



A Settler Colonialism Induced Feminist Snap

A case study in IRS denialism and institutional violence in Canada

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ABSTRACT

In this study, I preface the analysis of a case study about the IRS (Indian Residential School System) denialism and ableist, misogynist abuse by locating my experience as feminist research demands. I focus on the IRS denialism I witnessed at the University of Lethbridge and my subsequent correspondence with the university administration through discourse analysis.

KEYWORDS

Colonialism, feminist snap, white supremacy, discourse analysis, institutional violence



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HEADING 1 STYLE

In October of 2022, Canada's House of Commons unanimously voted to call the Indian Residential School System (IRS) genocide following the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (House of Commons 2022). This historic move has created the necessary foundation for calls to amend the Criminal Code of Canada to identify residential school denialism as hate speech (Stefanovich 2023).

The decision to recognize the IRS system as genocide builds on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) 2015 report and the decision of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls to use the term genocide in its 2019 final report. It represents a significant departure from what was perceived to be possible under the original mandate of the TRC. The rationale for the term cultural genocide stems from a narrow understanding of the term genocide and the assumption that in order to recognize the IRS system as such under international law, the TRC would have had to be empowered to make reference to the criminal and civil liability of the people and organizations who had not already been through legal processes and to hold them accountable for making the IRS system possible and/or engaging in physical, sexual, cultural, spiritual, and other forms of violence against the students. Because the TRC was created to inform the public, and document the truth of survivors, their families, communities, and anyone else personally affected by the IRS system, it was not able to hold formal legal hearings, to prosecute crimes, to grant amnesties or to subpoena witnesses. As such, declaring that it was genocide under international law would have exceeded its mandate despite references to the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in Canada's Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act and the parallel Independent Assessment Process (IAP) that took place to provide compensation above the common experience payment that was given to survivors. Because of the limited mandate of the TRC, the use of the term on its own was left out of its final report, but it was nevertheless careful to leave the possibility open for the use of the legal term genocide as a product of future lobbying to recognize the IRS system as such in future inquiries, and policy (NCTR 2023). This is exactly what happened as a result of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in 2019, and the motion that was unanimously passed in the House of Commons in 2022. Demands for the legal recognition of genocide are ongoing with the proposed bill to amend the Criminal Code of Canada.

The terms genocide and cultural genocide have been the source of much debate and controversy across Canada. Some argue that in addition to the limited mandate of the TRC, the term cultural genocide was applied by the TRC in the hopes of mitigating the kinds of backlash and the creation of the same kind of denialist movement that took place in Australia (Regan 2010). The difference in Canada, however, was that instead of succeeding as a mitigation strategy it became a means of minimizing the impacts of the IRS system (Staniforth 2015; McDonald and Hudson 2012). This decision and its results are very much in keeping with Canada's documented history of not only opposing the inclusion of the term "cultural genocide" in the UN Genocide Convention of 1948, but also with its opposition to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and its refusal to sign on without the proviso that the UNDRIP would not be legally binding in 2010.

In Australia, the forcible removal of Indigenous children from their families was declared both a crime against humanity and genocide in April of 1997 (Australian Human Rights Commission 1997). According to Ben Kiernan (2010, 163), this put significant pressure on then conservative Prime Minister, John Howard. It provoked his supporters to launch a concerted campaign to deny genocide in Australia resulting in "right-wing refusal to concede legitimacy to causes enlisting left-wing support." Denialism in Canada follows many of the same rhetorical strategies that are used in the Australian context, but it is not exclusively a right-wing or conservative phenomenon. Sadly, in Canada, denialism cuts across the political spectrum and a range of academic theories from Marxist circles to Alt Right Holocaust deniers and everyone in between. As Daniel Heath Justice and Sean Carleton (2021, n.p.) have articulated,

Residential school denialism is not the outright denial of the Indian Residential School (IRS) system's existence, but rather the rejection or misrepresentation of basic facts about residential schooling to undermine truth and reconciliation efforts [...] denialists begin and end with a firm belief in innate Indigenous deficiency and settler innocence, often rooted in Christian triumphalism. Their ranks include missionary apologists, writers and academics, right-wing and anti-Indigenous editorialists and relatives of residential school staff who uncritically refer to personal memory and work to defend their family reputations. These are neither informed nor objective commentators.

As recently witnessed at the University of Lethbridge, residential school denialism has provoked both protest against IRS denialists and a doubling down on arguments in support of IRS denialism as protected speech under the banner of academic freedom and freedom of expression (Dryden 2023). This, however, was not spurred on by a right-wing conservative movement as was the case in Australia, or the Christian triumphalism referred to by Justice and Carleton (2021). Instead, it was led by a self-identified historical materialist scholar who has used a number of the rhetorical strategies outlined by Justice and Carleton (2021), including arguing that the term genocide is not applicable in Canada and claiming that IRS survivors were receiving an education despite the harm that was being done to them (Taylor 2020). Finally, this speaker has also publicly and deliberately misread critical race theory, and intersectionality in particular, as creating hierarchies of oppression, when feminist critical race scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (2016, n.p.) who is often credited with coining the term, has most recently articulated that not only is intersectionality not primarily about identity, but it is about how "structures make certain bodies the vehicles for and consequences of vulnerability." Intersectional approaches are therefore not meant to be comparative or hierarchical, they instead consider the qualitatively different experiences of those who have been subject to discrimination, abuse and violence in the contexts in which they appear (Crenshaw 2016). This is precisely what I will be doing here, using myself as a case study.

The primary justification and support for the Widdowson talk emerged from scholars and members of the public who erroneously hang on the principles of academic freedom and freedom of expression as uncontestable and unfettered, and who view all expression, no matter how violent and abusive, as a means of generating democratic debate and free thinking. As a legal scholar who writes about rights and constitutional issues, I instead default here to the responsibilities that come with having rights and freedoms, and ask the threshold questions that must be answered in the context of so-called justifiable

human rights violations in Canada, or what some understand as proportionality review under s. 1 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*: 1) was there a pressing and substantive objective for this talk (pedagogical or otherwise)? 2) Were the means (racism, transphobia, IRS denialism, repudiating Indigenous knowledge, abusive language, etc.) proportional to achieving the objective? 3) Does meeting the stated objective minimally impair the rights at issue, ie. are there other ways of teaching critical thinking and inspiring debate that do not involve abusive, violent language, and the targeting of a person or class of persons for hatred and contempt under s. 3 of the *Alberta Human Rights Act*?

