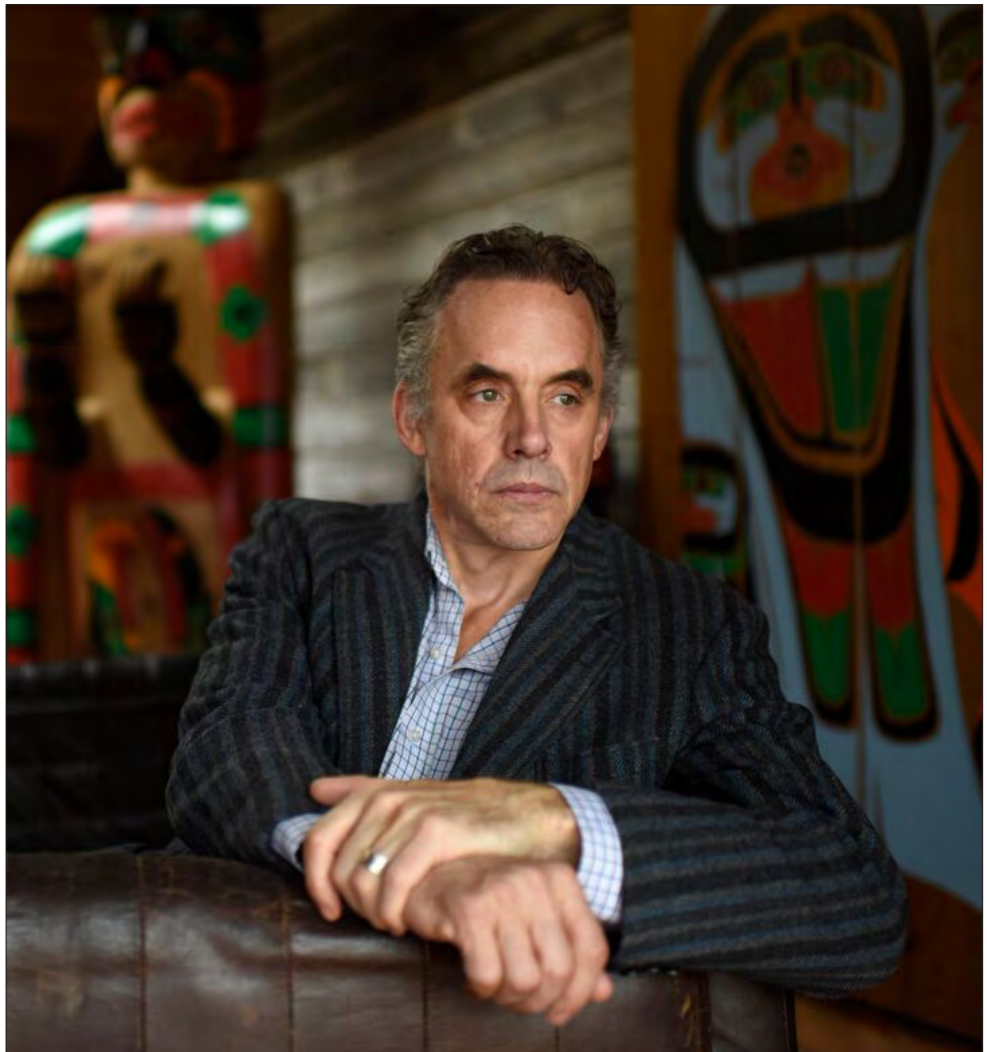
correctness is to be tarred and feathered for bigotry. The social justice people are always on the side of compassion and 'victim's rights', so objecting to anything they do makes you a perpetrator.

***Isn't that the logical outcome of the tactical application of Saul Alinsky?***

That's exactly right. If you replace compassion with resentment, then you understand the authoritarian left. They don't have compassion – there's no compassion there at all. There's resentment fundamentally.

***In a National Post op-ed you wrote that 'words like zhe/zher are the vanguards of a radical left wing ideology that's frighteningly similar to Marxism'. Can you elaborate?***

Assigned identity is oppression. Assigned identity is the identity that's assigned to you by the power structure – the patriarchy. The patriarchy assigns you a status to oppress you, so the language that frees you from that status is revolutionary language. As an example of revolutionary



*(Image: Maria Iwanek)*



language, we're going to blow out gender identity, because the concept of woman is oppressive. The anti-patriarchy philosophy is predicated on the idea that all social structures are oppressive, and not much more than that. Then to assault the structure is to question its categorical schemes at every possible level of analysis. And the most fundamental one that the anti-patriarchy radicals have come up with is gender.

***Do you believe that society should draw the line at all when it comes to limitations on hate speech?***

Hate speech laws are wrong. Hate speech laws repress, and I mean that in the psycho-analytical sense. That's not a good idea, because things get ugly when you drive them underground. They don't disappear, they fester, and they're not subject to correction. This is why free speech is so important. You can struggle to formulate some argument, but when you throw it out into the public, there's a collective attempt to modify and improve it. So let's say someone's a Holocaust denier. We want those people out there in the public so we can tell them why they're historically ignorant, and why their views are unfounded and dangerous. If you drive them underground, they don't stop talking, they just don't talk to anyone who disagrees with them. That's a bad idea, and that's what's happening in the United States right now. Half of the country doesn't talk to the other half. Do you know what you call people you don't talk to? Enemies.

If you stop talking to people, you either submit to them, or you go to war with them. Those aren't good options. If you put restrictions on speech, then you can't actually talk about the difficult things that need to be talked about. The conversations that are the most curative are simultaneously the ones that are most difficult and most dangerous. There's also this idea that you shouldn't say things that hurt people's feelings. That's childish beyond comprehension. Nietzsche said, 'you can judge a man's spirit by the amount of truth he can tolerate.' I tell my students that you can tell when you're being educated because you're horrified. If it's pleasant and safe, you're not learning anything. People learn things the hard way.

***What do you hope to achieve coming out of this?***

I hope that I can continue to educate people, if not at the university then on YouTube. For the first time, the spoken word has the same reach and longevity as the written word.



(Image: Marta Iwanek)

Not only that, the space between utterance and publication is zero. Looking at my growth in terms of subscribers, I could soon have more subscribers to my YouTube channel than the U of T has students. I don't know what the significance of that is. It might be that the university is already dying. I think that huge swaths of the university are irrevocably corrupted: sociology, anthropology, big chunks of history, classics, literature, social work, political science in many places. That doesn't cover women's studies, or ethnic studies. They probably started lost, and it's gotten far worse. I believe now, with the exception of the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, that universities do more harm than good. I think they produce indentured servants in the United States because tuition fees have

gone up so much and you can't declare bankruptcy on your student loans. We're teaching university students lies, and pandering to them, and I see that as counterproductive.

***How do you define social justice warriors?***

They weaponize compassion.

***Why do you view social justice culture as a threat to democracy?***

There's nothing about the PC authoritarian types that has any gratitude for any institutions. Their term – patriarchy – is all-encompassing. It means that everything our society is, is corrupt, and they mean everything. Go online, go look at ten women's studies websites. They say 'western civilization is a corrupt patriarchy right down to the goddamned core. We have to overthrow it.'

***Is there anything else you'd like to add?***

You asked what people can do. They can refuse to be pushed in this direction any further. Anything that's predicated upon group identity, we need to get rid of. Albertans were very skeptical of Pierre Trudeau and all his changes, especially with the introduction of the Charter and they were right about that too. It was an import of French Civil Law over top of English Common Law, and it was a mistake. In English Common Law, you have all the rights except those that are expressly forbidden. In the French system, you enumerate people's rights – that makes it look like rights are granted to you by the government. Then we started talking more about identity in Canada, and that was a deviation from the tradition of enlightenment individualism.

# The man who reignited Canada's culture war



by Jason VandenBeukel

Jordan Peterson knows what he believes, and he's not afraid to tell you. What does he think about gender-neutral pronouns, such as "ze" or "zhe", preferred by many transgender people? Those are the "vanguard of a post-modern, radical leftist ideology." How about Bill C-16, the federal legislation that proposes to amend "the Canadian Human Rights Act to add gender identity and gender expression to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination"? It's an "assault on biology and an implicit assault on the idea of the objective world." And what about the Ontario Human Rights Commission? According to Peterson, it's the "most dangerous organization in Canada."

For some, Jordan Peterson is a brave defender of the traditional values and moral certitude of Western civilization, standing up to those who would sacrifice them on the altar of political correctness and hurt feelings. For others, he is a villain, whose opposition to further government protection of transgender people threatens one of society's most marginalized groups. Whatever the case, Peterson, the University of Toronto psychology professor who shot to fame this fall after giving public notice via YouTube of his refusal to use gender neutral pronouns for transgender students, is now at the heart of a revived Canadian culture war.

The great debates over abortion, divorce, gay rights, aboriginal entitlement and the environment that erupted in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century have waxed and waned ever since, but rarely have they burned with the intensity evident today. And Jordan Peterson is doing a singularly impressive job of stoking the fire. His vocal resistance to the progression of transgender recognition and rights in Canadian society is, according to him, rooted in a firm belief in the importance

of freedom of speech to democracy. He passionately opposes the idea that gender is a social construct unrelated to biological sex, arguing that the connection between the two is clear and universal, and that the widespread acceptance of transgender and gender fluid people is simply ignorant kowtowing to political correctness and bogus relativism. The endorsement of gender neutral pronouns by Canadian governments and the idea that refusing to use those pronouns constitutes discrimination against transgender people that is punishable under the law is something that Peterson vehemently rejects as a left-wing attack on free speech. When Bill C-16 was introduced in Parliament, therefore, he decided to publicize his opposition to the proposed legislation as widely as possible.

It's safe to say he succeeded. In the two months since posting the first of a series of controversial videos attacking Bill C-16 and the Ontario Human Rights Code, Peterson has given dozens of interviews, been the subject of hundreds of news stories, and collected millions of views on his YouTube channel. In the process, he sparked a furious debate on the University of Toronto campus and across the country about the role of government in restricting and compelling speech.

Peterson's criticism of Bill C-16 and the Ontario Human Rights Code have not gone unchallenged. In a recent debate at the university, U of T law professor Brenda Cossman argued that Bill C-16 would not come close to criminalizing Peterson's refusal to use gender neutral pronouns, and that the bill was simply designed to ensure that violence and overt acts of hatred directed at transgender people based on their gender identity and expression are not permitted in Canada. And while Cossman conceded that Peterson, as a professor at a public university, would likely be found guilty of violating human rights codes for refusing to use students'





(Image: Strategic Communications/University of Toronto)

preferred pronouns, she argued that he could avoid this by simply addressing transgender students by name rather than using pronouns. Needless to say, Peterson, who has received a series of letters from the university administration advising him to end his opposition to Bill C-16 and who has been the focus of a number of protests against and for him on the university campus, disagrees.

Regardless of whether Peterson's refusal to use gender neutral pronouns will actually land him in legal trouble, it seems he has tapped into something much bigger. At first glance, his fight with his employer and his animus towards Bill C-16 and the Ontario Human Rights Code seems just another skirmish in a decades' long war over free speech on campus. He's unusual, though not unique, as a tenured academic challenging progressive orthodoxy, although he's more passionate and persistent than most. But that doesn't explain the extraordinary national and even international interest in his arguments and his manifestly unprofessional YouTube videos – which he himself describes as having “no production quality”.

His fight against Bill C-16 and his refusal to use gender neutral pronouns matches the mood of millions of people unhappy with much of the socio-economic agenda currently favoured by the so-called political and intellectual “elites” in Western society. 2016 has been a banner year for this discontent. The United Kingdom's vote to leave the European Union this spring, the rise of anti-establishment political parties in virtually every European country, and the election of Donald Trump as the next President of the United States: all these seemingly represent a backlash against the march of progressivism, feminism, environmentalism, and globalism, which for so long seemed inevitable and unstoppable. In the midst of the British Brexit debate this spring, Michael Gove,

one of the leaders of the campaign to leave the European Union, famously said that “people in this country have had enough of experts.” This is happening around the world: a rejection of experts and their opinions on topics as diverse as trade, immigration, and climate change. The ivory towers are out; the common sense of the people is in.

