In Defence of Safe Spaces: Subaltern Counterpublics and Vulnerable Politics in the Neoliberal University

Chris Waugh

Introduction

Higher education in the United Kingdom[1] faces a significant threat to its very being, according to many media and academic voices. This refers not to significant budgetary cuts to higher education funding (Adams 2017: n.p.), nor the alarming growth in mental health problems among undergraduate students (Denovan and Macaskill 2017: n.p.), but instead the 'threat' of requests for safe spaces, trigger warnings, and other student led 'interventions to make learning environments more accessible for students who have experienced trauma' (Byron 2017: 117).

Hostility towards these 'interventions' takes numerous forms, including condemnation from British Prime Minister Theresa May (Mason 2016) and actor and comedian Stephen Fry (Bowden 2016), citing an erosion of free speech on campuses. Prominent media responses have described the growth of safe spaces as part of a desire to 'scrub

C. Waugh (✉)
Leeds, UK

campuses clean of words, ideas, and subjects which might cause discomfort and give offence' (Lukianoff and Haidt 2015: n.p.), and that safe spaces themselves are contrary to the very idea of the University (Travers 2017). Some institutions have formally come out against safe spaces and trigger warnings: notably, a senior member of the University of Chicago made it clear that the University 'do[es] not condone the creation of intellectual Safe Spaces,' in a letter to incoming undergraduates (cited in Byron 2017: 120). More recently, the UK Universities Minister, Jo Johnson MP, called on the Office for Students (OfS) to champion free speech on campuses, and launched a consultation, citing that 'there are still examples of censorship where groups [on campuses] have sought to stifle those who do not agree with them' (Department for Education and Johnson 2017). Hostility towards 'student interventions' has spread into the policy and statutory framework of Higher Education.

While the anti-safe spaces discourse is powerful and pervasive both inside and outside of the University, there are examples of counter-discourses and resistance. Feminist academia has long debated the issue of safe spaces (Martínez-San Miguel and Tobias 2014). Student led initiatives to safeguard safe spaces, and the theoretical work of Sara Ahmed (2010, 2014, 2015), seeks to defend the principles behind safe spaces, and problematizes the dominant discourse, and what it implies about students as agents. This chapter is my attempt to draw on those counter-discourses, and contribute towards the reframing of the discussion around safe spaces and the role they play in student resistance. Primarily, this involves examining safe spaces and student subjectivity through the lens of vulnerable politics. As subjects, students in neoliberal universities are expected to embody traits of resilience; Allen and Bull (2017) identify the pervasiveness of psychological discourses around 'grit' and the ability of subjects to 'bounceback' in HE, a discourse which often divorces student subjectivity from the social and medical realities of trauma (ibid.), and often removes responsibility from the University and places it firmly on the students (Binnie 2016; Ehrenreich 2010). Indeed, some Universities made this psychological discourse explicit, such as the University of Edinburgh, which offers its students a 'building resilience' online toolkit (The University of Edinburgh 2018).

Student subjects are expected to be resilient to the what is present to them as the 'harsh threats and dangers of life', to respond with overcoming rather than vulnerability, and thus those subjects who are not perceived as resilient—those who call for safe spaces, for example—are denigrated and belittled. The neoliberal model of academic subjectivity—where individual solutions to structural problems are emphasised—is held above all else in questions of student welfare.

As both an activist and a social movement researcher, the concept of safe spaces has long interested me. My research focuses on gender discrimination and sexual violence within socialist movements, many of which are ideologically hostile to gendered ideas of vulnerability. Safe spaces, in some ways, are an attempt to explore this vulnerability. Over my academic and activist life, I have found myself frustrated and dismayed by the 'cookie cutter' nature of dominant discourse on safe spaces in Universities, which repeat the same, tired, superficial arguments about censorship, 'cry-baby' students, and the imminent collapse of Higher Education as we know it. Many of these come from self-professed advocates of 'free speech,' and yet—contrary to how I have always understood the principles of free speech—there is little to no attempt understand the perspectives, experiences and standpoints of those who campaign for safe spaces, nor the vulnerabilities those individuals and groups experience. As such, in this chapter I will consider the role of safe spaces in Universities, and why they are important (if often flawed) spaces for the politics of vulnerability and concurrent resistance.[2] This chapter will draw on Judith Butler's work[3] on vulnerability (2006; Butler et al. 2016), and Nancy Fraser's writing on subaltern counterpublics (1990). Additionally I will draw on blog resources, created by student activists who participate in safe spaces in Universities in the UK and USA, and explore their critiques of safe spaces in practice.

I contend that safe spaces represent an often clumsy—but still vital—attempt to create counterpublics for marginalised groups. These counterpublics serve two purposes; firstly, they provide spaces for groups to recuperate, reconvene, and create new strategies and vocabularies for resistance. Secondly, the presence of these counterpublics makes visible collective and individual traumas which disrupt neoliberal narratives of self-resilience.

In the subsequent section, I will offer a concrete definition of 'Safe Spaces', distinct from (but not unconnected to) 'No Platform' policies and 'Trigger Warnings.' I shall then, drawing on the work of Sara Ahmed (2010, 2015), explore the relationship between safe spaces and the notion of a neoliberal student subjectivity (Lewis et al. 2015), and argue that the critique of safe spaces is, in part, a critique of students who reject narratives of resilience.

Defining Safe Spaces

Popular discourse around safe spaces in Higher Education tends to elide several student led 'interventions' into one homogenous whole; thus, it is worth drawing some distinctions in the first instance. 'Safe Spaces' are often linked to 'No Platform' policies. 'No Platform' policies refer to a refusal to provide a platform, or stage, to an ideas which may be considered harmful, or contribute to the marginalization of oppressed groups (O'Keefe 2016). Originating as a tactic in the anti-fascist movement (Barrett in Kirk and McElligott 1999), No Platform for Fascists was adopted by the National Union of Students (NUS) in 1974 (O'Keefe, ibid.), where, under pressure from feminist and LGBTQA activists, its scope expanded to cover misogyny and transmisogyny (ibid.). No platforming is also significant to the Palestinian Solidarity Movement, especially in the context of UK Universities (Sheldon 2016: 176–178). Notable recent cases of No Platforming being used against non-fascist organisations and speakers include at Cardiff University and Cambridge University in 2015, against Germaine Greer, responding to transphobic statements made in her past work (see O'Keefe, ibid.; Page 2015).

