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CONVERGENCE

a journal of undergraduate and community research

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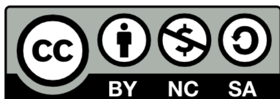

The 5th edition of Convergence is finally here! The publication embarked on a longer than usual gestation period this year and, despite repeated fears that it might not happen at all, the necessary resources have been pulled together.

Here it is!

Convergence is a journal of community-based social and environmental justice research. It seeks to bring visibility to ideas of various forms that may or may not be traditionally academic. We strongly believe that "research" and "knowledge" extend beyond the confines of academic institutions, and we highlight projects that do not fit neatly into the models established by academia—be it through their content, their medium or their methodology. Convergence is a publication that accompanies other community-based social justice research initiatives of the PIRGS, including Community-University Research Exchange (CURE), Study in Action, and Art in Action.

The content published in this edition of Convergence is primarily from the 2014 Study In Action Conference and the Community-University Research Exchange (CURE) program. As is often the case with community-based social and environmental justice research, they act as direct responses to our contemporary local political climate. It is no coincidence that a couple of the articles and art works in this journal are direct responses to Bill 60, also known as the Quebec Charter of Values, introduced by the Parti Québécois in 2013, and that gave rise to an increasing wave of Islamophobia, racism and xenophobia in the province, and also partly led to the party's defeat in the 2014 provincial election.

We hope you enjoy reading this year's journal! We also hope that this convergence of ideas, art, people, and communities will take a life of its own to encourage more spaces for intellectual work geared towards grassroots social justice and community-based models.

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Kai Cheng Thom

Asking for It

Critiquing Sexual Rhetoric on the Political Left and Moving Beyond the Sex-Positive/Negative Binary

**Presented at the Study In Action Panel: Whose Body is It Anyway? A Panel on Access, Sexuality, and Self-determination March 23 2013*

I would like to start with a warning that this presentation contains discussion of sexual assault. Those of you for whom such stories are painful, traumatically resonant, or overwhelming — please be warned and know that I honour your choices to listen, to leave, or otherwise take care of yourselves. Know also that this is not a trigger warning per se — as a friend of mine likes to say, triggers are for guns, and I am not a gun. My body is not a gun. Our stories of truth are not weapons. Rather, truth and the pain it sometimes causes are instruments of healing. And just as bones that have broken and re-connected in the wrong way must be re-broken in order to heal once more, I believe we must use the truth of our painful stories to break open the silence around sex, rape, trauma, and desire in activist communities in order to find a greater, more connected way of being. So let us begin:

Let us take a moment to breathe. Let me hear the sound, the song, the swell of your lungs. Let us take a moment to remember our bodies, our beating hearts, and our ancestors. Let's remember all of those people who cannot be here today because of illness or work or barriers to access. Remember those who worked and continue to work so hard, often in situations of exploitation, so that we can sit here in this university building with all its amenities. So that I could sit and write this (scintillating, of course) presentation in the comfort of my home and present it to you here today, on unceded Kanienkehaka territory. Breathe and remember the bloodshed that created this city, the ongoing violence that maintain the university and nation-state. Breathe and remember our spirit, our strength, our many different stories and experiences, our diverse and conflicting truths.

It is from the place of remembrance and conflicting truths that I would like to issue a challenge to you students and community members here in the room, to the organizers of this panel and QPIRG, to all of us who do radical, anti-oppressive work in the area of bodily sovereignty and sexuality: I think that we have failed. We have failed to talk about sex and sexual assault within our circles, and we have failed to bring to light the hypocrisy and violence that lies hidden in the difference between the ways we talk about sex, sexuality, and sexual violence; and the way we practice and experience (or don't practice and experience) sex.

It is difficult for me to say this, but I think I must, because the truth is that when I first fled my Chinese-Canadian family home on traditional Musqueam land for what I imagined were the rainbow-paved streets of the gay and queer community, it was in the arms of that community — that so-called safer space, that sex-positive, feminist, leftist community — that my body was violated for the first time. It is difficult for me to say this, because I so deeply love all of my communities, and especially

the politically radical ones so deeply — but here I would like to share some words from that great poet and Black lesbian writer, Audre Lorde:

I was going to die, sooner or later, whether or not I had even spoken myself. My silences had not protected me. Your silences will not protect you....What are the words you do not yet have? What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them, still in silence? (Lorde 4-5)

My communities had not protected me. The Chinese community in Vancouver did not protect me from internalized racism and shame, nor from the homophobia and gender-based violence at school that left me unable to turn to anyone in my family or neighbourhood to talk about my burgeoning sexuality and gender dysphoria. The gay and queer community did not protect me from being raped by our own people at seventeen — or nineteen, or twenty-one. The radical leftist community in Montreal, who praised and benefited from my writing and performance art and the volunteer labour I did as an event organizer and support worker, did not protect me from sexual fetishism and exploitation from well-loved activists who were instrumental in organizing the student strike in 2012. You did not protect me from seeing my rapists at the anarchist bookfair or at queer art vernissages or at Prisoner Correspondence Project fundraisers or events like this one. And those of you for whom these words strike a chord that resonates to the tune of your own experiences — *I* did not protect *you*.

How could this happen? How could it be that, for all our leftist rhetoric around consent, bodily sovereignty, anti-ableism, queer positivity, fat positivity, sex-positivity, we have somehow managed to perpetuate a culture of rape, silence, and shame? There is more than one answer, more than one truth,

but one of them is, I think, that progressive rhetoric around sexuality itself is fundamentally flawed. The popular frameworks used in community work: bodily sovereignty, the consent model, and sex-positivity are insufficient to encompass the complexities that inform the lived experience of sexuality in a context also informed by racism, ableism, and colonization.

The concept of bodily sovereignty is often used in community dialogue around sexual assault and abortion — it is the notion that each individual has the right to decide what happens to their body and when. That we are, or should be, sovereign over our physical experiences with other humans. Yet bodily sovereignty cannot not be divorced from the current context of colonization and white supremacy. The spirits and bodies of racialized and Indigenous peoples were colonized in concert with our lands — we have been subjugated to an ideal of sexual experience and physical beauty that locks us outside of our own ideals of beauty and pleasure. Ideals that are, of course, white. As the activist and writer Alok Vaid-Menon writes:

How to explain to a body that it is Brown? How to explain white fetish in a country which has been fucked for years? To a city whose most famous landmarks are the cum stains left from the British? To a city with a commercial street where you can buy Adidas sneakers and watch Hollywood movies in 3D (Vaid-Menon 22).

How indeed? How to conceptualize and speak about my own experience of assault when the boy who violently penetrated me until I bled in my own home was also the most "conventionally" attractive (read: white, non-disabled, masculine presenting) that I had slept with? How to resolve my own sense of pride that at last one of those beautiful radical queer boys had chosen the feminine, Asian me with the memory that he refused to stop when I told him it hurt, that he pinned me down

on the bed when I tried to get up, that he forced himself inside me from behind not once but six time over the course of the night? How to claim my right to bodily sovereignty when I did not scream, did not tell, did not just leave when I had the chance?

The Fillipina poet/activist Ninotchka Rosca said in a radio interview 1999 that consent is only possible all things being equal. White supremacy renders bodies of colour less than equal in the colonized landscape of sexuality — silences us by creating the illusion for people of colour that the violation of our bodies is identical to our liberation and promises that we might become beautiful only if we allow ourselves to be fucked by, to be fucked into, whiteness. The kinds of sexual assault, abuse, and rape enabled by this is most often invisible to the models of consent and bodily sovereignty invented by white feminism, the models used in community work and rad organizing and allow whiteness, heteronormativity, and ableism to dominate sexuality in organizing spaces.

White feminist concepts — bodily sovereignty and sex-positivity — are the tools that I used when I first began community work. They were the foundation of my understanding about what happened to me. And yet they left no room for an experience of violence beyond and between positive and negative, beyond and between the words yes and no. Worse, they are often employed in a way that regulates the access of racialized and disabled bodies to the language of sexuality.

The rhetoric of bodily sovereignty and consent was first articulated to me during a sexual assault support centre volunteer training session in the form of a catch phrase: "No one is entitled to sex." A white, able-bodied gay man told me this in all earnest — told me that I was not entitled to sex! As if I didn't already know that. As if white gay men hadn't made abundantly clear to me with and without words that I did not deserve desire, pleasure, beauty, or respect — but that I was, on

the other hand, entitled to rape. I continue to hear this phrase echoed in workshops and by community organizations in Montreal and abroad.

At the same time, the concept of sex-positivity is often employed in the understanding that "consensual sex is a pleasurable experience taking place between two consenting adults." Where does that leave those of us for whom giving consent is rarely or never an option? For whom sex is fraught with the implications of colonization and/or ableism? For whom sex is rarely or never wholly pleasurable yet still a deeply ingrained, socialized desire? For those whose bodies, psyches, and experiences do not allow for pleasure without pain? And for those who would rarely or never be chosen as sexual partners except as objects of fetishism or rape?

I think that we must move away from a politic of safety for some bodies but not others, of comfort for some people at the expense of others; away from a middle-class and ableist and white supremacist understanding of which kinds of sexuality are appropriate and positive, and which kinds of bodies are appropriate and positive. Away from catch phrases such as "no one is entitled to sex" and toward embracing the terrible and magnificent complexity of bodies that survive neglect, violence and abuse in the most intimate places yet still find a way to burn like flames with a desire that will not yield. Toward the understanding that we are, in fact, all entitled to sexuality — to feel and to want and to dream erotically — and also to respect and protection from violence. I want to move outside of a sex-positive/negative binary to a place of sex affirmativity — a place of deep listening and belief in our truths and stories. Toward an affirmation that sex and sexuality are complicated, ever-transforming processes that span a vast universe of pain, pleasure, and power that is so much more than positive or negative.

This is the challenge I present to you, to this community,

today: I challenge us to break the silence. I challenge us to believe and to affirm each other. I challenge us to see our own hypocrisy. I challenge us to protect each other. I challenge us to speak, to listen, and to believe.

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Alisha Mascarenhas

Words Are Stories

Reading Indigenous Women's Writing on Body and Land

I live on this land, but I am not from here. I grew up on the West Coast, on Coast Salish territory near what is often called Vancouver. My father immigrated there from India, and my mother, whose ancestors were mostly Scottish, was raised in Brandon, Manitoba — on whose land I still don't know. I now live on Kanien'kehá:ka territory in what many call Montreal, Quebec, and I am struggling to authentically understand the meaning of my body's presence on this land.

The point that I can come closest to naming the beginning of this paper and the process it documents is what sparked when I read an essay called "Land Speaking" by Jeannette Armstrong, a N'silxchn (Okanagan) writer, poet, and storyteller. I started to think about what she means when she refers to the land as a teacher, and to herself and the N'silxchn peoples as receivers of language. I started to think about the tensions and contradictions of imposing meaning onto something, rather than initially receiving then allowing the words to emerge. I started asking more insistently what it does when I write words down, when I slam my fingertips

into a keyboard, fixing meaning in time. I started to interrogate the stories embedded in the words that I hear, speak, read, write, think, and how Pueblo storyteller Leslie Marmon Silko tells us that language *is* story. In her piece on "Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective", she writes that "many individual words have their own stories. So when one is telling a story and one is using words to tell the story, each word that one is speaking has a story of its own, too" (Silko 50).

I have been finding myself caught in the snares of colonial English, and I want to take responsibility for that. I want to be accountable to the narratives I make true in their re-telling. So I would like to invite you through one strand of this narrative.

I will begin by establishing the grounds of the story that I, as well as the writers I am drawing on, am writing against. This story is one of colonial domination of men over the land. It understands men to be distinctly separate from and superior to nature, and is told in many forms and under many disguises. The manifestation of this story that I will refer to comes through Anne McClintock's book, *Imperial Leather*, and centres on a chapter called "Lay of the Land: Genealogies of Imperialism".

In this chapter, McClintock looks at one of Columbus' letters home during his initial voyage here to Turtle Island. It is said that as Columbus was approaching the mass of land before him, he wrote that the Earth was perhaps not round after all, but "[r]ather ... shaped like a woman's breast, with a protuberance upon its summit in the unmistakable shape of a nipple" (McClintock 21).

McClintock writes that such feminization and sexualization of the land conveys a terrain that is "spatially spread for male exploration" (McClintock 24). She is referring here to the imperial power implicated in language that describes the land as "virgin territory" and a "veil" to be drawn back. She considers this metaphorical phrasing as "from the outset a strategy of

violent containment" (McClintock 26). McClintock refers to this letter for what it signifies for Columbus' own perception of his relationship to the land he was arrogant enough to assume he was discovering. It is also relevant here to consider the significance of his status as an European explorer, and how and by whom his letter may have been received and thus, *whose stories are validated as true*.

The feminization and sexualization of the land is integral to a distinctly patriarchal and imperial project of domination and control, which emerges in countless ways in the colonial present. Having laid out an indication of the political, social, and linguistic context that I am writing against, I would now like to consider how a few Indigenous women writers are using the English language to sustain worldviews diametrically opposed to those. My intention is that learning through these women's writing can facilitate a process of destabilizing pervasive and insidious colonial worldviews and their emotionally, psychologically, spiritually and materially destructive manifestations.

Reverence

Rather than a desire to exploit, dominate, and control, I am suggesting that these women instead write from a relationship of interdependence, reverence, and respect for the land. In Jeannette Armstrong's work, she brings forth a living sense of reverence, humility, and respect towards all beings.

She writes that, in the N'silxchn language, "the word for our bodies contains the word for land, so when I say that word, it means that not only is my ability to think and to dream present in that word but the last part of that word also means 'the land'" (Armstrong 176). She understands that the "land holds all knowledge of life and death and is a constant teacher" (Armstrong 176). It is with this attitude that Armstrong offers her stories, poems and

essays, regarding the land as a source of her knowing, and relating her way of moving through the world in light of this relationship.

Rather than imposing fixed meaning and definition upon the land, she instead experiences language as being received from the living Earth. She explains that she is "being spoken to ... and not the one speaking" (Armstrong 183), and describes this as a "sacred act in that the words contain spirit, a power waiting to become activated and become physical" (Armstrong 183). In this way, Armstrong refers not to a passive state, but a receptivity that requires an active and awakened presence, allowing language to emerge from the land, through the body, to be expressed in voice. This role; this task of speaking, is a fully conscious act of invocation. Reading her words offers the reader a way of relating to the land and to language that is radically different from Columbus's mission of conquest.

Through her work, Jeannette Armstrong shows what is possible with language. She shows how listening, whether to the wordless sounds and messages of the land or to spoken language, invites the possibility for imagination to widen. Rather than refusing to use the colonizer's language or throwing up her hands in surrender to its learned meaning and the systems of power it affirms, she adapts the language to express distinctly anti-colonial worldviews. It is through advocating for a practice of listening that her work acts as an invitation into the experiential understanding she relates. It is an encouragement towards a living process and practice.

This creative act of transforming what appears to be rigid and fixed into something alive, nuanced, and fluid has great potential in language, yet it can also be applied to many other transformational ways of being, thinking and doing. *Language is a negotiation that we are constantly making. It is not fixed. It is not immutable.*

Experiential Learning

It should be clear that any authentic process and living practice

of unlearning colonial worldviews can not be fully comprehended through book learning. Leanne Simpson writes of an Anishnaabe origin story, within which she inserts herself as a character, to explain how embodied knowledge can be understood. She writes about the knowledge that the Creator, Gzwe Mnidoo, has given us, which is "so immense from creating the world that it takes all of my being to embody it" (Simpson 42). She thus relates to the notion that creative knowledge cannot be contained in our heads, but must be transmitted through our entire self: "our physical being, emotional self, our spiritual energy and our intellect" (Simpson 42).

