CONVERGENCE

VII

a journal of undergraduate and community research

We acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka. The Kanien'kehá:ka are the keepers of the Eastern Door of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. The island called "Montreal" is known as Tiotia:ke in the language of the Kanien'kehá:ka, and it has historically been a meeting place for other Indigenous nations, including the Algonquin peoples.

We believe it's not enough just to acknowledge the keepers of this land. We encourage everyone reading this journal to learn about and actively resist colonialism and neo-colonialism in the many forms these ongoing oppressions take, and in the diversity of forms that resistance embodies.

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THE CONVERGENCE 2016 EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE
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CONVERGENCE is

the name we give to an event that brings together different people, ideas, and approaches in a common project. As a noun, it simultaneously describes the group of students and community members who together determine the content of this project by a variety of research and educational approaches. This convergence also represents a movement between academic work and community activism. In its form as verb, Convergence is also a taking on of injustice: where students' and community organizers' approaches and ideas encounter political and social problems, where research converges on the powerful territory of academia to insist on alternatives.

Now in its seventh edition, this year's Convergence features pieces grounded in struggles for self-determination in Palestine, for prison abolition, and against police violence and anti-black racism. This edition also interrogates what sustains our movements: how do we care for one another, what power relations exist within organizing, who carries out the emotional labour in our spaces and how is this labour rendered invisible? In addition, it examines how music, art, and poetry fuel our organizing and create cultures of resistance. This year also marks the first edition of the Radical Research mixtape, which brings together audio interviews, music, sound art, spoken word, and poetry highlighting various forms of grassroots knowledge.

Convergence would not be possible without the work of its contributors, artists, and editorial collective members. We hope this small convergence of people and ideas will take on a life of its own, encouraging and creating space for intellectual work that is geared towards community and committed to fighting for justice.

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April 4, 2016 - Bony Jean-Pierre, a 47-year-old Black man, was shot in the head by a rubber bullet by the tactical squad of the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM) in Montréal-Nord over the weekend. He died this morning in the hospital. It occurred during a minor drug bust, and numerous witnesses report that he was unarmed and posed no physical threat to law enforcement.[1]

Racist Double Standards Surround Marijuana

Since the story broke, media outlets have already begun to justify the violent intervention and resulting fatal injury because marijuana was found at the site.[2] Yet it appears there are two different sets of rules for white and Black-skinned persons in Canada. Amidst general public acceptance of cannabis use, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's well-received plan to decriminalize marijuana, those who grow and sell cannabis are preparing themselves to be legitimate businesspersons, and are represented as burgeoning entrepreneurs in the media. Cannabis is sold 'for medical purposes' in storefronts all over the island of Vancouver.

But Black Canadians are still vilified and represented as dangerous criminals for their perceived or real involvement with the same substance. Black communities continue to be subjected to highly orchestrated, militarized police raids by tactical squads and SWAT teams. Black individuals thought to be involved in the distribution of cannabis continue to be seen as deserving of any police violence inflicted upon them, up to and including injury and death. Jean-Pierre Bony is dead because of a bust surrounding a substance used recreationally by large numbers of Canadians, across race and class; yet his tragic and unjustifiable death has so far been represented as a minor detail. Black life, after all, is cheap in Canada, and Montréal is not exempt.

The War On Blacks

Studies show that white persons in Canada are actually documented to be more likely to sell and use drugs than Black.[3] Yet Black lives have been

1 Romain Schué, "«Bavure policère » à Montréal-Nord selon des témoins," Journal Métro, April 1, 2016.

2 Daniel Renaud, "Dany Villanueva berné par un agent double," ***La Presse***, April 2, 2016.

3 Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario

disproportionately represented in surveillance, drug arrests, and incarceration since Brian Mulroney declared a "war" on illegal drugs in the late 1980s.[4] The 'war' on drugs has not been a metaphor for Black persons in Canada, and it is easy to see why it is referred to by so many as the 'War on Blacks.'

A recent study of SPVM arrests of Black and white youth in Montréal found that Black youth are seven times more likely to be arrested for possessing or selling marijuana than white teenagers. This was found to be caused by the over-surveillance of Black youth, not by their over-involvement in the behaviour.[5] This is corroborated by a leaked internal police report revealed that in 2006-07, at least 30 to 40% of all Black youth in St. Michel and Montréal-Nord had been subjected to 'random' identity checks, as compared to 5% of whites.[6] A 2011 investigation by the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse du Québec found that young Black persons had difficulty accessing public space

Bulletproof, Alex AbuTagiya

such as parks or metros without being harassed or told to disperse. Similar practices in Toronto have been compared to South Africa's apartheid-era passbook laws by Ontario criminologists and

Criminal Justice System. Report of the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System. Toronto: Government of Ontario, 1995.

4 Akwasi Owusu-Bempah & Scot Wortley, "Race, crime, and criminal justice in Canada," in The oxford handbook of ethnicity, crime and immigration, eds. Sandra Bucerius and Michael Tonry, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 281-320.

5 Léonel Bernard et Christopher McAll, "La surreprésentation des jeunes Noirs montréalais," Revue du Cremis 1.3 (Automne 2009): 15-21.

6 Mathieu Charest, "Mécontement populaire et pratiques d'interpellations du SPVM depuis 2005: Doit-on garder le cap après la tempête?," (Montréal: Section recherché et planification de la SPVM, 2009), 1.

Justice Harry Laforme.[7] This heavy policing is often justified by perceived associations between Black communities, danger, drugs, and gangs, despite the fact that in 2009, only 1.6% of reported crime was related to street-gang activity. Yet over-policing leads to racially disproportionate incarceration; the most recent report by the Office of the Correctional Investigator found that Black persons are now incarcerated at a rate of three times their percentage within the Canadian population and that Black incarceration rates have skyrocketed, having increased by 69% between 2005 and 2015.[8]

Despite increasing public acceptance, drug arrests of low-level players have actually continued to rise in past decades. In 2011, more than half of drug arrests (60%) involved marijuana, and arrests for trafficking, production, and distribution were eight times higher than thirty years ago.[9] And though the buying and selling of drugs is a consensual and victimless act, drug arrests are often militarized affairs performed by highly armed tactical squads and SWAT teams.

This occurs despite the fact that public health and human rights experts around the world are increasingly calling for the decriminalization of all controlled substances, even beyond cannabis. A report by John Hopkins University and The Lancet came out last week decrying the countless unnecessary lives lost or destroyed due to overdose, HIV/AIDS, and the mass incarceration of Black persons for low-level drug offenses, all of which are the result of nearly forty years of drug prohibition.[10] Drug prohibition has now caused far more harms than the pharmacological make-up of any drug.

Now the so-called war on drugs has taken yet another victim as collateral damage. The death of Jean-Pierre Bony is only part of a larger vilification and devaluation of Black persons in Canada.

Black Bodies Destroyed By Police Violence

The senseless deaths of Black persons at the hands of the police, and the clearing of any wrongdoing for police officers, is not new to Montréal's Black community. Following the death of Black teenager Anthony Griffin, who was shot the head and killed in 1987, it was revealed publicly that the municipal police had been placing photos of Black people over their targets.

Leslie Presley, a 26-year-old Black Jamaican man, was killed by the Montréal police at a downtown bar in 1990. Marcellus Francois, an unarmed 24-year-old Jamaican man, was shot to death with an M-16 machine gun in 1991; though he was un-armed, and indeed not the man sought by police, the officer responsible was cleared of all charges. Fritzgerald Forbes, a Black man of Jamaican descent died in 1991 at age 22 of cardiorespiratory arrest shortly after being arrested, in Parc-Extension. In 1993, Trevor Kelly, a 43-year old Jamaican man, lost his life by being shot in the back by the Montréal police. Rohan Wilson, a Black migrant from St. Vincent and the Grenadines, died in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce at 28 in 2004, from what the coroner's report called an "accidental violent death" caused by alcohol intoxication, following a police intervention that involved six officers. In 2007, Quilem Régistre, a Black Montrealer, sped through a stoplight and crashed into a car, was subsequently tasered numerous times by the police, and died four days later in the hospital. Alain Magoire was shot and killed by Montréal police in 2013; a 41-year old Black homeless man in the midst of a mental health crisis, wielding only a hammer.[11] Yet again the officers were not charged.[12]

7 Jim Rankin and Patty Winsa, "Known to police: Toronto police stop and document black and brown people far more that whites," The Toronto Star, March 9, 2012.

8 Howard Sapers, "Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator 2014-2015," Government of Canada: Office of the Correctional Investigator, June 26, 2015. http://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/rpt/annrpt/annrpt20142015-eng.aspx

9 Statistics Canada, 2012.

10 Sarah Boseley and Jessica Glenza, "Medical experts call for global drug decriminalization," The Guardian, March 24, 2016.

11 For more information on all these deaths and more, visit http://www.flics-assassins.net

12 "Montreal officers won't face charges in shooting of homeless man," Montreal Gazette, October 17, 2014.

Conférence de presse de Montréal-Noir et Montréal-Nord Républik, 20 avril 2016, devant le Poste de police n˚39 à Montréal-Nord

When Racist Police Investigate Racist Police

It is nearly impossible to have faith in the investigations surrounding police killings in Montréal. In the province of Quebec, there is no neutral oversight body when police kill. Instead, the Montréal police are investigated by the provincial policing body, the Sûreté du Québec (SQ). The SQ routinely exonerates police officers of any wrongdoing following their investigations, in what activists and legal experts call a clear conflict of interest. The SQ is currently under scrutiny for numerous allegations of sexual assault, abuse, and gratuitous violence towards Indigenous women all over Quebec, apparently spanning decades.[13] As such, the 'neutrality' of appointing this body to investigate possible police abuses of racialized persons is laughable. Given this context, it is unlikely that the officer responsible for the death of an unarmed Black man will be held accountable.

Unchecked police violence is not reserved only for Black men in Montréal. Majiza Phillip, a Montréal-based Black woman, chef, and dance instructor, was out celebrating her 26th birthday in 2014 when, in response to a non-violent interaction following the ticketing of her friend, an SPVM officer broke her arm.14 The officers subsequently brought her to the station in handcuffs and interrogated her despite her injury. Instead of receiving redress she was charged with assaulting two officers, obstructing justice, and resisting arrest.

13 Josée Dupuis et Anne Panasuk, "Après Val-d'Or, d'autres femmes autochtones brisent le silence," Radio-Canada, March 31, 2016.

14 Nathalie Laflamme, "Woman says arrest and charges were racial discrimination," Montreal Gazette, August 5, 2015.

Anti-Blackness Across Canada

The systemic devaluation of Black life is a cross-Canada reality. In Ontario, criminologist Scot Wortley has found that Black persons are ten times more likely than white persons to be shot by the police, and make up a vastly disproportionate level of deaths at the hands of police.[15] The Black Lives Matter – Toronto coalition is entering its second week of an occupation of the Toronto Police Headquarters, and 100 Black faculty members have signed on to the coalition's calls for an end to anti-Black racism and anti-Black police violence in Toronto. Included in their demands is that the mayor and the city council address the police slaying of Andrew Loku, a Black father of five who was shot and killed by an officer of the Toronto Police Department who, it has been announced, will not face a trial by jury.[16]

Until the highly racialized, militaristic 'war on drugs' is over, and an acute and systemic anti-Black racism is dismantled, the harms inflicted on Black communities across Canada will only continue. The death of Jean-Pierre Bony must not go unnoticed if we wish to fight for a society in which all Black lives have value, and in which Black communities are no longer threatened by profiling, violence, incarceration, and senseless death at the hands of police. ▼

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Schué, Romain. "«Bavure policère » à Montréal-Nord selon des témoins." Journal Métro, April 1, 2016.

15 Owusu-Bempah & Wortley, "Race, crime, and criminal justice in Canada."

16 Jacques Gallant, "No charges for police officer who shot Andrew Loku," The Toronto Star, March 18, 2016.

Molly Swain

Precarity Bites

Let's Bite Back

During my five years as a McGill University student, I held more work contracts than I can count on my fingers and toes. I've worked at the McGill University Bookstore, held positions as a recruitment assistant, as a delivery driver, as a zine writer, designed a peer mentorship program, and more. (One especially memorable job was facilitating a Community Engagement Day workshop for which, according to my pay stub, I was paid $162.50 per hour for one hour!) Some of these positions required that I apply over and over again every semester in order to keep my own job, so for one position that I held for two years I had at least four contracts. I was all over the university scrounging for work wherever I could. My limited French meant that I had few options outside of campus, and my extreme financial need limited my options even more: I couldn't afford to wait for a job with a decent salary, and I certainly couldn't afford to risk losing any of my positions by asking for a raise, trying to negotiate better working conditions, or refusing to take on tasks outside of my job description. I was stuck in the work-study cycle: I needed income in addition to my loans, so I took a barely-above-minimum-wage work-study position that still didn't cover my costs, so I searched out a second work-study job, and then scavenged as many short-term project-based contracts as I could (such as that Community Engagement Day gig). I still often ended up at the Midnight Kitchen's food bank.

Many of my professors weren't much help as I struggled to balance my academic and non-academic work. I ended up receiving a C in a class that should have been an easy A because attendance counted for 60% of the grade, but the class time conflicted with my work schedule. When I asked if I could make alternate arrangements or do extra credit work, I was told that "it wasn't fair to the other students" and that there was "nothing" they could do. I was forced to choose between making the grade and making rent, apparently this was the more "fair" option. While I did have the occasional professor who waived attendance grades, granted deadline extensions, and gave me some much-needed words of encouragement, the majority of my academic bosses seemed either uninterested or unprepared to deal with the realities of low-income working students.

What all of these jobs, including my role as a student, had in common was their precarity. Precarious work is work that lacks the protections and security that we associate with "good" jobs. This includes financial and livelihood security –

Fuck Off, Passages

in the form of a decent living wage with regular increases, and access to benefits such as health care, parental leave, sick days, and pensions – as well as other protections that come with permanence, such as having the capacity to stick up for yourself and your rights without the fear that your contract won't be renewed, being able to plan for the future knowing that that future includes stable work, and not feeling and being treated like you're exploitable and disposable.

The outside narrative of the low-income student worker is similar to that of the martyr: we're told that suffering is good for the soul, it's a rite of passage, it's a necessary step toward creating a strong moral character, it's a temporary state of being before we can reach a 'higher plane' – in this case, a 'real job' in the 'real world' after graduation. It's all bullshit. Students who do graduate into 'good' jobs are often the wealthy ones with family connections, who could afford to do unpaid or barely-paid internships, who could afford to work on their 'professional development' while the rest of us barely scraped by. 'Good' jobs are becoming fewer and further between as austerity measures increase, even for those of us privileged enough to have access to post-secondary education. What this narrative of the nobly suffering student-worker does is condition low-income students to accept precarity, low pay, no benefits, psychological harassment, shitty bosses, short-term contracts, insecurity, disrespect, and indignity in their working lives.

The increase of precarious work at the university mirrors what is happening in the rest of the country. Whether through government schemes that exploit migrant workers, such as the Temporary Foreign Workers Program, or because of the rise of the hyper-precarious 'gig economy,' a lack of decent wages, job security, and benefits is becoming the norm rather than the exception. We are graduating into a working environment characterized by contract, temporary, and casual labour and an

increasingly precarious and desperate workforce. We don't have to accept these terms, now or in the future. Student status shouldn't be what determines dignity and security in our working lives while we're in school. Our work for the university is anything but casual – there are student-workers in every building on campus, and our work is essential to keep McGill University running. If the senior administration up and left, it would probably take weeks for the average student or employee to even notice. If the hundreds of so-called 'casual' workers at McGill University decided to stay home for even one day, the university would fall into complete chaos! We have the power to improve our working conditions through our unions and through our collective action. We do the same work and deserve the same consideration as permanent, academic, and other support staff. All workers should be guaranteed decent working conditions, a living wage, and security in their jobs, and student workers are no exception.

This piece was originally written for the Fifteen and Fair McGill blog.[1]

While not every student-worker shares my experiences of financial and job insecurity, in my six years as a member of the Association of McGill University Support Employees (AMUSE) I have met far too many for whom this is their daily reality. If you're one of them, or if you feel like you deserve better wages or working conditions, I strongly encourage you to talk to other people in your workplace, get involved with your union (or start one!), read your collective agreement, and get in touch with the Fifteen and Fair/Fight for Fifteen campaign on your campus.▼

1 fifteenandfairmcgill.ca

Rana Salah

Falasteen

Why do you differentiate between colonialism
and Zionism
Zionism is colonialism
and colonialism is violence.

How is displacement
not a form of colonialism,
an ancient land bleeds
yet two-sides is
what "liberals" falsely see.

Your oppression supported
by other settler-colonialists
they also erase us
mock us
label us
they are your teachers
the inventors of colonialism.

You fear our existence
for existence is resistance
why else do we fill prisons
and labelled as terrorists?

You appropriate our identity
you appropriate our history
to re-define your identity
and deny our ancestry.

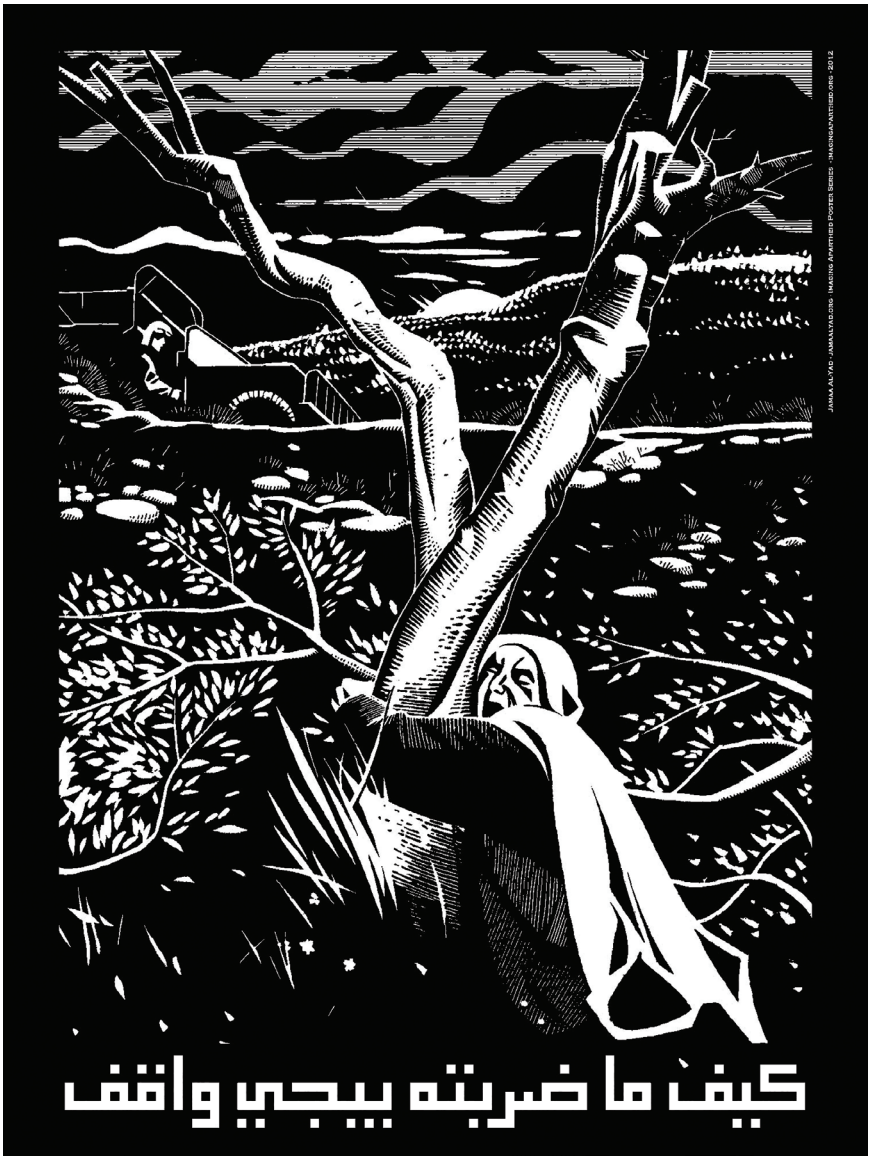
Do you think
your military
your prisons
your laws
your intimidation
can silence our
existence?

Falasteen is our mother
and we are her children
do you think her womb can be desecrated
and you'll remain unquestioned?

She is the earth that
we want to smell
without the chemical weapons
without the tear gas
the earth we want to hold
without her being poisoned

the earth we want to build on
without home demolition.

If even the “righteous” and “liberals” won’t ally with
us
at least the earth does,
that which Adam was fashioned from.
At least our mother does.
Our mother Falasteen
blessed from above. ▼



“Always remain standing no matter what happens.”

The Uprooting of Olive Trees, Daniel Drennan El Aawar, Jamaa Al-Yad Collective

Imaging Apartheid

Paniz Khosroshahy

Anti-Pinkwashing Activism in Palestine

AlQaws for Sexual & Gender Diversity in Palestinian Society (hereafter "alQaws") is, according to its website, a grassroots group made up of LGBTQ Palestinian activists and allies working to transform Palestinian society's perspectives on gender and sexual diversity and also working for broader social justice.[1] Because of its intersectional understanding of Palestinian queer identities, alQaws focuses its activism on fighting the patriarchal and heteronormative structures of the Palestinian society, as well as on opposing settler-colonialism.[2] One of the tools of settler-colonialism as employed by Israel has been pinkwashing: Israel's branding itself as a gay-friendly state to shift attention away from the occupation in Palestine. AlQaws places a large emphasis on deconstructing, exposing, and fighting pinkwashing.[3] I believe that alQaws's focus on pinkwashing is due to the use of pinkwashing in justifying settler-colonialism, dehumanizing (queer) Palestinian bodies, perpetuation of cultural imperialism in Palestine, and weakening of global solidarity for Palestinian liberation.

In 2008, Israel launched its multi-million dollar PR campaign called 'Brand Israel' to transform western perception of the country from a religious and militaristic state to a harmless, liberal, gay-friendly one.[4] In 2010 alone, the Israeli government invested $94 million in Brand Israel to promote Tel Aviv as a hotspot for gay men.[5] This pinkwashing is related to the broader phenomenon of homonationalism – the intersection of state practices, Islamophobia, marketing strategies targeted toward queer individuals, and the imposition of western notions of human rights on non-western subjects.[6] In this way, the treatment of a country's queer population (or in reality just gay men) becomes the measure for civilization, subsequently feeding into broader Islamophobic narratives, which flourished post-9/11 and intensified in Quebec during the debates

1 "About Us." ***AlQaws***. N.a., http://www.alqaws.org/about-us

2 ibid.

3 Lynn Darwich and Haneen Maikey, "The Road from Antipinkwashing Activism to the Decolonization of Palestine," ***Women's Quarterly*** 42.3 (2014): 281.

4 Jasbir Puar, "Citation and Censorship: The Politics of Talking about the Sexual Politics of Israel," ***Feminist Legal Studies*** 19.2 (2011): 138.