This scholar was invited to speak by a faculty member who thought it appropriate to draw Indigenization and Indigenous ways of knowing into question as legitimate paths to academic inquiry on the eve of the uncovering of the remains of hundreds of children in a shallow mass grave at the former site of Blue Quills Indian Residential School just outside of Edmonton, Alberta (Cook 2023). As a result, students, faculty, staff, members of Blackfoot and Métis communities across Southern Alberta, campus organizations, groups and clubs, residential school survivors and concerned members of the broader Lethbridge community came together and engaged in collective action including generating a petition that resulted in the president of the university cancelling the proposed talk.

In keeping with the reputation that Widdowson has built for herself over the years and her subsequent dismissal from her position at Mount Royal University that was a direct result of her discriminatory treatment of colleagues and students, Frances Widdowson came to the university anyway. She was allowed to teach a class in Paul Viminiz's philosophy course where she refuted the validity of Indigenous knowledge, whitewashed the history of the university system as being a product of enlightenment Europe instead of addressing its ancient origins on the continent of Africa, in Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt and Mali more specifically, or its pre-enlightenment manifestations in Europe itself, and wore an "anti-Woke" T-shirt to bolster her overarching claims that can be summed up in one phrase: diversity is threatening academic rigour, integrity, and academic freedom (Notterbrok 2023). She did not spare a thought to the fact that if she were living in Enlightenment Europe, she would have never had a university appointment to get fired from and if it were not for the 'woke' civil and human rights movements she abhors, she would not

have been empowered or allowed the education to write her misguided political and economic theories.

What is interesting about this case is the University of Lethbridge's initial willingness to understand blatant distortions of facts and violations of basic human rights including, and especially, Indigenous rights and trans rights, as protected speech with pedagogical value and the Canadian Association of University Teachers' (CAUT) willingness to admonish the university once the talk was eventually cancelled (Robinson 2023). First, the president of the university did not cancel her planned public talk until after he had received the results of the student petition, and after I sent him a pointed email outlining that private funders who have contributed to Indigenization on our campus may not be so forgiving when an institution happily accepts their money while simultaneously allowing anti-Indigenous racism on our campus. Coincidentally or not, the talk was cancelled shortly thereafter but not before releasing a public statement about how the talk was protected by academic freedom and freedom of expression that had to later be retracted (Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship 2023). Secondly, the University of Lethbridge allowed this disgraced academic to give a guest lecture in Viminiz' class because the invitation and the content of her lecture was considered to be protected by *his* academic freedom thereby negating the purpose of cancelling the public talk. And finally, the student newspaper, the *Meliorist* (Unger 2023, n.p.) interviewed both Widdowson and one of the student organizers in an attempt to be balanced, fair and to "subvert the second or third hand sources that people may be reading" about Widdowson. Sadly, the formal equality framework where conceptions of unfettered freedom of expression as academic freedom, an understanding of the civil liberty that has never been the case in Canada, was presented as legitimate. This representation was largely devoid of a power analysis and in a clear articulation of why these kinds of distorted facts and the people who deliver them should not be protected or allowed a platform in post-secondary classrooms, the author himself did not update his research to include the most recent facts concerning the end of residential school operations (Indian Residential School Adjudication Secretariat 2021).¹

After giving her lecture, Widdowson returned the following day and was greeted by roughly 700 people who did not want her rhetoric on campus. She was drummed and danced off university property by Blackfoot students, community members and residential school

¹ Since the truth is what was being represented as the thing that was at stake, the truth is that residential schools were in operation until 1997, Unger names the year as 1996. This includes the residences at the day school that I attended in the 1980s despite not being Indigenous. See: Indian Residential School Adjudication Secretariat. 2021. Final Report: Independent Assessment Process Oversight Committee 2021, https://www.residentialschoolsettlement.ca/IAP_Final_Report_English.pdf and Hardy, Richard I. (2022) *Mólazha (Child of a White Man) A Memoir*. Altona: Friesen Press. See the following cases: *R. v. Comeau* [1998] NWTJ no. 34 (S.C.), the accused was charged with two counts of indecent assault, entered a guilty plea and was sentenced to a jail term of one year on each count to be served concurrently. *R. v. Leroux* [1998] NWTJ no. 139 (S.C.); *Trial* [1998] NWTJ No. 140 (S.C); Sentencing [1998] NWTJ No. 141 (S.C), the accused was charged with 21 counts including indecent assault, gross indecency, and incitement to commit buggery. Seven counts were dismissed and convictions were entered on 14 counts. The accused was sentenced to a global term of 10 years in prison; *R. v. Maczynski* [1998] [unreported], the accused was charged with five counts including indecent assault, gross indecency and buggery. The accused entered a guilty plea and was sentenced to 4 years.

survivors. Sadly, this was following the class where she systematically devalued Indigenous knowledges and argued that they were negatively impacting the search for what she terms the truth that ought to be at the centre of academic inquiry (Notterbrok 2023). In the aftermath, as a means of retaliation for my outspokenness, I was harassed for a relatively benign letter of support for the student initiative to cancel her talk. This was done via email by two of my own colleagues in the philosophy department as the rest of their members watched the spectacle unfold and said nothing. While they allegedly voiced their concerns to the Dean, they said nothing to me or the group of email recipients raising important questions about workplace violence, psychological safety, and abuse in academic settings. In the following case study, the ableist foundations of contemporary universities and their “interrelations with heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, [settler] colonialism and capitalism” are made abundantly clear (Piepzna-Samarasinha 2019, 21).

My Location

I will preface the analysis of my own case by locating myself, as feminist research demands (Kirsch 1999; Lazar 2007; Valentine 2002). Feminist researchers have long understood that it is unethical to presume that there are universal or objective claims to truth and that all knowledge is mediated by the specific contexts, histories, and locations within which it is produced. The positionality of the researcher is therefore part of the study and should inform the story that is being told and how it ought to be read (Hirsch, Olsen and Harding 1995, 193).