It is crucial that we recognize here that Simpson is writing to Anishnaabeg peoples, advocating for a practice and resurgence of her own community's culture, known to her through Anishnaabe ways of life. The particularity of her teachings is what grounds her knowledge and makes it meaningful, and must not be removed from its historical and present context. Pulling from such teachings and assume them as our own can risk replicating the very colonial violence that Simpson is writing against.

This considered, the underlying principles behind such an approach are not entirely unique to Anishnaabe peoples. What Leanne Simpson suggests is a way of living and moving through the world that integrates our entire being and rejects the colonial division between mind and body, between body and land. This is what Cherokee writer Linda Hogan refers to as an "integrity of being ... that addresses a human wholeness and completeness, and entirety of living, with body, land and the human self in relationship with all the rest" (Hogan 168).

It must be absolutely clear that I do not advocate for the appropriation of Anishnaabe or any other Indigenous practices, ceremonies or language. I am, rather, seeking shifts in ways of thinking and living in our own particular communities that work towards a sincere, living practice of being in harmony in our relationships to the living world. So this is an invitation to

curiosity; to an ongoing dialogue concerning the language that we use, the stories that we continue to tell, and those that we refuse.

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Molly Swain

"Saving" the Child

The Genocidal Connections Between Residential Schools, the Sixties Scoop, and Contemporary Foster Care

This paper will demonstrate that contemporary Child and Family Services and Child Welfare practices are extensions of assimilatory and genocidal state policies like the Indian Residential School system and the Sixties Scoop. It will also explore some of the ways in which these policies are gendered and work to especially marginalize Indigenous women. In order to trace the history of state interventions into Indigenous families, we need to examine how settler-colonialism structures past and present exploit vulnerable populations, particularly through gendered and racialized constructions of Indigenous women, mothers, and families.

The importation of Christian Euro-patriarchy to Indigenous nations reorganized the social structures of many communities. Whereas many cultures (this work focuses predominantly on Cree, Anishnaabe, and Métis peoples) had traditionally egalitarian social roles — with children, elders, and women as the center

of communities — Euro-patriarchy began imposing vertical, hierarchical roles: the male head of family, the subordinate wife, and an emphasis on "nuclear family" structures instead of large extended family and clan networks (Anderson 29; 99).

The 1876 *Indian Act*, "Canada's main legal instrument of colonization" (Ouellette 39), legislated gender inequality. Under *Section 12(1)b*, Indigenous women who married non-Native men lost their status, but non-Native women who married Indigenous men gained status (Green 145). Women would not regain status if they divorced their non-Native husbands, which often meant legally enforced poverty for widows and women whose partners were abusive. Women actually died of exposure in their own homes on reserves because their water and electricity were cut off after they were no longer entitled to any band monies or services (Rebick 108).

In order to avoid this, many Indigenous women chose not to marry. Indian agents despaired over all of the "unchurched" relationships on the reserves, and of course blamed Indigenous women as being overly sexual and animalistic in their desires. Indigenous women faced a double bind: marriage could often lead to subservience, abuse, and involuntary enfranchisement, yet remaining unmarried could put them under the scrutiny of the Indian Agent (Brownlie 166).

The rise of Residential Schools made the latter choice even more fraught. Along with increased likelihood of poverty, Indigenous families that did not conform to Euro-Christian standards of morality and propriety — two heterosexual parents in a "churched" or married relationship with a stable source of income and a male head of household — were especially targeted by Residential School officials and truant officers (B. Johnston 19-20).

It is also interesting to note that Canada's anti-prostitution laws were initially only enshrined in the *Indian Act* until 1892,

when they were adopted into the *Criminal Code of Canada*. (Sayers, **www.titsandsass.com**) Legislation governing “Houses of Prostitution” — precursors to contemporary bawdy house legislation — explicitly included wigwams, which provided a reason for government officials to enter Indigenous homes on spurious grounds.

This set of laws played into tropes about the degenerate and sexualized character of Indigenous women and provided yet another legitimate avenue to steal Native children enrol them in Residential Schools. The nominal reason for enrolments was to provide the children of unwed or “unfit” mothers with a Christian upbringing and to socialize them away from the “savagery” of their parents — to “kill the Indian and save the child,” to borrow from Carlisle Indian Industrial School founder’s Richard Henry Pratt’s famous phrase.

Single Indigenous mothers, many of whom often had more children still in the home, had the fewest avenues of recourse and the least power to recover their children. As has been well-documented, severe emotional, psychological, physical, and sexual abuse of Indigenous children in the schools led to intergenerational trauma, interpersonal violence, family breakages, and a lack of healthy parenting and inter-relational skills (Trocmé et al. 2083). This history rendered Indigenous survivors of Residential Schools vulnerable to addiction, abuse, and violence.

Residential Schools operated until 1996, when the Gordon Residential School at Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, was shut down (CBC News, **www.cbc.ca**). However, the closure of the last residential school did not signify the end of coercive government imposition on Indigenous families. The decades following the Second World War saw a new form of intervention inflicted on Indigenous families: adoption. From the 1960s to the late-1980s, over 11,000 status Indian children were adopted

out to non-Native families (Smith **www.briarpatchmagazine.com**). The rate of adoptions was so remarkable that this time period came to be known as the Sixties Scoop. Moreover, because the known figure does not include non-registered status, Métis, Inuit, or non-status Aboriginal children, the actual number of children taken away from their families is likely far higher (Trocmé et al. 579).

Children were placed into state care temporarily or adopted directly into non-Native — predominantly white, middle-class — families. Provincial birth certificates carrying the names of birth parents were sealed, rendered inaccessible to both parents and children except in the event of a court order. In their place, new certificates with names of adoptive parents were issued. ("Adoption Information", **www.servicealberta.ca**) There is anecdotal evidence suggesting that original birth certificates of Indigenous adoptees were systematically destroyed by some provincial governments. This procedure, if it did take place, would be an assimilatory act to ensure that children adopted out of Native families would have absolutely no legal connection to their biological parents. The lack of legal connection erased not only legal Indian status, but also official non-status; a clear extension of federal Indian Act enfranchisement policies that functioned to disappear Indigenous peoples.

Up to 70% of children adopted into non-Native families were returned into state care. Adoptees often suffered racist abuse at the hands of their adoptive families. Stereotypes of Indigenous peoples as lazy, dirty, and prone to obesity and addiction often framed the types of abuse to the children experienced — their food and movement would be restricted, for example. Indigenous girls were subjected to abuse that reflected stereotypes of Indigenous women as promiscuous, sex workers, and unwed mothers (Smith, **www.briarpatchmagazine.com**).

Like Residential Schools, adopted children were often isolated from their families and cultures. Some adoptive parents tried to foster cultural and racial pride in their children, but more often children were forced to deal with the consequences of living in an extremely anti-Aboriginal society without the empowering frameworks of culture and tradition. There is limited information on the extent of adoptee abuse and its effects on the children as they grew into adulthood, but it's safe to extrapolate that children who suffered abuse during the Sixties Scoop likely suffered many of the same types of trauma endured by their Residential School survivor predecessors.

During the late-80s and early-90s, research began to show the negative effects of adopting Indigenous children into non-Native families. In response, some provinces made limited changes to their foster care and adoption policies. Yet the extent that these policies are respected is limited even today and many Indigenous children continue to be placed with non-Native foster and adoptive families (Trocmé et al. 579). I will discuss this in greater depth below.

Moving forward to contemporary foster care policies, it is imperative to examine what the *Indian Act* has to say about the jurisdiction of Child and Family Services over Indigenous children:

Section 88: Subject to the terms of any treaty and any other Act of Parliament, all laws of general application from time to time in force in any province are applicable to and in respect of Indians in the province, except to the extent that those laws are inconsistent with this Act or the First Nations Fiscal Management Act, or with any order, rule, regulation or law of a band made under those Acts, and except to the extent that those provincial laws make provision for any matter for which provision is made by or under those Acts (Indian Act 2014).

While *Section 88* does not explicitly mention children, foster care, or adoption, it nominally sets out jurisdictional boundaries and responsibilities for provincial and federal governments. The *Section* states that general provincial laws — for example speeding fines, liquor laws, and Child Services laws — apply to Indians under the *Indian Act* except when they violate treaty or band policy, or where federal legislation takes precedence, or where provincial laws contradict other Indian Act policy.

If this sounds confusing, it is because the Indian Act has been superbly designed to be especially dense and contradictory, and to provide loopholes through which the federal government can justify limiting, withholding, or modifying the services it provides to status Indians. *Section 88* creates a significant legal grey area when it comes to funding welfare services for Indigenous children. Currently, the federal government is technically *supposed* to fund services for status First Nations children, while the provinces are technically *supposed* to fund services for non-status, Métis, and Inuit children. Patrick Johnston states that,

The federal government accepts its constitutional right and responsibility to legislate on behalf of Indians to provide services. But it also argues that it can choose not to exercise that right, in which case the normal division of powers spelled out in the British North America Act prevails (P. Johnson 4).

Yet in reality, despite these technical responsibilities, the federal government has so drastically underfunded their services for Native children that it has faced a Human Rights Tribunal case from Cindy Blackstock and Lawrence Joseph claiming racial discrimination (Blackstock et al.). Many provinces are also underfunding their Aboriginal child welfare programs. Provincial and federal governments defer their responsibilities between each other: the provinces claim that they will not

pick up federal slack while the federal government exploits the ambiguity of *Section 88* to claim that the programs are the responsibility of provinces (P. Johnston 5-6).

In the past six months, the issue has become even more complex. The recent court case Daniels v. Canada has expanded the legal definition of Indian to include 200,000 Métis and 400,000 non-Status First Nations peoples, which brings them under the legislative and financial jurisdiction of the federal government (Daniels v Canada 2013). Predictably, the government is appealing the ruling, and it is likely to be years, if not decades, before a final decision is reached. In the meantime, the children of these 600,000 newly "legal" or status Indigenous people could be caught in the same jurisdictional web as their First Nations counterparts.

In midst of all this legal and political wrangling are the children. Indigenous children are hugely overrepresented in foster care across Canada, in some places making up nearly 80% of the children in care even though Indigenous children account for less than 5% of the total child population in Canada (Trocmé et al. 578). Despite a significant amount of research and many, many personal testimonies that highlight the negative consequences of placing Indigenous children with non-Native caregivers, the practice actually increased 71.5% between 1995 and 2001. As of 1998, only 2.5% of Indigenous children for adoption were placed into Indigenous homes. There are more Indigenous children in state care today than at the height of the Residential School era (Trocmé et al. 578).

Indigenous families are nearly twice as likely as white families to be chosen for investigation by Child and Family Services. Of those investigated, over twice the number of Indigenous children as white children are placed in out-of-home care. 35-60% of these cases will be justified on the basis of "neglect" (Trocmé et al. 2082).

Neglect is a serious issue that can have deeply negative consequences for children, but research shows that, when it comes to Indigenous families, neglect is often a code word for poverty. According to Child and Family Services, neglect is associated with several "risk factors" that include income, the number of people in the home, single parenting, maternal age (that is, young mothers) unemployment/underemployment, parental health, substance abuse, and a lack of social supports (*Ibid* 2082). Furthermore, while substance abuse concerns are significantly higher for Indigenous households, research has shown that Aboriginal status affects the outcome of cases involving substance abuse, with stereotypes of the "Drunk Indian" leading to an overestimation of alcohol consumption and increasing the likelihood of children being taken from the home (Trocmé et al., 595).

All of this is tied to colonialism and the deeply embedded racism in Canadian society, as well as the overwhelming effects of intergenerational trauma. Trocmé et al. have stated that "child removal policies may have prevented transmission of healthy parenting skills, instilled doubts about traditional parenting, or resulted in negative behaviours acquired in abusive, neglectful or culturally inappropriate settings" (2083). These factors have also been directly linked to increased substance abuse, depression, and other mental and social issues that can affect parenting. In spite of this, research has shown that Indigenous children who stay with their families are not more likely than white children to have experienced "emotional and physical harm related to maltreatment" (Trocmé et al. 596).

Children placed into foster care today experience many of the same abuses as those adopted out during the Sixties Scoop. Limited research has been done on these conditions, but harrowing information has been recently uncovered. In Alberta, it was discovered that over 285 children, many of them Indigenous,

have died in foster care in the past fifteen years (Kleiss www.edmontonjournal.com). The actual number is likely much higher but red tape, dense bureaucracy, and a lack of accountability between the various institutions overseeing Child and Family Services in the province are stalling, and possibly even preventing, full information from coming to light.

Beyond Alberta, statistics are likely similar in provinces with analogous welfare policies. Indigenous children are dying and sometimes outright murdered in state care. To account for the full extent of this harm, we must also factor in the children who age out of the system at ages 18 or 21, who receive extremely limited support for dealing with the consequences of trauma and abuse.

I would like to emphasize that I am not suggesting that all foster parents or adoptive parents are abusive, racist, or culturally insensitive. What I am suggesting is that for well over a century, the Residential School system, the Sixties Scoop, and current federal and provincial Child and Family Services policies are successive tactics of genocide and assimilation to “kill the Indian” in generations of children through removal policies.

Finally, I would like to say that I do not think that relying on assistance or social programming from settler governments will be effective. Setter-colonialism, since its inception, has been removing Indigenous peoples from our lands and disappearing us through assimilation and genocide. Thus, settler legal, political, social, and economic systems are incommensurable with liberatory decolonial projects (Tuck et al. 28-36).

This said, the implementation of social programs, support, and assistance by and for Indigenous peoples is absolutely necessary for moving forward. Indigenous-led projects and movements that centre women and children, that foster the reclamation of cultural pride, that explicitly work to dismantle Euro-patriarchal social relations, and that stand in opposition to government

interventions into Indigenous families are growing across the country. These movements have powerful potential to prevent further abuses and to ensure that Indigenous children are truly "saved" from genocidal state policies.

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Delice Mugabo

Window Seat

Looking Out from the Margins at Quebec's Anti-Charter of Values

The *Quebec Charter of Values* was the common name given to a Bill that was presented as a solution to a debated that had started in 2006 about the "reasonable accommodation" of religious and cultural minorities, and particularly religious symbols in the public sphere. It was first proposed in early 2013 by the newly elected *Parti Québécois* government and was submitted to the National Assembly as Bill 60 in October of that year. The public debate around the *Charter* in Quebec centered on the merits of regulating non-Christian religious practices and facilitating the "integration" of immigrants.

On April 7, 2014 the minority government of the *Parti Québécois* was defeated in a provincial elections and the *Parti libéral du Québec* won a majority of seats. Although the *Charter*, as it was proposed by the PQ, is now defunct, the Liberals promised on the day after their election to submit their own version of a Bill, a pared-down Bill that will nevertheless set limits on the ability of visibly religious people to move through and work in public space. We should also note that the new government has talked repeatedly in the last year about "forced marriages" and

"honour crimes" being among its priority policy "problems." It is, in short, still open season on people of colour.

I titled my paper "Window Seat" to reflect the outsider position from which I observed the debate on the Charter. I come to you today as a black feminist, and that is the position from which I always speak, for black feminism is the only perspective that has acknowledged the totality of my being and equipped me with the analytical tools I need to assess the kind of political action I should engage in for complete liberation for all. Black feminism has also connected me with the struggles of the black women and black people who have come before me, and has forced me to become accountable to others through time and space — for we are a transnational and intergenerational people.

