

For those wondering what exactly happened on the Ontario Psychological Association (OPA) Listserv that caused so much trouble/controversy, I have decided to post my contributions to the discussions. It is very lengthy but if anyone wants a record of what happened, here it is. I can provide only my contributions (aside from those from a colleague, Dr. Donald Young, who is not opposed to my presenting his name publicly) and I have taken out any potential identifying information of other members. If anyone makes it through the entire thread, I will praise your stamina and patience. **If you want to know about only the most recent controversy, please start from near the bottom of page 25.** Please note that these messages occurred over a number of months and, although they are repetitive, this is often because I am writing something in response to a message I received from a member privately or publicly. I also realized that I may have missed one or two messages because I am combing through literally thousands of threads in order to find the relevant ones; I trust that no one will think this is intentional:

**MESSAGE THAT STARTED IT ALL ON NOVEMBER 8, 2016, BY DR. DONALD YOUNG:**

It isn't very frequent that a psychologist manages to make headlines in the international press and media. It is even rarer when one of our members manages to do so. But this is precisely what is happening with our colleague, Dr. Jordan Peterson, a clinical psychologist and professor of psychology at the University of Toronto. The issue revolves around his refusal to use "gender neutral pronouns" such as the singular "they" or "ze" or "zir" as alternatives to "he" and "she". This has turned out not to be a just a linguistic tempest in a tea pot. Currently the University of Toronto's administration is threatening to prohibit him from teaching his courses as scheduled in the Winter term if he does not capitulate. He may in fact be fired. The administration sees this as a necessity in order to comply with Bill C-16 and the Ontario Human Rights Code. Conversely, Dr. Peterson views this demand as an infringement on freedom of speech as well as a practice that runs contrary to scientific research on gender identity. He also worries that his preference to stick to Contemporary Standard English could put him at risk of being prosecuted for a "hate crime" under the proposed legislation.

I am very sympathetic to Dr. Peterson's point of view and I see the issue as of paramount importance in a free society that cherishes freedom of thought and speech. But that is not the purpose of this post. Rather, it is to point out what is happening to one of our members, increase awareness of the situation one of our colleagues finds himself in, and, for anyone who cares to do so, offer some remarks one way or the other. Given this situation, its ramifications, and the proximity of this unique matter, I find it odd that, unless I've missed something, nothing has yet appeared on the list serve about this issue right in our midst.

**In response to two colleagues' comments, Dr. Young wrote:**

Thank you for your thoughtful remarks. I hope other people contribute to the dialogue. As I stated I was struck by the lack of mention of this issue here and starting a discussion was my intent. One point: if you listen to Peterson he does not say he would outright refuse to use such pronouns if a person requests it, and nor would I, particularly in a clinical setting. But he would refuse in the face of coercion. You can hear his explanation online. Again thanks for the remarks.

**I joined the discussion the next day in response to someone who disagreed with Dr. Peterson's stance and with Dr. Young's aforementioned post about it:**

While I can understand that people may feel very uneasy given the shocking and dismaying events last night, the reality is that protecting freedom of speech is not mutually exclusive from protecting the rights of marginalized groups. In fact, because of that freedom we currently have (sort of), I have been able to reach out to and help more people understand the issues via my classes and media appearances--due to the approach I take, which is in contrast to what I am describing below.

Many young people have told me that they were turned off of or turned against these and other "social justice" issues because of the manner in which professors, advocates, "Social Justice Warriors" etc presented their beliefs and agendas. And the main criticism is that such people try to shut down any relevant discussion that does not conform to their beliefs/agendas--especially via the strategy of labeling anyone who raises questions a homophobe,

transphobe, racist, sexist, misogynist, misanthrope etc. Although such descriptors do apply to a certain proportion of those raising such questions, it is unfair and deplorable to recklessly apply such labels (directly or through insinuation) to \*everyone\* who does not immediately conform to the way the world is changing in certain ways.

Most importantly, I believe it can be shown that Trump's election and a lot of the ugly unrest in Europe can be attributed in part to people's frustration with and rebellion against the efforts of those who want to shut down \*any\* discussion of important social issues. We know that people are more likely to join such movements when they feel disenfranchised and disempowered; although people with "privilege" may still be part of the most empowered \*group\* in their society/country, on an \*individual\* level very many of these "privileged" people feel anything but powerful.

And when these (young) people cannot even question things that may cause them discomfort--not because they are necessarily homophobic/transphobic etc., but rather because these are issues with which they are not yet familiar--they will be far more inclined to resist sledgehammer efforts to \*force\* them to go along with something they might not yet be ready to do. This is not necessarily borne out of hate but rather fear and ignorance in many cases. As psychologists, educators and other professionals in the helping field, is it not our responsibility to help inform people and reduce their fear and intolerance?

If you go to any of the universities in Toronto (and elsewhere, I presume) and ask students how much \*open\* and balanced discussion about the aforementioned issues goes on in their lectures, you will be surprised to see that many students who are not already on board with these issues will say that \*personal biases/agendas\* are far more common in their classes than disinterested presentation of facts/evidence and honest/open/balanced/comprehensive discussion of the many controversies inherent in these matters. And if we cannot have these critical discussions at \*university,\* where else can we have them?

Once again, shutting down the kinds of discussions mentioned above--while making a lot of what I consider to be rude, ignorant, hateful and/or inappropriate assumptions and statements about "privileged" groups--makes those "privileged" people feel hurt, angry, disenfranchised, disempowered, resentful and anxious/fearful. In such a state, they are more inclined to seek out some other "powerful" individual, leader, group or movement to help them quell or process these feelings/sentiments. Hence, my earlier comment about the correlation between what Dr. Peterson has been warning/fighting against and the rise in very ugly groups/movements we are witnessing today, including Trump's election. Obviously there are other factors at play as well, but I think we would be foolish to discount the factors I have listed here.

Just my two cents.

**Then, in response to a colleague who drew parallels between the pronoun issue and other changes to language and social mores in the past, I wrote:**

I think that is an important point, J\_\_\_\_. One of the main differences between these examples I believe is that people are far more likely to \*knowingly\* encounter someone from a different "race" than their own versus a trans/non-binary gender individual. As we know from many years of study, one of the best ways to reduce fear, intolerance and hatred of "other groups" is healthy exposure. So, in your example, I can imagine that those who did not have much direct (healthy) contact with the peoples you've mentioned would on average be the last ones to adopt the new language.

Knowing that, I believe we need to be strategic in how we introduce these concepts to the broader public because not everyone is open minded and many people are afraid of change. What Jordan is fighting against is the antithesis of strategic discussion and presentation of these controversial but very important issues, IMO.

**I then wrote this response to another colleague who seemed to be misconstruing what I had written; she never responded publicly but did write to me backchannel and continued to misconstrue what I wrote and was also entirely unreasonable. From this point on, and in numerous subsequent messages, I stated that I**

**did not think Dr. Peterson handled the “trans” aspect of his free speech/critical thinking/anti-thought police stance as well as he could have. In retrospect, I realize that, ironically, I was harsher in speaking about the way he dealt with this matter than I was in my dealings with my colleagues:**

Although I agree with most of what you wrote, A\_\_, part of the problem is that you (and others) are misconstruing or misrepresenting what is being stated--if your message was in response to mine in any way; if you are referring to something else, then please disregard this message. That is, you introduce your message with "...those who belong to privileged groups are asking those who are a part of marginalized groups to understand their pain."

If I had written a post entitled, "The Plight of the Privileged," I would have expected and accepted such a response. However, my reference to "the pain" of "the privileged" was in the service of explaining why there is a growing backlash against movements toward fairness, dignity, respect, safety and equality for various peoples. There is a big difference.

And if anyone wants to see the outcome of this backlash, look no further than feminism. As the son of one of Canada's early-ish (circa 1972) feminist "icons," I refuse to abandon the term and still refer to myself as an "organic feminist." Because I take what I consider "the right" approach to discussing such matters, I have had very productive discussions with many men/women/others who are ardent anti-feminists; we can get past their revulsion and resistance against the way that many feminists present their ideas so that we can actually speak about the virtuous premises of feminism. Once we do that, it's easy to see that many of these people actually support the same ideas. That is why only 18% of women in one recent poll apparently supported feminism, yet over 80% of these same women said they agreed with equality for the sexes/genders (I might be off by 1 or 2 percentage points).

As psychologists, we should be among the best when it comes to presenting challenging and/or controversial ideas to others. As mentioned in my first response, I believe JP handled his initial videos and a few subsequent interviews pretty clumsily; I do not think he chose his words carefully enough or adequately considered the potential impact of those words, hence we have the mess that is unfolding. If he had handled the situation better, we could be having a rational and factual discussion regarding the ongoing and worsening attack on free speech and open dialogue within the universities and elsewhere in society. And this could be done while continuing to promote the safety, wellbeing, respect and dignity of various groups.

**In response to another colleague, I also wrote:**

I ask the listserve's indulgence for an (hypothetical) example of what could happen if we are not careful about JP's stated concerns:

I discuss the Jian Ghomeshi case in my classes and state that he most likely did physically assault a number of women without their (fully informed) consent; that is, even if they knew he was into "rough sex" and indicated or implied that they were interested in that, they had no idea that he would actually assault them. However, the judge made the proper \*legal\* decision based on how the trial played out.

During this discussion, I mention that we need to acknowledge that you can never determine what happened during an alleged sexual assault (or any other type of traumatic incident) based on the victim/survivor's actions during, immediately afterward or sometime down the road, given what we know about these things. I also mention that we cannot change the laws so that we convict someone of sexual (or any other kind of) assault without any evidence or without a compelling disclosure of what happened to the alleged victim/survivor because the fact is that some people do indeed lie about these things or they may have a personality style or mental health issue that makes them susceptible to distorting their experiences.

I have had students tell me that certain professors have had the gall to claim that women never lie about these things. And when they have challenged such patently false claims, they get in trouble. Will we get to the point that,

if I am to make the entirely true statement that some women (and men and others) do in fact lie about being assaulted, I will be accused of promoting misogyny or some other repulsive ideology? The fact is that many students who make the same factual statements DO get accused of such things. How soon until it becomes a university policy that we cannot discuss these realities?

Fortunately, in my classes I am able to convey all of these (and many other) points and I have students from all ends of various spectra hear me out and then ask questions and provide their opinions and experiences. I am scared of the day that we cannot have such important discussions.

**Dr. Young commented on my post publicly:**

Very good and practical example of the concerns that engendered my post that started this maelstrom, Oren. And I'd say you have a lot to be scared about and it is already happening. You previously documented this in your post regarding the disruption of Peterson's attempt to have a dialogue with students and the disruption of various conferences and meetings at U. of T. And from the tone of certain communications sent to me here and back channel it seems that some of us see little danger in the potential criminalization of free speech and open dialogues. But open dialogue does remain alive and well in this forum and I for one have learned a lot. I hope others would bring similar "big issues" into this forum in the future. I appreciate the time and thought put into the many responses. I had anticipated a limited number of responses. But then I thought Hillary would just walk away with it.

**To which I responded:**

Thank you, Donald. And in JP's own words (from his interview with the CBC):

"I think that the continual careless pushing of people by left wing radicals is dangerously waking up the right wing. So you can consider this a prophecy from me if you want. Inside the collective is a beast and the beast uses its fists. If you wake up the beast then violence emerges. I'm afraid that this continual pushing by radical left wingers is going to wake up the beast."

**I also commented on a post by someone who cited Barbara Kay's National Post article on Dr. Peterson's situation:**

I haven't seen the piece yet but JP has made that point repeatedly in numerous interviews, so thank you for sharing it, J\_\_\_. The example he keeps using is shouting "fire" in a crowded theatre.

He also made it clear that he would refer to a trans woman as "she" (this was not a hypothetical but a real question about a real person during his appearance on TVO), whereas I have heard others in other places making false claims about what he has said, including the allegation that he is also a racist. Again, I would hope that we as psychologists (and others on this listserve) would be able to have an honest and open discussion about JP's legitimate concerns regarding language/thought police--independent of the trans/non-binary gender issue.

As mentioned a few times, I wish JP would have made his stance in a different context so that we could indeed focus on his real fears rather than focusing on claims that he is a horrible bigot, homophobe, transphobe, racist etc. If it turns out that he is indeed any of those things, I will be the first to call him out on it. Until then, I strongly support his efforts to preserve free speech and honest/real/rational discourse, notwithstanding the clumsy/misguided manner in which he has presented his case.

**At this point, I started getting backchannel messages from some colleagues who were totally missing my points and/or were making very inaccurate and ugly assumptions about me. In order to avoid the risk that they will complain that I have somehow violated privacy regarding these backchannel communications, I**

**will not comment on those emails nor post my responses to them here. Instead, I will continue to post my messages to the listserv:**

In fact, look at the term, "cisgender." A few years ago, the only non trans/non-binary gender people I knew who used it were students in Social Work or Gender studies at the university. Now, more and more people are using the term. However, I can tell you that I saw many examples of these students being very aggressive, hateful and unfair when they would try to shame one of my other students who did not know the meaning of the term and who would struggle with how to refer to non trans/non-binary gender people; that is, they would call them "normal." Up until a few years ago, virtually everyone would use the same term--"normal"--yet they were not all ignorant and hateful transphobes.

I believe it's all about how change is introduced and facilitated/encouraged. I believe JP is fighting against what he sees as the wrong approach to this process.

