

THE RACE ISSUE P. 42





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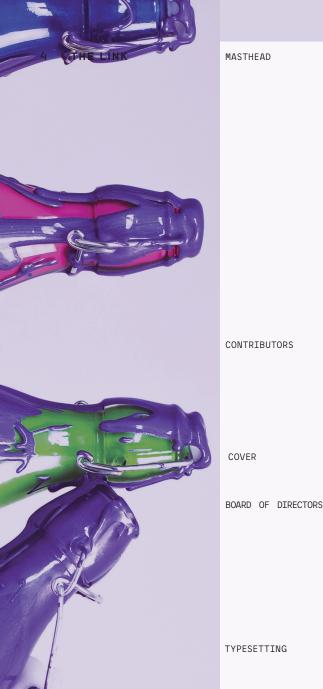
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### **EDITORIAL:**

### It's Not Always Obvious

Racism has always been a part of civilization. In the past, it took forms that were more violent, gruesome, and public—enslavement, torture, public executions. We claim to have evolved for the better, but the same issue persists. Only, it often manifests itself in more subtle and discrete forms.

Racism is usually not as trumpeted and celebrated as it used to be centuries ago. Although small extremist groups fester in cyberspace or exist in real life, they represent a minority of the population's ideology. However, it lurks in the consciousness of many as a hidden part of them.

While expecting racism to end is farfetched, the more we take action in understanding the unknown, communicating our differences, being aware of our implicit biases, and speaking out against discrimination when it occurs, the sooner a needed cultural shift will take shape.

Listen to stories of victims. Listen to their experiences and support them. Even if you've never experienced any form of discrimination, be aware of what is going on around you—aware of the targets and perpetrators.

One assumption, one altercation, one comment—these things all add up to a significant impact.

Ignoring the reality of someone else, simply because you're not noticing it, is counterproductive to fostering a rich and diverse society. Listen to others, be an ally, and raise awareness. Address racism—see where it comes from in order to solve it.

Institutions pass off responsibility over and over again; none

actually take charge to implement change. Obviously, change won't happen overnight—and it is easier said than done—but where is the initiative?

People "do their part"—writing reports, formulating long empty apologies.

We have all the pieces, but there is no concrete action.

If we look back into history, is this issue completely solvable? Can people really change? How do we pave the way for more cohesive and congruent communities? Although there are many layers to demystifying racism, it's important we prioritize a vital concept: understanding why it's not "Us vs. Them," but us vs. toxic tribalism. We need to look past our allegiances to our own social groups in order to rebuild a deeper understanding of ourselves and our surroundings.

With the rise of nationalist and hate groups, the impetus for racism seems difficult to counter, and our culture still tolerates this mentality.

We must be willing to accept change in order to foster strong relationships with others and bring life to a healthy environment.

Actions are dictated by assumptions. Listen, learn, and get to know a person before you judge and act based on preconceived notions of who they are. Everyone has prejudice. It's normal to have biases, but the important thing is to verify your assumptions before acting out.

# Parc-Extension Struggles to Keep Its Identity Amidst Major Changes

A Large Influx of Students Threatens the Neighbourhood, but What Can They Do to Help?

**ERIKA MORRIS @THINGJPG** 

## The

new Université de Montréal campus gleams in Parc-Extension, but in the same neighbourhood, Abdul Waheed's one-bedroom apartment has none of that shine.

The bedroom has a bunk bed and a twin. The space seems tight for his three children, some of whom are approaching their teenage years. The living room doubles as a bedroom for Waheed and his wife. There is no privacy.

In the kitchen, the floors are discoloured, the cupboards don't close, and some doors are shaky. One counter was recently replaced, and the gap between the two differently coloured countertops has yet to be filled in with silicone—something the landlord promised, but delayed.

In the bathroom, the plaster job from when water was raining down from the ceiling is still obvious. Since moving into the apartment in 2015, Waheed has dealt with infestations of cockroaches and mice—something many tenants in Parc-Extension are familiar with. The area has been notorious for infestations

of bed bugs as well.

Since 2016, Waheed has repeatedly complained about the poor maintenance. He and other tenants have had to use space heaters to avoid frozen pipes due to the lack of adequate heating.

Despite these problems, Waheed clings to the apartment because of its affordability. Open Waheed's phone log and you'll see hundreds of calls

and searches for other apartments in the area—most are unattainable to him because of the price range. Since he moved in four years ago, some apartments have had their rent hiked by at least \$300—such is the case of a building just a block away, he said. Waheed, a chemist with two master's degrees, came to Montreal in 2013 from Pakistan. Despite his level of education,





he was only able to find work at a call centre. He is now completing a diploma at Dawson College and hopes to be able to get a job in pharmaceuticals, before finding a better apartment for his family. "I want to leave this apartment for sure, because it's too small for my family and we have problems, but I would like to stay in Parc–Ex," said Waheed.

His family's life is now anchored in Parc-Extension. He doesn't drive, and depends on the abundance of public transit near him. His family doctors and children's schools are in the neighbourhood, as well as the institution where his wife is learning French. He also benefits from the large Muslim population in the neighbourhood that gives him access to Halal products.

But staying is becoming difficult to do.

### A Rising Housing Crisis

Many Parc-Extension residents have similar stories. Out of the approximately 30,000 residents in the neighbourhood, 61 per cent are born outside of Canada. Many of them are refugees, undocumented migrants, temporary workers, People of Colour, and immigrants. Further, almost 80 per cent of those in the neighbourhood are renters rather than homeowners, and 43 per cent of Parc-Extension households live below the poverty line.

Amy Darwish works with the Comité d'action de Parc-Extension, a tenants' organization that fights for decent and affordable housing in the neighbourhood. Recently, she's witnessed Parc-Extension fall victim to gentrification, one of the few neighbourhoods on the Island of Montreal that had avoided it thus far.

"Rent prices have exploded. We've seen landlords resort to any means necessary to evict long-term tenants," she said.

Waheed said his landlord has threatened tenants with eviction if they continue to complain about the state of their apartments.

Borough mayor of Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension, Giuliana Fumagalli, said the previous adminis-

tration promised residents 225 units of social housing. Today, only 54 units have been built.

"In Parc-Ex [...] let's say someone says, 'Oh, well our political platform says we can ask for federal land to be given for social housing.' That's all fine and dandy, except we don't have federal lands," said Fumagalli. "We're in a highly densely built part of town where empty lots are not rampant, where empty buildings don't exist."

Faiz Abhuani, of the housing initiative Brique par brique, said a problem in Parc-Extension is that people don't know their rights. As many residents don't speak French or English as a first or even second language, they don't know what resources are available to them.

"In Quebec, if you are low-income, an immigrant, your status isn't secure, and you don't speak French or English, you try not to rock the boat," he said. "You might not have the confidence, and even if you do have the confidence you're faced with a whole lot more antagonism

than if you were an educated, white, culturally Québecois person. There is a huge disadvantage there."

Waheed echoed this sentiment, saying many of the tenants in his building don't know how to write their grievances or to whom, and landlords take advantage of that. He believes his landlord is keeping the living conditions in the building subpar to push tenants out of the building, only to fix it after they leave and sell it at a higher price.

The CAPE has noticed a pattern of similar situations, along with many illegal evictions.

Darwish stressed that even when landlords go by the book, the impacts on people's lives are devastating. The Régie du logement has a history of favouring landlords over tenants, she added. People may have to wait over a year, or even several years, to get their cases heard for poor living conditions. A landlord who wants to evict a tenant, however, can get permits within a few weeks. From there, it becomes easy to evict tenants.

A large number of real-estate developers are taking advantage of lower prices to turn buildings into luxury condos and apartments, said Darwish. "This year, many families found themselves on the street as of July 1, and many were forced to move beyond the Island of Montreal."

Parc-Extension has historically been one of the poorer neighborhoods in the city, but strong networks of mutual support have equipped people to survive despite negligent landlords and exploitative bosses.

"We worry a lot of this could be lost as gentrification takes root in the neighbourhood and begins to price people out. Many tenants scatter to the far corners of the city and are separated from their support networks that way," said Darwish. "We're worried this could end up destroying the social fabric of the neighbourhood and community life as we know it."

She added that this is taking place as a result of the new UdeM campus. Many

"The neighbourhood is not dead—it is a vibrant and thriving neighbourhood. It's just that its grocery stores [and] businesses [...] are not meant to appeal to white middle-class people."

### - Amy Darwish

landlords want to be able to cash in on the influx of students, professionals, and wealthier residents into the neighbourhood.

"The impact of the MIL campus extends beyond our core mission," said university spokesperson Geneviève O'Meara. "The project is also the spark for the revitalization of an entire neighbourhood in the middle of the Island of Montreal. [...] Parc-Ex citizens will be able to take advantage of the new installations."

But Darwish said despite UdeM's attempts to brand its new campus as green, trendy, and innovative, the consequences on the neighbourhood may be devastating for the average resident.

"UdeM says they're going to help revitalize the neighbourhood, [...] but what about the one [we already have]?" asked Darwish. "They say that the campus is going to improve living conditions in the neighbourhood, but our experience with other neighbourhoods is the opposite."

She stressed that gentrification means more poverty, paying more of your income in rent, and that the services that used to be available no longer are because the income and needs of the neighbourhood have changed. "The neighbourhood is not dead—it is a vibrant and thriving neighbourhood," rebuked Darwish. "It's just that its gro-

cery stores [and] businesses [...] are not meant to appeal to white middle-class people. As more people are displaced, the support networks people used to survive also end up disintegrating," Darwish continued. "So, in the end, gentrification brings in more precarity for the low-income residents of Parc-Ex, she conintued.

### Parc-Extension Fights Back

The residents and social groups of Parc-Extension are determined to fight gentrification every step of the way. Abhuani said different groups have different strategies, but he believes the CAPE's is best: informing people of their rights.

The CAPE has been deeply involved in activism on the streets and making demands to the city and university, but Darwish said these demands have largely been ignored. "We've tried on a number of occasions [...] to demand they build student residences on their campus, that they reserve more land for housing for Parc-Extension residents, that if they're not able to do that, at least that they publicly acknowledge their impact on the neighbourhood and call on the city to develop more social housing," she said.

O'Meara said the university has been working with the City of Montreal since the beginning of the project and is committed to achieving 15 per cent affordable housing and 15 per cent social housing.

"There's absolutely no guarantee this will actually go to Parc-Extension residents. We believe it's absolutely necessary that the university acknowledges the negative impact they're having on the neighbourhood and that they begin to act accordingly," said Darwish, adding that the proportions are insufficient.

This summer, the CAPE and other activists protested developer Groupe Montoni's open house to denounce their gentrifying project and held a tenant-organized anti-eviction block party as a way of getting tenants together to share



Photos Erika Morris

their experiences and to strategize.

O'Meara said one of the projects aiming to allow the university to be closer to the Parc-Extension community is Clinique L'Extension, created in 2014. "Its mission is to support the development of children in difficulty and help their families by offering them educational services," in addition to accessible dental and optometry, she said.

The arrival of students isn't completely unwelcome. Waheed himself has been a student in several countries. "When you have a new campus, you are meeting other cultures. There are students from around the world," he said. "That is one advantage—they are bringing their cultures and will add to the beauty of Canada and Montreal."

Fumagalli said the population of the neighbourhood is already changing and seeing more students than ever before. Students' needs are different than those

of families. "[The arrival of students] changes things, because we've seen rent go from \$350 to \$1200," said Fumagalli. "If you split the rent, it's not as bad, but if you're a family, you can't split rent."

But there are ways students can help keep Parc-Extension's identity alive.

### What Can Be Done?

The Park-Ex Anti-Eviction Mapping Project is an initiative inspired by the events in Parc-Extension aiming to raise awareness on the effects of gentrification. They want to hold politicians, institutions, and businesses accountable.

The project combines digital mapping tools and quantitative data with multimedia storytelling through interviews with residents to highlight the effects of, and resistance to, gentrification in Montreal. They started handing out bilingual pamphlets around university

campuses, informing students of how they can minimize their contributions to gentrification and support vulnerable residents.

"In talking to the groups in Parc-Extension, what we saw was this need to raise awareness among students about what is gentrification, and also to call on students to hold the university accountable," said Kylie Goyette, a Concordia graduate and PhD student in human geography at the University of Toronto. Goyette has been working with the anti-eviction program and given guest lectures and workshops.

Aaron Vansintjan, a PhD student who studies gentrification, said the narrative needs to shift from placing blame on students. He said students will always be affected because they also, in general, need affordable places to live. He added that universities should change the world for the better, and a lot of



universities pride themselves on their involvement with the surrounding community. "If a university acts in a way that doesn't benefit the surrounding area for the local residents, that's a big problem and then a lot of the residents won't see the students very kindly, either."

Montreal benefits from a long history of tenant activism, said Goyette. This means there is a legal infrastructure in place already that doesn't exist in many other places. For example, Toronto doesn't have the same types of rent controls and tenant protections.

Students in Montreal have more tools at their disposal. The pamphlet suggests students should learn their rights, support local housing groups and tenants' associations, and pressure municipal politicians to implement concrete measures to fight gentrification and support social and affordable housing. Université de Montréal students can also use their student associations to pressure the university to put in better measures and acknowledge their impact on Parc-Extension.

On an individual level, students can use their knowledge

### Left: The new UQAM Campus is thought to be a factor by some in ParcExtension's gentrification.

### Photo Esteban Cuevas

to contest rent hikes, listen to the concerns of marginalized people and long-time residents, and demand municipal politicians take concrete action. They can also volunteer, translate, do research, or even just put up posters for tenants' rights groups. Students should get to know their neighbours and help those facing eviction by accompanying them to the Régie du logement, the pamphlet suggests, while stressing that guilt doesn't help anyone.

Another way an individual can help keep rents low is to transfer their lease when they move.

"Students don't stick around," said Abhuani, who suggested that outgoing tenants call CAPE or Brique par brique. These organizations can help connect people to existing leases. "If you give it back to the landlord, they'll increase the rent, but if you transfer it, it freezes the rent," he said.

Decisions leading to gentrification were made years ago. "In that sense, the ball is already rolling and the future of Parc-Ex already looks kind of bleak," said Vansintjan. "The evictions are really accelerating, and I think it's going to quickly affect cultural life and the community in Parc-Ex."

Goyette said Université de Montréal's role in accelerating gentrification "is so intense, and it's so clear that you can really see the role of the university as a developer and the impact that has on the neighbourhood." She added it should have a certain level of responsibility for the impact it's having.

