



Chan, J. (2018). Out of Asia: Topologies of racism in Canada. *Workplace*, 31, 1-9.

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**OUT OF ASIA:
TOPOLOGIES OF RACISM IN CANADA**

Abstract

This case study recounts my harrowing experience through a great Canadian equity swindle—involving two internal university equity investigations, BC Human Rights Tribunal, and the BC Supreme Court—to bring to account a deeply flawed and allegedly discriminatory academic hiring process. I situate my human rights complaint in the larger socio-political context of Canada becoming “too Asian.” Using a methodology of a critical personal narrative in the form of a self-interview, I discuss how diverse actors from the union to lawyers, the court system, the media, the public, and fellow academics stubbornly refuse to see the nexus between race and discrimination. These embarrassing conversations form the contours of topologies of race in Canada, stretching and bending our academic, legal, media, and social landscapes without tearing white hegemony apart. I highlight the common experiences of fellow human rights complainants who contacted me during this period and the implications of our ordeals on the Canadian social body.

We only become what we are by the radical and deep-seated refusal of that which others have made of us. —Franz Fanon

Tell us what life is like as a woman faculty of color at your university?

Well, life is busy, like for most other academics. Ours is not a nine-to-five office job. Email is both a blessing and a curse. You can do a lot of work from home, but that also means you are most likely working more than you should. I am a Canadian of Chinese descent. I graduated from Stanford University with a doctorate in International Comparative Education and joined the University of British Columbia in 2001, first as a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Political Science, and then as an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education in 2003. Being a woman faculty of color means you have to prove yourself thrice: as a productive academic meritorious of tenure and promotion; as a woman faculty who shoulders the bulk of childcare (I have two children) while going through the tenure grind; and as a person of color who is racialized in a predominantly White Canadian academic environment. I haven't encountered any major sexism in my department dominated by (white) women with the exception of one incident when my (white) male department head turned down my request for teaching schedule accommodation (I was a single mother with two young children and requested daytime teaching... The issue was never really solved and my union refused to intervene). But I would say that racialization and unequal treatment have been part and parcel of my work experience at my university. More than once,

students and faculty thought I was a graduate student; I did not look like a faculty member (most faculty members are white). Colleagues could not remember my surname and kept misspelling it: Chan/Chen/Chang/Chin/Chun. I received media requests on the issue of “tiger mom,” an area of research completely outside my expertise, because I was racialized as a Chinese faculty. I was repeatedly asked to comment on admission files of Chinese students even though my research had nothing to do with theirs. I had a disproportionate supervision load of students of color (80%) who were often turned down by my white colleagues, in part because they were perceived to require more work (e.g. English and cultural issues). When I brought this issue up at a program meeting, a Caucasian colleague responded: “Students of color like to work with faculty of color.” I found such simplistic race-blind comment frustrating and irresponsible. Despite my extremely favourable teaching evaluations, I was turned down twice for the prestigious Killam Teaching Award without any explanation; and a third nomination by a graduate student was not even forwarded to the Faculty (my Department Head simply said, in passing in the corridor, “Oh, I received a glowing letter about your teaching. I will put it in your file.”) I then found out that all 40 winners of the Killam Teaching Award in the Faculty of Education at my university in the past 20 years had been Caucasian. I was also “overlooked” in my Tenure and Promotion schedule by my department head. When my tenure review finally came up, a white colleague made an unfounded charge of plagiarism that almost derailed the entire process, forcing me out of the door. I have no proof that it was racially motivated, but I have no doubt that, as a faculty of color, I was subject to unnecessarily harsh scrutiny. Later, I brought this issue to the university Equity Office but was told that no case could be made because I did receive tenure. There was never any investigation or apology. White hegemony on a Canadian campus can be subtle and yet pernicious; it permeates throughout almost all aspects of working life of a faculty of color.

What happened at the hiring process for the David Lam Chair in Multicultural Education that was at the center of your human rights complaint?