I am a neurodivergent academic, a feminist killjoy, a woman driven mad. I have snapped. I gleefully embrace not only my neurodivergence and my psychotropic prescription drugs, but also what others often perceive as my madness itself—ie. my inability to bring others joy by successfully performing stereotypical white femininity as a meek, silent, selfless, racist, overly apologetic, nice, communal narcissist who falls to her knees for white men in positions of authority; my inability to bring others joy by deferring to stereotypically white, masculinist behaviours, including but not limited to toxic overwork, the arrogance of mediocrity, domination, and the hatred of everything that can be classified as feminine or feminism, no matter who is embodying them (yes, that includes all those diverse bodies who have opted to embrace these stereotypes as their default settings). In other words, I do not follow—your need for joy through complicity, silence, and/or domination, your arguments, your justifications, or your lead. I do not hold out for the promise of happiness. I do not exist to generate happiness. I complain. I kill joy. I name the problem; I become the problem. My edges are sharp. I will get in the way of your happiness (Ahmed 2023).

I am also a discourse analyst and stand firm in the belief that language matters. It is fluid and subject to change, and it is conditioned by the historical moments in which we live. As Lisa Archibald (2021, n.p.) has articulated, “[t]he language we use to describe our personal life experiences, challenges, and identities, can reflect not only our perspective and worldview, but also indicate what change we are hoping for, if any.” As such, despite having to claim a diagnosis and being forced to identify as a person with a disability for legal claims and workplace accommodations, I do not identify with the language of disability, nor do I identify as a diagnosis. My body, which includes my mind, is not the problem. I do not need nor do I want to be fixed, although I do appreciate how contemporary medications make surviving this settler colonial hellscape possible.

My diagnosis is the invention of a misogynistic, racist, and ableist medical establishment that would have had me sterilized and locked up in an asylum not that long ago. Therefore, the violently genocidal and ableist society in which I live, including the academic institution that pays my bills, are the problem as the following case study will demonstrate. I am my case study, a mad killer of joy. As such, it is fitting that I publish my unresolved complaints in a journal entitled *Feminist Asylum*, asylum in this case reclaimed as a feminist haven for a woman driven mad. A killjoy who has spent a lifetime in refusal and will not normalize violence and abuse.

Finally, I identify as a settler in a settler colonial society. The term settler is an interrogative identity that “is entangled both historically and in the present with the process of settler colonization” (Lowman and Barker, 2014, 3). Following Lowman and Barker (2014), settler identity represents a broad collective of people who share commonalities related to their relationships to land and place that have been forged through violence against the extra-human world, Indigenous bodies, and through the displacement of Indigenous Peoples. It is an identity that forces the interrogation of one’s relationship with and participation in genocide, including those structures, processes, rhetorical strategies, and institutional cultures that maintain it in the present.

The reason that I embrace this identity is because my parents were not born in Canada. My father came here as an economic migrant from Belfast, Northern Ireland to get away from ongoing sectarian violence that was also taking place throughout his early life, and my mother was forcibly displaced at the end of the Second World War and came here from Estonia via Sweden under the legal classification: Displaced Person. To complicate things further, while my father was born in Belfast, he grew up Jewish, as his ancestors had been displaced centuries before leading my grandmother to Scotland, and then to Northern Ireland, where she met my grandfather who was also part of the Jewish diaspora that had eventually taken root there. Both my parents came to Canada from conflict zones. One as part of a larger intergenerationally displaced diaspora stuck in the middle of a violent, Christian sectarian conflict. The other, escaping Russian occupation, or more precisely: Stalinism.

Estonia’s complex history includes the range of what Hannah Arendt has theorized as totalitarianism. During the first Russian occupation, from 1940-41, some of the Jewish population were deported to Siberia with members of other faith-based groups, including my grandfather who was a Lutheran minister. Under the later Nazi occupation, from 1941-44, it became the first country to become ‘judenrein’. By the end of 1941, knowing the fate that awaited them under the Nazis, most of the Jewish population fled. Those that could not were murdered by Estonian Nazi sympathizers and German units such as the Einsatzgruppe. By the end of WWII, Estonia was re-occupied by the Soviets who engaged in a systemic program of what in contemporary terms could be called cultural genocide but has been referred to in the literature as cultural, religious and language suppression. Therefore, when my parents arrived in Canada, they were no strangers to genocide and cultural assimilation strategies, the results of which are still felt in my father’s case across the globe, the repetition of which is being actively resisted by Holocaust survivors who condemn Israel’s ongoing massacres of Palestinians, and the Independent Jewish Voices of Canada, who call for an end to Israel’s occupation of Palestine. In my mother’s case, despite Estonian liberation in 1991, these kinds of genocidal practices are still being addressed in the language politics and artistic movements calling for Estonian

resurgence through ethno-futurism and language revitalization projects as a result of Soviet attempts at Russification (Kruger 2017). Despite these experiences, after they came to Canada, they both ended up working, in their own different ways, at the behest of Canadian settler colonial state.

My father worked for the federal government in what was then called, Health and Welfare Canada, Indian Affairs Branch and my mother coordinated a Native Medical Students Programme at the University of Alberta for twenty years. My father's role as Assistant Regional Director of Community Health Programs in Alberta was to work with community to develop meaningful and culturally relevant data driven health programs. In 1989, he worked closely with the Piikáni, creating a team to collect hair samples before and after the Napi (Old Man) River Dam was built to ensure that the it was not leading to mercury poisoning (Wagg, 1989). That same year, on the advice of a number of Indigenous leaders, he also worked in and with community to head an investigation into the over-prescription of opioids among other drugs. He described the investigation as follows: "it was really a community initiative that triggered me doing it. That shows concern on behalf of the communities. They want to do something about it" (Wagg, 1989, 3). Unfortunately, despite the findings and the prosecutions against overprescribing physicians, some of whom traded drugs for sex in a uniquely coercive form of sexual violence, the opioid crisis is still routinely headline news across Alberta today, and in Lethbridge in particular.

My mother worked as the coordinator for the Native Students Medical Programme at the University of Alberta for twenty-years. She is also a killjoy. She started before the last residential school was closed. In 1993, she gave testimony to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) where she indicated:

The ratio of Aboriginal physicians to the total Aboriginal population in 1993 stands at 1 to 33, 333 as compared to 1 for every 515 people in the general population...The number of Aboriginal MD students has grown to 12, exceeding the total number of students of Aboriginal ancestry in faculties of medicine in all Canadian universities combined [...]

All universities should set up programs and faculties to recruit students and to create a welcoming atmosphere and support structure [...] Strong support is required at the faculty level, especially by the dean, a multilevel support system for students in pre-professional and professional years [...] the inclusion of Native health issues in the curriculum and cultural activities under program sponsorship. These should include non-Native students, Elders, Healers, Native professionals [...]