"The accelerated gentrification that we are seeing in Parc-Extension, it's not a surprise to anyone. [...] It was clear to anyone in that neighbourhood that the impact of that campus going in was going to have an impact that was far greater than the gestures that the university made as if they were mitigating the problems," said Goyette.

The borough recently passed a bylaw to stop the conversion of duplexes and triplexes into condos, but Fumagalli said stopping evictions simply isn't in her power. "I live in Parc-Ex. My family came to Parc-Ex in the 50s and I moved back in over 20 years ago," she said. "So do I want my neighbourhood to keep that special cachet? Of course I do. I live here, this is why I moved here. Because of this community. Can we keep it exactly as is? Things change, people sell their houses, people move out. My objective is to make sure the most vulnerable are protected and that I put in mechanisms to make sure of that."

But Waheed isn't so sure people like him will get that protection. As Goyette said, gentrification leads to increased poverty, mental health issues like anxiety and trauma due to losing their community and support, and homelessness. In Parc-Extension, Waheed has the support of a large Pakistani community and social groups.

"If we go somewhere else, we have to start from zero," he said. L1

### Why Are Hate Crimes Underreported in Quebec?

The Significance of a Disparity Between Reports of Acts of Hate

### Nanor Froundjian

As Nafija Rahman walked out of a bakery on Monkland Ave. in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, an elderly woman accused her of having the blood of Canadian soldiers on her hands. Rahman answered that she and her ancestors had "the blood of Natives" on their hands. "Then she [almost] attacked me [...] physically. I was shaking in anger while no one said anything," she recalled.

Despite having experienced several similar incidents, Rahman is one of countless individuals who did not report them.

A report released by the Quebec Commission of Human Rights and Youth Rights (CDPDJ) revealed that 78 per cent of acts of hate in the province were not reported to any relevant authority, like the police.

The 86 victims interviewed for the study—from different backgrounds, countries of origin, communities, age, and gender—shared their stories. Combined, they experienced 275 acts of hate or discrimination. About half of them were from Montreal and the rest from different cities around Quebec. The qualitative report, titled "Les actes haineux à caractère xénophobe, notamment islamophobes: résultats d'une recherche menée à travers le Québec," was initiated in 2015 as a governmental action plan to combat radicalization.

The report's summary, titled "Xenophobic and Notably Islamophobic Acts

### **Graphics Caroline Tran**

of Hate," showed that hate crimes in Quebec had risen over the last decade. Between 2015 and 2016, there was an increase of 21 per cent in Quebec, and 2017 saw another rise of 49 per cent. In contrast, preliminary data for 2018 showed a 13 per cent decrease in hate crimes in Canada.

### Why are they not reported?

Among the many reasons brought out in the CDPDJ's report summary, what sums it all up is mistrust in the system. Victims are scared to approach the authorities or do not trust the system.

Most of all, those who do not have Canadian citizenship are afraid to go to institutions and file complaints, explained one of the researchers, Houda Asal. "It's really the mentality of an immigrant to say 'I don't want any troubles.' They really fear repercussions, and in some cases they're right," she said.

Another major obstacle: victims are unaware of their rights and the protective laws. Rahman too had the same reaction. She did not know where to go, or how to file a complaint. She doubted the validity of her case and felt like she was wasting resources. Why would they choose to believe her? She thought, "If women who are raped or beaten are not taken seriously, will they take this into consideration?"

According to Asal and the CDPDJ,

## Hate Acts vs. Hate Crime?

A hate crime—hatemotivated assault or threat, mischief against religious property, incitation of hatred and wilful promotion of hatred other than in a private conversation—harms or threatens a person's or a community's safety. A hate act—discriminatory speech, discriminatory act such as caricatures, graffiti, signage, contemptuous attitudes or rejection and distribution, publication or public exhibition of a notice, symbol or sign involving discrimination—is a violation of human rights. A hate crime is a criminal offense, and a hate act can be a hate crime.

the solution is to provide better training and education to the police, not only to better address acts of hate, but also to refer the victim to other appropriate resources.

The Service de police de la Ville de Québec's annual report for 2018 showed one third the number of hate crimes that were recorded by Statistics Canada, with the SPVQ count at 27 to StatsCan's 89. The SPVO released then new figures that were double the initial count, stating the number of reported hate crimes and incidents should have been 60 and not 27.

"The best prevention measure is to get tough on those who commit hate acts or hate crimes. You need sanctions, you need

tough punishment, you need zero tolerance of prosecution," said Fo Niemi, co-founder and executive director at the Center for Research-Action on Race Relations. CRARR is a non-profit organization that aims to fight racism and establish race equality.

The CDPDJ highlighted the problems and obstacles people may face when filing a complaint. Their goal is to provide tools and resources to inform society, "to educate people to know their rights, to educate police services to take care of this issue more seriously, and ask the

"Am I a Quebecer, am I a Canadian?' Because I was made to feel that I didn't belong here."

- Fatima Ahmad

government also to take into account [their] findings [and recommendations]," said Asal. "But it's not our mandate to commend on sanctions," she added.

It is the responsibility of each institution and organization to use the information provided by the CDPDJ to implement the changes they see fit, explained Asal.

Inaction, however, may discourage even more people from seeking help.

"Right now the system is broken," said Niemi.

In the summer of 2018. Niemi was working on a case for a Muslim family in Saint-Eustache who was constantly harassed, insulted, and threatened by their Québécois neighbours. They filed a complaint with the CDPDJ in June and asked them to help speed up the process because the children's safety was at risk. They received

an answer in spring 2019.

That's what makes people lose faith in the system, Niemi explained.

Those who constantly live in an environment where they have to be on guard face negative pyschological repercussions. "A hate act adds up to other experiences that are already negative and difficult," said Asal, explaining that the combination of incidents in public areas, in the workplace, and the portrayal in the media ultimately have a significant psychological effect on the victims.

Fear and anxiety, isolation, humilia-

tion, depression, fear for the future, and frustration were some of the impacts on victims listed in the CDPDJ's report summary. "You don't want to live in that kind of society where you feel not safe. When it's very bad times, you don't want to go outside," said Fatima Ahmad, a fourth year university student at McGill.

When Bill 62 briefly passed in 2017, preventing those who cover their faces from accessing public services including public transit, she found herself feeling isolated.

### How does this affect Montreal communities?

In Rahman's experience working with several organizations in Montreal and being a board member at Amal Center for Women—which aims to support women who are victims of violence—she noticed hate acts levels and tendencies vary according to the cultural landscape of each neighbourhood.

Amitié Soleil, a non-profit organization, is located in Little Burgundy, a very

multicultural neighbourhood, according to Rahman, and hate acts happen rarely, she said. Rarely, but not never.

When Rahman was driving in that area one day, a passerby said, "Go back to your country," she recalled.

"My mother was thrown eggs but she's not going to community centres to report that, because there's no place that you can report this kind of event," she said.

Resources that are available to victims of hate acts are not made clear or obvious, Asal pointed out. But how useful are they really when they are accessible?

Ahmad is another example of someone deeply affected by the issue. She repeatedly experienced discriminatory behaviour walking the streets of her own city once she began wearing the niqab—a decision she made that reflected her faith and spiritual journey.

Although she was born and raised in Montreal, Ahmad began asking herself, "'Am I a Quebecer, am I a Canadian?' Because I was made to feel that I didn't belong here."

Last May—right before Bill 21, which prevents public service workers from wearing religious symbols, was passed into law—a man hit her chest and tried to pull off her niqab. Despite having taken a picture and video of the man and sending it to the police, she said there were never any repercussions.

"It's really like a limbo," she said, "you don't know who will accept you, who won't, who will discriminate [against] you. It's like everyone has access to discriminate [against] you and you can't even contest that because it's their right or you don't have that right."

In response to that, Rahman believes the only way to take a step forward as a community is to become allies; to listen to others without preconceived judgment and try to understand and accept new perspectives outside of a society's normalized perception. "We don't need to be angry but we need to address it," said Rahman, who became tired of always having to prove herself.



### In Memoriam: Hayan Abu Fakher

On Oct. 15, in Dubai U.A.E., Hayan Abu Fakher, a former Concordia student passed away after a long battle with lymphoma. Hayan was a ray of light in the lives of those around him, always radiating positivity. He loved his family and those closest to him, a loyal and honest individual who always saw the good in others. His health was of great importance to him, spending many hours in Concordia's Le Gym, where he connected with others including his best friend, Reda. Hayan loved to talk; about politics, soccer, life, and philosophy, sharing conversations with those of all walks of life, old and young. Above all, he was humble. He never wanted to bring people down, as even those closest to him knew nothing of the battle he fought three times over. His life was celebrated in memorial ceremonies in Montreal, Oct. 20 and in Dubai, Oct. 25.

### Decolonizing Light: Three Concordia Researchers Set Out to Decolonize Contemporary Physics Research

New Frontiers in Research Fund Winners Seek to Involve Indigenous Knowledges in a Typically White, Male Dominated Field

Ireland Compton @irelandcompton

hysics has historically been a white, male dominated field—more so than any other science, technology, engineering, and mathematics field. This creates and reproduces inequalities, reflected in the underrepresentation of women, racial minorities, and Indigenous peoples.

This is why three researchers at Concordia are determined to create change in the way physics is seen and taught at the university. They have set out to decolonize physics research by engaging in intersectional dialogue and research initiatives, involving more Indigenous students, and increasing funding dedicated to Indigenous researchers and research projects.

In May, Tanja Tajmel, Louellyn White, and Ingo Salzmann were awarded the university's first New Frontiers in Research Fund, valued at over \$163,000. The grant is part of a federal initiative to support interdisciplinary and international research, and the money will be used by the three researchers to fund bursaries for Indigenous researchers and research initiatives to further their goal of Indigenizing physics.

The three researchers will focus their work on light specifically. According to their website, they decided to go with light because it's omnipresent across all languages, societies, and cultures. It's a key aspect in our lives, defining things like warmth and colour.

Speaking specifically within the context of physics, "light is both regarded as primary carrier of information on nature (e.g. in astronomy) and exploited as primary probe for the fundamental properties of nature (e.g. in spectroscopy). Despite the fact that everyone knows light and each culture has its own knowledge of it, only the physical knowledge of it is regarded as being scientific.

The three co-investigators are interested in finding out how

**Graphic Ireland Compton** 

colonial authorities deciding what is considered scientific continue to make those decisions in the context of light. Tajmel—who is fascinated by the northern lights—in particular questioned these colonial assumptions.

"We are teaching this content to our students without sufficient historical context and geopolitical awareness," said Tajmel, associate professor at the Centre for Engineering in Society in the Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science, in an interview with Concordia. "Who benefits from this knowledge? What do Indigenous people know about light? Why don't we know about it?"

Searching for these answers, she turned to her colleagues in the Faculty of Arts and Science. White is an associate professor in the First Peoples studies program and Salzmann an associate professor of physics.

White, who is Kanien'keha:ka and a member of the university's Indigenous Directions Leadership Group, said Indigenous ways of knowing have been suppressed and marginalized in academic history. But, there is momentum being gained in elevating Indigenous knowledge as equally valid as Western science.

"If we, as an institution, do not embody the territorial acknowledgement by recognizing and affirming the expertise of our Elders as Knowledge Keepers, the acknowledgement becomes nothing but empty platitudes," she said.

Often in Western thought, the concept of light has been accepted as a scientific concept through the work of the likes of Isaac Newton, Max Planck, and Albert Einstein. Rarely do we examine how light is viewed culturally, or how light could be viewed from a perspective that isn't strictly scientific.

According to Salzmann, it is important that physics and light become a part of critical discourses emerging in academia.

"The culture of physics certainly changes with diverse people involved," he said. "Therefore, decolonizing science involves challenging the underlying hierarchies.

"Through this project, physics students will engage in these discourses, and I hope that with this initiative we can support students from underrepresented groups, especially from Indigenous communities, to participate in science," he continued.

There is much to be gained through this project, White feels. The survival of Elders depended on the observation of weather and migration patterns as well as expertise in subsistence ways of living, she said. "Our Elders' wisdom and their contribution to knowledge creation at Concordia is just as important as that of the Western scientist, maybe more so, given the state of the world today."

The researchers recognize the importance of raising awareness of colonialism in science. According to White, decolonizing science is really about taking down systemic barriers and making space for open conversations and relationships.

"When non-Indigenous educators step out of a place of defensiveness or self-blame and investigate colonial history of academia while looking inward at their own participation, the door can be opened for understanding Indigenous worldviews," she said. "It cannot and should not be up to Indigenous educators alone to create a more inclusive learning environment at Concordia."

According to the website for this project, decolonizing light will take shape by studying colonial anchor points in the history of the field as well as the views of scientists on colonialism itself. In addition, they will investigate conversations around large scale light experiments while passing along what is learned to Indigenous students.

"We are training Indigenous and racialized students to do research in synchrotrons, and we are encouraging and training Indigenous and racialized students to follow research questions which are not defined by us but by themselves," the website reads.

The redistribution of funds to Indigenous students and researchers is an integral part of this initiative, per Tajmel. With 90 per cent of funding going directly to Indigenous people as bursaries and funding for research projects, as well as honoraria for Elders and Knowledge Keepers, this is an important step towards decolonizing academia. Tajmel recognizes, however, that this does not contribute to structural changes like the creation of positions for



Indigenous researchers. "This must be done at a different level. But we can train students to become qualified applicants for such positions," she said. "We envision a modern scientist or engineer who is able to critically reflect on his or her own scientific culture, who knows about different knowledges and about the role of science in reproducing social inequity."

The three founding members are currently looking for master's and PhD students who may be interested in contributing towards research projects like "cultural ideas about light in Indigenous knowledges and philosophies" and "physicists' views on colonialism in science."

## Glamour and Nostalgia in the 'Capitalist Doomsday'

Emotional Magazine: The Brainchild of Sensitive Meets Inventive

Noemi Stella Mazurek

just want to get *Emotional Magazine* in the hands of
Rihanna!" said Victoria Hall,
the publication's founder.

Emotional is described as a printed magazine "where the glamour is nostalgic and emotional intelligence is a word that strikes confidence in [its] readers." Photography, recipes, fashion, comedy, drawing, writing, and painting all come together in one glittering, flashy, 80s-inspired publication.

The project aims to challenge self-promotion culture by using a mesh of art forms to make satirical political commentary.

Each issue has an individual theme inspired by a single word hand-picked by Hall.