5 Sarah Shulman, "A Documentary Guide to Pinkwashing," HuffPost Gay Voices. December 6, 2011. Accessed November 25, 2015. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sarah- schulman/israel-pinkwashing_b_1132369.html

6 Jasbir Puar, "Rethinking Homonationalism," ***International Journal of Middle East Studies*** 45.2. (2013): 337.

on the Charter of Rights.[7] According to al-Qaws, "Pinkwashing strips away our voices, history, and agency, telling the world that Israel knows what is best for us. By targeting pinkwashing we are reclaiming our agency, history, voices, and bodies, telling the world what we want and how to support us."[8]

Pinkwashing as Settler-Colonialism

Pinkwashing is compatible with the western saviourist complex: Middle Eastern countries are inherently homophobic and misogynistic, therefore it is okay to intervene in them.[9] Haneen Maikey, co-founder of alQaws, refers to pinkwashing as a 'colonial logic' used by the Israeli government to paint Tel Aviv as a saviour for repressed Palestinian gays fleeing a homophobic, backward society

In this way, Israel's use of pinkwashing ignores the reality that queer and heterosexual Palestinians endure the same daily oppressions of the occupation. Regardless of sexual orientation, to be Palestinian means to live under an illegal military occupation characterized by road blocks, military checkpoints, house demolitions, curfews, and the wall of apartheid.[10] To Palestinian queers, sexuality is inseparable from an everyday resistance to the Israeli apartheid regime. As Maikey writes, "Sexuality is a relevant lens to the occupation, and occupation is relevant to how we see our sexuality."[11]

In the west, queer struggles are viewed as different, ignoring the interconnectedness of gender and sexual struggles to a wider resistance.[12] However, in Palestine, according to Maikey, "You cannot have queer liberation while apartheid, patriarchy, capitalism, and other oppressions exist. It's important to target the connections of these oppressive forces."[13] The occupation hinders possibilities for the flourishing of Palestinian queer communities through the suppression of Palestinians' freedom of movement and their ability to organize. Queer Palestinian activists in Ramallah, for example, cannot travel to Haifa, Jerusalem, or Gaza to meet fellow Palestinians.[14]

Furthermore, by suggesting that Palestinian queers flee to Israel, pinkwashing perpetuates the colonizer logic that the colonizer can give the colonized something they can never provide for themselves.[15] While certainly some Palestinian queers do flee to Israel, according to Maikey, "Israel 'creates' refugees; it does not shelter refugees."[16] As a Palestinian queer from Ramallah writes, "For me, Tel Aviv is the city that was raised on top of the remains of Yaffa, which is my grandparents' home city. To go partying in Tel Aviv is something that never crosses my mind."[17] AlQaws holds that Palestinian queers do not need to be saved from their own society; they need to work on dismantling systems of oppression in their own communities by creating spaces to deconstruct sexuality within uniquely Palestinian contexts.[18]

"If you want to do me a favour, then stop bombing my friends, end your occupation, and leave me to rebuild my community," Maikey writes. "I'm aware that my society has a long way to go in terms of human rights and social issues, but it's my

7 Puar, Jasbir, "Homonationalism as Assemblage: Viral Travels, Affective Sexualities," ***Jindal Global Law Review*** 4.2. (2013): 23.

8 Ghaith Hilal, "Eight questions Palestinian queers are tired of hearing," The Electronic Intifida, November 27, 2013. Accessed November 25, 2015, https://electronicintifada.net/content/eight-questions-palestinian-queers-are-tired-hearing/12951

9 Puar, "Citation and Censorship," 138.

10 Gil Z. Hochberg and Haneen Maikey and Rima and Samira Saraya et. Al, "No Pride in Occupation: A Roundtable Discussion," GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies 16. 4 (2010): 602.

11 Brandon Davis, "Finding a safe space for Palestinian queer activism," alQaws, July 17, 2014, accessed November 25, 2015, http://alqaws.org/articles/Finding-a-safe-space- for-Palestinian-queer-activism.

12 Haneen Maikey and Sami Shamali, "International Day Against Homophobia: Between the Western Experience and the Reality of Gay Communities," alQaws. May 23, 2011, accessed November 25, 2015, http://www.alqaws.org/siteEn/print?id=26&type =1

13 Hilal, "Eight questions."

14 Puar, "Homonationalism as Assemblage," 33.

15 Brandon, "Finding a safe space for Palestinian queer activism."

16 Ghaith, "Eight questions."

17 Brandon, "Finding a safe space for Palestinian queer activism."

18 Brandon, "Finding a safe space for Palestinian queer activism."

responsibility, not yours."[19] This colonizer logic also perpetuates the idea that homophobia only exists in the land of the colonized savage. In reality, homophobia exists in Palestine, Israel, Canada, and any other country. Israel brushes over homophobia present in its own society and denies the oppression of its own queers while also ignoring other issues as they relate to sexuality including migration, freedom of movement, and regulation of sexuality within the country.[20]

Dehumanization of Palestinians

As famously declared by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, "In a dark, and savage, and desperate Middle East, Israel is a beacon of humanity, of light, and of hope."[21] As Maikey points out in an interview, the erasure of (queer) Palestinian bodies and subjectivities through such narratives is a form of everyday violence committed by Israel. Pinkwashing, she says, is part of the ongoing Nakba – the Day of Catastrophe, also known as the day of the Israeli Declaration of Independence in 1948 that led to the displacement of Palestinian people.[22] Both Zionism and homonationalism depend on a continued negation of Palestine and of Palestinian belonging to the land. In this way, pinkwashing dehumanizes and undermines Palestinians, taking the colonized/colonizer binary to another level to create a dichotomy of Israeli gay tolerance/Palestinian homophobia – one side supposedly progressive and the other a homophobic culture killing its own gays.[23]

Solidarity with Gazan, Kevin Yuen Kit Lo Imaging Apartheid

The invisibility of Palestinian bodies and images, part of the ongoing erasure of Palestinian belonging to the land, is matched only by a hypervisibility of the 'victimized Palestinian queer' when any image does appear.[24] Such narratives are embodied in Israeli-made movies such as Invisible Men, Bubble, or Out In The Dark that portray white Israelis as saviours of oppressed Palestinians and Palestinians as being 'backward' or 'threatening.' Meanwhile, queer Palestinians are seen as 'victims of culture,' ready to flee their own society.[25, 26]

Furthermore, Israeli pinkwashing creates a hierarchy of bodies to further dehumanize

19 Hochberg, Maikey and Saraya, "No Pride in Occupation," 608.

20 Darwich and Maikey, "The Road from Antipinkwashing," 283.

21 Dan Roberts, "Netanyahu defends decision to address Congress: 'Today we are no longer silent'," The Guardian. March 2, 2015, accessed November 25, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/02/ binyamin-netanyahu-aipac-speech-defends- address-congress

22 Heike Schotten and Haneen Maikey, "Queers Resisting Zionism: On Authority and Accountability Beyond Homonationalism," Jaddaliya, 2012, accessed November 25, 2015, http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/7738/que ers-resisting-zionism_on-authority-and-accounta

23 Puar, "Citation and Censorship," 137.

24 Hochberg, Maikey and Saraya, "No Pride in Occupation," 562.

25 Hochberg, Maikey and Saraya, "No Pride in Occupation," 563.

26 Hilal, "Eight questions".

Palestinian queers. If Israel is gay-friendly, then there are only some queer bodies of importance to Israel; Palestinian gays are clearly of no concern. Nada Elia, Palestinian activist, says, "I can show up at Ben Gurion Airport and say I'm a lesbian, let me in, but they're not going to do that. So when you say gay-friendly, which gay person are you talking about?"[27] Palestinians who do flee their home for Tel Aviv to be 'out of the closet' find themselves in a 'closet' of 'Arabness.' In order to be accepted by Tel Aviv's gay community, they need to deny their heritage, culture, and identity.[28] Not only does Israel do nothing to support the struggles of Palestinian queers, it also uses their experience to promote hatred of all Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims – including those who are queer – and aims to brainwash Palestinian queers to forget about their own colonization and turn them against their own society.[29]

Pinkwashing as Cultural Imperialism

Israel's application of the western gay agenda to Palestine to pinkwash its crimes is a form of cultural imperialism. Mainstream western LGBT activism promotes standardized constructs that builds a LGBT culture and identity focused on 'pride,' 'coming out,' and general visibility.[30] In the west, this egalitarian fiction ignores the power imbalances among queer people and creates the illusion of the existence of a global homogeneous LGBT community.[31] Brand Israel takes advantage of this fantasy as well as of western people's ignorance of Palestinian culture to target people in liberal democracies and negatively portray the Palestinian society based on the absence of a set of values inapplicable to the Palestinian context.[32]

While Israeli pinkwashing propaganda has a large focus on Palestinians' alleged inability to 'come out,' alQaws challenges the relevancy of coming out to Palestinian queer experiences at all.[33] "You can't address the specific needs and conflicts of my community by copy-pasting the western experience," Maikey says. "You [in the west] have to be fully visible to be accepted, tell your friends, your family, your workplace, go to the shrink."[34] As Maikey notes in an interview, 'coming out,' adopted as a strategy by LGBT activists in the global north, is rooted in the act of confession in the Christian tradition and the individualism of the west. "We all have friends who know [that we are queer] and some family members that know, but others don't. In different places, we can be different people. We can have this flexibility in our identity without having the 'ceremony' of coming out. In the Western context, 'coming out' grew organically from its social context [of confession]. It's a very individual approach, from an individualist society," states Maikey.[35]

Furthermore, Muslim societies are much more community-oriented than western ones and most people in Palestine live with their families. In Palestine, many individuals value their ties with their communities more than coming out. As Maikey says, "My parents are more angry about me moving away than being a lesbian. Many people are very connected to their families and are not willing [to] break with them by coming out in the western sense."[36] Preserving ties to community is especially important for Palestinians given their collective struggle against settler-colonialism. As alQaws notes, "Ask us instead what social change strategies apply to our context, and whether the notion of coming out even makes sense."[37]

27 Nada Elia, "Pinkwashing Exposed: Seattle Fights Back!" Directed by Dean Spade. Seattle. 2015.

28 Hochberg, Maikey and Saraya, "No Pride in Occupation," 603.

29 London Palestine Action, "Liberation in Palestine, A Queer Issue-Haneen Maikey," Youtube video, 21:00.

30 Puar, "Homonationalism as Assemblage," 37.

31 Hochberg, Maikey and Saraya, "No Pride in Occupation," 605.

32 Puar, "Homonationalism as Assemblage: Viral Travels, Affective Sexualities," 32.

33 Hochberg, Maikey and Saraya, "No Pride in Occupation," 570.

34 Morten Berthelsen, "Stop using Palestinian gays to whitewash Israel's image," Haartz, January 10, 2009, accessed November 25, 2015, http://www.haaretz.com/news/stop-using-palestinian-gays-to-whitewash-israel-s- image-1.6887

35 Alex De Jong, "Resisting Homophobia and Occupation," International Viewpoint. July13, 2011, accessed November 25, 2015. http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php? article2211

36 De Jong, "Resisting Homophobia."

37 Ghaith, "Eight Questions."

Pinkwashing as Deterrence for Palestinian Solidarity

Last but not least, pinkwashing weakens global solidarity for Palestinian liberation. Brand Israel is designed to make people living in liberal democracies like Canada feel an affinity for Israel. Israel uses Brand Israel to target queers in western nations and uses their experiences of homophobia to justify apartheid under the banner of being 'the only democracy in the Middle East.' Unless Israel 'defends' itself by bombing Palestinian towns and villages, the narrative goes, queer people will no longer have a 'safe haven' in the land of homophobia and persecution that is the Middle East. In reproducing Orientalist tropes of Palestinian sexual backwardness, pinkwashing denies the impact of colonial occupation on the degradation of Palestinian culture and seeks to recruit western gays in 'saving' Palestinian queers through supporting Israel.[38] The truth is, overall, pinkwashing is an extremely powerful tool of Israeli occupation that ensures the continued oppression of Palestinians, including those who are queer. Queer struggles in Palestine will have a hard time gaining momentum while the occupation continues to govern Palestinian lives and Israel continues to create violence and regulate Palestinian bodies. ▼

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38 Puar, "Citation and Censorship," 138.

Shanice Nicole

#WhichBlackLivesMatter

Don't say #BlackLivesMatter
unless you mean all of them.
Otherwise you become part of the problem
if you're gonna pick and choose
whose life is more worthy;
it ain't up to you.

Don't say #BlackLivesMatter
unless you mean all of them.
Every single Black life
every last one –
one people
one
community
one race
and no not the human kind.
Don't be fucking wack
right now I'm talking Black,
talking back
with my middle fingers high in the sky
pointing them at anyone
who tries to deny
any Black life.

As I stand here beside
with my eyes ears heart mind open wide
ready to unlearn
and then ready to learn,
ready to teach,
ready to listen,
ready to preach
because when lives have been breached
sucked dry and dead like a hungry
leech we each have a responsibility
to speak up
to speak out
to fight for
to fight about
this drought that will kill us
this drought that is killing us
this drought of justice
this drought of peace
but still, no drought of racist ass police.
And even though it may feel like we are drowning
in reality this is a drought -
just a different type of suffering.
Our parched throats beg for the empty taste of
water on our tongues
"just a sip", we plead
as we cry out from our lungs
but water is life
and life is water
so without it we have
none. But some of us have

some. Some of us have
bottles full and taps that
run.
Yet some of us are thirsty as if lost under the
desert's sun
so when you say #BlackLivesMatter
tell me which ones.
Cause if it's only cis, straight, slim, pretty boys
and girls who look like me with access to money
and no disabilities
and just the right dosage of respectability
you tell me which ones.

Don't say #BlackLivesMatter
unless you mean all of them:
the trans ones,
the queer ones,
the fat ones,
the unattractive ones -
yes beauty privilege is real -
the poor ones
the disabled ones
the ones considered less than ideal
I need you to feel
I need you to feast on these words
as if they're your last meal:

All of us or none of us,
not one not some.
All of us or none of us,
to fight back and overcome.
All of us or none of us,
this is the only deal.
All of us or none of
us, this is how we
heal.
All of us or none of us,
together as one.
All of us or none of us
to survive and say we won.
All of us or none of us
is exactly what I mean,
so until all of us
no longer thirst to be free,
none of us anywhere ever will be.▼

reclamation!

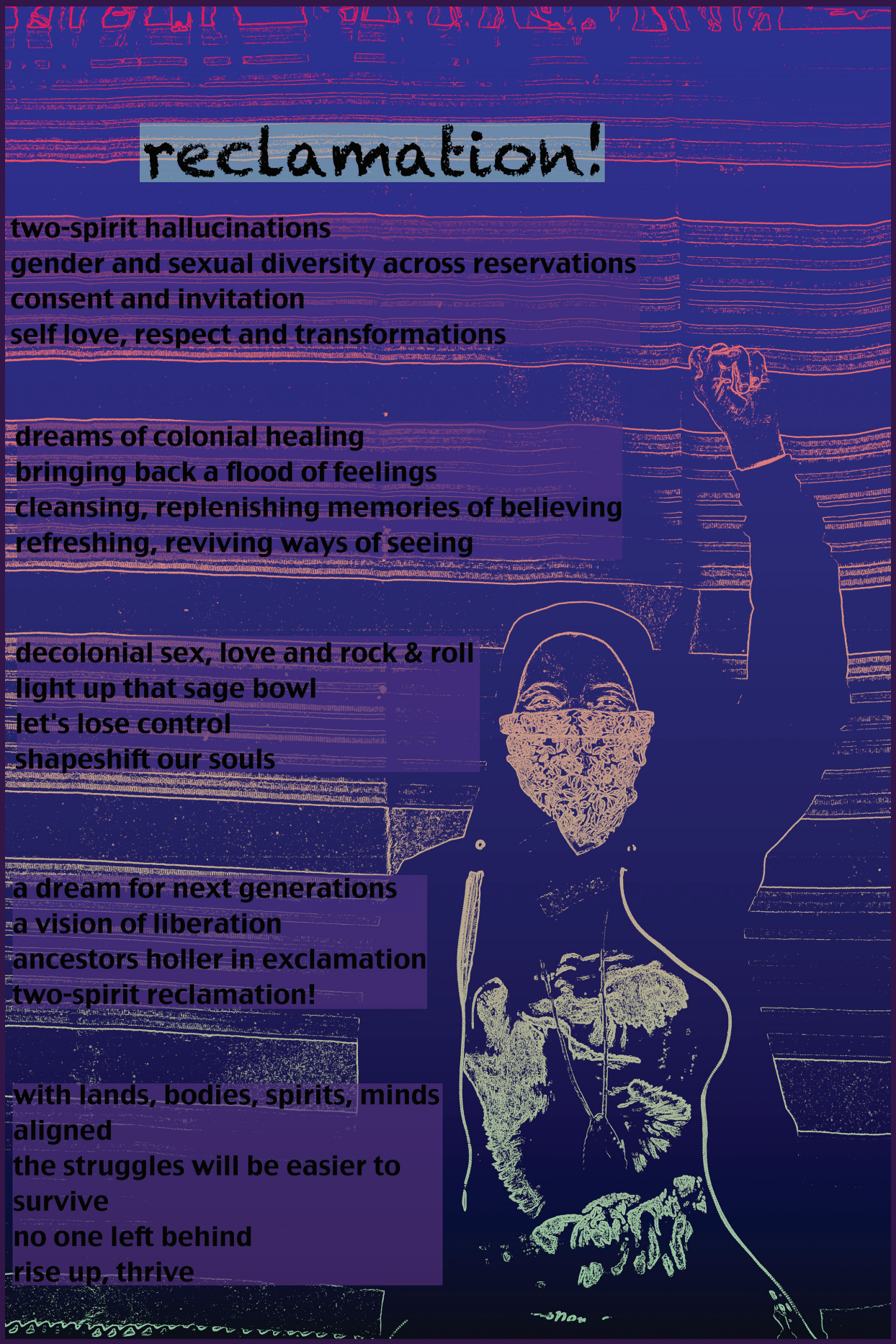
two-spirit hallucinations
gender and sexual diversity across reservations
consent and invitation
self love, respect and transformations

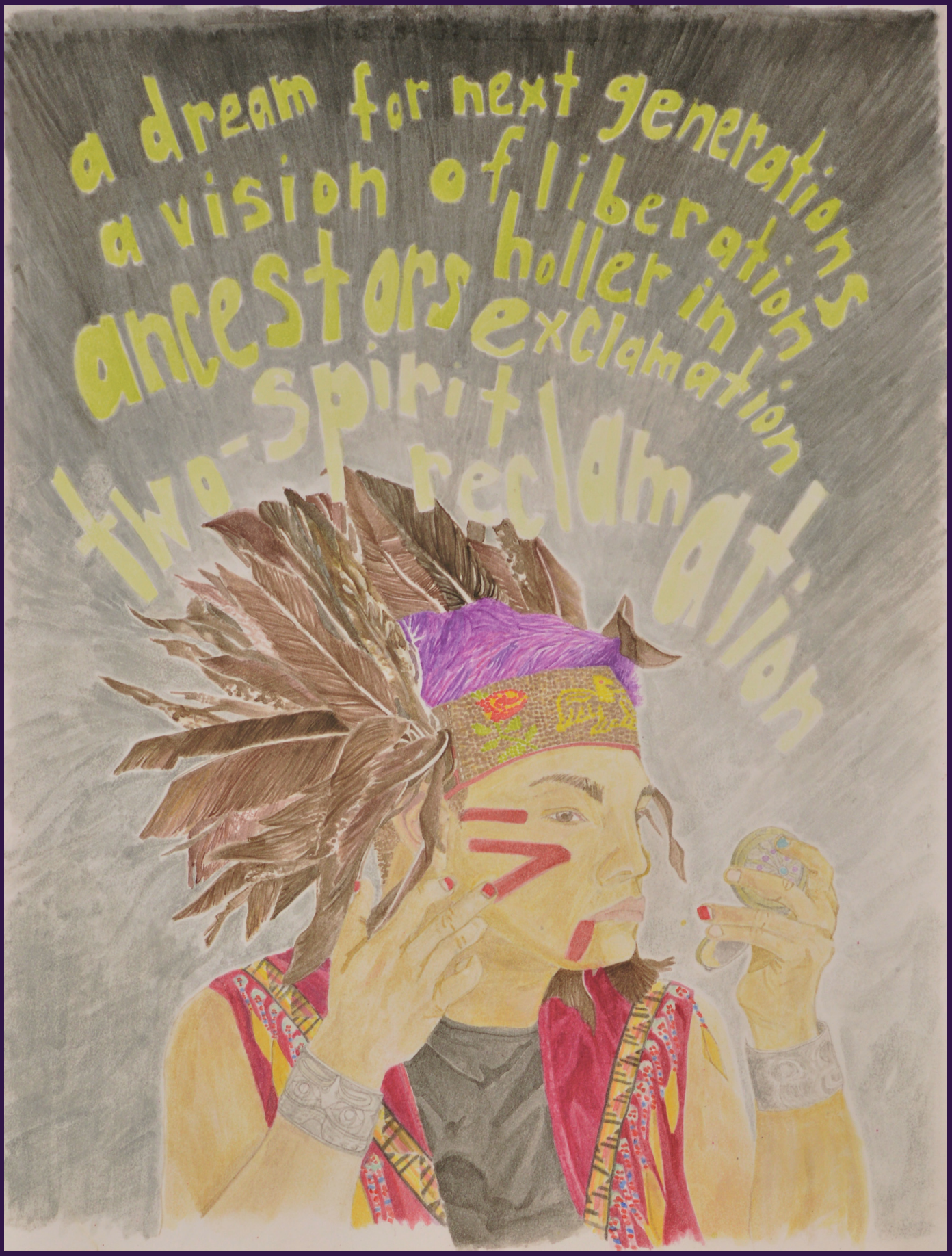
dreams of colonial healing
bringing back a flood of feelings
cleansing, replenishing memories of believing
refreshing, reviving ways of seeing

decolonial sex, love and rock & roll
light up that sage bowl
let's lose control
shapeshift our souls

a dream for next generations
a vision of liberation
ancestors holler in exclamation
two-spirit reclamation!

with lands, bodies, spirits, minds
aligned
the struggles will be easier to
survive
no one left behind
rise up, thrive





Reclamation! and Two Spirit Reclamation, B.

Émilie Savoie with Alexis Marcoux Rouleau, Billy Starchild, Karina Marissa Perez-Tristan, Malek Yalaoui, and (Maria) Elena Stoodley

Anti-Oppressive French

L'idée d'écrire un cahier d'exercices de grammaire anti-oppressif m'est venue à la fin d'une conversation téléphonique avec une de mes nouvelles étudiantes en privé. Elle me demandait quel cahier d'exercices acheter, quelles étaient mes suggestions. Je lui ai alors donné le nom des cahiers avec lesquels je travaille depuis 4 ans en lui disant qu'ils sont bien faits mais très problématiques. En raccrochant, je me suis dit mais pourquoi ne pas en écrire un !! Les collaborateurices et moi travaillons fort pour offrir un cahier d'exercices de grammaire accessible pour toustes, anti-raciste, anti-sexiste, anti-colonial et plus encore. Il est conçu en active solidarité avec toutes les personnes qui doivent apprendre le français et qui sont aux intersections des oppressions genrées, de classe, de capacité et de race. Il est conçu pour les apprenant.e.s qui veulent se positionner pour la justice sociale en reconnaissant d'abord les territoires non-cédés sur lesquels nous vivons.

(Plus d'éditions du cahier vont être écrites en d'autres langues/codes (ex: français-mandarin, français-arabe, français-créole, braille, etc.)

The idea of writing an anti-oppressive French grammar exercise book came to me when I was on the phone with one of my private students. She was asking me which exercise book she should get. I gave her the names of the books I've been working with for 4 years now, adding that they are well done but very problematic. Hanging up I thought why not write one?!! My collaborators and myself are working hard to offer a French grammar exercise book which is accessible to all, is anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-colonial and much more. It is written in active solidarity with all the people who need to learn French, who are at the intersections of oppressions around gender, race, class and ability. It is made for French learners who want to position themselves for social justice, starting by recognizing the stolen land we live on.

(More editions of the book are to come in other languages/codes (ex: français-mandarin, français-arab, français-créole, braille, etc.)

—Émilie Savoie

Avant-propos

Introduction

Ce cahier d'exercices est écrit sur le territoire des nations Kanien'kehá:ka, à Tiohtià:ke; un territoire non-cédé sur lequel nous sommes installéEs en tant que colonEs.

This exercise book is written in Tiohtià:ke, on the Kanien'kehá:ka peoples territory; an unceded territory on which we are as settlers.

Il est dédié à nous qui avons faim de représentation, de validation, de liberté et de célébration.

It is dedicated to us who are hungry for representation, validation, freedom and celebration.

Il est dédié à toutes les personnes qui veulent et/ou doivent apprendre le français efficacement et pas-à-pas.

It is dedicated to all who want and/or need to learn French efficiently.

Il est dédié à toi qui attendais une approche grammaticale anti-colonialiste, anti-capitaliste, anti-impérialiste, anti-raciste, anti-sexiste, anti-hétérosexiste, anti-cissexiste, anti-capacitiste, anti-âgiste et plus encore.

It is dedicated to you who was waiting for an anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-heterosexist, anti-cissexist, anti-ableist, anti-agist and much more approach to French grammar.

Ce cahier est imparfait puisqu'on est imparfaitEs.

This book is not perfect as we are not perfect.

Il s'inscrit dans des mouvements qui sont beaucoup plus grands que nous et qui sont continuellement en évolution.