The central problem she experienced while at the University of Alberta, was that:

Once larger numbers of under-represented students are admitted, the university feels it has done enough. Programs are cut because it is felt that with larger numbers enrolled there is no longer a problem with representation. No thought is given to retention. When students face problems, there is no program to address these, a strain is put on the system. The university then draws back its support, cuts back on admissions because it doesn't have the facilities to deal with what it now perceives to be a group of problem students. The very success of the program creates its demise (Hodes 1993).

She gave this testimony based on data regarding the public health needs of Indigenous Peoples three years before the RCAP released its final report. Seven years later, the Canadian Medical Association Journal, hailed the Native Medical Students Program that had received so much opposition through the racism the students experienced, the resistance of the medical school administration, and the faculty members, the pay inequity my mother experienced along with the verbal abuse she faced on the job, as a popular program based on the fact that an average of sixteen students would apply for the two positions the medical school had made available annually. By 2000, sixteen students had graduated and nine of them were from Alberta (Kent 2000).

My parents' work in the areas of Indigenous health and education started long before they took up these roles in Alberta. As a result, I grew up from the East Coast, but only as far as Ontario, to the West Coast, as far as Alberta, after which I moved to British Columbia before going back to Ontario and finally, I came back to Alberta to work in Lethbridge. My formative years were spent in Indigenous territories including Dene, Inuit, Anishinaabe, Ininew, Nehiyaw, Nakoda-Sioux, Niitsitapi, Oji-Cree, and Dakota. The most enduring of my childhood memories come from Inuvik where, when I was five and six years old, I attended Sir Alexander Mackenzie (SAM) School from 1980 to 1981. SAM School was constructed in 1959 as a Federal Indian Day School with residences at Grollier Hall and Stringer Hall. My experiences as a non-Indigenous student were dramatically different from those forced to go back to the residences at the end of their school day. I was not subject to physical or sexual abuse from staff, although fist fights with other students and name calling were part of my experiences. Many of the students who were forced to live at Grollier and Stringer Hall, however, have testified to the TRC about the sexual and physical violence they experienced in the residences.

Richard Hardy (2022), one of the former Métis survivors of Grollier Hall has written a memoir called *Mólazha* (Child of a White Man) documenting his experiences and his repeated calls on the Roman Catholic Church to acknowledge its wrongdoing. In 1962, at fifteen years of age, Hardy, with a group of other students, testified at the sex abuse trial of Martin Houston, a dorm supervisor who was convicted and sentenced to ten years in jail. SAM school didn't close until 2012 after which it was demolished with Grollier Hall in 2014. There have been seventeen documented 'suicides'—what Vikki Reynolds (2019) might instead call settler colonialism induced premature death, or genocide—as a result of the abuse that students faced at Grollier Hall and in 2019 the Catholic Church donated \$5000 to Dene film maker and former student, Raymond Yakeleya to make a documentary about the school called *The Ghosts of Grollier Hall*. Finally, it was not until 2022 that Pope Francis apologized for "the evil" that took place in residential schools and recognized the IRS system as genocide, the necessary precursor to the unanimous decision in the House of Commons in October of that same year (Deer 2022).

A Case Study in IRS Denialism and Ableist, Misogynist Abuse

This brings us full circle to the criteria laid out by Justice and Carleton (2021) for IRS denialism. Settlers like me often tell their stories to gain some sort of absolution. I have no need for absolution, in either the religious or secular senses of the word, and for me guilt has never been particularly useful, despite the political theorists who argue, following Adorno, that it is a revolutionary sentiment (Cucharo 2022). I work from the position of responsibility, accountability, and truth

before reconciliation. I have a unique inheritance that demands no less. I benefit from settler colonialism in a number of ways including but not limited to an immigration process that gave preference to white European immigrants like my mother, and educated professionals like my father, thereby enabling my family to migrate to this country from conflict zones. The privileging of British education and Eurocentric knowledge systems in Canada provided my father with access to employment in his field without upgrading, and it provided educational opportunities for my mother, myself and my siblings to be able to build careers while living and working on appropriated land. I have also witnessed genocide and its intergenerational impacts throughout my life beginning in early childhood, in multiple contexts as discussed earlier, and I grew up intimately familiar with the shifting modalities of settler colonialism and their impacts on Indigenous Peoples across Canada.

As Patrick Wolfe (2006, 388) has theorized, “settler colonialism destroys to replace.” Replacement, however, is not a singular event. It is instead a process whereby elimination not only includes murder but also assimilation into the politically, legally, socially and economically reproductive structures of settler-colonial society (Wolfe 2006, 390). As such, Canadian genocide is productive of settler colonialism at the same time as settler colonialism is an indicator of genocide. Canadian genocide does not eliminate exclusively through murder, although that is a significant part of the story, particularly in the context of police killings, the IRS system, the murder of women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and the over-incarceration of Indigenous people (Hodes and Bonifacio 2023). It is also present through the denial of the basic necessities of life such as clean water, the ongoing removal of children through contemporary child apprehension policies, land theft, and linguistic, spiritual and cultural assimilation—all things that constitute a spectrum of premature social and physical death for a singular purpose: the replacement of Peoples, their economic, political, legal and governance systems, and their broader cultures. Settler colonialism is therefore a structure, not an event, and its history does not stop (Wolfe 2006).

Among the many myths about Canada and Canadians, there is one that presumes this country is a staunch defender of human rights governed by a population of responsible citizens who are civil to the point of excessive apologizing (Regan 2010; Lowman and Barker 2014). My case study should relieve readers of that fantasy and alert them to the fact that Canada was, and still is, a deeply racist, misogynist, settler colonial society, where speaking out about, and opposing IRS denialism, calling Canadian genocide, genocide, and opposing anti-Indigenous racism, can not only lead to harassment, discrimination, possible escalation and assault, but where its educational institutions also support and tacitly condone this kind of violence through silence, inaction, acceptance, the protection of perpetrators, the rhetoric of academic freedom and free speech.

In response to Widdowson’s proposed public talk, I wrote the following email to the acting Chair of my department, the acting Chair of the Philosophy department, the Dean, the Vice Provost of Iniskim Indigenous Relations, a representative of our faculty association, and the president of the university. Given the senior levels of administration that all these people occupy, I made an assumption that they knew of the recent decision of the Canadian state to officially name the IRS system genocide according to the UN Convention. My assumption was wrong. I killed all the joy. I identified and then became the problem.