Monachopsis, a noun describing "the persistent feeling of being out of place," was the first issue's theme. Enouement, "the bitter-sweetness of coming to the future, seeing how great it is, and wishing you could tell your past self," was the theme of the second.

The thematic word, always obscure, intriguing, and loaded, ties together the artwork, colour palette, and writing in each issue, explained Hall.

The founder, who keeps a stash of

potential theme-worthy words in a small Moleskine notebook, selects the content of each issue based on how it relates to the theme.

Hall hopes *Emotional* can help people more effectively talk about and explore how they are feeling.

"Our emotions are more than just the umbrella terms that are really popular now like anxiety and depression," she explained. "We need to broaden our vocabulary to get to the root of [these] issues and take action."

Hall explained that the project was born out of a need to reconnect with her emotions. Throughout her life, Hall has kept creative. She described herself as "outside the groove, walking to [her] own tune."

Dabbling in writing, embroidery, and illustration, she has always felt a need to make art. When she realized the negative effects her job at a call centre were having on her mental health, she decided to quit.

A magazine seemed the perfect outlet for exploring the relationship with her emotions. Hall had always seen her mother as a sensitive person and realized this sensitivity had been passed down. *Emotional* was the perfect name for the project.

Hall had been noticing a personal desire to "escape and assimilate" into the universe of social media, a world that brought her little real satisfaction. She founded the magazine in part with the aim to take a step back from social media, she said.

Inspired by the copies of Country Home and Better Homes & Gardens that littered the coffee tables of her childhood, a tangible, printed magazine felt like the ideal tool with which to foster long-term engagement with her readers

The founder doesn't describe herself as a technophobe, but instead as an"anti-Instagram for artists."

"Being creative is a flow," she said, "and with [platforms like] Instagram, you always have to follow that algorithm."

Social media forces artists to always promote the best image of themselves, pointed out Hall, who is not an advocate of this exhausting, inauthentic lifestyle.

Hall wants artists to be artists, not robots. "I think technology is a great tool," she said, "but we have to be able to think logically beforehand to avoid encountering problems afterwards."



Rather than an army of individual users of Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook all vying for likes and attention, Hall aims to bring people together as a creative collective that values collaboration.

Hall does the photography and graphic design herself, labelling the process "all very DIY."

Influenced by her obsession with the 80s—especially their music videos—and inspired by styles such as Memphis and art deco, a distinct aesthetic was born out of her apartment photography sessions.

She uses her gut feeling to filter through writing and artwork contributions and selects those that fit with the theme.

"If it lit a fire in me, it was perfect," recalled Hall on putting together the

fırst issue.

Recipe contributor Begum Nathoo explained that there are different ways of being creative. An apothecary, Nathoo

### "If it lit a fire in me, it was perfect."

### — Victoria Hall

channels her artistic side primarily in the kitchen turned beauty lab.

"I like experimenting with different ingredients and seeing how they work together," she explained. "One [of the

first issue's recipes] we made by a fluke."

For Nathoo, concocting beauty products is an emotional journey taken through perfumes and scents. She aims to bring a more internal approach to the kitchen.

Through her formulas for body oils and detox baths featured in the magazine, she hopes to dispel toxic self-care culture

"By being involved in a creation process instead of buying into a system [of consumerism]," explained Nathoo, "you can make something [that's] for you."

Linda Chen, another contributor, is also fighting consumerist culture, or as she put it, the "capitalist doomsday."

Chen, a former interior designer and aspiring standup comic, described herself as an internet "troll." She aims to produce content that's relevant to culture and media in a satirical way, she said.

Her "Footstagram" piece in the second issue mocks Instagram influencers by recreating their posts, using bare feet as models posing in hot pink bikinis or testing colourful eyeshadow palettes. She calls it a "social media critique."

Hall hopes to eventually design events that encourage this creative collective to come together in "the world of *Emotional Magazine*." She would like to one day host interactive art conferences.

For the time being, however, she is focusing on a marketing strategy

for the print magazine. Hall plans to start up an *Emotional* blog in an effort to become more accessible and reach a broader audience. She's looking into profitable distribution channels. Originally, she was distributing to coffee shops. People were looking at the magazine, explained Hall, but not actually buying it and taking it home.

She is now reaching out to alternative bookstores and co-ops in an effort to find places interested in selling the magazine. The Concordia Community Solidarity Co-op Bookstore on Bishop St. currently carries *Emotional*.

Every day, Hall is learning. She spoke about figuring out how to use Illustrator, Photoshop, and InDesign as one of the biggest challenges she faced. Before she produced the first issue, she had never used the Adobe programs.

"I had a pop-up, and the day before I found out I couldn't get [the magazines] printed [properly] because of mistakes I made in the layouts," she recalled. She ended up going to the event with the



pages mismatched and out of order.

Thankfully, nobody noticed—or, at least, they kept it to themselves.

Weaving together a myriad of art forms, the magazine provides a muchneeded space for creatives of all sorts to come together and collaborate on one cohesive, tangible project.

There's no question Rihanna; popstar, actress, fashion designer, and businesswoman—known for embracing a gamut of musical genres and outlets of self-expression—would love *Emotional Magazine*.

Hall said she looks up to multifaceted artists like Rhianna because of how self-referential their work is. She is inspired by their unapologetic selfexpression.

People are interested in Rihanna because she is being true to herself, explained Hall.

She hopes the magazine can inspire people to embrace who they are by discussing their ideas and emotions. We need more listening and empathy in Victoria Hall is an entirely self taught magazine owner, designer, and distributor.

order for people to hold on more tightly to their ideals, she said.

Hall wants her work to spark conversation and discussion rather than one-sided debates with the sole purpose of getting a point across or pushing an ideology. She emphasized the importance of being open to teaching others without tying an agenda to it.

"The person you are talking to may not end up completely changing their philosophy, but maybe you sparked something in them," she explained.

Though the ultimate goal is to reach Rihanna, *Emotional* does so much more.

## The Perks and Presence of Public Art

How Does Quebec's Per Cent for Art Program Apply Within Concordia University?

Nanor Froundjian

How is the budget for the artwork calculated?

hen you're walking around downtown or in Old Montreal, you'll probably cross a few artworks on your way. They might be hiding, subtly hanging, or showing their true colours only under daylight. But they're there, adding a story and a touch of personality to cold, empty walls.

It all began in 1961, when the Quebec Ministry of Culture and Communications decided to implement a policy to have more public art in the city. The Program to Integrate Art Into Architecture and the Environment, also known as the per cent for art program, allocates approximately one per cent of the construction or expansion budget to fund public art for any institution subsidized by the government.

"It actually helps promote Quebec artists, because we are choosing people who are making art in this province, and it gives them a new form other than gallery work to reach a wider public," said Sandra Margolian, associate coordinator at the Office of Community Engagement at Concordia.

"It introduces students and the general public to artwork without having to enter an art gallery," she said.

Artwork adorns the arteries of this city. The policy also applies to many buildings or public areas including theaters, hospitals, conservatories, museums, courthouses, sports centres, and schools, like Concordia.

Concordia's curation of on-campus public artwork includes a myriad of creations—varying in dimension, medium, colour, and form—eight of which were produced under the framework of Quebec's one per cent program.

But not all public art pieces are created within the framework of that program. Some are donated or are commissioned works.

Twenty-five years after the implementation of the original policy, Concordia installed its first artwork in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Communications in the one per cent program's framework. François Houdé's *Four Horsemen*, as part of his *Ming Series*, was inaugurated at the Loyola campus in the late 1980s. The

The budget depends on the total cost of the construction project. When a project costs between \$150,000 and \$400,000, the artwork is acquired. When it costs more than \$400,000, it is integrated into the construction. For any project costing between \$150,000 and \$400,000, the minimum amount put towards artwork would be \$2,626. For any project costing \$5 million or more, the minimum amount reserved in the budget for artwork would be \$67,500.

glass sculpture blends seamlessly into the Vanier Library's stairwell.

The most recent addition will be the artwork for the new Applied Science Hub at Loyola. Though the construction has not yet been finalized and the artwork has not been announced officially, the occupancy date is currently projected for spring 2020, following the end of construction. The installation, hand-crafted by Marc-Antoine Côté, will be made of metal.

"He wants to use light and wants to take advantage of the fact that people will be able to take in his work from multiple angles as they are circulating around the hub," said Fiona Downey, senior advisor of public affairs and deputy spokesperson at Concordia.

Before diving into the imagination and artistry, the artist is made aware of the intended use of the building in order to produce a piece that fits within the physical space, regarding both aesthetics and logistical elements.

Dominique Dumont, facilities development manager, explained that there is a lot of planning that goes into it. She

Nicolas Baier, "Untitled"

1987 2004

1992

(Collectif)
"Effets publics"



Photo Nanor Froundjian

was involved in the early stages of the process. "The architect has the role to say if [the project] is feasible or not," she said.

In the case of the Applied Science Hub, the structure will mostly house research labs, providing state-of-the-art equipment and facilities to support scientific research where faculty and graduate students can work.

The proper integration of the artwork is crucial to a successful outcome. An external and internal team collaborate to make sure it all goes as anticipated.

"[The artwork] has to make sense for the entry of the building," said Kirsten Sutherland, facilities manager at Concordia. "[It is important to] coordinate the location so that is doesn't impede on the circulation and the plan of landscaping." Concordia's facilities management team—whose members are involved with the management of the project as they guide and advise—works closely with the externally hired architects who are in charge of the entire construction.

As part of the policy's framework, the Ministry of Culture and Communications created a database of Quebec artists. Depending on the budget of the construction project, the committee will determine the pool of province-wide artists they can pick from. The larger the budget, the wider the spread.

"For instance, the [Applied Science Hub had] a very large budget, it was a huge building so we had access to all of the artists in Quebec," said Margolian, who sat on the committee that elected the artist.

After committee meetings and pro-

posal submissions, one artist will ultimately be selected who will work closely with the architects to ensure the proper integration of the artwork within the public area.

"Clearly there is not these competitions every week, there's very few of them that happen [...] so it's not like curating in an art gallery where you're actively acquiring or exhibiting new things. It's very sporadic," said Margolian.

Emilie Mercier, communications consultant at the Ministry of Culture and Communications, called the policy unique and a key piece in the "democratization of art."

"Indeed, the support given to the creation of public artworks results in an enrichment of the living environment through the presence of these works in all public places, including universities."

"More than 4,000 works have been installed throughout Quebec, and \$168 million have been invested," she said.

However, in projects executed under a governmental framework, the artist's creativity can sometimes be compromised, according to Concordia fine arts alumna Cindy Hill.

"In some cases, with corporations and institutions, there's a certain set of constraints that surround it that can make work really frustrating and limiting," said Hill. That being said, when

Geneviève Cadieux, "Lierre sur Pierre"

Addad Hannah, "Leap"

2010

2009 2011

Pierre Blanchette, "Nacelle"

Kamila Wozniakowska, "Acer Concordiae"

Marie-France Brière, "Figures en lisière"

artists produce public artwork working in galleries, their opinion and input is prioritized because they are the only party concerned with the production. The control falls in the hands of one person: the artist.

"When you think about public art in [the context of galleries], there's a lot more freedom so people can do things that are more in line with what they're actually thinking about, more experimental and work without boundaries,"

she said.

"But overall I think it's a good thing," she added. "It forces buildings and corporations to invest in art."

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**TOPIC: SUSTAINABILITY** 

### **BAHAY** Breaks Boundaries

A 'Double-Edged Sword' Brings Representation to the Stage While Raising Relief Funds Back Home

Bree Rockbrand

ietnamese-Canadian
Chuong Trinh goes by
Waterboii as a stage
name. He's been making beats for the
past three years and rapping for the past
two. On his forearm, a tattoo that reads
"514 Pho" marks his distinct cultural
identity—Vietnamese roots, born and
raised in Montreal.

"We want to unite the whole community," he said.

"In the city of Montreal, there's a lot of Asians, but I feel as though they're not connected," said Trinh, co-founder of BAHAY, a non-profit event promotion organization. "It's not like Toronto, it's not like Vancouver—we're all just kind of isolated, and we kind of [had] an identity crisis growing up."

In March 2019, Trinh and Chelsea Capistrano collaborated on a benefit concert with two of McGill's Asian clubs that Capistrano had joined.

It was prompted by members of the McGill Association of North American Born Asians and held in collaboration with the McGill University Filipino Asian Students' Association.

All proceeds went towards relief efforts for Typhoon Mangkhut, a cyclone that struck the Philippines last September.

They set out to feature mainly Asian and other artists of colour. They named the concert BAHAY, which translates to "home" in Tagalog, an allusion to the event's mission to raise funds for destroyed homes in the Philippines.

Opened by rapper Bea di Vinci and featuring Trinh as Waterboii and head-lining rapper Lou Phelps, the night was a success; they raised over \$1,500 for ABS-CBN Foundation International, which is committed to improving the lives of disadvantaged Filipino families.

The night was electric. The reception was good, and everybody had fun, according to Trinh.

It did not take long for Trinh and Capistrano to realize that they had created something special. Why not stretch that night further, they thought, into a full-fledged organization?

"McGill is such a big school, and it's difficult to find a safe space sometimes because there's just so many people," said Capistrano. "BAHAY is similar in the sense that I wanted more representation for Asian artists, as well, in such a big city."

BAHAY "represents a home away from home for Asian talent in the diaspora," according to Trinh. They put on live art and music events featuring mainly Asian and other POC artists, with all funds going towards disaster relief in Asia.

"The idea is that people come to our events, and they have fun, and you don't even realize that the lineup is comprised mostly of Asian or POC artists," Capistrano explained.

"But they're still having fun regardless. And at the end of the day, the money that we're raising, we know it's "[BAHAY] represents a home away from home for Asian talent in the diaspora."

### -Chuong Trinh

going to help typhoons in the Philippines. So that, too, is really rewarding," she added.

Their first official event as an organization took place over the summer. Sponsored by MURAL Festival, the organization secured Toronto rapper Ching as a headliner.

They moved quickly onto their second event, which they held in collaboration with Bliss Collective, which supports up-and-coming local artists.

For Trinh, who is planning to release his first album as Waterboii by the end of the year, BAHAY gives a platform for artists from diverse backgrounds.

His own music is poetically driven, drawing on complex themes, often derived from his Asian-Canadian identity, chronicling his relationships with his parents, family, and mental illness.

"Mama" speaks about tiger parenting, which refers to demanding parents urging their children into strict academic routes, often at the expense of the children's mental health.

"Du Ma May," his most popular track



### Photo Bree Rockbrand

on YouTube to date, boasts a catchy hiphop beat. The title translates to "Fuck Your Mom" in Vietnamese.