And one thing I forgot to mention in my previous message regarding the term, "cisgender," is that I have surprised several members of the LGBTQetc community with my explanation of the actual origin/meaning of "cisgender." That is, some of them believed that the "cis" in "cisgender" stood for "Comfortable In (your own) Skin," rather than the "cis" from science/chemistry/genetics/biology.

**After my “cisgender” message, I returned to the same points I had been making repeatedly:**

I think Dr. Peterson did not handle this very important and controversial issue as tactfully and skillfully as he could have. Nevertheless, in all of his interviews I believe he has been quite consistent about the motive for his stance.

Although you and some others might not like the fact that he has used trans/non-binary gender issues as the context for his stance, this does not change the reality of his concerns. Please check out the Ontario Human Rights Commission/Tribunal's stance on the matter: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-because-gender-identity-and-gender-expression/7-forms-discrimination> Section 7.4.

Dr. Peterson is also concerned that universities will prevent any discussion of issues that are far from having been resolved; this is not hyperbole. I cannot count the number of male/female/other students who have shared their personal horror stories regarding the agenda-driven environment that characterizes their university. If they say anything that does not conform to their professor's *\*personal\** beliefs, they are singled out and shut down by the professor and students; they are called misogynists, transphobes, misanthropes, racists, etc; they have suffered academically with these professors; they have been sent to higher authorities within the university to defend their standing at the university.

It is unfortunate that advocacy for and protection of human rights, dignity, safety etc. of trans/non-binary gender people and others is getting mixed up in all of this because there should never be any question about such matters. However, I hope that we as a profession will be able to continue to promote such values while also recognizing that we have an obligation to study and learn more about the human condition based on *\*reality\** rather than the agendas of the ideologues against whom Dr. Peterson is rebelling.

**A few days later, I wrote this re. Nicholas Matte’s appearance with Dr. Peterson on TVO’s “The Agenda”:**

I don't mean to drag this issue on but I think I forgot to mention one thing in our discussion last week (which I was trying to engage in during brief breaks from a full day with patients) about that the ongoing and increasingly worsening restrictions on what can be discussed in academia. Specifically, Professor of Transgender Studies, Nicholas Matte stated on TVO's The Agenda (on which Professor Jordan Peterson appeared as well) that biological sex did not exist. And he stated it so matter of factly as if we should simply accept such a claim because it has been proved and is now common knowledge. If someone wishes to challenge such claims in class and a student complains, are we going to be accused of being a transphobe, as happened to JP?

I received some positive back channel correspondence from people who (wisely) did not wish to wade into this very important issue on the listserve (and also from some members who have commented publicly), and only one negative back-channel comment that I addressed thoroughly and of course respectfully--yet did not receive a response. My point is, I believe that many people agree with the concerns that I and others have raised regarding the issue of free speech and our profession's responsibility to use our knowledge, experience, expertise and various positions to promote critical thinking and rational/real exploration of important issues, as opposed to what has been happening across North America: ideologues with their own personal agendas are dictating what we can and cannot discuss, who is allowed to say what, and where such discussion may or may not occur.

If anyone has any good evidence that biological sex does not exist, please forward it to me so that I can educate myself accordingly. If such evidence does not exist, I hope that even those on this listserve who are sympathetic to Professor Matte's lived experience and his desire to make certain changes in society and academia will admit that it is as reckless to make such unfounded claims about biological sex as it is to claim that we can determine people's personality through the shape, size and configuration of their skulls.

**I then wrote about Dr. Peterson's "debate" at the University of Toronto:**

As an update, JP will be participating in a debate at the UofT this Saturday, according to this article: <http://thevarsity.ca/2016/11/14/jordan-peterson-announces-details-of-debate/>

I will unfortunately be teaching at that time so will not be able to make it but I hope others do and are able to convey to people on all sides of the issue what the relevant points are in a calm and rational manner. Also, I hope people will be able to see that promoting, advocating for and respecting the rights/safety/well-being/dignity etc of trans/non-binary gender (and other) people is not mutually exclusive from protecting freedom of speech and discussion of ideas at university and in other contexts.

**I also wrote about some concerning comments made in the aforementioned article:**

For anyone who chooses not to read the article I posted, I find the following passages\* concerning:

The Queer Caucus of CUPE 3902, the union representing "7,000 sessional lecturers, TAs, and other contract instructional staff at U of T," released an open letter on November 4 calling for a boycott of the upcoming debate. The letter states that "human rights are not up for debate." The letter also says that there is no room for discussion regarding some of Peterson's statements about gender. "Neither Peterson's views about race and gender nor his understandings of the Canadian Human Rights Act and Bill C-16 constitute valid forms of academic debate."

The 3902 Queer Caucus' letter also questions whether such a forum could be safely held, "given the disastrous outcome of the October 11 'free speech rally' held by Peterson and his supporters." It urges members of the community to stand in solidarity by boycotting the debate and express their disappointment with David Cameron via email.

First, shutting down discussion is never a good thing, IMO. As mentioned in a previous posting, this kind of call for a shutdown and other related tactics employed by SJWs has most likely contributed to the rise of people who are aligning themselves with factions or ideas that they might ordinarily reject if they were not so turned off by the insulting, narrow-minded, distasteful, deceptive, cowardly etc. approach of SJWs--particularly SJW professors/ instructors.

Second, so far the violence I saw and heard of during JP's rally was perpetrated by the SJWs trying to shut him down. And I just recently found out that two of the people who were supposedly "white supremacists" have completely denied such an affiliation. Apparently, that was a lie made up by the SJW who assaulted them, stole their phone/camera and then destroyed it; fortunately that individual was arrested for those despicable actions. This is not to say that there were not problems caused by some of the people who "crashed" the rally--namely bikers and neo-nazis who were reportedly hurling horrible epithets at some of the people in attendance and were likely acting in a very aggressive/threatening/intimidating manner (I cannot say for certain because I have not seen videos of these deplorable actions from such individuals but I did hear of them; I will do a search afterward). Nevertheless, I believe that the 3902 Queer Caucus is being disingenuous or outright deceptive by implying that an important

discussion regarding free speech cannot be held because of violence at JP's previous rally--when the documented assaults and other aspects of the "disastrous outcome" were in fact perpetrated by his opponents.

\*I am not including the final two sentences of the first passage because I would never argue with any statement about the humanness or rights/dignity of people. However, I don't want to be accused of quote mining so I am including them here: "Transgender people are not, as he claims, 'a coterie of left-wing ideologues.' We are human beings who seek fair opportunities," a portion of the letter reads."

### **I followed that up with two posts:**

I do really hope that as many "leaders" as possible can encourage the Queer Caucus of CUPE 3902 and others to stop insisting on shutting down discussion while hurling false/inaccurate accusations against those they dislike or disagree with and presenting false, dubious, questionable or uncertain information as fact. The only way to make true healthy progress, IMO, is through respectful sharing/receiving/discussing/modifying of ideas. This is something I believe has been sorely lacking in certain quarters, unless the people presenting the ideas are speaking with those who hold similar views.

The sad irony is that some of the backchannel correspondence I have received after my first and then next round of messages on this topic suggests to me that some of my colleagues are similarly unable or unwilling to engage in healthy and productive dialogue about controversial issues and instead are content to perceive me in ways that are antithetical to who I am personally and professionally. I use the term "irony" because the fact is that I agree with and regularly advocate for the same underlying principles for which they are fighting: the recognition, protection and promotion of rights, respect, dignity, safety, well-being and equality for trans/non-binary gender (and other) people.

I know it's unlikely but can the OPA whip something up to distribute at the debate so that we as a profession can do our part to help educate the public on these very important issues? I believe that we are in the best position to present facts from a scientific, professional, experiential, historical and humane/compassionate perspective, while also showing our support for the need to maintain free speech and to promote facts/logic as opposed to unfounded or heretofore equivocal beliefs/opinions/ideologies.

Since I am a giant fan of irony, I wanted to post this quote that was sent to me backchannel:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

— [United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)

### **On November 21, 2016, following the debacle that was supposed to be a debate at the U of T, I wrote:**

I wrote the following message after discussing recent events with a colleague, Donald Young, Ed.D., who began the Jordan Peterson thread. He has read what I wrote and would like to add his name to it as a sign of support for the sentiments expressed below:

I hope it is clear that I fully understand concerns about protecting the rights, safety, respect and wellbeing of marginalized peoples and I advocate for this important ideal. (I hate having to state such things but, in today's climate, if one does not do so then one is at risk of being mislabelled some truly awful things.) Doing so is not mutually exclusive to addressing the concerns that JP has been forcefully and cogently articulating with respect to infringements on free speech and attempts to block healthy/productive discourse about controversial and/or inadequately understood constructs or phenomena, together with fascist-like dictates by various ideologues—particularly those comprising or affiliated with the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

I am sure that everyone can find numerous things said by each speaker during the recent debate at the UofT to critique, but I want to focus on just two particular points that I believe perfectly capture why JP is so concerned: Dr. Bryson spent much of her time clearly denouncing JP in quite harsh language that seemed out of place in such a forum. After JP pointed this out as a warning to the audience that they "will be next," Dr. Cossman at 1:18:28 talks about how, throughout her career, she has been concerned about “how thoughtful discussion is often shut

down.” She then proceeds to accuse JP of doing this at the debate by announcing that he had been denounced by Dr. Bryson and that “They are going to come for you (the audience/society) next.” She continues, “The thing is about speech is that everybody gets it. And you say something and then you get criticized.” She next claims that JP has not been denounced but rather “He has been severely criticized. And that is actually what speech does.” Some in the audience applaud in response. She follows that up by saying that she would like to have a debate about free speech “with someone who is knowledgeable about the law.”

In short, a lawyer who should understand the definition of “denounce” chooses to deny and distort the word’s meaning (defined by Merriam-Webster as “to criticize (someone or something) harshly and publicly) so that she can deny and distort the reality of what was happening during the debate—which is consistent with what I have seen many people with strong and rigid agendas do in order to further those agendas. She also makes an essentially meaningless point (the one about “speech”) before doing what she falsely accuses JP of doing: shutting down discourse by essentially refusing to discuss the concerns JP has raised about the law and its (potential) impact on society. She does so while ignoring that JP cited a few prominent lawyers who completely validate his concerns about the very things she spent quite some time denying have occurred or could occur in Ontario/Canada.

Yet, despite what I have just mentioned, Dr. Cossman’s supporters applaud her comments—which lacked any actual facts or arguments. After this applause, Dr. Bryson is asked to speak and she ends up talking about the need for “practices of peer review” before asserting that JP has undermined the discussion of trans issues by “Simplifying the world for functional purposes,” which she criticizes by stating that “This is not how we relate to knowledge.” She continues by making bold claims about JP’s failure to engage in “the advancement of knowledge and excellence,” despite “carrying titles at great Canadian universities.” Ironically, she says this shortly after denying that she is denouncing JP and his claims.

Interestingly, Dr. Bryson apparently has no problem with something I stated in a previous message: One of her “allies,” Dr. Nicholas Matte from UofT’s Women’s Studies program, announced on TV—on a program that is considered to appeal to the more intellectually inclined (i.e., TVO’s “The Agenda”)—that “It’s not correct that there is such a thing as biological sex...For over 50 years, scientists have shown that that’s not true.” Why does she not see fit to challenge such a dubious statement? She apparently does not worry about the possibly (tens of?) thousands of students with whom Dr. Matte has shared and will continue to share such an ideology. If he had made a similarly questionable declaration about something that was not considered politically correct, would he not have been censored publicly and/or by the University?

In short, Dr. Bryson spent most of her time spouting rhetoric and trying to appeal to emotion rather than using facts/evidence to dispute JP’s arguments. Along these lines, she also made reference to the 1989 debate between J Philippe Rushton and David Suzuki—more rhetoric without merit and a very ugly comparison to boot. I regularly lecture on Rushton’s work and explain the serious flaws in his research methodology and interpretations/claims. I also provide background on him and his affiliation with the “Pioneer Fund” (which he ended up being the head of), as well as describe some of the real-life impacts of the ideology and agenda that he and others have been trying to push (up until his passing four years ago, of course). At the time of his original publication, however, I remember that many academics refused to even discuss the issue out of political correctness rather than on the merits or lack thereof of his dubious research. Once again, discussion was shut down based largely on ideological grounds rather than using facts/evidence/scientific argument to challenge Rushton’s claims. Fortunately, the APA finally struck up a task force to address the issue. Still, I remember seeing/reading a lot of rhetoric, hand wringing and name calling rather than open discussion of the issues.

Sadly, history appears to be repeating itself—although in stating this I am in no way making any parallels between JP and J Philippe Rushton. As I always tell my students when discussing Rushton and his work, if \*valid\* scientific research shows that certain “groups” are different from other groups on some measure such as intelligence, I want to have an open, honest and factual discussion about this so that we can better understand why these differences might exist and what if anything can be done to address the issue. Such discussion can also lead to better/greater understanding of related phenomena such as whether the supposed “groups” should really be classified as such.

I do not think it is productive or beneficial to declare that we cannot have such open and honest discussion because it might hurt someone's feelings—especially since there are many out there who will take advantage of the silence of the politically correct and promote their (often) false information and hateful ideologies. And those who do not wish to be talked down to by smug ideologues who say, “No, you cannot ask such questions or hold such discussions; we the informed have determined that ABC is true so you must trust us,” will be more inclined to hear out what is being espoused by those who do take the time to discuss such matters. Some or many of the recipients of potentially misleading and dangerous information will likely focus more on their belief that someone respects them enough to engage in dialogue rather than considering that such engagement is occurring in the service of trying to influence them.