The letter:

I am on study leave but I feel like I would be remiss if I didn’t add to what I know has been a chorus of letters from departments but also what I hope has been a barrage of email from community members, students, faculty and staff asking the university to cancel residential school denier Frances Widdowson.

This speaker has been fired from academic institutions due to her racism, transphobia and bigotry. She is known to distort the facts, deny genocide and engage in campaigns of anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism. She has been invited to this campus by a faculty member, Paul Viminitz, a member of the Philosophy Department, who has been routinely reprimanded by Dean Letts for his use of racial slurs and inappropriate conduct in his classrooms.

Residential school denial is genocide denial and this is a violation of Indigenous rights. This is not a form of speech protected by either the Alberta Human Rights Act or academic freedom as understood by our collective agreement or our Harassment and Discrimination Policy. Both Drs. Widdowson and Viminitz are engaging in forms of hate speech.

The university itself may not have invited this speaker but the university is responsible under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to provide an environment free of psychological hazards for faculty, staff, and students. Dr. Viminitz has created a psychologically unsafe environment on campus not only through his own conduct but by inviting this speaker. I need not remind you that many students, staff and faculty at the University of Lethbridge are residential school survivors whether through direct experience or intergenerational trauma. This is a betrayal of the University of Lethbridge’s commitment to Indigenization and reconciliation. I hope that this event is cancelled and that Dr. Viminitz and the department of philosophy are held accountable. Cancelling this event must also be accompanied by appropriate disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action! Carceral Feminist! Anti-Abolitionist! No. As Sara Ahmed (2022) illustrates, the complaint is method, it is feminist method. It is part of collective action. It generates complaint collectives. When we launch complaints, we find the other complainers and they find us. We want to stop the violence, not bring suffering to others. Making a formal complaint at a university is not the same as calling the police. Consequences are not the same as punishment. For Miriame Kaba (2021) and Sara Ahmed (2022): “Powerful people stepping down from their jobs are consequences, not punishment. Why? Because we should have boundaries. And because the shit you did was wrong. And you having power is a privilege. That means we can take that away from you. You don’t have power anymore” (Kaba 2021, 146; Ahmed 2022, n.p.).

The escalation: The list of recipients was changed. The Chair of the Philosophy department replied not to the senior members of the administration, my Chair, and myself, but to his entire department, and the Dean, including Paul Viminitz—the faculty member who invited Widdowson to campus. The reply was long. It was racist. It was ableist. It was ill-informed. It was predicated on my inferiority as a researcher, a knowledge producer. It intimated that I am not ‘smart’.

And it escalated. I transformed from an incompetent, into a pencil, a dull pencil. I was then reduced to a cunt. Not even my own cunt. A floating bodiless cunt, a generalizable body part.

The first articulation from Victor Rodych was supported as 'academic engagement' by the University of Lethbridge Faculty Association and the administration, including the Dean. This decision came from the collective arrogance of a group of people who are accustomed to never being made accountable for their behaviour; from those whose conduct is never registered as harm. They hold the door. They shut the door on those who complain. The complaint is what Ahmed calls "nonreproductive labour." Those of us who complain do it because we do not want it to happen to others. We want the violence to stop. But complaining about abuses of power is to learn about power, "complaint is feminist pedagogy" (Ahmed 2022, n.p.). In the following analysis of Rodych's reply, I will provide the lesson I learned about IRS denialism and misogynist, racist and ableist settler colonial discourse:

Here is the email that Dr. Hodes sent earlier today to President _____ and Dean _____, cc'ed to about six faculty members, including Dr. _____.

The Department decided that Dr. Widdowson's talk would not be a Department of Philosophy talk. As I understand things, Dr. Widdowson is giving a talk at the UofL soon, in Anderson Hall (I believe). A student has claimed to me that Dr. Viminiz is having Dr. Widdowson speak to one of his classes.

Although people are claiming that Dr. Widdowson is a racist, I have not seen a single piece of hard evidence that Dr. Widdowson is a racist. In 80 minutes of videos, I did not hear a single comment that seemed racist (Victor Rodych, Department of Philosophy, University of Lethbridge, personal communication, January 2023).

White male privilege and power: He has not seen it, so it must not exist. Ever the colonial dedication to discovery. He is the arbiter of truth. Although the speaker was invited by a member of his department, the responsibility is deflected, not on his desk, not his concern, the speaker will, however, teach the students in his department, but because he can't see racism, it does not exist.

CH: "Residential school denial is genocide denial, and this is a violation of Indigenous rights."

Dr. Hodes doesn't say what constitutes "residential school denial." However, she seems to imply that, whatever that is, it constitutes genocide denial, presumably because the residential school system constituted genocide. I have no expertise in this area, but I have read people claim that the residential school system was genocide, and I have read others claim that it was cultural genocide. From what I can tell, at least 4,100 Indigenous children died at residential schools. From what I can tell from only 2 videos, Dr. Widdowson does not deny that residential schools harmed indigenous people, and I have NOT heard her deny that thousands of Indigenous children died at residential schools. If, e.g., Dr. Widdowson denies the latter, or the former, I for one would like to see the evidence. Although I don't have the quotation at hand, in her interview with Rebel News, I believe Dr. Widdowson said that academics and others aren't even allowed to say things like some

Indigenous children would have received no education if they had not received a residential school education (Victor Rodych, Department of Philosophy, University of Lethbridge, personal communication, January 2023).

White male privilege and power: He has no expertise in the area, as he himself has articulated, but this does not stop him from opining as the arbiter of truth despite the fact that he is clearly unaware that the year before the Canadian State and the Catholic Church had both called the IRS system genocide. He is unaware of the proposed bill to name IRS denialism hate speech. Let us examine these claims according to Justice and Carleton's (2021) criteria for IRS denialism.

First, "denialists suggest that genocide is not applicable to Canada." Not only does Widdowson's entire publication record including her statements in interviews argue this very thing, but as discussed above, the UN Genocide Convention recognizes "the destruction, in whole or in part, of a nation or ethnic group" as genocide. This is what happened. But Rodych does not see it, so it does not exist. The House of Commons calls the IRS system genocide. The 2019 final report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, calls not only the IRS system but also the murders that have taken place since the last IRS was closed, genocide. The Pope calls the IRS system genocide. To narrow the definition of genocide and make it a matter of debate is denialism, it is racism, but he cannot see it, so it does not exist.