I am also a Muslim of Rwandan origin, born in the Republic of Congo, who immigrated to Quebec at 5 years of age, who speaks French with a Quebecois accent, who used to be an active member of the political party *Québec solidaire*, and who is now questioning her work and place within the Quebec feminist movement. Despite all that I am, I put my blackness at the centre because it's the most visible part of me in a settler, post-slavery, and "colorblind" society and it represents a history that Quebec continues to work hard to deny or tone down, as well as a present that it continues to exploit and police.

I am aware that in presenting this paper at an English university, my arguments can easily be interpreted to be a critique of Quebec and of French Quebercers as a distinctly or especially problematic place and people; a critique that takes the form of what is called Quebec-bashing. As Darryl Leroux wrote in his recent piece on the Charter and nationalism in English Canada and in Quebec, I too am "reminded in this moment that [English Canada] has a deep and generalized disdain for Quebec, especially when it comes to anything to do with the PQ." Yet many of us

know all too well that part of what happens in the discourse around the "two founding nations" or the "two solitudes" is that it silences and delegitimizes the histories of native peoples and the voices of people of colour. As a black woman, I am held hostage by projects that oppose my liberation.

My aim is to pry away at the usual framing of the *Charter* debate by bringing a black feminist critique to bear upon the dominant counter-arguments that have been entered into the conversation. In pursuing this, I insist on the importance of keeping race and colonialism at the intersecting centre of our critiques and strategies of a transformative politics. Central to my presentation is the importance for our struggle to remain grounded in history even — and especially — when it is inconvenient and difficult.

For the purpose of this presentation today, I will base my arguments on the declaration and manifesto *Québec Inclusif*, which has received wide coverage in the Quebec media. Here is how *Québec Inclusif* introduces itself in its manifesto:

We are a group of academics and professionals from the legal, philosophical and journalistic fields, joined by citizens of all backgrounds and origins. We count among us both separatists and federalists, as well as others with no firm position on Quebec's constitutional future.

The group's website received more than 200,000 hits during the first week and the manifesto garnered over 20,000 signatures within that period. The support that they received was far and wide, coming from artists, officials from all the opposition parties, public figures, and activists from social movements, the Quebec intelligentsia, and lay people. I am in no way singling out that group, for their positions are far from unique in Quebec and have been repeated across the political spectrum, from the Left

to the Right. However, I focus my analysis on *Québec Inclusif* because its authors were given a prominent public platform to advance their specific critique of the *Charter*.

Throughout this paper, I will focus on discourse deployed in this manifesto because as black Canadian sociologist Amal Madibbo points out, "the analysis of social and language practices particularly through discourse allows one to identify how language users make sense of their actions and their social realities by expressing positions and representations". Specifically, I will examine the reasoning behind two of the mainstream arguments that have been invoked against the *Charter*. The first contends that the *Charter* will create exclusions while the second asserts that it will make the integration of immigrants difficult. I want to show that both arguments are based in a revisionist version of history of Quebec and frame it as a model post-racial society.

On Quebec Inclusif Erasing Race and Racism from Their Discourse

The first dominant counter-argument to the *Charter* I want to critique is a recurring theme in the discourse of *Québec Inclusif*. Their manifesto writes,"Quebec has always been a warm and welcoming land where everyone could contribute to the greater social quilt." A much-cited example to support this affirmation is Quebec's embracing of the "boat people" of Vietnam during the 1980s. Other examples include Kosovars in the 1990s, and more recently, Columbians.

While *Québec Inclusif* advanced this argument in order to challenge the Charter, it fits into a broader Quebecois narrative that although — or perhaps because — French Canadians were subjugated by Anglo-Canadians, French Canadians have been more empathetic toward those who have wanted to settle here. This narrative also suggests that social integration for new immigrants (which is assumed to have taken place) occurred seamlessly and

even naturally and didn't involve struggles on the part of "the integrated". We're given the impression that if these arrivals have "integrated", it's due to the unending, always-existing openness of settler Quebecers. In this scenario, Quebecers were benevolent actors while "immigrants" were passive but grateful recipients of their generous openness. This is what *Québec Inclusif*'s particular challenge to the *Charter* wittingly or unwittingly invoked.

All this, of course, is a fiction and a glorification of Quebec history. It is born out of a foundational and mythical "tale of innocence and victimhood that conveniently omits Quebec's history of the colonization of Indigenous peoples, the practice of slavery and racial exclusion", to quote David Austin. By forgetting colonization, Quebecers are able to claim the territory as their own. By omitting slavery, Quebecers are able to claim that all black people arrived in Quebec by way of immigration and were generously welcomed by French settlers.

This historical narrative prevents us from speaking about the fact that some of us were brought here by force and as objects, and that we remain undesirable regardless of our level of education or fluency in French or our secularism. Pretending that these broad and longstanding problems never existed makes it hard to assess the *Charter* — which appears, without this history, a singular aberration, a kind of mistake that needs to be isolated and corrected. In contrast, bringing historical dis-identification, subjugation, and resistance to the fore reveals that the problematic dynamics underlying the Charter aren't only between Quebec and its *recent* immigrants. Being black and indigenous has always been a problem Québec needed to contain and the defeat of the *Charter* does little to change that.

To critique this dominant historical narrative in no way denies that Quebec has always been a racially diverse society and that there is a history of people of colour migrating to Quebec, starting their lives in a new society. Instead, it helps to draw out

further connections among these histories, including the parts that have been regularly erased. It allows us to fully recognize the active role played by immigrants throughout Quebec's history and to resist depoliticizing the regulatory process of "integration" deployed in Quebec, as in the rest of Canada.

I should note that many anti-racists and anti-colonial activists signed the manifesto as well. Though many recognized the limits of the manifesto, they saw in it an opportunity to mobilize against the *Charter* and hoped that it would open discussions that could eventually transform the political context beyond the *Charter*. In other words, they supported the manifesto in a strategic manner to achieve a concrete and immediate goal — to halt the *Charter*.

While I sympathize with these aims, I think it is important to reflect upon the kinds of alliances and solidarities that are opened up in this move, and the ones that are foreclosed by it. We might want to consider what it means to work in coalition with people for whom our stories and our truths are inconvenient to their goals. What kinds of coalitions would this be? What kinds of not-yet-coalitions does it foreclose? More broadly, I want to question the idea that it is possible, or desirable, to use a dominant narrative of power to arrive at a transformational politics.

A provisional answer to these questions can be found by looking at the actual solidarity (or lack thereof) between *Québec Inclusif* members and black activists in Quebec. Take, for example, *Québec Inclusif* founding member Judith Lussier's response to black feminist and food justice activist Nydia Dauphin's writing about the phenomenon of blackface in Quebec. During an award ceremony last year, several white comedians performed in blackface on stage. When Dauphin published an article on blackface and racism in Quebec, Lussier used her column in *Journal Métro* to criticize Dauphin and ridicule the historical analysis that Dauphin provided about racism and

anti-blackness in Quebec.

This illustrates what a mistake it would be to understand mainstream opposition to the *Charter* as a fundamentally anti-racist or anti-colonial project. The same discourses and the same people who rip their shirts in public for inclusion and the integration of immigrants are sometimes the same people who use their social and political capital to silence black women for calling out Quebec on its racist and colonial practices.

If the *Québec Inclusif* position is to be seen as a first step towards engaging a broader discussion on racism and colonialism, I would argue that their manifesto explicitly states the contrary. The third objection that they raise against the *Charter* is that it will generate a "ear of the other". It is in that section that they make clear that they "resist the temptation to demonize the defenders of this conception of secularism by charging them with racist and xenophobic intentions because doing so only leads to polarizing the debate and curtailing the opportunity for a real exchange".

According to the group, the racial ordering of Quebec as nation is not what produced the *Charter*; it is only one possible outcome that may result in its implementation. This is an important distinction because it presumes of a certain racial innocence in Quebec's management of social and material life. Further, nowhere in the brief that the group submitted at the National Assembly to the Public hearings on the *Charter* were the terms racism, or colonialism, or their derivatives mentioned.

As David Austin rightly puts, "the production of false truths and power are inextricably linked. Power is facilitated and exercised through the production of truth, through contrived narratives designed to maintain power, order, and authority, to make laws, and to produce wealth". A lot has been written about the ways in which the state produces a narrative that constitutes white settlers as the legitimate owners of the land, subsequently

ascribing to them the exclusive right to "manage" native and immigrant populations. Mainstream detractors of the *Charter* recuperate and solidify that narrative when they refuse to address the way the Bill "simply follows in the history of neo-colonialist assimilation", to quote Idle No More Quebec.

"The eagerness with which contemporary society does away with racism, replacing this recognition with evocations of pluralism and diversity that further mask reality, is a response to the terror [of whiteness]. It has also become a way to perpetuate the terror, by providing a cover, a hidden place."

On Québec Inclusif and Interculturalism

In addition to *Québec Inclusif*'s reiteration of a dominant (and problematic) version of Quebec history, it also provides support to Quebec's more recent approach to social integration : what is called "interculturalism." The manifesto explicitly supports this approach in the conclusion of the manifesto, where it is suggested that if Quebec does away with the *Charter*, "in terms of culture and identity, Quebec may continue to celebrate its authenticity through a rich culture protected by an integration model that is tried, tested and true."

As with the earlier argument, there is a strategic reason behind this one, though it may not be a good one. Proponents of the *Charter* have often accused its detractors of playing into the hands of Canadian multiculturalism — a doctrine that the Quebec mainstream rejects. Attempting to dodge such an accusation, *Québec Inclusif* clearly situates itself alongside or within the interculturalist model that Quebec began to develop in the late 1970s, which became fully articulated in a 1990 policy document. Simply put, interculturalism includes three main tenets: French as the national language, a democracy in which all are invited to participate, and a pluralist society that

promotes cross-cultural dialogue. Since both proponents of the *Charter* and detractors like *Québec Inclusif* have proclaimed to be guided by interculturalism, it is important to consider some of the pitfalls of that project.

Interculturalism is part of what allows Quebec to present a linear history of itself: one that does away with ethnic nationalism and moves into a cosmopolitan civic nationalism in which participation is extended to anyone living within the territorial limits of Quebec. Federalists and sovereigntist Quebecers alike embrace this political agenda, because it seems to ground Quebec among other Western nations that have adopted a liberal model of state management. When *Québec Inclusif* writes in its manifesto that "With this draft *Charter of Values*, the *Parti Québécois* fulfills its shift from a civic or liberal nationalism towards an exclusionary one"and that it is "at great risk of weakening the Quebecois identity rather than strengthening it", it is because the *Charter* is seen by many as a setback from the work that Quebec has done over the past three decades to acquire a respectable status among other Western nations.

But is this a status that opponents of the *Charter* should be buttressing? Is interculturalism a project that we should be affirming in our resistance to projects like the *Charter of Values*? It should be recognized here, at the very least, that Left scholars and activists have developed a strong critique of interculturalism, emphasizing the work that it does in protecting and affirming white francophone Quebeckers' power over the management of the land and all aspects of life upon it. In positioning interculturalism as the desirable norm in relation to which the *Charter* is an aberration, *Québec Inclusif* sets back the cause of anti-racism and anti-colonialism in Quebec and beyond.

In light of this, I have to doubt seriously that transformational politics are at the centre of mainstream oppositions to the *Charter*. On the contrary, I would say that arguments like

those of *Québec Inclusif* have the consolidation of a liberal and deeply oppressive, state as the unacknowledged goal.

Conclusion

The struggle over the *Charter of Values* — although it appears to be over (for now) — reveals some of the stakes in anti-racist and anti-colonial struggle in general. It is my view that, to postpone our critiques and our goals in the service of a short-term end (like annuling the *Charter*), is to participate in a larger politics of silence. As Black Canadian feminist scholar Notisha Massaquoi poignantly suggests, “many of us are forced to exchange a peaceful existence for violent relationships”. If nothing else, I would argue that racism and colonialism are the violence that the terms of our allyships must struggle against.

What I am trying to bring home is the importance committing to transformative justice and politics. This is always difficult work that must remain grounded in history to succeed. I want to end here with beginnings. In situating this debate in Quebec’s history, we can better see all those affected by the *Charter*. Instead of being afraid of losing allies, this moves us to expand the number of people we reach. Citing Red Summer, Muslim black feminist filmmaker, “a community broadens, once their scope broadens”.

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Francis Dolan

Analyse d'un fragment du discours identitaire québécois

Représentation de l'Autre et orientalisme

Introduction

Depuis les dernières années, il y a une hausse du discours identitaire qui se répercute tant dans certains résultats électoraux que dans le discours ordinaire, qui se voit teinté d'éléments racistes et xénophobes. Il y a, au Québec, une perception du phénomène migratoire qui pose ce dernier comme problème pour la volonté d'uniformité identitaire et, par conséquent, pour les fondements mêmes du projet indépendantiste québécois. Depuis le fameux "vote ethnique" de Parizeau, le soir du second référendum, l'immigrant est très souvent stigmatisé comme emblème et conséquence du multiculturalisme canadien, toujours démonisé et accusé de tous les maux par les mouvements nationalistes québécois. Par exemple, lors de la *médiaticocrise* des accommodements raisonnables en 2006-2008, on a vu des «déclarations de

politiciens en quête de capital politique [qui] ont contribué à ressusciter un nationalisme aux accents ethniques que l'on croyait être disparu du Québec.»[1]. Robert Vachon, théologien et longtemps directeur de la revue de l'Institut Interculturel de Montréal soulignait, en 2009, la montée de l'utilisation du *Nous* dans le discours politique et l'apparition d'un discours soutenant l'adoption d'une nouvelle charte portant sur la culture québécoise.[2] Ce projet ayant vu le jour suite à la commission Bouchard-Taylor qui ne l'avait pas intégré dans son rapport, a créé les fondations de la Charte des valeurs que nous a présentée, en automne 2013, le Parti Québécois. En outre, ce type de discours trouve une légitimité dans le langage xénophobe tant ordinaire que dans celui des élites politiques et médiatiques. Posture xénophobe qui s'accroît et durcit sans cesse.

Ce nationalisme, parfois dit identitaire, autrefois dit ethnique a propension à séparer radicalement *Nous* et *Eux*, l'*Être* de l'*Autre*, bref, l'ontologique de l'altérité. Cette distinction fondamentale s'inscrit dans une longue tradition propre à la pensée politique et épistémologique occidentale. Remontant aux *Anciens*, cette distinction entre le vrai et le faux, centrale chez Platon, entre ce qui est souhaitable pour l'harmonie de la *Cité* et ce qui mène à la sédition, fondamentale à l'œuvre d'Aristote, constitue les fondements de notre pensée politique contemporaine. Aussi, chez les Anciens, naît le concept d'ethnicité. Hérodote, historien grec, est le premier historien à le définir. Selon lui, ce terme réfère aux points communs d'un peuple, leur sang, langue et coutume. Aujourd'hui, nous avons plus ou moins rejeté le fait de sang, mais avons nettement conservé ceux de langues, de coutumes et des valeurs communes. Au Québec, tant les faits de sang que les faits culturels jouent un rôle très important dans les revendications nationalistes ethniques. Alors que le projet indépendantiste se

présente comme émancipateur pour l'idéologie nationaliste, un grand mythe ethno-nationaliste, voir raciste, se présente en filigrane de ce projet. Ce dernier mobilise un discours qui provient d'une essentialisation de l'*Autre* [3] dont il est possible de retracer les fondements idéologiques ethno-nationalistes grâce aux méthodes d'analyse du discours.