It joins movements that are much bigger than us and that are evolving continuously.

Enfin, il est fait avec toute notre rage et tout notre amour.

Finally, it is made with all our rage and all our love. ▼

Jamey (**utilise le pronom neutre « ya »**)

Ya est fort.e, ambitieuxe, gentil.le et énergique. /ja f t ɑ̃bisjøks ʒɑ̃ti j e enɛʁʒik/

ou

Cette personne est forte, ambitieuse, gentille et énergique. /sɛt pɛʁsɔn ɛ fɔʁt ɑ̃bisjøz ʒɑ̃tij e enɛʁʒik/

ou

Ya est fort, ambitieuse, gentil **et énergique.** /ja ɛ fɔʁt ɑ̃bisjøz ʒɑ̃ti e enɛʁʒik/

Maxine **(utilise le pronom « elle »)**

Elle est forte, ambitieuse, gentille et énergique. /ɛl ɛ fɔʁt ɑ̃bisjøz ʒɑ̃tij e enɛʁʒik/

Alejandra **(inconnu.e : on utilise un pronom neutre comme « ille »)**

Ille est fort.e, ambitieuxe, gentil.le et énergique. /ij ɛ fɔʁ t ɑ̃bisjøks ʒɑ̃ti j e enɛʁʒik/

ou

Cette personne est forte, ambitieuse, gentille et énergique. /sɛt pɛʁsɔn ɛ fɔʁt ɑ̃bisjøz ʒɑ̃tij e enɛʁʒik/

ou

Ille est fort, ambitieuse, gentil **et énergique.** /ja ɛ fɔʁt ɑ̃bisjøz ʒɑ̃ti e enɛʁʒik/

Félix **(utilise le pronom « il »)**

Il est fort, ambitieux, gentil **et énergique.** /il ɛ fɔʁ ɑ̃bisjø ʒɑ̃ti e enɛʁʒik/

Quelques pronoms sujets neutres

Yel est une personne très sociable.
Ya est une amie très généreux.
Iel était super heureuxe hier !
Ille a été choisi.e pour le rôle !

Le consentement doit être:

- verbal (l'absence d'un « non » n'est pas un « oui »)
- enthousiaste
- mutuel
- continu (tout les gens impliqués doivent être d'accord)
- pour tous les actes (une personne peut être d'accor de faire une chose, mais pas une autre)
- c'est la personne qui initie la relation sexuelle qui doit demander le consentement de l'autre ou des autres

a **à** gauche **A**ppear	**ɑ** L**à** H**O**t	**ã** Int**en**se H**uh**	**b** **B**ébé **B**aby	**ɔ** P**o**rte N**o**ne	**ɔ̃** voy**on**s **on**ly	**d** **d**onc **d**one	**e** **été** Beyonc**e**	**ə** **Euh** D**uh**
ɛ m**ai**s m**eh**	**ɛ̃** b**en** là R**en**t	**f** **f**amille **f**amily	**g** **g**aston **g**host	**ɥ** H**ui**t **we**	**i** **Hi**ver **e**	**j** fam**ille** **Y**a**y**	**k** **C**apricorne **C**apricorn	**l** **l**ion **l**eo
m **m**iau **m**eow	**n** **n**on **n**o	**ɲ** bei**gn**e **Ign**orance	**o** **eau** **oh**	**ø** Chev**eux** —-	**œ** P**eu**r —-	**œ** **Un** —-	**p** **P**antoute **P**arty	**ʁ** **R**ire **R**oll
s **s**ki **S**uzy	**ʃ** **Ch**at **Sh**oes	**t** **T**ata T**o**o	**u** B**out** **Ew**	**v** **v**oyons **V**iolin	**w** **T**o**i** **w**e	**y** B**u** Tut**u**	**z** **Z**ombie **Z**ombie	**ʒ** **J**eu Plea**s**ure

HOW TO ASK FOR CONSENT WITH OTHER VERBS

Est-ce que je peux t'embrasser ? /ɛs kə ʒpø tɑ̃bʁase/ **/ Can I kiss you?**

Est-ce que tu veux prendre une douche avec moi ? /ɛs kə ty vø pʁɑ̃dʁ yn duʃ avɛk mwa/
/ Do you want to take a shower with me?

Est-ce que tu veux qu'on marche main dans la main ? /ɛs kə ty vø kɔ̃ maʁʃ mɛ̃ dɑ̃ la mɛ̃/
/ Do you want us to walk hand in hand?

Comment je peux te faire plaisir ? /kɔmɑ̃ ʒpø tfɛʁ pleziʁ/
/ How can I please you? / How can I give you pleasure?

Est-ce que je peux emprunter ton vélo aujourd'hui ? /ɛs kə ʒpø ɑ̃pʁœ̃te tɔ̃ velo oʒuʁdɥi/

Le consentement ne peut pas être valide si:

- il y a manipulation
- il y a des menaces
- il y a de la pression
- la personne est trop intoxiquée pour consentir

Dans l'action, on peut demander

- Ça te plaît ?
- Tu aimes ça quand je fais ça ?
- Tu aimerais que je te _____ ?
- Qu'est-ce que tu voudrais que je fasse pour toi ?

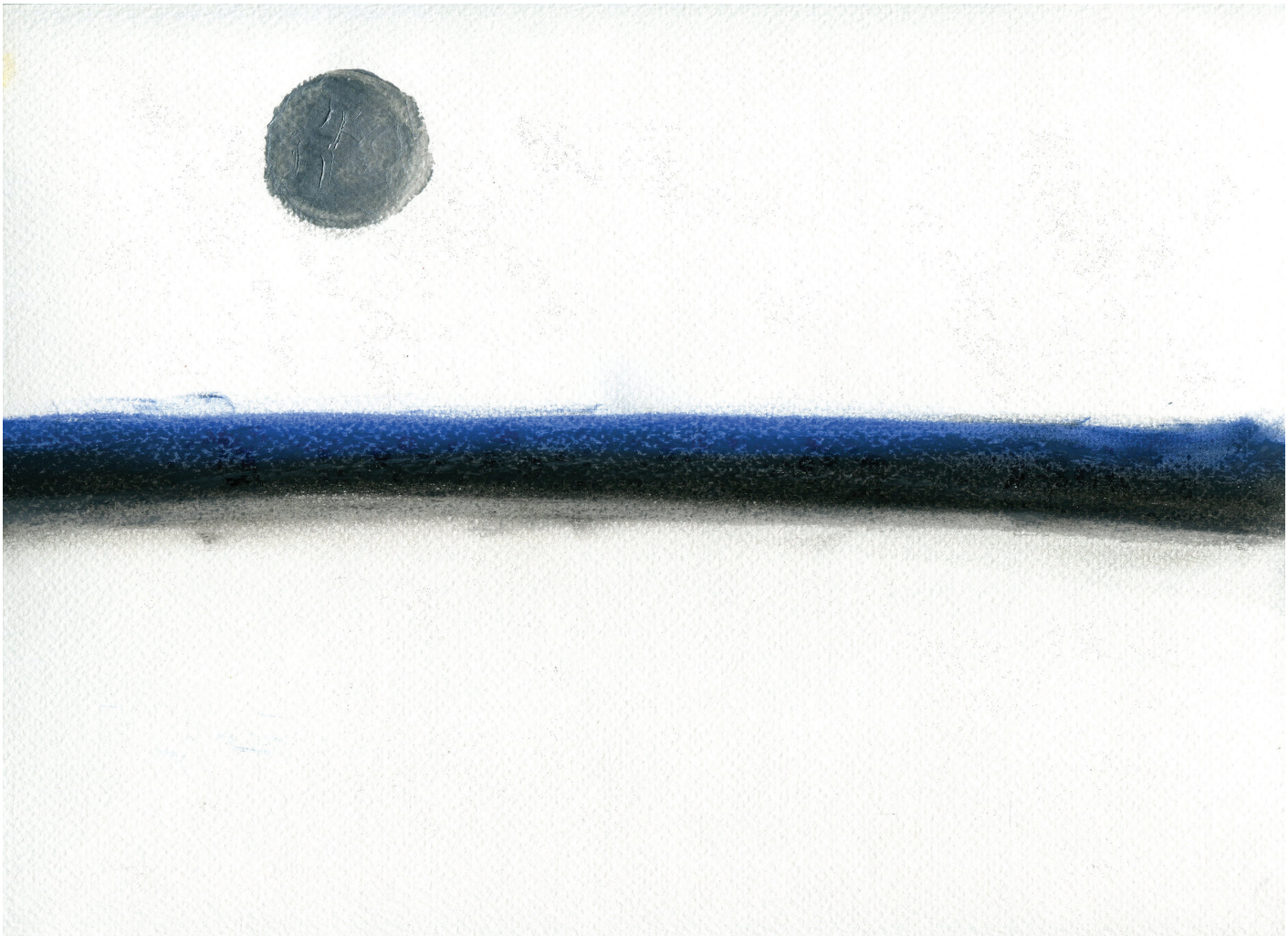
Estelle

I Don't Agree

In the queer community I live in, there has been an attempt in the last few years to challenge some of the more pernicious and explicit dynamics of transmisogyny by at least engaging with (instead of actively ignoring) the diverse realities and struggles of transfeminine experience. What this has translated to in a practical sense, I think, is an occasional willingness to listen to transwomen and transfeminine people when they speak about their lives. Unfortunately, as nice as this sounds (ha!), the sad truth is that this new disposition towards listening to transwomen does not automatically equate with a commitment to actually believing the stories we are telling. If anything, I think that this new engagement with transfeminine experience has just resulted in a gradual shift in the ways that we collectively talk about transwomanhood without actually challenging the ways we understand it. In the queer community in Montreal, for example, one could never get away with saying that a transwomen was really just a "man in a dress" or something that rings equally of harmful second wave radical feminist rhetoric, but one could quite easily say that a transwoman had "cis passing male privilege" or some such other absurd turn of phrase (which really means the exact same thing) and garner quite a lot of support for it.

As transwomen and transfeminine people become more visible in culture, there is a tendency to argue that this phenomenon means that things are actually getting better for us. Yet, as the list of trans women of color murdered this year continues to rise, as poverty and homelessness continue to structure many of our lives, and as street harassment continues forever unabated, we know that this is not true. One thing that does happen, however, when transwomen enter into the conversation as actual subjects instead of objects, is that the language we use to speak about transwomen changes. We can no longer say that transwomen are really men without causing a considerable uproar, so we have to find different ways of saying the same thing that isn't as controversial. The discourse of male privilege is a perfect example of this shift, because one can accuse a transwomen of having all the privileges that masculinity affords without actually saying that she is a man. Or, so it appears.

One of the main problems with privilege discourse is its fickle relationship with power. It asks us to understand masculinity primarily through the lens of privilege. Within this frame, masculinity only gains form and meaning through power, there can be no masculinity without privilege, no



Moon, Passages

man who doesn't continuously benefit from and reproduce this system. If we are committed to a de-essentialized understanding of gender, privilege must be the defining feature of masculinity, the very thing that marks it as different from femininity. When we tell a transwoman that she has "male privilege", we have to be honest here, we are calling her a man. In the terms of privilege discourse, it impossible to disconnect the power of masculinity from the man himself, for they really are one in the same thing. If you tell a transwoman she has male privilege, then you are not only engaging in some very serious misogyny, but you are denying her her very womanhood.

As much as people may protest, I think it is about time we reconsider the politics of male privilege. To insist that men in prison, homeless men, refugee men, men of colour, men with disabilities, and transwomen for example benefit from the same power of male privilege as white cis men is a complete absurdity which only commits harms. Masculinity, much like femininity, is an incredibly broad category, and we do not need reductive and homogenizing terms like "male privilege" (which, let's be honest, functions to denigrate transwomen) to interrogate and challenge power in our lives. We just don't. So there. ▼

Rushdia Mehreen, Pascale Brunet,
Politics & Care

Caring About Thriving

Pushed by a society that is always running, too often we are trying to be everywhere at once, to maintain high standards of productivity while working toward social change. Another protest, an extra meeting, and why not a conference at lunchtime before facilitating a workshop?! We fight for social justice… until we break down. And even then, we feel guilty for not doing, and being, "enough."

Rarely do we take the time to question our limits and the emotional involvement intrinsic to activist work. We tend to overextend ourselves without caring for one another. How many people around us have burnt out, are depressed, or are completely overwhelmed by our struggles and family life?

In addition to internalized capitalist notions of productivity, a group's internal dynamics have an immense impact on our collective well-being, and in turn on the political work that we do. The absence of accountability, the lack of accessibility, dominant personalities, internal power relations, hidden hierarchies, the lack of possibilities to bring up conflicts, and other problematic practices damage not only individuals, but also our collectives.

Some of the ways to address these challenges is to integrate care in our organizing, and in doing so to build collective capacity around emotional labour. Active listening, support work, mediation, defusing tensions, acting as confidants, protecting privacy and confidentiality, welcoming and creating spaces for newcomers, caring about people's comfort, and much more are all integral to building solidarity and to the long-term sustainability of our groups, collectives, organizations, and political struggles. However, this work is consistently seen as secondary and apolitical, and therefore not valourized.

We need to open up spaces for discussion and to think about collective care within our communities if we aspire to cease the reproduction of systemic oppressions and violences that we oppose. Acquiring tools for collective well-being and (self-)care and actively engaging with ideas about these topics are powerful ways to create thriving communities. We need to put as much emphasis on "how" we organize as we do on "what" we do and "why" we do it.

Whale VS Concretescape, Bruiser Bruce

If you and/or your groups, collectives, organizations, or political project want to reflect on these ideas, here are some questions that could make for a great starting point. You might want to warm up some water, gather around the teapot, get cozy, and open up your hearts.

The pressure to be productive:

- Do we leave meetings with the same amount (or even more!) energy than when we arrived?
- Do we debrief past actions, conferences, protests, etc. before starting new projects?
- Are we organizing within realistic deadlines?
- In the context of organizing, do we think it's selfish to take care of ourselves?
- Do we have too many meetings?
- What kind of relationships do we have with the people with whom we organize?

Accessibility and welcoming spaces:

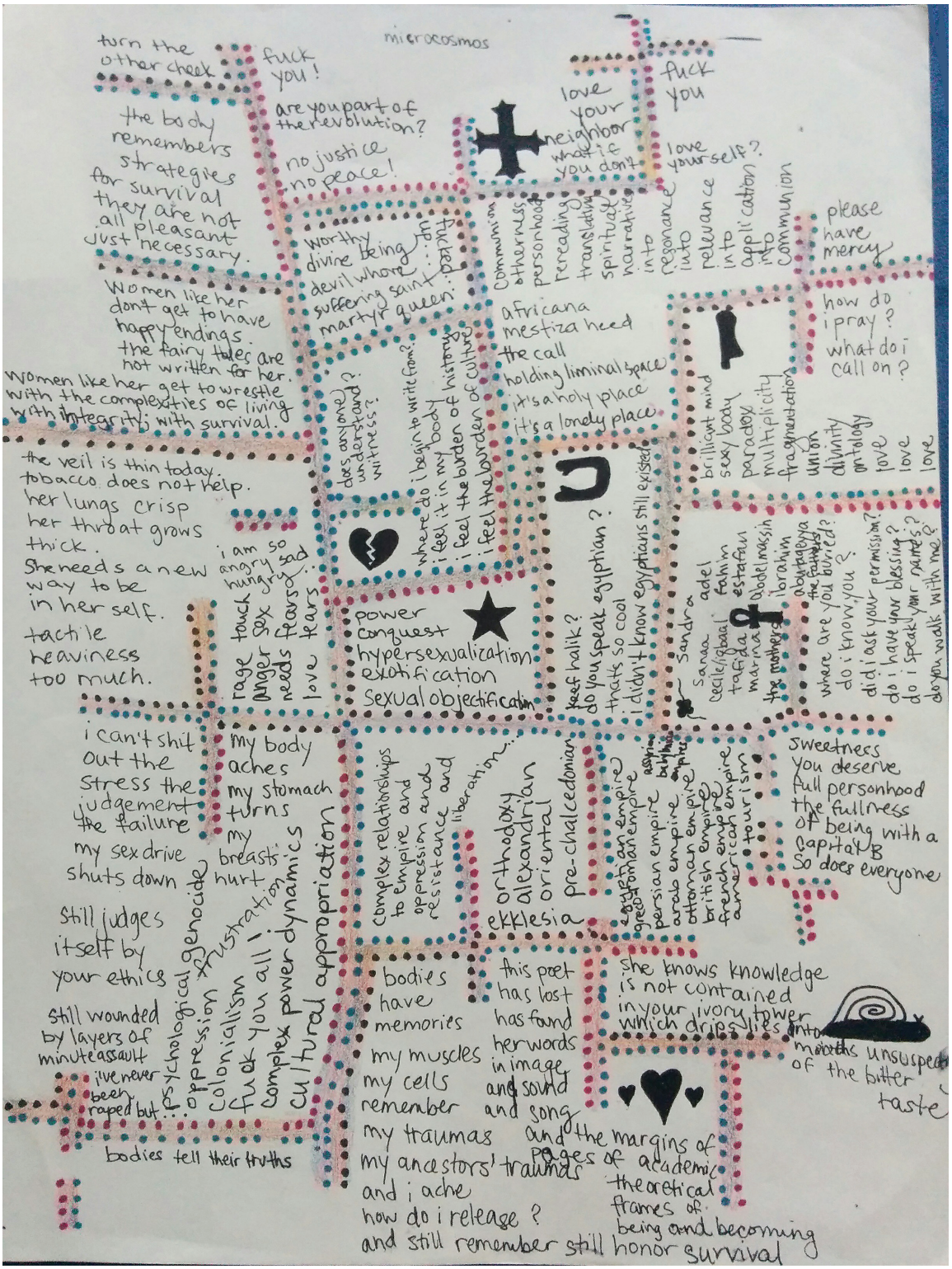
- Why have some people stopped attending meetings or organizing with us?
- Is there food served during the meetings, conferences, and events?
- What accommodation do we offer to families and young children?
- Who can physically access the spaces where meetings and events are held?
- What languages do we use (spoken, non-verbal, sign, jargons, etc.)? Are they accessible to everyone?
- Who do we naturally welcome into our group? Who do we leave out?
- Is our group welcoming of everyone regardless of any privileges?
- How can we really welcome a diversity of people to our groups regardless of race, gender, or activist credentials?
- Do we have rules or policies that deter new people's integration?

Working and caring practices:

- How can we make space to talk about how we feel?
- What elements can make us feel empowered to speak up against an injustice within the group?
- What are transformative spaces? How can we create them?
- How can we work to avoid recreating the oppression that we fight?
- What are the decision-making processes of the group and how can we really respect them?
- Are our organizing structures conducive to those who are marginalized systemically? Are we alienating them?
- Can those directly affected take space and leadership in our groups in meaningful ways?
- Who feels comfortable to take up space?
- Who is usually doing care work in the group? Is the division of labour gender-based/race-based?
- How can we get past the phenomenon of senior or charismatic personalities dominating discussions and leading collective direction?
- Do we recognize that excessive concentration of responsibility leads to concentration of power and control? How can we avoid this?

Accountability:

- How do we react when there is disagreement or conflict?
- How do we deal with frustrations in the group?
- How can we open up spaces for addressing hidden hierarchies within the group?
- How can we hold each other accountable?
- When organizing in urgency, do we stop being accountable to one another and to the affected communities?
- How can we work toward having effective conflict resolution practices?



Microcosmos, Alex Abu Tagiya

Sustainable and thriving communities:

- Do we try to understand members' irritability and exhaustion in relation to the way in which we organize?
- Is there space for members to share the struggles they are facing in their personal lives?
- How can we share responsibilities so that when people leave, contacts, expertise and relationships don't leave with them?
- How can we work actively not to let the founders, seniors, or charismatic personas be the sole persons to hold onto key responsibilities?
- How can we avoid situations where one or a few people get overburdened by taking on a lot of the tasks?
- How can we strive, as a collective, to reduce stress associated with organizing?

These questions, raised formally or informally, may only scratch the surface – but most importantly, they can spark an exchange and can lead to group reflections on how to integrate care in our organizing. It is by opening up discussions on sensitive topics such as accountability and the pressure to be productive that we can sow the seeds of more profound change around collective care and well-being. These discussions create spaces where we can speak of the discomforts or frustrations necessary for the transformation of internal dynamics. Such exchanges can pave the way for more open communication, where conflicts and other issues are discussed openly, ultimately resulting in nourishing communities. Fighting for social justice does not have to equate to a burnout or an eventual total dissociation from organizing; let's create spaces where we can heal and thrive.

Politics & Care is a space to weave links between collective well-being, care, and politics, all that with a little bit of magic! We are a collective of artists/community organizers dedicated to integrating care in our politics. We hold collective discussions and facilitate workshops for collectives, community organizations, and more.

You can write to us at politics.and.therapy.are.one@gmail.com, find more info about us on http://politicsandcare.wordpress.com or contact us on Facebook.

We would like to thank Koby Rogers Hall, Anne Goldenberg, and Gwendolyn Muir for their contribution to this piece.

EMERGENCY FEBRUARY PARTY

The great grey beast February is trying to eat us alive. It is a monstrous month, a dire and dreary month. If this month smothers us, how will we ever find our way out its intestines of dark and despair? Don't get so depressed you take a sailing trip in your bathtub with only razor blades packed. Don't get so hopeless you enrol in business school or decide to vote Liberal. Don't get so boring you start watching romantic comedies. Don't get so bored you forget how to breathe. Rather than wither away in the belly of the beast, what we need are tall tails of triumph and victory. FEBRUARY PARTY. Believe in something extraordinary or at least force someone else to. It needn't be comfortable. So that our hearts are bursting instead of breaking, let's tear ourselves from ennui like an incompetent surgeon ripping out vital organs and gush like our aortas would into a bloody, pulpy mess. It's going to hurt, let's face it, it's our lives. But let's make it hurt so good. That two-headed bastard February has our backs against the wall but we're gonna show that fucker. The great grey beast February is bloodthirsty, but before you offer your wrists, try having some fun.

EMERGENCY FEBRUARY PARTY

- February Party runs for the entire month of February, every February.
- February Party begins NOW.
- It's never too late for February – to celebrate February party, give cards, letters, gifts, greetings and feasts to others.
- February Party has no religious affiliation, does not commemorate victorious battles, and focuses on no one person or reason other than festivity and carnival.
- Handmade/home-made DIY is preferred
- February Party is anti-capitalist; February Party is a FREE PARTY.
- Participants only, no spectators.

Far from fun, February. But why? "Because it feels like the outside is loathing me." And it is, the outside wants you dead. In the face of such vehement opposition, only one course of action can save us: a party. AN EMERGENCY FEBRUARY PARTY. If it's kill or be killed, kill winter first. Party is a fight for life, and anyone who plans on surviving the winter is invited. Attendance is mandatory. Now, since you are going to be at a party, you had best get your shit together so that you don't look like some socially inept crusader

Untitled, Alex AbuTagiya

of lost and forgotten causes, pathetically peddling post-functional propaganda in a sea of the happy, healthy, and hip, like some bad suit-wearing lunatic waiting at the outlets of mass transit to distribute dubious documentation and being laughed at. No one likes to be laughed at, especially at a party. No, if you are going to get through this you better have a plan, you must be ready. Fortunately, February Party is free of fixed formalities such as dress codes and discussion topics (not to mention locations or timelines or fees), so just by staying alive at least until March you can join in on the fun. Fortunately, any number of things beginning with the letter F make for fun and exiting activities that will make you a hit at February Party, such as:

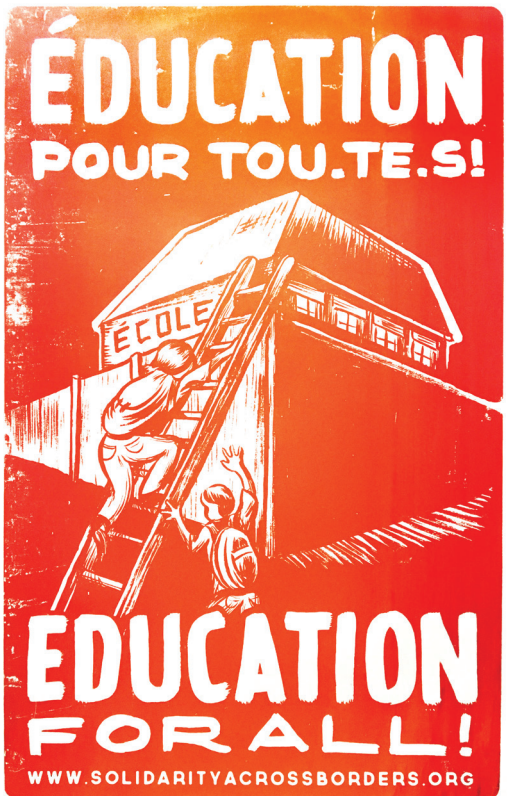
Filming. Frothing (be it in cups or from the mouth). Fires. Firing weaponry. Field-trips. Fucking. Fornicating. Forming (clay perhaps, or even your own religious sect). Fishing (nothing makes you feel alive like making something else dead). Freezing. Freeing. Formulating mathematical equations. Frog farming.