I do not know how anyone can watch/listen to the many videos, podcasts or programs out there, or talk to many students on campus, and not realize that more and more people are growing weary of being told what they can and cannot think, say or do by a relatively small group of people who are acting as we are seeing many opponents of JP and his “cause” act over the past few months. As JP has warned, this group of people—including the PC police and SJWs—is contributing to the rise of very ugly sentiments in Europe, North America and elsewhere. Although I am in no way defending those who voted for Trump, it is exceedingly simplistic and patently false to write off every one of them as bigots, racists, sexists, misogynists, intellectually challenged, etc. Especially now that they have been empowered by Trump's victory, more and more of them have made it clear that their vote was, in part, a direct response to the kinds of things JP is warning us about.

I hate to beat a dead horse but I really hope more colleagues will stand up and acknowledge JP's concerns. The more of us who do so and who can do so while also advocating for the rights, safety, respect and wellbeing of marginalized peoples, the more society will become educated and open minded about such important matters and not be so reactionary. I would much rather see that than watch people in certain fields and positions of power cop an attitude, make equivocal claims and pass them—and certain ideologies—off as fact while shutting down any discussion/debate about such matters, and/or ram ideologies down people's throats.

Lastly, I do appreciate concerns that the kind of discussion I am describing can potentially have a negative impact on certain groups or individuals. However, if done properly, I do believe that most people can handle such controversial discussions—especially in university. And should not those of us in a position to model adaptive discourse do so in order to help foster greater communication and understanding, which in turn can help facilitate more tolerance and compassion toward those whom some would rather simply shelter and, to use JP's words, infantilize? Similarly, by engaging with marginalized and other vulnerable people while encouraging and modelling productive and effective discussion with diverse groups of people with differing opinions/beliefs about very controversial/difficult issues, are we not helping them to gain a sense of self-confidence and self-efficacy?

I welcome any feedback, preferably in public. If you choose to write me backchannel, I hope you will not ignore my respectful response; this has happened to me with a number of colleagues these past few weeks, which only further supports the concerns I have presented in this thread.

**On the same day, I showed an example of what was happening at Ryerson University with the “Black Lives Collective” and the Social Work Department:**

A former student of mine just told me that the head of the School of Social Work Studies at Ryerson had to step down today because he apparently walked out of an Anti-Black Racism rally/presentation while a woman of colour was speaking. Those are the only details I can glean so far. When my former student asked a number of her colleagues why Dr. Parada had to resign, she was told that the details do not matter and that the only question she should ask herself is “Why are you siding with the white man in power?”

It is hard to know what to make of such a situation when those who demanded and effected Dr. Parada's resignation provide very few details, aside from calling his departure from the room “an act of violence” and a few other choice words; they provide no context to help explain why Parada left. If he did something truly egregious and deserving of termination, then I fully support such an outcome. If this is simply an over-reaction that has cost

someone his job and reputation, then it is entirely unacceptable and is something that we should all be wary of, especially those of us who work in academic settings.

Here is what is posted on the Black Liberation Collective at Ryerson's Facebook page:

The Black Liberation Collective at Ryerson has been established in response to the systemic anti-Black racism that students, faculty and staff experience. We refuse to allow this behaviour to continue. Dr. Henry Parada, Ryerson's School of Social Work, Faculty of Community Services, Ryerson University: You are on notice.

"Open letter to Dr. Henry Parada, Ryerson's School of Social Work, the Faculty of Community Services and Ryerson University"

October 31st 2016

Dr. Henry Parada,

We write this letter after witnessing a violent act of anti-Blackness, misogyny and misogynoir on Thursday October 27th 2016 at Ryerson University School of Social Work in Eric Palin Hall room 222, at approximately 2:15pm. While this violence came from one individual and was directed at another [Microaggression], our interests lie not at the individual level but rather at the broader systemic manifestations of this violent act. Your inability to contain your anti-Black rage, Dr. Parada, implicates the School, the Faculty, and Ryerson in general. As students and community members, it is our duty to take action and challenge the pervasive anti-Black racism within our School and protect our students, faculty, staff and community.

Anti-Black racism is a specific form of systemic and structural racism in Canadian society that targets the Black community, often through the perpetuation of Whiteness and the marginalization of Black peoples (Benjamin, 2003).

Your actions, Dr. Parada, perpetuate anti-Black racism. They indicated to the folks in that room that you do not value anti-Black racism scholarship, Black women, Black educators or education, Black experiences, Black life and ultimately Black students. When given the opportunity to learn more and explore new ways of conceptualizing Blackness and anti-Black racism, something that based in our mandate, should be welcomed, you chose to violently disrupt the speaker and the space. That says a lot, and we students and community members, received the message loud and clear.

Failure for the School, the Faculty of Community Services and the University to recognize this as anti-Black racism and a public display of toxic masculinity implicates all of you as both anti-Black racism apologists and deeply embedded in misogynoir. This tells us that within our classrooms and the School of Social Work we have a serious issue of anti-Blackness and anti-Black racism, and when the Director of the program is allowed to behave in such violent ways, how can we think that practically addressing and challenging anti-Black racism is valued or encouraged? How do we support Black students, educators, and staff and build a more critical community? We do not. Too many Black folks at the school of Social Work have too many stories that speak to experiencing anti-Black racism from other students and faculty. Given your actions, it is clear why this behaviour is acceptable, when your leadership is anti-Black.

The School teaches us to be critical, teaches us to practice resistance, teaches us to learn to know ourselves, to do better and be better. Well, we invite you to do the same Dr. Parada. To explore the feelings that led you to such behaviour, explore what those feelings of resistance, hate and misogynoir stem from and how to start doing the work to do and be better.

We figure you may need a reminder, so you can see how you walking out at a time when Black folks were giving praise to a young Black woman professor at a critical and vulnerable time is something that needs to be named and addressed, and when we name this act of violence we must name it as an act of anti-Black racism. You claim to understand "It is not your responsibility to ease the discomfort of those who benefit from the status quo...you are not called on to protect the non-legitimate interests and privileges of others, no matter how entrenched or long-held they are" (Parada et al., 2011). Much of your scholarship addresses issues of power and oppression, so you should understand the power dynamics in the space and how problematic your behaviour was. Power is most likely why you thought you could behave that way, but power is also why you particularly, are allowed to behave that way

and also the only reason why you would be excused. We as students and community refuse for this to be excused. Here is an opportunity to practice what you preach and see how you impact our program and allow for the perpetuation of anti-Black racism in our School.

Furthermore, the Ryerson School of Social Work states the following: [Ryerson's] School of Social Work is a leader in critical education, research, and practice with culturally and socially diverse students and communities in the advancement of anti-oppression/ anti-racism, anti-Black racism, anti-colonialism/ decolonization, Aboriginal reconciliation, feminism, anti-capitalism, queer and trans liberation struggles, issues in disability and Madness, among other social justice struggles. Our vision is to transform social structures into more equitable and inclusive social, economic, political, and cultural processes of society.

We figure you may need a reminder in your role as Director, because by walking out of this presentation, you walked out of a conversation on the experience of Black lives. You effectively tell Black students, faculty, and community members that our voices, academic and community work in resistance against anti-Black racism do not matter, and tell others that that is acceptable. Which means we have an issue because you are not meeting the mandate set out by the School of Social Work. What was worst, is during that critical time your behaviour signalled that none of us belonged there, that our histories, struggles and experiences, us as students are not wanted at the School of Social work, and this includes the presenter.

However, we have come up with some suggestions for you, the power holders in the School of Social Work, the Faculty of Community Services as well as Ryerson University in general to move forward in a genuine, actionable and authentic way.

1. Dr. Parada, immediately step down as Director of Ryerson's School of Social Work.
2. Remove confronting anti-Black racism from your mandate if you cannot, will not and are not invested in it. Ryerson is seen as a leader in the area of anti-Black racism however being disingenuous only leads to the violence experienced by the Black community by only symbolically confronting rather than practically and meaningfully challenging anti-Black racism.
3. If being in a room that centres Blackness, women and anti-Black racism scholarship is too much and there is work that you need to do as an individual and collectively, please do that work outside of those spaces, we do not need that violence but we encourage and support you in doing that work.
4. Formally apologize and publicly release how collectively you will genuinely address anti-Black racism within the School of Social Work and the Faculty of Community Services.

This goes beyond an apology; this is an opportunity for accountability and action. This letter serves as a kind invitation to take action and rectify the situation before we escalate. As concerned students and community members, we effectively exercise our rights and responsibility to resist oppressive dynamics that impact our community. You may not think so, but we know that [#BlackLivesMatter](#) [#BlackWomenMatter](#) [#BlackTeachersMatter](#) [#BlackStudentsMatter](#) and we cannot stop and will not stop until you value that as well.

We demand that [#BlackHumanityMatters](#) at the School of Social Work, in the Faculty of Community Services and Ryerson University.

In rage, solidarity and kindness,

Concerned Students, community members, the Black Liberation Collective at Ryerson, Ryerson Feminist Collective, United Black Students at Ryerson and the Ryerson School of Social Work Student Union.

**I then added:**

In addition to that Facebook posting, this is the same Black Liberation Collective -- Ryerson's official declaration regarding violence:

"On Violence

We understand that continuing to remain peaceful and encouraging others to remain peaceful at the hands of white supremacist oppressive violence is illogical and immoral. We support those who believe that nonviolence is a tactic, but we are aware that this is not the only way to dismantle the system that has humiliated, physically and literally enslaved, unjustly murdered, and continues to devalue black people in America. We will strive for liberation by any means necessary, including but not limited to: armed self-defense.

We condone whatever methods Black people adopt to liberate themselves and their kin."

**On that same day (November 21, 2016), the colleague who had originally written an online article calling for a cancellation of the U of T “debate” complained that the listserv discussion re. Dr. Peterson was being dominated by only a few voices—namely mine. One could easily infer from their message that they were once again trying to shut down discussion about this issue. In response, I ask my colleagues to point out anything I have stated that is factually incorrect. Also, due to some messages I was getting backchannel, I could tell there was a risk that the labels being hurled at me would get even uglier and there was a real risk that someone was going to make an official complaint that I was promoting hate or some other ridiculous allegation. I therefore had to reveal some things about my background that I felt silly for having to do (In contrast to how I refer to my other colleagues, I use “Dr. \_\_\_” to refer to the one who tried to shut down the debate because I don’t want them to claim I have done anything to identify them specifically):**

If Dr. \_\_\_ is signing off, then I hope that someone else will point out what misinformation JP presented during the debate, other than his inaccurate claim that 98% of the population identifies as heterosexual and his confusing the OPA with the CPO.

But I am not here to defend JP. In fact, I have repeatedly stated that he has not done as good a job of dealing with this issue as he could have--although his message and intent with respect to preventing the spread of fascist-like practices and their concomitant serious dangers has been consistent. I also said in this thread that I believed that the debate should have been organized so as to deal with trans/non-binary gender issues separately from free speech issues.

I am not asking anyone to agree with JP's beliefs/stance/approach; forget him. I have presented numerous points and have been exceedingly consistent in my position from the beginning. I have tried to engage in open, honest, factual and respectful discussion here with colleagues who may not agree with me but to no avail. I've been accused of certain things publicly and backchannel, and when I specifically address these false allegations or misconstruals/misrepresentations of my words, I am met with silence.

And I have been refraining from stating the following because I feel silly having to do so. However, I am now getting the sense that things could take a turn for the silly/sillier so I hope to preclude such an unfortunate eventuality. Specifically, I have been involved with, supportive of and an advocate for the LGBTQetc community for many years. I was raised by the woman who opened up one of Canada's earliest LGBTQetc-friendly spaces/businesses in January 1972, which she continued to operate until only two years ago. I was raised in this environment from the age of three, which helped me develop my open-minded perspective. Moreover, both my brother and sister are gay/lesbian (and my brother is also biracial, as are my three daughters, in case anyone is going to accuse me of racism as well).

Yes, I know that the preceding statements are akin to (implicit) racists claiming, "Some of my best friends are Black," which is why I did not want to go this route. As mentioned, however, I am hoping to prevent anyone from wasting time trying to make accusations about me or my motives based on my admittedly tenacious and verbose efforts to promote open and honest discussion about the issues germane to this thread.

I would rather have someone point out where any of my arguments are lacking in merit so that I can reflect on such things and continue to grow as a therapist, a university lecturer, and a member of a society that I hope will continue to become more educated, tolerant, inclusive, respectful and compassionate with regard to marginalized peoples. I believe that recent events in the US, Europe and elsewhere have demonstrated that such societal improvements are not possible if certain groups/individuals continue to promote their agendas in the way they have been doing; I believe that some of the major changes that need to occur is for people to stop shutting down healthy/productive

discussion; to stop villifying, attacking and misrepresenting those with whom they disagree or those whom they believe belong to "bad groups"; to stop promoting such an "us vs them" mentality; to stop sheltering, infantilizing, disempowering and often encouraging an exaggerated sense of victimhood in certain people--while claiming to be empowering them; and to stop presenting lies, misinformation or equivocal issues as "accepted fact" (e.g., the claim that biological sex does not exist). I have made these points repeatedly and consistently yet they seem to fall on deaf ears in the case of some (or many?) of our colleagues.

**Dr. Young spoke up once again; both he and I were receiving a number of private messages from colleagues stating that they supported what we were saying but that they were too afraid to speak out. Although I understood their perspective and concerns, Dr. Young had another position:**

Well, all I can say is that I have sure had a lot of members contact me who are indeed fearful about "going public" and don't want to end up in Jordan Peterson's shoes. They fear that by speaking out in favour of free speech that sort of thing may happen. I recognize and respect their anxiety. But for me if you're not part of the solution you're part of the problem.