The David Lam Chair is an endowed Chair established in 1998 by the Honourable David Lam, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia between 1988 and 1995. The Lam Chair’s website states that “Dr. Lam’s vision of Canada included a place where immigrants will not only find refuge and opportunity, but also contribute the best of their cultures and unique backgrounds to the rich pluralism of this land.” On March 9, 2009, the Call for Applications for the David Lam Chair in Multicultural Education was sent out, listing four criteria: breadth of representation of multicultural education; vision for the Chair; record of scholarship that matches the mandate of the Chair; and potential to provide linkages, integration across faculty members. It was decided that this would be an internal search within the Faculty. Four candidates were shortlisted including myself as the only visible minority faculty. Nine months later, on December 9, 2009, I was informed that I did not get the position. Instead, the David Lam Chair was awarded to my colleague whose research record was in gender and youth, rather than multicultural education. I found the entire selection process amateurish, unprofessional, and arguably discriminatory. The process deviated from previous searches as well as standard recruitment practice mandated in the university Faculty Recruitment Guide as well as the policy on academic appointments of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT). The David Lam Selection Committee was arbitrarily composed with overrepresentation of one single department, which raised the suspicion of the possibility of biased in-group voting. Out of the six Selection Committee members including the chair, only one member was a visible minority faculty; all other five were Caucasians. External referees were never contacted and the majority of the Selection Committee was non-expert in multicultural education. The Selection Committee adopted an arbitrarily broad definition of multiculturalism in which race was considered non-central. According to University Policy 20, all job postings must include the following: “UBC hires on the basis of merit and is committed to employment equity. We encourage all qualified persons to apply. Canadians and permanent residents of Canada will be given priority.” The Call for Applications of the David Lam Chair in Multicultural Education as well as the entire selection process including in the final stage when the successful candidate and I were the two finalists never mentioned or applied the principle of employment equity. The University Recruitment Guide also requires all Selection Committees to “keep a factual record of the recruitment and selection process.” But I was told that the only document that existed that recorded

the search committee's process were the "personal notes taken by the Committee Chair and have not been shared with the committee members or anyone else." There were no meeting agendas and minutes, and as such, no formal factual record of the selection process. Through a subsequent Freedom of Information release, I found that, in the sparse notes of the Selection Committee chair, questions were raised concerning my being "as more junior scholar," "level of familiarity," being "too new to Ed and UBC," "perception by the Faculty," theoretically "distancing," being "activist" etc. None of these comments and questions related to any of the four stipulated selection criteria. Nor was there any factual basis to these comments. The successful candidate and I joined the university the same year, occupied the same rank, and used the same critical theoretical approach. I had received positive feedback and recommendation from more faculty, staff, and students than the successful candidate. Yet, there was no evidence that the Selection Committee took into consideration these submissions.

What did you decide to do? Sure enough, there must be some kind of internal university equity policy and mechanism to deal with such kinds of issues. Walk us through this process.

In all my years as an academic, I have never experienced a hiring process like this whereby all accepted norms of practices were not followed. To this date, I have not received a satisfactory explanation for the multiple procedural irregularities in the David Lam Chair selection. It is well known that one does not have to show intent in discrimination; actions amounting to discriminatory effect suffice. For instance, the Ontario Policy and Guidelines on Racism and Racial Discrimination states, "It has long been established in Canadian law that intent or motive to discriminate is not a necessary element for finding that a discriminatory act took place. It is sufficient if there is a discriminatory effect to the conduct." As a first step, I wrote a letter to the University President to inform him what happened. He forwarded his letter to VP Academic and Provost who concluded that he saw no problem in the Lam Chair search process. Then I submitted a complaint under University Policy 3 on Discrimination and Harassment in December 2010. According to the Guide to Policy 3, "discrimination means unjustified differential treatment of a person or a group of people which is based, in whole or in part, on one or more of the 13 grounds protected in the BC Human Rights Code and Policy 3." Associate Vice-President Equity appointed an "external" investigator (who turned out to be a former colleague and friend of his) with the given mandate to investigate whether the Respondents engaged in conduct during the 2009 David Lam Chair selection process that discriminated against me due to my race. Associate VP Equity set narrow terms of reference: the investigator was not to look at the relative merits of the candidates, whether committee's decision was correct, and the question of employment equity. On April 15, 2010, I received the investigator's report that identified a series of errors from the composition of the Selection Committee to the lack of consultation of external referees, but opined that my race was not a factor in causing these errors. Further, she opined that the use of a broad definition of multiculturalism was not discriminatory. On the question of employment equity, she accepted that the principle of preference for a member of an underrepresented target group where there are equivalently meritorious candidates would have meant that the Lam Chair should have been offered to me, but the university's current Equity Policy did not mandate such outcomes. So what does an equity policy mean in Canada? It seems to mean little more than collecting statistics as part of compliance of the Employment Equity Act! The report concluded that the Respondents did not discriminate against me in offering the Lam Chair to the successful candidate. Four months later, as part of the investigation process, I met with a panel made up of an external human rights lawyer and two university faculty members to discuss the report. The final February 2011 Panel Report included four findings: the David Lam Chair Selection Committee did not violate procedural fairness as the Faculty of Education had no guidelines or requirements at the time of hiring; UBC's existing Employment Equity Policy does not take an "affirmative action" approach; comments made about Dr. Chan's lack of familiarity, being junior, and distancing do not disclose any racial stereotyping; systemic differential and discriminatory treatment experienced by Dr. Chan such as in her Tenure and Promotion are not relevant to the case. My complaint was dismissed.