'Safe Spaces' on the other hand, arose initially from student LGBTQA movements (Waldman 2016). Safe spaces can be defined as 'a place where usually people who are marginalized to some degree can come together and communicate and dialogue and unpack their experiences' (Amenabar 2016). Safe spaces can also be traced back to the feminist consciousness raising groups in the 1960s and 1970s. These more explicitly separatist spaces were create to provide a woman

a forum to discuss one another's lived experiences, free from the physical and psychological threat of men (Mackinnon 1982; Combahee River Collective 1977; Kravetz 1978). The exact 'space' aspect of safe spaces varies hugely; Harris contends that sex positive zines, websites and comics act as a safe space for young women trying to reclaim their sexuality and desires from capitalist commodification (Harris 2005: 42). Byron notes the use of a 'safe space' set up as a breakout room during a Brown University debate about sexual assault on campus, thereby allowing students and attendees to receive support from peer educators and health staff if needed (Byron 2017: 2). Ho (2017) draws the distinction between 'emotional' and 'academic' safe spaces; the former provides 'students the opportunity to feel secure in times of distress and dysfunction, and they also provide a sense of community,' with an emphasis on respectfulness and discretion in language. On the other hand, academic safe spaces refer to the ability of a speaker to make others feel uncomfortable, but that the risks are 'safe' within the framework of academic debate. For Ho, popular discourse has conflated the two forms of 'safe space,' implying that students wish for the politics of the former to encompass whole campuses (ibid.).[4]

Safe spaces, in short, can be fluid and localised to different contexts, synchronous or asynchronous spaces. It is worth emphasising that no space can be entirely 'safe'; the creation of such spaces in an ongoing process, rather than an absolute guarantee. Yet, in considering safe spaces in Universities, we also need to consider the student subjectivities which are connected to these spaces. To say that there is a pervasive hostility towards student subjectivities connected to safe spaces is to put the matter mildly; Spiked Magazine, for example, ranks Leeds University Union (LUU) as Red on a traffic light scale of student led censorship. This ranking cites as censorious policies—among other things—LUU's 'We've Got Your Back' Campaign, which promotes the Union's Zero Tolerance to Sexual Harassment and aims to make Leeds University Campus a 'safe' space for students, via tools and mechanisms for students to report harassment (Spiked 2017). A similarly warped argument was made at my alma mater, Cambridge University, after the announcement of compulsory consent workshops. These were framed as censorious and removing individual free choice

(Sehgal-Cuthbert 2014: n.p.). As outlandish as these responses are, they articulate a broader sense of student subjectivity: the students who would desire 'Safe Spaces' (or, at least, to make campuses 'safer' spaces within the politics of safe spaces) are a threat, an enemy of the university. In the next section, I shall explore in more detail the relationship between student subjectivities and safe spaces.

Theorising Safe Spaces and Subjectivity: Against (or for) Neo-liberalism

Bracke identifies a clash between the 'Look I Overcame' narrative and a 'culture' of trigger warnings and safe spaces on University campuses (Bracke 2016). For Bracke, the former narrative epitomises an enforced character trait of resilience within neoliberalism. In a neoliberal world, Bracke asserts, resilience has become the new security; subjects are expected to expect precarity, and respond by 'minimizing impact and erasing traces' (ibid.: 58; Ahmed 2015) of it. Defence against harm is replaced by response, and a response that manifests as a 'form of self-sufficiency,' a 'fantasy of mastery' (ibid.); if grief and mourning possesses a transformative power on the self, as Butler (2006) have argued, then resilience is anti-transformative: it forces subjects to turn away from the mourning process, and restore themselves to a level of normalcy (Bracke 2016: 59).

The ideal student subject is expected to display a certain level of resilience towards ideas and concepts which may be 'unsafe' if they are to achieve their potential on campus. This subjectivity is by no means new, and the prioritising of a certain emotional toughness, the ability to separate lived experience from discussion, and the implication of enhanced productivity, can find its roots as far back as Weber's Protestant ethic. This dynamic is also gendered, drawing a distinction between a masculine rational knowledge (linked to productivity) and a feminine emotional feeling (Hacker 2018). Indeed, as Gill (2007) has contended, resilience is integrated into neoliberal subjectivity outside out of Higher Education. Neoliberal femininity, for instance, is characterised by the

'imperative that one's sexual and dating practices…be presented as freely chosen' (ibid.: 154, underlined in original) whilst being subjected to disciplinary practices in terms of the female body. Such a femininity constructs a binary opposition where only 'discursively allowed' alternative is the 'prude,' which causes the 'eradicating of a space for critique' (ibid.: 152). One can either accept neoliberal subjectivity, or be relegated to a position of stigmatised outsider, problematic and counter to the values of society. Indeed, such ideas about vulnerability and resilience are profoundly gendered, as Phipps has argued (Phipps 2014: 38). As I shall argue below, we can see the development of a similar counter-subjectivity—that of the vulnerable, or censorious student, or 'killjoy' (Ahmed 2010)—in the neoliberal discourse on safe spaces in Higher Education.

Popular discourse suggests that younger people, especially students, are 'too sensitive,' easily offended, and millennials in general are branded with the insult 'snowflake', with the term being particularly prevalent as a taunt used by the 'Alt-Right' movement (Campbell and Manning 2015; Nicholson 2016; Lock 2016). The prevailing wisdom of these perspectives is that older generations possessed thicker skin than millennial students, and thus displays of vulnerability are linked to immaturity. Vulnerability equates to a lack of agency, and moral failing, a charge placed firmly against students in particular. As Ahmed puts it 'the idea the students have become a problem because they are too sensitive relates to a wider public discourse that renders offendability as a form of moral weakness' (2015: n.p.). Ahmed here reiterates a point made in her book *Wilful Subjects* (2014) about a politics of dismissal, which attributes problematic status to the student, or protest, as signifier of a decay in moral standards and values. The elision of offendability with vulnerability lessens the weight of the latter; it implies that to display vulnerability is representative not of legitimate trauma, but more of an inability to process uncomfortable information.