And that's just the letter F, and F isn't a very good letter. You see, you could do anything. The trick is making sure the party keeps on rolling, and then before you know it, it will be March. You could even bring it along into March too if you are having too much fun...▼

Not One More Deportation! Build a Solidarity City!

Solidarity Across Borders Poster Series

Solidairty Across Borders Poster Series, Designed by Lolo



A silkscreened set of colour posters, highlighting the grassroots campaigns to build a Solidarity City in Montreal. A Solidarity City is the creation of a community that rejects a system that engenders poverty and anguish, not solely for immigrants and refugees, but also for other Montrealers confronting these same realities.

We are opposing fear, isolation, precarity and division. We strike back with solidarity, mutual aid, support work and direct action.

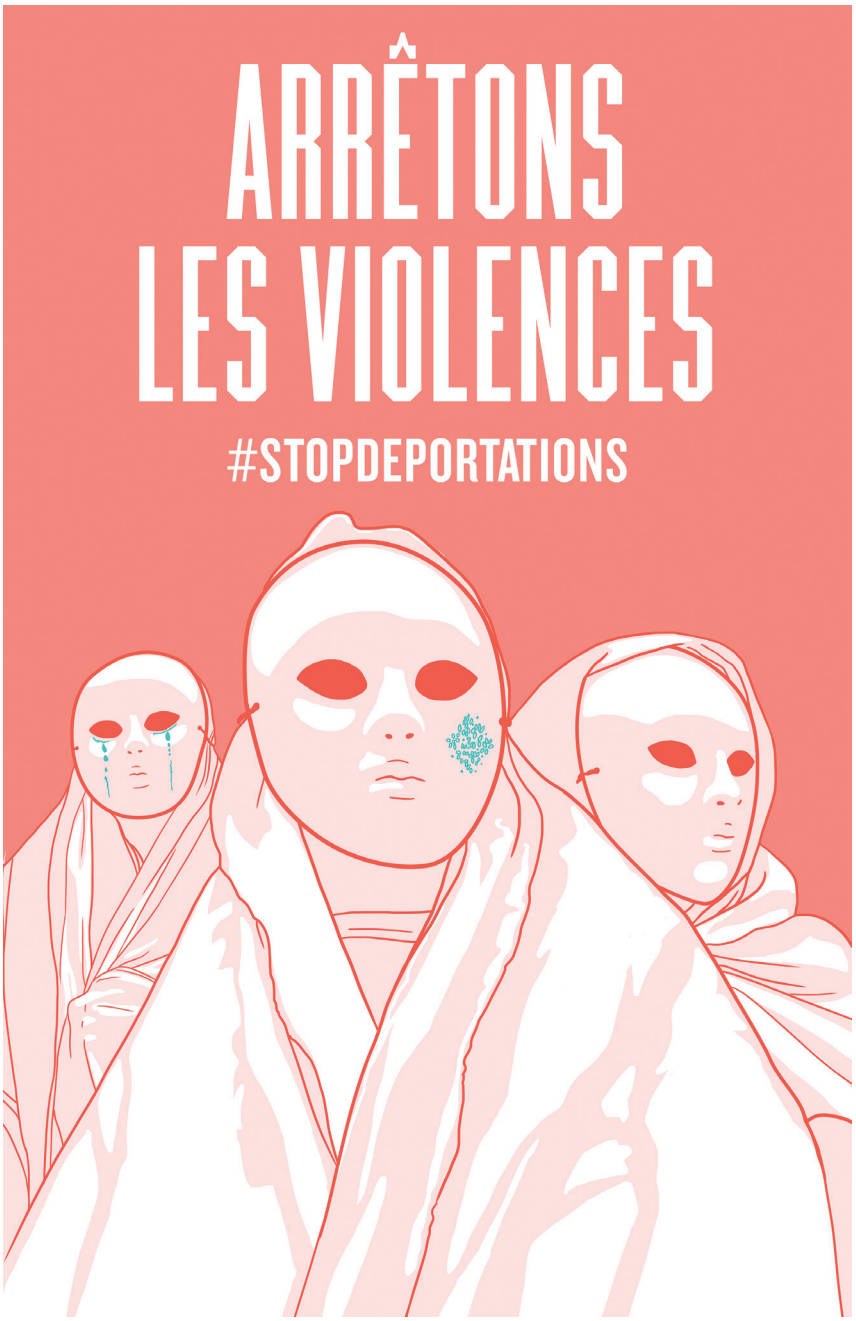
This poster series is a collaboration between Solidarity Across Borders & Sidetracks. ▼

Status Now #stopdeportations

Poster created for the Non-Status Women's Collective in Montreal

The Non-Status Women's Collective in their own words:

We are women and mothers who live and work in the shadows, invisible and excluded. We live in precarity because of our immigration status. Our precarious status threatens our security, our liberty as women, our rights as workers, our families. We live here; we will remain here. This is our home and our children's home. We want to live in dignity, peace and stability; we want an end to the fear that constantly tortures us. ▼



Poster by LOKI and ZOLA

Oula Hajjar

Welcoming Syrian Refugees

Insights from Berlin and Montreal

This article is a humble observation of what I have witnessed during a short period of time being around Syrians that decided to take refuge either in Berlin or in Montreal. It is my interaction with each one of them that enriched and informed my comparison. Syrians themselves can tell you more about their experiences.

Both Canada and Germany welcomed the Syrians. However, governmental policies, as well as societal reactions, differed significantly. The common thread was that Canadians, as well as Germans, considered the refugee crisis as a humanitarian crisis and completely depoliticized it from its context. No one was interested in knowing about the roots of this refugee crisis. Canadians and Germans neither wanted to know what caused this massive wave of refugees, nor did they step up to criticize the policies of their governments or challenge their involvement in Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East.

In both countries, the refugee card is played as a way to camouflage all the deals that are signed under the table. Despite its international reputation as a peaceful country, Canada is the second largest arms exporter to the Middle East after the U.S. In 2016, Canada's yearly sales of military equipment to the Middle East jumped to $2.7 billion, moving the UK down to fourth place, just behind France. It is also the sixth largest arms exporter in the world, selling $4.3 billion worth yearly.[1] This ranking came days after Canada addressed the UN Security Council and highlighted the importance of protecting civilians in conflict zones.

In the beginning of 2016, Germany, the fourth largest arms exporter in the world, doubled the arms exports to the Middle East to 8 billion euros worth, despite the government's stated policy of reducing arms sales. According to the Campaign Against Arms Trade, Germany delivered nearly 13 million euros in weapons to Syria between 2002 and 2013 – mainly tanks, chemical agents, and small arms. At the same time, Germany will be spending 50 billion euros to shelter, feed, and train refugees in Germany in 2016 and 2017, as outlined by the Cologne Institute for Economic Research (IW). However, this government spending also serves to create profits for construction companies, language schools, and other businesses serving

1 IHS Jane's, "Record-Breaking $65 Billion Global Defence Trade In 2015 Fueled By Middle East And Southeast Asia, IHS Jane's Says," June 13, 2016. http://press.ihs.com/press-release/aerospace-defense-security/record-breaking-65-billion-global-defence-trade-2015-fueled.

refugees, which provides a good stimulus for the German economy. As such, it can be concluded that neither the German nor Canadian governments cared about the will of the Syrians towards self-determination and freedom, as their geopolitical and economic agenda remained the top priority.

The role played by the international community to help Syrian refugees was minimal until the Syrians broke through borders and showed up at the doorstep of Western countries, forcing governments and societies to react. A bird's-eye view of the situation cannot be complete without a closer look at the daily reality and the struggle that Syrians faced to break through Western borders with strength and success, passing the message to the West that it is responsible for the mass displacement of refugees and should take action with regard to the refugee crisis.

It was a total coincidence that I was in Berlin, Germany during the summer of 2015 – dubbed the 'summer of refugees' – to witness the massive arrival of Syrian refugees in Germany and more precisely in Berlin. Berlin would become one of the major final destinations for the thousands of refugees who made the heroic journey from Turkey. In August 2015, Angela Merkel announced that Germany was willing to take 800,000 refugees by the end of 2015, asserting "we can do it" as a welcoming statement. Germany became the first European Union country to suspend the 1990 Dublin Regulation, which forces refugees to seek asylum in the first European country in which they set foot.

During the first years after the revolution, Syrians fled to neighbouring countries – mainly Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of June 2016, there were over 1.1 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon, 0.6 million in Jordan, and 2.7 million in Turkey, as well as over 6.6 million internally displaced inside Syria. These countries hosted more Syrian refugees more than any Western countries, and considered it a moral, humanitarian obligation. Yet, the lack of jobs, housing, and basic needs in these countries forced the Syrians to look for alternatives, as the infrastructures and economies of these countries were unable to accommodate more refugees.

Putting their lives and those of their children in danger, Syrians decided to take to the sea looking for a better place to get refuge in other countries. Hundreds of thousands decided to walk for almost a month toward Germany. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that 2015 was the deadliest year for migrants and refugees crossing the Mediterranean trying to reach Europe. The IOM also recorded total sea arrivals to Europe in 2015 at 1,004,356 – almost five times the previous year's total of 219,000. The people attempting to reach Europe are not only Syrians. At the shelter where I volunteered, I encountered people of different nationalities, many of whom came from countries where local economies are destroyed and basic necessities for survival are sometimes inexistent. Eastern Europeans, Afghanis, Iranians, Iraqis, and Africans decided to take to the road along with the Syrians hoping that they could find a better life in Western Europe. Many looked toward Germany's open borders, which hinted at possibilities that unfortunately did not pan out for many migrants.

I overheard an Albanian woman chatting with a Syrian woman. She was telling her that she knew that she might be deported in few months, as Germany was only granting asylum to Syrians. However, she was happy that she would have free food and a shelter at least for the few upcoming months, as she was not able to provide herself and her family with proper food in her home country, Albania, because jobs are rare. The Syrian woman answered: "We had food but we didn't have freedom."

The IOM estimates that just over 5,000 migrants and refugees crossed into Greece during the first three days of 2016: 41% were from Syria, 37% from Afghanistan, 12% from Iraq, 6% from Iran, 2% from Palestine, and 2% from other countries.

After the refugees' arrival in Germany, their battle was not over, as a herculean effort is required to obtain official documents to be recognized as asylum seekers. They first had to go to the police station to ask for refugee asylum. They were then transferred to the LAGeSo (Landesamt für

Gesundheit und Soziales – Berlin's office for health and social affairs). It was their first interaction with the German bureaucracy, as well as with German society. The LAGeSo became the epicentre of a human-made crisis, but also an incredible place of solidarity between asylum seekers and Germans. The refugees had to wait for hours, day and night, trying to understand the system and gather official documents while facing a chaotic bureaucracy and sometimes inhumane conditions. Immigration officers were not able to deal with thousands of new applications every day. The area around the LAGeSo was turned into an improvised refugee camp without any infrastructure. Most refugees didn't get a chance to meet with an immigration officer immediately and had to wait for more than twelve hours in a row, sometimes for several consecutive days before proceeding with their refugee application. On January 27, 2016, a 24-year-old Syrian died of a heart attack after waiting in the cold for few days at the LAGeSo refugee authority. Many refugees were shocked upon their arrival, as the image of "the beautiful, organized, rich Europe" they had in mind was shattered. Within a week of the beginning of the summer of refugees, local residents demonstrated solidarity by providing water, food, medical care, and legal support.

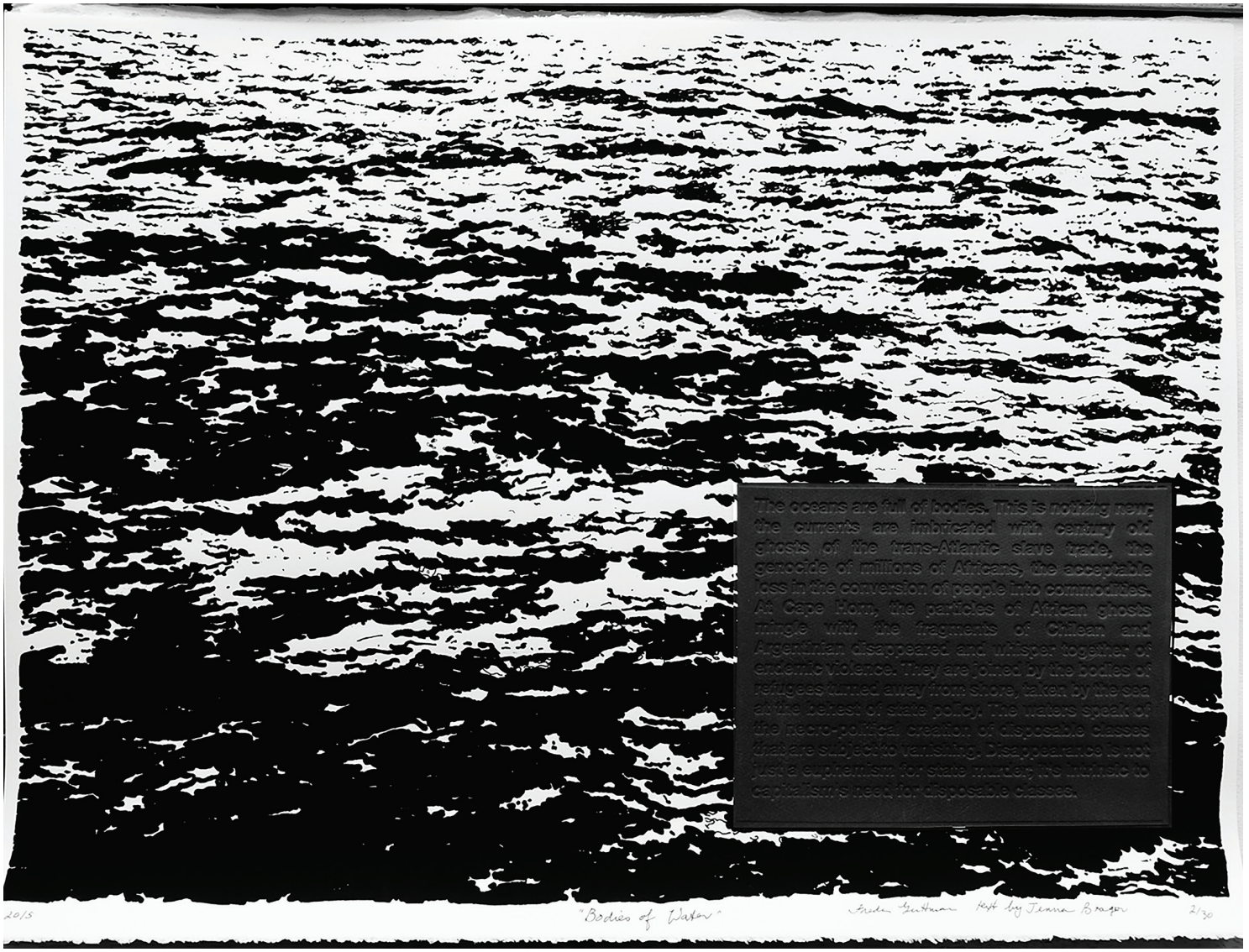
The shelter where I volunteered was located within walking distance from the LAGeSo. This shelter was nothing but a huge temporary plastic tent in the park. The shelter was divided into sleeping sections, an eating section, a kids' corner for playing, as well as a resting area. This shelter was a community site where new refugees could rest after an entire month of walking, but also where they could share the details of their trip and their fears and frustrations. I heard so many stories – stories of survival and strength. One pregnant woman walked for more than a month with her husband and three children, and was feeding herself and the family from the apple trees they found on their way. Another young man had swam for hours to the Turkish shore, after a group of men wearing army outfits jumped into the water and made holes in the boat he was taking from Turkey to Greece, along with forty other people. This shelter was a healing place where old refugees listened to the stories of new refugees, where refugees remembered Syria by crying, dancing, or chanting, where language was not a barrier and where integration was easy. German courses were provided for free on the spot.

The refugees who were luckier got a spot in this shelter, the others had to sleep in the street near the LAGeSo offices or try to look for hotels that accepted their vouchers. Most hotels refused to accept any refugees sent by the LAGeSo, even for a one-night stay. The shelter operated as a temporary fix for those who were in limbo during the waiting phase – after getting registered at the refugee authority, but prior to receiving the refugee status that will allow them to stay and work in Germany.

During this time, Syrian refugees were rapidly receiving work permits. German companies reacted positively to the government's decision to grant work permits and started hiring Syrian refugees, seeing the influx of workers as an opportunity in face of the aging German population and the rising need for young skilled workers. The German government's decision to accept a high number of Syrian refugees was made based on its economic agenda due to the need of labour force, as underlined by the IMF projection of a declining and aging German labour force, but also based on a political agenda.[2] Many supportive measures were taken to support the integration of the refugees in the labour market and many restrictions were removed to give easy access to employment and training for asylum seekers.

German society reacted in sometimes contradictory ways to the government's decision. In Berlin, thousands of Germans welcomed refugees by hosting them at train stations and guiding them to the refugee authority. They offered them food and clothing, as well as housing. Community centres were opened to make integration easier. Activities at these centres were not only accessible to Syrians, but also to Germans interested to learn more about Syrian culture. For instance, a cultural café in

2 Katie Allen, "Refugees hold key to German economic growth, IMF says," The Guardian, May 9,2016.



"The oceans are full of bodies. This is nothing new; the currents are imbricated with centuries-old ghosts of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the genocide of millions of Africans, the acceptable loss in the conversion of people into commodities. At Cape Horn, the particles of African ghosts mingle with the fragments of Chilean and Argentinean disappeared and whisper together of endemic violence. They are joined by the bodies of refugees turned away from shore, taken by the sea at the behest of state policy. The waters speak of the necro-political creation of disposable classes that are subject to vanishing. Disappearance is not just a euphemism for state murder; it's intrinsic to capitalism's need for disposable classes."

Bodies of Water, Freda Guttman with text by Jenna Brager

Moabit, the neighbourhood where the LAGeSo was located, became a social centre for migrants, local activists, and the community to provide support and mutual aid. The café offered German classes to refugees, as well as Arabic classes for Germans. Syrians and Germans were both learners and teachers at the same time. A Syrian family told me about their first day in Berlin. They arrived at night and didn't know where to go. They decided to sleep in the street until the next morning then try to look for the refugee authority offices. A German family passing nearby stopped and took them home, gave them a room and food for the night and drove them in the morning to the LAGeSo.

At the same time, the Syrian refugees faced an ugly reality that stood in contrast to this solidarity – vicious anti-immigrant sentiment and acts of racism and violence directed against refugees. From January through early July 2015, the Federal Ministry of the Interior registered 202 attacks on shelters for asylum-seekers, the vast majority attributed to right-wing extremists.[3] Every Monday, xenophobic demonstrations were organized by the resurgent far-right group PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West) to incite hatred and violence against refugees.

On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, newly elected Prime Minister Justin Trudeau wanted to begin implementing his electoral promises, and he decided to start by bringing 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada before the end of 2015. I was translating for Syrian refugees as they arrived in Montreal. The Syrians were not arriving in masses, as described by the media. In fact, 25,000 Syrians did not even represent 0.4% of the total number of refugees that fled Syria. The majority of the refugees that arrived had family in Canada. They had waited for many years before their applications were processed, even while their lives were at risk. When they arrived in Canada, they were taken from the airport to separate immigration offices that were established especially for this purpose, outside of the airport. They received their permanent residency and their health card number on the first day they arrived. From that day on, however, all responsibility fell on the sponsor to look for housing, integration and language classes, jobs, and any other integration and living needs of the refugees.

Those who were sponsored by a family member were taken care of, at the least for the first few weeks, until they found their way in their new city or town. But those who were sponsored by a church or private institution encountered many problems, as they knew no one in the city and found themselves alone, not knowing where to start. Those who were sponsored by the government were placed in hotels, up to a few months in some cases, until they found housing. Government support was provided for the first three months, and after that period, refugees were expected to start being independent and rely on themselves to start a new life in a new country, without speaking the language and knowing any relatives. In other cases, some Syrian families were able to come to Canada under the "Groups of five" refugee sponsorship program, which gives the right to five Canadian citizens or permanent residents to sponsor a refugee living abroad to come to Canada. In this case, the sponsors would be responsible for emotional and financial support.

I thought of the plastic tent in the park and the power of the community after seeing these newly arrived Syrians scattered all over Canada, mainly in empty spots where housing was available and labour was needed. Ironically, underscoring the repeated rhetoric of a country-wide welcome for the Syrian refugees, state-sponsored actions still left many Syrians feeling foreign and othered. For example, the Syrians had to be checked medically by a nurse within forty-eight hours of their arrival. There was a fear of any diseases or bacteria that they were carrying, even though all newcomers had to undergo medical tests a week or two before leaving the country where they were previously taking refuge (mainly Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan).

The Canadian media was happy to cover

3 Somi Somaskanda, "Germany Has a Refugee Problem, and the Problem is the Germans," Foreign Policy, August 7, 2015.

the generosity of the government and of the Canadian society. They covered in detail how the Prime Minister was handing out winter jackets and boots to the newly arrived Syrians, who were not all very happy with this present, as many were middle class Syrians who had enough money to pay for expensive visas and sponsorship applications. The media also covered how Canadians showed hospitality towards the newly arriving Syrians by donating food, furniture, clothes, and other supplies. Simultaneously, however, Syrian refugees also experienced a number of xenophobic attacks. A welcome event for Syrian refugees was greeted with pepper spray in Vancouver last January, while anti-immigrant members of PEGIDA attempted to march in Montreal in February. Elsewhere, a petition addressed to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to stop resettling Syrian refugees signed by 48,639 supporters spoke to widespread racist and Islamophobic sentiment.

In Canada, Syrians were welcomed by their sponsors and wider Syrian and Arab communities, with support from the rest of the society being minor and mainly material. A part of German society interacted more proactively with the Syrian refugees, and showed responsibility towards an external cause that became their cause. I was witness to a significant moment for migrants worldwide, as the refugees' challenge to Europe's closed borders system, the massive grassroots mobilization to call for open borders, and the strong solidarity movement led by German residents made the arrival of the Syrian refugees to Germany a heroic historical act toward freedom of movement and dignity. ▼

Cadence O'Neil

Feminist Forces, Colonial Collusions

A Discourse Analysis of Targeted Military Recruitment Ads

Recruitment strategies have changed drastically since women were first granted access to clerical and support jobs in the Canadian Forces; no longer are we targeted with statements of how much we can 'help our men' by joining. In 2016, all combat roles are open to women, and we are tempted with an increased variety of messages playing toward changing dominant contemporary conceptions of Canadian womanhood. As the Canadian Forces website asks, "Who says you can't have it all?"[1] The 2014 advertising campaign discussed in this article combines settler feminist discourses with discourse on the benevolence of the Canadian military. I draw my attention to the ad campaign's seamless confluence of settler feminist and Canadian military narratives. Do these ads mark a new era of harmony between Canadian feminist and Canadian military interests, or are they indicative only of the continual adaptability of settler feminism and Canadian innocence, made possible by a strong history of compatibility between the white settler women's movements and military interests?