Being an artist from a visible minority comes with its own set of challenges. Not only is Montreal's hip-hop and rap community fragmented, but so is the Asian community, Trinh explained.

Breaking into the scene is difficult. There are both personal and systemic obstacles to overcome, and stereotypes to break.

"I don't look like your average rapper," said Trinh. "And so, from that, a lot of people set up this expectation, like, 'Who does he think he is?'"

Trinh explained that a lot of his critics are other Asians who are deeply rooted in their own restraints, struggling with identity and stereotypes. "Because they don't see themselves like that, they didn't know that Asian people could do that," he said.

"I just want to be what I can't be, or what I'm told I can't be," Trinh added.

Facing these systemic challenges and being on stage provides a beacon of light for others.

"So much of the music scene in Montreal is dominated by white voices," said di Vinci. "[BAHAY is] about levelling the playing field, or at least attempting to. And then, giving back to marginalized communities."

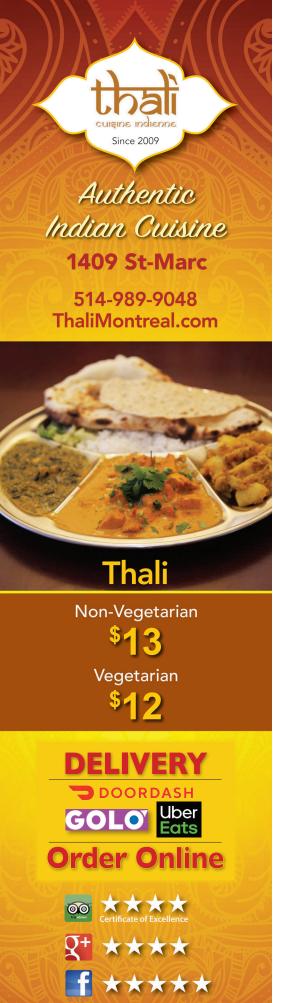
On stage at that critical first show, di Vinci was later asked to join the team once BAHAY became an official organization. Drawing upon her experience as an international development and social justice undergraduate student, di Vinci decides which fundraisers BAHAY will donate to, researching their accountability and transparency.

Being an artist herself, di Vinci said that sometimes playing an active role in the organization feels like self-promotion.

But, she added, her and Trinh are dipping their feet in both organizational and artistic components, which gives them an upper hand.

"We represent a little bit of the artistic side of it, where we can advocate for what an artist would typically want," di Vinci explained. This includes "making sure people are happy with how the sets are structured, with compensation, and choosing venues that are conducive to live performances."

The pressures of self-set stereo-



types are hard to break within a community that is so splintered, said Trinh. He mentioned that he receives a lot of hate from other Asians because of the lack of representation in the hip-hop community, and their own cultural conditioning. It can be hard for them to take Trinh seriously as a rapper.

These are tensions that both Trinh and fellow hip-hop producer and rapper Yenny Yuka express when it comes to performing and making music.

"I didn't know I had a reach in the Asian community until BAHAY," Yuka said. His main contact with other Asians did not leave an academic setting, where Yuka states the stereotypes of the studious and introverted Asian are played out.

"I don't hang out with my own people a lot," said Yuka. "I don't have an Asian squad, so I feel like I'm disconnected

from my own community. But with BAHAY, this came back in. This is me. This is my group."

Artistically, he calls himself a musician first and rapper second. He describes his sound as "jazzy and bluesy," and places more importance on the melody and flow rather than poetic meaning in lyrics, crediting his years studying music for his rich beats and clever riffs.

Yuka explained that the experience of being on stage, performing for fans he didn't know he had, made him feel reunited with the Asian community in Montreal.

"I've been in many collaborative projects, but none that really unites [its members like BAHAY]," he said.

"There's this deep connection between us. We have the same values, we were raised the same, we got the same mentality. But with other people, I don't feel that same connection. It's purely business, and I don't see a bigger goal, a bigger motivation," he contin-



ued. As a volunteer-based organization, BAHAY emphasizes mentorship. Each member fulfills a uniquely carved-out role that plays on their strengths.

Members are encouraged to share skills, cultivating proficiency among all areas, from music production to event coordination, all the while raising funds for disaster relief.

According to di Vinci, BAHAY is a double-edged sword. What they're doing is creative and engaging for the public.

Supporting charities for disaster relief is almost a hidden advantage. "Not everyone is necessarily coming for that," said di Vinci.

"But we're making it accessible in a way that they're still indirectly contributing to making a positive impact by coming to these events, and having fun and seeing all of these amazing artists," she added.

Graphic Artist of the Month:

Joey Bruce

Joey Bruce is a first year design student at Concordia. Working mostly in traditional mediums, drawing in ink and colouring with watercolours, sometimes painting with oils, Joey uses digital tools when necessary.

He is interested in portraying the intricacies of everyday life, from the crinkled candy wrapper on the ground to the inner workings of the human head.

Bruce's work is figurative rather than abstract, and based largely on line art. His art explores contemporary life through the themes of technology, urbanism, psychology, and science.

Bruce is inspired by comic book illustrators like Geof Darrow and Moebius, technical illustrations, and intricate mechanical machines.

He also enjoys painters like Lucian Freud and Franklin Carmichael.







## Breaking Barriers Breaking Barriers

For First Nations Hockey Players, Getting to the Next Level Means Leaving Home

## Barriers

**ELIAS GRIGORIADIS @ELIGRIGORIADIS** 

ff Montreal's Route 138, tucked into the corner of the Mohawk community of Kahnawake, there's a small arena. It's your standard once-homey-but-now-outdated rink. However, for kids on the territory, this is the only way to get access to local organized hockey.

Opened in 1987, the Kahnawake Sports Complex is the sole rink in the community. With that comes certain limitations and few opportunities for advancement in the world of hockey.

"In our association, we have limited funding and limited ice, so we can only help the kids get so far," said Lou Ann Stacey, director of bantam and midget levels of hockey in Kahnawake. "If they have the skill and the talent, we recommend that the parents find alternatives [outside Kahnawake]."

Bantam and midget levels—which occupy the ages of 13-14 and 15-17 respectively—are arguably the two most

important age groups with regards to a player's growth. Playing well and getting noticed at those levels could mean opportunities further down the road.

### **Leaving the Community**

Stacey—who has been involved with the community's hockey program for nearly 40 years—has worked with a number of funding options, including Hockey Canada. However, it still has not helped the hockey program get to the next level, which is consistent double letter hockey.

Double letters means not only higher quality hockey, but also the introduction of body checking and more advanced tactics. Another factor that puts additional stress on the program's growth is the economic situation that most families in Kahnawake are living in.

"We were able to get a skills camp done here with Hockey Canada and were able to get support for clinics from local "Talent was being wasted in Kahnawake, so I was like, 'I'll see if I can make it.' I loved playing, there but I knew I could've done more, and it just wasn't as competitive anymore."

### — Reece Glover-Kirby

businesses," said Stacey. "But at the end of the day, some families might be able to give their kids three four, five thousand dollars to play double letters. That's rarely the case from families in the community"

Hockey has become a year-round sport that demands offseason training from a young age. Those looking to either make a career out of it or play the best hockey they can have to commit to playing a winter sport for 12 months. Not only does that demand a massive time



commitment, but a financial one as well. The cost of playing hockey is increasing and shows no sign of stopping.

"As an association, we have a lot of people from the community involved. We have people help out the best they can," added Stacey. "We have had players find success in the double-letter system but there are many who have tried and many who have not [succeeded]."

One of the people that has found success is Brooke Stacey, who plays for the Buffalo Beauts in the National Women's Hockey League. After starting her hockey career in Kahnawake, her talent meant that she had to quickly look elsewhere to continue her career.

"I played in Kahnawake until I was eight years old. Maybe nine," said Brooke. "I played with boys and an age group higher and then I went to Châteauguay to play double letters over there."

It's not uncommon for talented players to make that jump to Châteauguay hockey. Given that both hockey programs are on Montreal's South Shore, it is the most accessible double letter hockey program for kids from Kahnawake.

While it does offer better opportunities and resources, players from the community are not immune to growing pains and often have an adjustment period before settling in.

"The biggest difference was the language at the beginning. Everyone there spoke French and so it was kind of funny at the beginning," said Brooke. "They would try and speak English, and I would do my best to learn French."

After competing in Châteauguay, Stacey found her way into prep school hockey at the Ontario Hockey Academy and followed that up by playing for the University of Maine. While the trajectory made sense for her, even leading to a spot on the U-18 national team, making the decision to leave the community is not always the easiest decision for Indigenous athletes.

"Sometimes people don't want to leave the reservation, and I get it. It's a massive sacrifice to leave your family and your community," said Brooke. "For me, it was never in doubt. This is what I wanted to do with my life and it's something I want to do, so these were necessary sacrifices. It also helped that I was only an hour away [from the OHA.]"

It's an unfortunate reality for a lot of the talented players in Kahnawake. They have to look elsewhere and-while the physical distance isn't necessarily a significant factor for most of them-some



Photos by Elias Grigoriadis

Left: Families enjoying access to the Kahnawake rink.



First Nations communities are not as close and have to make massive sacrifices.

"I've been to communities up north where I helped run hockey camps, and they have to travel like an hour for the nearest team to play against," said Brooke. "A lot of the time they end up playing amongst themselves."

### **Second Fiddle To Lacrosse**

With high-level hockey in Kahnawake not being a possibility with the current state of their resources, the main issue boils down to one thing: accessibility. Between the middle of April and the end of August, the ice is taken out of the arena to make way for lacrosse, Kahnawake's main sport.

It's no secret that lacrosse holds a special place in the hearts of most of North America's First Nations, the Iroquois men's national lacrosse team having won the silver medal at this year's Lacrosse World Championships in Langley, British Columbia.

The Kahnawake Sports Complex even hosted the President's Cup, the National Championship for Senior B indoor lacrosse, which drew massive crowds and brought Indigenous teams from all over Canada. At the tournament, the local Kahnawake Mohawks finished in third at home and picked up the bronze

medal.

"The community loves its lacrosse, and it's something we take a lot of pride in," said Lou Ann. "The President's Cup was a really big success, and it's still a massive part of the community."

All that attention to lacrosse over the summer means that hockey gets put on the backburner for a couple of months, which does not help the hockey program grow.

"Lacrosse is the main sport of Kahnawake and like a tradition around here," said Reece Glover-Kirby, a defenceman for the Midget AAA Chateauguay Grenadiers. "There are outdoor rinks and stuff if you want to keep on playing, but having a second rink is definitely the way everyone's going to get better."

### Where Do We Go From Here

Given that getting to a higher echelon of hockey now requires year-round training, this puts a massive dent into an already scarce practice schedule.

"You see all the other people, they get different resources like camps. We only get like two practices a week, so it's not always easy," said Glover-Kirby. "It's to be expected though, when all these age groups and all these levels have one sheet of ice to share."

Glover-Kirby played most of his life in Kahnawake and made the massive jump from local Bantam A hockey to Bantam AAA—a transition that is extremely rare, due to the fact that the contact at the AAA level takes a while to get used to.

"Talent was being wasted in Kahn-awake, so I was like 'I'll see if I can make it,'" said Glover-Kirby. "I loved playing there, but I knew I could've done more and it just wasn't as competitive anymore."

Glover-Kirby maintains that while his technical talent was well harnessed and developed in single-letter hockey, his understanding of the game and his acclimatization to the physicality of contact hockey was stalled.

However, this was to be expected. Much like Brooke, there was a language barrier that needed to be crossed first. The only difference is that Glover-Kirby didn't grow up in francophone hockey culture and instead had to learn on the fly and at the highest level in his age category.

"I was getting sat for most of the games and couldn't understand my coaches. I felt like a minority in [the dressing room]," said Glover-Kirby. "There was a lot to get used to, and it finally started getting better when I played my own game, but it was tough at the start."

While he ended up settling in and becoming one of the most relied upon players on the team, Glover-Kirby said that the lack of resources hurts the chances of other kids to achieve more success in the higher levels of hockey.

"If you look at Châteauguay, the difference is crazy," added Glover-Kirby. "They have three arenas and they have a bunch of resources that we just don't have, and it shows how good some of the players are and the development they get."

Glover-Kirby went on to elaborate on how there were plans to build a second sports complex in the community and finally get the chance to grow the Kahnawake hockey program further, but funding has always been an issue and it continues to be the case.

The second complex was going to be more financially sustainable and would also be able to produce energy for other services in the community. A far cry from the rink's current roughly \$10,000 hydro bill.

"There weren't too many places where we could get funding. You get a grant here, you get a grant there, but it's not enough to have the money outright to build it," said Lou Ann. "The usage of both spaces wouldn't be a problem at all, but the money to just get the project started wasn't there."

While small upgrades have been made on the infrastructure of the Kahnawake Sports Complex, it still remains very much an arena with technology from the 1980s.

"Lacrosse benefits from [a second sports complex] too. We're a community that loves their sports and being able to get better at both is something we all want to see," said Lou Ann. "Not only is this a good thing for the hockey program but the community as a whole."

The Kahnawake Sports Complex is a vital part of the community, serving as springboard for young player's dreams, but more importantly it serves as place for young people to gather socially and form a community.

Photo below courtesy Schuyler Meyer



## The Good Ol' Hockey Game?

### Despite Hockey Still Being Canada's Most Popular Sport, NHL Attendance Is Down

**DYLAN BUVAT** 

here is no question the city of Montreal bleeds bleublanc-rouge—local hockey culture is still alive and well as Montreal Canadiens fans stay glued to their TVs night after night.

Attendance rates to home games, as ESPN has shown, have stayed steady over the past decade, with the Bell Centre consistently selling over 98 per cent of its seats.

The 2018–2019 season saw the Montreal Canadiens having the second highest attendance rates in the entire National Hockey League, averaging over 21,000 fans a night. These seem like great numbers when compared to the New York Islanders, who averaged less than 13,000 fans on a nightly basis. However, have you ever noticed there are, in fact, vacant seats? Is the Bell Centre really a full house every night? These numbers may not always tell the whole story.

"Don't listen to what the Bell Centre announces, it's clear when you go to a Habs game, there's empty seats, it's not full anymore," said Moshe Lander, an economics professor at Concordia University. "Why? Because [young] people don't have a recollection of the glory days. We're going to start seeing fans

walk away."

Lander suggested that these statistics may falsely represent the amount of fans that really show up to Montreal home games; these seats, though paid for, are left vacant. The Bell Centre does not take that into account.

