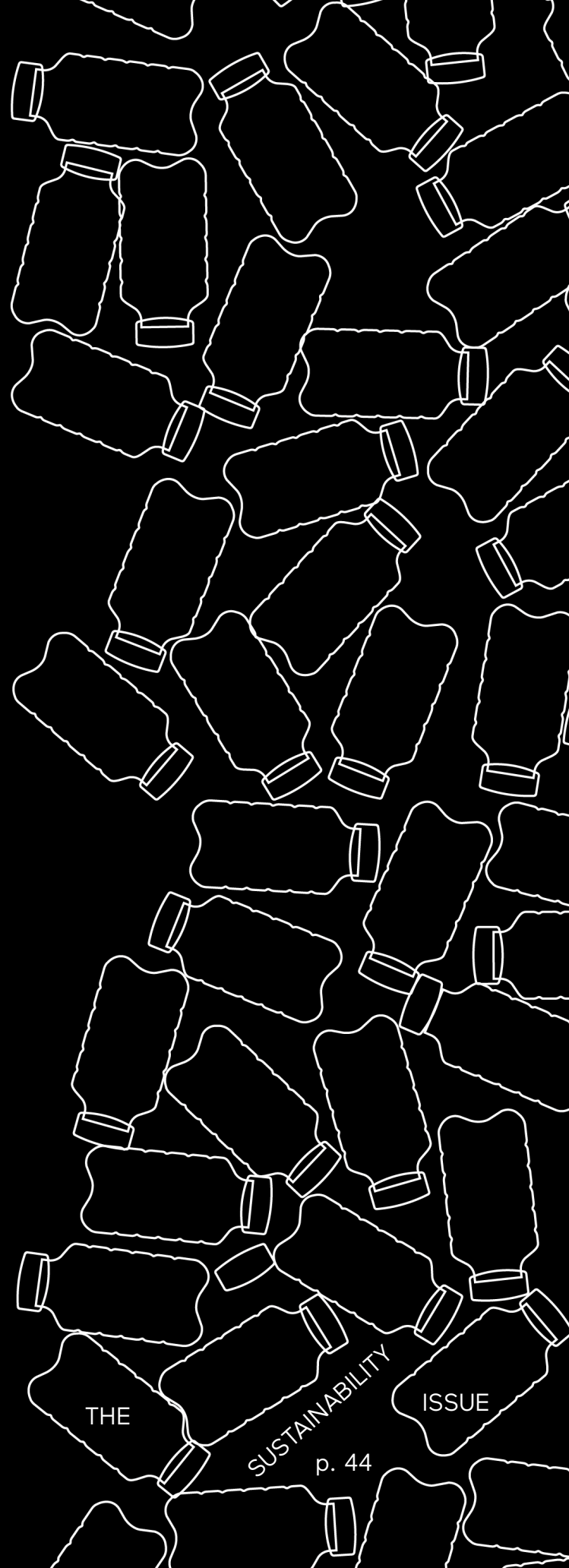


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Volume 40.4 • January 2020



THE

SUSTAINABILITY

ISSUE

p. 44

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Table of Contents

Volume 40, Issue 4: *SUSTAINABILITY*

| | | |
|----|----|--|
| p. | 6 | LOOKING AT THE FUTURE OF SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENTS FOR CONCORDIA |
| p. | 11 | MIGRANT AND TEMPORARY WORKERS IN MONTREAL WAREHOUSES |
| p. | 14 | VISUAL CONTRIBUTOR OF THE MONTH: CAROLINE MARSH |
| p. | 15 | VISIT MONTREAL'S VINTAGE FASHION WORLD |
| p. | 20 | TRANSLATING LITERATURE TO BRING CULTURES CLOSER |
| p. | 22 | ARTIST PROFILE: AIZA'S JOURNEY TO THE BIG SCREEN |
| p. | 25 | SANCHE TAKES "PLAYING BIGGER THAN YOU ARE" TO ANOTHER LEVEL |
| p. | 28 | MONTREAL ROLLER DERBY: ORGANIZED CHAOS |
| p. | 33 | MEN'S BASKETBALL IS LOOKING TO GET BACK TO THE TOP |
| p. | 37 | DON'T @ ME: INSTAGRAM COULD SELL YOU ANYTHING |
| p. | 38 | PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF CANADA: THE SILENT VOICES OF NORTHERN CANADA |
| p. | 40 | SEX ED(ITORIAL): EXAMINING MENSTRUATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT |
| p. | 43 | COMICS! |

THE *SUSTAINABILITY* ISSUE



| | | |
|----|----|---|
| p. | 47 | STATEMENT ON SUSTAINABILITY |
| p. | 48 | THE ENDANGERED FLORA AND FAUNA IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD |
| p. | 52 | WATCH OUT FOR GREENWASHING |
| p. | 54 | ADDRESSING OUR MENTALITY WITH ANIMAL INTERACTIONS |



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EDITORIAL:

Pick Your Battles

The concept of sustainability is corrupted. Instead of the term being used to identify simple and accessible products or practices that could help the environment, the word “sustainability” is being slapped onto anything that can be used to make a quick buck. Products are marketed in a specific way to make you the sole bearer of the weight of fixing the environment.

There are definitely certain lifestyle changes you can make in order to help. For example, making a diet change that includes less meat or restructuring your commute so you spend less time in a car and more time on public transit does move the needle a little. That’s not to say that if you can’t you’re a bad person—but an effort is always better than nothing.

Picking your battles and changing your lifestyle gradually is the most effective way to make sure that your changes are attainable and financially viable.

They also help ensure that you don’t revert to your old habits after a few months.

What we’re trying to say is that you are not the person we need drastic action from. If you’re trying to change your lifestyle and make it more sustainable, then good on you—but you’re not the crux of the problem; individual action isn’t anywhere enough.

Multinational corporations have made it a business to suck this planet dry for a profit and have used every tactic in the book to deflect any adequate level of blame or consequence. Short term profit over creating a long-term solution has always been their business model and then, they have the audacity to encourage you to lead a greener life while they polluting as if it were business as usual.

This puts an emphasis on consumers, making them responsible for changing their entire lifestyle without seeing a change from what shaped society in the first place.

One hundred corporations have contributed to 71 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions between 1988 and 2015—something they were fully aware of—and we’re expected to uproot

everything in our lives while these multinationals can continue with business as usual and lobby their way out of climate agreements?

Bullshit.

The world is on fire. We’re killing every species on the planet—including ourselves—and we can promise you it isn’t solely due to the fact that we use a plastic water bottle once in a while.

The whole “we need your help to save the planet” narrative is a destructive idea that puts far too much responsibility on everyday consumers and lets multinationals keep their profit margins.

So keep working on yourself. Keep improving your habits and trying to live a more sustainable life but do it in a healthy way.

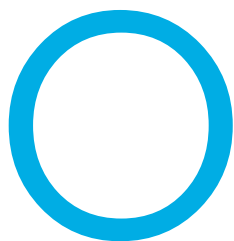
Make sure that your sustainable habits are ones you can maintain.

But most importantly, keep holding corporations who profit off the status quo accountable. **LI**

Divestment Is Only the First Step to a Sustainable Future

Concordia Aims for 100 Per Cent Sustainable Investments, but What Does the Future of Sustainability Look Like?

Erika Morris
@thingjpege



In the afternoon of Nov. 8, the phones of the more than 50,000 students, faculty, and staff at Concordia University chimed in unison. A special divestment edition of *Concordia University NOW* had hit inboxes announcing the university was fully divesting from fossil fuels and aiming for 100 per cent sustainable investments by 2025.

The previous day, Erik Chevrier—who had been pushing for divestment since 2013—had been set to give a presentation to the administration.

When the presentation was cancelled, he thought the university was stalling him, but he said its announcement came as a pleasant surprise—one a long time coming.

The move came amidst a spike in climate justice activism and growing acceptance of the need for action. The university itself had symbolically canceled classes for the Sept. 27 demonstration which saw about 500,000 people take the streets and a special appearance by teenage activist Greta Thunberg, but it remained under pressure to do more.

The Concordia University Foundation makes investments with money donated to the school, and the returns are used to fund research, scholarships, and bursaries. In 2017, only five per cent of what was a \$100-million endowment fund was dedicated to sustainable causes, meaning investments that have intentional social impacts. Within two years, Concordia has moved their investments to have just under six per cent of the fund invested in coal, oil, and gas, representing \$14 million.

Chevrier has been doing work in finance theory and how it can be applied to sustainability. In 2013, he decided to start exploring what was going on at Concordia and push for more

sustainable investing. That year, the Concordia Student Union started looking at Concordia's investments and hired him to write two reports.

“Surprisingly, if you look at the plan I put forth in 2014, all the steps have been adopted [by Concordia] at this point,” he said. “It’s quite positive.”

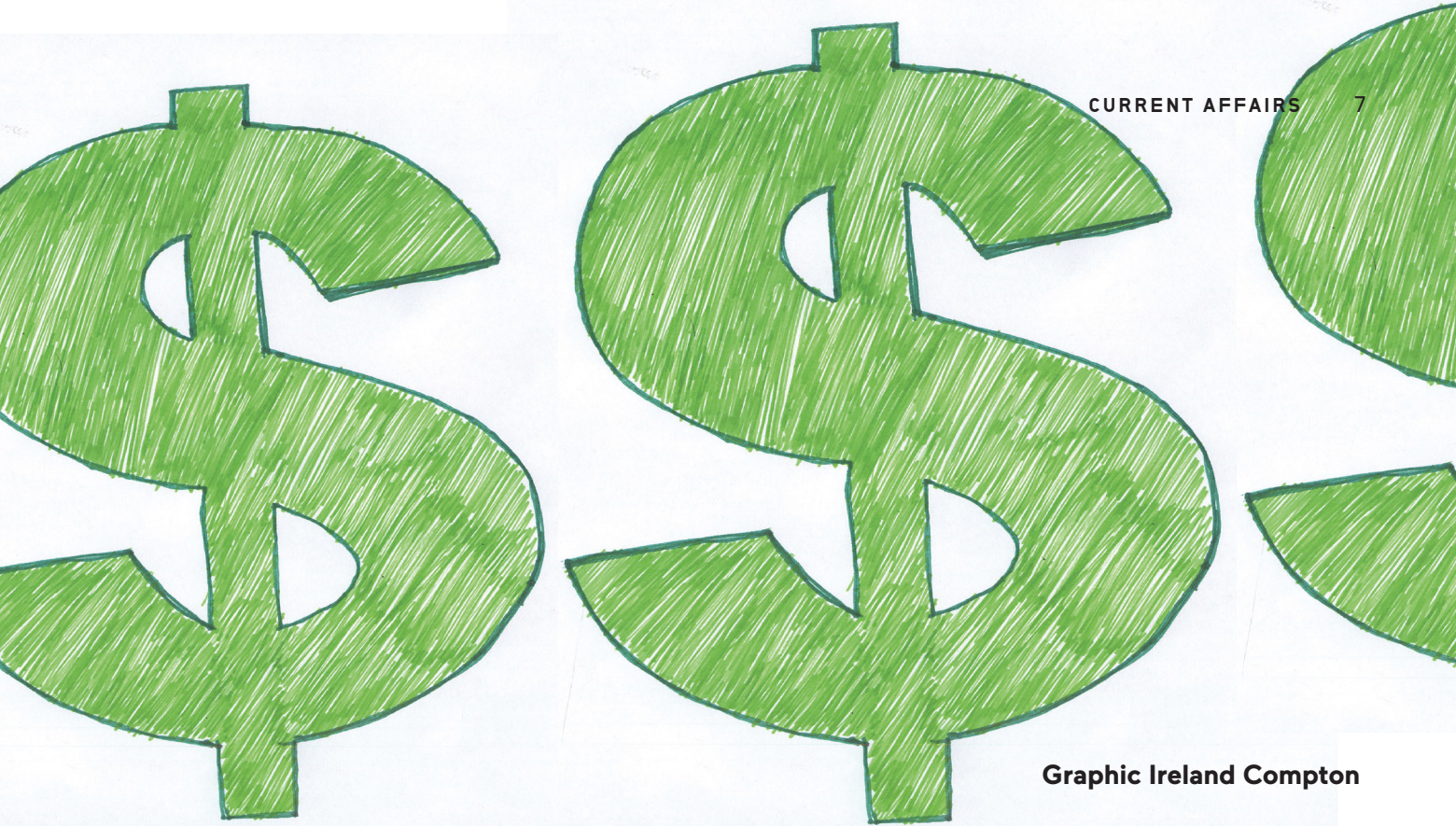
At first, the ideas pitched by student activists weren’t taken very seriously. But, after listening to Chevrier push the idea that it wouldn’t lose any money through socially responsible investing, the university saw credence in his arguments.

A \$5-million fund dedicated to socially responsible investing was started by the Concordia University Foundation. The idea was that if the fund did well, it would be expanded.

But, after that, the developments in sustainable investing began to stall. Chevrier said students were blocked from participating in extensive negative screening—which determines what kinds of investments the university will avoid. However, they did gain ground in other areas. In 2016, the Joint Sustainable Investment Advisory Committee was formed, and in 2018 the university signed on to the United Nations’ Principles for Responsible Investment.

The foundation also completely reviewed its investment policy to be environmental, social, and governance oriented, said Concordia’s chief financial officer Denis Cossette. Chevrier said the university started looking into impact investing—investing in things that will bring make a positive impact on the world.

“The committee opened a \$5-million SRI fund after I gave my first presentation, so that was quite surprising. I’ve never made that much of an impact in a small time,” said Chevrier. “But after that, things got quite slow. We thought they were doing it as a greenwashing endeavour.”



Graphic Ireland Compton

External coordinator of Sustainable Concordia Emily Carson-Apstein said it's clear the administration was doing a lot of work behind the scenes since then. They said that it's very possible it was a stalling tactic, but that the university had received JSIAC's message, or else divestment wouldn't have gotten done so quickly. After all, the finance world typically moves very slowly.

That being said, working with the administration wasn't always easy. "There's been a lot of student presentations, research, and discussions that weren't necessarily listened to. The arguments being made by students have been going on for years, and for a long time they weren't responding to it in a clear way," said Carson-Apstein. "Students in 2014 were saying, 'Here's an example of a path you could take,' and [the administration] was like, 'No, no, no, that's impossible,' but the steps they are taking are very similar to what was recommended."

Carson-Apstein stressed that the administration never disagreed with the students, but they had different priorities. But they highlighted that students have been lucky that the administration has been so open to working with them compared to other universities, like McGill, which won't open up the dialogue with students.

Even a year ago, Carson-Apstein said, the negotiations were in the realm of a 20-year plan, and now Concordia has announced a five-year plan.

Concordia President Graham Carr acknowledged that some might find the 2025 deadline to be too far away, but he said it's actually a very ambitious goal. "I think pretty consistently over the years, the activities of the foundation have demonstrated that there's a desire to go in that direction," he said, emphasizing that the university community supportive of that orientation will do their "level best to meet the objective [they] set."

"Part of the work that had already been done allowed us to decide, knowing what we know, what's a realistic timeline," he added. "Had we had this discussion two or three years ago, we would have ended up in a different place, but there's been an important movement."

Cossette said that many students, faculty, and staff have spoken out on the issue and have been heard. The working groups are putting together recommendations that will lead to the development of the sustainability roadmap in 2020. Now that divestment has been decided on, the university said it will remodel the way it works with students but will continue the dialogue with them through the JSIAC.