Criticism of safe spaces and concern about vulnerability and subjectivity does not solely come from Conservative elements and the political Right. Halberstam wrote of the tendency towards trigger warnings and safe spaces in contemporary Queer movements:

> Hardly an event would go by back then without someone feeling violated, hurt, traumatized by someone's poorly phrased question, another person's bad word choice or even just the hint of perfume in the room. People with various kinds of fatigue, easily activated allergies, poorly managed trauma were constantly holding up proceedings … Others made adjustments, curbed their use of deodorant, tried to avoid patriarchal language, thought before they spoke … and ultimately disintegrated into a messy, unappealing morass of weepy, hypo-allergic, psychosomatic, anti-sex, anti-fun, anti-porn, pro-drama, pro-processing post-political subjects. (2014b: para. 3)

It is worth noting that Halberstam is not explicitly talking about safe spaces in Universities. While they allude to Trigger Warnings as 'reductive…responses to aesthetic and academic material' (ibid.: para. 7), their critique fits along broadly generational lines, distinguishing between the gender radicals of the 1980–1990s who 'began to laugh, loosened up, [and] got over themselves' and the present where 'it is becoming difficult to speak, to perform, to offer up work nowadays without someone, somewhere claiming to feel hurt, or re-traumatized' (ibid.: para. 6). In this, we can see a parallel to the critique of safe spaces in Universities.

For Halberstam, safe spaces contribute to a redefinition of trauma and its effects. Trauma becomes like a pulled muscle, something which hurts when used, and rises to the surface at the slightest provocation. Halberstam contends that instead of empowering survivors of trauma against neoliberal ideology, this instead buys into neoliberalism, which 'precisely goes to work by psychologizing political difference, individualizing structural exclusions and mystifying political change' (2014b: para. 10). Furthermore, Halberstam contends that this approach disincentives seeking structural change through resistance, focusing instead on 'competitive narratives about trauma' (ibid.: para. 12). Halberstam's concern is that safe spaces (taken in isolation) undermine the character of activist subjectivity, and by extension, strategies for resistance.

Halberstam later clarified their argument in response to criticism and correspondence with younger queer activists (Halberstam 2014a; Duggan 2014). However, Halberstam tacitly shares some of the tropes of their discourse. Anti-safe spaces voices often discursively construct

the figure of the student as problematic, whining, censoring and fragile—one can also perceive this figure in Halberstam's initial article.[5] In doing this, there is a clear implication about the relationship between student subjectivity and the role of vulnerability in Universities.

The Figure of the Student and the Politics of Vulnerability

This section considers the discursive creation of this student subjectivity in more detail. I draw on the work of Sara Ahmed to explore how the 'problem student' has been created as a bogeyman to neoliberal educational discourses; subsequently, drawing on Butler, I challenge this discourse, and what it implies about vulnerability and its place in Higher Education.

Implicit in any discussion of safe spaces is the figure of the student. As Ahmed puts it, 'problem' students are positioned, by a series of speech acts in public and academic writing, as 'a threat to education, to free speech, to civilization; we might even say, to life itself' (Ahmed 2015: para. 1). The figure of the student becomes the pivotal figure in a generational war, one which paints the other side with broad brush strokes, and—depending on one's stance—sees young people as fragile and weak, and/or old people as conservative and too fragile to accept societal progression (Serano 2014). This generational distribution of fragility has become so second nature that it is a kind of *doxa* in certain literature on young people (Fox 2016).

What makes the figure of the 'problem student'—that is, the 'the consuming student, the censoring student, the over-sensitive student and the complaining student' (Ahmed 2015: para. 3)—striking is the conflation between the role of trauma, humour (or, more precisely humourlessness) and vulnerability. Halberstam's characterisation of the 'weepy', 'unappealing,' and 'anti-fun' (Halberstam 2014a) student activist clearly suggests humourlessness, a suggestion made even more explicit by Halberstam's frequent invocation of Monty Python comedy sketches to illustrate their arguments. The allegation that a subject 'can't

take a joke,' or that offensive speech is 'just a joke,' ties into prohibition of humourlessness, a tactic often used in the politics of dismissal (Hunt 2016). This prohibition of humourlessness does not just apply to student subjectivity; McRobbie (2004) demonstrates how post-feminist media discourse dismisses feminism and feminist ideas as being unable to 'get the joke' as a means of delegitimizing feminism. Accusations of humourlessness carry considerable weight in terms of legitimising others; jokes do not exist as isolated utterances, but tie into total social situations (Douglas 2002: 93), and the telling of jokes represents a 'public affirmation of shared beliefs' (Mintz 1985: 75). Thus to reject what is framed as a 'joke'—and be positioned as 'humourless'—is to face ostracism from others, by proactively refusing to accept what is presented as a joke.

This lack of humour ties into a foregrounding, by the 'problem student' discourse, of trauma as a competitive act. Halberstam evokes the 'Four Yorkshiremen' Monty Python sketch as representative of '…hardship competitions, but without the humour…set pieces among the triggered generation' (Halberstam, ibid.: para. 5). The problem student uses trauma as part of an emotional, politicised race to the bottom, a positioning of the self as 'most vulnerable' in a particular context. Such actions have been argued to be antithetical to radical goals, and amount to little more than 'reification of identity [leading] to infinite particularism' (Lopez 2017: para. 6). Serano takes issue with this perspective, seeing this critique as a generational attack on young activists, which generalises well-meaning attempts to make movements more accessible (ibid.: para. 25). Central to all of these arguments is fierce disagreement about the role that vulnerability can play in resistance. My assertion here is that these prevailing voices simplify vulnerability—especially the vulnerability of students—into something experienced, something debilitating, and something that should be stamped out by resilience and the 'freely chosen' neoliberal student subjectivity. In doing so, the nuanced connection between vulnerability and resistance—which is, as I shall argue later, an important motivation behind student safe spaces—is simply ignored.

Vulnerability is often conceived as a form of passivity,[6] or something that reduces or denies agency. This leads to the regularity with which

vulnerability is disavowed—consider the way in which hegemonic displays of masculinity incorporate dismissal of vulnerability in the self and vulnerability of others into its own mechanisms of power (Connell 2002; Seidler 2010). That said, vulnerability is not homogenous, and can have different uses in different contexts. For example, faux vulnerability can be deployed strategically by dominant groups as means to delegitimise resistance to their authority—for instance, the way that heterosexual groups claim to be under attack from a militant LGBTQA 'gay agenda' (Sears and Osten 2003); or how Neo-Nazi organisations concoct a theory of 'white genocide' to attack activism and resistance on the part of People of Colour (Ferber 1999: n.p.). Dominant powers can also deploy the real vulnerabilities of other groups to further a reactionary agenda and cement their own power: an example of this can be seen in the former UK Independence Party's leader Nigel Farage's claim that Islam represents a threat to women's autonomy and sexuality (Alexander 2017: n.p.).

