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THE McGill Daily

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Tired and unamused with the administration since 1911

AMUSE votes "Yes"

Union adopts strike mandate

PAGES 7 & 18

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CONTENTS

3 NEWS

A look into SSMU and PGSS Consultation Report on the DPSV

Senate discusses DPSV

AUS sees controversy over "Prof Talk"

PGSS debates budget amendment

SSMU Council passes motions regarding menstrual hygiene products

AMUSE votes to implement strike measures

8 COMMENTARY

State of abortion rights within a Canadian and European setting

Colonial presence of China in Tibet

Murder and exploitation of Black lives at the hands of police

11 FEATURES

On pegging

14 SCI+TECH

The "Shadowman" may be coming for you

15 CULTURE

Imago's artistic director talks feminism in theatre

New Montreal-based literary magazine launches

Kathy Page's new book tackles intimacy in relationships

18 EDITORIAL

We stand with AMUSE

19 COMPENDIUM!

"Fuck This"

Crossword

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Consultation Report emphasizes specificity in Sexual Violence Policy

SSMU and PGSS report calls for contextualization and specification

RYAN CANON
The McGill Daily

On September 12, the Office of the Provost released the Draft Policy against Sexual Violence (DPSV) for community consultation, with the intent of submitting it to Senate in November for approval. Following requests from representatives of the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) and the Post-Graduate Students' Society (PGSS), the Office of the Provost agreed to fund a series of focus groups on the DPSV.

Initial reactions to the DPSV

Between September 23 and October 3, SSMU and PGSS hosted a total of eight focus group sessions during which students gave detailed feedback on the DPSV, including two closed sessions for survivors of sexual assault. All sessions were facilitated by trained volunteers from the Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill Students Society (SACOMSS).

On October 12, SSMU and PGSS released a Consultation Report on the DPSV, which contains 28 recommendations for improvement. These recommendations were divided into seven different categories: language and framing, scope, empowering survivors, education and awareness, support resources, accountability, and comprehensive review.

In an interview with The Daily, SSMU VP University Affairs Erin Sobat explained the process that led up to writing the consultation report: "McGill first circulated a draft policy in May, over the summer [...] and at the time we were really emphasizing the need for wider consultation, particularly with those who would be most affected by a policy like this," said Sobat. "Now in the most recent revisions we see a centralized office that has been identified with a name, but there are other policies and procedures at the University that aren't explicitly named or aren't very clear on how they play in."

With regards to the focus group sessions, he said, "I think it was very useful and important to get the perspective of just students at large on how they would access or navigate this policy. [...] I think for students who were just reading through this, it really wasn't very clear what it was intending to do."

In an email to The Daily, PGSS Equity Commissioner Angela Yu, who was also involved in the drafting of the report, said, "our report empha-

sizes that the policy must be explicit about the expectations, resources and procedures that exist on our campus to address sexual violence to best serve all members of our community."

"A pro-survivor policy needs to clearly outline centralized reporting procedures and the rights of respondents just as much as it should ensure the university-wide provision of accessible and intersectional support resources," she went on to write.

"Our report emphasizes that the policy must be explicit about the expectations, resources, and procedures on our campus to address sexual violence [...]."

—Angela Yu
PGSS Equity Commissioner

The Daily also reached out to a representative from the McGill chapter of Silence is Violence to discuss the DPSV. "I believe that survivors' recommendations should have been specifically highlighted and given extra weight too. Survivors know what's best for them," the representative said, adding that, "I'm concerned that there was no specific effort to reach out to those who have reported sexual assault at McGill to provide feedback."

The Consultation report

As for the consultation report itself, the first category, language and framing, revealed "many participants, and particularly survivors, indicated that the policy's preamble does not sufficiently recognize the devastating impact of sexual violence for those who experience it."

It further notes the context of sexual violence is not explicitly defined, nor are the barriers that prevent reporting incidents of sexual violence, and that certain phrases are ambiguous.

The report calls for "contextualizing the disproportionate occurrence of sexual violence on university campus" and recognizing the impact of systemic oppression, among other recommendations.