What happened at the BC Human Rights Tribunal?

In May 2010, I filed my complaint to the BC Human Rights Tribunal (BCHRT) within the six-month deadline. I alleged that I was denied the David Lam Chair due to my race, color, ancestry, and place of origin, as prohibited by Section 13(1) of the BC Human Rights Code. Specifically, the numerous procedural irregularities of the David Lam Chair search committee, by virtue of their acts, omissions, and lack of procedural checks, allowed stereotypical perceptions to prevail and produced discriminatory effects that more likely than not excluded me from the position of Chair. Further, I alleged that the denial of the David Lam Chair occurred in a larger context of systemic racism at her workplace at UBC. UBC applied to defer my complaint pending the outcome of the UBC Equity Office investigation, which BCHRT granted. When UBC's Equity Office finally dismissed my complaint in March 2011, UBC applied to dismiss my case two months later. In its January 2012 decision, BCHRT turned down UBC's application to dismiss my complaint because "[t]he issues raised in this complaint are of significance to the UBC community as a whole" and "the complaint appears to cast the Committee's process and resultant decision as being the product of subtle racial bias and stereotyping, including the failure to apply employment equity principles."¹

How did your case wind up in the BC Supreme Court?

It was already a herculean effort to have survived the case up until that point. I had secured four Canadian academics as expert witnesses and I was ready for the hearing. But, in March 2012, UBC petitioned to the BC Supreme Court for a judicial review to challenge BCHRT's decision. So on November 13 and 14 2012, I went in the BC Supreme Court for the first time in my life. The judge was not appointed to look into the merit of the case, but to determine whether BCHRT's January 2012 decision was "patently unreasonable." UBC lawyers argued that it was, because 1) UBC's Equity Office investigation was like a legal proceeding and had exhaustively dealt with and dismissed my complaint, and hence it would be a waste of public resource for BCHRT to move to hearing; 2) there was no reasonable prospect of success; and 3) the "significance to the UBC community" argument was an irrelevant factor in BCHRT's discretionary decision to decline UBC's application to dismiss my case. On May 29, 2013, Madame Justice Linda Loo decided in favor of UBC, quashing BCHRT's January 2012 decision. UBC's May 2011 application to dismiss the complaint was referred back to the Tribunal for reconsideration. After three full years, my case was back to square one. Then, even though nothing had changed in the interim, the BCHRT member decided too to dismiss my complaint in its final decision on December 19, 2013 because "I am unable to see any likelihood that the explanation by the selection committee of their basis for establishing a broader interpretation of multiculturalism would support, even in the context of the other deficiencies alleged by Dr. Chan, that the selection was contaminated by discrimination on the basis of race, colour, ancestry or place of origin contrary to s. 13 of the Code. I find that there is no reasonable prospect that the Complaint will succeed."

What did you make of the BCHRT decision?