Until Peterson, Canada has seemed largely immune to these reactionary populist forces. They briefly erupted in Toronto during the chaotic reign of former mayor Rob Ford, but seemed discredited by his drug-addled fall from grace. Over the last year, even as Donald Trump was gaining steam in the Republican primaries, Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was consolidating power in an avowedly progressive government that explicitly put feminism, environmentalism, and aboriginal rights at the top of its agenda. As Britain prepares to leave the EU and as President-elect Trump gives notice of his intention to remove the United States from international trade agreements and withdraw from the Paris climate accord, the government of Canada is welcoming refugees, liberalizing international trade, and introducing a national carbon tax.

So far, Canada's Conservative opposition party has shown little interest in Peterson, or anything related to the new culture war. Interim leader Rona Ambrose called Trump's ideas “off the spectrum” a year ago and said they would not be welcome in her party. She and over half of her caucus voted in favour of Bill C-16. They remain ardent cheerleaders for globalized trade, and at least outwardly believers in anthropogenic climate change. Small wonder then that this fall the *Economist* magazine called Canada a “beacon of liberalism” in a world turning quickly towards reactionary populism.

It may be, however, that Canadian conservatives are



*Professor Jordan Peterson refuses to use gender neutral pronouns during a heated discussion with some students in the downtown campus, Toronto. (Image: Eduardo Lima / Metro News)*

controversy over a proposed new transgender teaching unit for public schools that mandates replacing the word parent with “caretaker” and boys and girls with “comrades”, so far Kenney has scrupulously avoided being baited into responding to allegations of misogyny and homophobia.

That sets him distinctly apart from Jordan Peterson, who welcomes and encourages any and all debate over his refusal to speak the language of gender neutrality. Peterson says he is merely expressing a widespread resistance to political correctness that people have up till now been afraid to voice. As he puts it, “The political correctness police are already in your heads,” and he’s taken it upon himself to get them out by loudly defending “freedom of speech and classical enlightenment values.”

Whether or not Bill C-16, the primary target of Peterson’s hostility, proves as dire a threat to democratic freedom of speech as he says it matters less to his supporters than the fact that he is willing to voice opposition to it in the first place. It’s not about what Bill C-16 says;

it’s about what it represents.

simply slow to recover their confidence following their emphatic defeat in the 2015 federal and Alberta elections. Events like the success of Trump, the Brexit vote, the lurch to the political right in France and elsewhere in Europe, and the lightning rod that is Jordan Peterson here in Canada, will eventually likely embolden some imitation among conservative politicians.

Indeed, there are already signs of it in the federal Conservative leadership race. Two of the nine MPs seeking to lead the party (Andrew Scheer and Brad Trost) voted against Bill C-16. Kellie Leitch, the Tory MP and leadership candidate best known for proposing that the federal government create a tip line to report barbaric cultural practices (and then tearfully apologizing for that proposal after the Tories lost the election), has become a contender by arguing that immigrants need to be screened to ensure they possess “Canadian values”.

Potential evidence of a rebellion against progressive dogma has also surfaced in provincial politics. Following years of debate over the Ontario Liberal government’s contentious sex-ed program, among other controversial initiatives related to gender and sexuality, this fall provincial Tories in the Niagara region selected 19-year-old home-schooled social conservative Sam Oosterhoff over their party’s president to represent them in a by-election – which he went on to win with over 50 percent of the vote.

In Alberta, former federal Conservative MP Jason Kenney, a devout Catholic with strong ties to the pro-life movement, is being vilified by progressives in his campaign for the leadership of the provincial PC party. Yet he is still winning most of the delegate selection votes leading up to a convention in Calgary next March. Against a backdrop of

it’s about what it represents.

In the recent debate at U of T, University of British Columbia education professor Mary Bryson accused Peterson of using the populist conservative rhetoric of the American Breitbart News Network, rather than the reasoned language and logic of an academic. Peterson, who forcefully denied the charge, insists he is a reasonable man and a careful researcher who cares deeply for people and fears that his country and his culture are at risk of succumbing to a malevolent authoritarian ideology disguised as minority rights. But his raised voice and palpable anger at what he identifies as political correctness is a hallmark of his YouTube videos, his debate performances, and his exclusive interview with *C2C Journal*. Media and communications professionals would describe his unpolished and often unconstrained delivery as too hot for the video medium he uses, but his authentic anger and frustration with a society moving ever more swiftly away from its traditions and roots is what makes his voice resonate.

As the drama at the University of Toronto continues to unfold in the coming weeks and months, the balance of human rights and free speech in Canada will be tested. Peterson – who fears losing both his license to practice clinical psychology and his clearance to teach classes at the university – may become a martyr for his cause. If that happens, the backlash against transgender rights and the related tenets of progressivism will only be further inflamed. “Canada’s back,” proclaims the most progressive prime minister the country has ever had. So too, apparently, are the culture wars.

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*Jason VandenBeukel is a PhD student in the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto.*



by Vanessa Walsh

It can be lonely being a campus conservative. There are clubs, for sure, for conservatives, libertarians and others who share traditionalist, fiscally responsible and pro-development views. But they tend to be small, if they exist at all, and badly outnumbered by liberal, NDP and other progressive groups. If right-leaning students were inclined to identity politics, they could declare themselves an oppressed minority, because the left routinely demeans its ideological opponents as bigoted, unintelligent, and exclusionary.

The vast majority of university and college students have nothing to do with either camp. They're mostly focused on schoolwork, part-time jobs, and partying as much as possible without blowing assignments or their meagre budgets.

All they know about campus politics is that they have to pay dues totalling several hundred dollars a year to support the students' union and other campus organisations. Many don't realize that some of their money winds up funding leftist political causes.

One of the biggest left-wing campus organisations in Canada, although it's not very-well known by most students whose dues fund it, is the "Public Interest Research Group". PIRGs are present on many major university campuses across the country, including Queen's, Waterloo, Toronto, Dalhousie, McGill, and Simon Fraser.

An import from the United States, PIRGs have been advocating for progressive causes on and off campus since they were founded by the famous American activist Ralph Nader and his fellow academic and lawyer Donald Ross in the early 1970s. Nader and Ross developed the concept in their co-authored book: *Action for Change: A Student's Manual for Public Interest Organizing*. It laid out a plan for collecting mandatory student fees to fund social justice activism, including consumer protection, anti-poverty and environmental litigation that was central to Nader's career (along with several unsuccessful campaigns for the U.S. presidency). The first American PIRGs were established in New York, Minnesota, Oregon, and Massachusetts; they first arrived in Canada in 1972 at Waterloo University.

Today there are 23 PIRGs operating in six provinces, many of which collaborate with larger off-campus organizations like the British Columbia Public Interest Advocacy Centre



# Kicking against the PIRGs

and Public Interest Alberta.

PIRG projects that have received funding from student fees, referred to as "Action Groups" or "Active Working Groups," include movements such as Palestine Solidarity Network, Greenpeace, In Arms Queer Theatre, Mental Health and Intersectionality Research, Fossil Free UWaterloo, the Boycott Divestment and Sanction Movement against Israel, Radical Skills Workshops, and Gender and Sexual Identity in Education.

The language used to describe PIRG projects often references goals such as "educational research", "safe space advocacy", "mental health awareness", "student action groups", "feminism", and "non-discrimination based on class, race, sexuality, gender, etc." The mandate of the Ontario PIRG chapter at Queen's University in Kingston, for example, is to "strive to work towards a more socially and environmentally just world." One of its current

initiatives is a research project it hopes will "inspire and ignite a conversation, and action, about how we account for and address racism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia and all form of marginalization within our discussions and actions around mental health."

Unlike other PIRGs, Queen's students can opt out of paying the fees that support the Kingston PIRG. Some decided that simply opting out wasn't good enough when they learned six years ago that OPIRG-Kingston had used the \$4.00 student fee collected from every undergraduate and graduate student who didn't opt-out to rent a bus to drive student protestors to the violent Black Bloc protests during the 2010 G-20 Summit in Toronto. In advance of the protests, the PIRG offered fully funded "armour making workshops" to teach student demonstrators how to protect themselves during violent confrontations with police.

Another common PIRG campaign calls for their host universities to pull their endowment and pension fund investments out of oil and gas companies. WPIRG at the University of Waterloo, where students enrolled in environmental studies pay a mandatory \$30 fee to the Waterloo Environment Students Endowment Fund, supported an aggressive "Fossil Free UWaterloo" campaign last February in hope of forcing the university



to completely divest its holdings related to fossil fuels.

Besides paying for various PIRG projects and causes, student fees fund PIRG staff salaries. In 2014, according to the *Queen's Journal* student newspaper, OPIRG Kingston Coordinator Kavita Bissoondial was paid a \$30,000 annual salary. Some students complained that student fees ought not to be paying the wages of a non-student (although Bissoondial was a recent Queen's graduate). At the time, the salary was higher than that of the President of the Undergraduate Society at Queen's.

Another controversial PIRG financial practice is the transfer of revenues between PIRG chapters. In Ontario, the "OPIRG Provincial Network" operates as a kind of equalization program where more prosperous PIRGs funnel money to financially needy ones. In other words, student fees don't necessarily stay within their corresponding campus PIRGs, but are also used to fund the activities of PIRGs across the province. This practice, among others, led concerned students at Queen's to call for an audit of OPIRG Kingston, which the organization has so far refused to undertake.

PIRGs across Canada could improve their financial accountability by moving to a completely voluntary opt in system of fee collection. Even on those campuses where PIRG dues are not mandatory, many students don't realize they have to pro-actively opt out to avoid paying the dues. The PIRG fee is a one line item on a tuition invoice, and many students just pay it without really knowing what it's for – or how their money will be spent.

Full disclosure: I am a recent graduate of Queen's and while I was there I was heavily involved in two "NOPIRG" campaigns, including co-managing one. NOPIRG is a word-play we, the campaign volunteers, coined for our anti-OPIRG campaign. Our goal was to remove the \$4.00 opt-outable fee

paid by undergraduate students to OPIRG, via a democratic student referendum.

Queen's undergraduate students have actually run three NOPIRG campaigns, and successfully denied the organisation its fees in two of them. Without money flowing in from Queen's students, OPIRG-Kingston relied on private donations and grants, as well as transfers of student fees collected from other universities under the OPIRG equalization scheme.

Grassroots campus campaigns to deny PIRGs access to mandatory or opt-outable student fees have been getting stronger and more successful, notably at Queen's and at McGill University in Montreal. This September, the University of Waterloo held a referendum

asking students whether they wanted to keep or remove the mandatory WPIRG fee of \$4.75 per term. A whopping 82 percent of students who voted endorsed scrapping the fee.

Such campaigns are successful when students become aware that some of the far left campaigns and causes that are occurring on their campuses are being paid for with their money. Once that awareness is in place, NOPIRG campaigns attract the volunteers they need to organize and execute successful referenda against PIRG fees.

Left-wing groups on campus usually have good intentions. They do what they think is best for students. Many of them are funded by private donations and grants, which they work incredibly hard to obtain. And they have as much right as anyone to freedom of expression and the freedom to organize and advocate for their causes. But PIRGs are founded on a fundamentally undemocratic financial model that amounts to confiscation of students' money without their explicit, informed consent. This is their method, and it clashes with fairness, transparency, and accountability on campus.

If you are a student with concerns about PIRGs on campus, please know that you don't have to put up with it. There are many other young people who don't agree with the progressive agenda and the confiscation of their money to support it. Find them and help organize at local NOPIRG campaign on your campus. You will learn a lot about political organizing that won't show up on your transcripts, but will be just as valuable to your life.

*Vanessa Walsh is a recent graduate from Queen's University and is active in conservative politics. Other students opposed to involuntary financial support for their campus PIRG are welcome to contact her for advice at [11vhw@queensu.ca](mailto:11vhw@queensu.ca).*



## BOOK REVIEW

***Unsafe Space: The Crisis of Free Speech on Campus.***

Edited by Tom Slater

134 pp: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016

*Reviewed by Patrick Keeney*

*There are two threats to reason, the opinion that one knows the truth about the most important things and the opinion that there is no truth about them. – Allan Bloom*

Tom Slater, deputy editor of the British libertarian web journal Spiked-online.com, has assembled a wide-ranging collection of essays documenting the erosion of free speech in universities in the United States and the United Kingdom. Slater and eight other contributors paint a bleak picture arising from a witches' brew of identity politics, an intellectually enervating relativism, and a militant intolerance for opposing points of view.

In chapter after chapter, we hear of students and professors who shut down debate, suppressing all dissent with a fierceness that would make Torquemada proud. How did we arrive at such a state of affairs, where free speech and academic freedom – the university's foundational intellectual virtues – have become so degraded?