**The person who had a great problem with me wrote something public once again—after numerous private messages with me—so I responded (as with all of my responses, I regret not being able to reproduce what they wrote, but I believe my email provides enough context to understand their precipitating messages):**

If people are tuning out due to apathy, lack of interest or information overload, that is their choice. If any members are avoiding this discussion because they are feeling emotionally overwhelmed, as implied by the most recent contribution to this thread, then I would respectfully question how effective they can be in dealing with such matters in a clinical or advocacy role--when they would be expected to deal with such sensitive matters in a much more in-depth manner than simply reading the concerns posted in this thread.

As for the very small number of people contributing to this thread, I think it has been made very clear both backchannel and publicly that more people would like to speak out but are afraid of invoking the kind of backlash that certain others have experienced by daring to raise the issues I and a few others have been trying to discuss. Dr. \_\_\_\_, your position on this issue is apparent because you stated it in both your original and subsequent responses to certain messages in this thread, as well as in the opinion piece you co-wrote and posted here calling for a ban on the UofT debate that had been scheduled for the following day.

Your reference to an echo chamber is ironic, given that such a phenomenon typically occurs within a "closed system"--which is what we have been seeing recently with respect to many controversial matters that certain individuals and groups refuse to discuss with those with whom they disagree. I have been calling for the antithesis of such a destructive process in my invitation to discuss the recent unfortunate intersection of the protection of trans/non-binary gender dignity/rights/safety/wellbeing and the maintenance of free thought/speech.

If an "echo chamber" has been created in this forum due to certain people's refusal to engage in healthy/productive discussion, then those very people should take responsibility for such a state of affairs. And if psychologists and related professionals cannot handle the presence of respectful discourse in this seemingly safe environment, then what hope does the rest of society have?

Instead of complaining about the continued efforts to have such important discussions, would it not be more productive to challenge the claims made in this thread? If I have made one factually incorrect or illogical statement, I would love to know because then I can modify any errors in my beliefs or thought processes.

In fact, each term I tell my students that I consider myself extremely fortunate to be able to interact with so many intelligent people who, without fail, help me improve on my awareness of, understanding of, perspective on and approach to dealing with various important issues. For instance, it was from students that I first learned the term "cisgender" many years ago. A student a few years back informed me that it was considered politically incorrect to use the term "transgendered" rather than "transgender." And the list goes on and on.

As an instructor of Human Sexuality (along with many other psychology courses), I have discussed many very difficult and controversial issues such as the ones being raised in this thread, as well as sexual assault, feminism, pedophilia, sexual orientation/identification, etc. etc. I tell my students that I know that a certain number of them are at risk of being "triggered" by these topics. And I have had some students tell me afterward about their experiences in class during such discussions.

Yet, not one of the thousands of students who have heard or engaged in these classroom discussions has ever asked me afterward to stop having such discussions. Not one has ever complained that I did not handle the topic in an extremely sensitive yet fact-based manner. Conversely, I have had many students thank me for holding these discussions in the way that I have, where the only agenda I promote is for people to keep an open mind to ideas that they might not be aware of, might not like or might not agree with, to employ critical thinking and to engage in healthy, respectful and productive discourse. If undergraduate students--many of whom have been directly and sometimes severely affected by one or more topics--can do what I have just described, should we not expect psychologists and related professionals to be able to do the same?

**After another member tired to shut down the discussion on the listserv or have it moved elsewhere on November 26, 2016, I wrote:**

I am not sure how we move discussions to side channels, as I still use the general listserv only. If there is a way to do so, please let me know. Before that, however, would you mind explaining why you would like that to happen? I am not trying to agitate you with that question; I ask only because I have not seen you participate in the discussion so I wonder why its mere existence leads you to make such a request. You can see the title of the thread so you can simply choose to ignore it, no? Is just seeing the title and knowing that I and others are expressing our serious concerns about this issue enough to bother you? Again, this is question is not meant to provoke or antagonize you in any way; it is asked in the spirit of healthy and respectful discourse--which is particularly germane to the topic at hand.

Lastly, on an unrelated note, my use of "censor" with respect to Dr. Matte's claim regarding the non-existence of biological sex should have read "censure," although in today's climate, "censor" would also seem appropriate. I am adding that point in this message so as not to needlessly lengthen the thread.

**On the same day, I tried to get my colleagues to engage in some critical thinking with this analogy:**

Here is an example that speaks to my concerns. If anyone can show me how anything I state below is lacking in merit, please do so rather than trying to shut me down simply because my rational logic and appeals for open and honest discourse offend your sensibilities:

Why are we not allowed to perform "conversion/reparative therapy" with LGBTQ people? I would hope that it is because science indicates that such therapy does not work--presumably because you cannot change something that is so innate/ingrained as sexual orientation. (Notwithstanding Dr. Robert Spitzer's claims to the contrary in 2003--which he retracted and apologized for 10 years later, admitting that he allowed his personal biases to override his scientific mind/duty.)

How would we know about such matters without proper research, honest, competent and ethically sound clinical experience, and proper discussion?

If we disallowed such practices simply because someone decided we should not do so based on ideological and/or political beliefs/agendas, then I would argue that we could similarly disallow treatment of schizophrenia or bipolar disorder because they are most likely a result of genetic or biological factors and some people/societies/cultures believe that we should embrace these conditions. If one argues that we should treat schizophrenia and bipolar disorder because they cause significant distress to those who experience them, then the same argument could apply

to sexual orientation because many non-heterosexual people experience great distress due to their sexual orientation/identification.

If one (correctly) argues that distress over one's sexual orientation is due to societal influences, the same argument could apply to schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, since not all societies/people believe they are bad conditions; therefore, the converse could reasonably be argued to be true: distress over having schizophrenia or bipolar disorder is a societal phenomenon.

If you find the preceding arguments silly or spacious, then you do not know your history very well. That is, look at how psychiatry and psychology have dealt with sexual orientation over the years. It was not until the early 1970s that the APA finally changed its thinking/position on sexual orientation via its revisions to the DSM--i.e., the criteria of significant personal distress or significant impairments in one's functioning were added to the diagnosis of sexual orientation (and then most other disorders). Ironically, this change was largely spearheaded or facilitated by the same Dr. Robert Spitzer from above. And how did he convince psychiatrists and psychologists to accept such a change? Through open discussion about such matters and proper research (largely afterward), and by directly exposing psychiatrists and psychologists to the people about whom they had been making so many false/inaccurate assumptions.

This kind of process is what I believe needs to happen with respect to trans/non-binary gender issues; the recent broohaha (sp?) over JP's "cause" suggests that this is not happening sufficiently.

On a side note, many textbooks and professors like to claim that the APA soon completely eradicated homosexuality from the DSM because they realized it is not fair to label someone as mentally ill due to the ignorance, fear, intolerance, hatred etc. that exists and is directed toward them by too many people in society. However, the reality is that sexual orientation remained in the DSM until the 5th edition in 2013; it was under Sexual Disorders NOS: "significant distress over one's sexual orientation"--which would seemingly apply only to LGBQ, since few if any people are distressed about being heterosexual.

Before anyone tries to discount or dismiss my example by arguing that schizophrenia and bipolar disorder are in fact disorders, whereas homo/bi/pansexuality is not, please re-read my example. Again, non-heterosexuality was considered a disorder until not that long ago, and it was changed only after people in a position to do so engaged in and promoted proper discussion about the matter. And once again, that is all that I and others are trying to promote with respect to trans/non-binary gender issues and any other issues that are not yet fully understood. How can anyone deny the need for such things?

**In response to a colleague who expressed his support for my publicly (a few others had done so as well but I don't think I responded publicly, only privately), I wrote:**

Thank you very much for the supportive email, R\_\_\_. I think many people are in your position—or at least I would hope so with respect to the advocacy efforts—and, unfortunately, the fear of backlash regarding the points you have made. Sadly, such a backlash is all too common in far too many contexts today, but it is even more unfortunate that it is occurring amongst those of us who, as professionals in our various fields, should be above such things.

Thank you again for your support.

**In response to a colleague who questioned/challenged my example regarding conversion therapy, I wrote:**

I fully agree, and that is part of the issue. If conversion/reparative therapy worked and people wanted to undergo it, would we have the right to stop them or therapists from engaging in it? For those who say "Yes, we should prevent such treatment," I would ask why you feel that way. If you say it is because they were born that way and thus

should not feel they need to change who they are, then should you not apply the same logic to people who wish to transition from (fe)male to (fe)male?

To be clear, I am entirely supportive of anyone who feels they need to transition or who wants/needs to alter their gender or sex in any way. I am simply posing the question in order to highlight the complexities and sometimes hypocrisies that pervade these issues, thus I will continue to call for honest and open exploration, investigation and discussion of such matters. And I hope that more colleagues such as Donald and R\_\_\_ and a few others who have voiced similar opinions will feel that they can do so in this forum without fear of the kind of name calling, fear mongering, misrepresentation of words, misconstrual of intention/motives and calls for shutting down healthy and productive discussion that has, unfortunately, been transpiring on this listserve, in personal/backchannel emails and in other forums ever since JP began making his videos about his concerns regarding what I just described.

**When that same colleague added more to his initial post, I wrote:**

Thank you for adding these critical factors to the discussion, F\_\_\_. As you indicate, issues other than science/facts and what's in the best interests of \*humans\* influence the kinds of decisions you are describing. Of course, "experts" such as psychologists are often not included in such important discussions--or at least not as much as we should be. When we do get a seat at the table, I want the public and others to be assured that we are providing valid information rather than infusing the discussion with our own personal beliefs and agendas. The way the current discussion has been going over the past few months, I do not think the public can be faulted for doubting whether we "experts" are in fact exemplifying such an ideal.

**The same colleague then misunderstood something I had written, thus I posted the following:**

Thank you for the very informative email, F\_\_\_. It took a while but I finally found my original comment and this is what it stated:

"At the time of his [J Philippe Rushton's] original publication, however, I remember that *many* [emphasis added] academics refused to even discuss the issue out of political correctness rather than on the merits or lack thereof of his dubious research. Once again, discussion was shut down based *largely* [emphasis added] on ideological grounds rather than using facts/evidence/scientific argument to challenge Rushton's claims."

I usually try to choose my words very carefully (notwithstanding any typos, poor editing or Siri's occasional misguided auto-correction of my dictation), hence my use of "many" and "largely" rather than "all" and "only," respectively. Due to the intent of my message--using Dr. Bryson's reprehensible comparison of Rushton to JP in order to make my own comparison of what I have seen recently with respect to an unwillingness or inability to deal with certain controversial issues in a mature, professional and fact-based manner--the focus was not on the work of those who did in fact challenge Rushton's "junk science" claims with rational/scientific arguments; I am familiar with the work you cited as it helped inform my lectures on the topic. I did not intend any disrespect toward you or anyone else who stepped up when necessary in 1989 or any other time that such responses have been necessary.

**In response to that colleague's next response, I followed up with:**

I definitely agree with you, F\_\_\_. I have enough faith in students that, if presented with ugly or dubious claims--that appear to reflect or promote a (sometimes not-so) hidden agenda--along with factual or scientific evidence and arguments to support and challenge such claims, they can process the information and arrive at their own conclusions based on the facts rather than their own personal feelings and beliefs. I believe the key is for professors/instructors to present those facts rather than to ma/paternalistically dictate to the students what they \*must\* believe simply because the professor/instructor in a position of power/authority says so based on their own beliefs/ideologies/agendas. And then those same professors/instructors shame, bully and shut down any students who question them and foster an environment that empowers others to do the same thing, thus modeling for those students an unhealthy, maladaptive and unproductive manner of non-discourse and uncritical thinking.

Unfortunately, I have been seeing/hearing far too much evidence that the latter approach is what is occurring at many universities across Canada and the U.S. Interestingly, an editorial from yesterday raises similar concerns: <http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/marni-soupcoff-canadas-institutions-of-lesser-learning>

Thank you for your efforts to enlighten not only students but also colleagues and the general public with you own work, F\_\_\_. I cite you in several classes, including a lecture on Cyril Burt...

**On November 25, 2016, I the following re. two relevant articles in the paper that I linked:**

Here are two pieces from The National Post that highlight some of the concerns I have been raising in several threads. The fact that some of our colleagues want to shut down the relevant discussions and others are afraid to speak up due to potential backlash--from our own colleagues--should be taken as evidence that these are not spurious, trivial nor hyperbolic claims/concerns.

If we as a profession do not do something to address these serious issues, I am afraid that we are going to lose as much respect and credibility as we have witnessed occur with "the mainstream media."

<http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/marni-soupcoff-canadas-institutions-of-lesser-learning>

<http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/christie-blatchford-ubc-prof-who-denounced-u-of-t-colleague-in-gender-debate-has-skeletons-in-her-own-classroom>

**On November 26, 2016, some colleague began complaining about my threads, all of which are reproduced above. And here is where the misrepresentations of my words commenced in earnest. As one can see, I apologized for any possible misunderstandings but also challenged their mischaracterizations of what I had stated. Not one of the colleagues I wrote to/about demonstrated the intellectual honesty or integrity to respond in any manner to my thorough and civil corrections to their messages (For the record, D\_\_\_ wrote a very positive message and did not misconstrue anything I wrote):**

Thank you for the feedback, M\_\_\_--and also to L\_\_\_, P\_\_\_ and S\_\_\_ who wrote subsequent to your message, as well as D\_\_\_ for her own response to T\_\_\_'s and my postings. I want to respond and to clarify a few points. I know there is a risk that this message will further solidify certain people's perceptions of me or my message, which is fine. I only hope that, if anyone chooses to comment on this message, they will answer the specific question I am asking and/or address my argument with rational, logical and/or factual points rather than simply appealing to emotion.