Carson-Apstein said one of the demands of the divest campaign has been to have student voices and representation on the committees, which, moving forward, they will continue to push for.

But divestment is only the first step, and it's the easy part, said Cossette. The challenge will be in figuring out where to reinvest to make sure investments comply with sustainability first, while protecting the returns needed to continue supporting the endowment activities.

"Ideally the fossil fuel industry won't exist in 20 years. If it does, we are not going to survive," said Carson-Apstein. "So, [2025] is a good timeline."

The Future of Fossil Fuel Investments

The reality of things is that fossil fuels are no longer a good investment, said Chevrier, as they're already starting to get phased out to reduce our carbon emissions.

In the Nov. 8 press release announcing the move, Howard Davidson, chair of the Board of the Concordia University Foundation, stated, "We believe that being socially and envi-



ronmentally responsible in our investments is the surest way to be Concordia University's best possible fund management partner. Investing in sustainability is not just the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do."

Chevrier and Carson-Apstein also stressed that, ultimately, the \$14 million Concordia will be withdrawing from the fossil fuel industry won't make much of a difference, but the positive press will influence other institutions to follow suit.

Alice Wei, the finance coordinator of Sustainable Concordia, has been working on a sustainable investment project which came about at their 2018 annual general meeting. Sustainable Concordia had a budget surplus of \$80,000 and allocated just over half of that to this project.

Their goal is to use \$35,000 in investments and use the remaining money for internships and research. The research is divided into client development, equity research, and bond selection.

The idea of the project is to create a constructive dialogue between the investment community and those fighting for sustainability, said Wei. The long-term goal is to build an exemplary portfolio that they can both present to the university and that can be used to educate other organizations on how to use investment for sustainability. Wei said there aren't really models for sustainable investments available, and now is the time to come up with one on their own.

As a John Molson School of Business student, she found the mentality was always to chase profit, but that there needs to be a bridge built between the world of finance and sustainability.

The sustainable investment project will be investing its first \$5,000 in February 2020 and will move from there. Wei's biggest takeaway from this project is that the sustainable investing field is very new and growing.

"There's no concrete way to do things; there's no established, to-the-book strategy, and it's still something everyone is trying to develop, so I think it's a good time for sustainable investments," she said.

The project's biggest goal isn't so much to make much of a difference with its investments, but rather to develop a methodology for sustainable investing for educational purposes.

The project has been presented to the JSIAC and was well received, said Wei. "When we first made that presentation [to the administration], they were definitely delighted that we are tapping into this field," she said. "Of course, they see our \$35,000, which is nothing—they have millions and millions of dollars in their portfolio."

The university didn't seem to be convinced at the time that the model could be scaled to this level.

"We have power with our money and we can choose to align our money with our values, and it's easier than you think," said Wei.

Carr echoed this sentiment. "I would hope this is a step toward reframing the conversation around sustainability," he said. "The kind of enterprises or companies or industries that we

want to invest in in line with the UN declarations are companies or organizations that are committed to sustainable future. So that's a different kind of logic and I think it's the kind of thing we're seeing more and more institutions are trying to get their minds around."

What's Next?

The Concordia University Foundation is investing \$1.2 million in the global investment firm Inerjys Ventures, with the deal having been made in April. The Concordia-Inerjys deal aims to strengthen the clean technology sector as Inerjys' portfolio is invested in projects like AESP Green Energy and Goliath Wind.

AESP Green Energy is a Quebec-based renewable energy company that specializes in the development of off-grid solar solutions. Inerjys has engineered a partnership with French oil and gas giant, Total. Goliath Wind, based in Estonia, enables its partners to manufacture wind turbines at half the cost of similar turbines.

Chevrier maintains skepticism of sustainable investments. He likes to think of sustainability as "bringing positive things into the world and not negative things." Based on that, one could conclude there's no 100 per cent sustainable investment because there's often collateral damage.

For example, electric cars are a good way to use less oil, but the resource extraction that goes into making one comes at a cost. The energy put into constructing motors for the cars can be problematic. Mining the lithium that stores the energy in the battery leads to other major issues, which is reflected in the current conflicts in Bolivia, one of the world's poorest nations, which holds the second-largest amount of lithium in the world.

"What I want to claim here is that there is no 100 per cent sustainable investing," said Chevrier. He believes divestment is only a stepping stone to a larger conversation that's necessary. He said finance is what dictates what does and doesn't get produced in our culture.

"In the bigger picture, if we look at democracy and democratic practices, the conditions of things coming into our world aren't part of democracy, they're controlled by people who have money," he said. "The bigger picture concerns me a lot."

Chevrier said the next step will be to look at investment portfolios in general and only invest in things that bring positive things into the world socially and environmentally, but that is harder than it sounds. For example, movements like Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions aren't seen positively by the administration, and Concordia still uses Aramark for food distribution despite its controversial labour conditions and food safety issues, like having maggots in the food it provides to prisons.

"Where the money goes is what dictates what comes into the world," said Chevrier. "We look at democracy and we say, 'We voted for this person to uphold decisions,' but we're realizing the political institutions are being controlled by finance also. [...] If we want to fight problems like climate change we need to have control over these mechanisms." □

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Immigrant Workforce Exploited in Montreal Warehouses; Part of Wider Quebec Labour Issues, Say Advocates

Report Sheds Light on Poor Working Conditions for Warehouse Temporary Workers

Kaity Brady



Graphic Joey Bruce + Breea Kobernick
Photo Esteban Cuevas

Merelyn Aguirre's voice cracked as she introduced herself. "Instead of crying, sometimes I write a song," she said.

Her partner, Nicholas Cesar Aguirre, accompanied her with his guitar as she sang: "It's been 15 years that I've been away from home, a thousand miles I'm here. I'm all alone, just trying to make a living, for my family that I miss."

Nicholas is a temporary placement agency worker and member of the Association des travailleurs et travailleuses d'agences de placement—a branch of the Immigrant Workers Centre—where the couple performed their song on Nov. 23 at their headquarters in Côte-des-Neiges. Dozens of community members gathered to launch the "Warehouse Workers Commission Report."

Aguirre was one of the ATTAP members who conducted a survey, summarized in the report, into conditions faced by temporary placement agency workers in Montreal warehouses over the last year. The IWC concluded that there's "a business model within the logistics sector that is based on the hyper-exploitation of a work force largely composed of migrants."

According to the IWC/ATTAP report, there are about 15,600 warehouse workers in Montreal. The report claims firms

like Dollarama are now employing only temporary placement agency workers for distribution, over 90 per cent of whom are migrants, new immigrants, or asylum seekers from Haiti, francophone Africa, and Latin America.

Temporary employment has exploded recently amid a Quebec labour shortage. The province has announced measures to bring in more temporary foreign workers and reduce immigration. The move has drawn criticism from opposition parties, immigrant advocacy organizations, and business groups that say it's economically unsustainable or xenophobic.

The use of placement agencies and flexible labour by warehouses creates gaps in responsibilities and promotes wage inequality, unsafe working conditions, and employment instability, according to the report.

Forty-two temporary placement workers were surveyed by the IWC. Almost 60 per cent of workers said they were paid less than a permanent worker doing the same job. 10 per cent were paid under minimum wage, 16.5 per cent worked more than full time, and almost half said they did not have proper safety equipment or sufficient training.

"You are not the staff of the company, and you are not the staff of the agency, so

what are you?" said Olawale Ogundipe, a Nigerian immigrant who worked at a Dollarama warehouse.

"I think the employment procedures are not right because when the agencies [...] hire you for a company, you are not staff of the company and you are not staff of the agencies, which means that you are just a tool in their hands," he continued.

Ogundipe said he developed a cough from lack of adequate ventilation and overcrowding in the facility. When he broke his ankle, he was told by his supervisor to treat himself.

"Because you don't have a contract or you don't have a letter that stipulates the terms and conditions of your job, there's nothing you can do," he said. "It's like a slave trade."

The report comes as Montreal's economy is growing. Unemployment is at a historic low, and Quebec's labour shortage is only expected to worsen.

The report found that over \$600 million in public and private money has been set aside for the expansion of logistic hubs in Montreal over five years and that in 2014 the greater Montreal area's 336 warehouses pumped \$368 million into Quebec's economy.

Advocates say this growth is possible because of the immigrant workforce

SAFER WORKING CONDITIONS

“It’s slavery—you have to use that word. You have to call the dog by its name.”

—Mohamed Barry

doing jobs other people wouldn’t.

“There’s so many millions of dollars in profit but [the workers’] rights are not respected,” said Mohamed Barry, who came as an asylum seeker nine years ago and uses a cane due to an injury suffered in a warehouse job.

Afraid of having their applications for permanent residency thrown out, some newcomers have no choice but to accept precarious work, notes the report.

“There were some people with language barriers who couldn’t express themselves and some who were afraid to be refused

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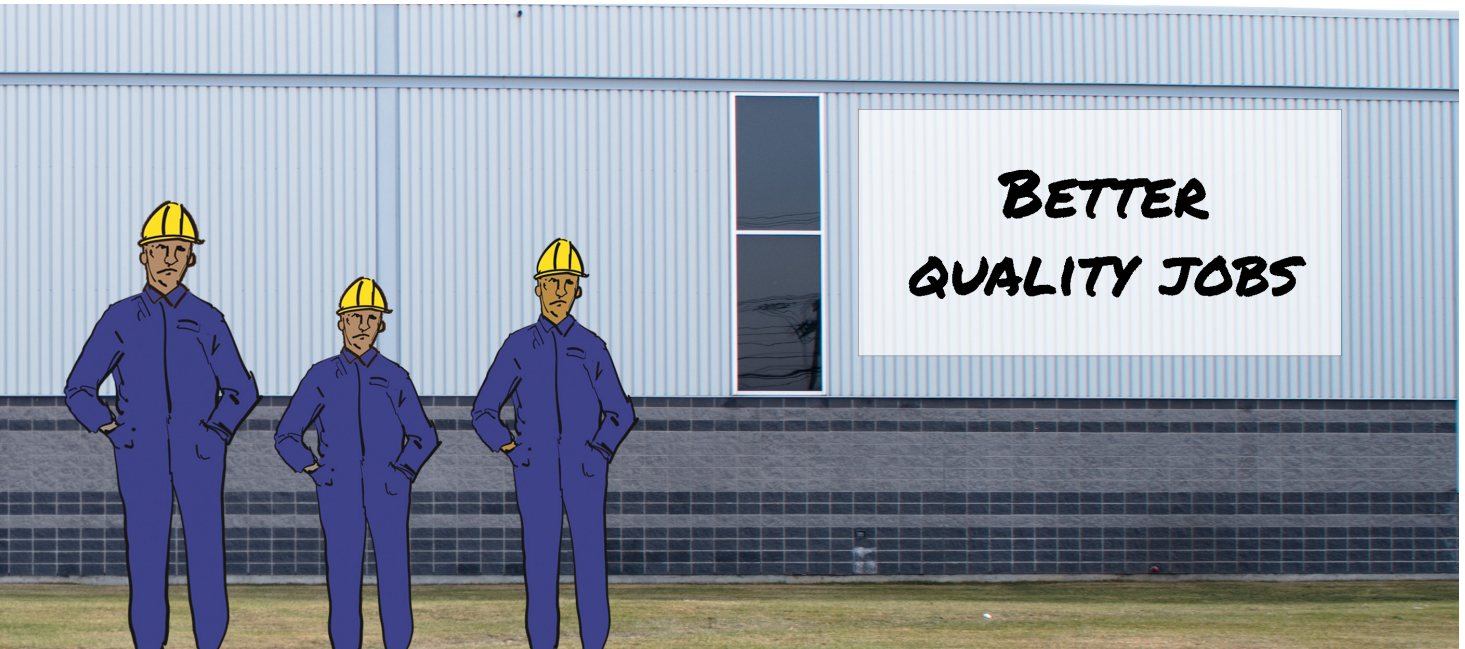
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immigration to Canada,” said Barry.

“It’s slavery—you have to use that word. You have to call the dog by its name,” he said. Ze Benedicte Carole, an immigrant from Cameroon, told the audience at the launch about her experience working through a placement agency.

When she first arrived in Montreal, she had multiple roles. “I killed chickens and turkeys and cleaned the machines. The job I had should have been [done by] two people, but I was alone.”

“I worked seven days a week without rest for two years. I did a huge amount of work, but I was exploited. The agency didn’t pay you all the hours,” she said.

“You’re like an animal, like a cow. If you get sick, you get thrown out.”

Andrés Fontecilla, Québec Solidaire MNA, said companies like Airbnb, Uber, and Amazon like to brand themselves as progressive but that “there’s a new kind of exploitation” of temporary workers.

“There’s complicity with the governments—not just the Quebec government, but all governments that are controlled by neoliberals,” he said. “It’s almost like, ‘We don’t want the immigrants, we just want the labour.’”

Fontecilla accused Premier François Legault of thinking of the Ministry of Immigration as a placement agency.

“You’re more than just a job, more than just a piece of paper, more than an experi-

ence,” he told the crowd. “You’re people who contribute to Quebec society.”

Mostafa Henaway, an organizer with the IWC, echoed these sentiments.

“I think it sends a signal that people really are commodities and that immigration is like a tap you can turn on and off,” said Henaway of the Coalition Avenir Québec’s moves to cut immigration while recruiting more temporary foreign workers. “If you want people to integrate, you would give them the same rights and possibilities that everybody else enjoys,” he said.

Henaway said conditions outlined in the warehouse report are part of a bigger problem and that other industries in Quebec are also marked by low-wage, temporary, immigrant labour.

According to “Invisible Workers,” a 2016 report by Santé Montréal, Québec’s job market discriminates against immigrants and visible minorities, and the province fares worse than the rest of Canada. “Immigrants are three times more likely to have low-income jobs than individuals born in Quebec. Of all Canadian provinces, the gap is highest in Quebec,” the report stated.

In Montreal, immigrants are almost twice as likely to be unemployed and more likely to have poor-quality jobs than those born here, the report said, noting that the situation is worse than in other major Canadian cities.

Santé Montréal concluded that immigrants who are visible minorities are pushed to use temp agencies because of structural obstacles they face, such as discrimination and unrecognized qualifications.

Poor conditions like low wages and long hours—which don’t afford the time or money to pursue other employment or education—also mean they are often stuck working in these precarious roles.

ATTAP and the IWC are now calling for Quebec to adopt a decree—a sector-based collective agreement—which should include common workplace standards.

The Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Social Solidarity did not respond to *The Link*’s request for comment.

Despite the IWC/ATTAP report’s findings, the launch was a time for people to express solidarity with workers, enjoy musical performances and a Guinean feast, and continue conversations on mobilizing for labour rights.

Last year, the province passed Bill 176, which reforms issues facing warehouse workers. It introduced measures like equal pay for workers with different employment statuses doing the same work.

In anticipation of Amazon’s 2020 arrival, ATTAP stressed that now is the time for discussions on labour rights for migrant workers. □

Visual Contributor of the Month: Caroline Marsh

Caroline Marsh photographs sports for the adrenaline rush of capturing the shot she sees in the seconds before the moment has passed.

She stumbled upon sports photography after she stopped playing rugby, realizing she had much more success on the sidelines than she did on the field. She particularly enjoys photographing ice hockey due to the fast pace, and rugby, the sport she fell in love with in high school.

She aims to capture the intensity of a moment, whether that is the physicality of the sport, the determination of the players, or the effortless camaraderie of teammates. She wants her audience to feel they are seeing the moment differently when they view it through her lens.