The eminent scholar Edward Shils once defined the

distinctive mission of the university as the “methodical discovery and teaching of truths about serious matters.” Yet the concept of truth as an epistemological category hardly exists in today's academy. Various waves of radical relativists, post-modernists, feminists, and critical theorists have worked diligently to dispose of the notion that there is any truth, or, if there is, that we are capable of grasping it.

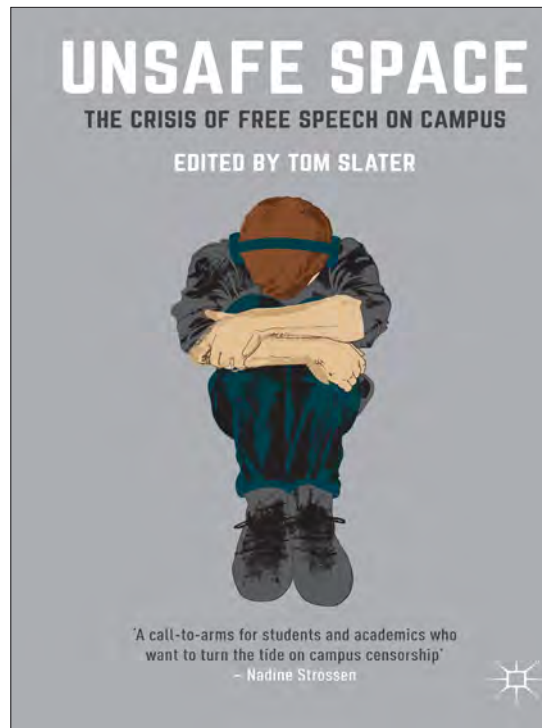
In recent years, the truth-deniers have allied on campus with various groups of social justice warriors who, ironically, imagine they have a monopoly on truth. Agitating in the name of identity politics, they seek to curtail freedom, and impose on the university a conformity of thought justified in their eyes by the righteousness of their cause. Advocates for social justice are diverse – and proud of it! – but they collectively subscribe to a militant fanaticism which brooks no dissent. Like true believers of all stripes, they are absolutists to the core.

We are thus witnessing something of a perfect storm in the academy: an enforced conformity in the name of social justice, along with a denial of empirical truth. This has brought about something new and hazardous to the educative mission of universities. Pascal's view that “We know too much to be skeptics, and too little to be dogmatists” has been turned on its head: the message to students today is that they can be simultaneously skeptical of the truth and dogmatic in their beliefs.

One of the insights which emerges from this collection is how academics have been complicit in undermining academic freedoms. Joanna Williams of the University of Kent (and Spiked education editor) points out that the attempt by students to turn the university into an emotional and intellectual safe space represents the fruition of ideas they were originally taught by their professors. "Academics", she writes, "have taught and legitimized the notion that words and images harm, that people should be protected from offence, and that restricting free speech is the best way to achieve that aim." The current demand for safe spaces, trigger warnings, and speech codes of all types is nothing more than students "putting into practice the ideas of their lecturers." And while universities have never lacked enemies in the wider society, "this attack on academic freedom came not from outside the university but from within, and not from the political right, but from the political left." In other words, the revolution is devouring its own.

Brendan O'Neill, editor of Spiked and contributor to *The Spectator* among other publications, argues that until very recent years, universities were liberal institutions, guided by the Enlightenment ideal of creating a society of morally autonomous, self-directing individuals. Kant famously sums up the Enlightenment orientation to knowledge in three words: "Dare to know," which requires from students a certain mental robustness. But such intellectual rigour, O'Neill writes, has been replaced by "the sanctification of fragility." Ideas, literature and art which challenge students' presuppositions and biases are now treated as "inherently harmful." Instead of providing students with the intellectual tools, disciplined modes of enquiry, and mental attitudes necessary for agency and self-direction, universities have created "vast new industries of Guardians, who are determined to protect [students] from harmful speech, hurtful people, interpersonal relationships, and life in general." The university's mandate now includes protecting the emotional well-being of students. In short, universities have adopted a therapeutic model of education. For O'Neill, "...we're seeing the corrosion of Enlightenment values, of Western societies' abandonment of the ideals of autonomy and subjectivity upon which university life, and democratic life, have been based in the modern period."

New Yorker Nancy McDermott, another Spiked contributor, writes about the deleterious effects of feminism on free speech. She points out that if we accept the fragility of students, then exempting them from any



potentially traumatic classes by issuing "trigger warnings make perfect sense. But they also make educating students very difficult." Given that the criteria for issuing trigger warnings is merely the *potential* to cause discomfort or give offence, then it is difficult to conceive of any sort of meaningful curriculum which doesn't contain such potential. At a minimum, such a highly politicized, parochial environment distorts the educative mission of the university.

Peter Wood, president of the American National Association of Scholars, which advocates for academic freedom, addresses climate change and the "Eco-orthodoxy on Campus." He documents the toxic effects of climate activism, "which so eagerly embraces tactics of silence and

exclusion." He cites the case of Bjorn Lomborg, the Danish scholar who accepts that man-made climate change is real, but balks at the more extreme of the alarmist forecasts, arguing that such alarmism diverts attention and precious resources away from more manageable and immediate environmental problems. But for questioning the standard orthodoxies, Lomborg has become a heretic in what Wood calls "The Established Church of Climate Catastrophe." He has been hounded and denounced with the same passion and venom that religious communities summon to shun apostates. For Wood, the climate change debate illustrates a transformation in Anglo-American societies, from an ethic of emotional continence and self-control, to an ethic of histrionic emotional display: "And the emotion that gets the greatest license in this shift is anger, which feels to the person expressing it empowering, righteous and authentic."

University of Kent sociologist Frank Furedi zeros in on what society risks by restricting the freedom of professors and students. "Intellectual and scientific progress requires a culture that is disposed to open debate and the spirit of experimentation," he writes. "The freedom to think, talk, teach and research fosters a climate that encourages the realization of the human potential." As Furedi reminds us, the search for truth requires fearless individual risk-takers who will pursue it regardless of "wherever it may lead and whoever it might offend." Any serious university must affirm academic freedom as a "non-negotiable value that underpins the genuine pursuit of intellectual and scientific clarity."

In the concluding chapter, Tom Slater offers eight practical strategies for making universities "un-safe" spaces, all of which seek to return to the university the notion of open and free enquiry. Among his observations are that, "You come to university to debate and to learn, not to be told how



to behave”, and “The debate is never over.”

Quite right. The debate truly is never over, provided only that we are permitted the freedom to engage in the debate. But for as long as we have had institutions dedicated to the pursuit of the truth, we have also had fanatics determined to shut down debate. Slater and his co-contributors are to be commended for reinvigorating a crucial debate about freedom

on campus, one with consequences which extend far beyond the groves of academe. Taken together, these essays remind us what a university is for, and how critical it is to maintaining an open and truly liberal society.

*Patrick Keeney is currently a visiting professor at Chiang Mai University in Chiang Mai Thailand.*



*by Fred Litwin*

Currently, LGBTIQCAPGNFNBA is believed to be the world’s longest acronym used to describe human sexual orientations and gender identities. Chances are it’s already been surpassed by an even longer acronym with the self-discovery of yet another person, or group of persons, with a unique gender fixation. It’s probably pointless to try to memorize what all the letters stand for, because theoretically there’s no limit to the proliferation of sexual identities. But some of them come with unique pronouns, and you had better learn those. Otherwise you might run afoul of new federal and provincial human rights and hate crimes laws.

How on earth did we get here?

Well, in the beginning there was G. And it was good. I’m not talking about God but about Gays. Back in the early 1980s, I joined the fight for gay rights and marched in the Toronto Gay Pride parade. Before G, there was actually H, for Homophile, as in the Queen’s (University) Homophile Association, which I discovered in 1978. I have to admit I

welcomed the change from H to G.

It didn’t take long before Lesbians decided they had to have their own letter. I always thought that G could have covered them. But they were insistent and Gay Pride morphed into Gay and Lesbian Pride. Before long we realized, with almost no debate, that we couldn’t leave out bisexuals, and so we became the LGB community.

LGB was no ordinary acronym. It had an electromagnetic charge and began attracting other letters. Soon it became LGBT, with the T standing for Transgender/Transsexual. LGBT then added a Q for queer. I still don’t understand the difference between a queer person and a gay person, but apparently some queers do. And one good Q obviously deserves another, so Q for questioning was added to make it LGBTQQ, or LGBTQ? for those who prefer punctuation over repetition.

At this point there was some serious momentum. The next addition was the letter I for intersex – people born with indeterminate genitalia, an exceedingly small percentage of

the population. Race broke into the line-up with the addition of 2, meaning two-spirit in reference to First Nations people who have both a feminine and a masculine spirit. Other letters that have been added include U for unsure, C for curious, P for polyamorous, F for flexual, A for asexual, and so on and so forth.

### **LGBTIQCAPGNFNBA...and counting**

But since there is no internationally-recognized sex and gender identity standards committee in Geneva – yet – there has been disagreement on which letter(s) belong in the LGBTetc alphabet. Peter Tatchell, a long-time gay rights activist in the U.K. and as much an authority on the subject as there is, says LGBTIQCAPGNFNBA is the longest acronym he's seen. At Wesleyan University they have a residence called Open House which they bill as a safe space for LGBTTQQFAGPBDSM. Pride Toronto has long used LGBTTIQQ2SA.

The main reason for this silliness is the letter T for Transsexual/Transgender. This letter is radioactive and is emitting more and more 'gender' identities in a chain reaction that might never stop. Most of the letters in the LGBT+ acronym are not related to sexual activity but to sex identity which subdivides almost daily.

So what exactly is this community?

Well, when I was growing up the T stood for two kinds of people: transsexuals – people who believe they are in the wrong body and who want to change their sex through hormones and surgery; and transvestites, mostly straight men who wanted to wear women's clothes, but also gay drag queens like the late great Canadian Craig Russell who so entertained us in bars and movies.

But T now also refers to Transgender people, or Trans, as they prefer. They insist gender is a social construct and that they are not part of the traditional binary male/female split of the population.

Gender dysphoria or gender identity disorder affects a very small number of people. Estimates range from 0.1-0.5 percent of the population. If you only consider transsexuals who medically transition from one sex to another, you're at the extreme lower end of that estimate. The

latest data from the U.K. suggests that 20 in 100,000 are transsexual. But the transgender population seems to be significantly larger than that, and growing. It includes an increasing number of children who are convinced, perhaps partly by the ubiquity of the phenomenon in popular culture, that they are growing up in the wrong bodies.

Referrals to gender dysphoria clinics are skyrocketing. The British *Guardian* newspaper recently reported that "a clinic in Nottingham reported a 28-fold increase in referrals in eight years, from 30 in 2008 to 850 in 2015. It is expected to increase to more than 1,000 referrals in 2016."

Activists are pushing the medical community to offer treatment at earlier and earlier ages. It is not uncommon to start patients on hormone blockers around age 13 to delay puberty, then prescribe cross-sex hormones at age 16, so the child is ready for surgical transition at age 18.

### **Dr. Frankenstein as pediatrician**

There is very little data on the long term effects of hormone blockers but what there is indicates that these drugs may stunt growth and affect bone density. One of the drugs, Lupron, which is manufactured by the U.S. pharmaceutical giant AbbVie, is intended for treating endometriosis and uterine fibroids. AbbVie has never tested Lupron for blocking puberty and has no plans to do so. Adverse events in clinical studies of females included "hot flashes, headaches, emotional lability (uncontrollable laughing or crying), decreased libido, acne, myalgia, reduction in breast size, and vaginal dryness."

The American College of Pediatricians reports that "puberty-blocking hormones induce a state of disease – the absence of puberty – and inhibit growth and fertility in a previously biologically healthy child." Dr. Lisa Brinkman, a clinical psychologist in Ireland told the Irish Examiner that "cross-sex hormones have irreversible effects on fertility. There's no going back."

That's just the puberty blockers. Cross-sex hormones also have not been studied for their use in adolescents. Dr. Lisa Simons, a pediatrician at Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago, told the Frontline show on PBS that "we don't really know how sex hormones impact





any adolescent's brain development," adding that there are no "specific studies that look at the neurocognitive effects of puberty blockers." What is known is that some of the physiological changes caused by cross-sex hormones cannot be undone if a child decides to revert back to their original sex.