MARINA DJURDJEVIC | The McGill Daily

The section on empowering survivors places much emphasis on creating a "pro-survivor framework," revealing that participants voiced concerns about survivors' autonomy.

Regarding this, the report notes that many participants believed the emphasis on "procedural equity," took away from the policy's other commitments. They recommended that the rights of both survivors and perpetrators be clearly outlined to clarify "procedural expectations" for both parties.

It also recommends that the policy specify a "centralized disclosure and reporting process," and introduce timelines for the provision of "support and recourse measures for both disclosures and reports."

With regards to education and awareness, the report calls for the development of a university-wide education plan that will address sexual violence awareness and response measures, as well as provide basic educational materials to staff.

The report also recommends that "detailed training sessions," be provided for front line service staff and those involved with responding to disclosures and reports.

Section five of the DPSV, which focuses on support resources, recommends that McGill "identify the specific resources responsible for enacting policy commitments, including employee titles and a centralized awareness and response office."

It also recommends the implementation of "new intersectional and

culturally-specific support resources," and the development of direct lines of referral to all support resources.

The section on accountability concluded that McGill must acknowledge the history of sexual violence, as well as the administration and community's shared responsibility of addressing it and recognizing perpetrators' role in enacting sexual violence. It also called upon McGill to commit to enforcing consequences "via existing disciplinary procedures."

The final section, "comprehensive review," focuses on Article 21 of the DPSV, which provides for a review of the "phenomenon" of sexual violence on campus.

The report calls for a review of the policy to be conducted by a committee at "arms-length" from the administration with "qualified students, staff, faculty, and external experts." It asks that the committee be mandated to review McGill's existing policies and procedures, and that they develop a detailed consultation plan for reaching people who understand university reporting structures.

The report's final request was that the committee mandate, consultation plan, progress reports, and final recommendations be shared with the university community.

It concluded that a policy against sexual violence at McGill is the first step towards combating rape culture on campus. This current draft "provides a valuable framework for educating the community and enhancing support for survivors."

More than just a policy

However, Silence is Violence expressed concerns regarding the impact of the policy on sexual violence.

"I don't think that a policy could have much effect if its enactment isn't being actively overseen by another body," the spokesperson said. "While I think the recommendations are trying to achieve the best they can in this system, I seriously doubt there would be much difference in the prevalence of sexual violence on campus or support offered to survivors."

Meanwhile, Yu added that "we believe that the campus review of sexual violence slated for next year will allow us to continue these much-needed conversations on a university-wide level and productively direct the implementation of the policy."

Sobat also believes there is still much to do in regards to McGill's work against sexual violence. "I believe it's important for us to recognize that we need more than just a policy. [The University should go] beyond the policy at the procedures and [consider] the longer term educational strategy on campus," he said.

He added that "we would like to see a recognition from the administration that sexual violence not only does occur, but has occurred in the past and people have been failed by the system in place. A campus wide plan on campus for implementation and education is definitely needed."

AUS Council endorses AMUSE

Meeting sees controversy over “Prof Talk” cancellation

MARINA CUPIDO
The McGill Daily

On Wednesday, October 19, the Arts Undergraduate Society (AUS) convened for their legislative council meeting, where they discussed endorsing the Association of McGill University Support Employees (AMUSE), the cancelling of an upcoming “Prof Talk,” and committee reports.

AMUSE endorsement

Since May 2015, AMUSE has been engaged in negotiations with the administration over its collective agreement. AMUSE argues that its current agreement fails to provide its members — many of whom are in need of financial aid to fund their education — with a living wage, adequate job security, or the employment benefits they deserve. As such, they have outlined a series of bargaining priorities, which include “respect for casual workers, including hiring priority for jobs you’ve already done,” “accurate job descriptions,” “seniority and ben-

efits for casual workers,” improvements to the Work Study program, and a \$15 minimum wage.

A motion had been brought to Council to endorse these goals and mandate AUS to “publish a statement in support of these priorities on its website, listserv, and social media channels.”

AMUSE President Claire Michela motivated the motion and took questions from the room, reminding councilors that the Students’ Society of McGill University (SSMU) had endorsed these priorities the previous week, on October 13.