First, I agree with much of what you wrote (unless I state otherwise, I am referring to you, M\_\_\_). And I appreciate that you disagree with how I am expressing myself; I will continue to express myself vigorously and I respectfully disagree that the quote of mine you cited reflects "personal attacks against people who do not see and act the way [I] do."

Before I go further, I only now realized that my point could have been misconstrued as referring to everyone who did not participate in this discussion, hence you wrote, "You are suggesting that a member's choice to not engage or inability to engage may reflect impairment in their ability to perform professionally." To be clear, that was not my intent and if anyone thought I was implying that their decision not to \*engage in\* this discussion reflected a deficit in their professional abilities, I apologize for the misunderstanding.

Given that I made specific reference to people who were "feeling emotionally overwhelmed, as implied by the most recent contribution to this thread," which was written by Dr. \_\_\_, I thought it was clear that I was referring to her claim in that message that "There is a strong possibility that there are many OPA members so uncomfortable at this point that they are simply deleting additional emails to this thread." As you can see, Dr. \_\_\_ was indicating that "many OPA members" may have been deleting the messages due to their great discomfort; this raises concerns for me for reasons explained below.

Nevertheless, I once again apologize if anyone thought I was chastising or denigrating them for not engaging in the discussion. I did in fact mention that "I do not begrudge those who have refrained from speaking out because of the potential consequences" in another email, so I hope no one thinks that I am trying to change my stance; as stated repeatedly, I have been very consistent in everything I have written in this thread.

Having said that, I do not apologize for questioning how a psychologist (or any other mental health professional; but for the sake of simplicity I will refer only to psychologists) could be effective in helping people deal with the issues we have been discussing in this thread if they are feeling \*emotionally overwhelmed\* upon simply reading these emails. Please think about that.

As alluded to in previous posts, I hold our profession to a very high standard and expect far more from us than I have been seeing recently from various members on this listserv and in other contexts. I do not believe such a statement--nor the question about how effective psychologists can be in helping others deal with certain issues if those psychologists cannot handle/tolerate the emotional strain of simply reading email discussions about such issues or even seeing the relevant Subject Headers--constitutes a "personal attack." It is a legitimate question about a fundamental issue that we as psychologists need to recognize and deal with.

Can anyone deny the need to be able to reflect on and "check our own baggage" when working with people and dealing with issues that could potentially "trigger" us? Instead of merely complaining about alleged "personal attacks," could someone please tell me how my question is inappropriate? Was it blunt? Yes. But I do not think it is disrespectful to ask such a question, in light of what was being written in this thread.

If you were to hear a colleague say that they could not read a thread about PTSD because it was triggering their own PTSD symptoms, would you not be concerned about how effectively they could help someone who was trying to cope with a violent sexual assault or some other traumatic experience through therapy or advocacy work? Would you not question whether their advocacy work with that person might serve some purpose other than their ostensibly stated reasons?

Perhaps you disagree with me and my approach, but is such personal and professional awareness, honesty and sound judgment not an ethical requirement? Again, please show me where my questions and concerns are invalid or inappropriate in the context in which I first wrote the quote to which you referred.

Also, please understand that I have had to deal with several people who have written me backchannel, distorting what I have stated. When I correct their misunderstandings in an entirely civil tone, they do not respond. These same people make what I consider to be concerning claims about themselves and/or colleagues, and when I address such issues respectfully, again they do not respond. So if my tone seems a bit blunt at this point, it might be due to such exchanges. But in light of my response to your own concerns, once again please show me how my blunt messages are incorrect in any way. If they are not incorrect or inappropriate, then I do not believe that my raising such concerns is disrespectful.

At the risk of belabouring the point, the only part that could be construed as disrespectful, IMO, is the misunderstanding of my reference to those who might be unable to emotionally handle seeing emails or Subject Headers about these very important topics--yet who say they advocate for such issues and work with people to whom these issues are most relevant.

Another point I know I am harping on but which I believe must be stated repeatedly is that we should hold ourselves to the highest of standards when it comes to dealing with these issues. If we cannot have an honest, open, fact-based and respectful discussion about sensitive/controversial issues, we should not complain if we or our field does not receive the respect most of us believe we deserve. And I cannot stress enough that we are doing ourselves a disservice when we allow the kind of ideology-driven teaching that is going on at university, whether by psychologists or anyone else. Just today, I had a student tell me that one of her professors had recently had a guest lecturer come in and this person, like Nicholas Matte, claimed that biological sex does not exist. Even though we had discussed this issue in my own course last week, she was afraid to question the speaker's claim out of fear of being reprimanded for daring to challenge "accepted science." She was apparently not alone in this fear.

I do understand what you are saying, M\_\_\_\_. And I hope it is clear that I am not trying to shame people into joining the discussion. Such sentiments do not mean that I am obligated to apologize for hurting some people's feelings by simply questioning some of the concerning things I have seen written in this forum and in other contexts. And I will certainly not apologize for believing that psychologists should lead the way when it comes to openly and honestly discussing important issues with our clients/patients, in classrooms, with policy makers, in the media etc, from a fact-based perspective while also promoting and modeling understanding, respect, tolerance, dignity, advocacy, compassion etc. for all peoples.

And to reiterate for the last time, if anyone thinks I am being hypocritical for mentioning "respect" when I am supposedly being disrespectful to certain OPA members, please explain how my stated concerns and the reasons for those concerns have been disrespectful in light of the explanations/clarifications I have provided. Simply calling them disrespectful is as unproductive as falsely claiming [as one of my colleagues did] that an "echo chamber" has been created when the creators of the alleged "echo chamber" [myself and others] have done nothing but encourage others with differing views to join the discussion.

**When someone else commented on my tone on November 27, 2016, I wrote:**

Thank you for the email, T\_\_\_\_. Some of my messages were admittedly blunt or may have lacked finesse (and all could have been edited down to reduce my verbosity; I write in between many different activities and thus do not subject them to the same editorial scrutiny other documents demand). I appreciate that you were willing and able to filter out such "noise" and see the "signal" that has been my consistent message throughout this thread. I need to step back from the discussion at this point due to my other commitments but I would like to convey/reiterate these parting words:

I do not believe it is arrogant or unreasonable for psychologists to expect members of our profession to be able to reflect on and "check our own personal baggage" in order to deal with controversial, complex and/or emotionally charged issues from a rational and fact/evidence-based perspective. Since so many members of the general public seem unable to do so (anyone who wants to deny this statement has apparently not been exposed to reality for the past many decades), psychologists who can in fact exemplify what I and others have been calling for would be considered capable of processing and communicating information better than the average person. I do not find this to be an odd, inaccurate nor offensive statement; it is a logical deduction.

Yet, I have been accused backchannel by some colleagues--who apparently do not wish to publicly stand by their private words/sentiments--of saying horribly offensive things by expecting more from our profession than the general public, who do not have years of our specialized education, training and experience. These same colleagues, who apparently do not actually understand the definition of certain terms and would rather recklessly toss around labels inaccurately and inappropriately, have accused me of "mansplaining" and "trolling."

This is the exact same strategy we have seen occur time and again over the past many years in so many contexts: People identifying with certain "groups" ignore, distort and try to dismiss valid points made by those whose words apparently offend their ideological sensibilities. Instead of engaging in honest, open, rational and fact-based discourse, they resort to name calling. And because those names and concomitantly implied false allegations can be so damaging to one's career or reputation (e.g., sexist, racist, misogynist, \_\_\_\_phobe etc.), the person being falsely accused of such things tends to back down. If they don't shut up as their accusers would like, they are accused of needlessly repeating themselves (or "mansplaining" by those who do not understand the origin and actual meaning of the term), whining about having their fragile egos or sense of "privilege" being hurt, etc., etc..

Very few people want to risk the ire of such "groups" by pointing out that people such as myself find it necessary to repeat ourselves because members of these "groups" are relentless in their logical fallacies, distortions of what is being said, spurious claims, appeals to emotion, false allegations, name calling, shaming, bullying etc. And when someone calls these tactics out for what they are, that person is further accused of the kind of "whining" mentioned above. All the while, the actual points get ignored, which in fact seems to be the underlying intent of those who engage in the kind of ugly tactics I am describing.

Although I am not as intense in my concerns as JP is, I do believe there is irrefutable evidence that many people with virtuous ideals are headed down the same path he has referenced in many of his speeches/interviews. History is repeating itself, whether it is the terrible pattern that occurred during the French Revolution by the Jacobins or any of the examples of fascism/totalitarianism JP cites.

Perhaps the one good consequence of Trump's election is that it has caused many people to reflect on the many reasons for his election. It is my observation and belief that only a certain type of person refuses to accept the obvious reality that a certain proportion of Americans who voted for Trump (or who have engaged in analogous decisions/actions in other parts of the world over the past few years) were not racists, bigots, sexists, \_\_\_\_phobes etc. Rather, they felt driven to push back against the smug, condescending and judgmental attitudes of certain "groups" who engage in the kinds of deplorable tactics described above. And please remember, members of these "groups" commit the same offences in academia, creating a space in which many people feel unsafe to employ critical thinking and to challenge the ideologies and agendas that are being rammed down their throats by certain professors/instructors/guest lecturers.

The sad thing is that I have put myself in a very vulnerable position by stating what I have in this thread because OPA members on this listserv also work in academia, are members of The College and occupy other positions that might be relevant to my professional practice. I would like to believe that psychologists are able to overcome our emotional reactions and employ critical/rational thinking when dealing with such matters. I do not know what percentage of psychologists are in fact able to do so--I am hoping it is the vast majority--but I can clearly infer from some of the public and private communications related to this topic that certain colleagues are unwilling or unable to embody this entirely reasonable and in no way arrogant ideal.

I now hope to disengage from this discussion--a discussion during which nobody showed me where any of my points were factually incorrect or inappropriate. Some colleagues did point out what they believed to be a "harsh" tone in some of my messages and some colleagues took issue with some things I said due largely to miscommunication; because they did not simply resort to name calling, distortions of my words, false assumptions and allegations, and attempts to shut down discussion, I believe we were able to engage in respectful and productive discussion.

I knew the risks involved in speaking out as I have but I made a decision to do so based on serious concerns about what I have seen in various areas of my personal and professional life, along with the belief that most of my colleagues held themselves to the same standards I have mentioned several times in this thread and thus I would not suffer any unwarranted consequences for raising these concerns. Only time will tell if I was correct.

**Two days later, I posted this message, which contained my reference to the “immature” actions of one of my colleagues; this resulted in my being censured publicly on the OPA listserv:**

In case anyone is interested in learning more about Jordan Peterson's concerns and the history on which he is well versed that have contributed to those concerns, here is his most recent appearance. I have not yet had the chance to watch all of it but it does include a very relevant discussion of Marxism:

<http://podcasts.joerogan.net/podcasts/jordan-peterson>

On a related note--and I really hope this is the last of my messages on the topic--I just found out that one of our members blocked me on Twitter (I am a member of a site that informs of these things, which is important for anyone who tries to use social media to their professional advantage), even though I believe I have never had any interaction with her on Twitter. This is the kind of action for which many in the public have ridiculed SJWs, radical lefties, PC Police and their ilk over the past few years. I am not "name calling" here but rather identifying the kinds of people who have been called out for such silliness.

To be clear, I am not referring to blocking someone who is abusive, is "trolling/spamming" one's social media accounts or is otherwise acting inappropriately. Rather, I am referring to those who have been called out for blocking people simply because they do not like the person's beliefs, opinions or "identity," or because the person has indicated agreement or affiliation with someone else that the blocker does not like.

This type of immaturity--akin to plugging one's ears, closing one's eyes and shouting "lalalalala" whenever confronted with something the person does not like/agree with and/or cannot handle psychologically/emotionally--is what creates "echo chambers" and an "us versus them" mentality. It is the kind of mentality that JP is railing against, for reasons clearly elucidated in the aforementioned video.

It is bad enough that such emotional/psychological fragility and intellectual cowardice is running rampant in general society. It is utterly dismaying that a colleague would exemplify the same traits/behaviours. Again, I will not apologize for bluntly expressing my expectation that a registered psychologist would not be susceptible to these kinds of very harmful practices. To be clear, I am not referring to simply blocking someone on Twitter; rather, this kind of action appears to be a symptom of a kind of belief system that dictates that a person in a position to have a significant impact on others--whether it is working at a university, hospital, school, government agency, etc., or whether it is the ability to use one's title to lend credence to their words in a private (e.g., with patients/clients) or public context--is justified in engaging in questionable actions, especially if their "echo chamber," institutions, laws, professional bodies or the ideology of the times support their decisions. I believe the JP incident has clearly highlighted this issue, hence my admittedly forceful and repetitive emails.

I truly was not planning on writing another email on the topic. When I saw a psychologist engage in the kind of unwarranted "blocking," which is a form of shutting down of discussion and shutting out of opposing views described above, I felt compelled to appeal to reason and a sense of professional responsibility one last time so that others who are rightfully concerned about speaking out on the matter might nevertheless encourage colleagues to capitalize on our specialized education, training and experience so that we can promote and model healthy discourse not only among ourselves but also the public that we serve.