However many people start the process, few people actually go forward to surgery. According to the *Encyclopedia of Surgery*, somewhere between 100 and 500 gender reassignment procedures are conducted in the United States each year. The U.K. reported 143 surgeries in 2009. A Swedish study found that fewer than 700 people had surgically transitioned over a 50 year period ending in 2010. Numbers for Canada are hard to find, although a handful of doctors across Canada specialize in the procedures, and almost all provincial healthcare programs pay for it. Last year the Ontario government moved to make transitioning easier to obtain, citing a wait list of 1,000.

Trans advocates argue that long wait times cause some

people to commit suicide. But there is also some evidence the cure is as bad or worse than the disease. John Hopkins University, one of the first places to perform sex reassignment surgery, stopped when they found it made little difference to the mental health of those who went through with the surgery compared to those who didn't. Paul McHugh, a former psychiatrist at Johns Hopkins, said that "producing a 'satisfied' but still troubled patient seemed an inadequate reason for surgically amputating normal organs."

Writing in the *Wall St. Journal*, McHugh also cited a Swedish study that followed 324 people who had sex reassignment surgery for up to 30 years. "The study revealed that beginning about 10 years after having the surgery; the transgendered began to experience increasing mental difficulties. Most shockingly, their suicide mortality rose almost 20-fold above the comparable nontransgender population."

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V) states that "rates of persistence of gender dysphoria from childhood into adolescence or adulthood vary. In natal males, persistence has ranged from 2.2 percent to 30 percent. In natal females, persistence has ranged from 12 percent to 50 percent." In other words, of the tiny fraction of children who experience gender dysphoria, most end up accepting their original sex.

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“If this rate of letter propagation continues, we’ll soon have an acronym that will be worth over two thousand points in Scrabble”

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### *Science steamrollered by politics*

OK, but how about the other, apparently much larger part of the Trans community – those who forgo medication or surgery but who, nonetheless, reject their in-born biological sex. This is where science leaves the room for politics. Advocates for this constituency view gender as a social construct, not as something that is biologically determined. Their demands for legal rights and protections and social accommodations are not rooted in immutable physiological characteristics but in how they feel about themselves. But they are no less eligible, in their minds, for protection from anything that could hurt those feelings.

Their first fight was over bathrooms – either the right to use bathrooms of their choice or for dedicated toilets for the transgendered. Schools and other public institutions across North America are now scrambling to satisfy the demand.

But it doesn't end with bathrooms. The Vancouver School Board passed a new policy in 2014 that says "where

discrimination laws by municipalities. In each case, so-called "transphobia" significantly influenced the outcome.

This has caused friction between the gay community and the trans community. In the former there is a growing call to "take the T out of LGBT". In some ways the trans community is an affront to the gay community, such as encouraging children to be trans rather than accept being gay. Fundamentally these two movements have little in common – except that post-modern activists see them both as foils to subvert the values and institutions of western liberal democracy. For them the cause is secondary to the main purpose, which is revolution.

The lust to overthrow convention has reached new heights of ambition – and absurdity – in the Trans movement. It has succeeded in badgering New York City to recognize 31 different genders in its civic human rights code. The dating app Tinder worked with the LGBT group GLAAD to add 37 genders to its website: Angender,



possible, students will be permitted to participate in any sex-segregated recreational and competitive athletic activities, in accordance with their gender identity." This policy applies not only to playing fields but also to change rooms.

Needless to say this has caused some discomfort among the overwhelmingly majority of people whom we might call gender traditionalists. And in some places it's causing a backlash against efforts to obtain legal rights and protections for mainstream gays and lesbians. The City of Houston, for example, last year voted down an anti-discrimination ordinance for LGBT, largely because of fears over trans rights and bathrooms. Springfield, Missouri repealed an LGBT anti-discrimination law in April 2015. And in March of 2016 the State of North Carolina passed a law preventing anti-

Androgyne, Androgynous, Bigender, Female to Male, FTM, Gender Fluid, Gender Nonconforming, Gender Questioning, Gender Variant, Genderqueer, Male to Female, MTF, Neither, Neurois, Non-binary, Other, Pangender, Trans, Trans Man, Trans Woman, Transfeminine, Transgender, Transgender Female, Transgender Male, Transgender Person, Transgender Woman, Transmasculine, Transsexual, Transsexual Female, Transsexual Male, Transsexual Person, Transsexual Woman, Two-Spirit.

Neurois is a "non-binary gender identity which is considered to be a neutral or null gender." Genderfluid people feel they have different gender identities at different times. According to a Wiki definition offered by nonbinary.org, Pangender "is a non-binary gender experience which



refers to a wide multiplicity of genders that can (or not) tend to the infinite (meaning that this experience can go beyond the current knowledge of genders). This experience can be either simultaneously or over time.”

### **Here come the pronoun police**

The federal government, many provinces, and some municipalities and school boards in Canada are introducing or strengthening regulations and legal protections for gender identities. The Ontario Human Rights Code, for one, protects “people from discrimination and harassment because of gender identity and gender expression.” It further decrees that “trans people should be recognized and treated as the gender they live,” and that “organizations should design or change their rules, practices and facilities to avoid negative effects on trans people.”

This includes the trans demand for everyone to use their invented pronouns. A Q&A on the OHRC site says that “refusing to refer to trans people by their chosen name and a personal pronoun that matches their gender identity, or purposely misgendering, will likely be discrimination when it takes place in a social arena covered by the Code, including employment, housing and services like education.”

And, just what are these pronouns? Well, to start: There is ne (nominative) /nem (objective) /nir (possessive determinant) /nirs (possessive pronoun) /nemself (reflexive). For instance, you could say that Ne laughed and that I called nem. Other sets include Ve/ver/vis/vis/verself; ey/em/eir/eirs/eirself; ze/zir/zir/zirs/zirself; Xe/xem/xyr/xyrs/xemself; tey/ter/tem/ters/terself.

If you are unsure of usage, there are many websites to guide the uninitiated through this minefield. And, if you won't or can't learn all the pronominal permutations, you may be accused of using oppressive language, which in turn could lead to an appearance in front of a human rights tribunal or a criminal charge under the hate crime law.

This is where Jordan Peterson comes in. As you will have read in other stories in this edition of *C2C Journal* or in countless stories about him in other media, Peterson is the University of Toronto psychology professor who is crusading against federal Bill C-16 which amends the Canadian Human Rights Act and the hate crimes section of the Criminal Code to include gender identity and gender expression to the list of prohibited grounds for discrimination and hate speech. He calls it nothing less than a Marxist authoritarian attempt to deny human biological reality and crush freedom of speech.

Peterson's opponents call him paranoid and delusional. But what if Peterson, and I, and you, refuse to call her They or him Zhe? Do we really know the full implications of Bill C-16? Are sanctions on the horizon for Canadians who don't submit to the pronoun police? For the record, I believe it is vitally important to protect trans people from discrimination in housing and employment. We should be generous and rigorous in defining and protecting all minority rights. But pronoun use?

Here are some other questions we should be asking. Will a small group of post-modern activists force us all to

“No doubt it is difficult for some to decide if they are a Neutrois or a Pangender”

change our language? Will doctors be forced to treat gender dysphoric kids with puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones? Will the public go along with people using the change room of their choice? Will women accept more and more boys and men in their athletic competitions? Are we really

going to give trans activists full control over all issues related to sex identity? Is 'misgendering' really a crime?

### **The scary shape of things to come**

And what's next on the activist agenda? In this world of identity politics on steroids, more and more victim groups are popping up – and all of them “intersect” together. There are people who classify themselves as “transabled”. Alexander Baril of Dalhousie University told the *National Post* that “we define transability as the desire or the need for a person identified as able-bodied by other people to transform his or her body to obtain physical impairment. The person could want to become deaf, blind, amputee, paraplegic.” Seriously? Self-mutilation to obtain a new identity? Will this be the next group added to the protected human rights list? Don't bet against it.

What's the way forward? Well, we certainly need more Jordan Petersons, people with a backbone who can firmly challenge this nonsense.

We also need more people who stand up for science. Dr. Kenneth Zucker is one such person. He used to run the Youth and Family Identity Clinic at Toronto's Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. But in December 2015, he was abruptly fired and the clinic was shut. Zucker had enraged trans activists by advising the parents of dysphoric children to hold off on medical intervention because most kids eventually accept their biological reality. Zucker now practices privately and offers an important alternative for parents who are looking for real answers.

Perhaps we can also use some ridicule.

Grant Strobl, a junior at the University of Michigan, decided that his preferred pronoun was “His Majesty.” He told the *Washington Post* that “When I realized that the university decided to live a fantasy of allowing students to insert words that aren't actual pronouns into the university online database that updates the rosters, I decided, well, I might as well be the king of that fantasy, and I henceforth shall be referred to as His Majesty.”

So, to all of the Grant Strobls, Kenneth Zuckers and Jordan Petersons of the world, I say, thank you for your courage in stepping forward and showing us the way to fight back against all this dangerous foolishness.

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*Fred Litwin is the President of the Free Thinking Film Society of Ottawa and author of Conservative Confidential: Inside The Fabulous Blue Tent. You can reach Fred at his website [www.conservativeconfidential.com](http://www.conservativeconfidential.com)*



# Failing campus freedom

by Michael Kennedy and John Carpay

As late as the 1970s Canadian and American university campuses were obsessed with freedom – freedom from racial discrimination, freedom from sexual inhibitions, freedom from want and war and, especially, freedom to think and say anything, no matter how rude, offensive or outrageous. But within a decade or so, conservative culture critics like Allan Bloom and Dinesh D'Souza were writing best-selling books such as *The Closing of the American Mind* and *Illiberal Education*, which chronicled the rise of militancy and extremism among students and academics whose tolerance for freedom was proscribed by their insistence on conformity to a suite of values and rules that came to be known as “political correctness”.

The repression of contrarian ideas and persecution of those who express them, on and off campuses, has only grown more oppressive in the decades since. Today it is common for student groups to be banned from operating on campus if their beliefs conflict with the prevailing view of their student union; for speakers to be deemed too controversial to appear on campus; for students and faculty to be reprimanded for challenging PC orthodoxy.

We at the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms have been advocating and acting for the cause of free expression since our founding in December 2010. In 2011, inspired by the wisdom of Fraser Institute founder Dr. Michael Walker

in his oft-repeated dictum, “If it matters, measure it,” the Justice Centre produced Canada’s first-ever survey on the performance of our public universities in upholding free speech on campus. Our Campus Freedom Index has been compiled every year since, measuring how well (or not) these taxpayer-funded institutions live up to their stated mission of facilitating the free exchange – and frank debate – of ideas.

In 2016, the Justice Centre released its sixth annual *Campus Freedom Index*. Using a five-tier letter scale (A, B, C, D and F), the *Index* grades universities and student unions on their stated policies (what they say) and their practices (what they do). The report uses specific, measurable and replicable criteria to assess the free speech climate on Canadian campuses, giving university administrators and student union executives clear performance benchmarks to aim for – if they choose to do so.

The *Campus Freedom Index* looks specifically and exclusively at public universities. Unlike private universities, public universities exist by provincial statute, and typically receive half or more of their funds from taxpayers, through provincial government subsidies. They have a legal obligation, under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as well as through their own policies and principles, to uphold free expression rights.

Sadly, the 2016 *Index* finds that there are still far too many universities in Canada where free expression is at



risk, but progress has been made at a number of campuses. For example, both the Carleton University Students Association (CUSA) and the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU) have improved their grade in the *Campus Freedom Index* by passing policies which directly improved the state of free speech on their campuses.

### 'I' for improvement

In 2012 CUSA reversed its *Discrimination on Campus Policy* from sanctioning overt censorship to supporting free expression. Formerly, CUSA's policy prohibited "any campaign, distribution, solicitation, lobbying effort, display, event etc. that seeks to limit or remove a woman's right to choose her options in the case of pregnancy" such that "no CUSA resources, space, or funding will be allocated for the purpose of promoting these actions." This policy effectively banned a pro-life club from campus entirely, and was arbitrarily used to prevent outside groups from attending campus events. One of its targets was the mainstream American conservative think tank the Heritage Foundation, which CUSA judged guilty of inciting hate. Such blatant examples of politically-charged censorship earned CUSA an 'F' grade in the *Index*.