Lander also points out how the Montreal Canadiens, like some of the other big Canadien hockey franchises, have seen their growth, both in terms of finances and results, diminish over the years. The Toronto Maple Leafs, for instance, saw their Stanley Cup hopes shattered by the Boston Bruins last season, as the team succumbed to a third consecutive first round exit.

The Toronto Raptors, on their end, found great success in the postseason: they shocked the sports world with an NBA championship win, a first in the franchise's history. Game six, the game in which the Raptors sealed the deal against the powerhouse Golden State Warriors, broke Canadian TV viewership records with over 7.7 million viewers.

As Lander suggested, casual sports fans are now flocking to a Raptors team that is finding tremendous success, with less interest in rooting for the Toronto Maple Leafs, a team that has not won a Stanley Cup since 1967.

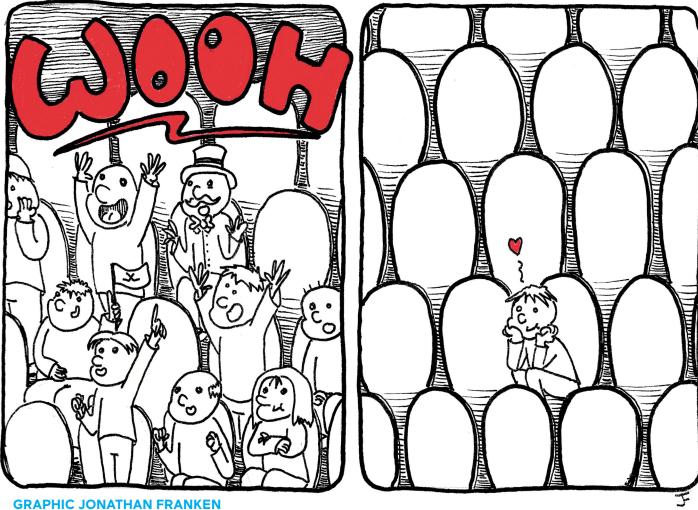
This new generation of hockey fans do not know what a winning team feels like.

"No Stanley Cup parade down Ste. Catherine St. for over a quarter of a century, no parade in downtown Toronto for over half a century," continued Lander.

This lack of success, as Lander explains, is hurting the Canadiens fanbase, as casual sports fans are turning away from their local team. Bandwagon or not, many fans are opting to support teams that are winning, plain and simple.

When ticket prices for home games can go up to almost \$300, it's difficult for casual supporters to fathom spending that much to see a team that has made the playoffs just once in the past four years.

The NHL generated around \$4.86 billion U.S. in revenue in the 2018 season, and are projected to see significant growth moving towards 2020. Almost the entirety of this revenue stems from the North American market, including its various TV deals and revenue sharing structure. The question remains, though, why hasn't the NHL worked



harder on building a market overseas?

What has the NHL done to brand itself on an international level? The league did send the Philadelphia Flyers to play Lausanne HC, a professional club based in Switzerland, in September-in an attempt to gain international attention among a smattering of other events like this over the years. Lander agreed that the NHL just does not have enough international viewership.

Lander went on to compare the NHL to the NBA, which has done a much better job branding itself on an international level; the NBA is seeing annual revenue from both Chinese TV deals and has been testing the international markets for branding and sponsorship opportunities.

There's nothing like that, everytime we score, the crowd goes crazy, it's a sea of red. It's a pretty amazing feeling."

Jesperi Kotkaniemi

The NHL has to compete overseas with leagues like the Kontinental Hockey League in Russia, the Swedish Elite League in Sweden, and the SM-liiga in Finland dominating the European markets.

"I think it's getting bigger. For many kids [in Finland], their heroes are Finnish league players, more than NHL guys, but the NHL is getting bigger," said Finnish Montreal Canadiens forward Jesperi Kotkaniemi. "But with social media now, everyone can follow."

Social media, as the third overall pick in the 2018 draft suggests, has made it easier for fans who otherwise would not have access to games or highlights to be involved with the NHL. According to league, more than 31 per cent of active NHL players are born outside of North America; fans that have grown attached to their local star players may continue to follow them even once they pursue their professional career in the NHL.

Kotkaniemi, who grew up playing hockey in the small town of Pori, Finland before being drafted by the Montreal Canadiens, has done just that. A young European talent who broke into the North American market. His presence on a popular team like the Canadiens helps build hype for the NHL on international level. Kotkaniemi just could not say enough good things about his time in Montreal.

"There's nothing like that," said Kotkaniemi. "Everytime we score, the crowd goes crazy, it's a sea of red. It's a pretty amazing feeling."

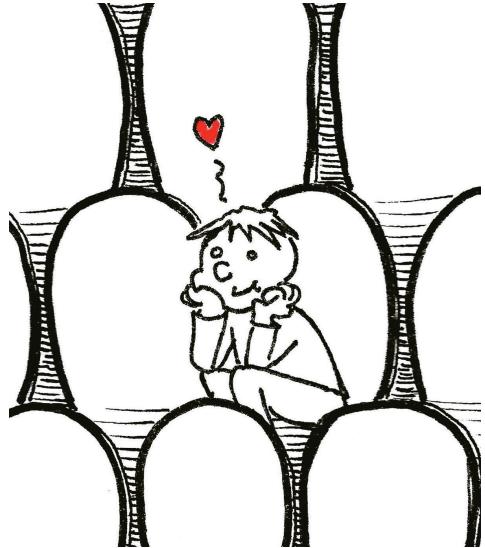
Patrick Marczak, a physical education student from McGill University, has been a Habs fan his entire life, and never really noticed if the Bell Centre was selling out every night.

"I probably go to see maybe two or three Habs games every year, but I haven't really noticed that many empty seats when I go," said Marczak. "If Montreal is playing Minnesota or like Florida, yeah there's some empty seats. But games against Boston or Toronto, it's always packed."

Rivalry is, after all, what people come to see, and it's what creates thrill and excitement amongst the fan base. It is always a captivating game when the Canadiens are matched up against the division rival Boston Bruins or Toronto Maple Leafs.

The rich history between these teams is what makes these games a must watch, for young and old fans alike.

However, as Marczak pointed out,



games against teams with a smaller fanbase, or who have not had much success in recent seasons, just don't attract much public attention. The young fan also brought up how most casual fans will opt to watch other teams and even other sports if their team misses the postseason.

"Honestly, because the Montreal Canadiens didn't make the playoffs, I didn't really follow the NHL playoffs too much," said Marczak. "There was so much hype around the Raptors in Canada that I caught myself more excited to watch basketball than hockey."

Hockey is Canada's official winter

sport, after all, and the city of Montreal is still very passionate about its historic NHL franchise.

However, younger fans do not know what it is like to win and bring home the Stanley Cup.

No Canadian team has won Lord Stanley's cup since the Montreal Canadiens lifted it in 1993, which has no doubt hurt growth of a Canadian fanbase. Yes, the NHL dominates the North American hockey market, but its inability to generate interest on an international level has made its growth less than it could have been over the last couple of years.

## From the Streets to U **Sports: A Childhood Dream** for the Philbert Sisters

Alice and Léonie Philbert Will Unite Once Again to Bring Their Team to the Promised Land

**LOUIS PRINGLE @LOUISPRINGLE96** 

rowing up in the suburbs, the Philbert sisters benefited from the wide streets of Saint-Bruno-de-

Montarville for their ball hockey games.

Over the years, veteran Stingers goaltender Alice grew fond of her role as the designated netminder between the two.

Stingers rookie Léonie gladly took on the role of the goalscorer against her big sister.

Rivals on the streets, the sisters were able to ply their trade early as facing off against each other meant facing some quality opposition.

Fortunately for them, their sibling rivalry was limited to the streets.

The sisters were lucky enough to play on the same team twice in their careers. Léonie's arrival with the Concordia Stingers marks the third time the sisters will get to play alongside each other, much to the pleasure of the goalie.

"She's a forward and I really wouldn't want my little sister to score on me." said Alice.

"I'm really glad she's on our team."

After serving as captain for the Dawson College Blues women's hockey team and being named their MVP last season, Léonie will join one of the most

competitive teams in U Sports. Her former coach with the Blues, Jean-Francois Leblond, had nothing but praise for his former player.

"Top nine, top six, top three. She'll fit anywhere," he said.

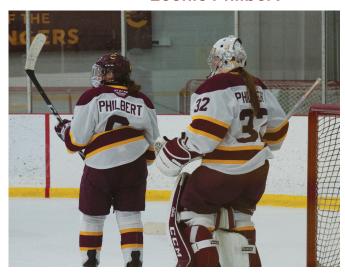
"I've coached at various levels of hockey, including the elite junior teams, and I can honestly say she is hands down the best player I have ever coached. Ingame strategies and their intricacies were easy to understand for her."

Léonie's on-ice intelligence is unsurprising considering her academic

record. Last year, she received a Réseau du sport étudiant Quebec Academic Merit Award for her accomplishments in class. Scholastics were at the forefront of Léonie's decision to attend Concordia. The youngest Philbert's hockey IQ was a big selling point for Stingers' head coach

"The important thing is to remain united together. It helps lessen the harder times. [...] You have to be grateful for what you have and not what you lost. This is how you make it through challenges like that."

Léonie Philbert



Julie Chu during the recruiting process. The rookie opted for an applied mathematics degree following the completion of her studies in pure and applied science at Dawson. But as Alice recalls, her little sister's decision was already made up even before her first visit to the school.

Hockey has always been an important tradition for the Philbert family. Their older sister, both their parents, and their grandfather all played hockey as well.

Supporting each other and working relentlessly are values that were instilled from early on in the Philbert household. Their will to support each other was seriously put to the test for a while.

At age nine, Léonie was diagnosed with a tumour in her left eye. While conducting a blind test experiment in class, Léonie noticed her vision disappearing completely when covering her right eye. Following a brief medical examination, it was determined that an operation was needed to remove part of the tumour. Removing the rest of the tumour eventually required radiotherapy and chemotherapy.

"We didn't understand it as well when we were young," said Alice. "Our parents told us that we had to take on this challenge as a team. We each had our role and we had to make sure that we kept the good vibrations within our circle to make it easier for [Léonie]."

Staying true to herself, Léonie didn't let the fight bring her down and she made sure to keep an active lifestyle during the treatments. She recalls playing soccer with her mom while sitting down in a chair in her hospital room 10



days after her operation.

"I remember having treatments early in the morning only to end up playing tennis in the afternoon with my brother and sisters," she said. "And that was pretty much every single day."

A challenge of this magnitude can often be too jarring for some and could leave a deep scar on a family. But as they always do, the Philberts stood by each other during this long and painful process only to come out of it stronger and more unified than ever.

"The important thing is to remain united together," said Léonie. "It helps lessen the harder times. We were very committed to keeping up the spirits and positive energy. You have to let go of negativity and focus on what you have. You have to be grateful for what you have and not what you lost. This is how you make it through challenges like that."

Fully recovered from her treatments long ago, Léonie is focused on this new adventure with the Stingers.

Integrating into the team was natural for the rookie as she got to reconnect with familiar faces. Aside from her big sister, Stinger veterans Megan Woodworth and Audrey Belzile were both Léonie's teammates at the CEGEP and midget levels respectively.

"I kind of had an idea of how they worked already," said Léonie. "I knew most of the girls already from playing against and with them in the summer. I was pretty much in the family already when I got there."

The sisters will get the chance to deepen their bond over the next season while sharing their apartment not too far from the Loyola campus. The gruelling student-athlete schedule forced the move from the suburbs. But, they return to the South Shore every weekend the team plays at home.

"We're a tight-knit family," said Alice.

"Our family has been through a lot and our bond is important to us. I couldn't see myself doing like [Dutch Stingers player] Bieke [van Nes] and moving halfway across the world."

"And it's pretty useful when you're sick or you need food," said Léonie. "Staying close to home played an important part in our decision to come to Concordia."

The Philberts will look to share that special bond with the rest of the team as the season goes on. Chu believes that their mutual support will be beneficial to the whole squad.

"It's really a fun and awesome dynamic" said Chu. "Beyond their connection, the team as a whole is raising them and they are raising the team as part of the group."

Chu played an important role in recruiting Léonie. Having her big sister on the roster already served as a big plus for bringing her in. The determination and relentlessness the family built through Léonie's treatments became a signature for the Philberts. Chu and assistant head coach Mike McGrath noticed the same strength of character in Léonie.

"The two of them never take a moment off," said Chu. "They put their heads down, they work, they want to learn. That's why they're great at the university and why they'll keep having an impact on our team. They fit perfectly in our culture here and I'm sure they'll achieve some level of success together."

The Philberts are looking to make an impact over their time with the Stingers. They want to make the most out of the next three seasons. The sisters aren't shy about their desire to win over the next few years.

"I saw Alice win the RSEQ championship and go to Nationals," said Léonie. "I lived it from the stands, but I'd like to get the chance to experience it for myself.

We want to win it as a family."



The Philbert sisters learned to play hockey together as children. Photos Caroline Marsh



### Peoples' History: Step Aside Fab Five, and Make Way for the Famous Five



How Emily Murphy and Her Colleagues Paved the Way for Women in the Senate

Ireland Compton @IrelandCompton

icture it: Edmonton, 1916, and you're Emily Murphy, a Canadian feminist and activist. A woman is being tried after being accused of prostitution, and you'd like to sit in on the proceedings. You, alongside the other women in attendance, are ejected on the grounds that this testimony is "not fit for mixed

Thus begins Murphy's fight—one that would end in drastic changes to the way Canada's constitution is applied in the Supreme Court.

company."

Upon her ejection from the trial concerning the woman accused of prostitution, Murphy protested to the attorney general. With her success in fighting for the Dower Act, which protects a spouse whose name is not on the title to their property, Murphy was already a well-known figure in the political sphere.

"If the evidence is not fit to be heard in mixed company, then the government must set up a special court presided over by women, to try other women," she wrote.

To her surprise, the minister agreed with her and appointed her as magistrate—making her the first female magistrate in Canada and in the British Empire. This only to have her authority

as a judge challenged by a lawyer on her very first day, on the basis that, under Section 24 of the British North America Act, women were not considered "qualified persons."

The act used the word "persons" when referring to more than one person and "he" when referring to one person. This enabled the argument that only a man could be a person, preventing women from participating fully in politics.

Murphy was a published author, a pioneer in the war on drugs, and an activist who fought for spousal rights—but under the BNA Act, she was not a person.