Born and raised in Massachusetts, she roots for all Boston sports teams. She spends her time at home photographing the Boston Bruins' practices, as a sports photographer and a fan. She is particularly inspired by Bruins photographer Steve Babineau, whom she is more terrified to approach than the players themselves. She hopes to one day travel with a team to capture both the action of games and the moments in between as Babineau does.



Photos Caroline Marsh

Vintage Montreal: Time Travelling With Resale and Recycling

“It’s Like Old Underwear to Her, but to Me, It’s a Thing of Beauty”

Nanor Froundjian



Vintage clothing is an escape—away from a fast-paced, performance-driven, and crazed way of life—to an era that only exists through artifacts left behind. Vintage can act as a tangible connection to past generations and the lifestyles of previous owners.

Amanda Vandenberghe, avid vintage shopper since her youth, opened a vintage store five years ago. She called it Rudston-Brown Vintage, in honour of her grandmother’s maiden name.

Tucked into a small shop on Sherbrooke St. W. is a universe, home to a collection of garments from different homes, ages, professions, and cultures, spanning more

than a century.

Walking back from the Salvation Army with bags full of clothes, Vanderberghe walked past a storefront for rent. “I just looked at my bag and I looked at the store like, ‘I should put vintage in that store,’” she said. What became Rudston-Brown used to be a fudge store. Within six weeks, the vintage store was open for business.



One of the gems Vandenberghe unearthed is a 1940s Hardy Amies off-white gown with sequin detailing.

Another one, which caught the eye of passersby through the glass window, was a floor-length coral bubblegum pink dress and matching coat, brocade with gold pineapples all over it. It belonged to the wife of the British Consul General in Montreal.

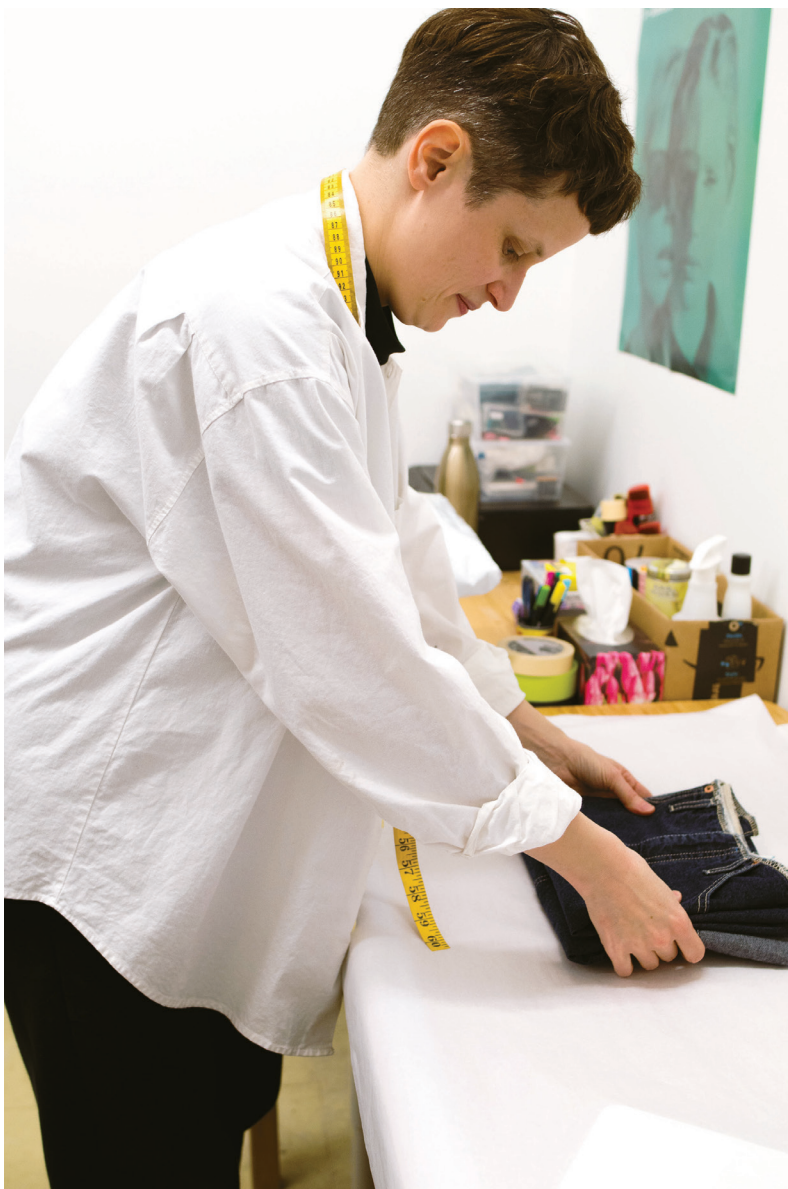
Each item is hand-picked. Few are pieces that Vandenberghe doesn't expect to sell, but they are nonetheless a part of the store—and part of the thrill of hunting for an old and rare piece.

One of them is an 1860s or 1870s little boy's kilt, made in Scotland, that she found at an antique auction.

"It comes from an era that's basically in our imagination,

Photos Nanor Froundjian and Esteban Cuevas





“This bra is spectacular,” she said, explaining that the woman she bought it from didn’t accord it the same value. “It’s like old underwear to her, but to me, it’s a thing of beauty.”

She credits her knowledge of clothing and taste to her parents, “clothes horses” who were always surrounded with quality items. “They spent way too much on their clothing probably,” she said.

Rudston-Brown is carefully curated by Vandenberghe according to her rule that each item should be at least 25 years old. “[A] vintage store, to me, means that each piece is selected individually [...] and that you try to maintain the principle of it being vintage,” she said.

Beyond Greenwashing

Fashion chains are also tapping into the vintage and resale market—usually curated or higher-end items—as they notice its importance and appeal for the customer on the environmental front.

Here are a couple of examples: H&M is set to trial sales of vintage and second-hand garments through its higher-end brand called & Other Stories. Selfridges, a high-end department store in the U.K., partnered with Vestiaire Collective to open a second-hand boutique.

Chief executives of major fashion companies consider sustainability—beyond greenwashing—as one of their top priorities going into 2020, according to a report from McKinsey & Company and The Business of Fashion, “The State of Fashion 2020: Navigating uncertainty.”

The second-hand industry—which includes resale and thrift—is on the rise, with Poshmark, TheRealReal, and thredUP as leading players, according to thredUP’s “2019 Resale Report.”

The report suggests the second-hand apparel market will double in five years, reaching \$51 billion U.S. in 2023, up from \$24 billion in 2018.

According to the McKinsey report, the textile sector accounts for six per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, and materials used in the manufacturing process—washing, solvents, and dyes—account for one-fifth of industrial water pollution.

Aside from vintage being a sustainable alternative, it is a sure way not to come across an outfit twin when you’re out and about.

“There’s always a desire to find a piece that, when you’re going to wear it, you’re not going to run into other people on the street wearing the same thing,” said Catherine Lehouillier, co-founder and co-owner of Amie Amie, a Montreal-based online vintage store.

She has been thrifting since her early teenage years in the 90s.

Montreal and the thrift scene

“[There’s] a lot of colour in Montreal,” Lehouillier said. “I guess there’s a lot of freedom; people feel like they have room to explore whatever style they’re working on.”

Lehouillier and her business partner, Emily Luciani, opened Amie Amie in March 2018.

Over the past five years, and even more so in the past two years, Lehouillier has noticed the emergence of sustainable brands in Montreal like Odeyalo, Nil Apparel, Meemoza, and Dailystory, all of which specialize Canadian-made quality garments.

To stock Amie Amie, Lehouillier is always on the hunt for durable materials and a high content of natural fibres.

“Usually, I’m looking for minimalist, simple, classic pieces that you could have worn five years ago, and it’s still going to be fine if you wear it in 20 years,” she said.

Sarah Power—a regular at thrift stores—remembers shopping second-hand with her parents when she was just a child. She said it’s become less of a taboo over the years, and now everyone does it. “I find things that are nicer than I would find in stores. It’s more original, it’s more my style. Every time I go to regular stores, I

but it's actually a concrete piece from that era," she said.

The store filled up gradually; the once sparse racks are now packed with colourful bursts of year-round clothing.

"I just go with my instinct," said Vandenberghe. "I select pieces. I guess it's just my eye that attracts me to the piece and I can't really say what it is." The cut, origin, and era are secondary criteria to the quality and material of the garment.

With only narrow paths left to circulate around the tables and aisles filling up the store, the walls were invisible, covered with pieces on display and lined with tightly packed racks.

Vandenberghe's best quality finds are from estate sales, where the treasures of a lifetime lay in the closet. One of her favourite items in the store is a three-piece lingerie set from the 1920s, in impeccable condition.

Left: Amanda Vandenberghe opened Rudston-Brown Vintage five years ago in the NDG area.

Bottom Left: Amie Amie is an Etsy-based vintage store focusing on pieces from the 80s and 90s run out of a studio in the Mile End.

"It comes from an era that's basically in our imagination, but it's actually a concrete piece from that era."

— *Amanda Vandenberghe*





can never find anything I'm looking for. I just settle," she said.

Thrift shopping comes with more excitement.

"I'll always find things that I'm shocked [were] designed before," she said.

Is there a risk of running out of vintage?

Although vintage shopping has been around for decades, a growing environmental awareness among consumers and the fading stigma around second-hand shopping have fuelled a resurgence.

However, as we progress through the decades and the era considered vintage extends, pieces from the 80s and 90s will become harder to find, said Lehouillier.

Soon, the generation of clothing defined by fast fashion will become vintage.

"Now it's early 90s [that] is vintage, so it's going to become early 2000s and then we're going to really have to watch out for the quality," said Vandenberghe.

However, neither of the store owners

feel that they will face this issue in the immediate future. Depletion is still far away because people who buy vintage usually have a tendency to recycle often and swap out their closet for new finds.

As someone with an eclectic style turned minimalist, Lehouillier said that if she doesn't wear an article of clothing for as little as a few weeks, it might go on to find a new home.

Also, there are still very large quantities of vintage clothing, if not in Montreal, then in the United States. "I think there is enough [vintage] because we don't need that much," said Vandenberghe.

Large scale stores and small shops combined, there are ample amounts of clothing that buyers are no longer wearing. "The sheer volume of used clothing that's available for us to recycle [...] is just so insane that I'm not really feeling like the end of something is coming. But it is changing for sure," said Lehouillier.

However, the future of vintage still lin-

gers in her thoughts. "I spend my whole life wondering if, in a few years, is it going to become impossible to find anything that's 20 years old or more?" she said.

Running a store

Another challenge for a vintage store is the inability to predict what will sell and when customer purchasing habits at vintage stores are not comparable to those at retail outlets, which sell new goods according to the seasonal fashion cycle. "Sometimes I give up on a piece. I don't pick things perfectly and sometimes I probably was not in my right mind when I picked the piece," said Vandenberghe.

It is even less predictable for online stores since customers shop from all corners of the world. "Actually, our second year so far has not replicated our first year at all, it's been quite the surprise," said Lehouillier. Since the items are usually one of a kind, the purchasing method for the store owners is different too: *You buy it when you see it.* □

The Art of Translation Bridges Quebec's Bilingual Literary Culture

Victoria Lamas



Meet Award-Winning Translator Rhonda Mullins

For Rhonda Mullins, translation is like a performative art. “The score is already there and I’m going to do my interpretation of it.” In early October, the five finalists for the Governor General’s literary award in the translated book category were announced.

Mullins was one of them, and not for the first time. She won that award in 2015 for translating Jocelyne Saucier’s *Twenty-One Cardinal* to English.

“I can’t believe my good fortune,” said Mullins. She remains humble, but her talent is celebrated in the literary industry—from the big award she was nominated for, to commendations from Anne-Renée Caillé, an author Mullins translated in 2018.

Caillé described her as one of the best translators in Canada.

“She possesses a humility, a passion, a literary culture, and a professionalism that contribute to her success as a translator,” said Caillé, author of *The Embalmer*.

Mullins is a passionate and resourceful translator, who has been recognized and celebrated for the important work she does in bringing French works to a broader English audience.

To be shortlisted again for such a presti-

gious award meant a lot to Mullins.

“You’re toiling away in your own little world, working with the authors and the editors,” she said. “And, all of a sudden, to have something like that happen—the recognition—it’s very moving.”

The Embalmer is a deeply personal book to Caillé. She captured stories from her father’s life as an undertaker, after conducting a series of non-directive interviews with him.

“She wrote this poetic prose about his experiences. It felt very much like taking dictation and adapting it,” said Mullins. She read it all in one sitting.

Caillé said she was delighted that Mullins was her translator, sharing her enthusiasm for *The Embalmer*.

“Rhonda wanted to be faithful to several stylistic elements of the text, such as its poetic aspect,” said Caillé. “She wanted to meet me and asked me many questions about meanings or rhythm details, to make sure that she understood each subtlety.”

Translators are invited to inhabit worlds that are not their own for the duration of a project. Translating Caillé’s book led Mullins to research the minutiae of the undertaker trade.

Mullins had to translate detailed

descriptions of the conditions of bodies and the process of preparing them to appear lifelike. She said she wanted to absorb the clinical aspects of the work.

Mullins spent a lot of time on undertaker supply websites, learning about the gadgets and tools used to make bodies presentable.

She could disrupt a dinner party with the gruesome details she learnt during the research process, she said.

Following the cliché that writers write about what they know, translators often end up writing about what they don’t know.

“It really feels like you’re inhabiting another person’s world,” said Mullins. “[You’re] stepping into another person’s world, and moving around in it.”

The nature of the work requires a translator to be adaptable and versatile. Translation gives an opportunity to explore and imagine a world you would otherwise never know.

“It’s the way that I look at it,” said Mullins. “I get the advantage that the manuscript is already written—you know what to do. Within that constraint there is a lot of creativity.” It’s like a window that opens up, she said. From book to book, translators navigate diverse topics, each



“It really feels like you’re inhabiting another person’s world.”

—Rhonda Mullins

trealers, explained Lloyd, because a high percentage of locals are bilingual. But, because the bookstore is a tourist destination, their selection of translations allow them to showcase Quebec’s talent.

“There’s commonalities between the cultures but there’s also so many differences,” said Lloyd.

“Reading is one of the best ways to bridge those gaps and to see what another world is like.”

For Mullins, translating literature in Montreal feels like bringing the English and French languages, and building a bridge between the two cultures.

“It’s great to share my work without language barriers,” said Caillé. “It is undeniable that translations and translators give more freedom and visibility to texts. We thank them for that.”

Mullins has lived almost her whole life in Montreal. She spent five years studying and working in Ottawa, and despite her social life, she said she felt like an outsider.

Mullins said she feels uniquely at home in Montreal. There is an incredibly strong literary tradition in both English and French cultures. “I feel like it’s sort of just bubbling with creativity and ideas,” she said.

“The minute I got back [to Montreal], the first day I was walking down the street and somebody says hello just out of the blue,” said Mullins. “This is the Montreal I know.” □

Rhonda Mullins often translates manuscripts in cafés around Montreal.

Photos Esteban Cuevas

demanding a different vocabulary.

“I feel like translators are very special people that are almost like actors in the way where they have to research and understand [...] the whole style, the whole way of thinking of the person that they are translating,” said Rebecca Lloyd, bookstore director at Montreal’s iconic Drawn & Quarterly. Lloyd feels strongly that translation in the province is essential.

“[French] culture has so many books that English culture just doesn’t have access to unless it’s been translated,” she said.