But they got an education! No. They were subjected to "racist assimilation, culture shaming and sexual violence combined with multi-generational collusion with church and state" (Justice and Carleton 2021). They were isolated from their communities, malnourished, subject to nutritional experimentation, and in some cases starved to death and made vulnerable to disease (Mosby 2012). They were trafficked to white families while their lands and resources were systemically stolen by the state. This is not education, it is genocide. They were getting an education at home, with their Peoples, families and in their communities. They were stolen. The racism inherent in the assumption that the IRS system provided an education is an unconscionable defence of genocide but for Rodych, his personal experience means that genocide didn't happen:

When I was an undergrad, every May I would start work as a Correctional Officer at Headingley Correctional Institute just outside Winnipeg. I worked there night and day (always accepting 8 hours of overtime) until August 31st, and then I did it again for three more consecutive 4-month summers. The 450 inmates, many my age, had one thing in common: they seemed not to come from the loving and supporting family and small Winnipeg community (mine a blue-collar high school) that I was lucky to be a part of. 250 inmates were Indigenous; 250 were non-Indigenous. Even as an 18-year-old, it seemed that Canadian society and Canadian governments must have done many things wrong the previous 100 years. Many inmates were serving 4-6-month sentences for breaking and entering. They would get out during the summer or in the Fall, and many I would see again the following summer. The only difference that I could discern was that I was much luckier than the men my age, on the other side of the bars. It is hard to imagine how a good society like ours can mess up so badly, for so long. I have no doubt that racism played a big role over the many decades. Some fellow guards were racists, and some weren't. It certainly seems that the residential school system was deeply flawed, and that programs like the 1960s SCOOP probably did far more harm

than good (I have not studied any of this.) It looks like decade after decade, Federal and Provincial Governments did do much that really improved the lives and circumstances of Indigenous peoples [...] (Victor Rodych, Department of Philosophy, University of Lethbridge, personal communication, January 2023).

Settler Absolution: A personal anecdote that is decontextualized, undated, rife with errors and contradiction, undocumented, and presumes formal equality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons in Canada's prison system. Statistical evidence has, for decades, pointed to the over-incarceration of both Indigenous men and women in Canada. Singh, Prowse and Anderson (2019) have referred to it as a health crisis. Finally, he relies on a settler colonial progress narrative positioning the government responsible for genocide and ongoing settler colonial violence as the saviour of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. He goes so far as to suggest that instead of genocide, settler colonial policy, and ongoing colonial practice, it was "luck" that created the difference between himself and the inmates at the corrections center within which he allegedly worked. As Justice and Carleton (2021) articulate, this is neither an objective nor informed commentary. But he is the legitimate researcher who is also the final arbiter of the truth, after all his friends made him a full professor. Finally, here he is again, asking for proof of racism when it is becoming increasingly clear that no matter how much evidence he is provided with, he will never be able identify it:

Are racist activities, which academics are actually promoting hate, and which are not, etc. There is little doubt that in North America there are far too many genuine racists. Who is only promoting open and critical discussion, and who is promoting hatred, racism, discrimination, etc.?

In 2022, Dr. Hodes sent members of our Department a series of emails in which she made all kinds of accusations, and I don't recall her ever providing any evidence. Today she writes: "This speaker has been fired from academic institutions due to her racism, transphobia and bigotry. She is known to distort the facts, deny genocide and engage in campaigns of anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism."

I don't understand this. If it is so well known that Dr. Widdowson "de[nies] genocide" and "engage[s] in campaigns of anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism," why doesn't Dr. Hodes help us all to see the facts by providing us with the facts/evidence? Dr. Hodes doesn't say that Dr. Widdowson was fired on allegations of racism, transphobia and bigotry, she claims that the firing was "due to [Dr. Widdowson's] racism, transphobia and bigotry." In all seriousness I ask: These are very serious allegations. If someone, e.g., Dr. Hodes, has solid evidence of some of this, help our community by providing the evidence. Please.

Our campus has more diversity than ever before. This is something to celebrate and encourage. I have witnessed support for Indigenous students, and students of colour, and I have not witnessed discrimination against such students (although that does not mean there is none; there probably is racism at the UoFL). Three colleagues have written me this week, and at least two of them seem to believe that Dr. Widdowson is a racist. But none of them has Tim Ball seemed to be paid years ago to deny climate change and

global warming. Is there any evidence that the FCPP funds Dr. Widdowson?

"The Frontier Centre is non-partisan and non-ideological. Committed to our independence, we neither seek nor accept government funding. By this definition we are the only truly independent think tank on the prairies."

They take private donations. Perhaps I am just too politically naive.

Yrs.

Vic Victor Rodych, Department of Philosophy, University of Lethbridge, personal communication, January 2023).

White male privilege and power; ableist, racist sexism: People are telling you, people are sending you the blog posts, the articles, the publicly exposed and published experiences of those the speaker has victimized, they are all publicly available on the internet if you google Frances Widdowson. The students have published petitions and letters of reprimand. But you deny the most egregious forms of violence, so it is unsurprising that you would deny other forms of abuse. You have allegedly read the literature. But you cannot find it, it eludes you, so it must not exist. Yet, I need to explain myself. I need to prove racism to you who cannot understand it when it is right in front of your face. It is my job to convince you. I am the problem. I am the villain. I make unfounded accusations without evidence. Although, it would seem this email has proven every single one. To you, I cannot conduct research, I am not "smart", I do not know. But you, who have no expertise in the area, you can tell me what I should think and how I should read racist literature. You can tell me what I know when you have never read a word I have written. And finally in another rhetorical move, you continue to engage in IRS denialism by creating an argument by analogy designed to make a joke out of genocide and deflect attention from the issue, the speaker. You are not politically naive, but you do think you know how power works.

To name an abuse of power is to learn about power. You are not powerful, Dr. Rodych. You are a case study for feminist pedagogy, someone who is seeking absolution, someone who denies the pain of others. You need to read the book my colleague and I just published so that you can understand racism (Hodes and Bonifacio 2023). It is clear that the intersection of sexism, ableism and racism might be too much, too complex, the stuff of pencils, dull pencils, like me.