Fast forward to 1917. In response to a gender-based challenge to a ruling by Judge Alice Jamieson of Calgary, women were ruled to be "persons" by the Supreme Court of Alberta.

Hallelujah!

With this in mind, Murphy tested the issue in the rest of Canada by letting her name go to Prime Minister Robert Borden as a candidate for senator.

As expected, she was rejected on the grounds that women still did not qualify as "persons" under the BNA Act, even if they were in Alberta.

By May 1918, the majority of Canadian women over the age of 21 had become eligible to vote in federal elections. The following year, they could stand for office





Does the word "Per sons" in section 24 of the British North America Act, 1867, include femal e per sons?



Emil y mur phy was a publ ished author, a pioneer in the war on drugs, and an activist who fought for spousal rights but under the bna act she was not a per son





of at least five.

Enter the Famous Five.

Court of Canada.

in the House of Commons, and, in 1921, Agnes MacPhail became the first woman elected to the House of Commons.

However, because of the way the Canadian government interpreted Section 24 of the BNA Act, women were still prevented from sitting in the Senate.

The interpretation was based on a British common law ruling of 1876 that stated "women were eligible for pain and penalties, but not rights and privileges."

In the meantime, the campaign to get a woman into Senate was gaining traction nationwide. Nearly 500,000 Canadians signed a petition in support of her cause, asking that Murphy be appointed to Senate.

Borden and William Lyon Mackenzie King, a subsequent prime minister, both

stated that they would like to appoint Murphy but because of this ruling simply could not. Regardless of whether this was truly how they felt, as far as the federal government was concerned there seemed to be no hope for Murphy's Senate dreams.

Despite her popularity and numerous achievements, it was clear that until the interpretation of the British North America Act could be changed, there would be no place for her—or any woman—in the Senate.

Never one to sit around and wait for things to change, Murphy set out to change it herself.

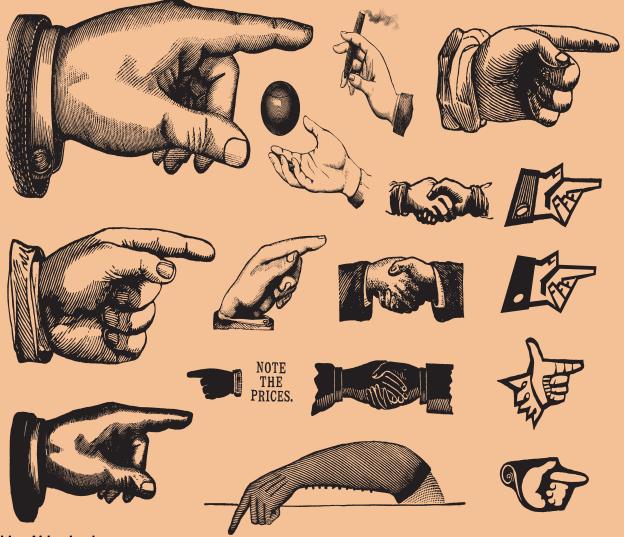
Alongside her brother, a lawyer, she laid out a plan to ask the Supreme Court for constitutional clarification. To submit this question, it had to be signed by a group

Murphy and four other women—Henrietta Muir Edwards, Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney, and Irene Parlby—met for tea at Murphy's home on Aug. 27, 1927, where they signed the petition to the Supreme

The petition posed two questions relating to the status of women:

"Is power vested in the Governor-General in Council of Canada, or the Parliament of Canada, or either of them, to appoint a female to the Senate of Canada?"

"Is it constitutionally possible for the Parliament of Canada under the provisions of the British North America Act, or otherwise, to make provision for the appointment of a female to the Senate of





Canada?" The Department of Justice ignored these questions, suggesting to then Prime Minister King that they submit the following instead: "Does the word 'persons' in Section 24, of the British North America Act, 1867, include female persons?"

The question was presented to the Supreme Court on March 14, 1928, Murphy's sixtieth birthday. The debate lasted the day, and, on April 24, 1928, the Court presented its decision.

The formal judgment of the court was as follows: "Understood to mean 'Are women eligible for appointment to the Senate of Canada,' the question is answered in the negative."

Unsatisfied with this quick dismissal of their cause, the five women decided to push further by bringing their appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London, widely considered the true supreme court of Canada under the British Empire.

Their appeal was made with the approval of Prime Minister King, and with his financial support as well. King's government covered their legal fees, amounting to \$23,368.47, \$21,000 of which was for the appeal itself.

After months of anxiously awaiting the Privy Council's decision, on Oct. 18, 1929, the Famous Five received the answer they'd fought long and hard for.

"Their Lordships have come to the conclusion that the word 'persons' in Section 24 includes members both of the male and female sex and that, therefore, the question propounded by the Governor–General must be answered in the affirmative and that women are eligible to be summoned to and become members of the Senate of Canada, and they will humbly advise His Majesty accordingly."

Lord Chancellor of Great Britain John Sankey announced the decision, stating, "The exclusion of women from all public offices is a relic of days more barbarous than ours. And to those who would ask why the word 'person' should include females, the obvious answer is, why should it not?"

Despite all of her and her colleagues' hard work, Murphy herself was never formally appointed to Senate, nor were any of the other four women.

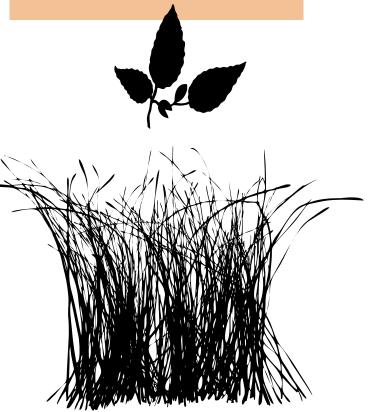
With Murphy's blessing, the first woman to be appointed to Senate was Cairine Wilson of Montreal on Feb. 15, 1930.

Later, Wilson would go on to become Canada's first woman delegate to the United Nations. In 1950, in recognition of her work with child refugees, she received the Cross of the Knight from France's Legion of Honour. In 1955, she was the first woman to become Deputy Speaker of the Senate.

The Famous Five became senators in their own right with honorary appointments in October 2009. The motion was brought forth by Senator Ethel Cochrane and seconded by Senator Consiglio Di Nino. It passed unanimously, cementing the Famous Five in history yet again, this time as the first people ever to be named honorary senators.

In the debate, the Honorable Claudette Tardif, deputy leader of the opposition, addressed the duress faced by Murphy and her colleagues, stating that she was impressed by their nearly 10-year fight.

"Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung, Irene Parlby, Louise McKinney, and Henrietta Muir Edwards, this is your rightful place."



### Having a Healthy Sex Life When You Don't Feel Healthy

### I'm Bringing Sexy Back, Rolls and All

#### April Tardif Levesque @AprilTardif

ur bodies change a lot through the various phases of our lives, especially after starting university, but this doesn't mean our sexualities need to change with them.

How then can one have a healthy sex life when one doesn't even feel physically healthy, let alone sexy?

Everyone has different challenges when it comes to body image. In my case, I weigh 50 pounds more than I did when I received my acceptance letter to Concordia.

I'm not alone. A Canadian study where students self-reported their eating habits indicates a change of lifestyle leading to weight gain in some college students, despite limitations in methodology and sample size.

This reflects what most of us refer to colloquially as "the freshman 15."

Busy schedules can make it difficult to find time for self-care, like exercising and home-cooking. I know I had less trouble managing my weight when I was eating whole foods at home, getting all my veggies, drinking more water, and making it to yoga every day.

Now, between work, lectures, papers, homework, and writing for *The Link*, I'm barely home, and my hours are so weird the gym wouldn't even be an option if I did get more than five hours of sleep per night.

Striking a balance between self-acceptance and finding the will to act has been a challenge, and has redefined how I

see confidence. While body positivity is important, in general and after weight gain, many people don't feel like themselves after they put on weight.

This leads me to wonder what the best practices for healthy sexuality might be in situations like these, where a person's lifestyle and body image may not be optimal.

I would suggest that when you have both a positive and comforting partner as well as positive self-talk, you can see a marked improvement in your confidence between the sheets and on the streets.

It could start from within, or in some cases with a support system encouraging you to be kind to yourself.

I've never found people saying, "You're not fat," "You're thin, actually," or "You're beautiful the way you are" to be quite helpful. In fact, it's annoying, because it doesn't address how I feel about myself when they aren't around, nor does it empower me to do anything about those feelings.

It's best to engage in your own selftalk that acknowledges how you feel at the moment, but replaces the negative thought with a more balanced one.

During intimacy, when you find your-self wondering if your partner is noticing your imperfections, perhaps consider the possibility that they are thinking about how happy you look and how it makes them feel good, how hot you look when you smile, or simply how soft and warm you are. If you can think of the negative they might be seeing, you should try to

make a case for a positive they could just as easily be seeing.

As for lifestyle improvements, the questions to ask yourself could include: "What can I compromise healthfully," "When can I compromise," "What small changes can I make consistently," and "What bigger changes do I want going forward?"

Maybe you'll feel sexiest after yoga class, during the once-a-week slot you

"You might be punishing yourself, but for what purpose?"

can afford to dedicate to it.

Breaking larger dilemmas down into manageable action plans is more sustainable, realistic, and maximizes success potential, as opposed to making huge changes you might not be able to implement consistently or sustainably.

The same goes for sex, really.



Instead of telling yourself you need to lose weight and change something about your body before getting intimate, maybe negotiating this with yourself based on what is realistic is best.

You deserve affection and intimacy, both where you stand and where you're aiming to be. As for small things you can do to make yourself feel more confident where

you're at—find a lighting that makes you comfortable, a partner that is comforting, and an outfit you find flattering.Remember that no one should be remotely as critical of you as you are to yourself.

Listen to music that makes you feel sultry, remember that candlelight looks good on anyone, and spend some time in front of a mirror to get to know yourself

#### **Graphic Breea Kobernick**

and how to emphasize the things you do like.

You don't need to do six months of yoga or stop eating the croissants you love to finally feel confident. I learned, through my experience, that I can feel confident and attractive at every phase of my journey.

I went from using food as a punishment and reward because of my weight to just setting movement goals and finding ways to motivate myself to attain them.

This shift from a punitive approach to a challenge approach is kinder to the self and fosters a sense of achievement rather than punishment.

On the way to where you want to be, you are still a human being who may want to engage in a healthy sexuality and feel good where you're at.

You are no less deserving of these things than someone already at your goal. You might be punishing yourself, but for what purpose?

Telling yourself you don't deserve to feel comfortable because you don't look the way you want is like saying you don't deserve to smile because you don't like the way you look when you do.

It's self-punishing, and it's making you miss out on so much joy and happiness that you deserve as much as anyone else.

Get your beautiful body into that bubble bath and let it be loved.

If you truly are unhappy with how you look and feel right now, how do you get comfortable without apologizing for your body?

Firstly, you owe no one an apology or explanation. Anyone who has access to intimacy with you owes you acceptance and respect.

Where you are now, as well as everywhere you'll ever find yourself, you are worthy of love, affection, and intimacy.

### Don't @ Me: You're Not Sapiosexual, You're Just Pretentious

Intelligence Is Subjective and Not a Sexual Orientation

#### Elias Grigoriadis @eligrigoriadis

66

One who finds intelligence the most attractive sexual feature."

That's what you get when you look up the word "sapiosexual" on Urban Dictionary.

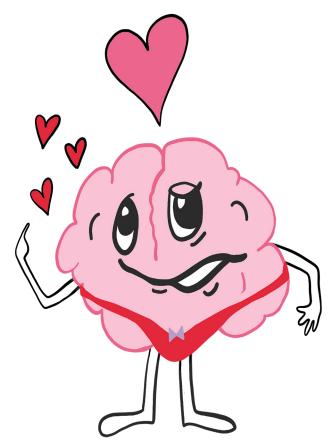
Why didn't I use an actual dictionary to find a definition? Because Urban Dictionary, much like sapiosexuality, should not be taken seriously.

I consider myself to be a pretty sex-positive person. I'm close with people from all corners of sexuality, be they different orientations, preferences, or kinks. That being said, one thing I refuse to tolerate is pretentious people, thinking they're so above you that they call themselves sapiosexual.

Given that a sapiosexual's main point of attraction is intelligence, the term doesn't normally observe gender by implication. The man who allegedly coined the term wrote a LiveJournal post and, wow, it sounds like a meme. Because it is a meme, the man's profile picture shows him in a top hat. It's so perfectly absurd that it's borderline impossible to take it seriously.

Yet, despite its memeness, people are identifying as sapiosexuals unironically. So much so that OkCupid has made it a legitimate sexual orientation when you make your account.

Derived from "sapiens," the Latin word for wise, sapiosexual is not only pretentious, it's classist. From high school, richer people get into better schools—public or private—which then usually allows them to get into better colleges and universities. From then on, richer students are more likely to end up in grad school and getting a "better education." Being attracted to someone solely based on their IQ isn't



**Graphic Breea Kobernick** 

cool, it's shallow as fuck. News flash: IQ doesn't actually matter in the real world. The knowledge of someone with a lower IQ is still valuable. IQ tests are the mental equivalent to the beep test, they're not that indicative and people attribute way too much importance to them.

Being a sapiosexual also reinforces the same tired and fake-woke ideas sur-rounding what it means to be intelligent. It feels like you're only considered intelligent in some internet circles if you own a copy of any Jack Kerouac novel, don't watch television, and generally feel just a

little bit superior to the rest of the world.

Not only is it ridiculous and dismissive, identifying as sapiosexual is also flat out inaccurate. The American Psychological Association defines sexual orientation as an "enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to men, women, or both sexes."

Being attracted to smart people is fine, just don't be so full of yourself that you would go out of your way to make it the sole identifier with regards to who you're attracted to.

### THE RACE ISSUE







### A Graphic Essay on Race

### Sheida Shamloo



AYSHA AND I WERE TALKING ABOUT THE NEXT MONTH ISSUE OF THE LINK MAGAZINE. SHE TOLD ME THAT THE THEME IS "RACE". BEFORE WE KNEW IT WE WERE DISCUSSING ALL THE "CUTE LITTLE THINGS" WE COULD RECALL ABOUT IT.



SHE TOLD ME ABOUT THE TIMES WHEN SHE HAD TO PAY EXTRA TO GET HER HAIR DONE JUST BECAUSE HER HAIR IS too curly



I RECALLED MY EX TELLING ME THAT I'M THE FIRST MIDDLE EASTERN GIRL HE DATED AND TALKED ABOUT HIS DIFFERENT POCS IN HIS SHELF OF TROPHY.