Afin d'expliquer cela, je m'attarderai premièrement aux théories et méthodes d'analyse du discours afin de cerner les méthodes pouvant être utilisées pour un tel travail, ensuite j'étudierai plus précisément le discours ethno-nationaliste afin d'en cerner les caractères généraux et les fondements idéologiques. Finalement, je m'attarderai à la situation québécoise quant à son immigration provenant de ce que l'on appelle l'*Orient* afin d'en étudier un court corpus discursif permettant d'en révéler les fondements idéologiques ethno-nationalistes.

Aspects théoriques et méthodes d'analyse du discours

Afin d'approcher cette problématique, je propose de faire appel à l'analyse du discours, un ensemble de méthodes permettant d'échapper «à un contact immédiat avec le vécu»[4]. Ainsi, il sera possible de dépasser l'immanence qui nous colle au contenu, à l'énoncé, afin d'approcher l'objet en tant que discours, donc en tant qu'énoncé lié à une situation de communication[5]. Pour approcher les discours, nous rappelle Eliseo Veron, il est nécessaire de prendre en compte les «conditions de production, de circulation et de réception des discours»[6]. La signification du discours s'institue donc dans la relation énonceur-récepteur, son contexte de production et de réception, il s'agit du principe de la *semiosis sociale.* Beaucoup de penseurs de l'analyse du discours, tels que Teun Van Dijk et Eliseo Veron posent l'aspect idéologique au centre de leurs

analyses. D'une part, Van Dijk soutient que le discours politique était le lieu idéologique par excellence pour son caractère manichéen[7], pour sa propension à séparer radicalement le *Nous* du *Eux*. Pour lui, l'idéologique et le politique, dans la profonde tradition occidentale, se mêlent parfaitement bien puisqu'ils ont, tous deux, comme méthode et comme finalité, de diviser. Eliseo Veron, quant à lui, a beaucoup écrit sur l'idéologique dont il en dit *producteur du sens discursif*. Veron soutient que l'idéologie n'est pas un ensemble d'idées, de représentations du monde, de concepts, mais plutôt «un ensemble de règles de production [discursive]»[8], un «système de règles sémantiques [fini] pour produire un nombre infini de messages»[9]. Aussi, que l'idéologie ne se situe pas au niveau du contenu, mais plutôt au niveau de la forme du discours. Par contre, le discours politique, selon lui, en fait exception. L'aspect idéologique, dans le cas du discours politique, s'ingère tant sur le contenu que sur la forme que prend le discours. Aussi, en reprenant les écrits d'Althusser quant à l'idéologie et les appareils idéologiques de reproduction des rapports de production, Veron soutient que l'État capitaliste emploi un discours joignant deux types d'appareils, les uns répressifs, fonctionnant à la violence, les autres idéologiques, fonctionnant à l'idéologie.[10] C'est ce second aspect qui m'intéressera dans ma recherche. Je mettrai en lumière la reproduction de l'ethno-nationalisme comme projet discursif politique, comme nécessité, pour les défenseur-e-s du projet nationaliste, de maintenir la division ethnique afin d'assurer cette reproduction idéologique. Sans cette division au sein du discours, le projet meurt sous ce qu'ils appellent, l'*assimilation*.

D'autre part, Veron nous aide grandement à mieux saisir le discours politique grâce à un court article qu'il a rédigé, et qui n'existe qu'en espagnol. Dans *La palabra adversativa*, il défend l'idée que le discours politique, du

moins, en démocratie libérale, connaît simultanément trois destinataires, un positif, comme allier, un négatif, à opposer, puis un neutre, à influencer. La distinction entre le destinataire positif et négatif est très importante et permet, qu'elle soit plus ou moins explicite, de mieux comprendre la différence radicale entre le *Nous* et l'*Autre*, aux yeux de l'énonceur politique.[11] Dans le cas du discours ethno-nationaliste, la présence de cette distinction est prédominante et fondamentale, elle devrait donc se trouver, en théorie, de manière assez explicite chez les défenseurs et défenseuses du projet politique nationaliste.

Aspects théoriques de l'ethno-nationalisme

Le concept d'*ethnos*, développé par Hérodote pour permettre l'étude des peuples non grecs, réunit quatre principales caractéristiques communes à un groupe social. Il souligne l'importance du lien de parenté, donc du lien de sang, de la langue, de la religion et des coutumes. Comme nous pouvons aujourd'hui le constater, cette conceptualisation n'est pas hors du champ politique.[12] En fait, elle est au centre des débats politique et se voit instrumentalisée dans nombre de politiques étatiques et de discours politiciens; notamment quant à l'immigration et aux valeurs nationales. Les adhérents de cette posture conçoivent l'État-nation comme le regroupement d'un groupe ethnique, donc d'une tradition culturelle, religieuse et linguistique commune. Son insertion dans le discours politique tend à défendre que tout groupe social ne partageant pas le patrimoine culturel commun de l'État est vu comme ennemi du peuple uni, comme dangereux, comme *Autre*. Au cours du XXe siècle, le racisme classique, qui avait longtemps été l'expression de cette posture, a lentement été rayé du discours. Van Dijk affirme que ce vieux racisme a disparu en laissant place à un nouveau racisme qui met l'emphase sur les faits de culture et de

langue.[13] Pour Colette Guillaumin, l'essor de l'*ethnos* soulève une grande problématique. En effet, cette sociologue française soutient que l'utilisation contemporaine du terme ethnie a comme but d'essentialiser et d'ainsi distinguer les groupes sociaux comme on le faisait, au début du siècle dernier, par le terme *race*. Elle soutient que «quel que soit le terme utilisé pour désigner les groupes, l'appréhension idéologique continue de poser des groupes pourvus d'une "essence" propre»[14]. Van Dijk va dans le même sens lorsqu'il dit que nous sommes passés d'un vieux racisme dur, de ségrégation et de discrimination systématique basée sur des différences dites biologiques, à un nouveau racisme plus subtil, mettant en opposition une culture dominante à des cultures subalternes.[15] Ce constat permet de réfléchir à l'utilisation discursive de l'*ethnos*, en remplacement du concept de *race*. Bref, de mettre en lumière les rapports de pouvoirs dans le discours nationaliste identitaire contemporain.

D'autre part, afin de réfléchir à la représentation de l'*Autre*, naissant par la distinction discursive du *Nous* et du *Eux*, propre au discours nationaliste, il est important de se référer à Emmanuel Levinas. Ce dernier est un important penseur du XXe siècle ayant réfléchi la question de l'*Autre* d'une manière si fondamentale qu'il en a fait les fondements mêmes de sa philosophie. Dans sa conception éthique de la représentation de l'*Autre*, il pose celui-ci comme *visage infini* nous rendant infiniment responsables en tout temps, tout moment.[16] De plus, il fait notamment mention de la mise à mort du potentiel infini des *Autres* par la mise en pensée, catégorisation, de ces altérités.[17] Drabinski dit de cette pensée qu'elle une éternelle quête de destruction des totalités, des pensées totalisantes.[18] En effet, la condamnation que Levinas fait de la représentation des *Autres* est très radicale et remet directement en question la violence de la perspective ethno-nationaliste.

Il y a, dans cette critique que fait Levinas de la pensée

totalisante et de la représentation des *Autres*, un parallèle très important avec la pensée d'Edward Saïd. En effet, chez ce dernier, la critique de la représentation de l'*Autre*, sous la forme de l'orientalisme, occupe une place très importante. Saïd soutient que «si l'on étudie pas l'*orientalisme* en tant que discours, on est incapable de comprendre la discipline extrêmement systématique qui a permis à la culture européenne de gérer — et même de produire — l'Orient du point de vue politique, sociologique, militaire, idéologique, scientifique et imaginaire»[19]. Cette représentation que l'Occident se fait d'un Orient imaginaire et imaginé est une identification de ce dernier de manière tout à fait hétéronome[20]. Cette représentation fait en sorte d'essentialiser l'*Autre* par rapport à des traits que l'on juge différents de nous, et ce, à partir de nos propres catégories de sens. On attribuera la majorité des actes sociaux et culturels orientaux à leur religion. Il y aura, par exemple, dans le cas du port du voile, une simplification, liée à l'essentialisation, des raisons de porter le voile. On dira que ce n'est qu'une simple irrationalité religieuse dont on peut se défaire, niant ainsi la rationalité des femmes orientales.

S'inspirant de l'Orientalisme de Saïd, le néo orientalisme est l'action contemporaine d'essentialisations de l'Oriental comme arabo-musulman, avec tous les préjugés défavorables que cela comporte. Ce phénomène est notable depuis que l'Occident, à la fin de la Guerre froide, a transporté sa haine contre un nouvel ennemi, cet *Orient imaginé*. Ce rapport imaginaire entre l'Orient et l'Occident est, d'une part, institué par les colonialismes et les militarismes de l'Ouest, et d'autre part, instituant des relations interculturelles, coloniales ou ordinaires. Ce phénomène institue donc nos rapports ordinaires et quotidiens, avec cet *Autre oriental* imaginairement institué[21].

L'Orient en Occident, le cas du Québec

Dans le discours ethno-nationaliste, l'immigration dite *orientale* est tout particulièrement vue comme une *invasion* et comme phénomène croissant et dangereux. Les défenseurs de cette posture sentent leurs identités française, blanche et catholique menacées. Frédéric Castel, un religiologue universitaire montréalais explique cette peur par une mauvaise perception qu'on les Québécois de la réalité migratoire. Il souligne notamment le rôle particulier des médias dans cette mésinterprétation généralisée.[22] Plus précisément, il souligne les problèmes liés à l'utilisation des termes *ethnie* et *immigrant*, où il propose plutôt l'utilisation du concept de ''nouveaux et nouvelles québécois-e-s''.[23] Par contre, dépassant la pertinence critique de Castel, je soutiens que le discours distinguant le *Nous* du *Eux* n'est pas qu'un problème d'utilisation de mot mais plutôt une volonté de dominer l'*Autre* par la représentation qu'on se fait de lui et d'elle, tant par l'essence spécifique qu'on leur attribue que par la domination que l'on exerce envers eux et elles, les immigrant-e-s.

Le Parti Québécois a, l'an dernier, fait la proposition d'une charte des valeurs qui lui a finalement coûté son gouvernement. Les discours entourant cette charte, tant au niveau parlementaire que médiatique, révèlent très limpidement les *a priori* idéologiques soutenant ce projet de loi. J'ai donc retenu un bref corpus permettant d'illustrer les fondements idéologiques pouvant être révélés par les méthodes d'analyse du discours.

En premier lieu, il s'agit de distinguer, de mettre en évidence, certains termes récurrents et centraux au discours portant sur la charte des valeurs. Dans l'ensemble du corpus, il y a un terme, souvent rattaché au même type d'énoncé, qui est fondamental à étudier, c'est celui de *valeur*. Ce terme

n'est jamais seul puisqu'ainsi il ne voudrait pratiquement rien signifier. Il se trouve toujours rattaché à ce que le Parti Québécois considère comme être les valeurs «québécoises» «de laïcité», «de neutralité religieuse» et «d'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes». Dans l'ensemble des interventions publiques du Parti, il y a toujours mentions de l'idée de ces trois valeurs dites «communes» et «fondamentales» à la société québécoise.[24]

Aussi, il y a une très grande présence du concept d'*identité*, dans les discours du Parti québécois. Cela est particulièrement le cas dans le dépliant long faisant la promotion du projet de loi 60 sur la charte des valeurs, où le Parti Québécois soutient que «Ce que nous proposons aujourd'hui, avec l'affirmation de ces valeurs, c'est de construire une identité québécoise forte, qu'on soit né ici ou ailleurs»[25]. Cet énoncé est clairement destiné aux convaincus, au sens que Veron donne à ce type de discours, et tente d'inclure l'ensemble des personnes vivant au Québec. Il impose un *mode d'identification*, celui de l'identité nationale, non pas celle d'origine, mais celle d'accueil. En parlant d'identité québécoise forte, et non pas de multiples identités dans un Québec fort, il y a un évident parti pris en faveur d'une identité unique et forte. Cette citation rappelle très dangereusement un communiqué de presse que le PQ avait publié en 2011 dans lequel il disait particulièrement que «nous avons des valeurs communes au Québec et [que] nous devons les défendre. [Que] nous ne pouvons accepter de tolérer le port du kirpan, du voile ou de tout autre signe religieux dans nos institutions publiques et en même temps y interdire les décorations de Noël qui font partie de nos traditions.»[26]

En outre, il s'agissait pour le gouvernement de l'époque de rappeler que sa politique était nécessairement bénéfique pour toutes et tous, qu'elle n'avait pas à être réfutée. En fait si quelqu'un s'y opposait, c'était qu'il ne l'a pas bien comprise et que l'on devrait ~~dialoguer~~ monologuer avec ce dernier. Le Parti

québécois dit, à ce sujet, que la loi ne «ne s'adresserait pas de manière particulière aux minorités, aux personnes immigrantes ou à celles qui sont d'origine étrangère, mais à l'ensemble des personnes qui travaillent pour l'État. Si cette mesure venait à être adoptée, le gouvernement envisagerait, pour sa mise en application, une approche basée sur le dialogue visant à bien expliquer aux personnes concernées le bien-fondé de la règle.»[27] Il s'agit d'un discours d'apparence neutre, destiné à convaincre ceux qui ne sont pas positionnés. Par contre, il est directement envoyé à l'*Autre*. C'est ainsi un discours négatif, dans le sens où il est destiné, préalablement à l'adoption de la charte, à l'*étranger*. Le catégorisant et le présentant comme nuisible, tant à l'adoption de la charte, qu'à son application, ce type de discours tend à diviser en présentant le groupe qui subira l'application de la loi comme entité étant contre celle-ci. L'homme blanc québécois catholique est considéré comme étant nécessairement en faveur de la charte, faisant de toute façon partie de la culture dite «commune».

Dans un autre ordre d'idée, le ministre Drainville tentait d'inscrire le projet de loi 60 dans une continuité historique en faisant appel à un discours fortement connoté de *mythos*. Cela est particulièrement évident lorsqu'il rappelle, dans son communiqué de presse du 7 novembre 2013, que «la charte des valeurs sera source d'harmonie et de cohésion pour le Québec. [Qu'elle] s'inscrit dans le processus de laïcisation, entamé lors de la Révolution tranquille»[28]. Ce recours au mythe national, en tentant d'inscrire son projet politique dans l'histoire nationale, est typique du discours nationaliste, se référant à lui-même, dans le but d'ainsi créer et solidifier une histoire identitaire, excluant les différences de classes. Le tout, en créant et solidifiant les distinctions ethniques.

Il y a, dans ces énoncés, une profonde distinction entre *Nous*, qui pratique la neutralité religieuse et la laïcité depuis

des décennies et *Eux*, qui immigrent et ne connaissent pas ce principe de *modernité politique* que nous devons leur inculquer. Ce discours s'inscrit dans une volonté claire et limpide d'unicité culturelle au sein de l'État québécois et considère clairement le multiculturalisme comme dangereux pour la pérennité de la culture québécoise. À la lumière des théories sur l'ethno-nationalisme et d'une analyse rapide du discours du Parti Québécois portant sur la charte des valeurs, il est aisé d'affirmer que le Parti Québécois participe activement à la création et à la marginalisation d'un *Autre* et qu'il connaît des fondements idéologiques ethno-nationalistes, notamment par la forme de son discours qui distingue incessamment les Québécois-e-s d'ici de ceux d'ailleurs. Présentés comme ennemi du patrimoine culturel et du monolithisme identitaire québécois, ces derniers sont, aux yeux des nationalistes, essentiellement inadaptés à la modernité politique et doivent être impérativement assimilés.