I am no longer an incompetent. His colleague calls me a pencil:

As the Department has known for some time, Hode [sic, Hodes] is not the sharpest pencil in the box. But just for the record, notwithstanding I AM the most unrepentant racist imaginable, I have NEVER been reprimanded by the Dean, not even once, for racist comments, spoken or written, neither in my classes nor anywhere else. That said, the spirit of Hode's [sic] letter is dead on. I was indeed the second gunman on the grassy knoll. I was indeed in Israel in 2000 helping Mossad plan 9/11. I am not just once but a THRICE-convicted pedophile. And, though she has the target of my racism wrong, I have made no secret of my advocating a campaign of genocide against the Scots. And yes, it IS because of the haggis. Please feel free to share these confessions as widely as possible. - Pauline (Paul Viminitz, University of Lethbridge Department of Philosophy, personal communication, January 2023)

I sent this off to the repository of complaints: the union and human resources, who eventually pass it off to the Dean to investigate it. I had made a previous complaint against abuses of power. I wanted them to stop. I was already a complainer before this complaint. I was already the problem. I was already a dull pencil with no evidence, despite the seven years-worth of abusive email that I sent complete with a narrative in the previous complaint. Will this single piece of ableist, racist, misogynist, violent word salad be considered enough evidence? I doubt it.

Before this violence, I had gathered seven years of email evidence where cis-gendered women were as abusive as these men, but in a less overt way, abusers of power. Power struggles, domination, threats: I better be happy, I'm lucky to have a job; I better stay in my office, shut up and put out or might not get my promotion although maybe I might be recommended for tenure. Maybe. I better agree with the way things have always been done and accept the abuse or I will be labelled "un-collegial": I don't like your tone. I better not take my meds; they are bad for me. Perhaps they thought another settler colonial assisted premature death, a white girl suicide, would be funny, who knows, I mean it would be another one of those, "she couldn't handle the demands of the sector" deaths, no big deal. Nothing was done. I knew the futility of the complaint before I even started. My lawyers looked at it and said the seven years-worth of email were actionable under the policies, but the Dean disagreed. My experience doesn't matter. I am the problem. He claimed that my seven years-worth of email was a lack of evidence and that I regularly make claims of malfeasance based on routine and accepted practice. Because I do not trust my abusers, I am the problem. I got my promotion, I published a book, I took on a dead colleagues' graduate students and successfully ushered them through the first half of their programs, so I should quit my whining. Look, I am a success.

Here the accepted practice of not seeing ableism, racism or sexism, the accepted practice of IRS denialism as academic engagement, the accepted practice of driving non-compliant women mad and out of the university system—this is what I must accept. You cannot see it, so it does not exist. The law requires that you understand the problem from my perspective, but you cannot see from my perspective. Instead, you take the stated 'good intentions' of my abusers at face value, with no evidence, because you hold the door. You deny. How much more evidence do you need?

And then, I became a cunt:

"LAUGHABLE...LISTENING TO A RACE BAITING CUNT LIKE YOU TALK ABOUT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION! DO CUNTS LIKE YOU EVEN HAVE A GOD DAMN CLUE AS TO THE MEANING OF "HYPOCRISY"? GENDER STUDIES...LOL...IF I HAD A DOLLAR FOR EVERY GENDER OUT THERE, I'D HAVE TWO DOLLARS!

HOWS THAT FOR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, YOU FUCKING USELESS PIECE OF SHIT???" (Ted Poplawski, unknown, personal communication, February 2023)

When read in the order they were received, these emails could have come out of a single person's mouth in a successive line of escalation. The first one made the second possible, as Rodych forwarded my letter of support for the students' bid to prevent the IRS denialist from speaking on our campus to Viminiz who claims that I am "not the sharpest pencil in the box." This colleague then proceeded to forward my letter in support of the students to the denialist who published it on

a facebook page populated by people who use terms like "race baiting cunt." I am now the problem; I'm looking for trouble. The killjoy who sniffs out malfeasance. Not these abusive men. Not the abusive women. Not the people who have been abusing their power since I arrived in campus, not their enablers.

Rodych's email does not fall within the scope of the harassment and discrimination policy according to the union, the Dean and HR. His patronizing, ill-informed email became an attempt at "academic engagement" while I was reduced to a dull pencil and then a generalized cunt. Rodych made this possible by drawing my research skills and credibility into question, the others simply followed suit, while the white ladies watch in silent complicity with their other silent counterparts. At the time of writing, now two and a half months later in a breach of university process and no support from my union, Viminiz has been dealt with, how I am not allowed to know, and there is a larger complaint against him that is still unresolved. The third communication was from someone unknown to me, and despite a meeting with security to learn how to file a police report, that, in the end, I did not file, no follow-up has taken place.

In light of my own experiences, I have publicly supported rendering IRS denialism a criminal offence despite my seemingly contradictory support and appreciation for the serious and significant work of prison abolition and defund the police movements. Could this political move give leverage to venues and institutions to refuse to house events that include IRS denialism by citing legal liabilities? Might it temper this violent ableist, racist, misogyny? I am unconvinced that education will solve this problem, these people have been granted PhDs from institutions of higher learning, they are educated. I am unconvinced there is a prosocial solution. Should I channel my inner carceral feminist and support future bids to throw them all in jail? Maybe then, they will learn about totalitarianism, what they call complainers and the complaints' process, we are totalitarians for expecting to be treated with the most basic civility and decency, so perhaps they need some experiential carceral feminist pedagogy at its worst.

I am, however, also deeply critical of the criminalization of IRS denialism for three reasons. First, it reframes it as a crime against the state, as are all criminal offences in Canada. The crime, however, is not against the state. The crime is against Indigenous Peoples, humanity and the extra-human world, as recognized by the TRC in 2015 and the Australian Human Rights Commission in the 1990s. Second, I do not believe that this will solve the problem or that prosecutions of denialists will be the outcome. It is very difficult to successfully prosecute hate speech in Canada and in the event that IRS denialists were charged and convicted, prison sentences would very likely only provide a venue for the hatred to evolve to new levels of violence. The criminal sanctioning of IRS denialism could also lead to false accusations, and given the systemic discrimination that permeates the Canadian legal system and the handling of workplace complaints, people like Rodych, Viminiz and Poplawski will have another venue through which to perpetrate their harassment through vexatious complaint.

I wrote the paragraph above not one month before I received a notice of complaint from Victor Rodych who was deeply concerned, not about the impact of his emails or his conduct on others, but instead, the impact of my analysis and my interventions in support of the TRC recommendations and the need for epistemic pluralism and greater diversity on our campus on his reputation. He accused me of defamation for not only addressing the deep resistance to change that I experienced while suggesting the transformation of some of the

Eurocentric assumptions underlying academic disciplines—a fact that has been articulated by BIPOC and feminist scholars for well over a century—but also for addressing the IRS denialism in his email. The Human Resources Department considered this complaint to be actionable under the policies indicating that they had not read or considered Justice and Carleton's (2021) articulation of what constitutes IRS denialism, and that they had not considered the House of Commons (2022) or the Pope's (2022) commitments to naming the IRS system genocide.