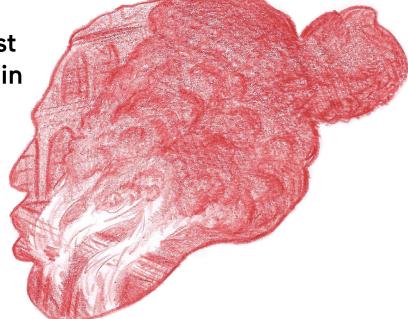


AND WE ALL HAVE THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING A BYSTANDER WHEN AN INDIGENOUS PERSON GETS ACCUSED OF PICKPOCKETING

### Marie-Joseph Angélique: A Story Untold

The Abuse and Unjust Execution of a Slave in Montreal

Rama Ammar



On a summer morning, 1734,

Marie-Joseph Angélique was in a chamber with a priest, a judge, a physician, a torturer, and several guards. She sat upright with planks of wood tightly placed on each side of her legs and felt the pressure on her knees as she gazed at a hammer and iron wedge. She maintained her innocence and swore she did not commit the crime.

Unhappy with the lack of confession and evidence, the accusers hammered down the iron wedge.

The medieval method of torture, known as the brodequins, crushes bones and knees and leaves the victim unable to stand. Going through horrible pain, and faced with her inevitable death under the unjust court, Angélique confessed.

The excruciating torture continued as the judge persevered for the name of an accomplice, but she insisted that she did it alone. Hours later, she was placed in a garbage cart and taken to St. Paul St., where a hangman and a noose awaited her.

The townspeople gathered, some prayed and some cursed. They watched as the rope tightened around her neck and as her body plunged when the hatch was released.

The sun set as her corpse hung high for two hours. Her body was then taken down and burnt to ashes, leaving nothing behind but an unresolved legacy.

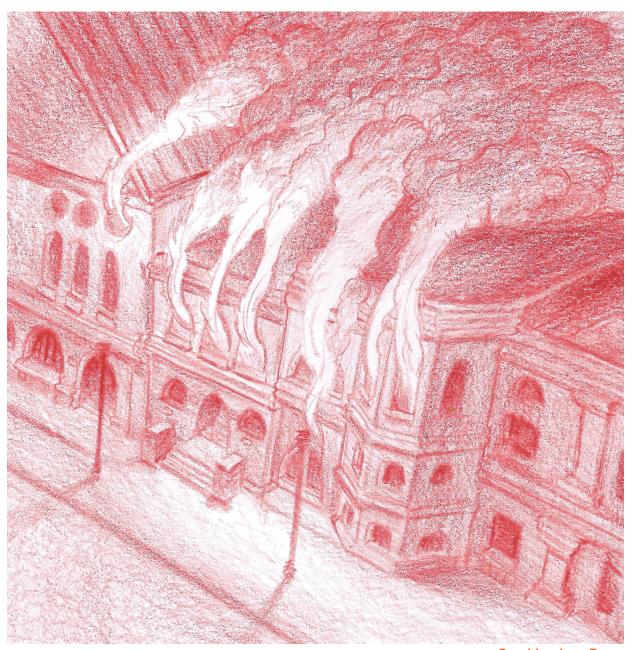
Angélique—a Black, enslaved woman—was executed. There was no credible evidence or witness to tie her to the crime.

Angélique was originally from Portugal, but somewhere around 1725, she was sold to a French man named François Poulin de Francheville in New England.

Francheville took her to Montreal, where she worked as a domestic slave in his household. In the years she was enslaved, she was allegedly given the name Angélique by her mistress Thérèse de Couagne de Francheville and gave birth to three children—none of whom lived past infancy—with another slave named Jacques César.

The gradual process of stripping Angélique of her humanity was amplified by the fact that some historians believe that she and César were forced to reproduce. Couagne whipped her on a regular basis and some speculate that Francheville sexually assaulted her.

And although today some might consider Angélique brave, her mas-



**Graphics Joey Bruce** 

ters branded her as defiant. She cursed, threatened, and fought back.

An embodiment of determination, she did not quietly ask for her freedom. Having her rights denied, she caused an uproar and lashed out at Couagne and the other servants. She even threatened to burn her mistress.

Despite all the efforts to belittle and control Angélique, she had a lover, Claude Thibault, a French white indentured labourer. His name was what the judge

wanted to hear when he asked Angélique for an accomplice later.

It was rumoured that Angélique and Thibault were accomplices in an act of rebellion that would lead to the former's torture and execution.

It wouldn't be the first time they had conspired together—they ran away a couple of months before that. Their escape was provoked when Angélique learned that Couagne sold her to a man in Quebec City.

Apart from her loud and rebellious attitude, she was also sold to be separated from her lover.

Couagne sought to break down Angélique out of fear. Infuriated, the lovers wanted to leave for Portugal. As Angélique was temporarily placed in the house of Alexis Monière, the brother-in-law of Couagne, until her planned departure to Quebec City, she and Thibault set her bed on fire and fled.

For two short weeks, they tasted free-

dom. They were hunted down and sent back—Thibault to jail and Angélique to her original owner. Upon her return, she kept stating that she would burn the house down.

About 10 weeks prior to the day of Angélique's execution, Montreal exploded into chaos and anger.

It was April 1734—thick clouds of smoke, the stench of burnt wood, and grey ashes, filled the streets and riddled Montreal with anger.

Overall, 46 buildings, and the convent and hospital of the Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal, were burnt. No one died during the incident.

The rage spread as fast as the fire burnt the houses and an overwhelming need to find a scapegoat transpired.

When the April fire occurred, suspicion around Angélique arose quickly. An enslaved Black woman that was appalled and angry by having rights and freedoms taken away?

It had to be her. Who else would

burn down homes and sacred buildings in a foreign land whilst tyrannizing the locals? When the court convicted her, 23 witnesses helped prosecute her without definitive proof. There was little to no testimony in which anyone actually saw Angélique set the fire, it was all based on what they believed had happened.

The witnesses themselves were questionable. Amongst them were Couagne, her 10-year-old niece along with her playmate who had seen Angélique earlier in the day, Couagne's former servant, and a five-year-old girl.

Some witnesses claimed that they saw Angélique on the roof of the house bringing up coal or heard her threatening to burn her mistress and her house down. Angélique's alibi wasn't that strong either; she was on the roof that day and she was in the house around the time the fire started.

With each accusation, the court became more confident that she had started the fire. However, the judge also believed that Thibault was involved. He

managed to escape, but his troubles were simpler. He was a white man and the court believed that Angélique manipulated him into helping her.

History has yet to decide on whether Angélique started the fire or not. For centuries, she was blindly accused of the of starting the fire.

If Angélique did start it, she had the right to do so after years of abuse and enslavement.

She can be praised for her rebellious act of bravery if she really did burn the city.

The lack of evidence and the utterly corrupt way the court convicted her is enough to incite outrage.

Anyone can be convicted if no evidence, strong witness testimony, or neutral investigation is needed.

Angélique's struggle pierces through Canada's darker side of history where slavery, unjust courts, and racism lie among the silenced chapters of oppression. She was bold,loud, and brave—feared by the people around her for those qualities.

### JOIN THE LINK!

We're looking for writers, photographers, graphic artists, videographers, and more to contribute to our monthly magazine and to our online sections.

Come see us in our office, room H-649 in the Hall Building, located at 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.

### WE ALSO HAVE PITCH MEETINGS EVERY TUESDAY AT 5 O'CLOCK

Feel free to contact our editor-in-chief at editor@thelinknewspaper.ca

# It's Hard Out Here for a Pimp—and a Journalist of Colour

### Confronting the Lack of Cultural Representation in Canadian Media

Lea Sabbah

hard out here for racially ambiguous People of Colour—like your girl—in the field of journalism. In a *métier* of permeating whiteness, trying to "get this money for the rent" still isn't as easy as it should be for marginalized up-and-coming journalists.

If you didn't catch the bitter truth in my wildly understated Three 6 Mafia reference, let me drop a barefaced fact in this bitch: the overwhelming majority of journalists across all Canadian media are white. It should not come as a shock that recently updated data to substantiate this thesis remains to be found. It's no surprise that newsrooms and other organizations are not pushing for data on racial diversity to be presented, mostly due to the simple fact that saying the taboo out loud is bad juju.

One of the extremely limited, more recent datasets on diversity in journalism, published in 2010 by CBC/Radio-Canada, showed that non-white minorities made up eight per cent of its reporting staff—and in a 2004 publication by the Canadian Task Force for Cultural Diversity on television news, visible minorities accounted for just over 12 per cent of Canadian anchors.

(If you're reading this, it's too late for righteous touting about Mitsumi Takahashi as the bastion of diversity in newsrooms.) In the same report, the organization found that minorities made up under nine per cent of reporters in English-language news. Before the Task Force's report was published, the lone reflection of journalistic demographics in Canada was a now heavily outdated study from Université Laval in 2000, which found that 97 per cent of journalists at the time were white—97 per cent! This ain't that Off-White that white people love so much—that's that white-white.

Unless you live in an acid-induced dreamland, it would be fairly reasonable to ascertain that this statistic has failed to drop by 50 per cent in 20 years—especially without newsrooms placing emphasis on ensuring that more People of Colour enter the workforce. Any less of an increase in employment opportunities for marginalized journalists would be laughable and impertinent.

If you've ever been concerned about the total lack of urgency and prominence placed on diversifying newsrooms, you may have heard the age-old excuse many editors love to bank on when being pressed on why they don't hire more journalists of colour. "They're just not applying," they say. "Our applications from visible minorities are so low. We just can't help it if white people apply!"

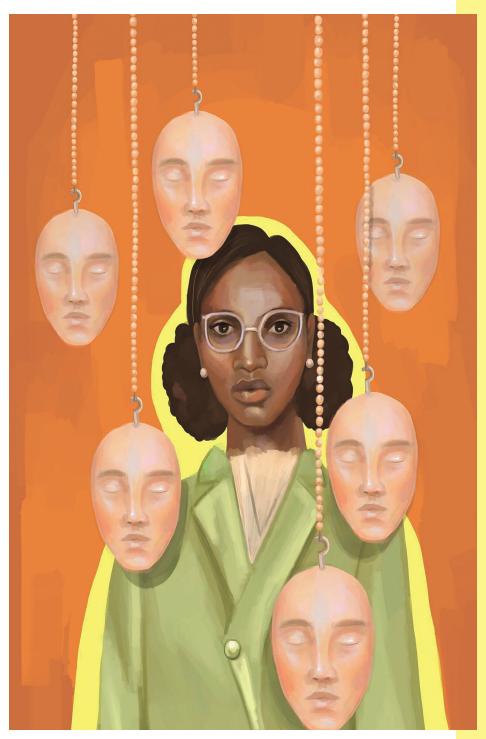
Any sensible public relations rep for a prominent news organization would state facts on this phenomenon to put themselves ahead of their competitors, but no news outlet has blatantly said what it claims to so desperately seek in its line of work—the hard truth.

The fact is, visible minorities remain particularly undriven to join the workforce of journalists in Canada because they do not see others that look like themselves in the news industry. Why would you pursue a career path in which you'd stick out amongst your vanillafaced peers like Evander Holyfield's gnarly, chewed-up ear?

To the nonbelievers: you don't have to search far and wide to see the effect of whitewashed journalism in action. Take, for example, our very own journalism program at Concordia.

As I reach the bitter end of a nearly five-year undergrad in this program, having had journalism classes with most of the same 15 or 20 people over the course of my education, I can count the number of visible minority students and professors in my classes on my elongated, manicured nails. In fact, I don't think I've ever had a racially marginalized journalism professor. It should be noted that no data is publicly available on student and faculty demographics at Concordia.

So what can news organizations and educational institutes do about our plight? Diversifying journalism should be a top priority for institutes that are training the future of Canadian news. So should publishing data on demograph-



**Graphic Catherine Vien-Bachand** 

ics to bring to light the absolute lack of diversity in journalism programs and in newsroom employees.

Public acknowledgment of this issue should not be avoided, but encouraged—People of Colour want to know what you're doing differently than past leadership.

The reasons behind our sad existences as journalists of colour are discernible. Students are often pressured by their families or cultural norms to pursue specific degrees and careers. But the culture of journalism in Canada will not change until all journalistic bodies shift their focus to not only hiring journalists of colour, but reporting on issues that affect journalists of colour and purposefully representing minority groups even with a lack of marginalized employees.

Racial minorities represent an increasingly significant portion of our population, and their voices should be a priority that deserve to be heard just as much, or, dare I say, even more than Andrew Coyne's archaic, meaningless drivel that Canadian media salivates over.

### PLEASE ETND ATTACHED TWO POEMS

I learnt more about life in the marketplace than I did at school. And Ijoma was my guide.

How to bargain, ignore catcalls, persuade, pretend, smile, which skin colour was worthy of love.

ljoma's yellow smooth skin were the envy of many And the knowledge made her whole Her dark knuckles reminiscent of what her skin used to look like.

She visited women that sold bleaching cream Women with dark knuckles and burnt yellow skin Women who sang to other women with little girls by their side "The brighter the skin, the smaller the struggle" "The brighter the skin, the earlier the marriage"

There I was at six watching Ijoma scrub at her skin Praying for the colour to go away Rubbing poison on her being An advocate for the yellow skin A guide of another that will wish the brown begone

I learnt more about life in the marketplace Lessons I teach myself to unlearn daily With hopes that young girls that were guided there, love all the women in themselves they've hated, mocked and shamed.





### "Whyte Passing"

### Aysha White

we'll always have to be a little quieter he explained to me as cars swished past cafe paris

quieter in order to be heard the same way whitewashed walls where you're supposed t—hush

#### words used in the evaluation:

works with door closed, judgemental, does not hesitate to share her opinion (hesitate more said two cold cobalt eyes across the imitation wood desk)

we feel like we're
walk
ing
on
e g g s hells

words of wisdom never impressed on the rainbow of palepinkpeach colleaguesaquaintancesfriendsloversfamilymembersetcetcetc

"I'd love to see you in a sari" (sounds like?/two syll/first syll)
what can I tell you about that?
at the time I hadn't worn one.
I'd been eagereager as a little girl
until the usual mild injustices
Kind of beige girls like me
"face"

took over and I teenage told my mother **no** I'll wear this **cocktail dress** dad bought me at **nordstrom** 

(I'm fine)

there was a whole narrative arc. I "found" myself. I wore a sari to a wedding. I'm still kind of beige and most others have it worse.