In 2015, Lloyd fell for Anaïs Barbeau-Lavalette’s *La femme qui fuit*. She said, “it’s so wonderful to see it translated by someone that does a wonderful job of it.”

Mullins’ English translation, *Suzanne*, was also a 2019 Canada Reads contender.

Since the rest of the country is not as bilingual as Quebec is, French literature from this province can only be represented through English translations in the rest of Canada, explained Lloyd. For her, translating literature is “absolutely necessary and super important.”

Drawn & Quarterly doesn’t sell that many translations to Mon-



Aiza Marks the Stage

Performing Arts: A Journey From High School Theatre to the Big Screen

Abegail Ranaudo

I love taking up space. I love claiming my space. And I love giving permission to other people to do the same for that moment in the room.”

Aiza—singer, songwriter, actress—was raised walking the same streets that many Montreal artists tread. She found her way from a young age.

“[Music] was always playing at home. It was a big part of dealing. When I was going through bad times, music was there,” she said.

“It was just always a great outlet for expression.”

She said that music started out as a hobby but evolved into this career she is building for herself.

She grew up on the corner of St. Jacques St. and Elmhurst Ave. She attended École secondaire Saint-Luc, a French high school in the Notre-Dame-de-Grâce borough. “I’m an NDG girl,” said Aiza.

In high school, she acted in the annual student-run plays and musicals.

“The big one was playing Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* in grade 9,” she said.

She discovered that she had a knack for reading and memorizing scripts. She longed for characters that allowed her to play a full range of emotions.

Aiza challenged herself even as a teenager. “I could see the other kids were having fun, but they weren’t taking it as seriously I was,” she said.

The school also had a music program where students could pick up and learn an instrument. Aiza decided on the trumpet and took part in the student orchestra.

“Music and performing was a big, big part of coming into my own as a teen,” she said. “It was a way to stay out of trouble and channel my creativity.”

Nearing high school graduation, her teachers recognized she had ample talent and pushed her to recognize that within herself.

“At the time, even though I loved the stage, I was still so shy,” she said. “If I hadn’t been pushed to do it, I don’t think I would’ve gone full steam ahead.”

As a young Black girl from Montreal, she did not find much representation on Quebec television.

“I am not seeing myself in the media,” she said. “Where do I see representation? In the U.S.”

Growing up, Aiza connected more with artists from outside Canadian borders, such as Destiny’s Child or Alicia Keys.

Everything became clear once she hit the ground running. She studied theatre at Dawson College for three years. “I made lifelong friends there,” she said.

At Dawson, where theatre was taken more seriously than it had been in high school, she gained confidence and got a taste of the industry.

“Be yourself. Shake your ass if you want to. Cry if you want to. Just let it all go. It’s setting the world on fire.”

—Aiza

Aiza said she took her sweet time growing and exploring her talent in the performing arts.

She had a reputation for being good at singing and dancing, both of which she loved to do. She performed in plays and musicals at the Segal Centre.

“Right now, the thing that comes to mind the most is music’s ability to capture a moment. You listen to a song and you’re 13 again, or your heart is broken again,” she said.

“We have photographs. We have video. Music is able to do the same thing but in a very sensory way.”

“She can sing, she can dance, she can act,” said Vincent Stephen-Ong, founder of the Montreal hip-hop and soul jam session Le Cypher.

Aiza has been frequenting the weekly jam session since its beginning. She eventually joined the house band Urban Science, which backs the musicians,

Courtesy Minus Coutur



singers, and MCs.

“Not only is she a great singer, but her ability to host and to engage [with the] audience is really strong,” said Stephen-Ong, noting just how captivating Aiza is as a performer.

Preach Ankobia, the director and general manager of Kalmunity, a Montreal improv collective, said that Aiza has enough talent and skill to reach a larger market.

“I’m sure she has many other talents kind of hiding away,” he said. “Very unique, very energetic, very spicy.”

Ankobia finds that Aiza has a unique tone and suggested Montreal is too small for her dreams.

After performing as a singer and an actor on Montreal stages, Aiza moved to Toronto, and now acts on the big screen.

She currently works for a Netflix production, voice acting in the original series *Jupiter’s Legacy*, airing next year. She plays Sierra Ectoplex, who can blast

ectoplasm from her hands.

“She’s badass, she kicks butt, and it was a lot of fun playing her,” Aiza said.

She also recently got a gig with the Canadian Netflix show *Working Moms*.

Ankobia said Toronto’s scene is saturated, calling it the American knock-off of eastern Canada.

“It’s not easy for artists if they’re trying to get by out there,” he added. He believes Toronto is a bustling city where many can find better opportunities in the arts, but accommodations are expensive.

“There is way more opportunity at hand, especially for a Black anglophone artist,” he said.

Both Aiza and Ankobia believe networking could go a long way for many aspiring artists in Montreal.

“Get the books, take a class, talk with people who are doing it. Ask questions. Pay attention to the people you are working with,” Aiza advised.

She said that Kalmunity was very helpful to her.

Aiza’s favourite part about performing is connecting with her audience. She feels grateful when the crowd dances and celebrates music along with her.

“I would be shy, but then when I sang, something else took over me. You’re just doing it—not worried about making money, because you enjoy it,” she said.

“Be yourself. Shake your ass if you want to. Cry if you want to. Just let it all go. It’s setting the world on fire,” she said.

“Light up the passion in people.”

Three years ago, Aiza decided to shift the language of her songwriting and produced her first work in French, “Adieu.”

In writing music, “you kind of have to sit through an uncomfortable, almost



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Aiza won Francophone Artist of the Year at Gala Dynastie 2019.

Courtesy Manoucheka Lacherie

homework—y kind of space,” she said.

She continued to produce more French singles and visited Abidjan in the Ivory Coast to perform.

“I milk my bilingualism all the way,” she said.

“Adieu,” her French track, is about leaving to find newer or better grounds to cover and claiming one’s own space.

Aiza continues to take steps forward and to follow her dreams.

“I’m going to leave the regret behind,” she said. “I’m going to leave [behind] the questions and the aching doubts about what I could’ve done differently. I’m going to let go of the blame that I may have cast on some people in my life.”

“I realize now, after the release, a month later, I left Montreal,” she said. “‘Adieu,’ in a way, was a farewell to my city, my hometown, and a farewell to so

much more than I thought I was writing about at the time.”

Aiza has been living in Toronto for almost a year now with her boyfriend, Christopher Cargnello, a multi-instrumentalist and studied composer. The couple work closely to produce music.

“I’ve been through so much, and I am going to take the lessons and I’m going to raise this glass to myself and to life, and I’m going to leave everything else behind,” she said.

She just completed the Allan Slaight JUNO Master Class. The internship plucks four from the many talented candidates who apply to participate in the week-long mentorship program in Toronto.

“Since then, it’s just been networking, doing shows,” she said.

While Aiza continues to reach great heights as a multi-talented performer

and musician, Montreal was the place that gave her talents enough time and space to grow.

Now, Aiza is in a different artistic space than she was before.

“I felt more confident,” she said.

She started to learn Portuguese for her recent trip to Brazil. Last December, she was excited to fly to South America for the Semana Internacional de Música de São Paulo.

Over 2,800 people auditioned to perform at SIM, but only 27 acts—including Aiza, the only Canadian musician selected—got to rock the stage under the Brazilian sun.

“[Music] is not a job I can just do from nine-to-five, walk away, and go back the next day,” she said.

“It’s always with me.” □

Heart and Balls

Philippe Sanche Brings a Rare Toughness and Determination to Stingers Men's Hockey

DUSTIN KAGAN-FLEMING @DUSTINKFLEMING

When you say the name Philippe Sanche to those who know him, you get a myriad of stories—all accentuating the same thing.

For Concordia Stingers men's hockey coach Marc-André Élement, it's when his captain blocked two painful shots late in a game last year, had to go back out for another shift seconds later, and then went right back down to block another.

For Sanche's teammate Tyler Hylland, it was when the two played junior hockey together. Sanche had missed a major part of the season due to injury, coming back just before the playoffs. Their Blainville-Boisbriand Armada team was expected to be eliminated quickly in the first round by a much stronger opponent in the Val d'Or Foreurs, which won 49 games to their 23.

Instead, Sanche brought his team to the largest upset in the history of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League, leading his team in points and scoring the series-winning goal in triple overtime.

"No one better could have scored that goal," said Hylland.

Those around Sanche will tell story after story about him getting beaten down, hurt, or just put behind the eight ball. They all have the same ending: him

jumping right back into the fight.

"If you get hit, you gotta get back up and keep working. It's what I've always done to end up where I am now. It's part of me," said Sanche.

Sure, in sports you tend to hear plenty of that tough talk, combined with clichés like "fall down seven times, get up eight."

Lots of athletes say that's who they are.

But few are the smallest player in their league, take as much abuse as Sanche

"[It's] his heart and his balls. He's just not scared of anyone. He's not the biggest guy out there."

— Tyler Hylland



does every night, and continue to play a punishing style of hockey.

At five-foot-five, Sanche is the smallest player in Ontario University Athletics hockey. He's also consistently one of the most dangerous, skilled, productive players in the league. He's never been one to let his height hold him back.

The moment he was able to play contact hockey in bantam, he went out and started throwing hits.

"I always liked the physicality of the game. I was always trying to hit the bigger guys," laughed Sanche.

While he might not have let his size be a barrier, others have doubted him plenty.

In his first year of midget AAA, he was cut from the team for being too small and sent down a level to midget espoir.

"It went into my brain. I wanted to prove something—to prove I was good enough to play in that league," said Sanche. "It was just something to motivate me."

He put up impressive numbers with top minutes and built a strong reputation. So strong that in his first year of hockey in the QMJHL, he was right away given plenty of playing time and a spot on the powerplay, a place reserved for the best offensive producers.

From there, his production soared. He scored 200 points in 210 games with the Armada over his years in junior. When he got to Concordia, nothing changed. He scored 30 points in 26 games in his rookie season, and has averaged at least a point per game in every full season he's played.

When asked about Sanche's skills, Élement listed a collection of things that he likes about his player. There's the deadly wrist shot, the defensive strength, the poise, and the toughness, he said, before laughing and adding how annoying Sanche is to play against.

Coaches and players alike have said how much they hate playing against Sanche and how much of a pest he is. He'll hit you, throw some trash talk in, get in every opposing player's face, and grind you out every second he's on the ice. He's a master of getting under people's skin.

Sanche knows how good he is at that; it's something he takes pride in, even if it's not always the most painless strategy. Yes, it will get players off their game, but it also means them coming after him with the checks, elbows, and high sticks that he takes time and time again.

He's fine with that trade-off.

"That's his leadership. He's never gonna stop. He's never gonna back down," said Élement. "He's never gonna shy away from anyone, even if it's the biggest guy on the other team."

Hylland, the team's rookie sensation, has known Sanche since he was eight years old. They both come from Mercier, Quebec and played junior together. Sanche was a big reason Hylland chose Concordia, and even played a major role in Hylland choosing Canadian junior hockey over going to the United States. His description of what makes Sanche special is a bit different than Élement's.

"[It's] his heart and his balls. He's just not scared of anyone.

He's not the biggest guy out there," said Hylland. "He's got a laser beam of a shot [and great hockey sense]. But it comes down to heart."

It's what got Sanche named captain of the team this season after the departure of the team's former captain, Philippe Hudon, who is now playing professional hockey in the ECHL.

"Frankly, I didn't envision anyone else taking over the reins of the captaincy other than Sanche," said Hudon. "He's well-respected in the locker room as evidenced by his unmatched work ethic and unselfishness."

He's not the most talkative captain, but Sanche leads by example and lets his play, production, and sacrifice speak for themselves. That style of showing up to work prepared and productive is a big reason why Sanche was named captain. The Stingers are a very young team this year. Eleven players are rookies and ten others are in just their second season.

That means only six players on the team had experienced more than 28 games in university hockey before this season. Adjusting to a new league is difficult; having a leader that has the right habits and can just show new players what needs to be done is a major asset.

"He's always been someone that I've looked up to and tried to model my game after," said Hylland. He explained that it's a constant inspiration for the team to see Sanche get knocked down so much, only to jump back up and go to the dirty and dangerous areas of the ice to make a play. When a player sees that, they can't help but think, "If he can do that, so can I," he said.

That kind of respect in Hylland's voice is a tone you hear when any coach or teammate talks about the captain; the locker room has plenty of Sanche fans.

At this point, Élement is no longer surprised when he sees Sanche take one of the many bits of legal and illegal abuse he gets every game, pick himself up and either go right up to the six-foot-six behemoth that hit him or skate up the ice and score a goal. The toughness is just vintage Sanche by now.

"With Phil Sanche, you know



every game what he's going to give you: everything," said Élement.

At points in his Stingers career, Sanche has been perhaps overshadowed by teammates. In his first year, it was the team's all-time points leader Olivier Hinse. The next year, it was league MVP Anthony Beauregard who garnered the attention. Last year, it was rookie goal-scoring sensation Hugo Roy.

During those years, Sanche was the picture of production and consistency. Through three years and five games (thanks to missed time this year), Sanche sits tied for fifth all time in goals in Stingers history and eleventh in

points. He's still got the rest of this year and his senior year next season as well. That's plenty of time to move up those rankings.

If he were to score at a point per game pace for the last 12 games of this season and 28 games of next season, he'd finish his career with 123 career points, good for second all time. He is 13 goals away from second all time on that list as well.

In his three full seasons with the team, he has scored 11, 15, and 12 goals, plus the one he scored this year. It wouldn't be a stretch to see him hit that mark if he can stay healthy, though that will be a difficult task.

This year, Sanche has been limited to just five out of 16 games with a broken hand, but will be back in January. It's been a difficult time for him, having to be away from the game. But if anyone thinks this injury, caused by blocking a shot, will change how he plays or what he's willing to put on the line, think again. Sanche knows what makes him the player he is, and there's only one way he'd ever change that.

"Someday, if I don't want to do it anymore, I'll just stop [playing]. I'll go play beer league with my friends," said Sanche.



Sanche battles the Carleton Ravens defence in 2019. Photos Caroline Marsh

Chaos on Wheels

The Montreal Roller Derby Scene Is on a Roll After Hosting the World Championships

Noemi Stella Mazurek



Tattoos poking out beneath fishnet stockings, flashy helmets plastered with stickers, stands selling rainbows of roller skates—on this afternoon, the Claude Robillard Sports Complex is jam-packed with a diverse crowd. From the arena rises heated cheers and energetic chants, reactions to the crashes and smashes on the roller derby track below.

Young children, supportive parents, university students, and curious grand-

parents from around the world gathered in Montreal to take in the second day of the international roller derby championships. This event, in which the top ten teams in the world are competing, marks the grand finale of the roller derby season, explained Women's Flat Track Derby Association marketing officer Heather Link. Montreal is welcoming teams from not only North America, but around the globe, including Australia and Argentina.

"They've been amazing hosts; this event is running so wonderfully. It's nice to see the turnout, [...] people from all over the world are travelling here to experience roller derby in person," said Link.

Montreal Roller Derby is the first league outside of the US to host an international championship.

"[It's] something that we're really proud of as a league because it's always been in the States, which has barriers



Photo Noemi Stella Mazurek

for [Canadians] to travel to,” said Renée Labrosse, co-captain of New Skids on the Block, the Montreal Roller Derby A-level travel team.

