

## Preface

About five years ago, while teaching a class on Lorraine Hansberry's play, *A Raisin in the Sun*, something happened to me that had never happened before. As I read the impassioned speech delivered by Walter Lee Younger, the adult son and eventual leader of the family presented in the play, I found myself choking up to the point that I could not finish reading the speech. Now, the speech is very emotional and comes at an important time in the development of this character. He recounts his family's long history in America and declares his newly rediscovered pride in this history. Two colleagues subsequently told me that this had happened to them as well at different points in their lives. In my case, a play I had taught several times before without betraying my emotional fragility became emotionally packed because of how it resonated with my life at that moment. My parents and I had not spoken in the preceding two or three years, and we'd not seen each other in a period much longer than that. In fact, when I went to an academic conference in Ottawa, where my parents live and I grew up, in April 2006, we had dinner together, marking the first time we'd been together in more than ten years. Walter Lee's speech gives voice to a deep-seated frustration that I had long recognized in my father, a frustration focused on the countless opportunities the world had denied him, while apportioning them to others. This frustration has always been palpable in my father, a handsome and intelligent man who in some ways, to put it more simply than the issue actually deserves, has just been unlucky.

As I thought about my emotional display in that class that day, I realized just what is at stake for me as I do my job. As a university English professor, I am the beneficiary of a lot of good fortune. In addition to having an idea and the aptitude to follow it through to completion, one needs a fair bit of good luck to complete a doctoral degree. Being able to keep at bay the deaths in the family, divorces and other personal catastrophes that often befall people between the ages of about twenty-five and thirty, not to mention having enough money to ensure that you don't have to get a job that will take you away from your work for significant periods of time, all mean that one's intelligence is not the only factor in eventually finding the letters "PhD" after your name. With good luck comes the idea of privilege: who has it, who doesn't, and how such things get decided. Within the academy — the professional world of scholarship, teaching, and administration in which I spend my working life — there has been some acknowledgement

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that privilege has been concentrated in the hands of people from certain ethnocultural groups and has been denied those from others. It has even been acknowledged that the university might have a role to play in making this access to privilege a little more democratic, if those two terms are not completely at odds, which they may in fact be. Few, however, have come to any substantial agreement on how this reapportionment of privilege might take place.

My argument is that whether or not it's fair that privilege exists is beside the point. We know it does. What matters is that this privilege may be put to use in the betterment of Canadian society as a whole. Rethinking how privilege operates and how it looks within Canadian society could provide people from groups who remain under-represented within the academy with more role models whose mere existence would suggest that a job like university professor or an intellectual professional of some other kind (journalist, businessperson, government official, etc.) might not be outside of the realm of possibility. Such a development within the university has the potential to change radically how Canadian society looks and functions in the future. If young people who trace their ancestry back to the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia could see examples of wider prospects for their own futures, they might be more encouraged to pursue such possibilities. The model of authority, expertise, and influence, in other words, might be altered substantially by how the university conceives of and goes about its business.

When I refer to how the university looks, I mean just that — who the people are standing at the front of classrooms and from where these people trace their ancestries. In other words, when I use the expression “people of colour,” I mean people who look different from the overwhelming majority of people presently teaching in the university environment, especially within English, history, and philosophy departments. While many of the examples I use in this book are either personal or involve the experiences of other black people, I do not mean in any way to exclude people who trace their histories back to the cultures within Asia, for instance. In the Canadian context, “people of colour” has a different resonance than it does in the United States, where discussions of people of colour conventionally begin with African Americans. The phrase itself, like words in general, is insufficient, a generalization standing in for what is impossible to express exactly. “Asians” are not all the same in their histories, cultures, experiences, etc., any more than “Africans” or “Native Peoples” are, but we settle on such expressions for the sake of expediency, to get us where we need to go. I mean the expression in a sense that promises to broaden the palette of faces at the front of university classrooms as wide as possible and, as a result, broaden the impression of what authority, expertise, and influence look like to our students.