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6 Veron, Eliseo. *La semiosis sociale : fragments d'une théorie de la discursivité*, Saint-Denis, Presses universitaires de Vincennes, 1987, p.24
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14 Colette, Guillaumin. « Une société en ordre. De quelques-unes des formes de l'idéologie raciste », *In. Sociologie et sociétés*, vol. 24, n° 2, 1992, p.14
15 Van Dijk, Teun. «New(s) racism : A discourse analytical approach», *In. Ethnic Minorities and the Media: changing cultural boundaries*, Buckingham, University Press, 2000
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17 *Ibid.*, p.132-133
18 Drabinski, John E. «Levinas, Race, and Racism», In. Levinas Studies, Volume 7, 2012, p.16
19 Said, Edward W. *L'orientalisme : l'Orient créé par l'Occident*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 2005, p.15
20 Castoriadis, Cornelius. *L'institution imaginaire de la société*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1999, p.161-162
21 *Ibid.*, p.219
22 Institut Du Nouveau Monde, *L'état du Québec*, Montréal, Fides, 2008, p.139-140
23 *Ibid.*, p.140
24 Assemblée Nationale du Québec. *Charte affirmant les valeurs de laïcité et de neutralité religieuse de l'État ainsi que d'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes et encadrant les demandes d'accommodement*, Éditeur officiel du Québec, 2013
25 Dépliant long. *Parce que nos valeurs, on y croit*, Septembre 2013
26 *Pauline Marois lance un cri du cœur pour affirmer notre identité québécoise*, CNW Telbec, 15 déc. 2011
27 Dépliant long. *Parce que nos valeurs, on y croit,* Septembre 2013
28 *Une affirmation de ce que nous sommes et de ce que nous voulons être*, CNW Telbec, 7 nov. 2013

Hallelujah!
JESUS
IS KING!

NO MORE STOLEN SISTERS
WE Demand Justice Now
Quel féminisme?
¿CUYO FEMINISMO?
TRANS RIGHTS NOW
WHOSE FEMINISM?
MY BODY, MY DECISION
DONT TELL UR DAUGHTER NOT TO GO OUT
TELL YOUR SON TO BEHAVE PROPERLY

DRAINVILLE

Pour Céline Dion, les musulmanes doivent « respecter » les règles du Québec

POMPIER PYROMANE

i

Title: Mirror, Mirror
Artist: Mohamed Thiam
Medium: mixed media on paper
Description: This piece is about perception, how people see or perceive themselves and others depending on the social, political and geographical context. I am curious about the double effect of stereotypes and prejudices, whether of sex, race or religion—how in uneducated hands, they become both a source of empowerment, as well as a source of oppression. I am curious abou their consequences on one's identity development and want to expand the visual vocabulary for those ideas.

ii

Title: Untitled, Revolution Romance series
Artist: Zola
Medium: permanent marker & acrylic on kraft paper + wheatpaste
Description: This piece is part of a series focusing on the masked protester as an iconic and romanticised character, but was also put up in the streets in solidarity with the fight against the Quebec *Charter of Values* in the fall of 2013.

iii

Title: Whose feminism?
Artist: Jess Mac
Medium: poster/digital art piece
Description: This poster is in response to the organizing of Art Against the *Charter*/ Art Contre le *Charte*. *"Whose feminism?"* is a response to the white, middle class feminists (ie Les Jeanettes) framing of discussions around feminism in the media. Who are we really talking about here?

iv

Title: Drainville Pompier Promane
Artist: K. Kersplebedeb
Medium: Image designed in CorelDraw
Description: Bertrand Drainville was the PQ Minister whose job was to front and promote the idea of a racist *Charter of Values* in 2013-14; the main targets of this racism were Muslims, though others were not exempt. "Pompier Pyromane" is an expression sometimes used in French political commentary, to denote a (usually populist, right-wing) political strategy of proposing "solutions" to imaginary or exaggerated problems, which actually end up creating or aggravating the problems in question. A cynical strategy, playing political football with people's lives. This is a big part of what Drainville and the *Charter* were doing; the human toll in terms of violence, harassment, and exclusion, is touched upon in the press clippings that form the background to this piece.
In many ways, 2013-14 was a really shitty winter in Quebec. There will be other similarly shitty times, in fact they will likely be even worse.

v

Title: Untitled
Artist: Dan Buller
Medium: pencil and digital
Description: a response to the *Charter of Values*. I thought it made sense to use the cross on the mountain as a literal 'fuck you' symbol, since that's basically what the PQ were telling all of us, when they made it clear that Christian symbols would be exempt from the ban on religious symbolism in Quebec.

Robin Reid-Fraser

Consensus and the Commons

Healthy Alternative Governance Processes Resisting Erasure by Global Capitalism and Colonialism

The current global economic system values economic growth in the form of GDP as its primary goal and mark of "success." This has severe consequences for the global environment, since ecological destruction often does not have immediate monetary impacts and thus is not generally calculated into short-term economic decision-making. In response to the failures of global capitalism, many resistance movements have sprung up around the world.

This paper will focus on the ones built around restoring common resources and governing their use through collective decision-making. The principles of the 'commons' and direct democracy are often scoffed by conventional economists as being inefficient, utopian ideals without effective practical application. This paper will show that not only are common resource-sharing and direct democracy possible and more likely to have positive outcomes for communities and ecosystems; they are also long-established ways of life that were deliberately eroded by colonial

and capitalist interests.

In 1968, Garrett Hardin published his famous essay titled "The Tragedy of the Commons," in which he argued that resources held in common would carry out their own destruction. As the number of people using common resources for their own benefit grows at an unsustainable rate, the resources would eventually become so depleted that they would be available to no one. His first example of this was a common grazing pasture for animals. As cattle-owners increase the number of their cattle on common land, each would benefit individually in the short term. However, the number of cattle would rise beyond the population that could be sustained by the pasture and, eventually, the pasture would no longer be able to support any animals at all. His point was that maintaining a sustainable use of resources necessarily entailed enclosing common resources and turning them into government-controlled or private property. (Hardin 1248)

Since Hardin published his article, a number of challenges have arisen against his assertion that the commons cannot be managed sustainably. Of particular note is Elinor Ostrom, winner of the 2009 Nobel Prize for Economics, who argued that: Although tragedies have undoubtedly occurred, it is also obvious that for thousands of years people have self-organized to manage common-pool resources, and users often do devise long-term, sustainable institutions for governing these resources. (Ostrom et al. 278)

Furthermore, Ostrom et al. noted cases in which local group-property regimes managed resources in far more environmentally sustainable ways than global capitalist regimes. One case study compared land degradation in northern China, Mongolia, and Russia. In Mongolia, the land was still being managed by traditional group-property regimes, whereas in China and Russia the state government had intervened to enclose the land. According to the findings, 3/4 of the pastureland in

Russia and 1/3 of the land in China experienced degradation. In Mongolia, however, only 1/10 of the land experienced similar effects (Ibid).

If the commons aren't destined toward the kind of devastation that Hardin depicts, what accounts for their historical decline? Silvia Federici, in her book *Caliban and the Witch* (Federici 2004), writes about the shift toward capitalism that began in Medieval Europe. She argues that, contrary to its common portrayal as a relatively static and uninteresting period in history, the medieval era in fact saw widespread resistance by peasant farmers (or serfs) against the control that wealthy landowners held over their lives. Their struggle stemmed from the condition of occupying and working — yet without owning — land that sustained them.

The experience of self-reliance which the peasants gained from having access to land also had a political and ideological potential. In time, the serfs began to look at the land they occupied as their own, and to view as intolerable the restrictions that the aristocracy imposed on their freedom (Federici 24).

In addition to the plots of land that each family worked for themselves, serfs shared some areas and resources in common. As Federici writes, these included "meadows, forests, lakes, wild pastures – that provided crucial resources for the peasant economy (…) and fostered community cohesion and cooperation" (Federici 24). Contrary to Hardin's tragic portrayal, use of the commons during the Medieval period was not simply an open-access free-for-all, and as Rodney Hilton writes:

Even if each family privately determined the use to which to put its garden or other enclosed plot within the village area, it had to observe a common routine of sowing and fallowing in the open field. It had to agree on the rules governing gleaning and concerning the number and type of animals grazing on the stubble, and concerning access to the commons. This was the practical basis of village common

action. (Federici 31)

The collective mindset of the peasants' resistance efforts was dangerous to the ruling class at the time, who began to quell dissent and break down social ties. The enclosure of the commons was part of the elite reactionary movement that began in the 15th century. Hilton describes this:

According to the survey of 1411 he (lord of Allesley) made arrangements as far as he could, with all neighbouring lords and freeholders in his various manor, that any claim they might have of common in any woods, wastes, moors, groves, meadows, pastures, ways, paths and approvements already made or to be made should be relaxed, often in exchange for considerable grants of land […] It was this encroachment of arable severalties which precipitated sharp social struggles in Coventry itself at the end of the fifteenth century, in which enclosures favoured by the city authorities were resisted by those citizens who claimed common pasture rights for their beasts on the city lands. (Hilton 42)

As European countries began to explore other areas of the world, they found more practices of common resource-sharing and collective decision-making. Specific examples of this include the Haudenosaunee people, as described by Jack Manno:

The settled areas, known as the 'clearings' were under the responsibility and management of the nation of which the settlement was a part. The other areas, the 'woods' were understood to be open for access and use by all Haudenosaunee people but the Nation within which the woods existed had the responsibility to manage and protect these Commons. (Manno 8)

As exploration turned to the violent process of colonization,

European colonizers needed to find acceptable ways to justify their vicious acts of land-grabbing and murder. They began to reduce of the status of indigenous people to something closer to non-human animals, as described by Hugh Brody:

On the settlement frontiers of the North American colonies, the question of the Indians' humanity was also raised. If the indigenous occupants of the lands to which settlers were moving were not humans, but roamed, rather, as "beasts of the field," then they had no right to resist the new Americans' "manifest destiny" to take and use all newfound lands. (Brody 267)

This below-human status was often directly linked to the fact that the indigenous peoples did not enclose their lands. Shiva describes a 1669 letter from John Winthrop, the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, who wrote that:

Natives in New England, they enclose no land, neither have they any settled habitation, nor any tame cattle to improve the land by soe have for other but a Natural Right to those countries. Soe as if we leave them sufficient for their use, we may lawfully take the rest. (Shiva 23)

The Americas were not the only colonized land where this took place. Commonly held lands existed in India as well, and they were given lower value by the British because those lands did not fit into their idea of "productive" areas. Shiva explains how the "wastelands", as the British called them, were taken by enclosure:

When the British established their rule in India, it was estimated that from one-third to one-half of the total area of Bengal Province alone was wasteland. The colonial concept of wastelands was not an

assessment of the biological productivity of land but of its revenue-generating-capacity. Wasteland was land which did not yield any revenue because it was not farmland, but forest. These lands were taken of by the British government and leased to cultivators to turn them into revenue-generating lands. It was only at the end of the 19th century when forests also became a source of revenue that state forests were no longer called wastelands. Village forests and grazing lands, however, continued to be categorized as wastelands, even though they were vital fuel and fodder resources for the agricultural economy. (Shiva 25)

In addition to commonly-managed resources, indigenous communities and nations also practiced various forms of consensus and collective decision-making prior to colonization. Many have continued these practices in explicit resistance to settler state governments, such as Canada, who have tried to impose other forms of governance. For example, the Mikmaq people govern through a body known as the Grand Council, which is, as Boyce Richardson describes:

A self-perpetuating body that has existed in an unbroken line since the time before contact with Europeans. It is based on the authority of Mikmaq families, and the Grant Captain's duty as executive head of the Council, working under the leadership of the Grand Chief, is to keep in touch with every family, and to "watch over" as Sajek put it, "the whole spiritual universe". A great deal of the decision-making in Eskasoni takes place informally as families exchange visits and through constant discussion arrive at a consensus about what should be done. (Richardson 35-36)

Pre-colonial Indigenous natural resource-use regimes are not the only example of effective collective management and decision-making. In 2001, economic policies of Argentina's

elites led to an economic collapse. Unemployment was near 25%; many factories, which had provided stable and well-paying jobs, were on the brink of shutting down from bankruptcy (Lavaca Collective). In the midst this crisis, workers across the country occupied their factories to prevent their closure.

In spite of state repression, workers extended their occupations to takeovers and began running factories by themselves. They formed worker cooperatives, where most decisions were made through general assemblies attended by every worker, each with equal speaking and voting power. Furthermore, the lack of formal management structure — and the attendant expenses — meant that all profits could go directly to the workers, and it was usually distributed equally. Financial success has varied from factory to factory. Some "have gone on to export or even lead their markets, while others still find themselves right where they started." (Lavaca Collective) Either way, the factories have challenged conventional ideas about the necessity of workplace hierarchies.

In addition to fostering resource-management regimes that reduce ecological destruction, collective decision-making and sharing of the commons often has positive social benefits, This is in contrast to hierarchical structures, which are damaging to the majority of the people involved. Taiaiake Alfred writes about the efforts of state governments such Canada to erode traditional forms of indigenous governance:

Along with armed force, they use dependency – which they have created – to induce people's compliance with the will of an abstract authority structure serving the interests of the economic and political elite. It is an affront to justice that individuals are stripped of their power of self-determination and force to comply with the decisions of a system based on the consciousness and interests of others. (Alfred 26)

Similarly, Peter Gelderloos, wrote that "the existence of a

hierarchy isolates group members from one another, so feelings of hostility are more likely to develop than feelings of solidarity" (Gelderloos). Consensus decision-making, on the other hand, is a deliberate effort to erase hierarchies. It ensures that everyone has space to share their opinion and that everyone's talents and energy are meaningfully put to use. Keith McHenry, a co-founder of Food Not Bombs, a consensus-based global organization that reclaims and cooks food that's near expiration(often from dumpsters) to serve in public spaces to people in need, writes that: "Consensus is on the cutting edge of global social change because it reflects the core values that every truly progressive political and social group is working towards. Consensus encourages its participants to express their interests directly to their group and it ensures that all are heard. It is cooperative, not adversarial [...] Consensing on decisions usually produces greater commitment to those decisions than would be the case if a voting process was used, with "winning" and "losing" sides, and with the "losers" grudgingly acquiescing to decisions they dislike" (Gelderloos).

Consensus decision-making can operate on a large scale. Relatively small and localized groups can appoint spokespeople to bring their consensus-based decisions and positions to bodies representing larger numbers of people. Gelderloos describes this method as way to share information and ideas among activist "affinity groups" working on similar issues:

Spokespersons can communicate the desires, limitations, and general goals expressed by their affinity groups, and using that information as a starting point, the spokescouncil can create a structure or framework that assists each affinity group in pursuing its desired ends, and allows each affinity group to work together without ever relinquishing the ability to decide its own course. (Gelderloos)

Collective decision-making and resource management

processes operate with the assumption that the people most affected by the decisions around a resource are those in closest physical proximity and, as such, they should be the ones responsible for making decisions pertaining to the resource. Furthermore, these decision-making processes assume that everyone generally wants the best for their community. Paul Hawken, author and entrepreneur, describes an example of this in the context of a workshop for a group of middle management employees run by his friend. The managers work for a multinational chemical company that manufactures herbicides and pesticides containing known carcinogens. The employees were told to design a spaceship that would leave Earth and bring back its inhabitants "alive, happy and healthy" one century later:

On the winning spaceship, they decided that they needed insects, so they determined that they could have no pesticides. They also decided that weeds were important in a healthy ecosystem, and banned herbicides also. Their food system, in other words, was totally organic […] And, at the end, they were asked if it would be okay if just 20 percent of the people on the spaceship controlled 80 percent of the resources on board. They immediately and vociferously rejected that notion as unworkable, unjust and unfair. And then they realized what they had said.' In short, as Hawken concludes, 'In small groups, with appropriate goals and challenges, we all know the right thing to do. As a society within the world of corporate capitalism, we are not very bright. (Suzuki & Dressel)

When given the chance to design their ideal community, even a group of employees who manufacture and sell harmful chemical products chose to avoid those same products. Furthermore, they all wished to disperse power rather than leave it to a minority of decision-makers. As long as alternatives to hierarchies and environmental degradation were available, they

were embraced by the workers.