When vulnerability is linked to resistance, it is often thought of as the act of resisting vulnerability (exemplified by the neoliberal 'Look I Overcame' narrative). What is overlooked is what Butler identifies as resistance as a '*social and political form* that is informed by vulnerability, and so not one of its opposites' (Butler et al. 2016: 25, italics original). Vulnerability, in this sense, is not essentially passive or active, but operates within 'a tactical field' (ibid.: 7). There is some evidence that this line of thinking has been applied to theorising safe spaces. Byron, for example, argues that when viewed through the lens of Queer Theory, safe spaces and trigger warnings bring trauma into the classroom, or refuse to ignore pre-existing trauma. This 'queers' the perceived purpose of educational spaces, opening up the detached, neoliberal space to the 'potential academic value of [traumatic] experiences and feelings' (ibid.: 3). Implicit within in this is the capacity for traumatic experiences to become a tool for resistance.

In line with Butler, I call for a reclaiming of vulnerability from neoliberal discourses, in order to produce counter discourses and vocabularies around safe spaces and Universities. Doing so would allow, following Foucault, for an 'insurrection of subjugated knowledges' (Foucault 1980: 990) and arm students with tools and skills for

enacting new strategies of resistance on campuses. With this in mind, I will now consider how safe spaces might contribute towards a tactical use of vulnerability as a form of resistance. To explore this question, we need to consider the position of safe spaces within a wider public sphere.

Safe Spaces as Subaltern Counterpublics

Popular and academic debate around freedom of speech and censorship orientates itself around a liberal democratic conception of 'the public sphere.' As envisaged by Habermas (1991), the public sphere is an arena '…of the discursive relations, a theatre for debating and deliberating rather than for buying and selling' (Fraser 1990: 57). Furthermore, the public sphere is 'made up of private people gathered together as a public and articulating the needs of society with the state,' thus offering an extra-state site of discussion and debate (ibid.). Conflicting ideas, verbalised as part of debate, links free speech intrinsically to the character of the public sphere (Roberts 2003), and accordingly any perceived attempt at censorship is seen as antithetical to its purposes. While No Platform policies are often cited as an attack on free speech and freedom of debate (Pells 2016), critics of safe spaces tend to frame them as 'self-censorship' (Garton Ash 2016), or as a refusal to engage properly with the public sphere, resulting in intolerance and separatism (Rose 2017).

As counterpoint to this theorisation of a single Public Sphere—with self-censoring agents inside it—I turn to the work of Nancy Fraser, whose work (1990) offers a critique of the Habermassian approach. Fraser (ibid.) argues against the idea that there is one sole 'public sphere' of which we are all part. While there is a 'public sphere' each individual and group forms their own 'counterpublics' where the rest of the actors in the public sphere are not, necessarily, welcome—your home, for example, is a counterpublic in this sense. Fraser argues that social movements, feminist organisations and the like, function as counterpublics for people with some shared political aim or experience of discrimination. These counterpublics, however, are not separatist

organisations but spaces for recuperation, a place where individuals and groups can think about how best to face the issues in the public sphere; by Habermas's definition, the public sphere is an exclusive space, where certain voices dominate, while counterpublics allow for inclusivity. In this sense, one might make a comparison between the counterpublic and the psychiatric idea of the 'therapeutic community' (Clark 1977). Fraser singles out particular counterpublics formed by vulnerable and subordinated groups as 'subaltern counterpublics' which are 'parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs' (Fraser 1990: 67).

Key to Fraser's sense of subaltern counterpublics here is that they provide space for formulating new vocabularies of dissent. Fraser writes that the 'feminist subaltern counterpublic' (a counterpublic built from journals, social movements, festivals, films and literature) created a space for the invention of new language to describe women's experience, identifying 'sexism', 'the double shift', 'sexual harassment'; this language allowed feminist women to 'recast our needs and identities' which, far from limiting engagement, contributed towards 'reducing… our disadvantage in official public sphere' (1990: 67). In short, a feminist counterpublic allowed for the greater engagement with feminist politics in the public sphere.

Drawing on Fraser's conceptualisation, I argue that safe spaces can thus be understood as engaging in a form of counter-discursive dissent by arming subordinated groups with new terms, new methods by which to theorise oppression. The power in this comes from a disruption of the supposed 'objectivity' of everyday oppression. Resisting normalisation of dangerous ideas, such as the race baiting and crypto-fascism of the Trump administration, is a noted tool of dissent (Williams 2016). The existence of safe spaces draws attention to the unnerving reality that sexism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia and the like are prevalent and often present themselves as objective, as fact, as 'the way the world works' (Young 2015) or what Bourdieu calls *doxa* (Bourdieu 1990). In doing so, safe spaces 'expand discursive space… assumptions that were previously exempt from contestation will now have to be

publicly argued out' (Fraser 1990: 67), as well as equipping members of subordinated groups with the language to begin their own strategies of resistance.

Safe for Whom? Safe Spaces and Their Flaws

Thus far I have proposed that—through turning to the work of Butler and Fraser—it is possible to produce new understandings of safe spaces. Additionally, it is possible to rethink those who defend and participate in safe spaces without accepting the dominant view of these agents as fragile, censorious, or a threat to the idea of the University, or democracy and the public sphere more broadly. However, Fraser cautions against the blind belief that subaltern counterpublics are always necessarily a positive element, and can, in fact, perpetuate their own internal exclusions and discriminatory practices (Fraser 1990). With this in mind, I now consider some of the limitations of safe spaces in facilitating resistance. In doing so, I bring in the knowledge, accounts and critiques generated by students who have participated in safe spaces movements in Higher Education. These voices—ignored outright by the dominant neoliberal discourse—offer some notes of caution about safe spaces. I turn to these voices, as they reflect the experience of those who have not dismissed safe spaces outright, but instead have tried to implement safe spaces in their Universities. Thus these perspectives offer something which governmental and media voices cannot. I contend, however, that while these critiques highlight the often imperfect nature of safe spaces, they do not detract from the vital, broader motivations of the project.

It is worth briefly discussing the methodology for gathering this student data; while there are numerous accounts of discuss in student media around safe spaces (both pro and against), it is difficult to ascertain whether the author or authors had actively participated in safe spaces activism.[7] Furthermore, searching Google for blogs and articles about student safe spaces generally return newspaper articles that are critical of safe spaces. It should be stated that my purpose was not to use student blogs or student media articles exclusively, but to merely locate

the voices of students—this has necessitated locating student voices in mainstream blogs, newspaper articles and academic article. Due again to the difficulty of finding relevant data, I have utilised some accounts from students outside the UK, and tried to ensure input from undergraduates and postgraduates.