This article takes as its starting point the acknowledgment that the Canadian Forces' erasure of settler colonialism and Indigenous resistance constitutes a colonial discourse and results in the material entrenchment of settler colonialism. Additionally, Canadian national discourse on white settler womanhood lacks colonial culpability, instead focusing on white feminine care and innocence. These histories are important context for the 2014 advertising campaign. I argue that when settler women become the faces of the Canadian Forces, we retain our access to narratives of innocence despite our proximity to a violent institution. Rather than white women becoming associated with the characteristics of the Forces, the Forces become associated with (white) feminine qualities. Through a discursive amnesia toward the settler colonial histories of both of these actors, the ads provide the Canadian Forces with bolstered access to humanitarian discourse via the deployment of settler feminist rhetoric and smiling faces of empowered women. The successes of settler feminism become an indication of the possibility of success for the Canadian Forces at home and abroad as the global War on Terror is defended as a war for women's rights.

The 2014 recruitment advertisements were

1 Department of National Defence, "Women in the Forces," Accessed April 13, 2016. http://www.forces.ca/en/page/women-92.

difficult to avoid, as they were pasted on huge walls, strategically located in high traffic areas of public transit and in and around universities, and in the form of targeted advertisements online. The general, strategic, and repetitive placement of the ads ensured that it was not only women, or a certain kind of women, seeing the ads. The campaign, while a direct response to a failure to meet target recruitment and retention numbers of women,[2] also had implications beyond military recruitment. Upon initially viewing the advertisements, I was eager to assume that they were an example of the Canadian Forces co-opting feminist discourse or an instance of neoliberal feminism collaborating with a violent institution in a novel way. While the ideas promoted in the ads mirror to a certain extent the ideas espoused by neoliberal feminisms, I no longer think it is accurate to describe the Canadian Forces as co-opting feminist discourse. Instead, given an understanding of some of the long-standing Canadian colonial discourses, the 2014 ads do not seem like a departure from the historical trajectory of the Canadian Forces or settler feminism but rather the logical continuation of a highly adaptable and insidious colonial collusion. The discourse of humanitarianism forwarded by the advertisements is not identical to the discourses of loyal collaboration or white women's innocence and care, but neither is it wholly novel.

Figure 1: Recruitment advertisements at the Berri-UQAM station – March 2014

Feminist Soldiers and the Transferability of Innocence

As a series, the 2014 ad campaign is both aesthetically reminiscent of previous recruitment campaigns, using similar colour schemes and general format, and clearly different from men's or general recruitment campaigns. None of the highly circulated poster advertisements visually feature women holding weapons, which differs vastly from recruitment strategies used to attract men and reinforces the denial of these women's potential to be violent actors. A 2006 general Canadian Armed Forces recruitment campaign featured the tagline "Fight Fear. Fight Distress. Fight Chaos. Fight with the Canadian Forces."[3] This action-oriented, militaristic language is completely absent from the 2014 targeted recruitment advertisements. Instead, the 2014 campaign focuses on the positive effects the Forces has on all those it comes into contact with. The omission of arms from much of the 2014 ad campaign likewise allows the women featured to maintain access to acceptable non-violent femininity while further demilitarizing the public perception of the Forces. The Canadian Forces represented by the women in these ads comes to resemble a construction, sailing, or medical company more than a deeply political military. Thus, the superimposed, sharply focused women featured over a background of benign workplace scenes hail women into a world that seems much the same as, yet definitively improved from, their own civilian lives.

In perhaps the most immediately compelling of the ads, Leading Seaman Christa Crocker says that when she "has something to say, people listen." In noting that Crocker is "listened to" in her role, the ad positions itself as implicitly feminist. Crocker seems to acknowledge that she (and by extension the Canadian women reading the ad) may not feel "listened to" in her current role in

2 Rachel Décoste, "Canadian Forces Admit This Mission Is Impossible," The Huffington Post, August 19, 2013. http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/rachel- decoste/canadian-military-women_b_3777917.html

3 Bob Bergen, "Recruiting Success Creates New Challenge for Forces," Ottawa Citizen, April 26, 2007.

civilian society. The Canadian Forces becomes a gateway to a respect that might be unattainable in a civilian context. The ad celebrates the authority bestowed upon a woman through her status as a soldier, but it does not name the source of that authority or the listeners referenced. The listeners might include civilians or combatants that the Forces comes into contact with, or they might be those servicemen and servicewomen Christa holds power over in the strictly enforced military hierarchy. A critical viewer can infer that Christa's authority is augmented by the physical and material power she likely holds over those the Canadian Forces come into conflict with. With the omission of weapons from the four featured ads, the source of her authority is doubly obscured through the narrative of her statement and the visuals of the image. However, just as those with fraught relationships with the police are aware, one need not see the handcuffs or gun on a cop's belt to fear the power of the badge. Likewise, military personnel without their weapons can still be understood by those interacting with them in contexts of conflict to wield the power of the institution behind them. The functional metonymy of this reality – that someone in conflict, with trauma, or who fears the Canadian military would likely translate this into a need to listen to a female soldier or seaman even though she represents only a piece of the institution – is also obscured by the geographical context of the ads. In downtown 'Montréal,' where military recruitment buildings coexist with shopping centers and schools, the vastly different understanding of the violence of the institution allows the (imminent or inferred) threat posed by Crocker to be completely ignored by many of those hailed by the ads.

Figure 2: Close up of recruitment advertisement at the Berri-UQAM station – March 2014

With this in mind, naming Christa's whiteness and the threat she poses by wearing her uniform would entail an honesty regarding white women's potential to be violent actors that goes against a historical narrative that knows us only as innocent victims. White women's propensity to call upon preconceptions of our vulnerability to justify racist and colonial violence against racialized and Indigenous communities has fuelled a colonial context in which the state's impulse to defend the boundaries and values of the nation from threats to its order or "civility" have been interpersonally represented by the need to protect the fragile white woman from Indigenous men and others figured as uncivilized. Crocker's ad, by obfuscating the source of the servicewoman's authority, perpetuates this highlighting of white female innocence and obscures the actions of the Canadian Forces. Acknowledging that anyone in a Canadian Forces uniform is likely to be listened to by those they come into contact with due to their power to cause harm if they are not respected highlights the absurdity of the idea that the Canadian Forces is primarily a peacekeeping force, and not an aggressor that has engaged and continues to engage in projects of occupation and murder.

In the contemporary context, the national need to protect white women's innocence can also be presented as a need to protect Canadian liberal secular democracy (which is presumed to be necessary for the protection of women's freedom) from Muslim threats. This line of thought can be seen in white feminist support for the Québec Charter of Values (The Canadian Press 2013), but

is also evident in the framing of the global War on Terror as a war for women's rights. As many anti-racist, anti-imperialist feminist theorists have pointed out, the Bush administration and allied Canadian government sold the War on Terror "to part of the Western public as a benevolent, humanitarian war, not just protecting 'our' women and children against terrorism, but also saving 'their' women.[4]" Similar discourse continues as Canada and the United States operate against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Syria, effectively adding fodder to the idea that the Canadian Forces are spreading and protecting democracy and thus Canadian women.

Beyond supporting this framing, Christa Crocker's advertisement positions the Canadian Forces as a career path that will lead Canadian women toward an environment in which they are respected, toward empowerment. This message speaks implicitly to the proposal that women will be safe in the military, despite the staggering statistics of sexual assault within the ranks that suggest otherwise. According to an investigation published by Maclean's in 2014, an average of 178 sexual assaults are reported to Canadian military police per year. However, considering the low rate at which sexual assaults are reported, Maclean's estimates that "a total of 1,780 sexual assaults per year in the Canadian Forces… five per day" is a more accurate number.[5] Canadian feminists and media have addressed this astronomical rate extensively. Following a Chief of Defence Staff announcement of renewed attention to targeted female recruitment over the next ten years, Ricochet reported that "the military's culture [of sexism] will be the biggest obstacle to hiring more women. Until the Canadian Armed Forces can truly create a safe work environment, no recruitment tool will be attractive enough to increase the low numbers of female personnel."[6] Within this context of continued media pressure on the Canadian military to improve its sexual assault reporting infrastructure and more broadly change the patriarchal culture of the military, it makes sense that the Canadian Forces would attempt to assuage women's fears that their experience will be a negative one if they decide to enlist. Christa Crocker, standing proudly beside her statement that she will be "listened to" can be interpreted as a sinister reassurance that servicewomen (and the civilian who might enlist) will be listened to in their sexual interactions as well; men who might sexually assault them will instead respect their bodily autonomy and ability to withhold consent. This sentiment can also be interpreted to be assuring future soldiers that the military police or their superiors will listen to, believe, and act accordingly in the event that they report a sexual assault.

Though much mainstream feminist criticism of rape culture in the Canadian Forces is reluctant to think of female soldiers as anything more than potential victims, the power given to women who join violent imperialist institutions often requires us to take active roles in this violence. In her provocative book *A Field Guide for Female Interrogators*, Coco Fusco explores and satirizes the role played by American female soldiers in interrogation using sexual harassment and assault. Fusco notes:

"…cultural perceptions of women can be used strategically to humanize the current US Military occupation of Iraq, in that women are presumed to be less threatening. Women's presence also creates the impression that American institutions engaging in domination are actually democratic, since they appear to practice gender equity. "[7]

Instead of being useful for the United States military in spite of their femininity or womanhood, the female interrogators are useful precisely because of it. Fusco's analysis reminds us that accounting for colonialism and imperialism necessitates a rethinking of our feminist critiques of

4 Sedef Arat-Koc, "Imperial Wars or Benevolent Interventions? Reflection on 'Global Feminism' Post September 11th," Atlantis 26 (2002): 60-65.

5 Noémi Mercier and Alec Castonguay, "Our Military's Disgrace," Maclean's, May 16, 2014. http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/our -militarys-disgrace/.

6 Toula Drimonis, "Sexist Climate Must Be Addressed If Canadian Forces Are to Recruit More Women," Ricochet, March 24,t 2016. https://ricochet.media/en/1036/sexist- climate-must-be-addressed-if-canadian- forces-are-to-recruit-more-women.

7 Coco Fusco, *A Field Guide for Female Interrogators*, (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2008), 41.

the military. If we acknowledge that the military can empower women to use sexual violence for their nation-state's gain, then we are no longer able to solely rely upon the (admittedly very real) epidemics of sexual violence against female soldiers by their co-workers to describe how female soldiers' lives are impacted by the military. As Fusco says, "our culture lacks a precise political vocabulary for understanding women as self-conscious perpetrators of sexual violence."[8] In the Canadian context, we also lack the political vocabulary to accurately describe this country and the women who benefit from its settlement as active participants in colonialism and warfare. It is possible and necessary to acknowledge and fight against the reality that Canadian women are vulnerable to sexual violence and sexism more broadly while serving, while also pushing for a recognition that the Canadian Forces facilitates access to more coercive power. If Crocker's advertisement is not popularly received as threatening it is because of our reluctance to view white women as militarily or sexually aggressive.

Hand, Passages

Crocker's ad is just the first in a series of four that variously call upon colonial discourses of humanitarianism, white innocence, multiculturalism, and colonial non-culpability. None of these ads are a departure from dominant Canadian discourses; they are rather a new site in which two histories of settler feminism and Canadian military advancement can coalesce and continue to serve the interests of the two groups. Settler feminists, hoping to gain access to institutions that will allow them to influence the formation and protection of the Canadian state as white men have are served positively by Armed Forces ads that invite women to join them in order to do just that. Likewise, the Canadian Armed Forces are served positively by the ability to feed off of settler women's images of innocence in order to further the portrayal of the military as a non-violent, empowering, humanitarian institution. Crocker's ad highlights the compatibility of settler feminist demands for a 'safer,' more equal Canadian Forces with the institution's desire for access to a softer image of domination. These ads represent but one example of the continuation of historical trajectories that bind settler women and the Canadian Forces together on the terrain of settler colonialism with each actor supporting the other in their respective erasure of their colonial roots. ▼

8 Ibid.

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Aishwarya Singh

New Modes of Old Social Control

Racialized Prison and Military Expansion

Citizenship refers to rights guaranteed by the state to all those who are formally recognized as members of a particular nation. T.H. Marshall describes three categories of citizenship rights that are meant to exist within democratic nations: civil, political, and social.[1] These are respectively the right for individuals of all classes to own private property and participate in the workforce, the right to participate in government, either through voting or serving as an elected official, and the benefits provided by the welfare state as a means to mitigate possible inequality.[2] Full and equitable access to these rights means that the state is using its resources in a way that best allows its population to enjoy equal access to economic and political opportunities, along with state protection. Under these conditions, each citizen ostensibly has an equal capacity for self-determination and growth.

It is easy, under this basic outline of citizenship, to view it as something related to national belonging. However, Sunera Thobani troubles this notion by situating citizenship in the context of North American settler colonialism and, as such, reveals it to be a mode of exclusion. She writes, "settlement, access to land, mobility, and the development of the market economy all relied upon the extension of civil and political rights to strangers [i.e. European settlers]."[3] Citizenship, as a social and legal construct that grants rights to those who 'belong' and withholds them from those who do not, was denied to Indigenous people. On one level, this justified the appropriation of Indigenous land for the development and imposition of political systems, industries, borders, etc. Moreover, it made possible nation-building itself – that is, it allowed white settlers to imagine their entitlement to Indigenous resources and thus legitimized their claim to nationhood. As such, people of colour's access to citizenship has historically been tenuous and dependent upon the economic or political demands of the state and its white elite.[4] She suggests that citizenship is offered to racialized people when it provides access to labour or has a diplomatic function. However, these rights can

1 R. K. Brickner, "Mexican Union Women and the Social Construction of Women's Labor Rights," Latin American Perspectives 33.6 (2006): 2006, 57.

2 Ibid.

3 S. Thobani, Exalted subjects: Studies in the making of race and nation in Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 74.

4 Ibid., 94

easily be compromised or taken away for the same reason. She presents the example of Japanese Canadians who were granted greater access to immigration than other Asians before World War II in order to foster an alliance between the British and Japanese states, but had these rights suspended and were labelled national enemies in a moment of national crisis.[5] Implicit in this example is the idea that citizenship, through how it positions racialized people (as enemy, terrorists, faithful subjects, etc.) and no matter how it does so, is used for white settlers' material benefit and works to legitimize the nation. While Thobani homogenizes different racialized groups into the category of "people of colour" and does not posit a specific analysis of slavery and anti-Blackness in relation to settler colonialism, her approach does invite us to a) denaturalize the concept of citizenship and examine the ways in which it can be mobilized (i.e. constructed and used in a specific way) in service of the state and to neutralize American nation identity; and b) view both the American state- and nation-building project as something fundamentally related to the interests of white settlers.

With this in mind, let us briefly examine racialized trends in two major institutions of social control, the American criminal justice system and military apparatus. This paper will argue that the American prison system and military apparatus mobilize citizenship – the former through legitimizing its denial and the latter through offering privileged access – to create conditions in which Black Americans can be purposed to support the economic and political power of the state or white elites.

Legitimizing Denial

After the Civil War, the criminal justice system reconfigured the concept of justice in a way that transferred "a symbolically significant numbers of Black people… to the slavery prisons."[6] Abolition was met with the passage of the "Black Codes," which listed as criminal behaviour for Black freedmen things like "vagrancy, breach of job contracts, absence from work, possession of firearms, and insulting gestures."[7] Because the mark of criminality suggests that one has violated their responsibilities as a citizen and poses a threat to the well-being of others, it justifies the nullification of one's citizenship rights. Through these new stipulations, thousands of newly freed ex-slaves could be targeted for incarceration.[8] Among the rights lost to prisoners as punishment for their crime was their civil right to choose employment and receive fair compensation for their work. The convict leasing system, which became a critical component of southern criminal justice, allowed the state to provide prison labour to private parties like plantation owners or corporations.[9] Through a reconstruction of what constitutes 'crime' and 'punishment,' many Black Americans then were returned back to a condition in which their labour could be exploited to support the economic dominance of the white bourgeoisie and the overall economic development of a white supremacist state.

Similarly, today, the American prison system warehouses Black Americans so that the state can maintain political legitimacy while refusing to fund critical social services. While crime rates in the United States have not been notably higher than those of other Western countries and violent crimes have been decreasing since the 1980s, the rate of incarceration has skyrocketed.[10] Moreover, the United States imprisons a disproportionate percentage of its Black population; in Washington D.C., it is estimated that three out of four Black men can expect to serve time in prison.[11] There is a positive relationship between the shift to neoliberal governance in the past thirty-five years or so, racialized and gendered poverty, and increases in the criminalization of Black people.[12]

5 Ibid.

6 J. James, The Angela Y. Davis reader, (Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1998), 75.

7 Ibid., 76.

8 Ibid., 77.

9 Ibid., 88.

10 M. Alexander, The new Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness, (New York: The United Press, 2010), 7.

11 Ibid., 6.

12 Anke Allspach, "Landscapes of (neo-)liberal control: the transcarceral spaces of federally sentenced women in Canada," Gender, Place, and Culture 17.6 (December 2010): 2010, 705.

Neoliberalism refers to a set of policies that centre around the free market, cuts to public expenditure for social services, increased privatization, and the replacement of the concept of 'public good' with 'individual responsibility'.[13] Under neoliberalism, the government limits its capacity to provide social rights like employment support, quality public education, and welfare. Neoliberal policy has exacerbated racial and socioeconomic inequality, having taken a very specific and disproportionate toll on Black communities,[14] as deindustrialization and globalization have led to increasing unemployment in inner cities, where most Black Americans live and work.[15] In line with the logic that market forces should rule the workforce, the state did nothing to ameliorate this loss, whether by trying to create or maintain industrial jobs or providing training for entering the service industry.

Similarly, the poor performance and high dropout rates in urban public schools (which are disproportionately attended by Black and Latino students) have been framed as resulting from the individual incompetency of teachers and their students rather than from structural factors like high levels of poverty and insufficient funding.[16] The response has been 'get tough' disciplinary sanctions based entirely on students' performance on standardized testing, as well as increased privatization through the closure of public schools and the integration of charter, contract, and direct for-profit schools.[17] Urban public schools are thus unable to provide students with a critical and holistic education, while families must now shop around for "educational access within a competitive education marketplace."[18] The result is that the quality of one's education (and thus often subsequent employment) becomes increasingly connected to one's socioeconomic position.

Amidst this growing poverty and socioeconomic inequality, the state has invoked "personal responsibility" to justify cuts to welfare, on which a far greater percentage of Black people than white people rely.[19] Statements like Reagan's condemnation of "welfare queens" (in reference to Black women who needed welfare but could not work) or Clinton's demonization of "deadbeat dads" (in reference to Black men who were not able to pay child support) framed poverty as a problem that is caused by poor individual choices.[20] In 1996, Congress passed a transitional work program called Temporary Aid to Needy Families.[21] The program involved a five-year limit on benefits (when no such limit had ever existed on welfare before) and required that those on welfare who are unemployed work off their benefits by doing menial tasks for non-profit human service agencies.[22] These stipulations are meant to force families to 'fend for themselves,' while ignoring that structural factors – poverty, hiring discrimination, and lack of access to quality education – can stand in the way of Black families' success in the market economy.

Using neoliberal policy, the state is able to withhold resources from Black communities, depriving Black Americans of their civil right to engage in the workforce and of their social right to receive assistance in conditions of inequality. Yet, it positions poverty and inequality as the result of weaknesses and pathologies inherent to Black communities.

The current constructions of crime and punishment support neoliberal practices and logic. Under the constraints outlined above, engaging in the informal economy through something like soliciting drugs makes sense and can even be a necessity. And yet, the 'War on Drugs' has framed drug solicitation as an inherently dangerous activity that is corrupting society, despite the fall in violent crime in the past decades and outside of any broader analysis of systemic discrimination.[23] As

13 A. Garcia, "CorpWatch : What Is Neoliberalism?" (n.d.). Accessed September 27, 2016. http://www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=376

14 A. Means, "Schooling in the age of austerity: Public education, youth, and social instability in the neoliberal city," (PhD. Diss., University of Toronto, 2010), 3.

15 Alexander, The new Jim Crow, 51.

16 Means, "Schooling in the age of austerity," 49.

17 Ibid., 50.

18 Ibid.

19 M. Abramovitz, "Welfare Reform in the United States: Gender, race and class matter," Critical Social Policy 26.2 (2006): 356.

20 Ibid., 343.

21 Ibid., 339.

22 Ibid.

23 Alexander, The new Jim Crow, 7.

such, many Black Americans have been incarcerated for the ways in which they try to overcome barriers to full citizenship; drug convictions account for much of the aforementioned increase of the largely Black prison population.[24] Moreover, the ways in which drug-related crimes are prosecuted is specifically designed to target Black Americans. For example, crack cocaine is pharmacologically identical to powdered cocaine; the former, however, is more likely to be found in Black communities and carries much more severe sentences.[25] The state criminalizes the specific mechanisms through which Black people navigate the restraints on their rights caused by neoliberal policy. On one level, this mystifies the way in which the state withholds certain rights from Black communities and gives them grounds for continuing to do so. On another level, through conflating Blackness with criminality, the state makes the claim that rights are not deserved in the first place, since Black communities cannot live up to its standard of upright citizenship. Moreover, incarceration removes many Black Americans from the public sphere, which involves their physical dislocation and disqualification from political participation through voting. As such, the state legally compromises Black Americans' right to politically mobilize, which in turn ensures that its policies remain unchallenged. By warehousing those who are disproportionately hurt by neoliberal reform and marking them as dangerous and undeserving, the state also absolves itself of the responsibility to care for these bodies. This is evidenced in the exclusion of prisoners from state services and housing or education programs, both before and after release.[26]

Additionally, under the neoliberal principle of privatization, private corrections companies are increasingly building and running prisons.[27] This means that the legal nullification of Black Americans' citizenship as described above is also profitable for industry, and for the white elite that usually profits most. Take, for example, the Corrections Corporation of America, which "operates internationally with more than 68 facilities in the United States, Puerto Rico, Australia, and the United Kingdom."[28] Because prisoners are not considered full citizens, the CCA and other companies are able to get away with cutting corners through providing "substandard diets, inadequate healthcare… and unsafe conditions."[29] Prisons also allow legal access to free Black labour. The Thirteenth Amendment to the American constitution prohibits involuntary servitude, "except as punishment for crime."[30] Companies using prison labour for little to no pay include IBM, Motorola, Honeywell, Microsoft, and Starbucks.[31]

Weaponizing Citizenship

The military has historically been and continues to be a body that provides access to rights associated with citizenship, including healthcare, employment, and education. During the early colonial period, slaves were regularly recruited to establish and defend colonies on Indigenous land in exchange for freedom.[32] While there usually existed laws prohibiting their employment as soldiers because of the fear of armed slaves, these laws were lifted in times of emergency.[33] For instance, during the American Revolution, slaves were recruited by both the Patriots' and British armies as the crisis worsened.[34] The conflicts in which slaves participated – whether they were between European colonizers and Indigenous people or between different European powers – ultimately had the consequence of giving white settlers access to Indigenous land and resources. This amounted to the expansion of a settler colonial state that would only need more slave labour for its economic development.

24 Ibid., 6.
25 Alexander, The new Jim Crow, 51.
26 Ibid.
27 Linda Evans, "Playing global cop: U.S. militarism and the prison industrial complex," in Global lockdown: Race, gender, and the prison-industrial complex, ed. Julia Chinyere Oparah, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 217.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 James, The Angela Y. Davis reader, 75.
31 Evans, "Playing global cop," 217.
32 O. Patterson, Slavery and social death: A comparative study, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 292.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.

During World War II, the military became the nation's "largest minority employer".[35] This happened at a time when Jim Crow laws legalized job discrimination and generated aggression against Black people. Military enlistment was thus incentivized for Black Americans under the promise of access to citizenship and the rights associated with it, one of the most important being fair access to employment. However, this access was not substantive nor unconditional. Upon soldiers' returning home from early twentieth century wars, Jim Crow laws were still in effect and Black veterans were often assaulted for daring to wear the American uniform.[36] This act of aggression is particularly illuminating because it shows how Blackness was thought to be incompatible with American identity, and thus Black people could not be allowed true access to the status of citizen nor the rights it entails. The military capitalized on Black Americans' institutionalized lack of opportunities, offering up access to formal employment and related benefits as bait.