Local, collective decision-making and resource-management processes are often brushed off as being naïvely idealistic in our current context of corporate globalization and Western domination. However, these processes have always existed, and continue to exist in a variety of forms around the world. In many cases, they have proven incredibly resistant to colonialist, capitalist efforts to exterminate them. Currently, collective decision-making processes are gaining popularity worldwide, particularly among those who recognize the severe social, economic, and ecological damage caused by global capitalism and the concentration of wealth and power into the hands of a small minority. While global collaboration is necessary for dealing with global issues such as climate change, supporting local participatory governance mechanisms strengthens our collective global capacity and empowers the insights of those most closely situated and most affected.

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Cameron Butler

Seeing the Forest for the Fags

Reimagining Sustainability as a Queer Project

An Introductory Throwing Down of the Gaunt

I wrote part of this paper sitting on the couch next to my father, who was watching the National Geographic show "Wild Nights," where a documentary crew travels to different cities, marveling at the 'exotic wildlife' inhabiting those landscapes. This particular episode was about Rio de Janeiro. I wasn't paying attention until a certain scene made me look up. The host went with undercover police to catch parrot smugglers. She said that parrot catching and selling was a lucrative opportunity for poor people in Brazil because there is a high demand for such "exotic" pets in the United States. After a short chase and struggle, the police arrested the smugglers and 'rescued' the birds. The birds were brought to a sanctuary for rehabilitation; the smugglers were charged and sent to prison. The host happily spoke of how the birds had been saved — this was a win for animals rights! It was also a damning indictment of the failure of environmentalism and the mainstream sustainability movement (MSM) to be

anything liberatory or revolutionary.

This anecdote highlights a number of trends in environmentalism. There is no understanding of the power dynamics at play. Absent is the discussion of how Western societies have commodified and demanded ownership over "exotic" animals. Absent is also the denouncement of globalization, capitalism, and Western imperialism that have created and perpetuated poverty globally. Instead, sole responsibility is placed at the feet of a marginalized few. Poor people of colour navigating a global system of exploitation are painted as villains. Poor birds are rehabilitated; poor people are criminalized. At every moment in this process, birds of colour are ascribed higher values, both economically and morally, than people of colour. And on top of this, the entire ordeal is packaged and sold to Western audiences to reaffirm their own progressiveness.

Environmentalism, with it narrow-minded call to protect and preserve "nature", provides the moral validation for this violence. The MSM has upheld and based itself upon oppressive narratives that harm both humans and non-human nature. Since its inception in the 1960s, the MSM has always been a privileged movement that has ignored systemic oppression (Seymour 14). Its sustainability ultimately sustains white supremacy, colonialism, imperialism, heteropatriarchy, ableism, and speciesism. What is necessary is a radical deconstruction and reshaping of sustainability discourse, and a prioritizing of marginalized voices.

Critical race theorists, ecofeminists, and social justice activists such as Phaedra C. Pezzullo, Ronald Sanders, and Joan Martinez-Alier have been making important contributions to this radical sustainability project. Queer theorists have been slower to engage with sustainability, but I believe that queer theory, and queer ecology in particular, have important contributions to add. Queer ecology strives to create "a sexual politics that more clearly includes considerations of the natural world and

its biosocial constitution, and an environmental politics that demonstrates an understanding of the ways in which sexual relations organize and influence both the material world of nature and our perceptions, experiences, and constitutions of that world" (Mortimer-Sandilands et al. 5). Thus far, queer ecology has been especially rooted in literary analysis, though some works have moved into presenting a queer environmentalism. One especially important work in this effort is Nicole Seymour's 2013 *Strange Natures*. This paper seeks to build upon the ideas presented by Seymour and others, and further ground these ideas into a sustainability politic and activism.

Before proceeding with the paper, I'd like to discuss the purposeful choice of the acronym MSM to stand for the "mainstream sustainability movement." MSM was a term created by epidemiologists in the 1990's for "men who have sex with men," because many of those engaging in cruising (having largely anonymous sex in public places) did not identify as gay or bisexual, so a behaviourally-based term was created (CDC). It has been especially used by police in their surveillance and arresting of men cruising in parks, as part of the state's attempts to rid the public sphere of queerness (Maynard 211). Parks are conceptually heteronormative spaces, meant for families to engage in socially-acceptable, wholesome activities. Queers, as socially corrupt(ed/ing) individuals, are polluting threats to families and are thus not allowed to shape the uses of the space (Gosine 150). This justifies the police surveillance, threats, and violence towards queer men in order to 'preserve' the park.

A fundamental, and unfounded, argument used against cruising queers, and of particular importance to sustainability, is that they cause environmental degradation through littering (Gosine 155). The logic of environmental protection is used to harm and marginalized queers, while cries of being "unnatural" invalidate queer lives and experiences. So I take joy in connecting

sustainability with men having sex in parks, with queer eroticism in a "nature" that does not fit within MSM's solar-powered utopian vision. I use it in the hopes that those who care about sustainability feel discomfort when they read it. I hope that each mention reminds them that uncritical talks of "nature" has real and harmful consequences for marginalized communities.

Straight Plays on the Global Stage

Agenda 21 of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and the 1997 Kyoto Protocol are critically important international documents in the MSM. While aiming to promote global sustainability, both documents are embedded within oppressive logics of colonialism and heteronormativity. Emma Foster argues that the victimization and infantilization of non-Western women in Agenda 21 "works to legitimize the operation of a neo-colonizing Western economic project, further projecting Western hegemonic ideals of 'development' and framed through a Green (in)security narrative" (Foster 143). This economic development project ascribes a state of poverty to individuals for their lack of participation in the market economy (Foster 142).

There is a clear parallel with the way queer liberation has become understood to be inclusion in marriage — in both cases, the goal is to slightly expand an oppressive system, rather than work towards its dismantling. Homonormativity, a concept established by Lisa Duggan, "promis[es] the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption" (Sbicca 39). The MSM strives for the same privatized and depoliticized culture of green consumerism and corporate social responsibility. Its rhetoric "champion[s] personal responsibility while dismissing structural violence and institutionalized inequality" (Seymour 31).

The issue of overpopulation is ubiquitous within MSM

discourse, especially Agenda 21. In decrying reproductivity in the Global South, the bodies of poor brown women are demonized for their potential to threaten white nationalist ideals (Sturgeon 124). MSM organizations in the Global North have a long history in promoting xenophobia domestically and racist sexual regulation globally (Gosine 157). In Agenda 21, overpopulation is addressed through the promotion of education, which is limited to abstinence in countries with anti-contraception and anti-abortion beliefs. This positions sexuality solely as an act of reproductively that exists only within marriage. (Foster 145) Principle 9, declaring that "the family is the basic unit of society and as such should be strengthened," (UNCED) exemplifies the unquestioned naturalization of heteronormativity in MSM rhetoric. This narrow focus on family as the all-encompassing societal relation also erases the notion of communities, of broader networks of support and solidarity. MSM solutions are located within families and the state is there to push people into them.

The Kyoto Protocol also works to further Western neo-colonialism through its development of tradable emission credits and promotion of carbon sequestration projects. Backram argues that "responsibility for over-consumptive lifestyles of those in richer nations is pushed onto the poor, as the South becomes a carbon dump for the industrialized world" (Bachram 11). Indigenous communities are forcibly removed from their lands, which are turned into mono-crop sequestration plantations. Significantly, the disconnection of emission sources and sinks allows the perpetuation of environmental racism, as the disproportionate exposure to harmful pollution experienced by poor and racialized communities is left unchallenged (Bachram 17). Carbon sequestration projects and emission credit trading increases environmental racism and imperialism globally while shielding privileged white people in the Global North from all consequences from their destructive systems. Similarly, the Kyoto Protocol also extends and enforces

heterosexist reproductive valuations of nature. Land areas are ascribed value based on carbon sequestration capacity and then monetized accordingly. Landscapes become reduced to economic potentials and singular capitalist-determined purposes to serve the Global North.

No History, No Future

MSM discourse divides culture, encompassing all human activity, and nature, encompassing the pristine, idyllic non-human. Noël Sturgeon argues that "mainstream environmentalists, in their emphasis on wilderness, species extinction, and in general seeing the environment as excluding human beings, often fall into services to this dominant Western logic of seeing the natural as pure, unchanging, untainted by social influence and without history" (Sturgeon 263). The nature/culture binary has two major implications for the MSM worth highlighting here. First, social injustice, inequity, and oppression are separated from ecological degradation. The interconnectedness of exploitation, hierarchies, and power imbalances that drive social and environmental violence are hidden. As a result, the MSM has not taken social justice efforts seriously (Soltys 21).

Secondly, the nature/culture binary strips "nature" of its histories, construction, and subjectivity. Conservation efforts have developed out of this ahistorical construction, striving to protect 'unspoiled' nature and minimize (negative) human impacts. By stripping nature of history, ecosystems are forced into in a strange state of petrification. Any impact caused by humans is deemed "unnatural" and must therefore be stopped/reversed, whereas "natural" changes are taken to be the result of evolution. But with the pervasiveness of human activity, what ecological changes can't be traced back to people and thus become undesirable? The denial of human history in ecosystems leads to paralysis.

Capitalism has deeply shaped the ways ecosystems are (de)valued. An ecosystem's worth is dependent on its perceived capacity to be productive in economically quantifiable ways. American wetlands provide a clear example of this. Beginning with European colonization in the early 1600's, wetlands were considered unproductive bogs, with the vast majority destroyed and turned into "productive" agricultural land. A shift started taking place in the 1970's, when they were found to be highly efficient at 'ecosystem services' like water filtration and carbon sequestration (Dahl et al.). As a result, massive efforts have been made to reclaim wetlands. The historical disdain and contemporary desire for wetlands are both rooted in anthropocentric capitalism. The ecosystem matters only insofar as it can fulfill current economic demands.

Connected to this are the similar ways in which nature and sexuality supposedly require "constant monitoring and restrictions to access, so that it may be free of undesirable elements" (Seymour 144). Attempts to control and shape nature, to regulate it, are intertwined with the regulation of desire (Seymour 107-8). The erotic potential of nature — its capacity to exist, flourish, and (re)produce in ways that are not economically useful, pretty, or desirable — is stamped out and crushed. In place of this potential, resource management strategies are developed to control ecosystems and maximize returns. The MSM adopts the rhetoric of ecosystem services and management in order to provide economic legitimacy for environmental concern and by doing so, renders itself unable to challenge the inherently unsustainable capitalist system.

The MSM's role in the domestication of nature is inseparable from legacies of colonialism and white supremacy. For example, the creation of wildlife preserves and conservation areas has dislocated indigenous peoples globally (Gosine 152). At the same time, discourse around "land reclamation" magnifies the MSM complicity in colonialism. As a greenwashing PR strategy, many resource extraction corporations, such as the Canadian

Association of Petroleum Producers, turn their focus to "land reclamation", the process of removing contamination from heavily polluted ecosystems. The term, used by indigenous communities to describe efforts to regain rights over their traditional territories, has been taken by corporations to justify inflicting intense violence and destruction upon these very same communities. Within the MSM, there is no reflection on what it means to "reclaim" land, who can reclaim it, and from whom is it being reclaimed. The goal is to simply return land to a pre-human state and thereby erase histories of the indigenous people who lived in those territories.

Complicating Nature

Queer ecology provides a poststructuralist platform to critique "nature" in ways that further understandings of ecological violence (Seymour 109). The MSM addresses environmental issues through institutions. Incorporating a Foucauldian understanding of power, I'd like to shift focus away from specific institutional configurations to underlying power dynamics that drive ecologically destructive systems (Foucault 92). As Catriona Sandilands posed, "to queer nature is to question its normative use, to interrogate relations of knowledge and power by which certain 'truths' about ourselves have been allowed to pass, unnoticed, without question" (Sandilands 22). A queered sustainability becomes an "anti-essentialist, anti-assimilationist, and heterogeneous" exercise (Seymour 25).

Queer ecology complicates our spatial understandings of environmental injustice. Environmental racism and classism are often discussed in terms of spatially-fixed models, looking primarily at where communities live (Seymour 74). Queer ecology supports this work by constructing spaces as simultaneously safe and unsafe for different people moving through them, such as domestic workers' exposure to cleaning chemicals while working

in suburban homes (Seymour 77). Pushing this idea even further, a biopolitical lens positions the human body itself as a site of ecological harm and resistance, as demonstrated clearly in the writings of Eli Clare that situate the body as home (Di Chiro 199-200). Deborah Slicer draws parallels between landscapes and the body to propose a queer ecological justice that (re)defines the "natural" as self-possession, shifting away from a state-based construction and towards one that is relational (Seymour 35). These queer ecological works show how the conceptual "ecosystem" and "nature" can be made temporally and spatially transient.

Foundational to queer ecology has been Donna Haraway's proposed concept of "natureculture," positing that "the very idea of nature itself is not natural; *nature is cultural*", though that is not to say that nature is subsumed within culture (emphasis in original, Bell 143). In collapsing the nature/culture binary, we also collapse the us/them and self/Other divisions, which reveals an interconnectivity of humans, nonhuman beings, and landscapes. This radical undifferentiation drives an ethics of care and collective responsibility to come out of the dissolution of stable identities (Seymour 176). Through this non-identitarian responsibility, a queer ecological sustainability prioritizes coalition-building across all forms of oppression, taking demands for justice outside of the realm of personal affronts and into the general discourse of solidarity and mutual support (Seymour 97). This directly challenges individualist narratives of capitalism and creates space for broad justice resistance work. As an example, lesbian separatist farm communes engaged with this environmental ethic in their treatment of the land as a partner to live with and guide to learn from (Unger 181-2).

Queer, Ugly, and Ironic

In rejecting heteronormative (re)productivity in the

organization and valuing of humans and landscapes, queer eroticism can present new ways of relating to and with others. Erotophobia limits understandings of non-(re)productive nature, and queer ecology must tackle this (Gosine 165-6). By centering queer eroticism within nature, there is potential for new, alternative interrelationalities that engage in valuation as a communal activity. Different bodies and beings will need and/or want different relations with spaces (Sbicca 37). By employing a queer empathy of collective value-creation, space is created for coalition-building and a radical restructuring of interactions within nature (Seymour 11).

An explicit engagement with and support for the ugly becomes especially pertinent in a queer ecological imagination. Western constructions of "ugly" landscapes have historically been those populated by Indigenous, racialized, and poor people — the politics of beauty are inextricably tied to racism, classism, colonialism, and sexism (Seymour 164). Landscapes and humans can all attest that, just as Beyoncé says, "pretty hurts." Community organizer Mia Mingus calls for bodies that are "moving beyond a politic of desirability to loving the ugly. Respecting Ugly for how it has shaped us and been exiled. Seeing its power and magic, seeing the reasons it has been feared. Seeing it for what it is: some of our greatest strength." A queer ecological sustainability must meet this call and extend it across bodies and landscapes. It must deconstruct beauty, find magnificence in the unwanted, revel in the ugly.