To their credit, however, CUSA reversed its policy, passing a motion which mentioned the *Campus Freedom Index* as a catalyst for the change:

*"Whereas Carleton University and CUSA received failing grades for restricting free and fair dialogue, in a recent [Campus] Freedom Index report conducted by the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms...*

*...Be it resolved that item 2 of the current Discrimination on Campus Policy be replaced with the following:*

*2. CUSA will ensure that its members have access to facilities and resources without fear of discrimination based on a person or group's racial, religious, political, or sexual distinction.*

*Be it resolved that Council strike 'members of the Klu Klux Klan, the white Aryan Resistance, the Heritage Front, the Heritage Foundation, Canadians for the Preservation of English' in item 4."*

In 2015, CUSA improved its game further by passing a template *Resolution in Support of Free Expression*, drafted by the Justice Centre for use by student unions. The Resolution was proposed by CUSA president Folarin Odunayo, providing students with a strong defence against any attempts to silence their expression on campus. CUSA now earns one of the highest ratings of any student union in Canada, thanks to these positive reforms.

The University of Saskatchewan Students Union (USSU), which earned failing grades in the *Campus Freedom Index* in 2011 and 2012, passed a motion the following year



Students demonstrate against unsafe space messages at Carleton University Sept. 8, 2014. (Image: Sam Heaton)

that unequivocally upholds the free expression rights of students on campus. With input and advice from the Justice Centre, the USSU passed a *Free Speech Policy* which commits the USSU to uphold free speech rights on campus while refraining from content-based censorship against students and student groups. The new policy reads:

*...the Student Union will support and protect the free speech of all parties under its jurisdiction. The Student Union will not endeavor to limit or prevent the exercise of free speech on campus and will work to aid those parties whose free speech rights are threatened. The Union further recognizes the fair and reasonable limitations on free expression as stated in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Criminal Code of Canada and pledges not to exercise censorship outside of these legal limits. When members of the Union use speech as a direct attack that has the effect of preventing the lawful exercise of speech by members or invited guests, or interfering with the conduct of authorized University business, the Student Union may intervene...*

In 2014, the Acadia University Students Union (ASU) in Nova Scotia improved its grade from 'C' to 'A' in the *Campus Freedom Index*, earning a rare 'A' for coming to the defense of its student newspaper, *The Athenaeum*, during a dispute with its printer. To illustrate an edition about female sexuality, the newspaper had put an illustration of a topless woman on the cover. Fearing controversy and possible litigation, the printer refused to publish it until the ASU stepped in and worked with both parties to reach a compromise.

In 2013, after protestors disrupted a pro-life lecture on the Brock University campus in St. Catharines, Ontario, the Brock University Students Union (BUSU) rose to the defence of free expression and issued this statement: "BUSU is an organization representing over 17,000 undergraduate students whom have varying opinions, ideologies, religious, political and social views. BUSU's mandate is not to voice an organizational opinion on such topics. It is BUSU's mandate to ensure that students are able to voice their views, thoughts and beliefs in a respectful, organized and safe manner." By demonstrating its commitment to upholding the free exchange of ideas on campus, BUSU raised its Index grade from 'D' to 'B'.

The students on Queen's University's Alma Mater Society (AMS) received an 'F' in 2013 for censoring visual presentations by selected campus groups. But in 2014 they voted to respect the right of all groups to have equal access to AMS services regardless of their political views, and improved their grade from 'F' to 'C' by rejecting a motion to de-ratify the Men's Issues Awareness Society. The defeated motion had proposed that the men's rights club should be banned "because of the manner in which its members have chosen to publicly undermine feminism and anti-rape culture discourse on campus".

The University of Calgary administration improved its mark from 'F' to 'D' after choosing to comply with the 2014 court ruling in *Wilson v. University of Calgary* after a campus free speech dispute. The court had vindicated seven students whom the university had found guilty of "non-academic misconduct" because they peacefully expressed pro-life opinions on campus.

### ***A helpful donor guide***

The *Campus Freedom Index* also provides alumni with information that helps them make donation decisions. For example, Calgary-based engineer and McGill University alumnus Colin Campbell donated to his alma mater for 35 years, until he discovered that McGill earned a 'D' average in the *Campus Freedom Index*. Campbell chose to cease his giving to McGill until the university improved its grade. He has applied the same standard to his giving habits to the University of Calgary, due to its record of silencing unpopular views.

In addition to these visible improvements, the *Campus Freedom Index* appears to be increasing awareness and appreciation of the importance of free expression among student organizations. One might reasonably ask: How many student councilors have voted against censorship policies because they learned about the legal and ethical basis for free speech rights from the *Index*? How many students, inspired by court actions that the Justice Centre has launched against student unions and universities, are resisting censorship rather than acquiescing to it? How many off-campus journalists are more closely monitoring and writing about censorship at Canadian universities?

While these improvements are laudable, much work remains to be done. Out of 240 grades awarded to 60 universities and 60 student unions in 2016, there were only

six 'A' grades. Conversely, 'F' grades were earned 32 times.

The biggest threat to freedom of expression is the misguided notion that people in a free society have a legal right not to be offended. High school and university students are rarely taught that freedom of expression serves to protect minority opinions which the majority considers to be wrong, offensive, hurtful, and false.

What can Canadians who are concerned about the threats facing free expression on campus do to fight back? The *Campus Freedom Index* provides the intellectual ammunition needed for parents, students, and concerned taxpayers to hold universities accountable for censorship. Through their provincial legislatures, all these stakeholders can hold universities accountable to their mission of protecting the free exchange of ideas on campus. Our public universities receive billions of dollars per year from provincial governments in operating funding. It is entirely within the provinces' jurisdiction to attach strings to this funding. If universities don't uphold free speech, democratic governments can and should withhold their funding.

### ***Mandatory student unions***

Reform is also needed of the rules governing student union membership. Unlike students in Australia and New Zealand, Canadian students at public universities are forced to join their student union, paying hundreds (or sometimes thousands) of dollars in extra fees to do so. But student union elections typically see voter participation at less than 20 percent. The reasons are understandable: students attend university to prepare for adulthood by gathering the knowledge and skills needed to pursue a satisfying and rewarding career, and often have little time for student politics. That leaves student unions vulnerable to domination by activists with extremist agendas.

A pro-life group was barred from protesting at the University of Calgary in 2008. Still today, the school is not exactly a bastion of free speech. (Image: Christina Ryan/Postmedia News)





These student unions then take positions on behalf of all members, not just involving censorship, but also on issues such as climate change, gender identity, or the “Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions” movement against Israel, that don’t necessarily reflect the views of most students. If students had the option of choosing whether to join their union, student unions would have a financial incentive to adopt policies and positions more reflective of mainstream student concerns and ideals.

Finally and importantly, a culture shift is needed to remind students – and all Canadians – why free speech matters. Without free expression, countless social movements of the modern era would have been impossible, whether it’s the abolition of slavery, the end of the Vietnam war, or the fight for civil rights and gay rights. Universities need to educate students and faculty about the importance of

academic freedom, and how it enables societies to advance scientifically, economically and socially. Yes, free speech means some will be uncomfortable. But discomfort is part of the real world, and handling discomfort maturely and with intelligence is an essential life skill.

Fortunately, reasonable students are taking notice of the growing absurdity of the ‘safe space’ movement, “trigger warnings,” and “micro-aggressions”. They are speaking out against this ideology. Through the *Campus Freedom Index*, our legal work, and on-campus education, the Justice Centre is empowering these students to make a difference.

*Michael Kennedy and John Carpay are co-authors of the Campus Freedom Index, measuring the state of free speech at Canadian public universities. View the full report at [www.CampusFreedomIndex.ca](http://www.CampusFreedomIndex.ca)*

# The values that universities forgot

by Mark Mercer

**A**cademic freedom and freedom of expression on the university campus ought to be valued for at least two reasons. One is that freedom is essential to the central goals of research and teaching. The other is that only a free university can be a place of true intellectual community.

Each is an excellent reason to maintain and protect academic freedom and freedom of expression. But as recent events have shown us, not all university people care much about either academic freedom or freedom of expression.

Indeed, we have seen widespread institutional hostility to both. How could that be?

When I was a younger professor, I thought all university people would put intellectual community and the central goals of research and teaching above all else, at least when engaged in university business and at least in times of relative peace and prosperity. University or intellectual values are not the only values worth honouring, of course, and in times of armed conflict, economic crisis, or



dictatorship, they might be subordinated to the urgency of our condition. (Although it is often in such circumstances that they are most important.) Yet, I thought, if university people in relatively free, fair, and democratic Canada were ever to privilege other, illiberal values over academic ones, it would be out of rashness, in the heat of an emotional moment. Upon realizing that their actions threatened or infringed upon academic freedom or freedom of expression, they would quickly revert to proper intellectual behaviours.

But then, in early 2006, Peter March, a philosophy colleague at Saint Mary's, taped the infamous Mohammed cartoons from *Jyllands-Posten* on his office door. The administration at Saint Mary's (and, even more sadly, many of the professors here) reacted badly – or, in any case, not as academics who prize research, teaching, or intellectual community should. In ordering him to take down the cartoons, they were, I thought, violating Dr. March's academic freedom and dampening freedom of expression on campus simply out of bad judgement. Temporarily blinded in the fog of conflicting values, they would correct themselves once they understood what they were doing.

I publicly opposed their actions and communicated my arguments directly to the administrators. Yet with each new development in the March affair, administrators continued to betray academic freedom and freedom of expression on campus. They consistently sacrificed academic values in the service of such non-academic values as avoiding offense and promoting harmony, even when those non-academic values were hardly in peril.

Dr. March was brought before a tribunal (of two professors and a student) charged to determine whether he had harassed anyone or discriminated against anyone in his actions or speech. When it became clear that the tribunal would find what was obvious – that posting cartoons and talking about them

could not possibly constitute harassment or discrimination – the complaining students were advised to withdraw their complaint. They did so, which was unfortunate because a clear and unequivocal tribunal ruling against the complaint would have set a useful campus precedent.

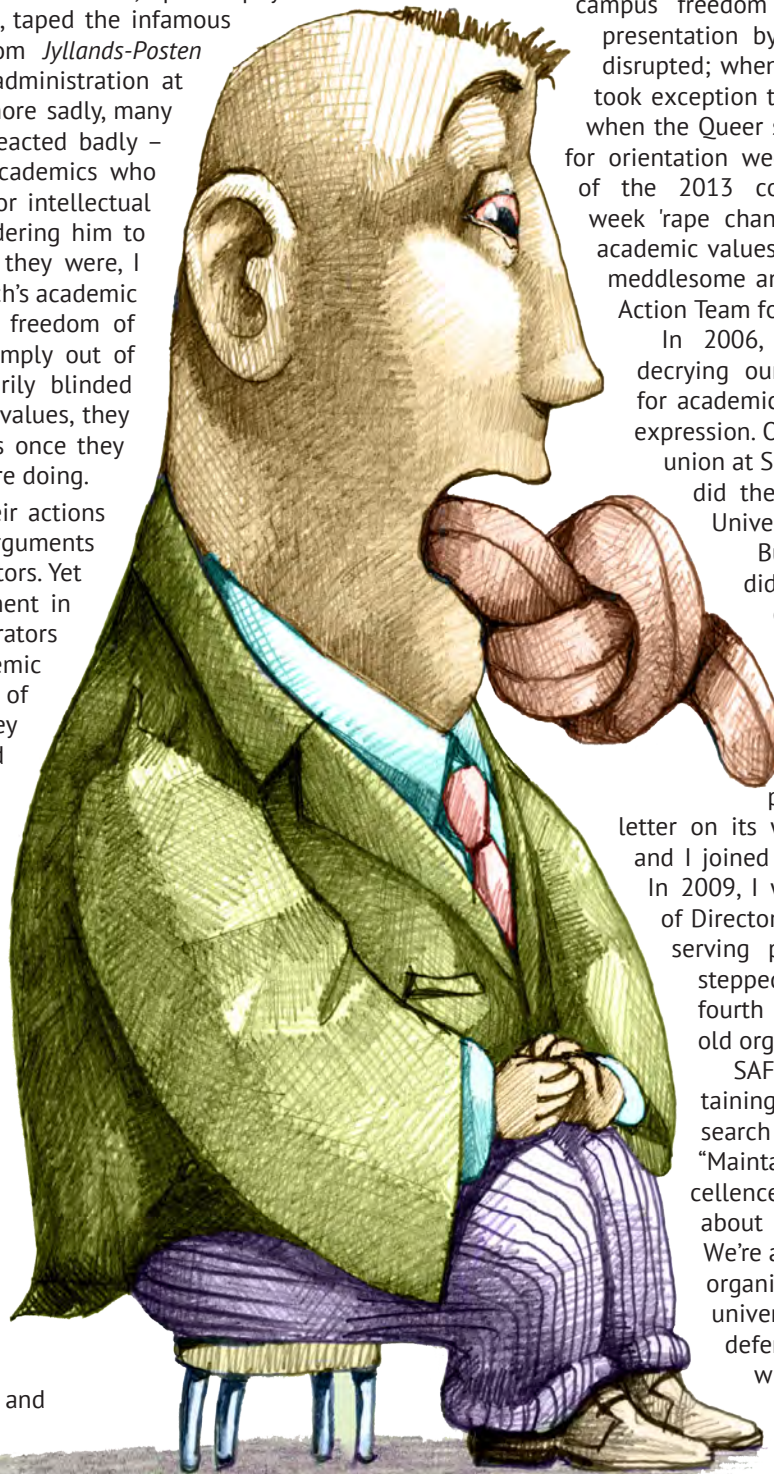
### **From March to worse**

Instead, in the years since the March incident the Saint Mary's administration, often with support from professors and our union, has acted weakly or wrongly whenever campus freedom was at stake: when a presentation by an invited speaker was disrupted; when the students' association took exception to a student society's sign; when the Queer society proposed an event for orientation week; and in the aftermath of the 2013 controversy over a frosh week 'rape chant' video. (The assault on academic values continues today with the meddlesome and censorious work of the Action Team for a Respectful Campus.)