A 2006 study by Amy Lutz found that Black people are currently overrepresented in the military, and those who engage and are killed in combat are more likely to come from lower-income towns.[37] Given the restrained opportunities for employment for Black people under neoliberalism, the military can more readily be seen as a viable economic opportunity. Moreover, the military offers education and training programs like the Army GED Plus Enlistment Program, in which applicants without a high school diploma are allowed to complete a high school equivalency certificate.[38] The state is reluctant to ameliorate poverty on a structural level, and instead imposes sanctions on schools that are already strapped financially. It is no surprise then that the Army GED Plus Enlistment program is largely promoted and used in inner city areas.[39]

In addition to access to rights which, under neoliberal policy, the state neglects to provide, the military targets Black Americans with the promise of a broader sense of national belonging. Take for example, an ad campaign for the American Marines. The first advertisement, which features a white soldier, reads, "You will become a storied protector of 230 years of tradition/You will serve faithfully with purpose/You will become the piercing tip of America's sword/If you have what it takes to make it." The second advertisement, which features a Black soldier, reads, "You will learn how to walk with honor/You will gain wisdom to command with decisive resolve/You will take your place among the most elite warriors on earth/If you have what it takes to make it." The first ad ties the white soldier to American heritage, suggests that there are meaningful consequences to his service, and suggests that he plays a critical role in the nation and stands out from the crowd. Meanwhile, the second ad suggests that the military is a place to gain access to opportunities for "wisdom" and "honor" – a place to make up for deficiencies – and promises a sort of belonging, notably with the "elites," a category that Black Americans have historically been and continue to be mostly excluded from. For the white soldier, the military is represented as a way to achieve a higher purpose and attain a status beyond that of a normal citizen; for the Black solider, the military is represented as a mechanism through which they can secure a place within the nation that has historically been denied to them. The military thus deliberately exploits conditions of inequality (whether constitutionally enshrined or not), recruiting Black Americans in a specifically racialized way by offering them the promise of access to citizenship.

Those who reap the benefits of this, however, are again the American state and certain industries. Major wars and military initiatives undertaken by the American military have often served American imperialism and amounted to repression and

35 D. Velez, "Sista soldiers: Black American women in the military," Daily Kos, 13 December 2015. Accessed April 13, 2016. http://www.dailykos.com/story/2015/12/13/1458121/-Sista-soldiers-Black-American-women-in-the-military

36 Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations," The Atlantic, June 2014. Accessed April 13, 2016. http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/

37 J. Mariscal, "The Making of an American Soldier: Why Young People Join the Military," Alternet, June 25, 2007. Accessed April 13, 2016. http://www.alternet.org/story/52233/the_making_of_an_american_soldier:_why_young_people_join_the_military

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violence against civilians in the Global South. Take, for example, the Iraq War, which was started to unearth and seize "weapons of mass destruction."[40] No such weapons were ever found, and the reports of their existence were later shown to be largely unsubstantiated; the war only served to lead to a regime change which secured U.S. corporate control over the region's oil and gas.[41] Moreover, it strengthened the military–industrial complex (the informal alliance between the military and the defence industry) by contributing to increases in defence funding.[42] Meanwhile, the documented civilian death count was between 155,481 to 173,813.[43] This case study exemplifies how war making (and greater involvement in it) essentially just increases the political and economic power of the state and turns a profit for corporations.

Under neoliberal governance, the state makes cuts to the public sector that disproportionately strip Black Americans of their citizenship rights. The marking of many Black Americans' modes of survival as criminal and removing them from communities into institutions of control justifies and enables the ongoing denial of rights related to citizenship, while the military offers the promise of access to those same rights to mobilize Black Americans for imperial war. Black bodies rendered criminal and expendable, the state and private corporations are able to extract profit at their expense with relative impunity. ▼

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My Desert, Alex AbuTagiya

Zahra Habib

People's Instinctive Travels and the Paths of Resistance

How Discursive Practices in Rap Music Challenge Systematic Marginalization

"My people had used music to soothe slavery's torment or to propitiate God, or to describe the sweetness of love and the distress of lovelessness, but I knew no race could sing and dance its way to freedom."

Maya Angelou

Introduction: The Blueprint

Hip hop culture has become one of the most powerful expressions of collective consciousness in the twentieth century[1] because of the way it has allowed its Black and Latino founders to express themselves and their lived experiences. At its core is resistance to oppression – the brutal racism, inequality, and state violence forced upon Black and Latino communities in twentieth century America. Hip hop was born out of the afflicted but creative minds of urban youth who were bumping to a rich mix of reggae, disco, funk, and jazz while living these conditions in New York City's South Bronx, and this element of resistance and its presence in rap music traces back to West African linguistic practices. The use of these discursive traditions by the Afrodiasporic Black and Latino population in the United States was a means of sharing personal experiences of suffering, forming social bonds, resisting systematic discrimination, and challenging the violence and social genocide of oppression.[2]

1 Here, 'hip hop culture' refers to the four basic elements of hip hop, which are artists, writers, critics, and musicologists unanimously recognize as the following: disc jockeys (DJs/turntablists), breakdancers (B-girls/boys), graffiti writers (who are not called graffiti artists), and emcees (MCs/rappers).

2 It must be noted that no history accounted for in this paper developed in a linear fashion, nor should the connections between African oral traditions and communicative practice of the Afrodiaspora be interpreted as an oversimplification of the incredibly rich and complex history of African American culture. Black orality, as well as the entirety of hip hop culture, has a specific and unique style that cannot be separated from its core as a social and racial movement which emerged from very specific conditions and experiences of systematic marginalization of the Black and Latino American populace. Since the scope of this paper prevents a proper study of the linguistic development of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and its function as an identity marker for the African diaspora, all the following references to AAVE discursive elements pertaining to rap and West African oral tradition are addressed solely for their relevance to rap music, and in the context of their contribution to the language of resistance to social and political subjugation. It should also be noted that due to the scope and limitations of this paper, a historical, political, and social analysis of the emergence of hip hop will not be possible here.

Origins and Power of Rap's Spoken Word: Black on Both Sides

The connection between modern rap and West African oral tradition is, above all, rooted in the Yoruba's concept of Nommo – the power of the spoken word and its ability to grant human control over life, as well as to offer comfort and sanctuary when one is not in control. The Yoruba are a West African community, whose origins can be traced as far back as the seventh century, and a central figure in their traditions is the divine and beloved Esu Elegbara. Esu's legend survived the dreadful 'Middle Passage' of enslaved Africans to the 'New World' and the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade that came afterward.[3] Esu, his rhetorical style of storytelling, and his social significance are in many ways nearly identical with those of griots/bards, who existed throughout West African society and served as intelligent but light-hearted critics, cultural historians, and storytellers of many African communities. Though the griot, bard, and divine character of Esu all require individual spaces to fully understand how they functioned for their communities, their shared contribution of interpreting the material systems which govern and affect human life (in a way that both enlightened and relieved the minds of the people) show a clear foundation for modern-day rap.[4]

One surviving aspect of these oral traditions was the 'trickster' personality of the orator, a trait found in accounts of Esu and shared with the griots/bards throughout the region. The traditions reflect a lighthearted consciousness of Esu and the community storytellers, not only for the sake of entertainment, but also for sustaining the spirit of the community in the face of hardship through using language and music.[5] Certain oral traditions that arose from the griots' light-hearted consciousness were preserved among the newly enslaved in the 'New World,' showing how important is was to use wit and creativity to resist oppression and domination. Arguably the most significant rhetorical strategy in ancient Afro-communicative practice is signifytin(g), or signification. Signifiyin' is "a way of saying one thing and meaning another," usually done with playful puns or substituting words that would have the opposite meaning when understood according to the standard rules of the dominant language.[6] In other words, it was, and remains, a satirical way to deliver a thoughtful message. The result of this was a doubled language, and only those belonging to the African (and African-derived) cultures in which it was a familiar vernacular could understand it.[7] Irreplaceable for setting cultural bonds strong enough to survive the genocidal slave trade, signifyin' as a tool of language has evolved from a critical discursive practice to one of disruption for the purpose of resistance.

The griot was seen as the guardian of the community's history and identity, the prophetic interpreter of the governing social order, and the bold but eloquent challenger of injustice everywhere. It was this last element and the rhetorical strategies that embodied his persona that would become integral to the Afrodiaspora's communicative practices in the twentieth century, which eventually led to the rise of rap as a musical genre with a distinct racial, social, and political character.

The Development of a Unique Afrodiasporic Lexicon Prior to Rap: The Paths of Rhythm

The transmission of these oral traditions happened over a huge geographical and social path, and primarily occurred because of the terrible 'Middle Passage' of the slave trade. The spoken word became a means of connecting the diaspora to the stories and memories of home. Before hip hop was a tangible movement and

3 Henry L. Gates Jr., The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African American Literary Criticism, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 4.

4 Amiri Baraka, "Riffin' on Music and Language," in Race and Resistance: African Americans in the Twenty-First Century, ed. Herb Boyd, (Cambridge: South End Press, 2002), 82.

5 Cheryl L. Keyes, Rap Music and Street Consciousness, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 19.

6 Gates Jr., 49.

7 Understanding a story told in signifyin' language forces outsiders to listen attentively to the story, its characters, and environment, and though initial creation of the semantic paid no heed to the outsider's feelings, this narrative component arguably became ever more important in the context which gave rise to hip hop.

culture, traditions like signifyin' and the figures of the griots/bards, the significance of their roles for the community, and the socioeconomic and political environments which met these traditions, particularly in the 1900s, nurtured an artistic environment that laid its foundations. Narrative poems, also known as Toasts, recited by Black Americans both during and after the slavery era, were ritualized performances where the community could express themselves on personal level to one another.[8] They consisted of "exaggerated language, metaphor, expletives, boasting, repetition, formulaic expressions, and mimicry."[9]

Beginning in the 1920s, these folkloric practices became more widespread, as did their connection with musical performance. The famous Brer Rabbit stories, told in a communal setting, were an inherited practice from West African traditions, expressing the trickster consciousness and superior intelligence of the marginalized Africans oppressed for generations under colonial rule. The stories gave an account of the brute force of the white masters and the evils of slavery, where Africans were represented by the Brer Rabbit, enslaved in their own kind of 'briar patch' and whose imprisonment was maintained by the selfish, ruthless, and deceitful Brer Fox – the slave owner.[10] The morals of the stories venerated the freedom that the Rabbit was always able to find, through the language of signifyin'. Signifyin allowed the persecuted to speak around their master and use humour to build collective resilience and the energy needed to understand and deal with the hardships of life under discrimination and enslavement.[11] It is easy to see how this memory of resistance is rooted in the Afrodiaspora's history of challenging forceful domination, and how both contribute to the meaning of being Black in America. The Toast poems, the humorous tales of Brer Rabbit, and the dual nature of the signifyin' language were able to do just this for the persecuted Black populace both in the short and long term – first as an antidotal social practice, and later with the birth of rap music in post-slavery America.

Let the Rhythm Hit Em': Communicative Practices and Resistance in the Hip Hop Nation

This section touches on the racialized rhetoric of rap after hip hop emerged as a clear music genre in the 1970s, and on its active embodiment of resistance in its initial role as a way of self-expression for the Black diaspora. Many of the discursive characteristics that make rap so unique are also basic elements of language and everyday conversation for the North American Afrodiaspora, like the narrative character of rap's prose. Narrating the history of African American and Afro-derived cultures is a central theme to rap, and is arguably it's fundamental purpose. Signifyin', in contemporary terms, is used to literally 'flip the script' – reverse the meaning of the dominant (white) understanding of words in American English, the language most commonly used by the dominant white American populace. One of the best examples of this is the rappers' inflection on the word nigga, where an endearing twist is made on one of the most perplexing and emotionally incendiary terms in the English language. Though there is no consensus among the African American populace on whether or not there is an acceptable use of nigga, nor are all its uses by Black artists made with positive intentions, the constant appearance of the term in non-derogatory, if not outright loving, contexts in rap and everyday conversation are both an implicit and explicit mode of resistance to the deeply racist origins and uses of the term. Changing the meaning of nigga from a racial slur to a term that signifies friendship and used as slang words just like 'brother/sister' or 'baby' had an effect that seems paradoxical, but is actually a continuation of a powerful tradition – signifyin' – where embracing a term historically used for oppressive purposes, flipping its conceptual understanding, and recording, mixing, and distributing music which lauds its new meaning, is one of the most explicit ways to resist marginalization and make one's presence known. In this sense, it is done by decolonizing language.

8 Geneva Smitherman, "The Chain Remain the Same: Communicative Practices in the Hip Hop Nation," Journal of Black Studies 28 (September 1997): 11.

9 Keyes, ***Rap Music and Street Consciousness,*** 24.

10 Imani Perry, Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 30.

11 Ibid., 31.

A second outcome of this inversion is empowerment through linguistic means, whereby African Americans are continually taking a historically dominant tongue and making it their own, rendering the white, English-speaking oppressor entirely unwitting of a form of their own language. Other examples of this semantic inversion are using down as a way to say they are up for something, and bad as a compliment of someone's good looks.[12] Similar to the moral of the Brer Rabbit tales, the doubling of language renders the flipped script hard for oppressors to understand, finding a unique type of freedom for the underclass, just like the distressed but clever Brer Rabbit manages to do.

Another lexical strategy used in rap is 'the dozens,' which is when rappers trade insults in freestyled, rhythmic couplets. It is dissing your opponents in freestyle spoken word, also known as battles. This allows the freedom of expression for a people whose history has been defined by physical and temporal constraints, allowing the voice of hip hop to be both diverse in substance and in reception. The symbolic significance of the practice is to have the lyrical freedom to diss the structural constraints of the governing order, rather than an individual attack on an opponent's style or persona, though the latter is normally what comes to mind first when talking about rap battle. Nevertheless, the freedom to criticize, be it individuals or institutions, without fear of retribution or censorship is what makes the expression of the dozens characteristic to hip hop culture, even beyond rap – the dozens represents free individual expression amidst ongoing systematic repression.

An indispensable practice that is unique to hip hop music, and more up the alley of DJs than rappers, is sampling – revisiting and revising earlier music, where DJs take bits and pieces of beats from records and mix them with several different sounds to make a type of musical collage.[13] They can be seen as an "indirect commentary on the work of earlier Black writers within the narrative structure of their own literary productions,"[14] and are also a reflection of how hip hop music capitalizes on Black expression as a platform for its resistant language. The exonerated discography of Public Enemy, a group of legendary status in hip hop, provides several examples of how sampling earlier works of rap and other genres are acts of defiance; perhaps the most forceful message of a sampled recording was the group's 1991 song "By the Time I Get to Arizona," which was released when Arizona was the only state to decide against having a national holiday to honour the late Dr. Martin Luther King. The song that Public Enemy sampled was the famed singer Isaac Hayes' hit, "By the Time I Get to Phoenix." The choice to sample Hayes' song, who himself was African American, had an effect that made it an unforgettable "text of racial protest that became a popular 1990s rallying cry against racism, Arizona-style."[15]

The discursive practices used in rap make up only parts of the whole of hip hop as a culture, a political movement created by and for Afrodiasporic and marginalized peoples' ultimate empowerment, a vehicle for social control and cohesiveness, and a phenomenon of consciousness. Between the discursive practices of the hip hop nation and the emergence of the hip hop nation itself, there is no chicken-and-egg relationship – central elements of rap's rhythmic prose and the linguistic dynamism of African American lexicon are grounded in ancestral traditions of West Africa. Yet, against the political, social, and economic background of twentieth century, hip hop and rap's distinctly Afro and Afro-Latino identity cannot be overlooked.

Conclusion: Rebirth Of a Nation

The rap artist – as the postmodern embodiment of the West African griot, a prophetic interpreter and lighthearted trickster – is the urban storyteller. From its historical roots up until today, rap is a creative response to curtailed educational opportunities, poor housing standards, unemployment, racial discrimination, and many other aspects of social dislocation that are part of

12 Smitherman, "The Chain Remain the Same," 18.
13 Cheryl L. Keyes, "At the Crossroads: Rap Music and its African Nexus," Ethnomusicology 40 (Spring-Summer 1996): 237.
14 Smitherman, "The Chain Remain the Same," 15.
15 Ibid., 16.

the American post-industrial urban predicament. Navigating a terrain marked by violence, social displacement, and incessant marginalization, rap is a form of decolonization at the most personal level. Though the essence of rap and hip hop culture is currently facing new challenges due to the onslaught of the music industry's capitalistic exploitation, the foundations of hip hop remain proudly rooted in combatting racial injustice. The hip hop nation is and always was proudly, unforgettably, and unapologetically resistant to cruel and violent domination, and thus represents the history of the Afrodiaspora by virtue of its existence alone.▼

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Sandra Sjollema with Avi Grenadier

Words on Edge

Poetic Counter-Narrative in Community

L'Anneau Poétique is a community-based creative writing group in Côte-des-Neiges that encourages the use of poetry among community members as a means of counter-narrative in the fight for social justice. In 2013, L'Anneau Poétique collaborated with the CURE program at QPIRG Concordia to investigate community poetry groups in Montréal. The group recently applied for another CURE project to set up a database of poems and recordings that use poetry to counter dominant narratives in regards to issues of social class, poverty, and working conditions.

In this article, L'Anneau Poétique Coordinator Sandra Sjollema explores community poetry in North America and Montréal, and discusses why this type of poetry is an apt tool for counter-narrative discourse. She presents excerpts of a Yiddish poem adapted by Avi Grenadier, a Côte-des-Neiges community member and Jewish anarchist, as well as comments by Avi about the poem that illustrate the use of poetry as counter-narrative.

Community Art and Poetry in North America

Community art has traditionally existed as a way for people to express their distinctiveness and hopes in a collective voice.[1] However, with the beginning of industrialization in Western society, art has been progressively linked to professionalism, commodification, and financial gain.[2] In the last twenty-five years in North America, there has been a renewal of community production of the arts, partly as a response to globalization, which has advocated participatory citizenship and the collective construction of knowledge.[3] Among the art forms, poetry has played a role in this resurgence, with countless groups active and events taking place in urban community settings across North America,[4] including in Montréal. Ongoing community poetry groups or more spontaneous activities and events

1 D. Barndt, "Touching Minds and Hearts: Community Arts as Collaborative Research," in ***Handbook of the arts in qualitative research,*** ed. J.G. Knowles & A. Cole, (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2010).

2 Ibid.,

3 Ibid.,

4 S. D. Sjollema and J. Hanley, "When Words Arrive: A qualitative study of poetry as a community development tool," ***Community Development Journal*** 49 (2013): 55.

can vary in purpose, but social action and working for social justice and change are among their mandates.[5] These poetry groups and events with a mandate for social action can take place in prisons, shelters, halfway houses, soup kitchens, parks, etc. and are often attended – and in many cases run – by those disadvantaged by race, gender, class, ability, etc.[6] Of particular note is the prominence of performed poetry in the form of rap, hip hop, and spoken word in urban community settings, particularly among racialized youth who use it as a means of consciousness raising and social change.[7]

Whether in Montréal or elsewhere, poetry is being used as a means of counter-narrative or alternative discourse[8] – terms that are often used interchangeably with the expression 'counter-hegemonic discourse.'[9] Critical theorists define counter-narrative discourse as "the… stories of those individuals and groups whose knowledge and histories have been marginalized… or forgotten in the telling of official narratives."[10] As for counter-hegemony, it has been described as presenting ideas or images that are subversive of existing power relations.[11] These types of alternative discourse can challenge dominant discourse and ideologies that are propagated through mainstream institutions such as universities and media[12] and can foster a culture of questioning and resistance.[13]

Community Poetry in Montréal: Marginality and Social Action

In 2013, community activists and McGill University academics Sjollema and Hanley reported on an exploratory study conducted the previous year which located twenty-five creative writing activities and groups in Montréal (including francophone, anglophone, and multilingual groups), primarily based in food banks, youth organizations, and drop-in centres. Some of the events occurred in more unofficial community settings, such as parks, or consisted of public readings that took place during demonstrations. These groups and activities were in existence at the time of the study or had existed previously to it. Another study carried out in 2013 by L'Anneau Poétique, in collaboration with the Community University Research Exchange (CURE) at QPIRG Concordia, revealed that some community poetry groups in Montréal use artistic expression and capacity and community building for social action ends, i.e. to bring about change in their communities or in the larger society.[14] Both studies revealed that the majority of people participating in these activities are racial, ethnic, or religious minorities (including newly arrived immigrants) or people experiencing poverty, mental health problems, gang affiliation, literacy difficulties, and addiction. Due to the instability of many of the writing groups and to the variable

5 M.B. Cohen, and A. Mullender, "The Personal in the Political: Exploring the Group Work Continuum from Individual to Social Change Goals," Social Work with Groups 22 (2009): 18-21; E. Westbrook, "Community, Collaboration and Conflict: the Community Writing group as Contact Zone," in ***Writing Groups Inside and Outside the Classroom,*** eds. B.J. Moss et. al., (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004).

6 A. Rich, "Notes towards a politics of location: Talk for conference on Women, Feminist identity and Society in the 1980's, Utrecht, Holland, June 1st, 1984," in Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader, eds. R. Lewis & S. Mills, (New York: Routledge, 2003).

7 A. A. Akom, "Critical Hip Hop Pedagogy as a Form of Liberatory Praxis," Equity and Excellence in Education 42 (2009): 56; M.J. Gladney, "The Black Arts Movement and Hip Hop," African American Review 29.2 (1995): 291; J. Johnson, "Manning Up: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Los Angeles' Slam and Spoken Word Poetry Communities," Text and Performance Quarterly 30.4 (2010): 407.

8 V. Foster, "What if? The use of Poetry to promote Social Justice," ***Social Work Education, The International Journal*** 31.6 (2012); V. Gaylie, "Taking (a)part: poetic counternarratives for troubled times," ***Current Issues in Education*** 5.6 (2002).

9 N. D. Abrams, "Antonio's b-boys: Rap, rappers, and Gramsci's intellectuals," ***Popular Music and Society*** 19.4 (1995).

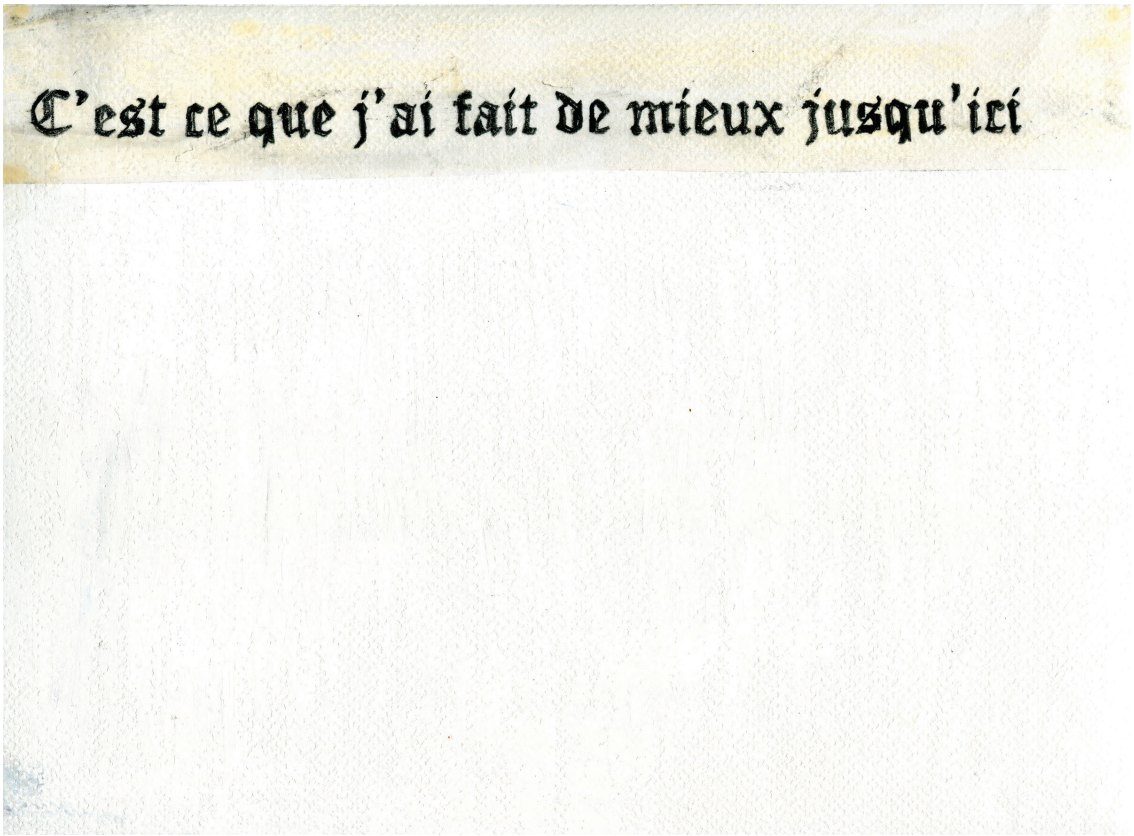
10 M. Peters C. & Lankshear, "Postmodern counternarratives," in ***Counternarratives: Cultural studies and critical pedagogies in postmodern spaces,*** eds. Giroux et al., (New York: Routledge, 1996), 2.