With its commitment to dismantle beauty, queer sustainability rejects privatization and commodification of bodies and land, focusing on care instead of profits or compensation (Seymour 109). Rejecting the privatization of nature allows ecosystems and people to be supported as unmanaged and uncontrolled, building a broader (re)imagining of how humans and nonhumans can live in unproductive and magnificent ways.

The queer ethics of care is built upon the emotional dimensions of interpersonal relationships and shared Otherness (Perpich 225). It is important to acknowledge that these understandings of care are indebted to indigenous peoples and thus must be part of anti-racist solidarity (Seymour 168). These ethics of care are predicated upon attentiveness, reverence, and patience; in shaping care through these attributes, along with sympathy, empathy, and identification, landscapes, humans, and non-humans can be given space and support to explore the ephemeral and unfamiliar, as opposed to the "useful" or "normal" (Seymour 166). This queer ecological ethic of care is one "not rooted in stable or essentialized identity categories, a care that is not just a means of solving human-specific problems, a care that does not operate out of expectation for recompense" (Seymour 168). It is one that works to sustain and improve the well-being of bodies and landscapes, while being critical of how spatial and temporal conceptions of well-being are constructed and embedded within broader politics.

Seymour argues that irony, often thought to be incompatible with sincere environmentalism, can be employed to subvert logics driving ecological degradation (Seymour 149). She argues that it is deeply ironic to act on firm beliefs of environmental ethics and social justice while maintaining a critical skepticism of the categories, boundaries, and distinctions employed in those ethics (Seymour 180). Importantly, a queer environmental irony as one that is not "cruel or dismissive" but rather "simultaneously compassionate, introspective, and good-humoured" (Seymour 172). It can thus be a tool to highlight the gaps of hypocrisy wherein oppression manifests. The use of MSM as a term, with its dual meanings, is meant to be an example of such queer irony. A playful twist of words to stake out a point of queer resistance against sustainability's heteronormativity, a serious critique that does not take itself too seriously.

Conclusion

The MSM, in its narrow focus on protecting a construction of pristine and untouched nature, has built itself upon oppressive politics and heteronormative capitalist logics that prevent it from achieving the goals it has set. These political underpinnings must be challenged and destabilized as part of the queering of sustainability. A queer sustainability is one that is deeply skeptical of our categorizations of nature and yet still works to support our ecological communities through care, solidarity, and communal valuation. Queer ecology can bring unique contributions to our articulations of self, community, and relational possibilities, but it can only be part of liberatory projects when engaging in solidarity with communities of colour, poor communities, communities in the Global South, disabled communities, landscapes, ecosystems, and all communities that are devalued and Othered.

In closing, it's worth returning to the parks. Undergrowth and bushes were commonly removed as a way of preventing men from having necessary cover for cruising and this harmed the park's ecosystem (Gosine 160). A queer sustainability recognizes the irony in saving the environment by destroying it and resists oppression through that irony. It is a sustainability wherein "one can both love an adulterated landscape and criticize its adulteration, and recognize beauty in ecological disasters without condoning the disaster itself — just as one could recognize a landscape as 'ugly' and still decline to do violence to it" (Seymour 164).

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M'Lisa Colbert

Voluntary Standards are Smoke Screens

The Case of Pacific Rubiales Energy in Colombia

Meet Pacific Rubiales

"Pacific is Colombia" reads a recent marketing campaign by Canadian multinational oil and gas giant, Pacific Rubiales Energy. Pacific Rubiales is one of the fastest growing crude oil producers in the world and, for the greater part of the decade, they have been aggressively expanding in Colombia. Their average annual growth rate is an impressive 8.4% and their current market value is estimated at US$6.23 billion (Pacific Rubiales Energy Corp (PRE: CN) Market Data). Moreover, their CEO, Ronald Pantin, is one of the highest paid in the industry. He makes around 5 million dollars a year in compensation and benefits while the average annual income in Colombia is approximately US$692 (Executive Profile: Ronald Pantin, International Labour Organization). To put it in perspective, Ronald Pantin's salary roughly amounts to the income of 7,225 Colombians. Pacific Rubiales is quickly becoming one of the richest crude oil producers in the world and the community of investors that have helped

this company grow are being lead to believe that it is also one of the most socially responsible companies as a result of the way Pacific Rubiales conducts Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices internationally.

Voluntary CSR Standards

Companies in the extractive sector works tirelessly to assure Canadian citizens that they protect the rights of local communities and share profits with them by highlighting voluntary participation in social responsibility initiatives. Yet in the case of Pacific Rubiales, voluntary CSR standards have not been effective. Social responsibility is both defined and decided upon solely by the company; members of the civil society have no access to the decision making process. Voluntary participation in CSR initiatives has been one way that Pacific Rubiales has bolstered their reputation to increase their shareholders and revenue without actually being accountable to the local societies in which they operate.

For instance, Pacific Rubiales has voluntarily completed a CSR and Sustainability report annually since 2009 and they claim to have invested approximately $37,787,801 in social causes over this period of time. A few of the projects and initiatives they have either created or joined that are included in this total investment are: the Monitoring Committee for Investment Royalties (MCIR) — a program the company initiated to support transparency of royalty spending in local governments in Colombia — the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and Global Compact Contract (UNGC); the CORDEPAZ in Colombia, the Humanitarian Committee; the European Union; the Women's UN; The World Bank; The IFC; and Export Development Canada. Involvement in these committees illustrates

their commitment to CSR, at least on an international front, but it does not illustrate Pacific's commitment to CSR practices in the towns where they operate — and where it is most important.

Moreover, in 2012, Pacific Rubiales was honoured with an award for the Best Oil and Gas producer in CSR for 2012 from Capital Finance International, a London-based business and finance print journal. They also received an award for The Most Sustainable Oil and Gas Company in Latin America from World Finance, another London-based financial magazine that is produced by World News Media. Also, from Corporación Calidad, a Colombian IT Firm, and RS Magazine, a magazine published by el Centro International de Responsabilidad Social y Sostenible, Pacific received the Colombian National Responsibility award. Pacific's most prized accomplishment is the UN Global Compact Award (Pacific Rubiales Sustainability Report 2012).

However, these awards that Pacific has won are not of as much merit in CSR leadership as its shareholders believe. For example, World Finance details on their website that the awards they distribute are determined using a panel of "qualified judges" that oversees and decides on the votes presented to them by investors and members of the website (World Finance). It does not mention how they are qualified, but it is clear that investor votes and feedback from customers weigh heavily on the judges' decisions. Moreover, the UN Global Compact Award is not as difficult to obtain as one might think. The award is granted to any voluntary corporate participant that pays their annual commitment fee. In the case of Pacific, that amounted to US$15,000 last year (United Nations Global Compact). It is awarded in faith of voluntary implementation of international CSR standards approved by the UN and voluntary commitment to accomplishing the millennium development goals. So, the awards that Pacific colourfully displays in its CSR reports every year are not much more than ink they have paid to put on the

page. Their voluntary participation in these initiatives drives their shareholders to believe they are socially responsible, even though civil society in Colombia is not actually the major recipient of Pacific's CSR initiatives.

Pacific's documented social track record has not only helped the company's public image; it has also contributed to their eligibility for publicly funded loans. In 2012, Pacific Rubiales was approved for a supply chain loan from Export Development Canada (EDC). This raised questions and prompted activists and media to ask for further review as a result of labour complaints and protests surrounding Pacific's operations in the Meta department in Colombia. EDC first commented on Pacific's application for the loan saying, "...in terms of their social and environmental review directive or the OECD common approaches, corporate loans are generally not subject to review." However, as a result of external pressure, EDC did eventually elect to conduct a review of Pacific Rubiales. Their preliminary research uncovered that there was in fact evidence supporting these complaints (Profile: Corporate Facility Review, Pacific Rubiales Energy). Nonetheless, the loan was issued as a result of Pacific's voluntary participation in improving the situation. The EDC commented on Pacific's steps toward progress saying:

...the company added a direct stakeholder engagement model through roundtable discussions...We engaged in an extensive dialogue with the company over its perspective on the labour issues, which included collaboration between EDC's CSR group and internal country risk experts. Looking forward to 2013, one of PRE's notable CSR goals is to formally adopt the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights. We reached a favourable conclusion on the CSR front for this customer (Profile: Corporate Facility Review, Pacific Rubiales Energy).

The EDC did not comment on whether Pacific was held accountable for its past actions and it did not require Pacific Rubiales to engage in dialogue with Columbian civil society or labour unions. This case illustrates the ineffectiveness of voluntary participation — in this model, it is the company, without consultation with civil society, that defines "responsibility". Thus, the needs of those most directly affected by mining operations in local towns are those most often ignored and the EDC investigation was not of particular help to this growing problem.

Civil Society's Evaluation of Pacific Rubiales

Civil society's analysis of Pacific Rubiales' CSR performance has been much less positive in comparison to the EDC's evaluation. For example, in July of 2014, nine Canadian organizations travelled to Colombia to attend a people's tribunal against Pacific Rubiales after learning about complaints of poor working conditions and abuses of worker and human rights at PRE's oil fields in Puerto Gaitain, Colombia (NGO's Prepare Ethical Tribunal on Pacific Rubiales). The company was accused of, "systematic violations of the union right to freedom of association, the militarisation of the oil fields, violation of constitutional rights and practices that go against ethics, collective rights and the environment, non-respect of environmental legislation, profiting off the lack of state control over the taxation of production and causing the deterioration of public resources." The final verdict of the tribunal found Pacific Rubiales guilty on all counts (Verdict of the Popular tribunal, PASC). USO, the national oil workers union in Colombia, also filed an official lawsuit in 2013 against Pacific Rubiales for violations of freedom of association, accusing the company of union-busting and oppressing independent labour organizing (USO Files Suit against Pacific Rubiales, PASC).

Despite this lack of approval from Colombian and

international civil society, Pacific Rubiales recently announced the World Bank and the International Financial Corporation (IFC) as investing partners in their latest expansion project, Pacific Infrastructure. Pacific Rubiales is overseeing the development of a new crude oil port and pipe line in Puerto Bahia, Colombia and, the IFC and the World Bank have invested over US$150 million towards their further expansion (Oil and Gas News).

Thus, this case illustrates the need to include the voice of civil society in the Voluntary Corporate Social Responsibility model. Compared to current standards that have been put in place by those involved in the extractive sector, society has a much better understanding of what it means to be socially responsible. Civil society groups — from social organizations to indigenous communities to autonomous unions — are afar better source for understanding how socially responsible a company is, as they are outside the industry and experience the impacts of the extractive sector firsthand. It is important for institutions like Export Development Canada and the World Bank to prioritize civil society's voice and sincerely consider civil society's approval of extractive sector companies before funding their further expansion. This is the only way to ensure that violations do not continue to go unnoticed and that future investors are well-informed.

The case of Pacific Rubiales in Colombia also demonstrates that there is a need for a comprehensive legal framework to formalize procedure, hold Canadian companies accountable for their actions, and aid civil society in its watch dog role. Until decision-makers and public institutions begin to take civil society voices seriously and until a legal framework is developed to hold Canadian extractive companies accountable for their actions, voluntary CSR practices will continue to be mere smokes screens, concealing corporate crime instead of bringing it to light.

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Brooke Nancekivell

Rad Enough

How Anti-capitalist Roots Shape the Actions and Identity of the Midnight Kitchen

Introduction

The Midnight Kitchen is a non-profit, volunteer and worker run food collective dedicated to providing affordable, healthy food to as many people as possible. Based out of McGill University in Montreal, QC we provide free/by donation vegan lunches 5 days a week, Monday through Friday, at 12:30 in the Shatner building on McGill campus.("About MK")

The Midnight Kitchen (MK) is more than just a kitchen. It is a radical collective, an activist hub, an anti-oppressive educator, and a mobilizer for action. It is a space that allows social movements to germinate. Over the past decade, it has creatively opposed oppressive food systems by combining cooking and serving meals with teach-ins, workshops, and political conversation, together establishing MK as an autonomous space within social movements. Drawing on both academic articles

and personal experience organizing with the Midnight Kitchen, I will discuss how the political institutions at McGill and beyond have shaped the creation and growth of organization. I will argue that its political history has shaped its anti-capitalist identity, which has in turn molded MK's tactical choices and the role it plays in broader social movements.

Laying the foundation

Midnight Kitchen formed in 2002 in response to the increasing privatization of food services on the downtown campus at McGill University. Chartwells Corporation, a sub-company of Compass Group, began operations at McGill in 2000 (Chiliak et al., Lewis). With over 50,000 locations serving 4 billion meals per year in venues ranging from prisons to sports stadiums to mining camps, Compass Group is the largest catering service and food provider in the world ("Who we are"). Soon after their arrival on campus, they began monopolizing food services, with Chartwells becoming the primary determiner of everything from distribution to nutrition to pricing, limiting the options and accessibility of dining for a campus of over 30,000 full-time students ("Enrollment reports", Lewis).

The process of large companies privatizing the food industry is a phenomenon seen not only on university campuses, but on a global scale. Chain restaurants, cafeterias, and grocery stores are increasingly becoming key sources of people's everyday food intake, meaning that people's options are dictated by a market-based system. Those with financial means are given access to a wide range of choices, but those living on low incomes face restricted autonomy and access in caring for their own nutritional needs (Lewis). The contractual relationship between McGill University and Chartwells Corporation is a continuation of this process, as well as a further invasion of private interest into the

sphere of a public university. With this greater context in mind, I will discuss how Midnight Kitchen came to be, and why it was established in 2002, two years after Chartwells initiated its services at McGill.

One explanation is provided through the theory of political opportunity structures. This theory, advocated by sociologist Sidney Tarrow, refers to the conduciveness toward change of the institutions within which a social movement takes place. The degree of openness, political leanings, and structures within an institution or set of institutions can determine aspects of social movement organizing such as timing, tactics, framing, and development of alliances (Staggenbourg).

Midnight Kitchen was founded at a moment of opening in the political opportunity structure at McGill. In April 2001, Québec City hosted the Free Trade of the Americas Summit, prompting extensive organizing that brought students and activists together in anti-capitalist opposition. Connections made at the Summit led to the creation of GRASP(é), a new group at McGill focusing on issues of neoliberalism. GRASP(é) brought together students who were passionate, socially aware, and motivated to incite change. Its founding facilitated opportunities for students to meet and organize against privatization on campus, and they soon centred on Chartwells as a potential target. Without both the Summit and GRASP(é) providing the space for organizing, Midnight Kitchen may never have been formed (Lewis).

Additionally, GRASP(é) connected student activists who had a variety of connections both on and off campus (Lewis). According to resource mobilization theorists John D. McCarthy and Mayer Zald, social movement mobilization is dependent on the physical, social, and skills-based resources that opposing actors have both access to and ability to activate. This not only shapes the advent of mobilization, but the form and tactics a movement adopts (Staggenbourg). Students didn't have, for instance, the

financial and political capital to block Chartwells' contractual agreements with McGill, but they were able to mobilize social linkages, organizing skills, and cooking know-how to build the foundations of the Midnight Kitchen. Their liaisons with organizations such as McGill Chaplaincy's Rabbit Hole Café, the Catholic Students' Centre, and Food Not Bombs developed into powerful allyships that provided materials, space, and mentorship during the kitchen's fledgling stages (Lewis).