In 2006, there were few voices decrying our administration's disdain for academic freedom and freedom of expression. On the contrary, the faculty union at Saint Mary's supported it, as did the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

But one organization did stand up for freedom of expression at Saint Mary's: The Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship (SAFS). SAFS sent a letter to our university's president and posted the letter on its website. I was impressed, and I joined SAFS a few months later. In 2009, I was elected to the Board of Directors, and in 2015, after long-serving president Clive Seligman stepped down, I became the fourth president of the 25-year-old organization.

SAFS is dedicated to "Maintaining freedom in teaching, research and scholarship" and "Maintaining standards of excellence in academic decisions about students and faculty." We're an advocacy and education organization. We write letters to university presidents and others defending academic values when our board judges them to have been infringed or put at risk. We publish





a newsletter and organize symposia in which the things we care about get discussed and debated. Over the last year, we have held panel discussions on initiatives to indigenize the university and on pseudo-science and academic freedom.

Since the beginning of the current school year, SAFS has been engaged in three prominent cases involving the subjugation of academic freedom or freedom of expression on campus.

### **Black October**

In early October, administrators at Western University, in London, Ontario, reacted to photos on social media of four students posing under a banner reading “Western Lives Matter” by formally investigating whether the students had violated Western’s student code of conduct. Though that code explicitly states that nothing in it “shall be construed...to inhibit free speech,” administrators said that trivializing the Black Lives Matter movement could violate people’s human rights. After the investigation, no students were disciplined because their actions “did not rise to the threshold as a code violation under our student code,” according to Western’s associate vice-president of student experience. The implication, unfortunately, was that there is a threshold where criticising or making fun of a political movement could very well violate the students’ code of conduct, and not be protected by freedom of expression.

Also in October, University of Lethbridge professor Anthony Hall was suspended without pay because of allegations that some of his social media postings were anti-Semitic. Dr. Hall was suspended, that is, before the allegations were tested and independently of any expressed worries about the quality of his research or teaching. Of course, even if the postings were indeed anti-Semitic, universities attentive to academic values would be neutral with regard to the content of peaceful expressions of opinion or emotion.

Finally, and most prominently, on October



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“Saint Mary’s administration, often with support from professors and our union, has acted weakly or wrongly whenever campus freedom was at stake”

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18 University of Toronto psychology professor Jordan Peterson was sent a letter, signed by the dean of the faculty of arts and science and the vice-provost of faculty and academic life, urging Dr. Peterson to stop saying publicly that he will not accede to requests from students or colleagues to use their preferred “gender neutral” pronouns. Failing to accede, the letter said, is “contrary to the rights of those persons to equal treatment without discrimination”; acting contrary to those rights would be in violation of the “responsibilities of faculty members to establish ‘fair and ethical dealings with students, as well as with colleagues.’” Dr. Peterson’s persistence in his “discriminatory intentions” had been “emotionally disturbing and painful” to members of the university community and had caused some of them “to fear for their safety on the University campus.”

To its credit, the U of T subsequently organized a public debate on the issues, pitting Dr. Peterson against two academics opposed to his views. But the union that represents part-time faculty members objected. In an open letter, the union wrote:

“Despite the administration’s welcome stance on respecting pronouns, we are deeply troubled to learn that the University is providing a forum for what Peterson has termed a ‘free speech debate.’ We object to the basic premise of this event. Human rights are not up for debate. We urge members of the University community to boycott this event.”

The union of graduate students likewise came out against free and open debate. “In agreeing to host future debates on the themes challenged by Peterson and his supporters, the University of Toronto Administration has proven irresponsible in providing Peterson a continued platform to promote discrimination at the expense of students.”

The actions taken by administrators and their supporters in these three cases need to

be considered in relation to the central goals of teaching and research and of intellectual community.

### ***What universities should be***

“Research” is a broad term that covers at least three sorts of activity in which professors and students engage. One is inquiry into the ways of the world. The goal is figure out how things are, or to come as close as one can to how they are. Another is the interpretation of artistic and other cultural artifacts and expressions. A third is the emotional and intellectual appreciation of the world as understood through inquiry and by interpretation.

“Teaching” is of course the dissemination of the products of research and interpretation to students. But its goal is not only to make students knowledgeable. Teaching is primarily aimed at helping students to become researchers, interpreters, and appreciators themselves.

The goal of figuring out how things are and producing and appreciating interpretations of their meaning is much better served in an atmosphere of freedom than in one of constraint. Academic freedom and freedom of expression increase the likelihood that we will get things right and help others to do so. That is because they multiply the options we can discuss and test.

Intellectual community is formed when people come together in an institution to pursue inquiry, interpretation, and appreciation together. There are two reasons for intellectuals to gather together. First, through collaboration and critical discussion, inquiry and the rest become more productive. Second, by coming together in community, people enjoy the pleasures of collaboration and critical discussion. Intellectuals aspire to develop insightful theories and interpretations, and they enjoy presenting their work to others and discussing the work of others.

Academic freedom and freedom of expression do not just work to improve intellectual community but are necessary for it to exist in the first place. Researchers and interpreters care about getting things right, certainly. They want to believe truly and to value soundly. But they also deeply care about believing what one believes and valuing what one values for one’s own good reasons. The only good reasons for believing or valuing are the reasons of evidence, argument, and example. To believe or value because of social or other pressures is not consistent with the endeavour to think for oneself.

True intellectuals and scholars, then, aspire to be intellectually and morally autonomous. Because they value autonomy for themselves and for all members of their community, they refrain from the controlling behaviours exhibited in the examples from Western, Lethbridge, and Toronto.

The university administrators and other officers who

“Universities are increasingly places for training experts and professionals, creating a professional or managerial class, and inculcating preferred attitudes and values”

investigated the students, suspended Dr. Hall, ordered Dr. Peterson to mind his words, and called for an end to debate, are in fundamental conflict with the goals of research and teaching and the ideals of intellectual community. They do not think of universities as places of liberal study. Indeed, their actions are antithetical to liberal study.

### ***The new academic utilitarianism***

Their evident understanding of the purpose of universities is that they are places for the training of experts and professionals, the creation of a professional or managerial class, and the inculcation of preferred attitudes and values (respect for diversity, for instance, or concern for sustainability or citizenship). At universities that pursue such goals, academic freedom and freedom of expression are unneeded, and can be a nuisance. Free debate and critical discussion of human rights, for instance, could be emotionally and even psychologically

upsetting for some; thus, they are an unnecessary and unwelcome diversion from the utilitarian purpose of the university. While an intellectual welcomes such a discussion even in face of the risk, for an administrator hoping to bring members of historically marginalized groups into a society’s cadre of experts and managers, the risk is unacceptable.

I wish I could claim that the Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship has succeeded in maintaining universities as places of liberal study, places devoted to intellectual community or to the goals of research and teaching. But the truth is, safe space for academic and intellectual freedom has been shrinking over the last 25 years, not expanding. We would like to think that interventions and arguments we have made may have contributed to the exoneration of the students at Western and Dr. Peterson’s continuing employment at the U of T. But the most important task of SAFS, in the long term, is to keep alive and to nurture the idea of the university as a place for dispassionate inquiry, for study for the sake of study. The idea of intellectual and moral autonomy is for many people extremely powerful, if only they hear of it and know that others cherish it as much as they do. You are not alone.

*Mark Mercer is a professor of philosophy and serves as the chair of the philosophy department at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax. He is also the president of the Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship. (The views in this article are his and not necessarily official SAFS positions.) Membership in SAFS can be obtained at the SAFS website, safs.ca. Dr. Mercer’s website is at [professormark-mercer.ca](http://professormark-mercer.ca).*



by Aaron Gunn

“Anti-debt youth group booted from campus for ‘unsanctioned activism,’” announced the September 7 headline in the Toronto Sun. It wasn’t how we intended to kick off our 2016 campus tour, but officials at Montreal’s Université Laval had other plans. The headline likely raised a few questions in readers’ minds. For one, isn’t ‘unsanctioned activism’ kind of an oxymoron? Since when are universities in the business of “sanctioning” anybody’s right to free expression? Also, what kind of activism is so unacceptable that it causes a university to expel young people from its grounds, lest they interact with other students?

Oh, and who ever heard of an anti-debt youth group in Canada?

Generation Screwed is a campus initiative of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation launched in 2013 to raise awareness among young Canadians about the massive fiscal burden they are being bequeathed by their elders. By the turn of the last decade, federal and provincial governments had already racked up nearly \$1.1 trillion in debt, and left trillions more in unfunded program liabilities (e.g. pensions and health care costs).

After governments made significant progress in bringing down debt and deficits during the 1990s, cavalier attitudes

# Unscrewing the millennials

toward borrowing have returned. The temporary and “modest” deficits promised by our current prime minister

in last year’s election campaign have already morphed into large and long-term projections of new debt. In Ontario, provincial red ink has soared past \$300 billion while formerly

debt-free Alberta now runs the second-largest per capita deficit in Canada. Even Saskatchewan, an erstwhile bulwark against the spend-now, worry-later instincts of so many governments, is running a billion-dollar operational deficit. Eventually these bills will come due.

It is future generations who will be saddled with the ever-growing public debt plus the interest it accrues. Yet, on university campuses across the country the people most adversely impacted by this political profligacy are the ones least exposed to alternatives. From their classroom pulpits, professors impart knowledge on a myriad of topics, from climate change to gender expression, but few put much emphasis on fiscal sustainability. To the extent that students learn anything at all about economics, most of it comes with a bias against capitalism, free markets, resource development and fiscal restraint.

This is what spurred the CTF to get involved. We originally hoped to establish student chapters at 13 universities within three years. Instead, the enthusiasm of

(Image Aaron Gunn)





local student coordinators has given us a solid presence on over 25 different campuses. We are now Canada's largest, non-partisan student movement advocating for fiscally responsible small government.

We focused on the issues most critical to the next generation and most closely associated with our established CTF brand, namely debt, deficits and unfunded liabilities. The reaction from students has been overwhelmingly positive. Most had little idea about the size and growth rate of government debt. Many were stunned at the amount spent each year just to pay interest on it. But when they got the facts almost all agreed that debt was bad, government debt was worse, and that it was unethical to stick the next generation with the bill.

### ***Storming the campus barricades***

Our campaign would have been an unmitigated success if we only had to work with students. Unfortunately some student unions, and in some cases university administrators, erected bureaucratic and politically correct roadblocks between us and students. The University of Alberta, for example, seems determined to do everything in its power to discourage the formation of student organizations and student-staged events. Activists are forced to open a bank account, track down insurance, fill out cumbersome paperwork and recruit an entire club executive before being "permitted" to operate. They are then forced, as on many campuses, to run every event through the student union for approval.

Leaving aside any impairment to the right to

free association and expression, this deluge of red tape, which is typically of many SUs, can cause a cascade of bureaucratic headaches. Understaffed and sometimes incompetent or biased student union bureaucracies frequently misplace requests and correspondence, or are otherwise slow to respond. This has led to numerous Generation Screwed events being delayed or, in some cases, cancelled.