11 Abrams, "Antonio's b-boys."

12 V. Foster, "What if?"; C. Leggo, "Astonishing silence: knowing in poetry," in ***Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples, and Issues,*** eds. J. G. Knowles & A. L. Cole, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008).

13 J. B. Kubayanda, "Minority Discourse and the African Collective: Some Examples from Latin American and Caribbean Literature," Cultural Critique 6 (1987).

14 M. Abdelhak, "What is in a Word? / À l'intérieur des Mots: A Portrait of Community Creative Writing Groups," Convergence: A journal of undergraduate and community research 4 (2013): 58.



participation of some community members,[15] it is impossible to estimate the number of people writing and publishing in these community settings at any given time. Generally, these groups publish the poetry in community publications such as zines, anthologies, chapbooks, and journals and perform their work in a variety of public settings.[16] The public nature of these venues allows the poetry to reach a wide audience, and renders counter-narrative accessible to the community at large.

Why Use Poetry as Counter-Narrative in Community?

Poetry, by its very nature, offers possibilities of counter-narrative to those living in marginality. For example, poetry is inexpensive to practice and requires few materials, which for low-income people is a very important consideration.[17] The inexpensive and portable nature of poetry also makes it easy to set up a community poetry group or move it to another location.[18] Other characteristics of poetry that make it amenable to being used as counter-narrative include its use of creativity and imagination, which are considered key elements in the consciousness-raising process, in contesting power, and in envisioning a different future.[19] Poetry can also evoke rational reflection, bodily responses, and emotional resonance in a concise and intense form of expression.[20] As post-structuralist, feminist author Ellsworth (1989) suggests, consciousness raising about social issues is best served when we include our emotional and bodily responses as well as our ability to analyze situations rationally. Poetry achieves this emotional and embodied evocation through literary devices,

15 S. D. Sjollema and J. Hanley, "When Words Arrive."

16 M. Abdelhak, "What's in a Word?"

17 C. Hull, "The marriage of Poetry and Poverty," Social Alternatives 15.4 (1996): 4. ; A. Lorde, "Race, class and sex: women redefining difference," in Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures, ed. R. Ferguson, (New York: MIT Press, 1990).

18 S. D. Sjollema and J. Hanley, "When Words Arrive."

19 D. Clover, "Feminist aesthetic practice of community development: the case of Myths and Mirrors Community Arts," ***Community Development Journal*** 42.4 (2007).

20 R. Furman, "Poetry and Narrative as Qualitative Data: Explorations into Existential Theory." ***The Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*** 7.1 (2007) 1-9.

including imagery, rhythm, metaphor, and rhyme.[21]

Poetry's ability to elicit emotion in particular is an important consideration. Despite Western society's history of considering emotions as irrational and unproductive, and their being associated with the exotic and subordinate Other,[22] emotions have recently been found to be an essential factor in social change among those living in marginal situations. For example, emotions can play a key role in how people perceive injustice,[23] in how they perceive and live in oppressive situations[24] and in how they conceive of and mobilize for change,[25] including for social change in particular.[26] Emotional expression and evocation also make poetry a significant community-building tool, as they allow for empathy and intimacy to develop among those reading, listening to, and sharing poetry.[27]

Poem "Es Brent": Yiddish Poetry as Alternative Discourse on Israel

"Es Brent" is a Yiddish poem originally written in 1938 by Mordecai Gebirtig. It was adapted by Jewish anarchist Avi Grenadier in 2014 during the Israeli siege and bombing of Gaza. Avi performed the poem in response to a call by various community groups to include arts-based representations in the protest against Israeli actions in Gaza. He performed the poem twice during the summer of 2014, first at a pro-Palestinian rally held in the Plateau Mont-Royal and again at a Jewish-based protest held at the Canadian Jewish Federation building in Côte-des-Neiges. The protest was directed at the Canada-Israel Jewish Affairs group whose office is located in the building. This section will feature excerpts of the poem in English interlaced with comments by Avi that demonstrate how poetry can act as counter narrative in community.

Es Brent
It's burning, sisters, it's burning
Oh, our poor village, brothers, burns!
Evil winds, full of anger,
Rage and ravage, smash and shatter,
Stronger now that wild flames grow –
All around now burns!

And you stand there looking on
With futile, folded arms
And you stand there looking on –
While Gaza burns

Avi: "The content of the poem, hopefully, was meant to challenge specifically… the Jewish mainstream institutions because of where it was presented [at the Canadian Jewish Federation building] as well as to challenge certain normative enforced ways of orienting towards Israel…not looking at the realities and the destructive nature of nationalism… of the Jewish nation-state. So the content itself just by naming the injustices happening in Palestine, the villages being in flames, olive trees being burnt… that's hopefully part of building an alternative discourse."

It's burning, sisters! Our town is burning!
Oh, God forbid the moment should arrive
That our town, with us, together
Should go up in ash and fire,
Leaving when the slaughter's ended
Charred and empty walls!

And you stand there looking on
With futile, folded arms
And you stand there looking on –
While an olive tree burns

21 M. Prendergast, "Introduction: The phenomena of poetry in research: 'Poem is what?' Poetic inquiry in social science research," in Poetic Inquiry: Vibrant Voices in the Social Sciences, eds. M. Prendergast, et. al. (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2009).

22 J. Barbalet, "Emotion and rationality."

23 S.J. Scher & D. Heise, "Affect and the perception of injustice," Advances in Group Process 10, (1993): 223-252.

24 U. Narayan, "Working Together Across Difference: Some Considerations on Emotions and Political Practice," ***Hypatia*** 3.2 (1988): 31-47.

25 Reddy, W.M. "Against Constructionism: The Historical Ethnography of Emotions," ***Current Anthropology*** 38.3 (1999): 327-351.

26 A. Lorde, "Race, class and sex."

27 S. D. Sjollema and J. Hanley, "When Words Arrive."

Avi: "The fact that it [the original poem] is in Yiddish is itself part of an alternative discourse because it's been so marginalized both by virtue of the oppression and killing of Yiddish speakers in World War II on a mass scale and then… the evolution of normative Zionist ideology being pushed where Yiddish even outside of Israel was not encouraged… the jettisoning of the language is part of the assimilation process. I'm also fairly convinced by the argument that Yiddish is a language that represents a kind of inherent opposition to state nationalism since it evolved so much across and through the violence of borders, as Ashkenazi Jews developed their cultural and religious life in Europe."

Don't stand there brother, looking on
With futile, folded arms
Don't stand there, sister, douse the fire! –
Palestine is burning!

Avi: "Yiddish poetry has always been a way of speaking to issues differently, of bringing out eotion. There is a certain kind of soul level that is reached when you are writing poetry, and a lot of this poem in particular reads almost like a song even though it's a poem. I think there is a heartstring that poetry pulls and that Yiddish poetry particularly pulls for a lot of people for whom it's either their heritage or who connect with it."

Conclusion: Poetry and the Aesthetics of Social Justice

The use of poetry in community struggles for social justice reflects the postmodern emphasis on the aesthetics of social change, meaning that what matters is not only the message, but also what form the message takes.[28] The use of poetry by those marginalized by race, ability, gender identity, sexual preference, etc. in community settings in Montréal and across North America bodes well for counter-narrative discourse: poetry is accessible, portable, and evokes imagination as well as emotions. Most significantly, poetry's capacity to engage readers and listeners in an empathetic response may be its key strength in community building, social justice efforts, and breaking through hegemonic discourse.[29] The example of a poem used as counter-narrative in this article reminds us that the content of a message is not the only important element of counter-hegemonic discourse. Indeed, the very language of alternative expression, and its ability to reach beyond the intellect, can be considered essential elements in moving us beyond the influence and pressure of rote, familiar, and repeated messages and into a vibrancy that speaks simultaneously to mind, body, and soul.

NB: Permission to reprint the adapted version of the poem "Es Brent" and the commentary excerpts was given by Avi Grenadier.

For more information on L'Anneau Poétique, see anneaupoetique.wordpress.com ▼

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Sea Wolf with Octopus, Otter, and Owl, B.

Rana Salah

To Indigenous Peoples

This is for the missing and murdered Indigenous women.
To the victims of settler-colonial violence.
To residential school survivors.
To the land defenders.

How little we settlers know what it is to be colonized,
even after all this time.

I am a settler,
a privileged settler.
for my water,
my air,
my education,
my health,
has been placed above yours.

I am a settler,
a first-generation Canadian,
one still yearning,
still learning,
how little I still grasp your diversity,
your beauty,
your histories,
your courage.

Four-hundred years of resilience,
four-hundred years of endurance,
how much we settlers can learn,
for it is not you who isolates,
but it is ourselves.

Your histories precede colonialism,
but ours do not.

Our existence,
continued persistence,
is colonialism,
the fuel of extinction,
money is the epitome
the god of the land.

There are no words to describe
the crime of genocide
inflicted upon your peoples,
and dispossessed throughout times.

I grew up not knowing
the names of your nations
I grew up not knowing
not feeling
not thinking
what it would be
if you had complete sovereignty
would we be where we are now,
unable to see?
unable to hear,
and how the earth pleads?

We can never be who we say we are
until we are all free.
Free of poverty,
environmental destruction,
and racism.

May we learn how to heal.

Sincerely,

A settler of Palestinian origin,
A daughter of the colonized,
Related to victims of Israeli colonialism,
To victims of Israeli apartheid. ▼

Berta Cáceres no se murió, se multiplicó!, Fanny "Aïshaa"

Laura Zuñiga Cáceres,
translated from Spanish by
Matt Ginsberg-Jaeckle

Guardian Spirit of the Rivers

La Madre Tierra militarizada, cercada, envenenada, donde se violan sistemáticamente los derechos elementales, nos exige actuar.

Mother Earth, militarized, fenced in, poisoned, where the most basic human rights are systematically violated, demands that we take action.

—Berta Cáceres, from her speech upon receiving the Goldman award, April 20, 2015

Berta Cáceres, guardian spirit of the Rivers, embraced her historic and ethical role, defending the peoples of the world with tenacity and love, those people who are living through the tremendous violence of a system that prioritizes the profits of the few over life itself.

This sister contributed her spirit, her strength, her intelligence and her body to the great struggles of the world. They shot her body, her heart stopped beating; the body of this sister, guardian spirit of the

"Berta Cáceres no se murió, se multiplicó!" Mural by Fanny "Aïshaa"

Berta Cáceres, leader autochtone Lenca du Honduras, co-fondatrice du Conseil civique d'organisations populaires et autochtones du Honduras (COPINH) et défenseure de l'eau et de la vie, a été assassinée le 2 mars 2016 en raison de sa lutte pour protéger la rivière sacrée Gualcarque, convoitée par l'entreprise Desarrollos Energeticos-DESA pour la construction d'un barrage hydroélectrique. En tant que symbole de la résistance et lutte des peuples contre le système capitaliste qui dépouille et saccage les communautés et les territoires, Berta Cáceres a laissé un héritage d'articulation des mouvements, de dignité et de combativité. Son assassinat a provoquée une vague de mobilisation et d'indignation à travers le monde. Partout sur la planète, des centaines d'activistes sont poursuivi.e.s, agressé.e.s et assassiné.e.s en raison de la lutte qu'ils et elles mènent en défense de l'eau, de la terre, de la dignité et de la vie.

This mural was first unveiled at the World Social Forum in Montreal on August 10, 2016 at a vigil in hommage of Berta Cáceres and water and land protectors, and in the presence of two of Berta Cáceres' daughters, Laura Zuñiga Cáceres and Bertha Zuñiga Cáceres.

rivers, is no longer with us. But this sister, guardian spirit of the rivers, is the powerful ancestor who keeps calling on us to wake up, who protects us and gives us the loving energy that entices us to keep going.

From our land, with the commitment that we feel towards life, we too embrace our role as guardians of Mother Earth, who today suffers the multiple forms of violence of the powers that be. Our cry and our struggle joins with the many struggles around the world defending life in the face of weapons that try to quiet us, in the face of men in uniform who repress us, who assassinate us, in the face of those for whom our lives are disposable, as people with a multiplicity of bodies, with Indigenous, Black and rebel spirits.

We speak to you from Honduras, where they are in the midst of plundering our mother. Where extractive corporations, both national and transnational, enter our territories, protected by the police and military. We see clearly what the priorities of the Honduran government and its "partners" are – providing security and protection for corporations, even when they trample over the decisions of our people, or worse, over our lives.

Ever since the 2009 coup d'état, supported by the United States, we have lived through the re-enforcement of state security forces, whose weaponry has been modernized, whose military training has been strengthened, and whose budgets have been fattened, aided by the governments of the United States, Canada and several European powers. We suffer from policies of militarization that directly impact our communities and organizations when, for example, the soldiers and police act to contain the populations who rebel against the imposition of hydroelectric or mining projects. We have lived through the assassination of sisters and brothers by the military. We have been the target of repressive policies that seek to sow terror amongst those of us who dare to dream of another world. Soldiers and police officers have

beaten us for crying out and demanding justice. Businessmen have accused us of being violent for exercising autonomy and not allowing their machines in to destroy our rivers. And today we cry, with a heavy heart and our lives hanging on by a thread, for our sister, Berta, who taught us how to fight, who was assassinated for her struggle and suffered in her own flesh the pain of confronting the militarization of the continent, promoted by the United States.

We speak to you from Honduras, from our indigenous worldview, to say we assume the responsibility for carrying on the legacy of our sister, the guardian spirit of the rivers. Though the governments and corporations disregard our knowledge, for over 500 years we have been breaking the silence they have subjected us to with weapons and fire. They said that we didn't have spirits, that we didn't have minds, they repeat time and again that we are unable to plan for the future, not seeing that it is they themselves, the rich and powerful, who are carrying this planet towards death. As a people marching towards our emancipation we "re-affirm the commitment to continue defending the water, the rivers, the well-being of ourselves and our environment, as well as our rights as peoples."[1] With our sister Berta as our guide, we continue to struggle in defense of life and to build a new world, from our roots. We continue confronting extractive industries, both national and international, governments who promote this system of death, and international financial institutions who forget about our lives. Pain doesn't paralyze us, terror doesn't inundate us; we keep on fighting, dreaming, creating and building the future that we deserve.

Wild Woman, B.

Laura Zuñíga Cáceres is the daughter of assassinated Honduran indigenous land-defender Berta Cáceres and a member of COPINH, the Civil Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations. ▼

1 From Berta's speech upon receiving the Goldman award

The Termite Collective

We Demand Prisons Change

An Open Letter to the Liberal Government

Dear Liberal government,

Congratulations on being elected. We are writing to you as people concerned for the well-being and dignity of prisoners in Canada. Some of us are currently incarcerated, some of us are not. For many years, the rights and entitlements established by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms have not been upheld in Canadian prisons. Since the Conservatives took power, we have returned to a system of incarceration based on retribution rather than rehabilitation. This perspective has had an enormous economic impact, with the costs of prisons and prison construction rising. This money could have been better spent elsewhere. We are writing to urge you to defend the rights that all people are entitled to, regardless of whether they are in the community, or behind bars. You ran on a platform describing yourself as 'real change' and hope.

Here's what we think you should change.

Criminalization

We protest the fact that more people are doing more time. Prison sentences are getting longer and longer. More people are being brought back for parole violations. More people are facing extra years on their sentences after being refused at a Parole Board hearing. This has both economic and human costs.

We demand that all the bills passed during the Conservative government's era regarding prison be overturned.

We demand that the Parole Board and Parole Officers honour eligibility dates. Eligibility dates are a time set by a judge during sentencing after which a person is allowed to appear in front of a Parole Board to ask for parole.

We demand the return of the Faint Hope Clause (Criminal Code, Section 745), as it was in its original form. This allowed people to access a judicial review after serving 15 years of a sentence. If the judicial review was favourable, people were then eligible to appear in front of the Parole Board and ask for parole.

We recommend an overhaul of the parole revocation process. It is unjust that the Parole Board can give a jail sentence of four years after a parole

revocation for breaking a parole condition. Parole Board members are not judges. This process is nothing like a trial. The process, as it currently works, effectively results in being locked up for four years for acts as banal as breaking curfew by one minute.

We demand shorter waiting periods for people who have received negative Parole Board decisions and would like to see the Parole Board again. The current average wait time is two years and that is too lengthy.

Justice

We protest the transfer of prisoners based on unproven allegations. We protest the impunity of the prison system as a whole. Our supposed 'bad attitudes' are not a reason for a transfer and increase in security level.

Nowhere in our correctional plan does it say we must be happy. We protest the lack of privacy both inside prison and when on parole or probation. Many prisoners currently face double bunking, which is accompanied by a loss of both dignity and privacy.

We demand the creation of an independent group to deal with prisoners' grievances. Allowing the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) to 'investigate' itself is an inherent injustice and lacks transparency. We demand that prisoners' grievances be dealt with fairly and efficiently. That is to say, in good faith, and within three months after the grievance is submitted.

We demand the establishment of paralegal services, access to up-to-date legal texts, pro bono lawyers or law students, and no disciplinary repercussions for individuals using this knowledge to help themselves and others.

We demand the end of all double-bunking practices for any length of time. Double-bunking means that two of us have to live in an 8' by 12' cell with a sink, desk, chair, toilet, and one shelf. Living in these conditions has resulted in an increase in incidents of sexual assault, thieving, and fights.

Work

We protest the cuts to our wages. We should have access to real wages, not pennies. CORCAN, which provides employment to prisoners, is an entity separate from CSC. Its mission was to provide meaningful employment and skills. It was a way for long-term prisoners to keep their families together and short-termers to build some money for release. In fall 2013, prisoners' pay was cut. The bonuses/incentives that prisoners used to receive for working at CORCAN have been taken away.

Currently, the maximum wage we make in ten days is $69. Of that sum, we must pay $15.18 to kitchen services, $5.52 to telephone services and maintenance, $11 to television fees and maintenance, and $3.73 to savings. Only $33.57 remains. Our pay rates have not been indexed to inflation since 1982. The cost of living has increased over the years, and funds are needed to support our families, assist them in visitation costs, and save for our eventual release.

We demand that our pay rate equal the provincial minimum wage in the province where we are imprisoned and that our pay reflect the cost of living in 2016 and increase each year according to inflation.

We demand that the pay incentive for CORCAN workers be brought back.

We demand access to actual insurance for workplace injuries and illnesses. The current $2.50 we receive as an allowance in case of injury is insufficient.

We demand access to a Canada Pension Plan.

Even as we protest cuts to wages, we decry the lack of job opportunities inside prison. We also protest the lack of job opportunities for prisoners who have been released and emphasize the need for job support that specializes in prisoner placement.

We demand access to trades and training while in prison that have an accreditation that is recognized outside of prisons.

Programs

We protest the closure of the prison farms, the de-funding of the LifeLine program, and the closing of countless productive and meaningful social programs. As outlined in the Perron Report (Task Force on Long-Term Offenders) programming is essential for successful reintegration.

We recommend that the Liberal government reinstate the prison farm programs. The farm programs helped to foster practical skills, a sense of self-sufficiency, and a form of zootherapy through the care of animals. The farms allowed us to feed ourselves and brought in revenue through the sale of milk and eggs.

We demand that the government reinstate the LifeLine program, which supported people with life or indeterminate sentences. We further demand that people with life sentences be given a voice in the hiring process for LifeLine.

We demand a reduction in the wait time for all programming, especially for people with life and long-term sentences.

We recommend the reinstatement of all social programs closed during the Conservative Reign, including OPEX, Maison d'Arrêt, and life skills programming.

Food

We protest the high prices of food in prison. We decry the lack of expiration dates on all products in prison. We also protest the lack of training we receive inside prison to prepare healthy meals. Some prisoners in minimum or medium security institutions live in independent living units, where they are expected to prepare their own meals. They receive $35 per week for food. With the high cost of food, that amount is insufficient.

We demand that kitchen and food trades training programs be reinstated and that food be prepared in the prison by inmates – not brought in frozen from elsewhere and reheated.

We demand access to better, fresher food and real milk in the prison cafeteria, where we eat three times per day.

We demand that the meals served by the cafeteria reflect the Canadian nutritional guidelines and that the expiration dates on the food be visible and respected.

Visits

Though we are the ones spending time behind bars, our family members are punished for our actions. The disrespectful, suspicious treatment of our family and friends is unacceptable. Our phone conversations are cut short without notice. Visiting hours are cancelled unexpectedly and without cause. There is an insufficient number of phones in the prison wings. Wait times are excessive. Currently, our family and friends have to call a phone number between specific hours in order to secure a visit with us. Often no one answers the phone, or the phone is busy for the entire period during which one can call.

Even when our visitors are able to secure a visiting time and drive, often a great distance, to come see us, their visits can be cancelled at the door if the Ion Scan Machine beeps at them. Ion Scan Machines, use to detect drugs and illicit substances, are known to produce false positives. We protest the cutting of family days. Family days offer an opportunity to visit with our families from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. They occur much less frequently than in years past. Keeping strong relationships with people on the outside is essential for our health and well-being. We protest the lack of support we receive in pursuing these relationships.

We demand that CSC staff show more respect to our visitors.

We demand that CSC fix the phone system so the phone doesn't cut off anymore. We further demand reimbursement for the cost of every phone call when our calls get cut off, regardless of the length of the phone call.

We demand the reinstatement of family days.

We request that at least eight occur per year.

We demand more visiting hours in the evenings for family members who work during the days and are not available on weekends.

Education

We should have access to educational opportunities on the inside. In the last twenty years, CSC has cut almost all trades programs available to us. They have cut off our access to outside education. We should have access to education about technology.

Progressive changes to technology on the outside leave us unable to function once we get out.

We reiterate our demand for the reinstatement of trades programs.

We recommend the reestablishment of educational programs, especially with regards to modern technology and media.

We recommend that libraries contain more up-to-date, educational books, especially pertaining to Canadian laws.

We demand that all education levels be accessible in both official languages.

We demand that access to personal computers be reinstated.

Health

We protest the lack of accessibility of medical services inside prison. Many people inside wait years for a diagnosis and then are put on another long waiting list for any needed surgery. It can take months to see a doctor or a dentist. We protest the lack of compassionate palliative care. There is a lack of personal care assistance for older inmates, leaving many without compassion or dignity.

We demand that preventive medical services be made more accessible, that access to multivitamins and supplements be reinstated, and that CSC honour prescriptions written for us by doctors on the outside.

We demand timely access to psychologists who provide follow-up care, not just evaluations, reduced wait times to see a dentist or have an optical exam, and the reinstatement of free teeth cleanings for people serving life sentences.

We demand that trained health professionals lead programming related to substance use, not prison guards.

We demand appropriate treatment for older inmates, especially for those needing painkillers and chronic disease medication. For these older inmates, we demand the lifting of restrictions on certain prescriptions in order to prioritize their health.

We demand access to trained professionals to provide palliative care and personal care assistance to those with severe chronic disease or disability.

Reintegration

Through the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, CSC is mandated to assist in the rehabilitation of offenders and their reintegration into the community. CSC is currently not fulfilling its reintegration mandate. Many people are sent back to jail for something that could have been dealt with in the community. Once inside prison, people lack opportunities for reconnecting with the outside community.

We demand that more community groups be eligible to come inside prisons as volunteers in order to run rehabilitation programs and build relationships necessary for reintegration.

We recommend that the warden regain the ability to give permissions for unescorted temporary absences and escorted temporary absences into the community. The current system of organization clogs the system with bureaucracy and limits accessibility to rehabilitative outings in the community.

We demand alternatives to re-imprisonment for parole violations. Parole violations often are instances where someone did not break the law and thus, should not be dealt with through imprisonment. This is an issue of habeas corpus, and costs the taxpayers a great deal.