Next, a word about the title of this book. I am six feet, six inches tall,

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relatively healthy physically, black and male. To most North American university undergraduates I look like a basketball player. This observation is not meant as a slur against the students I teach or, for that matter, their parents. It is a simple statement of fact. A lot of the men my students see — on the television, on webpages, in magazines, even, occasionally, in person on their campuses — who fit the above description are on basketball teams. It must also be said that there was a time in my life when being identified as a basketball player was a source of pride to me. This identification was central to who I was in high school, certainly. But even then I realized a sense of conflict underlying this identification. After one of my elementary school classmates said to me that I should be a comedian because I was so funny, my mother told me, “That’s all she thinks you can do.” I’m sure my little classmate probably had not thought out the implications of her comment, but my mother’s observation stayed with me. Our images of our own possibilities are framed by what we encounter in our lives. Probably because of admonitions like this one from my mother, I slowly became aware of the potentially double-edged nature of such compliments. “You must be a basketball player” works the same way.

If I had a dollar for every time this has been said to me — by strangers in grocery stores, coffee shops, movie line-ups, museums, restaurants, cafes, airports, you get the idea — I might not need a job at all. Usually meant as a compliment, it also carries the underlying suggestion that this is what I *should* be doing. When I tell people I am a university English professor, they invariably register that they have been caught out in their assumptions and recognize what their assumptions might actually mean. These assumptions haven’t limited me. I just grew out of a basketball player and into a university English professor. But I cannot discount the effect of such “compliments” on other young men who superficially resemble me.

Both the expressions “*you* must be a basketball player” and “*you must* be a basketball player” have a double-edged character. In the former case, the emphasis tells me that *I* in particular must play this sport because of my combination of sex, race, and physical dimensions. Of course, this first instance is not directed exclusively at me, since this observation is applicable to *anyone* who looks as I do. The second version is imperative, in the way my mother observed when I was a child. I *must* be a basketball player, because that is all some people will see. This limiting effect is the concern, since it’s easy to imagine how many other young boys are told this each day. I cannot help wondering what else they might see themselves doing if they were told something else about themselves, even half as frequently.

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This book is not about affirmative action. Instead, I describe how the university environment looks at present and make a case for how this appearance must change. I suggest a new practical vocabulary for dealing with how best to integrate people of colour into the academy. By “vocabulary,” I mean less a set of terms and more a context of ideas that will enable people working within the university, and Canadians generally, to rethink some of the ways in which issues of race have been approached in policy and public discourse. It is difficult to break old habits, but being given new ways to see our habits can help us relearn what we thought we used to know.

Integration of people of colour into the university environment will have at least four substantial benefits.

1. It will enable a largely unrepresented section of the Canadian population to help create an updated and more socially relevant appearance for the university than is presently the case.
2. It will enable academics who hail from the traditional Canadian ethnocultural majority to rethink how the university looks, the implications of the university’s appearance, and the relationship between the university’s appearance and its function.
3. It will provide young Canadians from the growing ethnocultural diversity that makes up the country with professional images to aspire to, thus facilitating future integration.
4. It will provide young Canadians from the traditional ethnocultural majority with a more varied experience of what expertise looks like, enabling them in their own future professional lives to be more conscious and constructive in thinking about diversity in their workplaces than has been the case with their parents.

The last two points are crucial since the models of authority, expertise, and influence that emerge from the university environment right now cannot help but affect how young Canadians see their world. Giving this impressionable segment of the population practice in thinking about how diversity benefits themselves as well as their workplaces and practice in talking about these issues will make these discussions progressively easier for future generations. All of this is available through a constructive rethinking of the way the university looks at the front of its classrooms.