At the University of Ottawa the level of incompetence has been particularly egregious. Our club had to complete the registration process on four separate occasions after the student union repeatedly "lost" our paperwork. Numerous phone calls and emails went unanswered and in-person meetings failed to solve anything. The level of ineptitude and obstruction was so bad it caused us to wonder about motive. Although officially registered earlier this semester, as of this writing our campus coordinator still had not obtained the necessary credentials to book rooms and thus host speakers. As a result he was forced to cancel a December speaking event.

I should say that not all universities have been difficult to work with. Western University, for example, provided a streamlined process to register our Generation Screwed club on campus and competently facilitated our visit there with our mobile debt clock last fall. Regrettably, Western stands out as more of an exception than the rule.

Elsewhere, we have endured run-ins with officials responsible for creating and policing "safe spaces" to insulate fragile students from

*Generation Screwed Coordinator Michael Loughrun and students gather at a Trinity Western University club fair to raise awareness in September 2016 about the mounting debt in Canada. (Image: Aaron Gunn)*





ideas that may “shock” or “offend” them. At Brock University in St. Catharines, our campus coordinator was forced to undertake mandatory sensitivity training before being permitted to host events. At Guelph University our Generation Screwed club name was found to conflict with the student union’s “anti-oppression” mandate, whatever that means. At the aforementioned September 7 event at Université Laval in Quebec City, Generation Screwed activists were ejected from the university under threat of arrest by campus security. Laval students had simply organized a visit of the CTF’s travelling debt clock – our signature visual tool to raise awareness of the size of Canada’s debt.

Parked legally on campus, the iconic clock immediately drew the attention of students. Dozens approached to ask questions about the federal debt as the digital read-out ticked off its rapid growth at roughly \$1,000 every second. But five minutes after we set up our display, campus security arrived at the scene, grilling the local GS activists and demanding to see their permit. The students responded that they were exercising their right to free expression and had paid for parking as required. The campus cops replied that they were committing “unsanctioned activism” and would have to leave immediately. Within half an hour, the officers called for backup and issued a final warning. Rather than risk arrest, our team reluctantly departed campus, debt clock in tow.

It’s hard to say whether our “crime” was a parking violation or some offence against political correctness. Regardless, our run-ins with campus officials represent only a small fraction of the conflicts that occur over free expression at campuses across Canada and other western democracies. For example, at Mount Royal University in Calgary this summer, a student union representative verbally accosted a fellow student because he was sporting one of Donald Trump’s signature “Make America Great Again” ball caps. She referred to the hat as “hate speech,” demanded that he remove it, and threatened to involve university administration if he failed to comply.

### ***What millennials really believe***

Whether you’re celebrating Trumpism or griping about government debt, you risk provoking this kind of backlash. Intolerance for politically incorrect ideas and opinions seems to be on the rise, but polling indicates it is not supported by most young Canadians. According to an August 2016 poll from the Angus Reid Institute, 67 percent of Canadians aged 18-34 believe political correctness has “gone too far”. Even more of this same cohort – 71 percent – believes “too many people are easily offended these days over the language others use.” Young people support that statement in higher numbers than any other age group in Canada. The data refutes the notion that millennials have invited this coddling, “safe space” culture. Instead, it implies that such attitudes are the preference of PC activists whose influence over campus debate far exceeds their actual numbers in the

“Generation Screwed is now Canada’s largest, non-partisan student movement advocating for fiscally responsible small government”

student population.

But these so-called “social justice warriors” do not represent their generation. Millennials, in fact, are very much the free-thinking entrepreneurs fomenting the digital revolution; the generation most comfortable with the open, free-wheeling debate synonymous with the Internet. They are open to fresh ideas and bold new ways of thinking. They believe, by and large, that universities should be a place for the free exchange of ideas. And that society should reflect a diversity of viewpoints, not a single, socially approved narrative.

Enter the Generation Screwed campaign. Over the past three and a half years, we have interacted with thousands of young Canadians across the country. Over and over, students approach our booths and displays armed with probing questions and open minds. They get that perpetual borrowing against the promise of a brighter future doesn’t add up. And they understand that an aging population and soaring health care costs are only going to make the intergenerational debt transfer even worse. As millennials move toward middle age, and try to make ends meet while raising families and servicing mortgages, they are only going to feel the debt burden more acutely, and they will increasingly challenge politicians to live within their means; to build a better future for the next generation, not a more indebted one.

The CTF, and our Generation Screwed team are proud to be playing a role in spreading this awareness, despite the obstacles we have faced. We’re also proud to be part of the growing resistance to campus censorship and political correctness. It is long past time for universities to return to their roots as bastions for the free exchange of ideas and the guardians of open debate. On its surface, the Université Laval’s eloquent vision statement appears a good place to start, promising, among other things, “An open university that promotes dialog, cooperation, and the participation of its members in major world issues.”

For now it seems those words only apply to officially “sanctioned” activities. But based on what we’re hearing at Laval and elsewhere, young people want the university to start believing in its own vision again.

*Aaron Gunn is executive director of Generation Screwed for the Canadian Taxpayers Federation*

# Where have all the stoics gone?

By Daniel Bezael Richardsen

*From my grandfather Verus: decency and a mild temper. From what they say and I remember of my natural father: integrity and manliness. From my mother: piety, generosity, the avoidance of wrongdoing and even the thought of it; also simplicity of living, well clear of the habits of the rich.*

These are the opening lines of the second century work that came to be called *Meditations*, penned in Greek by the Roman philosopher-king, Marcus Aurelius. These words fill me with longing for my family back in India and Brunei. It's not just due to the distance that bars the joy of being together. I don't constantly embody these listed virtues – often far from it. But my very recognition of and aspiration towards them is rooted in my fortune of an attentive upbringing by decent and principled adults, a fact I only fully grasped myself, like countless others, with the ripening of years. The esteemed Classics scholar, Diskin Clay, summed up the core of *Meditations* in this way:

*The virtue of honesty, truthfulness, and a courageous recognition of reality (aletheia) combine into one of the most important of the virtues of the Meditations, integrity. These virtues connect with Marcus' deep sense of responsibility to and tolerance for his fellow human beings.*



As has been chronicled elsewhere in the Winter 2016 edition of *C2C Journal*, it seems as if it is the antithesis of these 'Marcus virtues' that are falsely held up as vehicles of tolerance and responsibility to others. The tetrad of honesty, truthfulness, a courageous recognition of reality, and integrity, appear to be forgotten. The fruits of this forgetfulness don't look promising. We can reasonably guess that what is happening in our post-secondary institutions are both symptoms of and predictions for our society at large.

The personal irony is that it was the opportunity to study at a Canadian university that motivated my 17-year-old self to leave all that I knew behind and move nearly 15,000 kilometres away. I was no pilgrim of privilege; the move demanded everything from me and my family, materially and emotionally. I still recall with a chuckle the naïve frisson I experienced on discovering, in those early days, that the Latinate etymology of *alma mater* meant "nourishing mother." A notion that would probably strike the majority of students today as laughable. I had very idealistic notions



of universities in the West, being impressed by thumbing through glossy brochures at my Bruneian high school.

After a dozen years in Canada, as I ponder my own journey as an immigrant, I realize that many of the 'Marcus virtues' that helped me to survive and thrive require practice and cultivation. Which is both good (that they are not innate and can be developed) and bad (they require the hard work of being valued, the harder work of being taught, and the hardest work of being lived out). They are already difficult enough per se, but they become impossible when they aren't even affirmed as virtues, which seems to be the case on campuses today.

Let's take a closer look at what makes these traits tick.

*'No thief can steal your will' – Epictetus, quoted in Meditations*

One of the key characteristics that Marcus Aurelius emphasizes is "self-mastery." There is a sturdy confidence in Stoic thinking on the ability of a person to will themselves to desirable traits. Paul Tough, writing in his book *How Children Succeed*, expanded on the notion of self-control and willpower in helping build the type of character that led to academic success. Tough cites Angela Duckworth, an expert on motivation, who observed that: "To help chronically low-performing but intelligent students, educators and parents must first recognize that character is at least as important as intellect."

A crucial building block of character is something Duckworth defined as "a passionate commitment to a single mission and an unswerving dedication to achieve that mission." She labelled this as "grit." Fundamental to grit is a non-voguish virtue: loyalty. In the early twentieth century, American socialists exhorted their faithful to "wash the flag, not burn it." Implicit in this sentiment is a very important distinction. Loyalty (or patriotism or a fondness for Western Civilization), does not mean docility, a dumb allegiance that fails to question. But its position of critique is tied to a dedication to the object of criticism; it does not seek its wholesale destruction. You criticize because you care. You don't lose hope that reform, renewal and yes, even redemption is possible. But this type of "critical thinking" seems to have been abandoned on many campuses, and in its place a radical rejection seems to have momentum. One of Duckworth's aphorisms is: "Enthusiasm is common. Endurance is rare." Enthusiasm only has the lower demand of energy, but endurance

asks the harder assent of loyalty.

*'The art of living is more like wrestling than dancing' – from Meditations*

For Aurelius, the stoic life was not achieved without struggle, and persistence, or without loyalty to a group and ideas. Even more importantly, the maintenance of loyalty requires the aid of others.

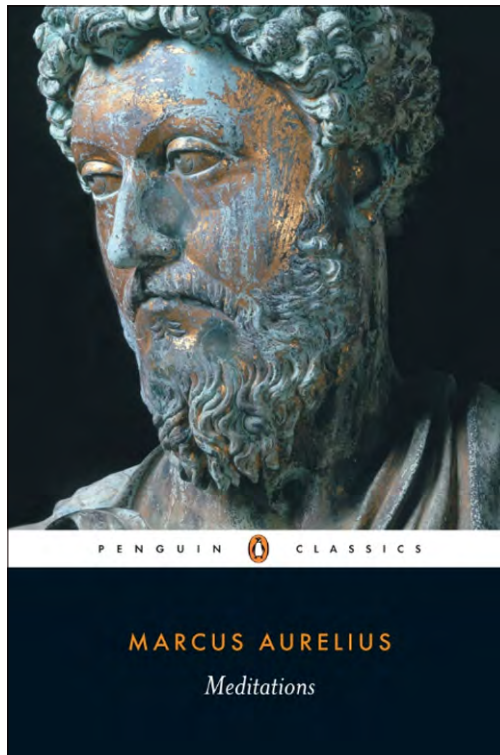
J.D. Vance, whose *Hillbilly Elegy* should be on the year-end reading list for anyone who wants to understand what happened in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, explained in an interview with the Hoover Institution what he owed to his displaced and dispossessed Appalachian community and their values in shaping his conservative ideals:

*...liberals tend to have a certain discomfort with talking about actors other than the state and other than the individual. If you read this book [Hillbilly Elegy] the theme that runs throughout it is that family is an important actor, that community is an important actor, that neighbourhoods, that churches are important actors. That's a long way of saying that culture matters in a way that is distinct from the way an individual acts, and the way the state acts.*

One of the great tensions in life is between self-preservation and solidarity. And the non-individual, non-state spaces that Vance refers to – frequently mediating the major part of our lives – help us grapple with that conundrum. This is a tension that needs to be taut, for lived life can't cope with a chaotic unravelling. This is why Charles Taylor, the Canadian Catholic philosopher, in speaking about meaningful political engagement, advocates "localism and subsidiarity," with the view that

problems should be ironed-out by those closest to it. It might mean a "political life centered on local schools, town governments, voluntary associations, and churches." When I look back to my own time as an undergraduate, it was my involvement in the many campus clubs and other aspects of student life such as athletics and residence that helped form my closest friendships, salvaged my loneliness, and helped me thrive. I could say the same for my adult life today. Maybe this is where the hope for students today lie. And not just the clubs and associations sanctioned by campus authorities, but in the ones you can form on your own, if need be.

One of the things these civic spaces also do for us is that they help us move past ourselves. Marcus Aurelius' notion of self-mastery was



not egoist. He advocated humility:

*Think of the whole of existence, of which you are the tiniest part; think of the whole of time, in which you have been assigned a brief and fleeting moment; think of destiny – what fraction of that are you?*

He also preached an attachment towards others:

*Fit yourself for the matters which have fallen to your lot, and love these people among whom destiny has cast you – but your love must be genuine.*

Duckworth notes a strong correlation between grit and selflessness by observing that “grittier people are dramatically more motivated than others to seek a meaningful, other-centered life.”