We demand that the Parole Board cease imposing the non-association clause as a parole condition. The non-association clause is a parole condition that requires parolees to figure out within fifteen minutes whether or not they are speaking with someone who has a criminal record or an active police file.

Media and Communications

Prisoners are discriminated against in the media. News articles about prisons focus only on the most high-profile cases. Media attention and public service communications amplify unfounded fears. As a result, prisoners face discrimination upon release, especially with regard to employment.

We demand that rehabilitation and reintegration success stories be celebrated in order to commend the hard work of people inside and their families.

We demand transparent publication of findings that crime rates are on the decline in Canada.

We demand that the representation of prisoners in the media change. Having an open-

minded, understanding community is necessary to reduce harm, decrease recidivism, and promote reintegration.

Conclusion

Prisoners deserve the right to a second chance. We urge you to heed our demands to ensure a dignified life for all prisoners, and that all prisoners successfully reintegrate into society following their release. ▼

No Mining on Barriere Lake Algonquin Lands

Copper One's mining project is an attempt to bury our cultural identity alive under the debris of mining tailings.

—Barriere Lake Elder Michel Thusky

The Algonquins of Barriere Lake have set up a land protection camp at a proposed mining site in the heart of their territory, where core sample drilling is supposed to begin at any time. The mining claim covers over 300 square kilometers of Barriere Lake's land base, which contains La Vérendrye wildlife reserve, as well as a larger area including several lakes and numerous waterways. The junior mining company Copper One seeks to develop an open-pit mine on this land. This proposed mining project continues a colonial relationship where Canada and Quebec stake corporate claims against Indigenous lands, life, and health. The Algonquins of Barriere Lake have consistently opposed mining activity on their ancestral and current-use territory. They assert their rights and jurisdiction in the spirit of co-existence embodied in the 1991 Trilateral Agreement, the 1998 Bilateral Agreement and subsequent recommendations, all of which recognized Barriere Lake's ongoing relationship to the land and role in co-management. In June 2016, as Barriere Lake's council negotiated with the Quebec government, Quebec lifted the suspension of the mining claim without any prior conversation with or informed consent from Barriere Lake, as is required under recent Canadian case-law.

By saying no to mining, Barriere Lake are asserting care for Algonquin people, the land and future generations.

The land defence camp needs our support. Donations will cover fuel, food and other essentials. There are also other ways to support. For more information, visit http://www.barrierelakesolidarity.org/

Photos and Text by the Barriere Lake Solidarity Committee - Solidarité Lac Barrière

Barriere Lake Land Defense Camp, October 2016

Artwork

Cover Art
Ensley Chau

A digital drawing of 5 brown and black arms holding up a large light pink swirling banner on a lavender background. The arms are framed by the banner, bright flowers and green leaves. The banner says, "Convergence" in black letters at the top and has the roman numerals for 8 at the bottom.

Ensley is a QPoC illustrator and zine-maker. They love plants, glitter, and dogs. Website at http://enscurrent.tumblr.com or contact @enscaper on twitter.

Bulletproof, Microcosmos, Untitled, My Desert and Flower
Alex AbuTagiya

Bulletproof: When you get your angel wings, you become bulletproof. This piece was made in response to the systematic murder of Black men in Oakland, California, at the hands of police and inspired by a mural in North Oakland depicting Gary King Jr. with angel wings. Gary was shot by Oakland police in 2007. Rest in power. End the war on Black people! #blacklivesmatter Marker on paper.

Microcosmos: This piece was made in response to the traumas of being a POC (person of colour) in academia and in response to the colonization of Egyptian history, and the fetishization of my ancestry within academia. It's also about personal and ancestral trauma, and how they relate to the institutional trauma of academia. Marker and coloured pencil on paper.

My Desert: The desert, in Egyptian Christianity, is a site of spiritual confrontation. My Desert is a spirit's journey, the totality of lived experience as an Egyptian and Coptic Christian woman raised in diaspora. Based on narratives of Coptic womanhood through the lives of the saints, who are very important in Coptic spiritual life (as mediators between people and God). The 'virgin' is St. Mary (or take your pick – they're all virgins!), the 'whore' is St. Mary of Egypt (she repented, baptized herself in the Jordan river, and wandered the desert), and the 'transvestite' is St. Marina the Monk (who lived incognito at a men's monastery). Their stories are juxtaposed here with the fetishization of Egypt and Black/Arab women's bodies in pop culture. Acrylic and collage on reclaimed wood.

Alex AbuTagiya is an artist & educator of Egyptian descent. They are currently teaching at Ouroboros Healing Space, working on a Coptic diaspora community-led research project, and hustling their arts & crafts all over town. inkandglitter7@gmail.com

Passages
Le Manifeste des Passagères

Passages est une ressource communautaire et une ressource d'hébergement et d'insertion pour les jeunes femmes en difficulté de 18 à 30 ans habitant la région de Montréal. Dans le cadre des ateliers d'art offerts à Passages, de magnifiques œuvres sont créées chaque année. Les femmes qui participent à ces ateliers sont rémunérées et ont l'occasion de vivre une expérience d'exploration artistique positive et valorisante. Ces pièces sont faites en 2011 dans le cadre de la création collective d'une pièce de théâtre intitulée La Maison.

Les Passagères sont des femmes sensibles, ayant un vécu difficile, qui sentent le besoin de s'exprimer et de communiquer. Elles vivent avec des problématiques d'itinérance, de toxicomanie et de violence. Elles ont besoin d'un moment de répit dans un lieu sécuritaire pour refaire le plein d'énergie en laissant les soucis du quotidien de côté et afin de répondre à leurs besoins de base. Ces jeunes femmes ont besoin de respect en tant qu'individus et en tant que citoyennes. Elles sont créatives, résilientes, persévérantes et dotées d'une grande force de caractère. Elles sont des filles, des mères, des sœurs, des tantes. Nous faisons partie de ces femmes.

Comme nous n'avons reçu aucune invitation officielle, nous nous sommes réunies afin d'être entendues et de partager ce que l'on pense et ce qui devrait être changé. Nous avons décidé de dire (haut et fort) les problématiques, de se présenter en tant que femmes pour détruire les préjugés et briser les tabous. Beaucoup de femmes itinérantes se retrouvent prisonnières d'un cercle vicieux incluant l'isolement et la violence. À cela peuvent s'ajouter les réalités du travail du sexe et des grossesses. Malgré notre passé difficile, nous avons beaucoup de positif à apporter et ainsi participer à trouver des solutions à plus long terme, permanentes et visant le soutien et la prévention.

Nous souhaitons que les différents paliers de gouvernement continuent à investir dans les ressources adaptées à la réalité des jeunes femmes en difficulté. Nous souhaitons qu'il y ait plus de logements sociaux répondant aux besoins des femmes et plus de visibilité pour les programmes existants. De plus, l'accès aux soins de santé, qu'elle soit physique ou mentale, devrait être gratuit. Nous souhaitons avoir accès à des formations diversifiées et flexibles qui nous permettront d'avoir des conditions de travail équitables et réalistes. Nous avons besoin d'aide car avec un petit coup de pouce, nous croyons fermement pouvoir aller loin. Donnons-nous la main pour réussir mieux! http://www.maisonpassages.com/

Imaging Apartheid

The Uprooting of Olive Trees, Daniel Drennan El Aawar, Jamaa Al-Yad Collective

Solidarity with Gaza, Kevin Yuen Kit Lo

Imaging Apartheid is a Montreal/Toronto based initiative with global reach responding to the call for support of the BDS campaign. We aim to bring awareness and support to the Palestinian struggle for liberation through the production and dissemination of poster art.

We are a small collective of artists and activists who strongly believe in the intersection of art and politics as a means of advancing social change. This project's focus is on the pressing issue of Israeli apartheid. Striking posters are now being selected from submissions collected from around the world, which will be either silkscreen or offset printed. The Imaging Apartheid collective will produce these posters that give voice to the Palestinian struggle for freedom through a grassroots process, working with local screen printers and utilizing independent, activist distribution networks. http://justseeds.org/project/imaging-apartheid/

Solidarity with Gaza: Kevin Yuen Kit Lo is the creative director of LOKI, a small multi-disciplinary design studio that works at the intersections of graphic design, cultural production, and social change. He is a founding member of the Howl! Arts Collective, a member of the Artivistic collective and Memefest: the international festival of radical communication, and sits on the board of the artist-run centre articule. This poster design Solidarity With Gaza was originally designed in 2009 during the invasion of the Gaza Strip, in support of the BDS movement. It was disseminated widely as a digital image, and in 2013 was reworked as a four-colour silkscreen poster for the Imaging Apartheid project.

The Uprooting of Olive Trees: Daniel Drennan ElAawar worked as a designer and illustrator in New York's publishing industry for 16 years before

returning to Lebanon in 2004. For the past 12 years there, he has taught graphic design and illustration at the university level. In 2009 he founded the artists' collective Jamaa Al-Yad (جماعة اليد) which produced the series of posters that included this image for a supplement to the Lebanese newspaper Al-Akhbar in a run of more than 12,000 copies. The supplement, publicizing Israeli Apartheid Week in 2010 in Beirut, included eight posters linking images of daily life in Palestine with Lebanese proverbs. The juxtapositions of text and image evoke patience in the face of adversity as well as solidarity with the Palestinian people. Four of the posters were linoleum cuts, and four, including this one, were done as scratchboard renderings. The Arabic text says: "Always remain standing no matter what happens." jamaalyad.org

Reclamation, Two-Spirit Reclamation, Seawolf with Octopus, Otter and Owl, Wild Woman

B.

Seawolf: With winter as a time for stories, I was once told that Lkwungen people came from killer whales that had transformed into wolves- who came ashore, divided off into families and later became human. The image I share is my interpretation of the Sea Wolf.

Wild Woman: The Wild Woman is a well-known relative of the Coast Salish with an abundance of forest stories. Wild Woman often reminds us of our human fragility and the sacredness of keeping our children safe.

I'm B. I am a two spirit art creating, youth centering, forest wandering, garden growing, kick-ass crip with maternal roots of Lkwungen, Quw'utsun' and Lummi descent and paternal roots of mixed- Euro ancestry.

Whale VS. Concretescape

bruiser Bruce

Created years ago with my best friend in mind, 2007. Ink & paper.

Not One Deportation! Build a Solidarity City (SAB Poster Series)

Solidarity Across Borders, Sidetracks, LOLO

This poster series is a collaboration between Solidarity Across Borders (SAB) & Sidetracks. Posters drawn and designed by Lolo, local artist, and member of Sidetracks and SAB.

Sidetracks is a superstar screen printing team of volunteers whose mandate is to make screen printing accessible to projects and organizations working for social change. As a collective of activists and artists, we work within an anti-oppression framework toward social and economic transformation. We share skills and resources to create art in the spirit of self-representation, self-expression, anti-racism, and queer liberation. New members and projects are always welcome: sidetracks.team@gmail.com

Arrêtons Les Violences #stopdeportations Non-Status Women's Collective in Montreal

LOKI and Zola

LOKI is a small, independent graphic design studio based in Montréal, founded by Kevin Yuen Kit Lo. The studio's work is grounded in a social understanding of the role of design, emphasizing collaboration and community building, critical research, cultural production, and typographic craft. LOKI creates images that empower, engage, and oppose. http://www.lokidesign.net/

Zola is the name I go by when talking about the street art that I do, Anti-oppressive street art in Montreal, unceded Kanien'kehá:ka & Anicinape territories. I'm a queer, white settler (french canadian descent) woman trying my best at working in an anti-oppressive approach, and always learning. My work mainly focuses around the iconic character of the masked protester as a romantic allegory for radical street politics. I have a love-hate relationship with graffiti. I also love all animals. http://zolamtl.tumblr.com/

Bodies of Water

Freda Guttman

Text by permission from **Jenna Brager**
http://thenewinquiry.com/essays/bodies-of-water/

Silkscreen and embossment, 2015

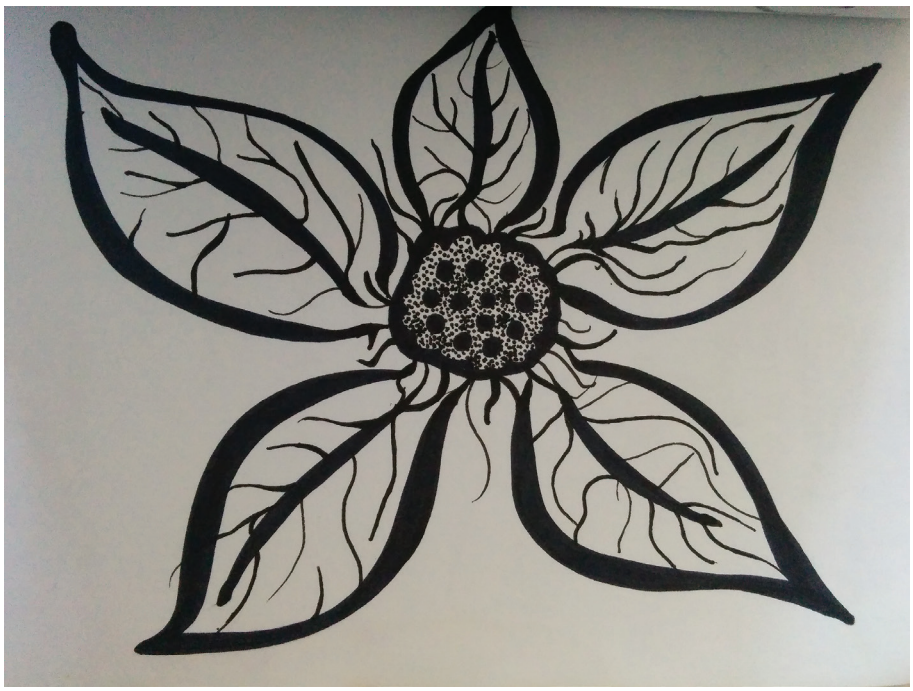
Freda Guttman, a native of Montreal, is an artist/activist whose work over 50 years of practice as a printmaker, photographer and multi-media installation artist has been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Canada, the United States and internationally. She has, in the past, worked to bring her art practice and her activism together and to experiment in ways of situating her work into the realm of the political that would reach out to a participatory audience, and a wider range of viewers who would not ordinarily come to an art gallery. In recent years she has worked outside the official Art World, producing prints, posters and a column in POPIR's journal, "Le Canal" entitled "A People's History of Montreal". She is planning to wheat paste the city of Montreal as it celebrates its 375th 'founding' this year.

Berta Caceres no se murio, se multiplico!

Fanny "Aïshaa"

Latex, 25 ft x 8 ft

Fanny "Aïshaa" is a nomadic artist. Her unconditional love of colours incorporates the magic found at the heart of communities and the diversity of the world. A self-taught artist, she became involved in numerous community projects centered on street and mural art in Brazil covering transforming violence and creative positive visions. The power of art in giving value to invisible histories, equality between human beings, and the celebration of differences has left a deep mark on her and has literally given birth to her voice as an artist. In 2010, after cofounding a nomadic mural project within Indigenous communities co-working with community knowledges, scientists, and independent environmental organisations, she redefined her focus mainly on marine issues and concern for biodiversity. She is committed to focusing on artwork that acknowledges the precious relationship between biodiversity and cultural diversity, and especially to building more collaborative work with First Nations leaders and marine scientists, focusing on solutions, resilience, celebration of relationships of respect, and leadership that is efficient in the protection of Mother Earth. Each creation that bears the signature of Aïshaa, meaning "The one that lives," seeks to thank the powers of life, diversity, and nature, as well as our ancestors and the connection between generations. www.fannyaishaa.com



Flower, Alex Abu Tagiya

Contributors

Adrienne Moohk I want to smash all authority, trash every binary distinction, & look forward to ideological disintegration. (Bodies-in-flight don't leave the world behind. If the circumstances are right, they take the world with them.)

Aishwarya Singh is a third-year student at McGill University.

Alexis Marcoux Rouleau est une personne trans non binaire, queer et radical.e, investi.e dans les luttes pour la reconnaissance des droits des personnes trans et leur inclusion en société. Iel s'intéresse particulièrement au développement d'un Français non genré facilitant l'accessibilité du langage pour les personnes non binaires.

Avi Grenadier is a co-founding member of the radio613 collective, an autonomous Jewish cultural, political, and religious radio broadcast. Avi lives on unceded Kanien'kehá:ka territory known as Montréal. He is active in kitchens, cooking for local grassroots organizations, and learning Yiddish, the language last spoken in his family three generations ago.

Billy Starchild Magic prince rising up. non-binary, bitter, witchy with a penchant for a soft palette. ENFP. Scorpio cusp. they/them.

Cadence O'Neal completed her Bachelor of Arts in honours Women's Studies at McGill with a minor in History. Her research focuses on ongoing settler feminist complicity in militarism and settler colonialism, and she is also interested in queer interventions into consent/sexual assault discourse, and the history of opposition to weapons research at McGill University. Outside of the classroom, Cadence is involved in campaigns against military collaboration at McGill.

Émilie Savoie is a queer, cis, neuronormative, able bodied, white woman born and raised in so-called « Québec » who teaches French to adults. She reads daily on social justice movements all over the world and in her life and work, positions herself as a megaphone for marginalised folks with their consent always.

Estelle is a surfer and do you have a chocolate bar.

Laura Zuñiga Cáceres was born in 1993 in La Esperanza, Intibuca, Honduras. She is the third daughter of the Lenca Indigenous leader and land and water protector Berta Cáceres Flores and grew up alongside the process of organizing the Civil Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations (COPINH). She has been a youth activist in several organizations including COPINH, in which she participated as a grassroots correspondent for the organization's community radios and also is part of the youth movement Let's Do the Impossible in Argentina. She is currently studying in the area of obstetrics at the University of Buenos Aires.

Malek Yalaoui is a force to be reckoned with. Born in North Africa but bred in the American midwest, Malek's work is all about reconciling her multiple, intersecting identities as she moves towards wholeness. A queer femme of color and adult survivor of child abuse living with long-term depression, the sole purpose of Malek's work is to heal herself and her community.

(Maria) Elena Stoodley est une auteure compositrice interprète, artiste en son et en image ainsi que technicienne de son. Elle est une touche à tout et dédie sa vie à lutter pour la réhabilitation de la liberté noire. Née et vivant à Montréal, ses origines sont haïtiennes. Son nom est à la fois

espagnol et anglais mais elle a grandi en créole et pense en français.

Matt Ginsberg-Jaeckle is a Chicago-based organizer, interpreter and translator. He has done accompaniment work with COPINH, the Civil Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations in Honduras, for close to two decades, co-founded the Chicago grassroots organization Southside Together Organizing for Power (STOP) and member of the Honduran solidarity collective La Voz de los de Abajo. He recently completed his MA in Literary Translation from the University of Illinois and is about to publish his first book-length translation, 13 Colors of the Honduran Resistance, by Honduran feminist author and activist Melissa Cardoza.

Molly Swain is an otipêmsiw-iskwêw from otôskwanihk, former president of AMUSE (amusemcgill.org), co-host of the Indigenous Feminist science fiction podcast Métis in Space (metisinspace.com), and co-founder of the Indigenous Women and Two-Spirit Harm Reduction Coalition (ndnharmredux.wordpress.com). She has finally escaped from McGill and is beginning a Masters in Native Studies at the University of Alberta this fall.

Oula Hajjar, a community organizer and activist, has worked on several campaigns for social justice in the Middle East as a member of the Montreal-based solidarity group Tadamon! Recently, she has worked directly supporting Syrian refugees in Berlin and Montreal.

Paniz Khoshroshahy is a women's studies major at McGill University. She enjoys thinking, learning, reading and writing about the intersection of race and gender, Orientalism, homonationalism and diaspora. She also enjoys biking in a sundress, rolling her eyes at edgy white liberals and making Iranian food.

Pascale Brunet is a Montreal community organizer who likes to get involved in projects that explore art, public spaces, feelings & healing. Sometimes she facilitates meetings, discussions or workshops, and sometimes she protests in the streets, reads graphic novels and listens to secrets people want to share. At all times she likes to question the status quo and create connections with humans who dream of a radically different society. In the past few years she's been involved in different collectives and social justice projects, including P!nk bloc, Maille à Part, À qui la ville? and the Politics & Care Collective.

Rana Salah is a Concordia University alumni, community organizer and poet. She is currently a board member at QPIRG Concordia and Centre for Gender Advocacy among other initiatives. She enjoys reading, ranting about social injustices, and occasionally creating silly videos with her own "Rana" twist.

Robyn Maynard is a Black feminist who has spent years documenting racist and gender-based state violence, focusing on anti-Black racism and the criminalization drugs and sex work. She has also spent the better part of the decade doing frontline harm-reduction outreach work in Montreal, including full-time street-based outreach with sex workers at Montreal's non-profit organization Stella. In 2010 Robyn helped found Justice for Victims of Police Killings, who work alongside several families of victims of police killings to demand an end to police violence and impunity, and as a youth, she helped create Project X, a group that supports racialized young persons around racial profiling in Montreal's NDG borough. Most recently, she helped co-found Montreal Noir, a Black activist group committed to combatting anti-Black racism in Quebec. She is currently completing her first book Policing Black Bodies: State Violence and Black Lives, for Fernwood Publishing, 2017.

Rushdia Mehreen has been reflecting on integrating care and well-being in activist/political work since she started organizing in the student movement in 2009. With the Politics and Care Collective since its inception in 2012, she helped facilitate numerous workshops and discussion circles on collective well-being and anti-oppression in diverse milieus. She holds a master's degree from Concordia University in Geography, Urban and Environmental Studies, and has been involved in other initiatives including justice for Palestine, other

anti-colonial struggles, climate justice and anti-racist organizing.

Sandra Sjollema is the fearless coordinator of L'Anneau Poétique, a community-based creative writing group in Côte-des-Neiges that seeks to affirm poetry's role as anti-hegemonic conduit and intense nourisher of community. Sandy cooked and cleaned at the People's Potato for three years and is currently undertaking Ph.D. studies at Concordia University.

Shanice Nicole is a Black feminist spoken word poet, writer and educator. She discovered poetry in the summer of 2015 and now uses it as a form of healing and dreaming of social justice and change. Her writing explores themes of feminism, race, sexuality, and mental health, and together acts as a stage for the exploration of her Black womanhood.

The Termite Collective is a group of creative and concerned individuals who want to expose the increasingly repressive nature of prison through writing, workshops, political parody and criminal cabaret.

Zahra Habib Having grown up in the shadows of Canada's largest city, I am always looking for opportunities to grow intellectually, professionally, and personally, beyond my recent and not so recent past. I'm currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in Middle Eastern Studies and Communications at McGill University in Montreal.

Boats, PASSAGES

The Community-University Research Exchange (CURE) promotes community-driven social justice research. We foster collaborations between university students and grassroots community groups working for social change. CURE works to validate grassroots knowledge and avoid academic co-optation of social movements by giving community organizations autonomy over their own research needs. Groups can submit research requests or project proposals and students can undertake those projects, often for class credit. Our work is grounded in an anti-oppression analysis, as we strive to redefine the boundary between the university and the communities that surround it. http://www.curemontreal.org/

The Quebec Public Interest Research Group at Concordia (QPIRG-Concordia) is a resource centre for student and community research and organizing. We strive to raise awareness and support grassroots activism around diverse social and environmental issues. Our work is rooted in an anti-oppression analysis and practice. We seek to make campus-community links and inspire social change through engaging, inclusive and non-hierarchical approaches. We support close to 30 Working Groups that organize on a wide variety of social justice issues, including: radical childcare, prison justice, art skillsharing, anti-capitalism, migrant justice, anti-police brutality work, queer issues, accessibility, international solidarity and more. Both students and community members are welcome to make use of our space and resources, and participate in our projects. We believe in the power of collective organizing to achieve social justice! qpirgconcordia.org

The Quebec Public Interest Research Group at McGill (QPIRG-McGill) is a resource centre for students and community working towards social and environmental justice. We strive to engage students in research, public education and action, and to support grassroots organizing around diverse social and environmental issues. We seek to build campus-community alliances and inspire social change through inclusive and non-hierarchical approaches. QPIRG-McGill is opposed to all forms of discrimination on the basis of: race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and dis/ability. QPIRG-McGill is committed to engaging in research and action that are rooted in an anti-oppression analysis and practice. http://qpirgmcgill.org/

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