Founded in 2006, Montreal Roller Derby was the first roller derby league in Canada. Made up of two travel teams, three local teams, and one rookie team, it was also the first Canadian team to join the WFTDA. New Skids on the Block compete at the international level in this.

“Our team [is] really lucky that the league hasn’t asked us to step up and volunteer a lot,” explained Labrosse. “They’ve supported us to continue training, so we can do the best we can while they’re all here putting in hours and hours of work for months to make this go smoothly.”

Caroline Poudrier, secretary of the board of directors, head of fundraising, and media liaison for the tournament, explained that because the sport is

so young, it’s still in a very DIY stage. “There isn’t much time for anything else. [...] You’re either playing, practicing, [or] fundraising; [...] you’re always doing something.”

As Labrosse puts it, it’s very grass-roots. The players work to fund the league, dedicating hours and hours of volunteer work. “It’s like having another job. It’s very labour-intensive.”

“I think most [players] arrange their life to fit with derby. [...] It does take

Signs You Might Be Playing Roller Derby

- There is a flat oval track, slightly lopsided to mimic a bank.
- Each game is held in thirty-minute halves, made up of plays (jams) lasting up to two minutes.
- The jam has five skaters on the track. (one= jammer distinguished by a star on their helmet, other four= blockers.)
- The jammer has started skating behind you if you're a blocker.
- You've been hit by another player but they only used parts of the body below the neck, above the elbows, and above the knees.

a lot of adjustments," said Nadia Gregoire, a player on B-travel team The Sexpos. Poudrier explained there is a running joke in the roller derby community about having friends outside of the sport.

But it's exactly this sense of community that the players live for.

Yuna Guivarc'h, a player on New Skids on the Block who had previously played only individual sports, explained that the idea of team spirit drew her to derby. "As much as I love gymnastics and martial arts and everything, I have really come to appreciate working with teammates, [...] suffering with someone and playing against another team and having that support all around."

However, as Poudrier explained, the support and team spirit extend far

You're the only instrument. There's no stick, there's nothing to grab. It's just you against the other people. [...] It's very empowering."

— *Caroline Poudrier*

beyond the local market.

"It's a worldwide community. One time I was in New York at Mermaid Parade on Coney Island, [...] and I saw this girl with roller skates on her arm. I was like 'Oh! Roller derby!' and she's like, 'Yeah! I play for Gotham on the home team!'" recalled Poudrier. She remembers an instant connection being forged.

Mutual support is something that comes naturally to the people of roller derby, explained Poudrier.

Because of financial hardship due to an economic crisis in their country, the Argentinian team was having a difficult time fundraising for the playoffs. Poudrier explained the global roller derby community came together and collectively raised \$17,000. Because of this, the team was able to make the tournament.

The strong sense of community is only one of many attributes of the sport that captivates players.

"I like the physicality of the sport. [...] You need to have a lot of different strengths to play it, like cardio [and] agility," said Gregoire. "I also like [...] the values of inclusivity."

Poudrier, in addition to her volunteer work, finds time to play as well.

Photo Noemi Stella Mazurek



She skates for the MTLRD home team Les Filles du Roi and participates in the men's league. For her, she explained, exercise is therapy.

"I was not in a good time in my life. [...] I was depressed and looking for some direction," recalled Poudrier.

"I had a lot of aggressivity, because I had a lot of conflict in this time of my life. [...] I wanted something physical and I remembered that one of my friends told me years ago that I should try roller



derby.” A bootcamp was starting, so she geared up and started playing. She immediately found the sport’s physicality exhilarating.

“You’re the only instrument. There’s no stick, there’s nothing to grab. It’s just you against the other people. [...] It’s very empowering,” explained Poudrier.

“It just brings you out of your shell,” said Link, who used to play for Springfield Roller Derby in Springfield, Missouri. She explained the roller der-

by’s values of inclusivity and acceptance allowed her to build up her self-confidence.

“You have this community where otherness is not only tolerated, but embraced with a lot of love. [...] It’s this amazingness of having the ease of just being,” said Poudrier. As the WFTDA states in its gender policy, it is committed to including and not discriminating against anyone who identifies as female. This includes transgender women,

intersex women, and gender-expansive participants.

“We only care about who the people are, no matter what bits they’re carrying,” explained Poudrier. Though men, and those identifying as male, cannot play in the league, they may coach.

Despite roller derby being female-dominated, Jeff Post, one of The Sexpos’ coaches, feels fully accepted by the team. Better known as The Rev, or simply Rev, Post explained that because the roller

derby community is so accepting and open-minded, gender discrimination is not as prevalent in roller derby as it is in other sports.

"If you look at professional football teams, [...] it's like, 'Oh, they have their first female coach.' Well, of course they do, because they're trying to make everything all inclusive now, but they make a big controversy about it because it's a male-dominated sport," said Post. Post explained the roller derby community is made up of an incredibly diverse crowd of people of all backgrounds, genders, cultures, and sexualities.

"It's one of these kind of all-inclusive sports where you can really help develop not only female skaters, but trans players and bisexual [and] gay players that don't feel like they are going to fit in in any other kind of sport."

Poudrier feels that, these days, being a straight woman in roller derby has become the exception. "When I tell people that I play roller derby, they're like, 'Isn't that a gay sport?'" said Poudrier. "But there's no such thing as a gay sport! [...] It's a sport where you can be gay and it doesn't matter; [...] you're more than accepted—you're embraced."

Poudrier explained that this value of diversity goes hand in hand with the sport's relatively recent rebirth.

Modern derby has its roots in Texas, explained Poudrier. She explained that a big event was set to take place, but then the organizers had a fallout with the players and called off the tournament. The players were angry, explained Poudrier, and decided to host the event themselves.

"It drew this crowd of people who never played sports," explained Poudrier. "It brought in the queer community, outcasts, punk and rockabilly people, tattooed people."

Poudrier explained that because the modern version of the sport is so young, there aren't stereotypes surrounding it yet, making it a free-for-all in terms of self-expression. "We're still building this community; [...] it's moving and it's

evolving," said Poudrier, who is full of hope and excitement about the future of roller derby.

"We just need to continue down this path," said Gregoire. "It would be awesome if we could [host the championship] another year."

Guivarc'h agreed, saying she loves having friends and family able to come out to support her without having to travel long distances.

As for her team's future goals, Guivarc'h said, "[New Skids on the Block] want to pierce the top five, so we try to have a several-year plan to do that."

Guivarc'h explained that though the A-team is currently quite strong, they are focusing on building powerful skaters in the B-team to have the best possible group.

"We can really help develop players and help them grow starting at the B-level so that we can give them that jumping off point [...] to get into the A-level," explained Post.

For anyone interested in trying out the sport, bootcamps are held by the MTLRD every fall.

People pay a fee to attend and learn the skills the players are working on, explained Labrosse, who said the intake of new players was huge this year.

"There was a ton of skaters that were keen to learn how to play. [...] Montreal has such a vibrant community interested in roller derby." The bootcamps are open to anyone 18 and up, regardless of gender, and require no former roller skating experience.

Photos Esteban Cuevas



Building a Culture

After Their Provincial Championship Win Last Season, the Stingers Men's Basketball Team Is Focused on Continued Improvement

OSEREMEN IRETE
@OSRM3N

Right: Stingers playing Bishop's University Gaiters at a home game.



The Stingers have gradually climbed their way to the top of the Réseau du sport étudiant du Québec since Rastko Popovic took over as head coach.

Last season's provincial championship was the culmination of years of grinding by the men's basketball program, and no one knows that better than Popovic himself.

"It was progress. If you look at it throughout the first few years that I was here as a head coach, it takes time," said Popovic.

"It's not easy to just come in and win [...] It was definitely a great experience and I guess the most important part is to see that our program has improved."

In his first two years at the helm, Concordia impressed in the regular season but fell short in the first game of the playoffs, losing to lower-seeded Université du Québec à Montréal Carabins in

"I think guys who are with us in the program understand what we want from them and what's expected of them when they put the Concordia jersey on."

— Rastko Popovic

back-to-back semi-finals in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017.

The following year, the team took what Popovic described as a "positive step" by making it to the final, although they eventually lost to McGill.

Concordia eventually made it to the top of the mountain last season in a moment that would not have looked out of place in a sports movie script, defeating the team that had been a thorn in the

Stingers' side since the start of Popovic's career: UQAM.

"It felt good to win the championship last year," said fifth-year guard Cedrick Bryan Coriolan.

Coriolan, who has been with the team since the 2016-17 season, recognizes how long the team worked towards a provincial trophy, noting that Popovic preached what it takes to win a championship since day one.

Popovic's attitudes towards coaching and building a championship program has some shades of the NBA's San Antonio Spurs head coach Gregg Popovich, with whom he shares a lot more than a similar last name.

For the Spurs' Popovich, team culture—on and off the court—is prized above the individual, and the Popovic at Concordia endorsed similar principles when it comes to his team.



“The last two years our team chemistry has been great, and building a team chemistry comes from building a team culture, where guys are all on the same page with the coaches,” said Popovic.

The only other people who use the word culture more than coaches might be the hip-hop group Migos and anthropologists, but what exactly does it look like in action?

Well, Popovic gives an example. Earlier this season, the Stingers were playing away at the University of Guelph. After they got back to Montreal, Popovic got a message on Facebook from a stranger who was at the same hotel as the Stingers in Guelph.

The message read: “Just wanted to let you know, so impressed

with how well your team was behaved. It was great to see they were polite and really respectful.”

A message like that shows Popovic that he and his coaching staff are doing the right thing with the program.

“It’s not easy,” said Popovic. “It takes some time and definitely took us a couple years to get to that stage. I think guys who are with us in the program understand what we want from them and what’s expected of them when they put the Concordia jersey on.”

The Stingers culture is based on hard work, selflessness, and accountability on and off the court. Players are taught the importance of representing themselves and their school with pride and dignity and are held to a high standard—not just by



the coaching staff, but by one another.

Last year's team boasted a crop of experienced players who had come up within the coach's system and grown together through the losses and heartbreaks of years past.

"One of the key things for us was we had a great group of veterans, so a group of guys that have been there for four, five years and [were] used to the system, guys that always stick to the process. We had a lot of veterans on the team, so the whole team knew what was needed to win," said Coriolan.

The challenge for the Stingers—if they want to return to their championship ways this year—will be replacing some of those veterans who are no longer with the team, and trying to bring the Stingers' new crop of players up to speed.

"We lost two fifth-year players [...] We have a lot of rookies on the team and a lot of young guys that came straight out of high school. A lot of guys on the team are actually 17 years old, 18 years old," said Coriolan.

One loss stings more than others: point guard Ricardo Monge. Monge was the team's assists leader (5.5 per game) and second-highest scorer on the team (15.5 point per game).

He finished up the final year of his U Sports career with a provincial championship, first team all-star honours, and a league MVP award.

The team has seven first-year players on the squad and after this season will lose both their starting guards, Coriolan and fellow fifth-year Adrian Armstrong.

Losing your starting point guard would have serious repercussions for any team, especially when that point guard is a player of Monge's calibre. Luckily for the Stingers, they have the luxury of being able to transition the position to someone

like Coriolan who knows the team inside out.

He was Monge's backup for three years, and that experience has been crucial to his own development.

"All my years, I've been playing behind [Monge]. So I've learnt a lot from him. We've never been on the same team in practice [...] I always had to guard him, so that made me improve a lot as a player," said Coriolan. "I just embraced the challenge that the former MVP of the league and fifth-year point guard [is] gone and [that] now it's my turn to step up."

Monge's departure—along with that of veteran guard Garry Merisier—not only left gaps on the box score, but in the locker room as well.

"That's why you build a team and try to make sure the players get better year in year out. [...] You have to build players and give them opportunities to learn and make mistakes," said Popovic. "Every year is going to be like that. It's a cycle, and that's why you have to keep coaching and keep recruiting and keep hoping it can get better and they can step in when their name is called."

The culture of "team above self" is reflected in the recruitment strategy. "It's not always about having the most talented guys," said Popovic. "We want guys who are coachable. That's one of the most important things to me as a head coach, is guys who are willing to come here and learn and get better."

Coriolan and Armstrong hope to fill those gaps this season by setting a good example for the rookies and the upperclassmen who will take the mantle of leaders next season.

"Guys that come out of high school or CEGEP, they don't know what to expect or how it's going to be. So us showing the example makes everybody see what's necessary. Maybe not [to] win every year, but at least have a chance to win it every year," said Coriolan.

The aim at the end of the season is clearly another championship, but what's important is what happens after the game and off the court.

"My goal as a coach is to get them ready for real life after the university and basketball," said Popovic.

Players are held to high standards to teach them lessons in basketball that transfer to life. This is something the team takes to heart and the veterans believe as well.

"Our role is also holding guys accountable, [...] making sure that if coach says we have to do this, everyone is on the same page," said Coriolan. This extends to study hall as much as it does to practices or games.

As for the championship this season, the Stingers are taking it one game at a time. "There's no guarantee when it comes to that one playoff game in March. You gotta show up and be better than the other team," said Popovic.

The Stingers closed out 2019 second in the RSEQ, but Popovic doesn't want to be thinking about nationals right now. "What we try to focus on day by day is [building] enough good habits to give ourselves a chance at the end of the season." □



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Don't @ Me: Instagram Could Sell You Crap on a Plate

Instagramability ≠ Quality

April Tardif Levesque
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Instagram

I absolutely love avocado toast and lattes. There is this remarkable visual appeal in seeing the vibrant colours of these treats in a photo. The visual appeal stimulates my senses, and, of course, I take peek at the geotag to see where these tasty delights were born.

This isn't really about the avocado toast. This is about how we have come to value photogenic things over the less photogenic ones. I don't think many of us would have taken a photo of the avocado toast and latte if there were no art on the latte or pretty colours on the toast. Both the coffee and toast don't need to taste good as long as they photograph like a model.

I once found myself consuming a dessert I had seen on Instagram that was absolutely stunning visually. I realized that it tasted like frozen spit. The visual appeal made it irresistible. Yet, I was sadly underwhelmed in terms of what

dessert was created for: taste.

Did that stop me from snapping and gramming the dessert though? It was tempting to get my money's worth for clout—making it known to the haters I was enjoying that sexy dessert. Then again, I'd hate to be the reason someone wasted \$12 on a dessert that has zero flavour and advertise myself as someone with trash taste.

Even if I was tempted to post it, I'd be endorsing a boring dessert to all my friends and followers nonetheless.

This is where I see a problem in the content we post and how we select photos.

Today, we can get away with posting, liking, and consuming food items solely based on their photogenic qualities by trusting people who we perceive as having good taste.

The post no longer has to be about the quality of the product or the experience.

This means companies can make a killing selling total garbage if the prod-

Reality

uct itself looks grammable.

Sure, some people make a lot of money posting these photogenic items—in exchange for free products, services, and paid contracts—but is that how it should be? It's important to be aware that even the best of us are susceptible to making choices based on looks, and that some people are more willing to post for appearance over genuine endorsement.

If someone posts something that looks irresistible and has absolutely no taste, they'll probably post anything. It might be time to rethink basing your purchases on their feed.

Give ugly food some credit: It's often much tastier. Your eyes can betray you.

Remember that some of the best cafés and foods tend to not look all that bright and colourful in photos, but they sure make me feel less guilty for burning money for Instagram hype.

Go ahead and post that avocado toast, but only if it's actually tasty. While you're at it, post your ugly food too. ☒

People's History of Canada: The History of Deaf Communities in Canada

The Importance of Recognizing and Preserving Signed Languages

Meriem Chiadmi @CulturalApp_

Graphic Chris Michaud

On May 13, 2019, federal Bill C-81 officially recognized American Sign Language, Quebec Sign Language, and Indigenous Sign Languages as the “primary languages for communication by Deaf persons in Canada.”