Asam Ahmad (a US postgraduate) sees 'call out culture' as concurrent with the rise of safe spaces (2015). This refers to the idea of publicly naming or identifying patterns of oppressive behaviour and language. I suggest this can be seen as an extension of the role of safe spaces in arming activists and students with new vocabularies, the tools needed to challenge oppression. However, there is an increasing concern among student activists that 'calling out' has, instead of being a means to draw attention to inequality and oppression, become a performative exercise for activists to display intellectual superiority over others (Hetti 2017). Increasingly, and especially on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, calling out becomes 'a public performance where people can demonstrate their wit or how pure their politics are. Indeed, sometimes it can feel like the performance itself is more significant than the content of the call-out' (Ahmad, ibid.: para. 2). The end result of calling out can often result in ostracism from a community, a judgement on an individual's entire being, a disciplining of speech and action which eerily mirrors the prison industrial complex (Ahmad, ibid.: para. 3). Individuals are banished and disposed of, rather than engaged with as complex individuals, with their own stories, narratives and capacity for mistakes. Ahmad is not alone in this criticism—Wilson (an Edinburgh University student), recounts how she fell afoul of safe spaces policies while raising a hand in a student union meeting (2016). While Wilson emphasises her support for safe spaces, she describes the incident as 'farcical' and 'bizarre,' as well as noting the abuse she had received on social media following the incident. It's also worthy of note that Wilson's defence of safe spaces was largely co-opted by anti-safe spaces voices in the mainstream media (Gosden 2016; Wyatt 2016); Wilson's own experience of safe spaces was largely ignored, and her situation instead became an example of the harmful nature of safe spaces (Wilson 2016).

A common aspect of call out culture is that an offender is told to 'educate themselves' (Tatum 2014). Again, this is not problematic in principle, and one might conceive of safe spaces as place for such education. However, the issue lies with the method by which individuals are 'called out' and told to 'educate themselves.' Dzodan (2014) identifies the issue as being a performative matter; 'calling out' can often be used as a means to 'legitimize aggression and rhetoric violence' but 'Unlike bullying, *a call out is intended for an audience*' (italics in original: paras. 25 and 26). The moral undertones of this are relatively explicit—a 'lack of education' is now viewed as a matter for an individual to rectify, but as a claim of moral failure, that '*you have been found wanting …[by]… someone who thinks they are more righteous, better, more politically engaged than you*' (ibid.: para. 27). Such accusations of immorality strike at the core of an individual, rather than targeting a particular act, leaving them marked in the eyes of the wider community. What should be a constructive method of reflexivity becomes a method for disciplining and potential exclusion, even within spaces that are meant to be for learning and forming strategies (Volcano 2012; Serano 2013: 281–300).

An additional concern is whether a distinction exists between 'safe' and 'same' spaces. As noted earlier, early consciousness raising groups tended to be homogenous; this is not, in any sense, a negative thing, and there is plenty of evidence to suggest that 'group only' spaces can be beneficial, fruitful and helpful to activist communities (Pennington 2012; Serano, ibid.: 287–288). However, there is also a danger of excess homogenisation, leading to the creation and perpetuation of stereotypes within the group, and a space being known as 'safe' because those stereotypes are met (Serano, ibid.). This can lead to exclusion from the supposed safety of those who do not meet such stereotypes. A notable example of this was the decision by the UK based Radical Feminist Collective to exclude transwomen from their annual conference, drawing considerable criticism from the wider feminist movement (Laura 2012; Stavvers 2012). Student activists have raised concerns about exclusion in safe spaces; Lewis (a Ph.D. student at Manchester University) suggests the need for a 'permanent revolutionary tension' between what is defined as 'us' and 'them' to prevent safe spaces from becoming exclusionary 'heterotopias' (Lewis 2012).

The evidence above of the possible toxic or even exclusionary nature of some safe spaces raises a question of what 'safe' is meant to mean in safe spaces, and for 'whom' this spaces are meant to be safe. Lewis et al. (2015) draw a distinction between being 'safe *from*,' and 'safe *to*,' in their analysis of women's only feminist spaces. Being safe *from* allows members of a marginalised group to be shielded from everyday oppression they might experience in the public sphere such as 'threats of sexual violence and harassment' (ibid.: 5). Being safe *to* refers to when participants in a safe space to be 'fully human…enabling dialogue and debate which enabled learning and understanding' (ibid.: 7); in order to be able to participate in the public political sphere, in order to have the tools and strategies to navigate a hostile, mainstream environment, safe spaces need to provide the 'cognitive and emotional expression… [which] is an important part of feeling fully human' (ibid.: 10).

The implications of a lack of dialogue, of the creation of new hierarchies, of toxicity, for safe spaces in Universities are troubling to say the least. If safe spaces are meant to be sites for forming new vocabularies of resistance on campus, those vocabularies need to accept that within marginalised groups there are different positionalities and connections. Safe spaces are not meant to be 'calm and cuddly,' but instead 'an arena for engaging in constructive conversations… [an] intrinsically challenging,' environment, which requires difference and engagement (Lewis et al. 2015: 8). Failure to allow this limits the possibilities of 'discussions about power, privilege and oppression' (Koyama 2000 in Stryker and Whittle 2006: 123). If, as Orwell asserts in *Politics and the English Language*, political transformation must begin 'by starting at the verbal end' (Orwell 2013), then vocabularies of resistance, formulated in safe spaces, cannot perpetuate the same (often gendered) hierarchies and inequalities of speech which pervade the public sphere (Fraser 1990: 63).

Conclusion: Activism as Balancing Act

On 2nd January 2018, the UK Department for Education appointed the right wing British journalist Toby Young as a non-executive board member of the newly created OfS, a body created to ensure accountability in Universities, which has the power to fine or sanction

institutions. The appointment was greeted with immediate criticism, citing Young's lack of qualifications (Rawlinson and Luxmore 2018), his public lewd, sexist and homophobic tweets and articles (Butterworth 2018), his attendance of eugenicist conferences, and the parallel lack of representation for the NUS on the OfS (Foster 2018). Young, a self-professed 'free speech advocate,' has positioned himself as a critic of 'snowflake culture' (Foster, ibid.), and was set to be a key figure in British educational policy under the current Conservative administration. Though Young eventually stepped down in ignominy, his original appointment speaks volumes about the ideological trajectory of HE policy in Britain. With this in mind, it is not a huge leap of logic to assume that in the coming months, the dominant discourse on safe space which I identified earlier will become more prevalent, and loud enough to be cacophonous. All the more reason, then, for the intervention staged in the current document.