I appreciate that someone could easily accuse me of hypocritically committing a number of the transgressions detailed above. If anyone feels compelled to do so, please do not simply hurl allegations but be specific in your complaint. And if I respond respectfully (even if assertively), I hope you will show me the same respect by acknowledging my response and the specific logical/factual points in it.

**All remained quiet on the listserv until I posted this message on January 8, 2017, about an article that tried to genderize a tragedy, serious mental health concerns and family violence:**

[http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/isabelle-cote/lionel-desmond-ptsd\\_b\\_13988574.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/isabelle-cote/lionel-desmond-ptsd_b_13988574.html)

I am heartened that the vast majority of the commenters saw this article for what it is. I can only hope that psychologists and others in the (mental) health care profession do our part to ensure that the public that we serve do not miss out on the nuance, context, complexity, comprehensiveness and compassion required when dealing with such horrific issues.

**In response to a colleague who commented on my post and the article I cited in it, I wrote:**

I think the author of that comment raised some important points but I am concerned about the author of the original article spinning this into a "male violence" issue. And when she responded to my tweet about her article, she started engaging in the same kinds of intellectually dishonest tactics we have seen become the norm these days, even among people/professionals who should know better than to do so. For instance, she immediately accused me of trying to promote the MRA agenda, which is a vile and underhanded strategy b/c the MRA movement has earned itself a very negative reputation. She essentially tried to dismiss my questions, points and facts by immediately assigning an unwarranted label to me. That should be a red flag and should clearly reveal her agenda.

Along those lines, she employed the other sad tactic, which is to project her own agenda onto me, by asking me why *\*I\** am obsessed with gender, when *\*she\** made that the central theme of her argument. Moreover, after I showed her the flaws in her logic/argument--by simply using her same "logic" but applying it in a way that she did not like b/c she cannot defend it--she ran away, stating, "ok you have insulted me enough. Bye." Again, she is projecting onto me because she is the one who insulted me by falsely accusing me of promoting an MRA agenda and she did

not like that I called her out on that; I told her that "Trying to dismiss my FACTS w/ "MRA" label is as intellectually dishonest as dismissing your points w/ [#feminist](#) label" before telling her that I hold myself out as a male feminist.

The point is, she is a Postdoctoral Researcher at IREF and she was given a public platform: Huffington Post. She turned a tragedy that requires an honest discussion filled with lots of nuance and facts into a piece on the evils of patriarchy. When I tried to tell her that we should be looking at this from a non-gendered perspective, since domestic violence, mental health etc. affect all sexes (and races and classes etc), she stated, "Because the 3 people in this case are 3 women. Its is a gender issue." Of course, she did not respond to my question of whether she thought the killer would have spared his child's life if she were a boy instead of a girl.

I am sorry, M\_\_\_, but when a Postdoctoral Researcher at IREF is allowed to hijack such a serious issue to promote her own personal/political agenda and then hurls false allegations at me for calling her out on her actions, we should all stand up and say that is not cool. I did not "attack" her. I did not call her names. The worst I wrote was "Falsely accusing me of pushing an MRA agenda is dishonest and vile." And then she ran away.

And if I were to pursue her, trying to hold her accountable for the many false and flawed things she wrote in her article and in her tweets to me, I would be accused of "trolling" and "mansplaining" and probably of being a misogynist--not only by ignorant and intellectually dishonest anonymous people on the internet but also by \*colleagues\* who engage in the exact same tactics that the author of the article used. That is fact because it has happened.

Remember, the author is a postdoctoral fellow. We should expect more from our colleagues in psychology and in other related fields.

I will leave it at that, lest some colleagues use this as an opportunity to recommence the silly season with me backchannel. But I do hope that some of our colleagues will read the article and the comments that follow. Also, feel free to check out the twitter exchange I had with the author to see how things played out.

**I continued on the same day with one more caution:**

Again, I am not trying to stir things up but I can't help but feel compelled to reach out to colleagues, especially those who teach or supervise others. We need to use our specialized education, training and experience to try to put an end to the kind of ignorance/agenda-driven movements that have pervaded society over the past few years/decades.

In case anyone wants to simply dismiss my concerns, the same person who wrote the article in question--which tries to take attention away from serious (mental health) issues in order to promote the author's own personal/political agenda--responded to someone who tried to call her out with this: "If men have issues it's not women's job to deal with them. You can find solutions amongst yourselves"

Again, she is a postdoctoral fellow at IREF

(<https://translate.google.ca/translate?hl=en&sl=fr&u=https://iref.uqam.ca/&prev=search>), meaning that she will have many opportunities to promote politics of divisiveness and hate, all under the guise of something ostensibly noble.

**On January 19, 2017, I posted this article about OISE's creation of an anti-psychiatry program:**

I fairly critique certain aspects of psychiatry and psychiatrists (as I do other aspects of the mental health system) but I think Bonnie Burstow's "cause"--at least as I've seen it portrayed--is wrong-headed and reflective of agenda-driven "academia" that has become more pervasive in Canadian/US universities over the years. I am curious as to colleagues' reactions to Barbara Kay's column below. I know some people find her to be quite biased and agenda-driven herself but she is also one of the more hard-hitting journalists out there. Thoughts?

<http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/barbara-kay-u-of-ts-antipsychiatry-scholarship-and-not-believing-in-mental-illness-is-an-attack-on-science>

**In response to some colleagues' commentary on the issue, I wrote:**

Thank you M\_\_\_ and others who have commented on the article and issue at hand. I agree with so much of what has been stated, hence I am very vocal about these matters in my classes and in the media. But I am in fact very concerned about the Bonnie Bustrows of the world because, from what I have seen thus far, she is taking a very radical, black-and-white, non-nuanced approach to this issue, contrary to most of what has been written in this thread and contrary to the kind of approach Jason mentioned.

From what I can infer so far, it seems as if Bonnie is going to establish a program in which students are going to be taught a political/personal agenda based on opinions and beliefs as opposed to a critical analysis, presentation and discussion of facts, science and logic. And I know I will ruffle some feathers with this comment but I have seen some of our colleagues who have graduated from certain programs fail to demonstrate such an approach. (To be clear, I also know many others who have attended those same programs who do not exemplify these concerns.)

I am sure that some (many?) colleagues are growing weary of my repeated concerns about such issues but I know that others have expressed the same concerns to me privately--especially those who teach at university and have seen the lack of critical thinking that is being promoted in parts of academia these days. Too many academics and others in the fields of (mental) health, social work, etc. are becoming more and more emboldened by the perceived support for their entirely non-scientific and non-factual claims, which have also been accompanied by some pretty reprehensible conduct without fear of consequence; I hope the actual support for such mindsets and misconduct is relatively low and that these individuals and organizations are simply inferring support from the deafening silence that occurs because most people are rightfully concerned about backlash if they dare to speak out.

I hate to beat a dead horse in asking how many on this listserv felt "safe" enough to add their voice to the few of us who expressed disbelief at the so-called academic who proclaimed on TVO's The Agenda that science has determined that biological sex does not exist? Far more people were inclined to focus on Jordan Peterson's initial clumsy attempts to highlight the serious issue of thought police dictating what we must say and do, even if their demands are not rooted in science, facts or evidence but rather their own personal/political ideologies.

I believe Bonnie Burstow's program will greatly add to the aforementioned problems by churning out students who blindly adopt the same kind of black-and-white, non-scientific and non-factual approach to very serious, complex and controversial issues. I apologize for repeatedly raising these concerns; I hope that more people will persuade me to believe that something is being done to prevent our own field from becoming the kind of laughingstock that certain programs/fields are becoming when they say and do the kinds of things we have seen recently.

**I then commented on one more post by another colleague:**

I appreciate your nuanced and multi-sided perspective, T\_\_\_. I will be incorporating what you and others have been expressing in my Clinical Psychology and Psychological Disorders courses, which is one of the reasons I wanted to get feedback from colleagues.

I think my underlying concern is when one adheres to only one "camp" or the other in dealing with any complex phenomenon, especially mental health, as you have elucidated. If you do not mind, I would like to take one of your points and "spin" it to align with one of the themes that underlies the concerns I have expressed in writing about several issues: Namely, to the guilt you mention can be added shame, fear and vulnerability.

I have seen too many people in various fields try to "protect" those over whom they are assuming a paternalistic/maternalistic role by assigning "guilt" to others outside of their "children." I see this as a kind of parallel to what you are saying in your penultimate paragraph. That is, too many people are being spared having to take accountability for their own issues, limitations, problematic behaviours etc. By directing attention and blame externally toward all of the "bad people" in "bad groups" with "bad ideas"--essentially, a simplistic "us vs them" perspective--individuals are being denied the chance to introspect, to gain some insights, to make some adaptive changes in themselves and to grow as humans. Instead, they seek solace in the false belief that they are fine as they are and it's those with whom they disagree that are the real problem.

Such a fear/weakness-based approach to life is obviously extremely limiting. Unfortunately, I see more and more people in positions such as ours promoting this approach and I see Dr. Burstow's efforts as falling in line with such thinking. The fact that her program is occurring at OISE makes it seem all the more likely that this problematic narrative will pervade the teachings to which students and future (mental) health care professionals, academics etc will be exposed.

I hope you do not feel that I hijacked your cogent points, T\_\_\_. When I read your message, my own bias caused me to think about the aforementioned issues, which as mentioned I believe share some common features.

**And then, in response to another comment, I wrote:**

As with other responses in this thread, I find little to disagree with in your comments. For instance, I think every intro psych book makes reference to PKU and avoiding salt consumption.

As stated previously, I have spoken out against certain aspects of psychiatry many times for what I believe to be valid reasons. My concern is when people promote "radical" ideas that are based on ideologies rather than facts, science or evidence, yet try to present them as such. Certain academic institutions or departments seem to be taking this anti-factual approach more and more prominently and are creating an atmosphere in which students are terrified of ever challenging the prevailing ideology.

**On February 18, 2017, I wrote this in response to an article chastising psychologists and psychiatrists who were weighing in on Trump's possible personality disorders and/or mental health issues:**

[I cut out a paragraph unrelated to the actual topic, which I used to segue into my latest call for critical thinking]:

I am saying this as a self-serving segue into my oft-lamented refrain about we as a profession failing in doing our part to avoid ideology and instead to promote science, facts/evidence and reality. To this point, last week Jordan Peterson was generous enough to give a guest lecture in my class; I wanted my current and most recent former students to have a chance to question him directly regarding what he has been saying these past few months.

Since posting the videos a few days ago (the first of which is here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtqSoTOG3Ac>), I've been contacted by a number of strangers, thanking me for being "brave" enough to do so. \*That\* is the point I want to make: As I've been saying for months now, our profession--be it as clinical psychologists or academics--has lost a lot of credibility and respect in the eyes of the public and students who do not tow the current ideologically driven party line. It is sad that not only my students but also complete strangers are longing for more intellectual honesty from those who should be leading the charge when it comes to promoting critical thinking and fact-based discussion/analysis of important issues.

I know I have said this before but I am seeing more and more good-hearted people becoming more disenfranchised with "the system," particularly universities. And given the prominent role that psychology plays in academia, we need to do a much better job of representing our field.

[I edited out a digression re. the OPA, which included a reference to my constant promotion of it]

Having stated that, I am also concerned that certain members of the OPA BoD harbour and promote the kind of mindset that has been harming the causes of other individuals and organizations within Canada and the USA. IMHO, we as a profession need to adapt with the changing times and if we do not fully appreciate the backlash certain ideologies and approaches have been causing recently, we will most likely continue to witness some of the very concerning trends within society that have manifested themselves over the past few years.

I apologize for these occasional rants. They do come from a good place.

**On March 4, 2017, I posted this message about Dr. Peterson's guest lecture in my class a few weeks prior:**

A few weeks ago, I invited Jordan Peterson to give a guest lecture in one of my classes. I posted the video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtqSoTOG3Ac&t=1364s>, along with my commentary on it

(<https://soundcloud.com/docamitay/ep-34-the-real-reality-behind-dr-jordan-petersons-guest-lecture-critical-thinking-free-speech>). It got a bit of traction but then JP finally posted it on his site and it went viral, with over 45,000 people viewing it in two days. Lots of people are now taking clips from the nearly two-hour talk and posting them as standalone topics all over the internet.

To be sure, when I saw that my friend filming the talk had framed it as he had, I was mortified because I did not need to be in the shot the entire time, playing the role of animated furniture. But the fact that only a tiny handful of people from among the thousands who have commented on the various links are trolling my mostly superfluous role rather than focusing on the content and implications of JP's speech is a testament to how much he is resonating with a wide variety of intelligent people who do in fact wish to engage in healthy discourse. That is, so many of the comments are thoughtful, intelligent and passionate, and are inspiring similar responses rather than simple "flaming" of each other.

I am stating this because I have shared my concerns regarding how we as a profession have apparently been coming off recently, and so when one of our colleagues--who has his feet firmly planted in both the academic and clinical areas of our profession--represents us as powerfully and positively as JP is doing, I think his efforts deserve to be recognized. And if anyone doubts just how disillusioned so many people, particularly the young, have been feeling due to things I have warned about repeatedly, please do check out the comments, especially on his own page, which has far more activity than mine: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ABa4RdNPxU&t=3179s>

I know that certain people disagree with JP and believe he should not be given the opportunity to present his ideas publicly--an idea that is reprehensible and has no place in our field. If any among us (or anywhere else) believes that he is saying something that is factually incorrect, should they not speak up and present their own fact/evidence-based arguments and counter-arguments? Would that not model for others the proper way to engage in thoughtful, insightful, respectful, intelligent and productive discourse?