Kat Svknushin, AUS VP Social, spoke in favour of the motion and the values it represented. “I [...] want to speak in support of this motion, mostly because I feel that it underlines one of the things that the AUS is always trying to achieve, which is student employment, [...] but I also think this motion serves as a reminder to ourselves when we’re discussing [...] paying people that we’re funding a livable wage, and using our bargaining

power with people like the Dean to [...] continue increasing stipends to [...] a livable wage. As someone who employs twelve Frosh [Coordinators], this is something I’m very sensitive towards.”

No one expressed opposition to the motion, and it passed with only two abstentions.

“Prof Talk” controversy

During his report, AUS VP Academic Erik Partridge announced that an upcoming “Prof Talk” had been cancelled due to a room booking problem. World Islamic and Middle East Studies Student Association VP External and former editor at The Daily Niyousha Bastani responded to Partridge, calling this statement “disingenuous,” and stating that as she understood it, there had been other reasons behind the cancellation. Partridge responded that the room booking problem had been the “main reason.” He did not, however, mention any other reasons.

In her report, AUS VP Internal Kira Smith also told Council that

the “Prof Talk” in question had been cancelled because of a room booking problem.

Arts Representative Igor Sadikov, another former editor at The Daily, took issue with this assessment, arguing that Partridge and Smith had presented the situation in a “misleading” way, and that if the talk had been cancelled for confidential reasons, this fact should be stated publicly. Smith then denied that her statement had been misleading, repeating that the talk had been cancelled because of a problem with finding a room.

Though these disagreements occurred in the context of Partridge and Smith’s executive reports, neither written report mentions the “Prof Talk” cancellation or the rationale behind it.

In a statement to The Daily after the meeting, AUS Equity Commissioners Jad El Tal and Leah Damo explained the context of the controversy.

“Last weekend, a student in Arts approached us and told us about their concern with the upcoming

Prof Talk,” Damo and Tal wrote. “They informed us that the invited professor was accused of having sexual relations with students, but this was never formally published. As Equity Commissioners, it is under our mandate to monitor on-going discussions/events, with an emphasis on promoting anti-oppression and pro-survivor values. This is why we forwarded the student’s concern to [...] VP Academic Partridge. As for the actual reason behind the cancellation, we do not know whether or not the talk was cancelled due to the allegation or room booking, since the final decision is not under our mandate.”

Asked to clarify his statement at the meeting, Partridge made the following statement to The Daily by email: “I regret that I was not more clear at AUS Council and that my answer was equivocal. The logistical issues were the most proximate cause of the cancellation. That said, a cancellation was on the horizon with regards to other issues that I did not feel at liberty to discuss publicly.”

Senate discusses Draft Policy against Sexual Violence

Definition of consent discussed

MARINA CUPIDO
The McGill Daily

On Wednesday October 19, the McGill Senate met to discuss the Draft Policy against Sexual Violence (DPSV).

The DPSV was drafted over the summer by the McGill administration, in discussion with various parties on and off campus, and released to the University community for consultation on September 12. Since then, the administration has been collecting feedback on it, largely through an online form which students and staff have been encouraged to fill in.

At Wednesday’s Senate meeting, Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) Christopher Manfredi presented the results of this feedback and reported on the progress that has been made in recent weeks.

“The aim of the policy is to ensure support for survivors who are members of our university community in a manner that is respectful and confidential, and is not conditional on initiating a disciplinary or criminal investigation,” Manfredi explained. “A policy is essential, of course, but we understand that a policy on its own will not do all of the work, and [...] we are putting resources in place to support the policy, and other actions [we are taking] in this area.”

“We have put in place [...] the process to hire a second person to support our work against sexual violence at the University,” Manfredi explained, “as well as secured office space at a location proximate to campus that provides a greater level of accessibility and confidentiality than we had available in our facilities on campus.”

For the purposes of this discussion, Senators were provided with a summary of the online feedback sent in since September 12 — the document had been prepared by an unbiased third party. The summary highlighted several “key insights” drawn from the 175 online submissions, which included a need for clearer information regarding how to report sexual violence and how the policy will interact with existing disciplinary procedures.