In this chapter, I have argued that safe spaces have been consistently misrepresented—by media, governmental and academic voices—as censorious, separatist, and contrary to the pedagogical values of the University. Concurrently, the students who campaign for, or set up, safe spaces on University campuses display a form of vulnerability that, like safe spaces, is denigrated. The discourse around these students is scathing in its criticism, yet superficial in its analysis. Vulnerability can be a vital part of resistance, and safe spaces offer the necessary counterpublics where new generations of student activists—facing an increasingly marketised, atomised and neoliberal Higher Education sector—to collectively and constructively create the vocabularies of resistance. Further research could set out to explore, through qualitative data analysis and ethnographic research, the practical strategies and pitfalls of setting up safe spaces on UK campuses. Furthermore, collaborative work with student activists could allow for the broadening of existing strategies of resistance in the wider political arena.

Notes

1. This chapter focuses on safe spaces in UK Universities. This is motivated by the increasing animosity towards safe spaces and student resistance in UK legislation and media discourse, which suggests an urgent need to engage in critical discussion about campus activism. This is not to say that safe spaces are a contentious issue in the UK alone (see Hacker 2018).

2. It is worth reiterating that while this chapter explores the politics of safe spaces in the United Kingdom—due to their political contentiousness and the familiarity of this context to the author—the policing of 'acceptable' behaviour on campuses is a more widespread phenomenon; Hacker (2018) among others notes the normalisation of masculine standards of behaviour and emotional among both students and academics in an Israeli University; similarly, Byron (2017) notes a similar issue on US College campuses. While this chapter focuses on the UK, it is hoped that the conclusions and theoretical analysis will be relevant to more global contexts.

3. Since work on this chapter began, controversy has surrounded Butler, and other high profile leftist academics such as Zizek and Spivak, regarding their defence of Avital Ronell. Ronell, a philosopher at NYU, who is currently accused of inappropriate sexual advances and harassment of one of her Ph.D. students. An open letter, signed by Butler, defended Ronell on the grounds of her academic contributions, and furthermore appeared to blame the alleged victim of the assault for 'malicious' intent towards her. Butler later explained that she was merely criticising Ronell's suspension from her position (Butler 2018). This has done little to prevent ongoing debate about Butler's defence of Ronell and how this sits with her feminist politics (Leiter 2018; Pearl 2018). The implications of the Ronell case, and Butler's support for it raises too many questions to be answered here, but aspects of the open letter do appear to clash with Butler's own work on vulnerability.

4. Since safe spaces are heterogeneous, it is difficult to give a typical example of one, though for illustrative purposes I will use the example of Manchester Students Union's safe spaces Policy (Manchester University Students' Union 2016). The policy places prohibitions on 'discriminatory language and actions' which safeguards 'freedom of speech' while

opposing the 'incite[ment of] hate' on grounds of religion, sexuality, gender identity, disability, race, and other protected characteristics. The policy further has a process for visiting speakers (necessitating content warnings, if appropriate).

5. It's worthy of briefly noting that Halbertsam, like Butler, has become embroiled in the case around Avital Ronell. Halberstam used Facebook to brand blogs such as 'Leiter Report' (which published articles critical of the academic support for Ronell) as 'right wing.' More tellingly, Duggan (2018) published a post on Halberstam's blog which argued that emails exchanged between Ronell and her accuser could be seen as 'queer intimacy' rather than as abuse; Halberstam later promoted the post on Twitter, calling it 'clear [and] politically savvy.' Any sense of the vulnerability of Ronell's accuser is absent from this take on events, with Duggan emphasising his relative wealth and economic privilege. The defence of Ronell bears some uncomfortable similarities to Halberstam's critique of safe spaces—a dismissal of vulnerability as part of a broader apparatus of neoliberalism.

6. Passivity itself a topic of interest for feminist scholars—Halberstam (2011) theorises 'radical passivity' as not the simple acceptance of societal roles, but a refusal to be as '…other ways of thinking about political action that don't involve doing or dying' (p. 130). Political power for resistance arises from simply 'being' without label, category or acceptance.

7. Examples of such articles by students include Okundaye (2016) and Malshmann and Oakley (2016). While these articles provide interesting insight into safe spaces, they offer no evidence that the authors had been involved in organising safe spaces, nor any personal reflections on their own experiences of such spaces.

References

Adams, R. (2017, June 7). UK Universities Fall Down Global League Tables After Budget Cuts. *The Guardian*.

Ahmad, A. (2015). *A Note on Call Out Culture*. Briarpatch. Regina, Saskatchewan: Briarpatch Incorporated.

Ahmed, S. (2010). Killing Joy: Feminism and the History of Happiness. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 35,* 571–594.

Ahmed, S. (2014). *Willful Subjects*. Duke University Press.

Ahmed, S. (2015, June 25). *Against Students.* Feminist Killjoys [Online]. Available from https://feministkilljoys.com/2015/06/25/against-students/. Accessed 8 Aug 2017.

Alexander, H. (2017, June 4). Nigel Farage Says London Blighted by "Wholly Muslim Areas" as He Defends Trump's Response to Attack. *The Daily Telegraph*.

Allen, K., & Bull, A. (2017, October 3). *Beware of the Positive University: WonkHE Higher Education: Policy, People and Politics* [Online]. Available from http://wonkhe.com/blogs/beware-of-the-positive-university/. Accessed 4 Jan 2018.

Amenabar, T. (2016, May 19). The New Vocabulary of Protest: What Students Mean by Terms Like 'Safe Space'. *The Washington Post*.

Barrett, N. (1999). The Anti-Fascist Movement in South-East Lancashire, 1933–1940: The Divergent Experiences of Manchester and Nelson. In T. Kirk & A. McElligott (Eds.), *Opposing Fascism: Community, Authority and Resistance in Europe* (pp. 48–62). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Binnie, G. (2016, August 18). Struggling Students Are Not 'Lacking Resilience'—They Need More Support. *The Guardian*, Thursday.

Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Bowden, G. (2016, April 11). Stephen Fry Speaks About the Erosion of 'Free Speech' on Student Campuses in Controversial Rubin Report Interview *Huffington Post*.

Bracke, S. (2016). Bouncing Back. Vulnerability and Resistance in Times of Resilience. *Vulnerability in Resistance*, 52–75.

Butler, J. (2006). *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. London: Verso.

Butler, J. (2018). Judith Butler Explains Letter in Support of Avital Ronell—Letters—Blogs—The Chronicle of Higher Education. *Chronicle.com* [Online]. Available at https://www.chronicle.com/blogs/letters/judith-butler-explains-letter-in-support-of-avital-ronell/. Accessed 28 Sept 2018.