By not seeing any problem with the broad and arbitrary definition of multiculturalism used by the selection committee to justify its decision to award the Chair to someone whose research was on gender and youth is to fall into the same fallacy of the Selection Committee of accepting a definition of multiculturalism void of race. Canada has an official multiculturalism Act and policy which puts race at the center. Emptying race out of multiculturalism amounts to both epistemic and legal racism. It is indicative of how many whites (academics and judges alike) view multiculturalism in Canada in a race-blind fashion, ignoring our historical struggles and context in which multiculturalism became policy and law in the first place.

Did you not seek out your union in the whole process?

I experienced what feminists call "second rape" when I sought the help of the Faculty Association of my university. The white male union lawyer questioned me on the nexus between race and the denial of the Lam Chair. He did not see the nexus, and that was the end of UBCFA's involvement in my case. Equity is not a bread and butter issue for my union. Its leadership is predominantly white; I am not sure how equity-

conscious it is. Then I decided to contact the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) to no avail. My union and the CAUT failed me.

Tell us about your experience in seeking legal representation.

I must have contacted close to 50 lawyers in and out of town. I used the BC Lawyers' Referral Service whereby you could meet with a lawyer for an initial consultation for only \$25. How many times I walked out of their offices feeling dazed by their whiteness and inability to see race and racial discrimination in academia. I concluded that, short of racial slurs like "Chinks go home" which were unlikely in an academic environment, racial discrimination was close to impossible to prove in Canada. No one wanted to take up my case. I am grateful to Joanna Gislason, of Caroline + Gislason Lawyers, and Lindsey Waddell, of Community Legal Assistance Society, who were generous with their *pro bono* representation at different times of my case.

What made you decide to go public with your case? What was the media's response and what was its impact on your case?

I made my decision to go public after having an extended conversation with Dr. Kin-Yip Chun whose human rights complaint was probably one of the most notorious and protracted in Canadian history. Dr. Chun was repeatedly, improperly denied a permanent academic position in the Department of Physics at the University of Toronto allegedly because of his race. His case was the subject of an extensive CAUT study in 2006 with recommendations that seem just as relevant today:²

Recommendation 2

Where an institution purports to have rules governing such matters as hiring processes, the responsibilities of faculty members, research grant applications, and so forth, these rules should be applied consistently.

Recommendation 3

The academic procedures in force need to be visible to all observers.

Recommendation 4

It is extremely costly to wage struggles within Canadian universities over discrimination on the basis of race through the lives of named individuals. To the extent that the problems can be studied systemically, and remedied institutionally, without singling out specific individuals, that would be an objective to emulate in the future.

Recommendation 5

Depicting individuals who voice racism complaints as "angry," "aggressive," and otherwise unbalanced, characterizations that are often unfair to the individuals concerned, does much to dissuade others from drawing attention to racism. The silencing of anti-racist critique makes the few courageous individuals who do speak out seem even more unusual, even more angry and isolated. The cycle that is created is not a healthy one for the individuals and organizations concerned, or for Canadian society in general. Institutions and individuals should take great care to avoid such mischaracterizations.

Recommendation 6

Where allegations of racism arise, it is beneficial to have a quick, fair, and accessible internal dispute resolution mechanism. Dispute resolution should be implemented early in the process, before attitudes on both sides harden. Dispute resolution mechanisms should be easily accessible, capable of coming into operation quickly, and perceived by all sides as impartial.

Recommendation 7

Canadian universities should be one of the foremost sites for the exploration of racism, the

promotion of anti-racist activities, and the production of new knowledge that will allow us to move forward toward a more just society. Universities should expand their research into inequality and into the development of new mechanisms to mitigate the effects of inequality.

Recommendation 8

University decision-makers should have training about the broad and systemic dynamics of race discrimination, so that they no longer perceive racism as an “exceptional” event, but as something that should be anticipated.

Recommendation 9

The composition of university administrations and faculties should represent the increasingly diverse population of Canada. Affirmative action hiring policies should be adopted until faculties achieve a critical mass of racialized professors. Universities should strive to accelerate the pace of change in ways that do not undermine legitimate academic objectives.