Relatively little discussion took place around the DPSV; those who spoke expressed appreciation for the work that had gone into producing it. Senator John Galaty also commended the policy, though he offered some suggestions for improvement and implementation.


“In the document [...] we see a definition of sexual violence stating that somebody cannot consent when they are intoxicated,” said Galaty. “Then, the next page

says that we cannot, or should not, query people who are self-reporting with regard to alcohol use, and it seems to me that there’s a contradiction between these two paragraphs.”

In response to Galaty’s concerns, Associate Provost Angela Campbell, who was largely responsible for drafting the DPSV, said that “we’re not talking in this document about issues of determining whether or not an incident occurred for the purposes of assessing disciplinary action. [...] This is a document that sets out the commitment that the University is making to both educate the community with a view to preventing sexual violence [...] and also to support individuals who have disclosed a lived experience of sexual violence.”

“The definition of consent in the document doesn’t say that one can’t consent if they have [...] used any kind of intoxicating substance, [...] it talks about lack of capacity,” continued Campbell. “So if a person has been rendered incapacitated as a result of any situation, [...] the lack of capacity is what renders the consent vitiated.”

Other matters discussed at Senate included the recent relocation of the McGill bookstore, and a report on hiring inequity.



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PGSS Council debates funding

Reduced electricity use discussed at PGSS General Meeting

XAVIER RICHER VIS
The McGill Daily

On Wednesday, October 19, the Post-Graduate Students' Society (PGSS) of McGill University met for their monthly council meeting, as well as their biannual General Meeting. Council voted on three motions, one regarding a referendum question for a Midnight Kitchen student levy, another allowing the Macdonald Campus Graduate Student Society to access the Post-Graduate Student Life Fund, and a final one approving Board Committee appointments. Two other motions were tabled.

The General Meeting consisted of a multitude of announcements from graduate students and other McGill officials, as well as executive reports.

Student Life and Learning

The council meeting featured an extensive presentation by the Office of Student Life and Learning (SLL), headed by Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) Ollivier Dyens.

"I come to Council about once or twice a year," said Dyens, "usually to discuss the student services budget which we will do again this year, a bit later in November [...], but the point of this meeting is to show you a bit of what SLL is and what we do, and then [...] to answer your questions about some of the things we do, kind of like a meet-and-greet."

SLL's presentation began with an introduction to the office's objectives, including but not limited to "offer[ing] the best, most innovative and healthiest educational experience in North America," while "[developing] intellectual partnerships [between McGill's] faculties, students and the entire McGill community."

The presentation also touched upon the challenges faced by SLL. SLL detailed its work in negotiating Memorandum of Agreements (MoAs) with the University's student unions, while simultaneously working on policy development within the university as a whole –

notably, with policies that pertain to sexual violence, student academic assessment, medical notes, and plagiarism.

Midnight Kitchen

Council voted on a motion to approve a referendum question on a Midnight Kitchen student levy. While McGill undergraduate students currently support Midnight Kitchen through a \$3.35 per semester per student opt-outable fee, graduate students don't pay any fees to support the organization.

The referendum question asks graduate students if they would "support a student levy of \$0.75 per semester to support the Midnight Kitchen, payable and fully opt-outable on Minerva by members of PGSS," from Winter 2017 until Fall 2018, at which point it will be brought back to PGSS for renewal.

The motion passed unanimously, with 54 votes in favour.

Debate on MCGSS Funding

An amendment of the budget for Macdonald Campus Graduate Students' Society (MCGSS) funding was brought to Council. It was sent to committee last Council meeting, but was not approved. The amendment to the budget would result in PGSS taking a total of \$2,500, or the equivalent of \$5.00 per graduate student at Macdonald campus, from the PGSS grants budget line and allocating it to MCGSS. This would subsequently be added to PGSS' annual budget.

A motion to amend this was brought forward that would take \$2.00 per graduate student, instead of \$5.00 for Winter 2017. The motion passed.