Their decision to take the route of community kitchen was also influenced by what Charles Tilly terms "repertoires of action", or the modes of resistance that have developed and spread among activist groups (Staggenbourg). Midnight Kitchen had a local example of student anti-corporatization organizing in the People's Potato, a collective kitchen at Concordia University which was formed in 1999 ("History of the Potato"). With three years of serving free vegan meals under their belt, the People's Potato had legitimized student-supported community kitchens as a tactic against campus corporatization. Their existence set the stage for Midnight Kitchen to begin.

Within the past decade, Midnight Kitchen has transformed from a handful of student radicals cooking in borrowed spaces until the wee morning hours to an established university service with paid staff, dozens of volunteers, hundreds of daily attendees, and its own autonomous kitchen space. These transitions have been significantly influenced by the political opportunities available at McGill. When Midnight Kitchen was seeking funding in its beginning years, it received financial and institutional support from QPIRG-McGill, a social and environmental justice organization with a mandate to connect campus and community ("About - QPIRG McGill", Lewis). As it began serving more students, MK allied with the Student Society of McGill University (SSMU), which provided them with meeting space, significant cash inflow through a student fee levy, and legitimacy among

the student body. Significant lobbying from members and allies enabled Midnight Kitchen to successfully advocate for its own self-designed, semi-autonomous kitchen space within the SSMU building. The choice of operating a community kitchen, as opposed to other tactics, to oppose corporatization on campus, also opened many doors. MK's anti-capitalist motivations alone may not have garnered support from SSMU, which is not explicitly committed to political change ("Our Mission"), but its commitment to providing a service to students gave the two organizations a common ground for alliance. Political opportunities are not merely set by institutions; they are also shaped by the modes of resistance.

Alliances with institutions within McGill also come with limits, however. Sometimes these are minor hindrances, such as not being allowed to serve lunch outdoors on gloriously sunny days, but other times they dramatically affect how the organization is run. For example, Midnight Kitchen's finances are controlled by the SSMU, meaning that they are unable to withdraw cash on short notice, official receipts are required for all purchases, and payments are often sent out weeks or months after purchases have been made or services have been rendered. Such barriers may seem to pose a mere nuisance, but they limit Midnight Kitchen's ability to act both autonomously and in accordance with its mandate. If the kitchen runs out of vegetable oil in the morning and there is no petty cash on hand, a volunteer must pay out of pocket and wait for reimbursement, which clashes with Midnight Kitchen's anti-oppressive and anti-classist mandate. Although there are ways to maneuver around the system, it is important to note that the same political institutions that enable Midnight Kitchen's work as a social movements actor also restrict its agency and independence.

Frames of Understanding, Frames of Action

...We aim to empower individuals and communities by providing a working alternative to current market-based systems of food collection and distribution. We oppose privatization, corporatization and other process that actively disempower people to obstructing their access to resources and independence... We recognize that much of the politics surrounding food production and distribution are part of a larger system of oppression… ("About MK")

Framing is the practice of activists and actors aligning themselves and their struggle as part of a broader social movement. It can be significant in shaping the public perception of the organization, in building alliances and choosing tactics, and in affecting decision-making practices (Staggenbourg). The mandate of the Midnight Kitchen, quoted above, clearly outlines the organization's framing as a social movement actor. It is explicitly anti-capitalist, anti-corporatization, anti-oppressive, and committed to social justice. According to social movements analyst Suzanne Staggenbourg, these labels constitute "master frames" used by multi-movement actors to encompass the many shared injustices they address (Staggenbourg). Frames not only help connect movements ideologically, but also affect and reflect the day-to-day operations of a group. In this section, I will discuss Midnight Kitchen's food procurement as one example of how its anti-capitalist framing affects its logistical decisions.

Midnight Kitchen is no small operation. In addition to coordinating and executing daily lunchtime servings for approximately two hundred people, the kitchen caters for social-justice oriented actions or groups in Montréal. Given the aforementioned privatization of the food system, gathering sufficient ingredients to feed this many people while maintaining an anti-capitalist practice is a major feat. By establishing connections

with local grocery stores to salvage produce no longer considered high-quality enough to sell, MK is able to use perfectly edible food that would otherwise be discarded. The willingness of grocery store employees to coordinate with Midnight Kitchen has transformed a miniscule political opening into sustainable fuel for the organization's alternative structure. Nonetheless, MK still purchase goods such as beans, grains, and flour in bulk to supplement donations of produce. While they are working toward an anti-capitalist reality, the market system still constrains their actions and possibilities.

Despite its limits, Midnight Kitchen operates a more oppositional practice than parallel groups at other North American universities. Earthfoods Café at University of Massachusetts, Amherst, for instance, is a vegetarian collective that also serves food daily to a large student population, but they purchase their food from grocery stores and charge set prices for their meals. Their framing is similar to that of an independent or cooperative café: business-oriented, but highlighting the benefits of collective management and the restaurant-specific organizational skills their employees gain from working there ("Earthfoods Café"). Both Midnight Kitchen and Earthfoods Café title themselves collective kitchens, but MK's explicitly anti-capitalist mandate means it functions very differently.

Yet even campus food collectives with similar framings may operate differently given their contextual political opportunity structures. Dalhousie University's Loaded Ladle, for instance, sources their food from a local farmer through a collection of CSA (community supported agriculture) baskets. Sourcing locally is one of their methods of resistance to oppressive food systems, and it is facilitated by their positioning in Halifax, Nova Scotia, a small city surrounded by rural agriculture ("Loaded Ladle"). Midnight Kitchen could potentially liaise with agriculture programs at McGill's Macdonald campus, which is based in

the more rural Saint-Anne-de-Bellevue, but its location in the highly urbanized Montréal makes this strategy unnecessary, as there are a plethora of opportunities to reclaim edible food within the city limits. Even with similar political frames, organizations' decisions are shaped by local contexts and opportunities.

From the Kitchen to the Streets

Lastly, Midnight Kitchen's anti-capitalist framing affects its role as a social movements mobilizer. Students drawn to the kitchen by its by-donation meal become daily attendees, forming relationships with other students, volunteers, and staff that are grounded in the kitchen's political context. Polletta argues that autonomous spaces including collective kitchens can be vital forces in social movements as creators of culture (Polletta 1999, 11-17). They offer the opportunity to explore alternative structures of organizing society, with values that are oppositional to the mainstream. Yet, their engagement in prefigurative organizing can be exceptionally trying, as people struggle to work within a broken system to both heal and create new means of relating to each other and to organizing. Providing an essential service such as meals, Polletta argues, can help to mitigate these difficulties and to fuel such organizations in the long-term (Polletta 1999, 12). Such is the case for Midnight Kitchen, where the experience of both going for lunch and becoming involved becomes about more than just the food that sustains it and its members, but also the friendships and social justice education that come with participating.

Beyond keeping their own institution afloat, Midnight Kitchen supplies a steady flow of mobilized students for outside movements and actions. Its position, especially due to its location in a university setting with strong supports, is fairly stable. It may organize workshops and teach-ins and provide sustenance for

protesters, but it doesn't organize mass-mobilizations or explicit direct actions. Rather, it educates people, engaging students who often have relatively few commitments into activist networks and providing a space for socialization into activism (McAdam).

Through kitchen-counter discussions of homemade tear gas remedies, lawyers to consult after being arrested, and how the police systemically target people of colour and trans people, MK exposes injustices and proposes alternative ways to examine the systems within which we live. These discussions instill values that mobilize toward action. Sociologist Doug McAdam refers to this process as recruitment into high-risk activism and theorizes that connections to other activists and social organizations are as important for recruitment as factors such as one's stage of life and relative availability. Midnight Kitchen facilitates these relationships, both between members themselves and between members and external organizing groups. When you know forty other people going to a protest and when you are familiar with the group organizing it, the distance from the kitchen to the streets doesn't seem so far. Even if autonomous and prefigurative spaces such as Midnight Kitchen do not organize direct action against the strains and violences of our greater social system, they are oppositional in the socialization and mobilization capacity their existence enables. Such spaces are essential, but often ignored, aspects of social movements organizing (Polletta 1999, 11-12).

Collective Kitchens as Radical Spaces

"Not rad enough". This hallmark critique of activist communities, accusing the offending organization of not working hard enough, directly enough, or effectively enough for societal or political change, has often been charged at Midnight Kitchen. It operates out of SSMU, has strong connections to the university, purchases significant portions of its food, employs

paid staff — according to some, its only purpose is to give free food to wealthy students at an elite university. These comments, however, ignore both the context in which Midnight Kitchen was formed and the roles that collective kitchens play in social movements. While smashed cop car windows, black bloc protestors, and blockades can be easily pointed out as "radical" actions, collective kitchens are more subtle. Their emphasis is cultural change rather than immediate and direct pressure (Polletta 1999, 14-19); they push slowly with the whole hand rather than poking with a single finger. In creating the opportunity for social justice education and mobilization at McGill, Midnight Kitchen is itself rad enough.

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List of Contributors

Articles

Alisha Mascarenhas
Alisha Mascarenhas is nourished by the relentless compassion and integrity of the allies, friends, artists, thinkers and teachers she is accountable to. She is committed to a creative and political practice of learning how to honour the land she lives on as a settler and visitor on the unceded Kanien'kehá:ka territory known as Montréal.

Brooke Nancekivell
Brooke Nancekivell is a former McGill student and Midnight Kitchen volunteer. They appreciate popular education, community kitchens, and the learning that happens around the cutting board and the dinner table.

Cameron Butler
Cameron studied Bioresource Engineering at McGill, but spent most of his time writing about queerness and exploring questions like 'what would engineering be like if it was queer?' He currently lives in Montreal with his lover and works on addressing accessibility and mental health issues within a student residences context.

Délice Mugabo
Délice Mugabo is Black feminist activist based in Montreal and a member of the Third Eye Collective, a group that focuses on gender violence within black communities and transformative justice. Ms. Mugabo is currently pursuing a Masters of Science in Geography, Urban and Environmental Studies at Concordia University. Her research will look at anti-blackness and/in islamophobia in Québec and muslim black women organizing in Montreal.

Francis Dolan
Étudiant au baccalauréat pluridisciplinaire en Histoire, Culture et Société à l'UQAM, Francis s'intéresse aux idéologies politiques contemporaines et à l'analyse du discours politique comme méthode de dévoilement des idéologies.

Kai Cheng Thom
Kai Cheng Thom is a writer, performance artist, and community worker living in Montreal, unceded Mohawk territory. They are also a co-founder of the mental health collective Monster Academy Montreal. They like poetry, nail polish, and sparkly stuff.

M'Lisa Colbert
M'Lisa recently completed a B.A (Distinction) in Political Science with a minor in English Literature at Concordia University. She is currently the Managing Editor of The Undercurrent—a national peer reviewed undergraduate journal of development studies and plans to attend graduate school in the upcoming school year. Her scholarly interests include: post-colonial narratives, morality, international development, renewable energy, definitions of public and human identity.

Molly Swain
Molly is an otipêmsiw-iskwêw from traditional Niitsitapi territory, co-founder of the Indigenous Women and Two-Spirit Harm Reduction Coalition, labour organizer, co-host of a nerdy Indigenous feminist sci-fi podcast, and Women's Studies student who

is interested in the imaginative and practical work of decolonization and Indigenous futurity.

Robin Reid-Fraser
Robin is a graduate from the McGill School of Environment and is currently undertaking an industrial mechanics diploma in Montreal. She is interested in strategies and tools for building resilient, supportive communities in a context of global climate change, with a particular focus on community-based waste management initiatives.

Art Work

Dan Buller
I've lived in Montreal for nearly 20 years, doing all kinds of art. I was the editorial cartoonist for the Hour for 8 years.

Jess Mac
Jess Mac is an artist whose practice engages with the intersection of institutional violence and the socio-political reality of personal trauma. Working with communities affected by stigma and oppression, she positions art as a tool to engender personal and political agency.

K. Kerspebedeb
K. Kerspebedeb has been politically active in the Montreal radical left for over thirty years. Most of his time is spent publishing books and working with people in prison. He also maintains a website (www.kersplebedeb.com) of marginal interest.

Mohamed Thiam
Graphic designer, artist and maker of senegalese origins, Mohamed was born in Saudi Arabia and later studied in Nice, Paris and Detroit. Growing up surrounded by other, "Third Culture kids" he had no real sense of home or absolute culture. Now living and working between Montreal and Ottawa, he is on a perpetual quest to expand and enrich my visual vocabulary and multicultural richness, cultivated on four continents, each with their own systems, patterns and textures so as to enhance the way he narrates his stories.
Mohamed holds a graduate degree in 2-D Design from the Cranbrook Academy of Art and runs the design studio Momogoods.

Zola
Zola does street art on unceded kanienkéhà:ka and anishinaabe territories in Montreal. She is a white settler francophone woman learning how to integrate anti-oppression approaches into as many aspects of her life as possible. She has been most active in the student movement, anti-colonial and feminist organizing.

Cover Art

Jenny Galewski and Matt Corks
Jenny Galewski and Matt Corks are friends who have worked together, laughed together, and watched their babies play together. Ils habitent à Montréal, où ils adorent les cygnes les plus ostentatoires possibles, mais ils détestent les oies spéciales.

Community-University Research Exchange (CURE)

Community-University Research Exchange (CURE) is a database by which students can integrate their academic research with the work of local movements and activist organizations. Through the administrative infrastructures already in place at McGill and Concordia University, students may complete a CURE research project as an independent study course, internship, or thesis advised by a departmental professor, or as a term project for an upper-level class. By connecting students to non-profit community groups with limited resources, CURE hopes to encourage and support academic research that is socially relevant.

CURE operates on the principle that the University is an institution which maintains systems of privilege and oppression around race, class, and neocolonialism. By redirecting resources to groups and individuals in need of theory, information, and the energy to supply them, CURE encourages students to acknowledge their institutional advantage, and convert it into a useful tool for political action. By allowing students both to engage in anti-oppressive academic research, and to work with local movements for social change, CURE is an initiative that hopes to make rubble of the walls which enclose academic privilege.

http://curemontreal.org/

Study In Action

Study in Action is an undergraduate conference designed to link students and community activism. It is held in March every year and is organized by a collective through QPIRG Concordia and QPIRG-McGill.

In its mission, Study in Action seeks to foster ties between undergraduate students and the broader Montreal community in order to strengthen the spirit of social and environmental justice, promote undergraduate research, and emphasize links between the two. Study in Action provides an opportunity for students and people outside the academic community to come together to work on and discuss approaches to social justice, while creating a forum to highlight undergraduate research. The conference is a forum for students to present and engage in meaningful academic work that will benefit their communities as well as their academic experience and careers. Panel presentations showcasing undergraduate research provide students with the opportunity to present and develop their university work and direct its application to community issues.

http://qpirgconcordia.org/studyinaction/

Art In Action

Art in Action is affiliated with Study in Action. Art in Action highlights creative student and community contributions related to social and environmental justice issues through diverse mediums including: drawing, painting, photography, performance, film & video, installation, music, spoken word, zine, collage, water colour, poster, and print.

About the cover image

Title: Cygne ostentatoire
Artists: Jenny Galewski and Matt Corks
Medium: Pencil & marker
Description: The Charter of Quebec Values was a proposed law that would have allowed the provincial government to fire any of their employees who wore a "conspicuous" religious sign, such as a hijab or a turban. The Parti Québécois had made this shallow appeal to xenophobia and ethnic nationalism a cornerstone of their 2013 re-election campaign, but lost to a party which promptly withdrew the bill. In French, these symbols were described as a "signe ostentatoire", which is pronounced the same as "cygne ostentatoire", meaning "ostentatious swan". As a play on words, opponents of the bill used a picture of a swan looking very proud of itself to show their objection.