The book is punctuated by personal anecdotes. The events all happened to me, but I tend not to use other people’s names to avoid their, or my, embarrassment. The Introduction lays out general observations about how the academic environment looks now, what some of the impediments to changing its appearance are, and the advantages to making such changes nevertheless. Part One discusses the most thoroughgoing impediment to progressive

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change to the university, which I call “the myth of merit.” My argument is that the notion of merit has never been the uncomplicated gold standard for the evaluation of job candidates that is so often suggested whenever questions of integration arise. In Canadian society there currently exist, in fact, all manner of preferential hiring and admissions policies and practices in workplaces and elsewhere. We just don’t call these policies and practices “affirmative action” or “employment equity,” and (perhaps because of this) we seem to accept them without much controversy — and sometimes seem not to even identify them as preferential treatment. We only seem to have problems with preferential practices when they are accompanied by issues of race, as if to say that some are allowed to benefit from such practices while others are not.

In Part Two, “Beyond the Myth of Merit,” I argue that since “merit” is a myth that has restricted progressive policies, we should consider how the university might be changed for the better through an active attempt to integrate people of colour into the ranks of the professoriate. Since the managerial, intellectual, governmental, and business leadership of the country emerges principally from universities, the argument to alter the make-up of the university is not merely a high-flown principle, but a social and national necessity. I also assert that it is more difficult to be a graduate student of colour now than when I started my master’s degree in 1988. While this may seem counterintuitive, it makes sense within the present climate of affirmative action and employment equity policies. This section also addresses the effect of critical mass on university decision-making and how institutional literacy influences the way students see themselves within the university and, as a result, how they interact with it. The Conclusion reiterates the central point that underlies the book: if the university looks as it does to someone who has been treated quite well by it and who has spent more than half of his life in universities, then how forbidding must it look to many people of colour, who have much to offer the enterprise, but are implicitly told that their only way in is by accepting that their presence is freighted with the largesse of the majority, whom the institution is *really* for? The Conclusion also restates the importance of developing an environment in which the goal of integration is the responsibility of the university as a whole and not merely a theoretical idea outsourced to a peripheral office almost no faculty members actually know about.

My point here is ultimately to argue that the university — specifically the big three departments within the humanities — has been able to talk the talk without having to walk the walk with respect to integrating its own place of business and that this does the institution an ethical disservice. I hope this book will contribute constructively to the profession taking those first steps.

## Reflections of a Tenured Black Sheep, or How the University Looks to Me

### Judging Books by Their Covers

This introduction discusses how the academic enterprise looks to me, how it might be improved through a concerted effort to integrate people of colour into the profession, and some of the implications of such an effort. I pose initial questions and suggest tentative answers and an overall direction that flesh out in subsequent chapters. I have no interest in turning my discussion into a shrill screed on affirmative action or the historical wrongs done to my ancestors; nor is this a slash-and-burn exercise on the evils of the university, although some will interpret what I have to say in that negative light. I love what I do for a living and consider myself fortunate to have the job I have. But, in the same way that we are able to be the most critical of those we love, because we know them best, I am critical of the enterprise in which I make my living, a profession that brings with it the opportunity to make sense of my world. Similarly, I may appear to have an axe to grind against certain individuals, but that is also not the case. My examples are for the use of my argument, not to “get back” at anyone. Some people may recognize themselves but will be recognizable to very few others, although the behaviours that I cite will be familiar to many readers.

I hope to present a constructive argument for the improvement of the institutional environment in which I work. The notion of the screed becomes problematic because perceptions vary and perspective is difficult to achieve when questions of race are concerned. I said recently to a colleague that I am confident I have not mentioned race as a subject of consideration in a departmental setting more than five times in the twelve years I have worked in my department, but that I am certain it seems like much more than that to many of my colleagues. He agreed with my assessment. Again, perception and perspective are tricky things, especially in this sometime overwrought context.

Academics are considered to be fulfilling the conditions of their employment if they teach, conduct research, and serve their profession. What follows is intended as part of the latter of these three responsibilities, not merely in an administrative sense but in a more proactive way. As a black man born and raised in Canada and with a PhD in English Literature, I

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have had many opportunities to experience the best and the worst that this profession has to offer. My hope is that if we, as a profession, start to think about the issues I put forward here in a constructive and fearless manner, the profession as a whole will be greatly improved. What we need is a new vocabulary for thinking about and discussing these issues as they are played out every day within the university.