Dr. Chun went through a horrendous human rights complaint process (which was settled out of court). In his opinion, Canadian universities would rather pay millions in legal fees to fight against any human rights complaints than to admit wrongdoing. The odds were stacked against individual complainants. It was paramount that donors and the public knew about cases like ours. A friend of a student of mine who was a media specialist trained and worked with me on my press releases. On April 19, 2011, the *Globe and Mail* as well as local news including Chinese television outlets carried my story. On March 15, 2012, the chief editor of the student newspaper, *The Ubysey*, wrote a featured article, “*Does UBC Have an Equity Gap? A look at the independence and integrity of the Equity Office,*”³ which some believed subsequently prompted the early retirement of the UBC AVP Equity. On November 6, 2012, just before the BC Supreme Court hearing, the *Vancouver Sun* ran my story as well. Prior to this, I had no media training or exposure. It was a steep learning curve, an important part of my human rights complaint process. I saw my media engagement as part of anti-racist public pedagogy.

How did the public react?

It was a mixed bag of reactions. Racism is such a common lived experience and yet an immensely contentious issue in Canada. There was an outpour of support from a few academics across Canada and mostly people of color who had experienced racism. But there were also racist reactions like “Don’t play the race card... Go home!” kind of comments. The most unexpected were emails and phone calls from fellow human rights complainants at UBC and beyond. I had not imagined that my coming out would bring us all together. We were all fighting our own cases, groping through the opaque legal process, surviving the brutal process.

Who were these other human rights complainants?

Three were Chinese Canadians who were lab technicians in UBC’s Faculty of Medicine who filed a human rights complaint against two white faculty members to BCHRT after the Equity Office dismissed their case. One Japanese Canadian, a contract Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Dentistry, filed a bullying and discrimination complaint against her department head. One Aboriginal Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Arts filed a human rights complaint to the UBC Equity Office. Another Aboriginal Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Law submitted a complaint to BCHRT for being denied tenure. A Turkish Canadian Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Victoria filed a similar human rights complaint to BCHRT also for being denied tenure. Finally, a faculty of color at Northern Lights College filed a complaint to BCHRT for being denied a Chair position. Some of us met several times, strategized, met with members of parliament and media. Others communicated through email. Out of these, the Chinese Canadian case was the most horrendous. The working conditions and racist treatment they described in their UBC medical lab defied imagination. Unfortunately, their case was settled due to lack of financial means for legal representation. The Japanese Canadian contract faculty’s complaint was dismissed internally and her contract was not renewed. The Faculty of Arts Aboriginal Assistant

Professor's complaint is ongoing; he went on long-term medical leave. The Faculty of Law case is still in BCHRT proceeding. Both the Turkish Canadian Assistant Professor's complaint against University of Victoria and the visible minority faculty case against Northern Lights College were dismissed by BCHRT. Race was a component across all of these cases; none was ever moved to hearing. They were all dismissed either internally or by BCHRT. This is why I call the Canadian equity apparatus a swindle. We, human rights complainants, feel cheated, not once, but twice, thrice, four or five times. We are cheated into believing there is equal employment opportunity and equity in Canada in the first place. We are cheated then into believing that, if we suspect something goes wrong, there is a fair equity complaint process. We are further cheated into believing that our union would support us. We are even more cheated into believing that Canada is a beacon in human rights and that our tribunals would accord complainants a fighting chance to tell their stories in a hearing. We are most cheated of all into believing that our Supreme Court upholds our sacred principles of equality and equity. After years of legal wrangling with incalculable costs to our health, family, and careers, all of our cases were dismissed.

Did you receive support from the Chinese/Asian Canadian community?

I would not say that there was no support from the Chinese/Asian Canadian community. First, there was clearly strong interest from Chinese/Asian Canadian students, faculty, and activists, some of whom had similar experiences. I was invited to give talks several times to share my experiences. Among Chinese Canadian activists, however, there was a feeling that being a professor was a class privilege and that academic racism was not a priority. The Chinese Canadian community is notoriously difficult to mobilize. In the end, I did feel disappointed that community activists did not see my case as “an injury to one is an injury to all.”