Thank you for your indulgence

**On March 10, 2017, I posted this message about an instructor at Ryerson University who did something I could not believe; yet, several colleagues wrote to me privately, arguing that she did nothing wrong:**

This is the kind of affront to critical thinking that can occur in academia that I have been warning about: <http://www.torontosun.com/2017/03/09/ryerson-instructor-tells-student-to-only-rely-on-feminist-journals>

There is a reason that Dr. Peterson's guest lecture in my class has been viewed by nearly 110,000 people in one week, in addition to the many tens of thousands of views of various clips of the video that have been made from the original lecture--with the vast majority of viewers giving "thumbs up" and/or positive written feedback. The only bright side to this story is that it was not a psychology instructor who committed this egregious (IMO) action.

**On March 15, 2017, I wrote the following, which set of the most recent problems on the OPA listserv:**

No, I am not a radical nor a sycophant. I am someone who is very concerned about what I keep seeing occurring on university campuses and many other places in society. Why are we as a collective remaining silent on these reprehensible actions? And even worse, why are some of our colleagues engaging in or encouraging the same form of academic fascism?

To wit:

Dr. Peterson's tweets from today:

Harassment so intense that the 3 other people at McMaster U on panel with me this Fri 17/03 withdrew. It's now a 1 man lecture, with Q & A.

"posting obscenities on Facebook page/harassing our members & most troublingly posting the contact information of our other panelists."

"This in turn, lead to the harassment of Dr.s Carter, Grellete & Takim via email until they chose to withdraw from event this morning."

**After some supportive public emails from colleagues, I wrote:**

Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts and very personal history, H\_\_\_. Based on the comments I have received from a number of colleagues backchannel, I fully agree with you and others who argue that we are far too comfortable in our incredibly comfortable lives (compared with any other era), which leads to complacency and makes it all too easy to forget history.

My father himself was "exiled" from his group of artists and "intellectual elites" about 50 years ago--which led him to leave the country he had loved so much and had fought for in the Sinai War (despite being a pacifist) at 16 because he felt his country was in danger so he left in the middle of school and joined up on the spot (fortunately, the army made sure he was not in real danger for the week and a bit that the war lasted<sup>1</sup>). His "crime"? He argued that the Palestinians and Arabs living in and around Israel deserved to be treated with more dignity and respect.

The point is, I was raised to stand up for what I believed in and to fight against what I see as wrongs around us. I also learned to base my fights on facts and evidence rather than ideology, even if it means going up against popular yet unfounded opinions of the time. Unlike some people who have made a lot of waves in the media, I try to balance my factual approach with compassion and empathy while trying to truly empower the people whom I am supporting.

I know I am coming across as a crank who loves to beat dead horses. And I know that this next line is going to make some people see me as sanctimonious and obsessed with a particular position. That is unfortunate but my conversations with a number of colleagues backchannel have shown me that they have wilfully ignored much of what I have said and continue to misconstrue my words and intentions--notwithstanding one exception who reached out to me a little while ago, read what I had to say and then provided his very thoughtful response. The others who have written backchannel (excluding those who have expressed support) appear to be so wrapped up in their ideologies that they have all failed to write back when I provide a comprehensive response to their emails that should demonstrate why their impressions are incorrect. It seems that they want or need to see me in a certain light--a light that is bereft of any nuance--because that enables them to feel that their "cause" is righteous, even if it lacks facts/evidence and even if they refuse to see that their approach has been shown to do far more damage than good in certain ways.

Hence, history seems to be repeating itself. So I thank you again H\_\_\_ for providing another example of what happens when those in a position to do something fail to do so out of apathy, ignorance, fear or whatever other motive prevents them from doing the right thing even as the evidence mounts that they are "on the wrong side of history." Instead, they surround themselves with like-minded people who are mostly acting with good intentions and do in fact effect a lot of positive change and do help/advocate for many people. The problem is that they are wilfully ignoring the negative impact of their maladaptive approach, no matter how many rational and good-hearted people point this out to them. It is far easier to look at those people through a very narrow and biased/skewed/distorted lens, inappropriately label them, toss around a bunch of popular phrases of the day and falsely accuse them of things.

As always, I apologize for the rant. It comes from a good place -- a place of serious concern.

**I then posted this in response to one colleague's message to the listserv, while making reference to another colleague who had written me backchannel; ironically, I did not realize that he was in fact being supportive of me through irony/sarcasm that I missed/misunderstood until I clarified things with him. Even more ironic is that my response to what I thought was a terrible private email to me was the one exception to my rule of civil discourse—I was very direct and harsh with him because his message really did seem to be incredibly offensive. Of course I apologized profusely as soon as he clarified things and I made it clear how mortified I was that I could make such a mistake:**

Thank you very much, T\_\_\_. Sadly, not everyone understands that--especially based on an email I just received from a colleague. I have asked him to post his message publicly; we will see if he has the integrity to do so. If not,

I will post it to show that his email perfectly captures what I sated in my latest message. The astounding irony would be funny if it were not so concerning. At the very least, his message further motivates me to continue speaking out against what has been occurring recently.

**Because one of my colleagues was focusing so much on the pronoun issue even months later, I wrote the following; we had also engaged in very civil email correspondences backchannel:**

As you know, M\_\_\_, I agree with your position regarding showing compassion to marginalized or other people, as I clearly state here: <https://soundcloud.com/docamitay/ep-34-the-real-reality-behind-dr-jordan-petersons-guest-lecture-critical-thinking-free-speech>.

And as I also say in that podcast, I agree with JP's underlying messages, which he articulates in further detail here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtqSoTOG3Ac&t=4s>.

Even if no one has been arrested yet, we should be concerned about the implications of these policies because they \*are\* occurring daily, particularly in academia, as I have stated repeatedly. How many students have you spoken with recently? I have spoken to many and they are disgusted, fed up, disheartened and disillusioned. Many of them are dreading going further in academia because they know there is a risk that they will have to work with someone who promotes nonsense and who will not listen to reason/logic. Do you know how many students can never present their opinions because the consequences are too severe? Do you not have a problem with that? Do you defend Kelly Train's forcing of a student to write about a construct that does not exist? What if she had told the student she could only reference mythology books to write an essay proving that fire-breathing dragons are real? Or what if she told the student that she could only reference the bible to prove that \_\_\_\_\_? I think your sentence, "if you are in a position of power over them such as a professor in a government funded classroom would be, it starts to look like something different" applies perfectly here.

I also have colleagues in the business world who tell me so many horror stories relating to thought police ramming their ideologies down other people's throats, sometimes with absolutely no science, facts or logic behind them. Did you know that more and more jobs are using the I.A.T. and/or are forcing people to undergo training to identify and modify their "unconscious/implicit biases," even though the test does not work? How would \*you\* feel if you were forced to undergo hours of training/programming or failed to receive a promotion or faced some other form of punishment based on something that is not real? What if your job depended on the results of your E-meter (a la Scientology)? How is that any different from the I.A.T.? Seriously. \*These\* are some of the real-life consequences of allowing BS to pass as "science," all because certain ideologues have attained some positions of authority.

I really hope you are not arguing in favour of these things. We as educated and rational professionals are supposed to be better than that. And for the one particular colleague who takes offence when I make such statements, please explain how that particular statement is offensive; but do so publicly as opposed to backchannel so that others can observe firsthand how irrational some of the arguments emanating from some of our colleagues can get.

I am not trying to be rude. I am trying to highlight the concerns I have. You seem rational, M\_\_\_, and I agree with much of what you state. However, a shockingly large number of our colleagues allow their personal biases to overrule their logic and they can act in a very petty, vindictive, exclusionary, punitive and otherwise harmful manner. Do you not think these colleagues act in a similar way with their students, supervisees and others over whom they hold some power/authority? I know they do because I have seen it firsthand or have heard of it directly from the recipients. And some of these colleagues occupy positions of relative "power" within our profession. Given how some of them have conducted themselves backchannel, I would be very concerned if they were ever to sit on a Panel of the College in investigating a malicious or nuisance complaint against me. That is another real-life implication or consequence of allowing ideologues to run amuck in our profession and in other capacities.

In short, everything I have stated in my emails to the listserve, my lectures, the media and my podcasts should make it exceedingly clear that I support, promote and advocate for the rights, respect, equality, safety and well-being of marginalized and other peoples. And that is in no way mutually exclusive to fighting against the worrisome developments I have observed and commented on over the past few months.

On a related note, what if otherkin students start demanding that we address them by their own pronouns. And are you prepared to learn Klingon for those who identify as such? If you did not do so, could I then say to you the same thing you said, which is that "blatant refusal of using [such terms] is...Hatefulness"?

These examples in no way denigrate trans/nonbinary gender people because the number of them who wish to be called by these new pronouns, rather than he or she--as many trans people prefer--or they might be about equal to the number of otherkin, Klingons and other types of "identities." And even if the numbers are higher, they are still relatively low; so at what point do we say one demand/request is reasonable and another is not? I believe this is a legitimate question.

Having said all that, you know that I would have absolutely no problem calling someone "they," as I have with my trans/nonbinary gender friends, patients and students. And I might even call them "zir" etc., but am I expected to then remember "peh," "pehm," "thon," "vis" etc as well? Where does it end?

But I really don't care about preferred pronouns, as I would make every reasonable effort to be accommodating to trans/nonbinary gender and other people. I think the focus should be on the ideological tyranny that continues to worsen here and in the US, and more importantly the backlash it is generating. Let's not talk about some fantasy/ideal utopia and rather focus on the real world around us so that we can truly help vulnerable people and everyone else inhabiting the same space.

**When that same colleague still did not seem to understand my points, I continued:**

Thank you for your message, M\_\_. To keep things shortish, I will address only the parts I think require clarification. If I do not refer to something you wrote, you can infer I agree with it, understand the logic/point and/or take no issue with it.

1) You are choosing to focus on that one aspect of the issue and that is your choice. I am focusing on other aspects, including JP's right to speak out on what he sees as problems with the legislation. I understand you feel he should use people's preferred pronouns because it takes very little to do so. But he sees that as representing an insidious agenda and I believe he is correct because I keep seeing examples of that agenda and the harm it is causing--particularly the backlash to which I keep referring. The difference is in how he and I choose to deal with the issue. I've made my point many times that I do not support the way he would address individuals but I do not disagree with his oft-stated sentiment underlying his decision.

Conversely, you and others have ascribed motives to JP that you have chosen to assume based on what you believe to be valid observations and/or inferences; I do take issue with that because you and others have used terms such as "hateful" and "reprehensible" to describe his intentions, actions and/or character, while others have unfairly labelled him a white supremacist, neo nazi, misogynist, transphobe, homophobe, racist, bigot etc. Again, I take issue with that because I have not seen any evidence of such traits in JP, although I do see how his blunt language can come across certain ways. And I have also seen others hurl similar labels at me and others simply because they disagree with what we are saying. Not cool.

2) If you have spoken to students then you know of what I speak. Everything else you said about their or your academic experiences is not really relevant because the fact is that no student should ever feel that they are being graded on anything other than the quality of their work (and related factors). The only exception to this would be if the students were making unfounded inferences about their professors' impressions of them or the reason for their grades.

3) I am not sure whether you are defending KT or not. I do find you making apologies for her with statements such as "But that would be my privilege of not being on the spot and having the benefit of time and public discourse to craft my own response." Not to pick nits or get caught up in semantics, but do you really think "privilege" is appropriate here? You may have been using it in another form but as someone who has seen "privilege" misused far too often, I have to call you out on that. (It's really a minor point.) Putting that aside, how was she "on the spot?" A student sent her an email. She should have taken the time to craft an appropriate response. She certainly took the time to consider certain aspects of her answer so it was not as if the student cornered her after class as she was desperately trying to make it to the bathroom.

In light of the circumstances, I do choose to infer that you are making excuses for what I find to be inexcusable conduct. I mean, think of her words: "She opened up with, 'First off, your premise is wrong.'" That is an abuse of authority. She later states, "The *reality* is patriarchy [emphasis added]." Is that fact? Again, the rest of your points around this, which are entirely valid in of themselves, are not relevant to this specific case.

4) Please do not misconstrue my hypothetical as "making it personal." My point/example was not a "red herring" in any way. It was a solid analogy. And it had nothing to do with politics; how is L Ron Hubbard's E-meter any different from the I.A.T., aside from the fact that the latter has been accepted by some people in various industries (including social psychology) as valid--despite the lack of data showing its scientific validity?

To reiterate, I was not "making it personal" or appealing to emotion or tossing out a rhetorical question. An example of that would have been, e.g., "How would you feel if your mother/father lost their job and lost their home because \_\_\_\_?" I was truly just providing a legitimate analogy and was expecting a real answer from you.

5) As for the examples you gave of the struggles women have in the workforce due entirely to their gender, I do not deny that these issues are real. You may have heard me ask JP that re. the fact that only women can give birth. I lecture about that and other unfair realities you point out all the time. But I could easily counter with "Why is it that men are expected to sacrifice their lives at the time of war?" or "Why is it that men are expected to take on jobs that have been proven to shorten or end their lives or to cause them extreme physical discomfort, including various forms of cancer, loss of limbs etc?" or "Why is it that Family Courts are structured in ways that, on average, disadvantage men significantly with respect to finances and custody/access?" or "Why is it that men will be sentenced up to 67% longer (I believe that figure is correct) than women for the exact same crime?" Do you see where I'm going? Playing the Victim Olympics is not very productive. It certainly is not empowering.