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*Recently, while traveling to an academic conference, I took my seat on a plane flying from Atlanta to Tallahassee. As I sat down, I noticed that I would be sharing the next hour and ten minutes sitting next to a skinhead. The man, obviously at least ten years younger than me, was dressed in old, tattered jeans, a tee shirt, and had the signature shaved head that announced his political allegiance loud and clear. The only things I couldn't see were his Doc Marten boots, which I assumed were hidden under his seat, or perhaps he did not wear them for the purpose of travel in an environment where not all could be expected to share his views. As we waited for our plane to take off, it became clear to me that the man was pretty uncomfortable sitting next to me, too. He kept fidgeting and reaching for his head with both hands, evincing real discomfort. My thinking was that we should both just ignore one another and make the best of what was obviously a bad situation, tolerating (always an interesting word) one another for what was to be thankfully a very short flight.*

*At one point, unexpectedly, the man spoke to me, asking if Atlanta and Tallahassee were in the same time zone. As I answered his question, I realized that he had an English accent. This fact only made my original apprehensions about him worse, since I now knew he was not a copycat skinhead but was, in fact, a genuine British skinhead. My thoughts turned to images of some sort of skinhead convention assembling in Tallahassee, perhaps even a protest against the conference on cosmopolitanism that I was attending. Maybe there would be trouble. I was traveling to a Southern U.S. city to which I'd not been before, and it crossed my mind that maybe this was the sort of thing that routinely happened in Tallahassee, as I entertained progressively worse scenarios. At some point, I started thinking that maybe I should try to befriend this skinhead while on the plane in case there was trouble some time after our arrival in the Deep South. My thinking was that, as in the story of Androcles and the lion, when the inevitable lynch mob had descended upon me, he might recognize and spare me before it was too late.*

*Once we arrived at Tallahassee Regional Airport, as the plane sat inevitably on the tarmac for a few minutes more than seemed necessary, I engaged the flight attendant and another passenger in light conversation. I had gotten up out of my seat so as to leave more space between my hostile seatmate and myself. The other passenger asked me what brought me to Tallahassee. I told him, "I'm here for a conference at Florida State University." At this point, the skinhead looked up at me from his seat and asked, "What's the conference about?" Somewhat surprised, I told him, "It's on cosmopolitanism." He replied, "Oh. I'm going to that conference as well."*

*As it turns out, the "skinhead" was a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Art and Design*

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*at Manchester Metropolitan University. Upon realizing that we were attending the same conference and staying at the same hotel, we shared a taxi and went out for a drink and dinner after checking in. We also spent a lot of time together at the conference, when not at sessions. We sampled a couple of bars in the city and ate dinner with a nice older couple, whom we met in a bar that at first looked to me like the sort of redneck bar I have made it my life's work to avoid — which, of course, it was not. During lunch on the second day of the conference, I felt compelled to tell my new friend what I originally thought he was. He laughed at the time, although I can't help but think he was at least a little offended by my presumption. And rightly so.*

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*Several years ago, while standing in line at a grocery store in Halifax, where I live and work, I became aware that I was being surveyed head-to-toe by a man standing in the next checkout line. As I tried to ignore his attention, he decided to guess at my height. "Seven feet," he said. He wasn't a very tall man, so to him this probably seemed like a reasonable guess. I smiled at him and said no, and made it clear that I did not want to continue the conversation. He persisted and asked me directly how tall I was. I asked him if his mother ever told him not to talk to strangers. When he said no, I told him mine had. (This was probably an unwise move on my part, in retrospect, but I do not always feel I have to engage people in conversation just because I am unusual to them.) At this point he became belligerent, "Oh. Well. Fuck you. Go back to where you came from." And with that he stormed away. Actually, "stormed" overstates things, because he was probably seventy years old. In addition, he had a thick Eastern European accent that suggested to me that I have probably lived a higher percentage of my life in Canada (all of it) than he has his. But in that moment, he felt he could symbolically send me "home." I felt tempted to pursue the man and tell him off but was instinctively aware of how this would look. A much larger and younger black man accosting a smaller, much older white man in a grocery store. There was no way that such a scene could end well, so I just accepted his insult silently and tried to forget it. My recounting the story now makes it clear that I have failed in at least the second of these ambitions.*