And your colleagues? Have they been supportive?

One of the most heartbreaking dimensions of my horrendous experience is the silence of my colleagues. With the exception of three colleagues, all other close friends in or beyond my department disappeared overnight. Some were going up for tenure and promotion with understandable fear of association with my case. But others were tenured and full professors of color who chose to remain silent. This is something hard to forget or forgive. Faculty of color remain underrepresented in numbers, isolated, and fragmented. Few are willing to rock the academic boat.

How do you read the connection between your human rights complaint and the issues of multiculturalism in Canada? Is Canadian multiculturalism a myth?

Australian anti-racist feminist scholar, Sara Ahmed, has this apt metaphor of a “brick wall” to describe institutional resistance as well as racism and whiteness in academic life. In her book, *On Being Included: Racism and Institutional Life*, she describes how “diversity talk” has been co-opted. While a big diversity apparatus is set up on most campuses now (equity policies and offices, diversity officers, and complaint mechanisms) to encourage discussions about diversity, there are few clearly defined commitments of equity. Academic racism is often portrayed as something that can be “overted” through diversity work/talk.⁴ My human rights complaint process confirms this co-opted diversity approach not only at my university, but in Canadian society as a whole. So much excellent research has been published on minority Canadians' lived experiences of racism that one has to intentionally ignore this vast literature to deny the profound multicultural crisis in Canada. One of the most hideous facts about systemic racism on Canadian campuses is the perpetuation of white privilege due to a culture of silence and the culture of denial. It is what Canadian antiracist educator George Dei terms as “the impossibilities of speaking race.”⁵ The seminal 2010 Final Report of the Task Force on Anti-Racism at Ryerson states that “often, there is an inadequate understanding of the systemic forms of racism but also from the belief that complaints about racism must be validated and clearly shown to derive from racist behaviour or attitudes before they can be dealt with. These are discourses of denial that suggest a need to better understand the systemic and subtle ways that racism manifests itself.”⁶

Further,

- Both the survey and the focus groups identified structural barriers to advancement as a concern. Some faculty members spoke of a culture of patronage that disadvantaged those “out of the loop.” There were indications that these tended to be faculty of colour. The head of department was often cited as the source of discrimination.
- According to the interviews with faculty and leadership, what may partly explain these shortfalls is that the processes by which decisions are made are not highly sensitized when it comes to equity. Goals are not effectively communicated to DACs or they are not important considerations around the hiring table or in tenure and promotion processes. These processes remain vulnerable to charges of limited diversity and inclusiveness. The connection between goal setting and such structures as Departmental Appointments Committees needs to be more strongly influenced by a commitment to equity in both process and outcomes.
- An obvious area of concern is the low level of awareness of issues of diversity and inclusion or initiatives related to them.⁷

In particular, the 2005 CAUT Report on Dr. Kin-Yip Chun mentioned above suggests a close relationship between procedural inconsistencies and systemic discrimination:

There were various points in the Chun case at which academic procedures were not followed, or were changed in ways that seemed arbitrary and unfair to some observers. One obvious lesson here is that where an institution purports to have rules governing such matters as hiring processes, the responsibilities of faculty members, research grant applications, and so forth, these rules should be applied consistently. Failure to apply the rules consistently will invariably create problems. Furthermore, the academic procedures in force need to be visible to all observers... Fair procedures are especially important when considering allegations of inequality. Procedures that are not fair and transparent carry an added risk of incorporating discriminatory aspects or being applied in a way that is discriminatory. Because discrimination can be subtle and subconscious, a decision maker may not realize that assumptions and biases have coloured a decision untested by a process that brings out all sides of an issue. In addition, a perception of unfairness can easily lead to a perception of discrimination...