Butler, J., Gambetti, Z., & Sabsay, L. (2016). *Vulnerability in Resistance*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Butterworth, B. (2018, January 3). Labour Calls for Government to Fire Toby Young Over 'Misogyny and Homophobia'. *PinkNews.com*.

Byron, K. (2017). From Infantilizing to World Making: Safe Spaces and Trigger Warnings on Campus. *Family Relations, 66,* 116–125.

Campbell, B., & Manning, J. (2015). The New Millennial 'Morality': Highly Sensitive and Easily Offended. *Time*. New York City: Time Inc.

Clark, D. H. (1977). The Therapeutic Community. *The British Journal of Psychiatry, 131,* 553–564.

Collective, C. R. (1977). A Black Feminist Statement. *Women's Studies Quarterly, 42,* 271–280.

Connell, R. (2002). The Social Organization of Masculinity. In S. M. Whitehead & F. Barrett (Eds.), *The Masculinities Reader* (1st ed.). Cambridge: Polity.

Denovan, A., & Macaskill, A. (2017). Stress and Subjective Well-Being Among First Year UK Undergraduate Students. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 18,* 505–525.

Department for Education, & Johnson, J., MP. (2017). *Jo Johnson Calls for Free Speech to Be Protected on Campus*. gov.UK [Online]. Available https://www.gov.uk/government/news/jo-johnson-calls-for-free-speech-to-be-protected-on-campus. Accessed 3 Jan 2018.

Douglas, M. (2002). *Implicit Meanings*. London: Routledge.

Duggan, L. (2014). *On Trauma and Trigger Warnings, in Three Parts*. Bully Bloggers [Online]. Available from https://bullybloggers.wordpress.com/2014/11/23/on-trauma-and-trigger-warnings-in-three-parts/. Accessed 3 Jan 2018.

Duggan, L. (2018). *The Full Catastrophe*. Bully Bloggers [Online]. Available at https://bullybloggers.wordpress.com/2018/08/18/the-full-catastrophe/. Accessed 28 Sept 2018.

Dzodan, F. (2014). *Come One, Come All! Feminist and Social Justice Blogging as Performance and Bloodshed*. Libcom.org [Online]. Available https://libcom.org/library/come-one-come-all-feminist-social-justice-blogging-performance-bloodshed. Accessed 16 Aug 2017.

Ehrenreich, B. (2010). *Smile or Die: How Positive Thinking Fooled America and the World*. London: Granta Books.

Ferber, A. L. (1999). *White Man Falling: Race, Gender, and White Supremacy*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Foster, D. (2018). Free Speech Works Both Ways—As Toby Young Is Finding Out. *The Guardian*.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*. Pantheon.

Fox, C. (2016). *I Find That Offensive!* London: Biteback Publishing.

Fraser, N. (1990). Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. *Social Text, 25,* 56–80.

Garton Ash, T. (2016, September 16). Safe Spaces Are Not the Only Threat to Free Speech. *The Guardian*.

Gill, R. (2007). Postfeminist Media Culture. *European Journal of Cultural Studies, 10*(2), 147–166.

Gosden, E. (2016). Student Accused of Violating University 'Safe Space' by Raising Her Hand. *The Telegraph* [Online]. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/04/03/student-accused-of-violating-university-safe-space-by-raising-he/. Accessed 1 Oct 2018.

Habermas, J. (1991). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Hacker, D. (2018). Crying on Campus. In Y. Taylor & K. Lahad (Eds.), *Feeling Academic in the Neoliberal University: Feminist Fights, Flights and Failures*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Halberstam, J. (2011). Unbecoming: Queer Negativity/Radical Passivity. In B. Davies & J. Funke (Eds.), *Sex, Gender and Time in Fiction and Culture*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Halberstam, J. (2014a). *Triggering Me, Triggering You: Making Up Is Hard to Do*. Bully Bloggers [Online]. Available from https://bullybloggers.wordpress.com/2014/07/15/triggering-me-triggering-you-making-up-is-hard-to-do/. Accessed 3 Jan 2018.

Halberstam, J. (2014b, July 15). *You're Triggering Me! The Neo-liberal Rhetoric of Harm, Danger and Trauma*. Bully Blogger [Online]. Available from https://bullybloggers.wordpress.com/2014/07/05/you-are-triggering-me-the-neo-liberal-rhetoric-of-harm-danger-and-trauma/. Accessed 8 Aug 2017.

Harris, A. (2005). VII. Discourses of Desire as Governmentality: Young Women, Sexuality and the Significance of Safe Spaces. *Feminism & Psychology, 15,* 39–43.

Hetti, T. (2017). "Call Out Culture" Is Toxic and Problematic. *Affinity Magazine*.

Ho, K. (2017). Tackling the Term: What Is a Safe Space? *Harvard Political Review* [Online]. Available http://harvardpolitics.com/harvard/what-is-a-safe-space/. Accessed 8 Aug 2017.

Hunt, C. J. (2016). *"It's Just a Joke": The Subtle Effects of Offensive Language*. Melbourne [Online]. Available http://theconversation.com/its-just-a-joke-the-subtle-effects-of-offensive-language-62440. Accessed 15 Aug 2017.

Koyama, E. (2000). *Whose Feminism Is It Anyway?* Portland: Emi Koyama.

Kravetz, D. (1978). Consciousness-Raising Groups in the 1970s. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 3,* 168–186.

Laura. (2012, May 17). *There's Nothing Radical About Transphobia.* The F Word Blog: Contemporary UK Feminism [Online]. Available from https://www.thefword.org.uk/2012/05/theres_nothing/. Accessed 16 Aug 2017.

Leiter, B. (2018). *CHE Article on the Letter Defending Professor Ronell.* Leiter Reports: A Philosophy Blog [Online]. Available at http://leiterreports.type-pad.com/blog/2018/06/che-article-on-the-letter-defending-professor-ronell.html. Accessed 28 Sept 2018.

Lewis, S. (2012). *Being Secure in the Space of Occupation: Notes from a Student-Led Experiment in New York.* openDemocracy [Online]. Available at https://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/sophie-lewis/being-secure-in-space-of-occupation-notes-from-student-led-experiment-in-n. Accessed 28 Sept 2018.

Lewis, R., Sharp, E., Remnant, J., & Redpath, R. (2015). 'Safe Spaces': Experiences of Feminist Women-Only Space. *Sociological Research Online, 20,* 9.