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These two anecdotes signal how I go about what follows. My long-term objective has mostly to do with a sense of balance that does not exist in my profession at the present time, where questions of race and integration are concerned. Instead, race is a subject that most of my colleagues would rather avoid, at least as it pertains to the conditions of the workplace. I tell the first story to make it clear that I am not above judging books by their covers. I hope you will remember that. Fortunately, in that instance, the object of my prejudice did not seem overly offended, although he was a little, quite understandably. The second story simply presents the sort of experience that

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cannot help but influence how I see the larger world and how my professional environment fits into it. The story also explains, without excusing, why I might have reacted to the man on the plane as I did, without knowing a thing about him. Both stories mean that I see the world as everyone else does, through eyes whose vision is, from time to time, partial (in both the sense of biased and of incomplete) and, as a result, flawed. Everyone remembers experiences that have contributed to their own partial vision of the world.

The two stories work together in at least one more way. The experience of the second one suggests that I should know better than to give in to the temptation of judging people superficially, as I do in the first story, because I have had every opportunity to think about and feel the sting of such judgements. And yet, I still do it. We all do. But being aware of this occasional, habitual, and thoughtless injustice that we commit against other people gives us a better chance at keeping this impulse at bay. One thing is for sure, ignoring this impulse will not alleviate it. However, we can learn to think so that it does not contribute to the implicit exclusion of people from the academic profession. I have had more opportunities than I can count to think consciously about how the university looks and the effects its appearance has had on me and on others who superficially look like me. The university exists in the world that produces both the above stories. To some the university not only exists in such a world but is just another place in which such thoughtless judgements occur. It's not an ivory tower but something quite a bit worse. Changing this appearance would be a constructive good from which other benefits could not help but follow.

## The Effects of On-the-Job Discrimination

In Halifax, a controversy was created, then averted, then recreated, when a man who argues against the benefits of diversity because he claims it is not what anyone wants was disallowed from speaking on the campus of Dalhousie University. I will not use his name, since he has already gained plenty of publicity from the event without my help. This same man was subsequently provided with radio air time to engage in a discussion on diversity with a professor who teaches at another university in the city.

In another episode in Halifax, Percy Paris, a Nova Scotia MLA, raised a controversy when he said publicly that he is discriminated against by other members of the Legislative Assembly. These are just two instances that occurred within a three-month period in a relatively small Canadian city. They point to a larger question about how much useful discussion actually takes place where issues of diversity are concerned, as opposed to how much discussion is merely taking up people's time, making them fatigue of the issues (much as charitable groups talk about "donor fatigue") and creating the illusion that the matter is well in hand, being constructively dealt with,

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or worse, that most of the large questions have been resolved. More and more frequently, issues of multiculturalism, diversity, affirmative action, employment equity — whatever we might choose to call them — appear to be addressed within the public forum in Canada. After a while, it seems that the news media are repeatedly returning to questions of the treatment of the only black MLA in Nova Scotia, or how diversity issues might be addressed on a university campus, or how race and crime intersect in the neighbourhoods of Jane and Finch in Toronto, or Little Burgundy in Montreal, or Uniacke Square in Halifax. People could not be blamed for thinking that this kind of attention indicates a healthy democracy hard at work. They might also be forgiven for concluding that these issues have been over discussed or even finally resolved. After all, look how much time we spend on them.

But that is not the answer that these and other media events should leave us with. Instead, they should prompt a simple question: what has actually been achieved? Not only would people be wrong to think that such stories in the press are being dealt with in useful ways, many public discussions of diversity and race actively point people in the wrong direction in terms of how these questions come up and are addressed, if they are addressed at all. Let's take the case of Percy Paris.