In their (mis) handling of this complaint, the institution has made it clear that there are two sets of rights: one for people who call people names, dehumanize and objectify them, put their colleagues at risk of violence, in addition to those who watch and who say nothing; a second one for those who want the abuse to stop. Those who engage in forms of IRS denialism, who put faculty members in danger of violent harassment and discrimination, possible physical violence, and escalation, and those who watch it and do not intervene are permitted to do so in the name of academic freedom and freedom of expression. Those who speak out against the violence, who are targeted for it, and who have a deep desire to make academic institutions more equitable and to, at the very least, follow the TRC recommendations, will be retaliated against, violently verbally abused, subject to vexatious complaint and expected to remain silent because we do not have academic freedom or freedom of expression. Formal equality does not even hold sway when it comes to silencing changemakers, but that is not what is truly astonishing. What is truly astonishing is the primary concern over reputation in Rodych's complaint against me and not over the impact of his violent conduct against others particularly in the context of the defenses of the IRS system and the escalation that resulted in gender-based violence and abuse. This all gives credence to those in popular media who claim that in Canada today we are experiencing a crisis of empathy, ie. its absence (CAMH 2022).

The letter the Dean drafted to me after seeking accommodations to avoid a meeting about Rodych's complaint where, once again in violation of process, I was denied the ability to have persons of my own choosing as support, read as follows:

While your aggressive approach to dealing with colleagues is rooted in a deep conviction and sense of responsibility to promote social justice and change in the academy, some of your interactions go beyond the extensive rights that we promote and encourage...I encourage you to continue to champion your positions, including any unpopular views, critically and with vigor but while treating your Faculty Member colleagues fairly and showing due respect for opposing ideas.

What constitutes fairness? The letter does not specify. What constitutes opposing ideas? Apparently, IRS denialism, name-calling, my "colleagues" putting me in danger, in addition to their collective resistance to the TRC recommendations. These are their opposing ideas. Because I named racism and white fragility and analyzed the Eurocentric foundations of academic disciplines in an effort to get legal programming on this campus in alignment with the TRC, ie because I did my job relying on examples of best practices in legal programming post-TRC, used the language of Critical Race scholarship and identified some clear distortions of fact, including the racism in Rodych's email, I am the villain. In a clear example of DARVO (deny, attack, reverse victim and offender), I, once again am the problem, a "race baiting cunt." Rodych will not be held accountable but because other academics in my institution have been subject to vexatious and

violent complaints against them for identifying the same things, the union is therefore finally taking my complaints seriously. Nevertheless, here we have the first step in pushing me out of the university. The vagueness of the Dean's reply will enable the institution to claim that everything I write and say is unfair because I name racism, white supremacy and white privilege in my academic work. They can then say I didn't follow their directives and in a clear violation of my academic freedom and basic human rights, they can fire me for doing the very job I was hired to do.

I am now at the end of my rope. I could sue, but to what end? Letters of reprimand? Dismissals? The system will not change, they will merely hire replacements. Will the union's decision to champion my case succeed? It wouldn't surprise me if all the abuse of process in my case is used to keep Viminitz from being made accountable for his conduct. These kinds of people, including the ones with PhDs, and these kinds of institutional responses are a dime a dozen in Canada. Nothing original to be found here. While I have no interest in pursuing legal action, recent developments may make it necessary. Yet, for me, there is nothing left to say about the complaints, the case study, the abuses of power, the violence, the discrimination except this: 1) was there a pressing and substantive objective for this talk (pedagogical or otherwise)? NO. 2) Were the means (racism, transphobia, IRS denialism, repudiating Indigenous knowledge, abusive language, etc.) proportional to achieving the objective? NO. 3) Does meeting the stated objective minimally impair the rights at issue (Widdowson's freedom of expression, Viminitz' academic freedom), ie. were there other ways of teaching critical thinking and inspiring debate that do not involve abusive, violent language, and the targeting of a person or class of persons for hatred and contempt under s. 3 of the Alberta Human Rights Act? YES. There was no reason for Widdowson to teach or talk on our campus. There is also no reason for the people who defended her to keep working on our campus. As Kaba clearly articulates, "[p]owerful people stepping down from their jobs are consequences, not punishment. Why? Because we should have boundaries. And because the shit you did was wrong. And you having power is a privilege. That means we can take that away from you" (Kaba 2021, 146).

This case is specific to the Canadian context, but its violence takes place in institutions in many other places in the world as Sara Ahmed's body of work shows. All is not lost, however. A complaint is not a gap, lost time or a waste. As Ahmed (2022) has articulated, it is a set of transferable skills. In protesting the violence that brought you to the complaint, you see it all the more: "[t]o be an institutional killjoy, a killjoy at work, you need to work with others [...] Complaint activists can also be understood as complaint supporters; you not only work with each other, but in working together, in pooling your resources, you are also more able to give advice and practical support to those who are making complaints" (Ahmed, 2021, n.p.). I am a legal researcher, so I know both the reach and the limits of the law well, I also know the pitiable state of institutions and individuals who cross boundaries, abuse others, do not follow process, and violate human rights and harassment and discrimination policies with impunity. The formal equality framework that presumes my Dean, or a member of my union or HR can understand my experience is fundamentally flawed. These are not people who can read evidence or understand the impact of violence when they can minimize its impact and defend those that deny it in its most egregious forms. Here the complaint is not about a fair outcome. Such as thing does not exist in institutional contexts. It is, instead a form of activism, it is a form of self-empowerment, it is a way of identifying what is no longer tenable and

what can be possible, it is a way of setting clear boundaries. It is the single most effective way to say: no, none of this will ever be ok.

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- R. v. Leroux [1998] NWTJ no. 139 (S.C.); Trial [1998] NWTJ No. 140 (S.C); Sentencing [1998] NWTJ No. 141 (S.C), the accused was charged with 21 counts including indecent assault, gross indecency, and incitement to commit buggery. Seven counts were dismissed and convictions were entered on 14 counts. The accused was sentenced to a global term of 10 years in prison.
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