Lock, H. (2016, March 10). Student Protests: Are Young People Too Sensitive These Days? *The Guardian.*

Lopez, D. (2017). The Beginning of the End of Identity Politics? *Red Flag.* Melbourne: Socialist Alternative.

Lukianoff, G., & Haidt, J. (2015). How Trigger Warnings Are Hurting Mental Health on Campuses. *The Atlantic.* Boston, MA.

Mackinnon, C. A. (1982). Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 7,* 515–544.

Malshmann, E., & Oakley, A. (2016). On Safe Spaces and the Ethics of 'Clickbait' Journalism. *The Cambridge Student* [Online]. Available at https://www.tcs.cam.ac.uk/editorial/0034993-on-safe-spaces-and-the-ethics-of-clickbait-journalism.html. Accessed 1 Oct 2018.

Manchester University Students' Union. (2016). *Safe Spaces Policy.* Manchester.

Martínez-San Miguel, Y., & Tobias, S. (2014). *Safe Feminist Spaces: Reflections About the Institute for Research on Women at Rutgers-New Brunswick.* Springer: The Entrepreneurial University.

Mason, R. (2016, September 14). Theresa May Criticises University 'Safe Spaces' for Shutting Down Debate. *The Guardian.*

McRobbie, A. (2004). Post-Feminism and Popular Culture. *Feminist Media Studies, 4,* 255–264.

Mintz, L. E. (1985). Standup Comedy as Social and Cultural Mediation. *American Quarterly, 37,* 71–80.

Nicholson, R. (2016, November 28). "Poor Little Snowflake"—The Defining Insult of 2016. *The Guardian.*

O'Keefe, T. (2016). Making Feminist Sense of No-Platforming. *Feminist Review, 113,* 85–92.

Okundaye, J. (2016). On the Vitriol Against Safe Spaces. *Varsity Online* [Online]. Available at https://www.varsity.co.uk/features/10685. Accessed 1 Oct 2018.

Orwell, G. (2013). *Politics and the English Language*. London: Penguin UK.

Page, C. (2015, January 23). Transphobic Feminism: An Oxymoron. *Varsity*.

Pearl, S. (2018). When a Queer Feminist Professor Is Accused of Harassment. *Lilith Magazine* [Online]. Available at https://www.lilith.org/blog/2018/08/when-a-queer-feminist-professor-is-accused-of-harassment/. Accessed 28 Sept 2018.

Pells, R. (2016, April 25). NUS 'No Platform' Policy Goes 'Too Far' and Threatens Free Speech, Peter Tatchell Warns. *The Independent*.

Pennington, L. (2012, December 6). Feminism, Men, and Women-Only Spaces. *The Huffington Post*.

Phipps, A. (2014). *The Politics of the Body: Gender in a Neoliberal and Neoconservative Age*. Cambridge: Wiley.

Rawlinson, K., & Luxmore, S. (2018, January 3). Doubts Cast on DfE Claims of Toby Young's Qualifications for Watchdog Job. *The Guardian*.

Roberts, J. (2003). *The Aesthetics of Free Speech: Rethinking the Public Sphere*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Rose, F. (2017, March 30). Safe Spaces on Campus Are Creating Intolerant Students. *The Huffington Post*.

Sears, A., & Osten, C. (2003). *The Homosexual Agenda: Exposing the Principal Threat to Religious Freedom Today*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman.

Sehgal-Cuthbert, A. (2014, May 20). Letter: Teaching Consent: A Dangerous Game? *Varsity*.

Seidler, V. J. (2010). *The Achilles Heel Reader: Men, Sexual Politics and Socialism*. London: Routledge.

Serano, J. (2013). *Excluded: Making Feminist and Queer Movements More Inclusive*. Berkeley: Seal Press.

Serano, J. (2014, July 13). Regarding "Generation Wars": Some Reflections on the Recent Jack Halberstam Essay. In *Whipping Girl* [Online]. Available from http://juliaserano.blogspot.co.uk/2014/07/regarding-generation-wars-some.html. Accessed 15 Aug 2017.

Sheldon, R. (2016). *Tragic Encounters and Ordinary Ethics: Palestine–Israel in British Universities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Spiked. (2017). *Free Speech University Rankings 2017* [Online]. www.spiked-online.com. Available http://www.spiked-online.com/free-speech-university-rankings/profile/leeds#.Wk0N5lVl_cs. Accessed 3 Jan 2018.

Stavvers. (2012, May 29). *Shelia Jeffreys: Another Angry Woman* [Online]. Available from https://stavvers.wordpress.com/2012/05/29/sheila-jeffreys-radfem2012-and-the-imaginary-trans-conspiracy/. Accessed 16 Aug 2017.

Stryker, S., & Whittle, S. (2006). *The Transgender Studies Reader*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Tatum, E. (2014). Getting Called Out: Why Acknowledging Oppression Matters More Than Your Hurt Feelings. *Everyday Feminism*.

The University of Edinburgh. (2018). *Building Student Resilience Model* [Online]. Available https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/levels/academic-transitions-toolkit/building-student-resilience-model. Accessed 2 Jan 2018.

Travers, R. (2017, February 13). University 'Safe Spaces' Are a Dangerous Fallacy—They Do Not Exist in the Real Word. *The Daily Telegraph*.

Volcano, A. (2012). Police at the Borders. In C. B. Daring, J. Rogue, D. Shannon, & A. Volcano (Eds.), *Queering Anarchism: Addressing and Undressing Power and Desire.* Oakland, CA: AK Press.

Waldman, K. (2016). What Science Can Tell Us About Trigger Warnings. *Slate.com* [Online]. Available http://www.slate.com/articles/double_x/cover_story/2016/09/what_science_can_tell_us_about_trigger_warnings.html. Accessed 5 Aug 2017.

Williams, Z. (2016, November 15). The Dangerous Fantasy Behind Trump's Normalisation. *The Guardian*.

Wilson, I. (2016). Safe Spaces Are Not Demanding Very Much. *Huffington Post* [Online]. Available at https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/imogen-wilson/safe-spaces_b_9618468.html. Accessed 27 Sept 2018.

Wyatt, C. (2016). Student Subjected to 'Safe Space' Vote Simply for Raising Her Hand. *HuffPost UK* [Online]. Available at https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2016/04/01/safe-space-gesture_n_9592090.html. Accessed 1 Oct 2018.

Young, P. (2015). Safe Spaces as Resistance. In *Brown Political Review*. Rhode Island: Brown University.