When this story first broke, in January 2007, the local television news stations reacted in a predictable way. They interviewed another black man who had once served in the Nova Scotia Legislature and asked him if he had ever experienced any racism while serving there. He said he had not. Then another man of colour, who is not of African descent, as Paris is, and who also sits in the legislature was asked if *he* had ever experienced racism. He, too, said no. The speaker of the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly launched an investigation into Paris's allegation and found, not surprisingly, that no one else within the Legislature saw things as Paris did. I say this is not a surprising result because there are very few who really wish to conclude that members of a legislative assembly might be susceptible to such unsavoury sentiments. Moreover, the whole story and the speaker's investigation seemed more concerned with proving Paris wrong than getting to the heart of his allegation. The story played out like a bad science experiment in which an experimenter sets up a methodology with the intent of finding a particular outcome and then, surprise, that is the outcome that is discovered.

All of this was finally punctuated by a panelist on an evening news program saying that Paris was simply "inexperienced" in the rough-and-tumble of the Legislature and was probably a little too sensitive to other members' behaviour. In other words, the way the story was handled finally resolved itself as was intended in the first place, by implying that it was Paris who was behaving improperly — by misreading the behaviour of his esteemed colleagues in the Legislature — and not the members themselves. The society

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is fine, the implication goes. This individual's perception is flawed. Of course the individual's perception is flawed. But that's not really news. All of us have imperfect perceptions. What *is* news is why the perception of this individual is flawed in the first place and why it is more important to "prove" the flawed nature of his perception than it is to address the behaviour of those members of the Legislature that led to Paris's making the statement he did. This need to prove the individual wrong is always more patent in circumstances where the status quo is under scrutiny. Moreover, when the behaviour of members of the ethnocultural majority is under scrutiny because of attitudes towards race, this imperative to prove the individual wrong takes on a character that starts to resemble panic.

Along with the point that Paris's perception is flawed — again, as everyone's is — comes the more basic observation that just because his perception is flawed does not mean that he is wrong in feeling discriminated against in the Nova Scotia Legislature. What did not get much attention was how difficult it probably was for Paris to make his public statement in the first place. If he feels discriminated against within the Legislature, how much more hostility does he stand to encounter there after taking his feelings public? I applaud Paris for bringing his allegations into the light of day, if only because he must have known ahead of time the cost he would incur in doing so. It is easy to presume that he could have predicted how the matter would be handled by the Legislature and by the media. The question that was never asked was: why was Percy Paris the only black MLA in the Nova Scotia Legislature in 2007? There were more black head coaches in the 2008 Super Bowl (two) than there were black MLAs in Nova Scotia, a province with a longstanding black population that goes back to the United Empire Loyalists.

The 2006 Statistics Canada census tells us that black people make up 2.1 percent of Nova Scotia's population. The percentage is 3.6 percent in Halifax. (Interestingly, both numbers are lower than was the case in the 2001 census.) These are not very large percentages, but percentages can be misleading. For example, in 2008 there were fifty-two members of the Nova Scotia Legislature. Paris, then, made up 1.9 percent of that body, almost the Nova Scotia average for the black population. For starters, my questions are these: Is that enough? What do the legislatures in other provinces look like when it comes to their integration of non-white populations into positions of authority? Is this acceptable? Is this as it should be? What might be gained from consciously altering the composition of these bodies? The Department of English at Dalhousie University has twenty-two full-time tenured or tenure-track members in 2008, of which I am the only person of colour. The same 2006 census says that Canada's visible minority population made up approximately 16.2 percent of Canada's 31,241,030 citizens. Since I make up 4.5 percent of my department's population, people of colour

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are under-represented. On the other hand, since people of African descent make up only 2.5 percent of the Canadian population, we might come to the purely statistical conclusion that there are already too many (all right, let's say "enough") black people in my department, and that there would be no need to hire another until there are approximately eighty full-time members in my department. As I said, percentages can be misleading and can lead to some useless findings, as I hope this brief statistical analysis makes clear.