The bill aimed to promote inclusivity and equal access for a “barrier-free Canada.”

Spoken language has always been at the forefront of communication methods—yet an important part of society relates its experiences in a realm that does not rely on sound, where hand gestures and facial expressions drive conversations.

According to the Canadian Association of the Deaf, it is estimated that there are over 350,000 culturally Deaf Canadians and over 3 million hard of hearing Canadians.

Indigenous Sign Languages, widely used before colonization, still don’t receive as much attention by linguists as spoken languages.

Most people have heard of American Sign Language or Quebec Sign Language, but for centuries, Inuit Sign Language has been an important part of the Inuit linguistic landscape.

It is estimated that there is a higher percentage of Deaf people in Inuit communities (5.7 in 1000) than in Canada in a whole (one in 1000).

Paige MacDougall, director of research

at the Canadian Deafness Research and Training Institute, has been recording the Inuit Sign Language used in Nunavut as part of a recent initiative.

“We are really trying to revitalize this part of Canadian history that has been relatively ignored,” said MacDougall.

The Preservation and Revitalization of Inuit Sign Language project aims to record the stories of Deaf persons and their families in their own customary language.

MacDougall explained that Inuit Sign Language has a long history among Inuit.

“There is a strong emphasis on family values and community,” she said. “Deaf people aren’t as alienated from social life, and there is a higher degree of sign language used among the hearing population. So there’s not as much discrimination and there’s no specific formation of Deaf culture in opposition to hearing culture.”

Signed languages have been used for years by both Deaf and hearing Inuit communities. In Inuit culture, the nomadic lifestyle of hunting, trapping, and fishing seems to have always valued the use of signs, according to MacDougall.

According to Jeffrey E. Davis, author of the book *Hand Talk: Sign Language Among American Indian Nations*, signed communication—also used in the past for treaty negotiations—still plays a crucial role in traditional storytelling, prayers, legends, and rituals.

Schools for the deaf

Understanding Deaf culture requires us to look back at the historical role of residential schools for deaf children.

Historically, deaf children were sent to residential schools for the deaf—where sign language was forbidden in favour of oral programs. There would have been a few cases of children being taught American Sign Language, the report says.

Consequently, these children experienced many difficulties communicating with their families when returning to their communities up north for the holidays or the weekend.

Around the 1850s and 1860s, oralism started gaining popularity in North America. Alexander Graham Bell, commonly known as the inventor of the telephone, was actually one of the most prominent advocates of oralism.

Despite being fluent in sign language and both his mother and wife being deaf, Bell discouraged sign language in favor of lip-reading and speech. He felt that visual languages contributed to the impairment of speech development. Bell advocated for abandoning the use of sign language in schools and did not believe in Deaf intermarriage.

“The oralist position views deafness as a deficiency and that integration into the hearing world should be the goal of all Deaf people,” explained Fern Elgar in their 1997 thesis, submitted as a master’s student in

anthropology, comparing the histories of Indigenous residential schools and residential schools for the deaf.

In the late-nineteenth century, Thomas Widd, a Deaf Englishman, and his wife, Margaret Fitzakerly Widd, were among the first to have significantly contributed to the development of Deaf identity in Canada. They founded the Protestant Institution for Deaf-Mutes in Montreal, now known as the Mackay Centre School.

Around the 1970s and 1980s, oralism programs started to decline in favour of ASL and manualism, which supported the use of sign language in the teaching of the deaf.

An important figure in the quest for recognition of sign language as a legitimate language was American linguist William C. Stokoe Jr. Considered the father of ASL linguistics, Stokoe published his 1960 monograph, *Sign Language Structure: An Outline of the Visual Communication Systems of the American Deaf*, which supported significant changes in both deaf education and linguistics.

For centuries, the Deaf community has fought for its rights and privileges. Not until the thirteenth century did Deaf people finally gain the right to marry in the Western world, according to the CAD.

From the right to use sign language in classrooms to being viewed culturally rather than pathologically, Deaf Canadians have continued to protect their unique culture.

In May 1989, Deaf communities all over Canada staged a massive protest demanding recognition of their fundamental rights.

This included a call for schools for the deaf to remain open and for the acknowledgment of ASL in the school system, which would enable more inclusive education.

More recently, in June 2019, Bill C-91, an Act respecting Indigenous languages was criticized for not being co-developed with Inuit, as well as for a lack of legal measures to safe-guard Indigenous languages.

Deafness must be seen as a cultural iden-

tity. As the CAD states on its website, “Sign languages of Deaf people are true languages and must be given the same status and respect as any other language.”

The CAD notes that most violations of human rights of Deaf people are unintentional and seem to stem from

“systemic discrimination, inappropriate priorities, and simple ignorance.” However “the ‘unintentional’ nature of the discriminatory act does not justify it,” it writes. “Deaf people are human beings and have the same ‘right to rights’ as anyone else.” □



Sex Ed(itorial): Pads and Tampons Are Trash

Sustainable Menstrual Products Could Keep Millions of Pounds of Trash Out of Landfills

Michelle Malnasi

As a society, we have an addiction to stuff. We no longer buy things based on their quality. Instead, we just focus on how quick and easy the product's use and access are. This need for new and simple has infiltrated all aspects of our lives.

We are moving meals from on the table to "on the go," changing our tags from "Made in Canada" to "Made in Sweatshops," and trading our open fields for landfills. Everything has to go, go, go. Our periods have become part of this cycle as well.

When it comes to periods, the main focus for most menstruating individuals is finding a way to deal with them as quickly and discreetly as possible—with little regard to the potential impact on the environment. Large companies like Kimberly-Clark, which owns the Kotex brand, are capitalizing off of menstruation and reaping real profits as a result.

Every month, I would get anxious about that time of the month. The stress started first thing in the morning when choosing what to wear and would continue with excessively checking for leaks throughout the day and sleeping in certain positions—hoping the pad would work overnight. I was also under the impression I was bleeding consider-

"The products we use for our periods are not a luxury, they're a necessity—large companies just capitalize on our basic needs."

ably more than I was, so I changed my tampon more often than necessary—just to be safe.

Since using a DivaCup, a brand of menstrual cup, I've come to realize the products I was using were just not absorbing as they promised. Companies, per the insert in their tampon packages, have made women like me believe that we bleed more than we actually do. Cautiously, we use more product by changing our tampons more often—for fear of falling ill. This deprived many of us of knowledge about our own bodies, leading us to trust companies whose products are made to profit them, not

to benefit us.

Imagine blindly trusting Philip Morris to tell us about how smoking affects our bodies. Why are we allowing Kimberly-Clark to inform us about our periods? The company can tell us what it wants, to increase its profit. How absorbent is super absorbent?

Alyssa Gauthier, a McGill University student, found it hard to invest in a product that she didn't know would work, which is something that I have also experienced. We often find ourselves stuck in our routine behaviours and purchases, especially when society has created a narrative that we are pressured to go along with.

"It was really hard to get out of the mindset that the only things out there are tampons and pads," said Gauthier.

Who could blame her when most pharmacies carry very few sustainable options, yet typically have a complete row dedicated solely to pads and tampons? We are made to believe that the only choices we have are whether our pads have wings or what size tampon we want.

We live in a time where we are taking back control—of our bodies, our sexual freedom, and the way we are perceived in society. Rather than allowing hyper-consumerism to infiltrate yet another sphere of our bodies and lives, we should fight back against the culture dominat-

ing our periods.

Certain sanitary products, such as tampons, risk the lives of their users through toxic shock syndrome, and the garbage they create endangers our environment on top of that.

According to Change to Green, a company that produces organic cotton bags and tampons, more than 45 billion tampons and pads are consumed globally every year.

The result of this is millions of pounds of waste that takes hundreds of years to decompose.

When it comes to reusable menstrual products such as the menstrual cup, Rachel Desveaux, a student at Dawson College, feels that the “removal process [of the menstrual cup] is very invasive and unhygienic,” yet others, like Carleton University student Dina Morales say that it’s the best \$20 they’ve spent.

If menstrual cups aren’t your cup of tea, there are also other options, such as reusable pads, reusable tampon applicators, menstrual discs, or the Ziggy Cup (which can be used during sex!).

The products that we use for our

periods are not a luxury, they’re a necessity—large companies just capitalize on our basic needs. Be they fast food companies providing us with “food,” or female hygiene companies providing us with a so-called solution for our periods, what they provide is a false sense of satisfaction and comfort.

Rather than contributing to consumerist cycles, there are many options out there for us to explore before letting Kimberly-Clark wreck the environment by selling us an easy solution. ☐



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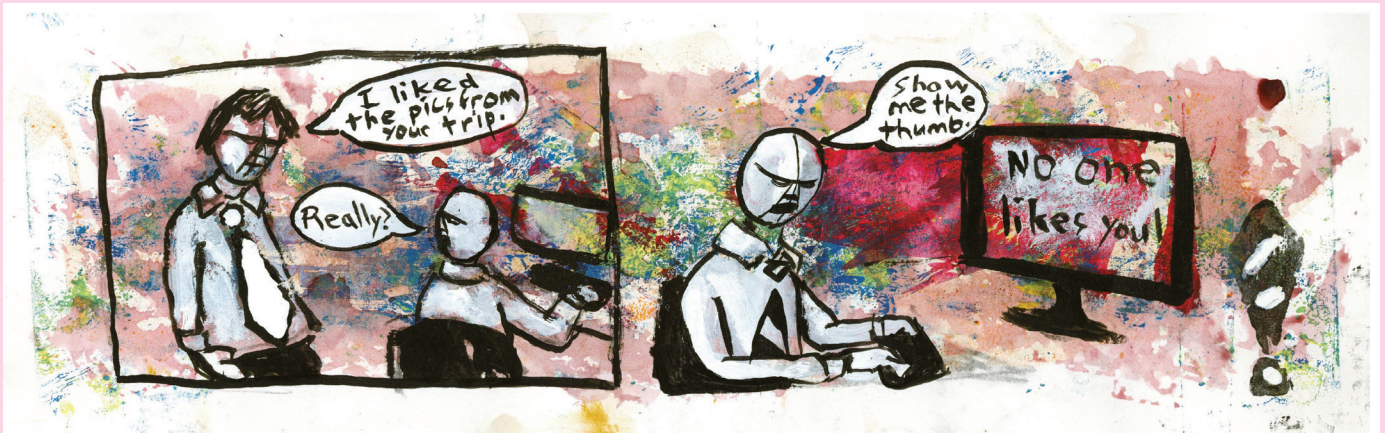
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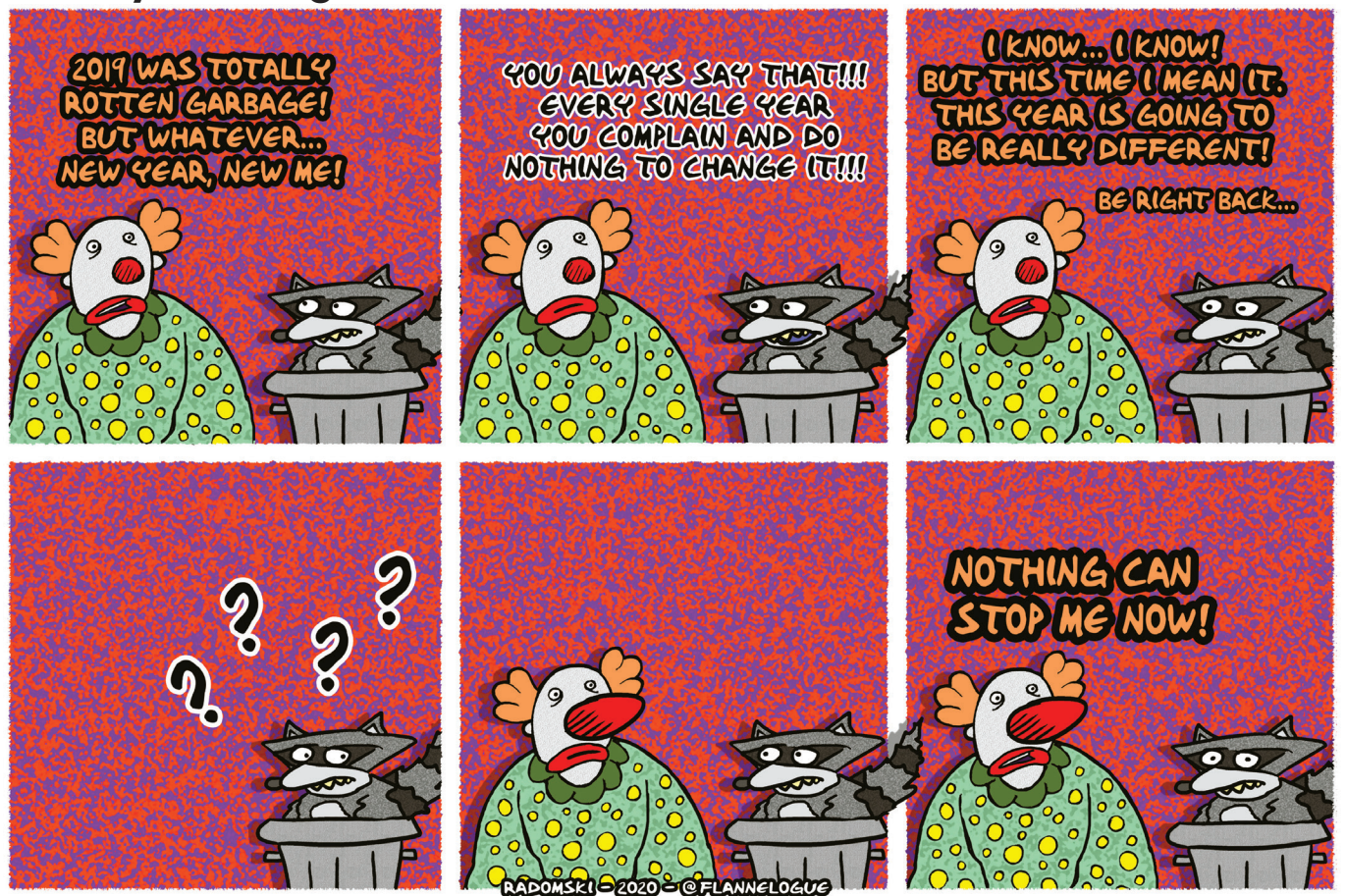
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The Epic Adventures of Everyman



By Every-Man @theepicadventuresofeveryman

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THE SUSTAIN



ABILITY

ISSUE





Happy 2020!

To those of you returning from the holiday break, welcome back!

If you are joining our community for a first term, I hope you'll enjoy everything that Concordia has to offer.

I'd like to invite all of you to bring a mug and join me for a **Back-to-School Get-Together** at which light refreshments will be served:

Loyola: January 8, 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. in the SP Atrium

Sir George Williams: January 9, 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. in the EV Atrium

Graham Carr
President and Vice-Chancellor



THIS PAGE HAS BEEN LEFT INTENTIONALLY DARK TO REPRESENT THE EARTH AND BY EXTENSION OUR FUTURE WITHOUT INVESTMENT IN SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AND TECHNOLOGY BY THE WORLD'S POPULATION.