The other disservice we do to young people by propagating a grievance-first-and-last mindset is to deprive them of the opportunity to persist in a discipline, to learn a craft, to accept that while not all problems are solvable, this still need not be a cause for despair. As the philosopher Alain de Botton notes, our vocations and purpose, like romantic love, “is in essence a skill we need to learn, rather than an enthusiasm we simply experience.”

The final point I want to press is that the neglect of the Marcus virtues, particularly in shirking a “courageous recognition of reality,” enfeebles our moral sense, short-circuits our mutual trust, and robs us of an ability to “stand ready for what comes”; the true ambition of Stoic thought.

“To help chronically low-performing but intelligent students, educators and parents must first recognize that character is at least as important as intellect”

Lewis Mumford, writing in *The New Republic* in 1940, castigated the liberalism and liberals of his day on the dangers of appeasement: “[T]heir complacency, their emotional tepidity, their virtuous circumspectness, their unwillingness to defend [Western] civilization with all its faults and all its capacity for rectifying these faults, means barbarism tomorrow.”

I neither fancy myself an alarmist nor a seer. Yet it is quite clear to me, with much still unsaid, that our present cultural hedonism is a self-inflicting wound, and a cul-de-sac of futility. Our campuses and culture need to become reacquainted with the virtue of grit: honesty, truthfulness, a courageous recognition of reality, and integrity. That maybe the notion of an alma mater, “a nourishing mother,” need not – some fine day – be a laughing matter.

Motivational expert Angela Duckworth, and writers Paul Tough, and J.D. Vance, from left to right. (Images: CC by John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation / Larry D. Moore CC BY-SA 3.0. / Ryan Lash, TED)

Daniel Bezael Richardsen is the founder and editor of Foment, the literary journal of the Ottawa International Writers Festival, Canada’s largest independent literary celebration. His previous article for C2C Journal was on the Magna Carta and his work has also appeared in Tablet, National Post, The New Quarterly, Convivium, Arc Poetry Magazine, and other publications.





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# Merry Christmas from Donald Trump

by Nigel Hannaford

During the grueling battle for the Republican nomination, and in the election campaign that followed, you could never be entirely sure when Donald Trump was on or off script. He constantly used the very opposite of the safe, focus-group-tested talking points of the political elites and the media who report on them. And he mocked and derided all those who played by the rules of political correctness, including progressives of all stripes and the establishment of his own party.

He did not merely get away with it: it carried him to the presidency.

So, will the ascent of Trump prove the death of political correctness? Will his presidency mark the eclipse of the written and unwritten laws that enforce PC across a great swath of public policy and beggar free speech? Or will he, as president, shutter his Twitter account, tone down his outrageous invective, and abandon some of the bold policy positions that helped win him the White House?

Certainly, while he has been tamer since his victory, there are strong reasons to expect he will continue to flout the



liberal consensus. Among the most compelling is the fact that he can't unsay everything candidate Trump said:

His vanquished opponents will forever be known as "Little Marco", "Lyn' Ted", and "Crooked Hillary".

Regardless whether he bans Muslim immigration to America "until our country's representatives can figure out what the hell is going on," can anyone forget that he threatened to do so or be certain that he won't if there are further Islamist attacks? After all, this is the president-elect who also said of Syrian refugees "I can look at their faces and say, 'Look, you can't come here.'"

Will he deport all illegal immigrants and get Mexico to pay for the Great Wall? Doubtful, but after saying "they're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists..." it's still a safe bet things that some big changes are coming to America's southern border arrangements.

Will he deliver on some kind of national daycare program and pay equity, as his daughter Ivanka implied in her speech at the Republican National Convention? Doing so would seem starkly at odds with the rest of his anti-progressive agenda. But if he does it won't be to satisfy feminist orthodoxy, judging from his lifetime refusal to kowtow to

it, and illustrated by campaign comments like this: "26,000 unreported sexual assaults in the military – only 238 convictions. What did these geniuses expect when they put men & women together?"

Will President Trump "knock the hell out of ISIS", as promised? They're already losing ground in Syria and Iraq, and might be better off surrendering before he takes office, lest he deliver on his startling vow to "take out their families" and bring back waterboarding.

Will he curtail press freedoms, as some fretful members of the Fourth Estate predict? Probably not, because he plays the media like a fine fiddle, feeding them stories they can't resist even as they serve his objectives, all the while deriding them as "liars", "vultures", or "sleazeballs".

### ***Pro-life provocations***

How about abortion, putatively the hottest "third rail" of politics? "I'm pro-life," candidate Trump said, matter-of-factly. "I'm totally against abortion, having to do with Planned Parenthood. But millions and millions of women – cervical cancer, breast cancer – are helped by Planned Parenthood... But I would defund it, because I'm pro-life." Millions and





millions of pro-lifers heard that and voted for him because of it. At the least, PP should be planning for some lean years of federal funding.

The president-elect's website makes no mention of any of this. Maybe he's hoping it will disappear down the memory hole. But in a post-election interview with CBS, he affirmed he would appoint a Supreme Court justice who would overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

To feminists there is no greater provocation than to identify with the unborn. And for them it could not have come from a more predictable and contemptible source – a self-confessed serial female groper.

So yes, Trump was rude, insulting and insensitive – seemingly the living, breathing expression of political incorrectness.

Does it diminish this assessment to recognize that he left some low-hanging fruit untouched? After all, he could have easily spoken to the grave reservations that many Americans have about the PC *cause-de-jour*, legal protections and pronouns and bathrooms for the transgendered. That would include conservative Christians, whom Trump eagerly and successfully courted.

On this issue, they were offered little by candidate Trump. Indeed, LGBTetc issues constitute one of the rare policy areas where he equivocates. In April, he gave the politically correct answer that transgender people should be free to use the washroom of their choice, saying that fellow reality television celeb Caitlyn Jenner would be welcome to use the women's washroom in Trump Tower.

In May he said the opposite, asserting that “whatever you're born, that's the bathroom you use.” Eventually he passed the buck, saying states should decide.

He was similarly and uncharacteristically wishy-washy on gay marriage. In June he said he would “strongly consider” appointing Supreme Court justices who would overturn the Marriage Equality Act and make gay marriage illegal again. Since the election, he has proclaimed gay marriage “settled law”.

Trump would be an even more exceptional politician if he kept all his promises, of course. But it's fair to ask why he backed off on these gender and sexuality issues, not the

“Trump was rude, insulting and insensitive – the living, breathing expression of political incorrectness”

others. There are at least two possible explanations.

First, Trump is by all accounts a meritocrat with a history of hiring and promoting capable people regardless of their race, sex, or sexual proclivities. He has also generously praised his homosexual friends like Elton John as “tremendous people.” It is entirely likely the thrice-married Trump doesn't see issues involving bedroom and bathroom as being all that important in the grand scheme of things.

Second, it could have backfired on him in a way that railing on about Mexicans and Muslims could not. Plenty of reasonable people think tens of millions of illegal aliens is a legitimate public policy concern, and every day they are appalled by some new Islamist terror outrage. By comparison, who people sleep with and where they urinate seems trivial, and related political criticism can easily appear mean-spirited.

### ***How Clinton-Obama validated Trump***

Public civility is a worthy goal. But when excessive delicacy – political correctness – restricts speech too much, at some point voters start to wonder if their political leaders are really capable of leading, or are hiding something.

When 49 people were slaughtered in June at a gay bar in Florida by a self-declared follower of ISIS, Barack Obama characteristically hesitated to talk about terrorism and Hillary Clinton talked about gun control. The same Hillary Clinton who as Secretary of State tried to scapegoat a Coptic Christian filmmaker for the Benghazi debacle.

When Lou Dobbs revealed that President Obama's vaunted reassurance to Americans that record numbers of illegal immigrants had been deported was based on manipulated numbers, it made the Democrats look devious and Trump look necessary.

And for workers, consumers and taxpayers, there was never a starker contrast between what the progressive elites thought and what Donald Trump thought than when climate change took centre stage. His brazen and repeated assertion that the “concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive” sounded pretty convincing alongside his complaints about China's looting of American jobs and wealth. It also sounded pretty attractive compared to the Obama-Clinton alternative of Gaiacide unless the U.S. shuts down all its coal plants and taxes the hell out of carbon.

Even if Trump has abused science and economics to overstate his case, there's a big constituency for a broader, fairer and more balanced discussion on climate-change policy. Too many jobs and too much money – on both sides of the 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel – depend upon how governments treat it. To declare the issue of global warming settled is to transfer the entire concept from the realm of science to that of religion – a religion regarded skeptically by millions who benefit from the fossil fuel industry.



Even in more liberal Canada, three quarters of respondents to a recent Reid poll said they think political correctness has “gone too far”. As if to prove their point, demonstrators who mocked Alberta Premier Rachel Notley with cheeky Trumpian chants of “Lock her up” at a December anti-carbon tax rally in Edmonton were subjected to a furious media and progressive frenzy of condemnation. The charges included routine allegations of misogyny and the new crime of “bringing Trump-style politics to Canada.”

Apparently it didn’t occur to any of the scolds that the chant was a jest, although it did carry the serious point that Canada needs to rethink its carbon tax policy because our main energy customer and competitor just elected a president who is apparently going to dig and drill for carbon like there’s no tomorrow, whether that’s a climatological possibility or not.

**Making American debate free again**

One reading of the Trump victory is that it marks the end of a long liberal delegitimization of how millions of Americans think. Whatever the progressive elites managed to superimpose on the façade of their country over the last several decades, Americans still identify with the working man in Norman Rockwell wartime paintings lionizing freedom, particularly of thought and expression. Talk down to him, silence him, call him a “deplorable” and pay the price: In the saddle today, under the horse’s hooves tomorrow.

Trump stood out in the GOP debates by saying, “The big problem this country has is being politically correct. I’ve

been challenged by so many people, and I don’t frankly have time for total political correctness. And to be honest with you, this country doesn’t have time either.”

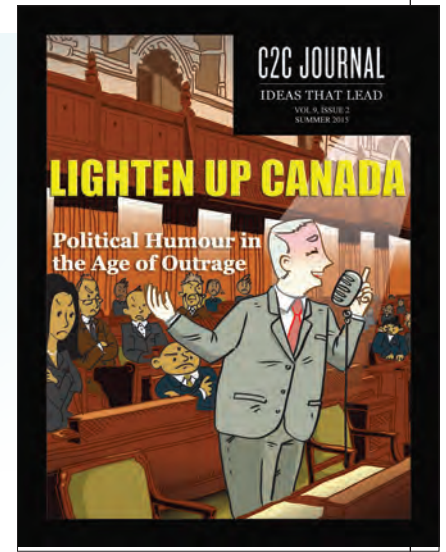
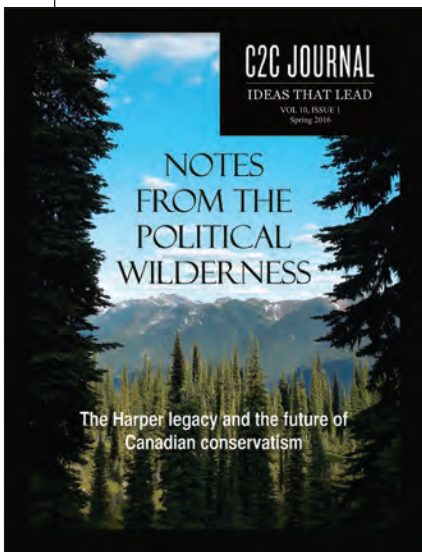
So once more, does the rise of Trump herald the fall of political correctness?

The big post-election street demonstrations in blue cities across the country suggest otherwise. So do the campus cry-ins and the resolute efforts of the liberal media to sandbag the president-elect on some of his controversial cabinet pics, his tangled conflicts of interest, and his dismissal of CIA and FBI evidence of Russian attempts to manipulate the election outcome. If anything, PC militancy may mushroom, at least in the near term

But if Trump’s radical agenda succeeds in producing economic and security gains, the force of political correctness will almost certainly ebb.

If President Donald J. Trump is even half as politically incorrect as candidate Trump was, he will restore to the intellectual market many ideas America’s liberals thought they had framed out of bounds. And he will continue the liberating effect he’s already had on political debate in the U.S., Canada and elsewhere. With any luck, we’ll be hearing less of “safe spaces”, trigger warnings”, “micro-aggressions” for a long time. And instead of obsessing about minority rights and the weather, policy debates will focus on serious problems.

*Nigel Hannaford was Manager of Speechwriting in the Office of the Prime Minister from 2009 to 2015*



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