My discussion in this book is not based in statistics for a number of simple reasons. First, I am neither a social scientist nor a statistician and would be pretending otherwise if I were to engage in a statistical discussion of the issues. Second, statistics have been used by some who work on issues to do with race to "prove" inherent inferiorities and superiorities, a pursuit that demonstrates how tendentious statistical analysis can be. And third, and most important to me, these questions have been statistically analyzed to death with little discernible improvement in the representation within the disciplines I am focusing my attention on here.

With all of this said, the question remains: Is Paris's presence in the Nova Scotia Legislature (or mine in my department, for that matter) "enough"? I can say with some certainty that I understand how Paris feels as he walks the halls of the Nova Scotia Legislature, and I take him at his word when he says he feels discriminated against. Having worked in a university for the last twelve years and been on university campuses for over half of my life, I have, on any number of occasions, been walked past by colleagues whom I recognize only to have them not see me. Of course, people are busy and it is not their job to acknowledge me every single time they encounter me. Furthermore, such minor slights are hardly the end of the world. But, as with Mr. Paris, it is easy for such incidents to take on an inflated importance in my mind when I look around the place in which I work and see almost no one who resembles me. Think back to my second anecdote. Moments of hostility do not occur in a vacuum. I don't know the old man's name and probably would not recognize him if I ran into him again. And yet, what happened that day in the line at the grocery store stays with me and affects how I see the world I live and work in. Under these conditions, what is more than likely just understandable distraction on the part of colleagues, looks to me like something considerably more malevolent. Not all the time, but sometimes. Frankly, it's the unpredictable nature of all of this that makes it so frustrating. The almost completely monochromatic environments in which people like Paris and I work mean that these places cannot help but be experienced from time to time as hostile, uninviting, and discriminatory, irrespective of individuals' intent.

It has to be acknowledged that at least part of the reason some of my colleagues don't see me some of the time is that, on a university campus, they

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do not expect to know anyone who looks like me. The vast majority of their colleagues, their classmates in graduate school, and their students now do not look like me, and so their expectations are justified based on experience and observation of their surroundings. These observations similarly justify people in this same environment assuming that I am on the Dalhousie University men's basketball team (an assumption that decreases as I age, thankfully) or, at least, that I must play basketball, as I did, although many years ago. But whether I played basketball or not is beside the point. These assumptions are also based on experience and observations, mostly of the immediate environment of the university campus and of North American popular culture. (Think back to my first anecdote.) This imperfect observation is something we all do. Central to this point about observation is that, like Mr. Paris, my work environment reminds me on a daily basis that I am often misperceived as a visitor to the campus, not as a contributing, full-time member of it, until I tell people who I am and what I am doing here. Irrespective of individual intent, then, the workplace can feel hostile to people who are in a minority position. This feeling of hostility is exacerbated by the experience of being the only person of colour in a workplace. These effects are rarely if ever acknowledged, or are raised only to be dismissed, as the reaction to Paris's statement about the Nova Scotia Legislature makes clear.

I told a graduate student several years ago that I do not leave my office, even for a minute, without my wallet because I am always conscious of the prospect that I may have to prove who I am to someone from campus security. After twelve years in the department I still try not to stray too far from being able to identify myself, just in case I have to. Again, when one is a rarity in his or her workplace, one feels vulnerable in ways that may (and sometimes may not) be justified. But the feelings themselves are real and the conditions that exist within the professoriate that enable these feelings of vulnerability to persist must be subject to more of our close and unflinching scrutiny than has been the case to date.

## Equity Policies versus Integration

While people are talking about whether or not diversity in neighbourhoods is or is not a good thing, and how immigrants are being treated in Canada, and most people I know (perhaps because I work in a university) appear to support ideas of diversity in principle, very few people are talking about the way the professional ranks of our ostensibly multicultural nation continue to look. This is what I mean by "integration" — the inclusion of people from the various ethnocultural groups that make up twenty-first-century Canada within the levels of power, authority, and decision-making. I use the word "integration" deliberately because of its resonant reference to the struggles of African Americans to be recognized as a vital part of their nation's history and