Raj Anand, a lawyer with expertise in human rights law who acted as counsel for Dr. Chun at several stages of this dispute, stated that in his opinion the University never really seemed to understand the concept of “employment equity” in connection with this dispute: “There was a sort of shock and dismay at the idea that it could ever be said that the fact that the geophysics area had never had anybody but a white male tenured professor in one hundred odd years was indicative of anything. They didn’t understand why the investigator was even looking at numbers. They didn’t understand what a reprisal was, and when a reaction to a protest could become blaming the victim and compounding the wrong.” Describing universities as particularly resistant to critique based on human rights, Raj Anand noted this might relate to the subjective criteria for competitions, and the difficulties of proof. He noted that informal, highly discretionary, labour-intensive appointments processes could be affected by improper factors, even by professors acting in good faith. While not advocating a reversal of the traditions of academic freedom and autonomous hiring processes, Anand concluded that the “distinctive nature of an academic institution has to give way at the point where those practices result in discrimination.”⁸

Dishearteningly, the Chun Report concludes that little has changed since the Federal Contractors Program has been in effect and that “equity initiatives do not always fully achieve their objectives... One factor is active resistance to change in the composition of faculties.”⁹ Systemic racism on Canadian campuses is the

“unspeakable complaint,” the problem that still has no name, unless university administrations as well as the larger members of the academic community are willing to admit that it constitutes the very fabric of university and Canadian life. In 2010, *McClean’s* published an article, “Too Asian: Some Frosh Don't Want to Study at an Asian university.”¹⁰ According to *McClean’s*, Canadian campuses have become “too Asian.”

The characterization, smacking racism, did not go unnoticed. It was reminiscent of the “monster home” issue, recurrent since the 1990s, when conservative journalists, politicians, and white Canadians grow resentful of the large influx of Asians scooping up real estate in Vancouver.

What is the impact of this case on you?

Going through this human rights complaint process is arguably the most stressful experience in my life. Academic life was busy enough. Parenting life was busy enough. But life as a human rights complainant was unparalleled. Your every waking minute was spent on the case, and yet you lived in quasi-silence because racism remained such a taboo even in Canada. Like my fellow human rights complainants, I developed a high level of stress, insomnia, inability to concentrate, and sudden mood change... I stopped publishing altogether as I was unable to write. One book project, a second book project... One journal article, a second journal article... all abandoned. I remain unable to write any journal article. There has been a journal publication gap in my resume since 2007 and my job applications have not been successful due to this. The case left a bitter taste; it shattered all illusions about Canadian universities and Canadian society as a whole. I want to leave Canada, a country that has done me so much harm, for good. Racism hurts; it ruins life. It puts a strain on families, stalls careers, and intensifies an already toxic work environment. It exerts immeasurable impact on the complainant’s health, self-esteem, productivity, and ability to trust and engage with others. Racism costs time, energy, and precious lives. Universities, as the place of higher learning, should be the first place to confront, address, and remedy racism. How or when will racism on Canadian campuses stop?

NOTES

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http://www.bchrt.gov.bc.ca/decisions/2012/pdf/jan/12_Chan_v_UBC_and_others_No_2_2012_BCHRT_1_2.pdf

² [http://www.caut.ca/docs/af-reports-indepdent-committees-of-inquiry/the-chun-independent-committee-report-\(dec-2006\).pdf?sfvrsn=0](http://www.caut.ca/docs/af-reports-indepdent-committees-of-inquiry/the-chun-independent-committee-report-(dec-2006).pdf?sfvrsn=0) [accessed on November 23, 2014].

³ <http://ubyssey.ca/features/does-ubc-have-an-equity-gap692/> [accessed on November 23, 2014].

⁴ Ahmed, Sara. 2012. *On Being Included: Racism and Institutional Life*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, p. 22.

⁵ Dei, George. 2007. *Racists Beware: Uncovering Racial Politics in the Post Modern Society*. Sense Publishers: xiii.

⁶ Final Report of the Task Force on Anti-Racism at Ryerson 2010: 15, http://www.ryerson.ca/antiracismtaskforce/docs/RU_Taskforce_report.pdf [accessed on November 23, 2014].

⁷ Ibid 8.

⁸ *Report of the Independent Inquiry Commissioned by the CAUT into Alleged Discrimination against Dr. Kin-Yip Chun at the University of Toronto 2005*: 48-49, 56.

⁹ Ibid 62.

¹⁰ <http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/too-asian/> [accessed on November 23, 2014].