Endangered Species in Montreal

Flora and Fauna That Need a Helping Hand

Sheena Macmillan @seenamac

According to Jason Di Fiore, a biologist and general director of Héritage Laurentien, the brown snake is the rarest snake in Quebec. “This small nocturnal reptile is actually a true urban snake, limited to the Montreal area in the province,” he said. “We could say that the brown snake is a true Montrealer!”

In its efforts to conserve the brown snake, Héritage Laurentien performed a two-step study on its populations in LaSalle, Verdun, and southwest Montreal.

“Little was known about these populations, so the first step was to identify the areas used by the snakes,” he said. The group installed more than 600 roofing shingles along the St. Lawrence River’s shoreline, from Lachine to the Champlain Bridge, including Nuns’ Island. They used shingles because they offer high-quality hiding and basking habitat for the snakes to gather underneath.

This first step made it possible to identify eight distinct brown snake populations in the area, Di Fiore said.

“The second step was a capture-mark-recapture study. The idea is to capture all the snakes, marking them, then releasing them,” he said. After a few visits, they were able to determine the number of individuals in the given brown snake population.

“Our mandate was to lobby, raise awareness with the public, but also be a pain in the politicians’ butt.”

— Sue Stacho

After conducting this study over the eight populations identified in the first step, Héritage Laurentien concluded four of the eight populations “were composed of more than 100 individuals, one capping at nearly 200,” said Di Fiore.

Saving the seagull’s classy cousin

Along with the brown snake, Héritage Laurentien is also working to conserve the common tern, even though it isn’t endangered.

The common tern, visually similar to a ring-billed gull, nests on Mud Pie Island, located in the Lachine Rapids. It faces many challenges there, putting it at risk. “The main factors are predation and competition from ring-billed gulls and the loss of quality habitat,” Di Fiore said.

“The digging of the St. Lawrence Seaway created a lot of small islands, which provided perfect nesting habitat for the ring-billed gulls,” he continued. “This, among other factors, like dumping grounds and feeding, [led] to an exponential population of gulls in Montreal,” and now they crowd the Montreal sky.

Ring-billed gulls are opportunists and have low standards when it comes to choosing a nesting area, according to Di Fiore. They migrate back to Montreal a month before the common terns, which are more selective about where they

nest. Over the years, the ring-billed gulls have taken over all of the common tern-approved nesting spots. Because of this, the population of the common tern has almost disappeared.

A survey conducted on the Lachine Rapids in 1998, prior to the control of the ring-billed gull, concluded there were only 48 common tern nests. The following year, Pierre Mousseau, an ornithologist, came up with a solution to the problem at hand: install a repulsive structure on the sites early in the spring, when the ring-billed gulls are returning from their migration. This scares them away. The structure is then removed once spring's first common tern is seen in Montreal.

This method led to a significant reduction of ring-billed gull nests on Mud Pie Island, and a steady increase in the common tern colony. In 2014, around 525 common tern nests were recorded. The project's instigator retired in 2014, then Héritage Laurentien took over.

Going wild for wildflowers

Héritage Laurentien works not only with fauna, but with flora as well.

The American water-willow is an aquatic plant that blooms small white and lavender flowers and grows in dense colonies. The plant is considered threatened on both provincial and national levels.

Decades of development have rendered this plant almost extinct. Now, it's only found in three locations: along the Rivière des Mille Îles separating Laval from Terrebonne, the Nicolet River neighbouring the Bécancour area, and on Rock Island in the Lachine Rapids. "Héritage Laurentien is working on the latter," said Di Fiore.

"Our team of biologists and wildlife technicians identify two major threats to this colony, both linked to human activities," he explained.

First, there has been a direct destruction of wildflowers brought on by kayakers, surfers, paddle-boarders, and jet ski users trying to access the island and often leaving their boats right in the plant colony.

Second, there has been a rise in the presence of the common reed—a plant

that grows tall and has a tuft of seeds at the top. The common reed is an invasive plant brought onto Rock Island by human activity that competes with the water-willow.

"Our specialists evaluated the threat as very high, and protecting this specific population became a top priority for Héritage Laurentien," he said.

The organization has benefitted from the Habitat Stewardship Program for Aquatic Species at Risk, a federal program established in 2000. After receiving aid from the program, Héritage Laurentien started a three-year conservation strategy for the American water-willows on Rock Island—an admittedly ambitious project worth more than \$100,000 over three years, said Di Fiore.

He said the project includes a survey of the water-willow population, a permanent dock to prevent boats from getting on the island through the plants, a guardian during the summer to raise awareness with the site's users, measures to control the common reed population, and training the kayak and surfboard rental company's staff to inform clients about the presence of the water-willow.

"So far, the results are amazing. Rock Island's users are much more aware of the importance to protect the American water-willow," he said. "There is still some work to do, and we are currently working on extending the project for another three years."

Protecting greener pastures in l'Anse-à-l'Orme

In the borough of Pierrefonds-Roxboro, the City of Montreal was planning to develop more than 5,000 housing units on 185 hectares of unused agricultural land, adjacent to an ecologically rich forest in l'Anse-à-l'Orme. Sauvons l'Anse-à-l'Orme was created primarily to combat the housing project, but also to enrich the land in l'Anse-à-l'Orme. The housing project would have stretched from the east of the Elm River to western



“We’ve filled up our island with concrete surfaces and not enough natural surfaces. Now we have to manage all of that rain water.”

— Sue Stacho

Pierrefonds, according to Sue Stacho co-founder of Sauvons l’Anse-à-l’Orme.

“Our mandate was to lobby, raise awareness with the public, but also be a pain in the politicians’ butt,” said Stacho.

Pierrefonds experienced recurring flooding, a calamity for many residents, but Stacho thinks it encouraged Valérie Plante to side with Sauvons l’Anse-à-l’Orme.

“If the housing development went through, the 10,000-plus people living there would be in a prime flooding zone,” said Stacho. “When the municipal elections came around in 2017, we had Projet Montréal already well on board with protecting the land. When [Plante] became mayor, we were in. [...] She followed through with her promise, which is the first time I’ve ever seen that happen.” Because the land was left untouched by developers, the open fields were able to absorb some of the water overflowing from the Rivière-des-Prairies during the 2017 floods.

When flood water hits concrete, Stacho said, it has to flow down to the street, to

the sewer, through to pipes, then to the river. In turn, the river overflows because it’s taking in too much water. With open fields, however, water flows more gradually into the river, so it does not get overwhelmed as quickly.

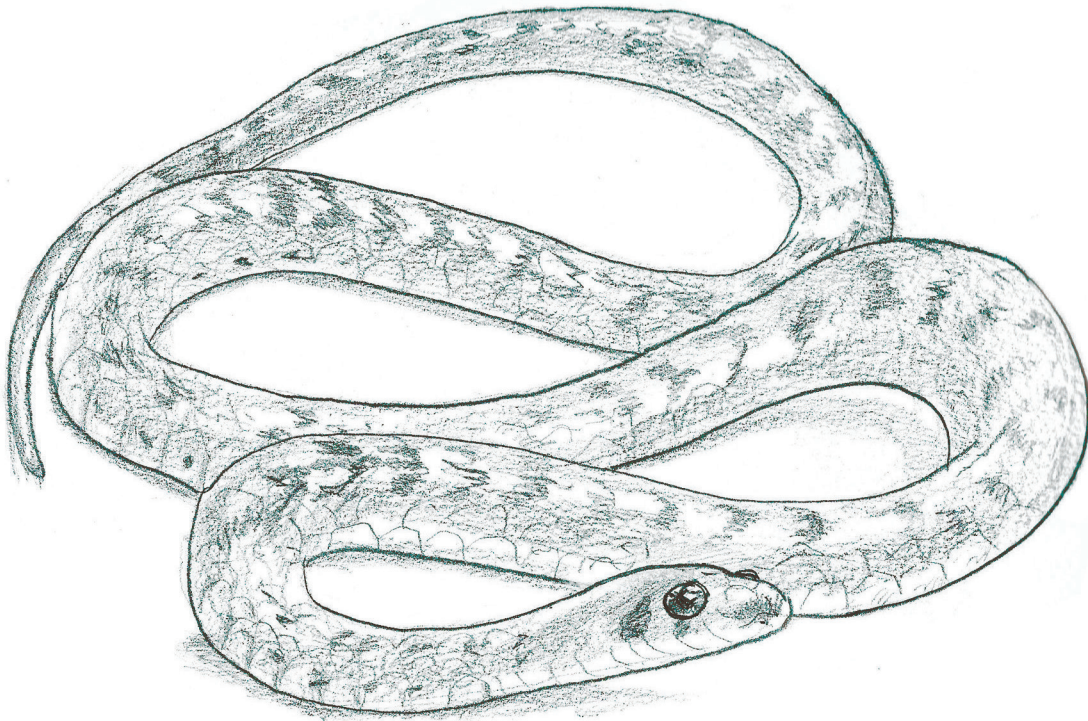
“We’ve filled up our island with concrete surfaces and not enough natural surfaces. Now we have to manage all of that rain water,” she said. “When you have vast areas that are left natural, it’s managing the water.”

Most of the species living in the site neighbouring the l’Anse-à-l’Orme Nature Park are endangered because of a loss of habitat, said Stacho.

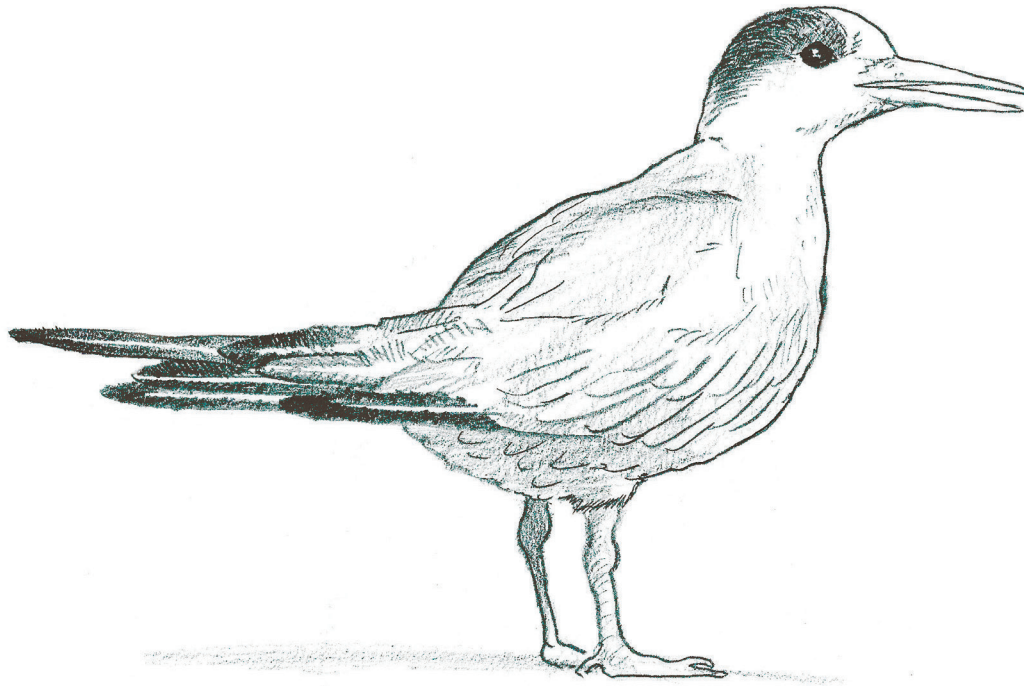
What’s a bobolink bird without a meadow?

Amongst the animals living on the site is the bobolink bird. These, Stacho explained, nest in meadows.

“Meadows occur when land has been cultivated and left to grow back. Even in cultivated land, bobolinks will nest. [...] As long as that grass, that growth is not cut back, the bobolinks have their nesting site,” explained Stacho.



Graphics
Joey Bruce



“They live right on the edge of fields; they’re very vulnerable. Their nesting sites are often damaged from agricultural practices,” she said.

L’Anse-à-l’Orme is full of meadows, making it perfect for bobolinks. Terrain like this is rare in Montreal, making this site unique. The land was being cultivated up until the early 2000s, said Stacho, and has been regrowing since.

“The land is coming back to the forest, and it supplies habitat for all different kinds of wildlife,” she said.

Stacho feels it’s important for everyone to connect with nature and grow attached to the greenspaces around them.

People already have an innate love for animals and pretty pictures, but to be standing in a wide-open field—watching the grass move, looking up at the vast open sky above you—feels special, she said.

“There are very well-established paths. They look kind of like tractor roads that

were used by the farm owners in the past. You can follow those—you can veer off into the tall grasses of some of the fields. Each field is lined with trees. [...] Those edges are really cool, too, because they’re really wild and gnarly trees with vines growing all over,” she said.

The forested area of the site has been protected for a long time, Stacho explained, meaning it’s grown much denser than the rest of the area.

“If you veer off into that, then you’re under this canopy of century-old trees,” she said. “The nice thing about summer is that the forest gets a break from us, because it’s so buggy.”

The wetlands nearby contribute to the abundance of insects found in the forest. While the bugs drive the humans out, they present birds with a wide array of dinner options.

Shoreline birds and frogs live in the site’s wetlands. There’s also a river within the site, which also lives in the site’s wet-

lands, is in decline because its habitats around Montreal are either being filled or dried up, said Stacho.

The fields, forest, and wetlands have created a buffet for all of the animals living in the site. In the spring, bees and other pollinating insects turn the fields into blossoming gardens.

Until recently, the protected site neighboured private property. According to Stacho, the municipal government has purchased the private property from its owners to grow the size of the protected site and add it to the park.

Connecting with the greenspaces in Montreal runs through the core of saving the city’s endangered species.

Walking through the site in L’Anse-à-l’Orme or the trails on Mount Royal raises one’s awareness of the flora and fauna living here. Keeping the environment in mind is a small action anyone can do, and it can cause a great ripple effect. □

How Corporations Trick You Into Buying Their “Sustainable” Stuff

Greenwashing Is a Real Threat to Solving Climate Change

Olivier Cadotte @OlivierCadotte

As the climate disaster inches its way closer and closer to us, we are being told as a society to do our part. It's often the same corporations that are doing much of the damage to the environment doing that pushing.

Late-stage capitalist businesses have, of course, found a variety of ways to encourage change from others while not changing any of their own methods of operation. One particularly dangerous way is greenwashing.

Greenwashing is when you advertise your product or brand as being better for the environment than it actually is.

Greenwashing can be roughly categorized by misleading changes and misleading terminology and packaging.

Why is it so dangerous? Here's the deal: a lot of people actually do want to make changes to help the environment.

According to a Nielsen report, 73 per cent of global consumers say they would definitely or probably change their consuming habits to reduce their

environmental impact. With that large majority, corporations would be throwing money away not being sustainable, right? Of course, sustainability means changing production methods, training, modernization, and a whole lot more costs that would put a dent in their revenues. The solution? Misleading advertising, or **greenwashing**!