(I'm fine).

### The Struggle of in the Midst of

A Personal Narrative on Intersecting Identities

Sarah Abou-Bakr

you remember what it was like to see the world as a child? I remember everything being met with such an open, welcoming frame of mind. In a child's mind fascination, magic, and excitement are everywhere. It shows up in the form of sparkles in their eyes. It makes me wonder when the moments where sparkles disappear happen.

Although when I think of these twinkles, a part of me knows that it's normal that they're gone, as it's part of change. Everyone goes through it. Change is absolutely inevitable. It is what makes you evolve, but it often also forces you to leave things behind, so you can move on to new encounters.

As we grow older, we experience. We establish our identities based on our personalities, our values, our beliefs, and all these little things that, together, make us who we are.

Every once in a while, I get lost in my thoughts, reminiscing about the past. I scroll through photo albums, looking through photographs from years ago.

In today's world, everything is real. There is no pretending.

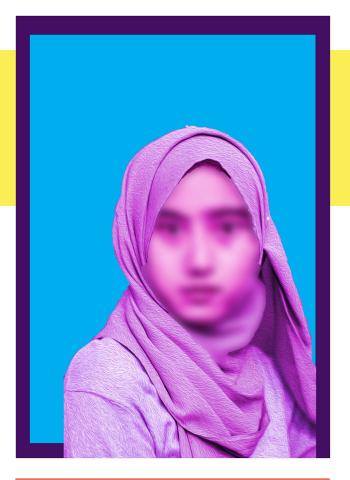
People don't pretend to discriminate, they do it. They will look at us, at our colours, our ethnicities, our cultures, our faith, our gender. In addition to that, they will listen to what is said about us and people that are like us, but they won't come to us and ask.

When I sit in roundtables to talk about diversity, when I go to multifaith or multicultural events, when I sit with my friends and discuss life, the one thing I get out of these conversations is that people like us have firsthand experience of the impacts of ignorance-based discrimination.

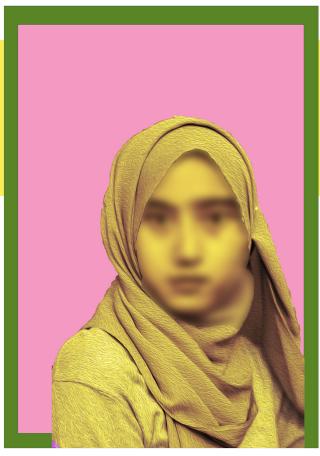
This simply results in several types of discrimination intersecting. Let me put it in an even simpler way.

Let's say that we are looking at advantages. I am a Woman of Colour, so from the very start, I am treated unfavorably, sometimes due to my colour, and sometimes because of my gender.

Therefore, I already am more disadvantaged than a Man of Colour, or a white woman, because I have colour and I have gender, both to









## Being Yourself Diversity

#### **Graphic Breea Kobernick**

my disadvantage. Let's add faith to this. Because I wear a hijab, I am a identifiable as Muslim. This entangled with being a WOC, results in an increase of disadvantages in comparison to just being a WOC, because I am a Muslim WOC.

My identities intersect, each carrying a baggage of inequality in some way. They all get together, and you get me—Sarah—a composition of various identities.

I feel as though being a woman wearing a religious symbol means I am always in battle. It almost feels like I constantly need to squeeze myself into the group when it comes to any discourse on womanhood.

It is me against society. I constantly need to explain how I am not a brainwashed imbecile and how my choice of dress is not a sign of oppression. My hijab is a sign of how I understand and decide to perform my religion while contributing to society, just like everybody else.

I refuse to accept and settle for spending the rest of my life living in a hostile society that won't allow people like me to be celebrated for the way that we are. I should not be living my life in the west, fighting for my right to be who I am.

It leads me reflect on how society defines the word "liberating" and why it is so often brought up when talking about what women like me are not. Ironically, I feel the opposite of liberated when something as simple as my freedom of wearing what I want is constantly limited.

If not by governments, then it becomes limited because of looks, stereotypes. and judgements. It becomes limited when people tell me "go back to where you came from."

Go where? Tell me. You want my born-and-raised-in-Canada self to go back where? How is this even a solution? And if we actually are looking for solutions, please tell me—what problem are we looking to solve? The only one I can possibly think of is a systemic problem.

A problem of the system as a whole allowing people like you to tell people like me to go back where they come from.

A systemic problem where people are not only comfortable being hateful, but are being even more comfortable acting upon their hatred.

I say this not only because I feel it, but because it's true.

The reported criminal incidents in Canada motivated by hate increased by 47 per cent in 2017, the same year as the Quebec City mosque shooting, a tragic

hate crime that caused the death of six people. More and more people act upon their hatred, motivated by pure ignorance.

In the space of only two weeks, two disturbing reports came out.

On Sept. 24, Quebec's Commission des droits de la personne et de la jeunesse published research where they documented acts of hate that were xenophobic, and notably Islamophobic.

On Oct. 7, the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal released a report revealing that Black and Indigenous people are four to five times more likely than white people to be stopped

by police officers in the urban centre.

In an environment where we have a serious problem involving xenophobia and Islamophobia, what happens to a visibly Muslim WOC like myself?

From what my experiences tell me, it only makes my battles hundreds of times harder every single day. How did we come to normalize hate like that? The consequences are frankly violent, dangerous, and scary.

People of Colour are constantly being silenced, women told to step aside, and Muslims always pointed at.

I am so tired of being silenced. I am more than that. We all deserve better

than that. I do not want to have to distance myself from certain aspects of my identity to "reconcile" with other parts.

What is left of me if I become pressured to silence my womanhood, my colour, and my faith? I become nothing.

"It becomes limited when people tell me "go back to where you came from." Go where? Tell me. You want my born-and-raised-in-Canada self to go back where? How is this even a solution? And if we actually are looking for solutions, please tell me what problem are we looking to solve?"

Nothing at all.

That is exactly why I will not do that. I am a whole. Barriers exist. They are here all the time. I learned to cope, and I taught myself to overcome obstacles that appear on my path.

People with stories that are similar to mine have come a long way, and we just won't settle for being what others want us to be, because often times, it is something we are not.

I want to live in an inclusive and accepting society, I took it upon myself to never let anyone invalidate my feelings when it comes to attacks directed at who I am. It is time we put our insecuri-

ties aside and speak up.

It is time to report every single experience that we encounter, because it is not OK to be violated.

Let's not normalize what was never meant to be the norm.

Women, Muslims and People of Colour aren't insignificant nor are they worthless.

People carrying these identities fight to advocate for social justice, to be treated equally, and to free themselves from discrimination.

We understand that diversity cannot be properly addressed if not everyone is at the table.

We need to become part of this conversation. All of us, with all of our identities. It is not difficult to talk about our differences—it's part of living together. It is part of coexistence.

To those who are more advantaged than others, I strongly advise you to know your privilege, and use it to make room for others. Use it to advocate for justice and equality for all. Use it so that we can all coexist and be on the same level.

One last thing I must say and cannot stress enough—to you, a stranger who tells me "it's just a piece of clothing, just take it off."

Although I sincerely am annoyed by your audacious remark, allow me to explain to you that the issue here is not whether

I should or should not take it off. The issue is that you are comfortable enough to expect me to detach myself from how I choose to practice my faith, because it makes you uncomfortable.

This will not happen.

Just like I embrace my colour and my womanhood, I will not change or hide my Muslim identity for anyone.

I have the right to be true to myself, and so will I be.

Sometimes, I wish I could see the world through the eyes of the child that I once was. Despite all this, I always remain hopeful, and I will keep going.

### Stop Assuming Who I Am

### Do Not Stereotype Me; You Don't Know Who I Am

### Reina Ephrahim

t's one thing to mispronounce somebody's name on the first try after having just met them. It's another to assume you know someone from their name, skin colour, or accent.

We've all done it, but that's certainly not an excuse to keep repeating the same mistake everyday when we leave the comfort of our home.

Look at that stranger on the bus, wearing a trench coat drenched in rain water, the tips of their hair dripping, and a look of frustration plastered on their face.

Latching onto a black briefcase like their life depended on it, they anxiously check their watch every minute or so. Their sweater vest has a name sewn in: Rashad.

Who is Rashad? Why such a rush? It's almost 7:00 p.m.—I wonder as I sit by the far left wing of the 485 STM bus, headed west.

With nothing but time on my hands until the bus comes to a stop, and the sound of "Case of You" by Joni Mitchell ringing through my earbuds, I continue to analyze Rashad from across the bus.



Just to be clear, I'm not a stalker. I'm getting to the point, and you'll see why.

Rashad pulls out a book, something that appears to be written in a Middle-Eastern dialect. But that doesn't stop an elderly white woman sitting nearby from starting the following conversation.

Woman: "Arabic, eh? I once went to Cairo on a trip. Aren't Egyptians just fascinating? Such rich culture."

Rashad: "Sorry I wouldn't know. I'm half Syrian and half Italian, but I'm taking classes to learn Arabic."

It occurred to me then, and even now as I write, of how such a seemingly normal conversation took such a steep turn

This woman, who probably made a similar assumption as most people on that bus (myself included), never took a second to think about the words that were coming out of her mouth. She had just assumed Rashad's ethnicity with no knowledge of who they were.

Don't even get me started on this elderly white woman's definition of what a "rich culture" is. That's just as bad as saying that Brown people are exotic.

What in the world does that even mean?

All I can do is shake my head in contempt from how ignorant some people are. Boomers, am I right?

I witnessed this exchange in late August—it's not the typical kind of racial profiling we see on FBI shows or documentaries or even the news, this is mundane.

Speaking from personal experience as a Person of Colour, it seems as though many external factors also make misidentification so habitual. I've learnt that it's often based on stereotypical portrayals of the traditional non-whites.

It can be as simple as assuming you know someone's identity based on their name

This, my friends, is what we in woke culture call problematic. It's a violation of self-identity, and just plainly ignorant.

Let me break it down for you all, as a POC myself.

My name is Reina Ephrahim. You, the reader, cannot see my face as you read, and will proceed to analyse my entire existence from my name. Hence why

I've taken the liberty to do it for you. My first name — Reina — is Spanish, meaning queen. My last name — Ephrahim — is Jewish, from the book of Genesis in the Bible; for others, the Torah or the Koran.

Now, you're probably thinking, "She must be a Hispanic Jew." Well you're wrong. I'm actually half Pakistani and half Indian.

Boom, mind blown. All my parents did was pick my name out of a Latin encyclopedia.

With my name and ethnicity now presented, you're probably thinking I'm either Jewish, Muslim, or Hindu. The answer is that I was raised as a bornagain Christian by both my parents, who have been Christians all their lives.

But wait! The colour of my skin also comes into question. I'm traditionally and significantly lighter skinned than the typical South Asian–almost wheat–like. This often gives people the impression that I am Middle Eastern. I usually get mislabeled as Persian, Egyptian, Turk–ish, or Israeli.

The colour of my skin also leads most to assume that I'm Muslim, or Hindu. But no, I'm afraid that's just y'all being racists.

Side note: Does this remind anyone about the whole Princess Jasmine scandal during the casting call for *Aladdin*?

When Disney came out with news of their casting for the live action remake of *Aladdin* back in 2017, many fans of the classic became livid when they were informed that Princess Jasmine's role would be played by someone of another race, therein eliciting an ethnically perpetuated backlash on the movie.

Naomi Scott, a London-born actress of both English and Indian descent was the final choice by the film's producers. Scott was given the task to fill the princess' shoes, but fans disagreed with the outcome. The problem addressed in this case was why Disney's producers picked someone of Indian heritage to play a character that is very clearly of Middle-Eastern descent.

This plays right into the stereotype that South Asians and Middle-Easterners

share similar, if not identical cultures, traditions, and/or ethnicities. *Aladdin*'s producers fell right into that trap.

Who knew it would be so hard for movie producers to find someone of the appropriate ethnicity to play a role that pertains to them or their heritage specifically? It's not like we have a shortage of humans in the world; climate change has made that abundantly clear.

We have yet another case of racism in Hollywood on our hands.

It's kind of underwhelming to realize that even a mega-corporation like Disney is capable of making such an obvious blunder. Especially when they had two years between 2017 and 2019 to correct the obvious red flag in the whole ordeal.

What can we conclude from this simple breakdown of my name? Well, if you've made the same assumptions I've previously stated, it makes what I'm about to say very clear:

We tend to stereotype the names of people and appearances with certain ethnic, racial, religious, and other identifiable characteristics upon first impression, which often leaves a lasting effect, even when corrected.

Most of you are probably just unconsciously racist.

The lesson to pick up from this short but concise monologue is that it's not simply OK to base your entire foundation of a person based on these details.

Before I revealed who I was in this article, you all would have made the same mistake of assuming my entire existence based on preconceived ideas of what I must look like — all that just from my name. In person, you would have done the same, if not worse.

Nevertheless, this is who I am.

I'm a 20-year-old, POC of Pakistani and Indian origin, born in Canada and raised as a Christian, with an ethnic background based in both Muslim and Hindu majority countries, carrying a



Jewish last name. Needless to say, I'm the whole controversial package.

Not only am I a culmination of most minorities under scrutiny by the patriarchy; I'm also a queer woman. Bet you weren't expecting that little curveball.

I am literally the embodiment of Donald Trump's worst nightmare: A female POC, who is part of the LGBTQ+ community. A triple threat, if you will. Here's to all the white cis males in existence!

\*Clinks of champagne glasses fill the



bleak silence.\* Although social constructs are to be blamed for forming these stereotypes, while disrespectful, they are humanly made.

Being self-aware of those around you is important—this I cannot stress enough. Which is why it saddens me to see these kinds of if-the-shoe-fits-wear-it scenarios. Neither my name, my skin colour, my gender, nor my religious beliefs are traits that fit a typical generality that was created by the colonization period. I can

vouch for this, and I'm sure that Rashad and many other POC would agree with this notion.

At the end of the day, it's all really a matter of respect.

Seriously, I only wish people would ask me more specific questions about who I am rather than making assumptions, therein making a total fool out of themselves.

It would at least show me and others that people are somewhat taking initia-

Reina Ephraiham in the Vanier Library on Concordia's Loyola Campus where she attends class.

#### **Photos Esteban Cuevas**

tive to be more conscientious of the many ethnic groups in the city we live in, with each person having a story of their own.

Let's all collectively avoid making total asshats out of ourselves and show some basic human decency, shall we?

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