But you said you provided those examples as counters to my anecdotes. To which anecdotes were you referring? You essentially stated or implied that my anecdotes were unreliable so please tell me which ones I presented fit that bill as unreliable and if it is appropriate, I will find you stats or other evidence to support whatever point my anecdotes were supposed to make.

6) The one part of my message that I nearly regret is if you believe I was trying to imply that you are not rational or educated. I explicitly stated that you seemed rational and I explicitly stated that I agreed with much of what you wrote, so I do not think you should have inferred that I was trying to suggest otherwise through some subtle or deceptive means. But I do apologize if that is what you thought I was doing. Let me be very clear and assert unequivocally that I was not in any way stating or implying anything to that effect.

7) When I was writing about irrationality and education, I was actually referring to someone else, whom I am not naming out of protocol; I thought the relevant paragraphs made that abundantly clear but I apologize if there was any ambiguity. To be clear, during the original discussion around JP and free speech, I stated to one of our colleagues backchannel that we, as educated and specially trained professionals, should hold ourselves to a higher standard than "the average person" when it comes to being able to analyze issues from a logical, rational, disinterested and fact-based perspective. The colleague for some inexplicable reason took that as a horribly arrogant, offensive and elitist declaration. Why?

To repeat the examples I provided back then (or something similar): Should we not expect musicians to recognize pitch and tone better than the average person? Should we not expect basketball players to be able to jump higher than the average person? Should we not expect mathematicians to perform calculations better than the average person? Hence, should we not expect psychologists to be able to analyze certain phenomena better than the average person?

I believe to expect otherwise would represent an irrational thought or deduction. Do you disagree? Or do you believe that anything I stated above is factually incorrect?

8) Along those lines, no, I am not saying that if you disagree with me then you are irrational or uneducated. I *will* say that it is irrational to make determinations about people's careers or other important aspects of their lives based on unproven/invalidated/equivocal constructs and/or measurement devices.

If you can find any logical fault with that statement, please let me know. And if you agree that the preceding statement is entirely logical, then would a disagreement with it not represent an irrational thought?

9) I have had others write to me and suggest that I might get better results if I soften my tone and reduce my risk of coming across as rude or offensive. I do not believe that to be true in this forum. I say that because I have seen certain people make some objectively offensive statements to this group without consequence for reasons I cannot get into publicly. I am not being coy; I am trying to avoid some form of censure. I can guarantee you based on factual (albeit anecdotal) evidence that there are some colleagues who believe I have already made statements that warrant a severe rebuke.

Accordingly, I am not going to disclose more than I have. Nothing I have stated here or in my previous email identified anyone specifically. Nor have I made any statements about anyone's character. If you believe otherwise, please show me where I have erred and I will make the necessary amends immediately, just as I made a public correction and private apology to someone whose backchannel message I misread entirely. You see, I have no problem with acknowledging when I am wrong and apologizing and making amends accordingly. Such a sentiment is antithetical to believing that anyone who disagrees with me is irrational or uneducated.

Returning to my apparent rudeness, I personally do not believe my blunt messages are rude. Some people may be (overly) "sensitive" and take offence with what I state. Given that some people have taken offence with my declaration that I believe in having open discussions about controversial, complex and unclear issues, I know that virtually anything I state could offend them, hence I see no reason to cater to such individuals. Ironically, they are the very same people who say some objectively offensive statements backchannel, including making some very ugly declarations about my motives and character.

And, as mentioned before, when I take the time to explain very clearly why they are misrepresenting me and/or what I have stated, they do not even have the decency to respond. So no, I do not feel particularly compelled to soften my tone to accommodate such individuals.

10) I am not going to comb through my thousands of emails but I will estimate that at least 10 to 12 people have written to me over the past few months, doing the kinds of things mentioned in the previous point. And, because I do not wish to be removed from this list serve, I cannot disclose other things that these and others have done. To me, 10 to 12 psychologists acting in this manner constitutes a shockingly high number.

Also, please keep in mind that, for every person who writes to me backchannel, a certain number of other colleagues will share their beliefs and/or conduct. Do you disagree?

To add to that number, I have had many dozens of students tell me about their experiences with professors/instructors who do the kinds of things Kelly Train apparently does. When I ask who those professors/instructors are, it's not as if all of the students provide the same name; I have lost count of the many different ones, quite a few of whom are in psychology.

I hope I have afforded your message the attention and consideration it deserves. I am not trying to start a fight with anyone. I also do not want any of my words or intentions misconstrued. Some of those misunderstandings are on me, hence I have addressed them. If you think there are other things I should address, clarify or acknowledge, please let me know.

**After the president of the OPA declared that everyone should stop commenting on the preceding thread, two colleagues took it upon themselves to keep posting; I have known the first one for about 20 years and they wrote to me backchannel several times, expressing what I believe was sincere concern for me. The second person comes from OISE and had revealed their personal/political agenda back in November 2016. Although I had complied with the president's request, I needed to address these two last messages because not only did they completely mischaracterize me and my messages but they also portrayed the current and previous threads in such a biased manner that I needed to point that out:**

M\_\_\_, I appreciate your comments and thus am risking the ire of some by responding (which is why I did not respond publicly to G\_\_\_'s supportive comment, nor will I publicly respond to any other supportive comments that might follow). Please consider how you've set up your message: If I point out any flaws I find in it, I have ostensibly validated the impression you have posited of me.

With that in mind, I hope you can accept that I have never said that "If people disagree with [me], they are surely illogical." As I did in my reply to M\_\_\_'s post, I explained what kind of disagreement would be illogical. If he were able to show me that my reasoning or arguments were flawed, I would concede his points and would consider changing my opinions.

Stating outright that "If people make (even really good) points other than [mine], those points are irrelevant" is a gross mischaracterization of what I actually wrote. I explained that some of the things M\_\_\_ said were valid **in of themselves** but were not relevant to the point at hand and explained why that was. Again, if he could effectively show me why he believed they were in fact relevant, I would accept that. Moreover, I explicitly stated to M\_\_\_, "I agree with much of what you state," which is literally the opposite of how you portrayed me in your post.

Again, I acknowledge that I have been forceful in my postings but, as I have mentioned to you backchannel, that is because I have seen the force with which those who disagree with my points attack people such as myself--anyone who does not blindly and uncritically buy into their ideology, much of which is based on personal beliefs, desires and opinions rather than facts, evidence or reality. The greatest irony in your message, which I do in fact appreciate as mentioned and I do believe deserves to be considered, is that I have yet to see you direct it to others who are acting antithetically to what you have properly suggested. That is, do you really believe that those who disagree with me promote and exemplify "open dialogue, respectful discourse, and tolerance for one another's opinions"?

If you really want to have an honest discussion, please re-read the earlier emails of those who disagreed with me and show me how they evinced "open dialogue, respectful discourse, and tolerance for one another's opinions." I know for fact that I can demonstrate conclusively that they did not do so. That is not being rude. That is not being arrogant. That is not being dismissive. It is stating something with certainty because I know the facts support me. What is wrong with that?

And truthfully, please show me where I have actually been rude in this thread. I did not oppose nor question Sylvain's edict because I respect him and the work he does, and I do not want to make his life any more difficult than it needs to be. Also, given that I have repeatedly promoted the OPA in my classes, in numerous media interviews and all over social media, I definitely do not want to cause any members to leave the organization.

Having said that, I still contend that if someone cannot read \*or ignore\* a forceful message by me--particularly when I do not believe one can find anything objectively offensive or factually incorrect in what I am saying--that seems to be a sign of over-sensitivity. And if my messages are not objectively disrespectful (if they are, please show me where; I do not necessarily equate bluntly stating facts with disrespect), then why do you not ask the apparently dozens of colleagues who have complained to Sylvain about my messages to try to personify the "open dialogue...and tolerance for one another's opinions," just like you reasonably asked me to do?

Returning to my original point, I hope you do not misconstrue my addressing your points as unfair "intense scrutiny and a demand to prove [you] point by point in precisely the way [I] see fit." Rather, you expressed your opinions and suggestions and I respectfully provided you with my thoughts about and responses to those opinions and suggestions. Seriously, is there anything wrong with that?

Also, do you think it is appropriate to arbitrarily denigrate my correspondences by comparing them to "some second year Philosophy essay competition"? Do you not think that might be judgmental? I do not think it would be reasonable to avoid taking accountability for your words by deflecting and saying I am being rude or disrespectful by simply pointing out what I believe you did. If you think I have misconstrued what you wrote, please explain and I would be happy to stand corrected if that is the case.

Sticking with your "Philosophy essay" analogy, are you not making a huge assumption that I believe that I am "the only one worthy of grading it"? Where did I ever state that? If anyone can show me where I have made a factual

mistake or a logical fallacy, I am happy to concede that. In previous messages, others have pointed out apparent flaws or concerns with respect to what I have stated--usually as a result of my failure to express things as clearly as I should have--and I quickly clarified what I meant and/or apologized for any mistakes or misunderstandings that could be attributed to me. So how is that reflective of a belief that I am "the only one worthy of" deeming which points are correct?

All I have done is expressed what I believe are misunderstandings, misrepresentations, mistakes or flawed arguments/points in some people's posts. If they disagree and can show me why I am wrong, of course I will acknowledge that, as I have done many times--including earlier today after realizing that I made a spectacularly huge and ironic blunder in reading someone's private message to me.

Because I want to respect Sylvain's request that we stop discussing this topic, I would be happy to do so backchannel, M\_\_\_. The only thing I would request is that you not portray me as doing certain things simply because it \*seems\* or \*feels\* that way to you. Please show me where exactly I have committed any transgressions; and if I believe you are incorrect, I hope you will respectfully allow me to engage in open dialogue and will tolerate my response/fact-based opinions, even if you disagree with them.

I am very sorry for this message, Sylvain; as always, I truly do not wish to cause you this unnecessary stress. M\_\_\_ posted her email publicly and I did not think it would be appropriate if I were not allowed to address what I believed to be inaccurate depictions of what I had said or done. If no one else posts anything publicly that I believe I can clearly demonstrate has similarly mischaracterized my words, intentions or actions, you will not hear from me again on the subject.

**This is my response to the colleague from OISE who ostensibly wrote a reasonable message calling for everyone to act with more civility and respect. However, it was clear that they really were referring only to me. Not surprisingly, this colleague never responded to my public post nor to two civil private messages:**

I appreciate your message and its intent, Dr. \_\_\_. Combining Sylvain's [OPA president] message that "dozens of complaints" about this thread's "causing distress, anger and frustration among members" with another member's backchannel email about the number of people who have apparently taken offence with my message and/or tone, I will infer that your message was directed (primarily) at me and/or that others will infer as much.

Accordingly, I hope that members will not become distressed at what is by all rational and objective accounts a neutral message (as I believe my other messages mostly were, albeit blunt):

Dr. \_\_\_, I would appreciate if you would display further integrity by explicitly stating that your message applies to those who have called for the shutting down of the critical topic of free speech. To me, this is the crux of the matter.

Some members might find my direct, rational/logical and fact-based messages (not only with respect to the issues themselves but also with respect to claims made by those who disagree with me, e.g., when I respectfully state, "Please show me where I said/did \_\_\_") to be rude, offensive or inappropriate--which to me is a gross misuse of such terms. However, some of those same people have directly stated or implied that I am:

- a misogynist
- a transphobe
- a bigot
- hateful
- reprehensible
- unreasonable
- unwilling or unable to engage in respectful discourse

Moreover, Dr. \_\_\_ explicitly stated on this listserv in November that she did not believe that JP should have been given a forum to discuss what any reasonable person would agree is far from an unequivocal issue. She posted a link to an online article she co-wrote that stated her reasons for what most objective people should find a concerning call for  **censorship of not only non-hateful ideas but also scientific investigation and discussion, as well as civil debate about poorly conceptualized/worded legislation that could potentially cause unforeseen harm.**

Based on what I have read from colleagues, I wonder how many of them truly understood or cared about the implications of this last sentence. What do *you* think about it, Dr. \_\_\_? And please note that Dr. \_\_\_ [the one who has a problem with me] wrote that article well before the last few threads I have initiated these past few months.

To reiterate, I hope you will stand by your words and state clearly that your admirable message applies to those who call for the shutting down of discussion or ideas with which they disagree--regardless of their ostensible rationale for such actions. No one who supports the position that those who call for censorship so vehemently oppose has once demanded that they stop expressing their opinions, even when they have used much stronger language or have made much uglier implications than anything contained in any of my messages. In other words, only "one side" of the discussion has acted in ways that, by definition, outright contravene points 2 through 5 of your message: those who have called for a cessation of discussion.

I await your public response, Dr. \_\_\_. And if anyone wants to take offence at this email, I genuinely hope that they will specifically point out anywhere that I was rude, offensive or inappropriate, rather than tossing around such unwarranted accusations without supporting evidence.

**And that is how I have found myself in the current situation. So far, nothing terrible has resulted from my continued efforts to promote critical thinking, free speech and factual/intellectually honest discourse. I have made this document available to all of my colleagues in the OPA so if anyone believes I have distorted anything in any way, they have every opportunity to demonstrate where I have done so. If anyone does try to frame things differently from how I have presented the preceding information, I will provide updates on my website and Youtube channel.**

**Thank you for reading!**

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<sup>i</sup> In my sleep deprived state, I somehow mixed up my father/Israel's history and incorrectly identified the Suez Crisis as the Sinai War.