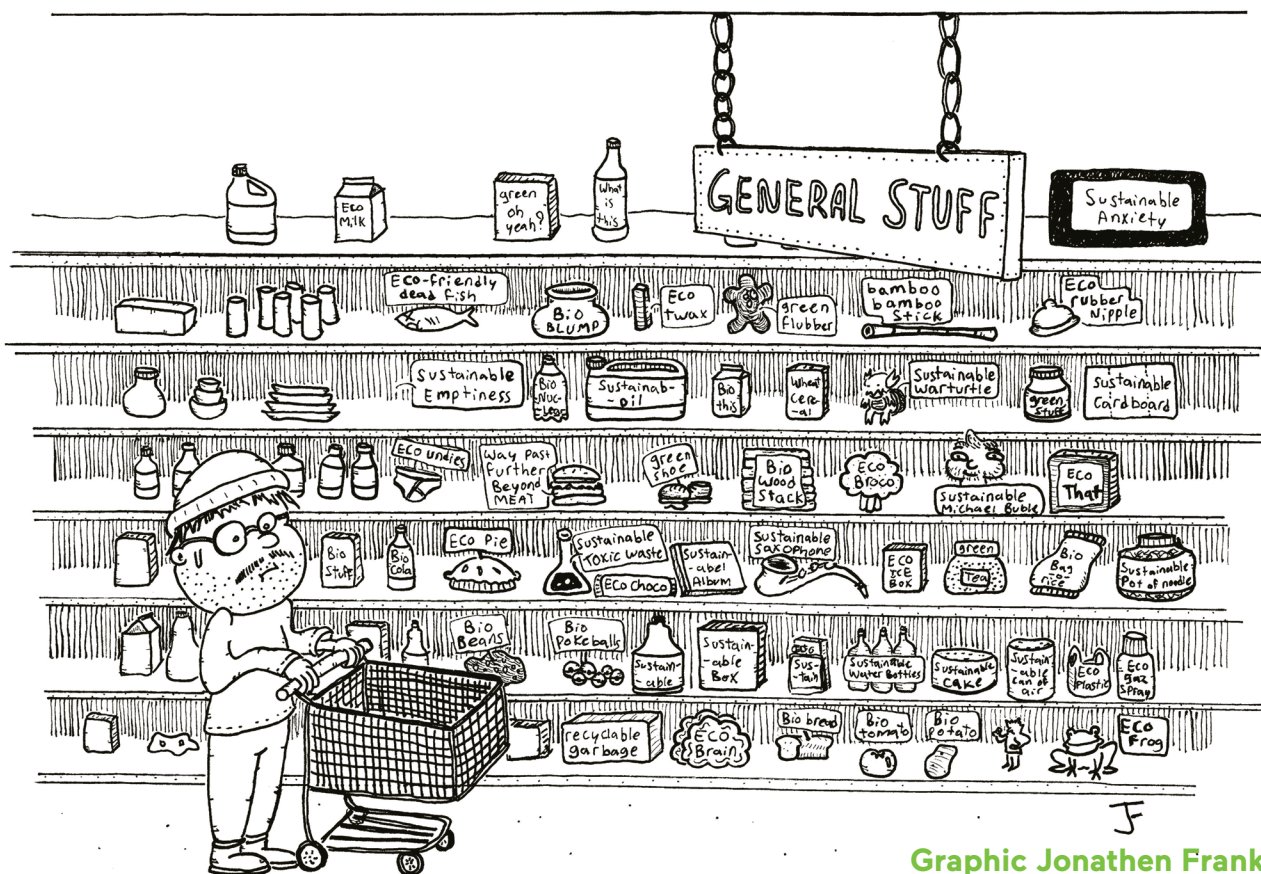
Let's look at misleading changes first. This is when a company makes a change for a reason other than sustainability, or that has a negative trade-off, then advertises that change as being eco-friendly. There's a few examples: advertising something without chlorofluorocarbons when they have been heavily restricted for 40 years; packaging being reduced to cut costs; or clothing made from recycled fibers fabricated in sweatshops.

This kind of **greenwashing** is less obvious to spot without knowing what's going on behind the scenes, which makes it all the more difficult for a consumer to know when they are being

“Late-stage capitalist businesses have, of course, found a variety of ways to encourage change from others while we not changing any of their own methods of operation.”

duped by marketing.

I'd like to stress that I am not shaming consumers for falling for the tricks of marketers when facing greenwashed products. These corporations shouldn't be lying about their products to make a quick buck, and it's already hard enough



Graphic Jonathon Franken

to survive for many people, so putting the blame on them for a dirty marketing trick is just unfair.

Luckily, the second big **greenwashing** category is much easier to spot. Here, the advertisement of the product is being misleading, vague, and sometimes just plain untruthful. There are a few handy ways to tell when a product is being **greenwashed** in this method. The packaging might use colours associated with eco-friendliness, like green, but also earthier colours or softer pastel greens and yellows, with pictures of plants or cute animals on the plastic packaging (think laundry detergent or dish soap).

There are also vague guarantees or certifications that aren't backed up by anything or that have made-up classifications. They can feature claims of their eco-friendliness that seem to be from third-party groups, but the claim or the group are actually made up. Or, they claim to be "best in class," which makes them seem good by comparison when they are only barely better than they're competi-

tors. Finally, sometimes companies just straight up lie about how eco-friendly they are. In 2015, it was discovered that Volkswagen had been cheating laboratory emissions testing on their turbo-charged diesel cars, which they had advertised for years as using "clean diesel technology." In reality, they had been producing up to 40 times more nitrogen oxide than permitted under the United States' laws.

Why **greenwash**? For one, you have to increase costs to make a product that's actually more sustainable, with all of the overhaul in business structure and strategy that goes with making a real change. Why worry about that as a company when you can amass goodwill for minimal costs? There is also the question of brand loyalty.

One of the most important aspects of marketing, brand loyalty happens when a consumer buys the same brand or product, no matter the price or competition. What could be better then, for your typical loyal consumer, if the product they usually buy anyway has nice new packaging that says "RECYCLABLE!" or "CERTIFIED

ORGANIC!" For the company, it's a win-win scenario: the consumer will feel good about buying a seemingly sustainable product, and is more likely to buy it again if they are satisfied, and all it cost you was developing a marketing strategy.

Of course, the environment is the big loser in this transaction.

Because **greenwashing** is so prevalent, it's hard to distinguish what's a real sustainable product and what is just marketing trickery, which ultimately means the failure of preventing climate change by shopping sustainably in this current system.

Corporations are willing to trick you into buying the same products by making the box green and lying to you to save a buck. No wonder they are the biggest contributors to climate change.

So, the next time you're at a big-box store (or shopping online, it is 2020 after all) and you see that a product is claiming to be eco-friendly, but in a vague way, ask yourself: Am I being **greenwashed**? ☒

Human Nature vs. Is There a Victor?

Make Like the Lorax and Fight for All Beings' Right to Life.

Reina Ephraim

If you were told that the price of being human is to be the world's greatest enemy, would you be shocked, confused, offended, or curious? [26] Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

[27] So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them;

male and female he created them.

[28] God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Most religious scriptures assure followers that the world was made for human dominion. Genesis 1:26–28 sticks by this, as presented by the passages above (NIV). That means that we may treat nature and its beings as we wish because the world is ours to do with as we please, right?

According to the Bible, the garden of Eden was a utopian representation of godliness and perfection that existed

thousands of years ago. Sadly, this is not what our ecological climate is facing today. In fact, if we were to go by biblical scripture today, it seems as though the dominion of humankind has led to the world's climate crisis.

Still confused? Don't worry, I'm here to help.

Welcome to a short discourse on the interpretation of interactions between human and nonhuman animals. Take a seat and grab yourself a cup of coffee, because there is a lot to digest.

Tell me, reader: Who among us wants to destroy the world?

Now, you're probably thinking this is a ridiculous question—ridiculous because nobody actually wishes such an ill fate upon the world. This, however, is not entirely true as we contribute to the destruction of the world every day when we put our needs before that of other life forms.

Daniel Quinn's novel, *Ishmael*, best answers this. "You are captives of a civilizational system that more or less compels you to go on destroying the world in order to live [...] You are captives—and you have made a captive of the world itself." According to Quinn, we are captives of our inner god-complexes. This is what's at stake.

Humankind has been diagnosed with a sickening disease: speciesism.

Peter Singer is one of the first to coin the term "speciesism" in his book widely considered a pillar in the animal liberation movement, *Animal Liberation*. He defines it as "a prejudice or attitude of bias in favor of the interests of members of one's own species and against those of members of other species."

Let's take the example of pain. In order to fulfill our own needs, humans are ready to acquire resources by whatever means necessary, even if that means killing or abusing members of another species. The problem with this lies in our readiness to cause pain for the benefit of human interest. It's hypocritical, considering we would not willingly afflict the same pain to our kind.

As Singer says, "most human beings are speciesist in their readiness to kill other animals when they would not kill human beings." He calls this "the sanctity of human life," which pushes the belief that human life is sacrosanct, which is in itself speciesist.

Marion Achoulias has taught courses on cultural studies and comparative religion, with a focus on the cultural aspects of speciesism and anti-speciesist advocacy at Concordia University. An activist herself, she has volunteered at farm sanctuaries in Quebec like R&R Refuge and SAFE, taught courses, and developed teaching materials for chil-

S. Mother Nature:

“Rats display empathy, chickens enjoy play, pigs outperform three-year-old human children on cognition tests, fish have memory, bees can get depressed. Cows have personalities—while some are shy, others are playful, even mischievous.”

—Marion Achoulias

dren. “To justify such extreme violence, we must turn a blind eye to the needs and interests of animals,” she said. “Such discrimination based on species-membership and body/cognition/ability divergence is called speciesism.”

When we consider this, one thing is clear: The dominant discriminatory ideology of speciesism is invisible to corporate and government power. Moreso, “France, Canada, even Quebec [more specifically] are among some of the most speciesist societies,” according to Carl Saucier-Bouffard, professor of Animal and Environmental Ethics at Dawson College.

There is no limit to what we as humans cannot do, even the most inhumane of things. To paint a picture, let’s take the concept of pain affliction on animals to the slaughterhouse.

Did you know that some species, mostly mammals and birds, react similarly if not exactly the same as humans when faced with danger? Behavioural traits include writhing, facial contortions, moaning, yelping, and appearance of fear. Physiological traits include rise and fall in blood pressure, dilated pupils, perspiration, and many more. There is even research that suggests that animals share similar emotional traits as humans, which are located in the cerebral cortex.

According to Achoulias, “rats dis-

play empathy, chickens enjoy play, pigs outperform three-year-old children on cognition tests, fish have memory, bees can get depressed. Cows have personalities—while some are shy, others are playful, even mischievous.”

Eighteenth century French philosopher Voltaire’s discourse, *Bêtes*, makes similar remarks in liaison to Singer and Achoulias.

“There are barbarians who seize this dog, who so greatly surpasses man in fidelity and friendship, and nail him to the table and dissect him alive, to show you the mesaraic veins!” he wrote. “You discover in him all the same organs of feeling as in yourself. Answer me, mechanist, has Nature arranged all the springs of feeling in this animal to the end that he might not feel?”

The evidence is there, but we continue to turn a blind eye when nonhuman animals clearly have an interest in their quality of life and environment.

Now apply these reactions to what a slaughterhouse might look, sound, or smell like. Worse; imagine being one of those creatures, who have only been bred to end up slaughtered.

Stephanie Eccles is a teaching assistant and PhD student and researcher at Concordia. An animal rights activist herself, she is a key organizer of the Montreal Animal Save Movement, which is an animal safety movement that holds



vigils outside of slaughterhouses.

Volailles Marvid Poultry is a slaughterhouse based in the Montreal North region. MAS organizes vigils there regularly to see the animals brought to the facility by truckloads before they are turned into produce for the food industry.

“We are currently working on ways to build solidarity with the community and slaughterhouse workers, with the intention of putting the spotlight on this egregious form of environmental neglect of Marvid’s location within Montreal,” said Eccles. Her activism in the field focuses on combining animal agriculture with socio-environmental problems.

“When the animals enter the slaughterhouse, their aliveness is a challenge to the workers who are tasked with hanging at least 20 birds per minute,” according to Eccles. “Without a doubt, extreme force, fear, and pain is inflicted during this process by the workers, but they are tasked with initiating the killing of thousands of animals a day that are actively resisting their death.”

Slaughterhouses in Quebec are relentless and reckless when it comes to killing these animals. However, it is very common for animal welfare to be neglected in Quebec, as Saucier-Bouffard suggests.

“No one really inspects provincial slaughterhouses,” says Saucier-Bouffard. The problem is that there is not enough scholarly research on the subject, since most slaughterhouses are owned by private corporations, who refuse access to scholars. This forces academics to rely on federal inspectors’ reports.

Yet another problem arises. Inspectors are often spread thin, responsible for multiple facilities, which can cause poor reporting on the conditions observed. Because of this, inspectors usually focus on reporting the treatment of animals in federal slaughterhouses rather than provincial farming factories. The facts are usually based upon this type of research.

Canada’s protection laws aren’t doing enough for animals either. On farms, animal welfare is not regulated, which allows food companies to do as they please. Canada’s Animal Clock website blatantly states that “undercover investigations have shown time and time again that a culture of cruelty and neglect is systematically ingrained in commercial farming.”

Radical changes in technological machinery has contributed to the increase of production of goods over the years. According to Saucier-Bouffard, Quebecois poultry producers can slaughter thousands of chickens per hour, even as many as 10,000. This is an enormous increase from the 1980s. Singer described how farming factories were pushed by the industry to increase production from 225 bodies per hour to 275. Saucier-Bouffard also mentioned that “it is not rare for pork producers to kill 600 pigs per hour.”

So, what does this say about humanity? Our need to prove our level of intelligence is unwavering. And yet, here we are, on the verge of tipping the iceberg that is the height of greenhouse gas emissions.

The killing of animals for the food industry is a large contributor to the climate crisis we face today.

Eccles adds that “animal agriculture contributes to at least 14.5 per cent of global greenhouse gases, [and that it] is the main historical and contemporary driver for land-use change, the leading cause of dead zones such as the bleaching of coral reefs and the most consuming industry of land.”

According to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, the two main sources of these emissions are the production of fodder (45 per cent of all emissions) and the processing of fermented animal-based products (39 per cent of all emissions). 10 per cent of the emissions are linked to the storing of manure.

Saucier-Bouffard had similar statistics to share, stating that our lifestyle factor alone contributes to between 15

to 20 per cent of all global greenhouse gas emissions.

And what becomes of animal waste? You may be asking yourself. Research shows that animal waste is often stored in open-air lagoons, with risk of spillage.

Contamination of water is one of many consequences, in addition to residing species of fish killed in the process. This was the case in 2011, when 110,000 fish were killed after 200,000 gallons of hog farm waste spilled into a creek in Illinois.

To make matters worse, spilling of animal waste in lagoons “consists of blood, bedding, antibiotic residues, hormones,” among other things.

One report mentioned that chemical releases from animal waste contains phosphorus, nitrogen, and ammonia. These chemicals can create dead zones in oceans “caused by algal blooms which deplete oxygen and choke out marine life.”

Take that, climate change deniers. You can take your ignorance and shove it.

Animal cruelty for the sake of human interest continues to be forgotten in the policies and mitigation strategies for tackling climate change. If this goes on much longer, we will continue to give in to our speciesist mentality and as a result, climate change.

It’s great that people are now openly stating that there is a climate crisis in our midst. “The proof is in the pudding,” as they say.

Good on all the Greta Thunbergs, Jane Goodalls and Steve Irwins of the world. But the fight for Mother Nature’s protection still has a long way to go. Our everyday speciesist habits contribute to climate change, and time is running out.

In all seriousness, the boxing match between human nature and Mother Nature is no longer neck-and-neck. Mother Nature is down on one knee, and the other will give out sooner rather than later if nothing changes.

The fight is on, so let’s place our bets on the latter, shall we? ☐

MASTHEAD



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The Link acknowledges our location on unceded Indigenous land. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of these lands and waters. Tiohtiá:ke is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations.

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