Thomas Colburn of the Post-graduate Philosophy Student Association (PPSMUA), asked why the MCGSS wasn't initially allocated any funds. Secretary General Victor Frankel responded that he "wasn't part of the decision-making process, but I think that's the most fair thing to do."

"Essentially, it's goods and services that we cannot regularly provide to Mac students because they're [on the MacDonal campus],"



Thomson House, where PGSS Council is held

pus]," continued Frankel, "so this gives them [...] a budget line that allows them to run their own events."

Former PGSS Financial Affairs Officer Behrang Sharif clarified that "it's not that we are not giving any money [to MCGSS]," he said. "This was the money that was under another name. We had an agreement with MCGSS that this money is going to go to [Macdonald Campus Students' Society [MCGSS]] now they are asking for extra money on top of what we agreed."

Former PGSS Financial Affairs Officer and current Graduate Students' Association for Neuroscience (GSAN) council rep Erik Larson spoke against the amendment. "The PGSS grants budget is funded by a referendum question. If we collect this money for the grants project at PGSS, this would be the equivalent of taking money out of the needs-based bursary fund or the library improvements fund – all of which PGSS collects and all of which they remit to the intended recipients of it. [...] I don't think that Council can and should take money from the budget line and give it to another organization."

The debate centered mostly around what funds PGSS was al-

ready sending to MCGSS, and how much this new amendment would contribute to MCGSS's budget. Eventually, the motion was tabled in light of the information brought up at Council.

New energy management program at McGill

At the general meeting, McGill's energy manager Jerome Conraud spoke about a new energy program at McGill that might affect students during the winter.

"I don't think Council can and should take money from the budget line and give it to another organization."

—Erik Larson
GSAN representative

"Essentially, you might know that in Quebec, peak demand for electricity is in the winter [...] between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m., and in the

XAVIER RICHER VIS | The McGill Daily

afternoon between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m., so to help the utility company, Hydro-Quebec, they have a new incentive program to have customers like [McGill] reduce their power demands during these very cold days [and hours], and that will allow us to not have to purchase electricity at a very high cost from the United States or Ontario."

Six buildings will be impacted by the energy program: McIntyre Medical Sciences, Penfield 470 (Genome), Wong, and Trotter buildings, and McLennan and Redpath libraries. Conraud assured council members that the heat wouldn't be turned off completely, but would rather be set at "minimum acceptable levels." The program will not detrimentally affect labs on campus, but heating will be turned off sequentially in certain areas of the specified buildings to minimize electricity usage.

Conraud acknowledged the disruptive effect this might have on students, but emphasized that the program would assure a \$200,000 rebate from Hydro-Quebec by the end of the year, to be invested in energy conservation measures or greenhouse gas reduction measures.

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SSMU Council debates discretionary funding

Council passes motions on menstrual hygiene policy, fee, and fund

ELLEN COOLS
The McGill Daily

On Thursday, October 20, the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) Legislative Council convened for the fourth time in the 2016-2017 academic school year. Councilors heard two guest presentations, one from the Office of the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) (DPSSL), and one from the Library Improvement Fund Commissioner, as well as a report from SSMU VP University Affairs Erin Sobat regarding unpaid internships at McGill.

Six motions were passed, including a motion to endorse CKUT's existence referendum question, a motion regarding Midnight Kitchen existence referendum question, a motion regarding the creation of a Musicians Collective Fee, and a motion regarding the free menstrual hygiene products policy.

Council also passed a motion regarding the free menstrual hygiene products fee and health and hygiene products fund referendum question, and a motion to approve the 2015-2016 audited financial statements.

Fiat Lux

Library Improvement Fund Commissioner Malcolm McClintock gave a presentation on current library projects and the Library Improvement Fund's work so far this year.

One of McGill libraries' main projects in the next several years will be the "Fiat Lux," a re-imagining of the McLennan-Redpath library complex. This includes a proposed robotic storage center housed under Lower Field that will free up space for students to study.

"Thirty per cent of the books haven't been checked out in twenty years now," McClintock noted.

"It might not be for our generation of students at McGill, it might not be for the next generation at McGill, but it's something that is worthwhile," he added.

McClintock also discussed that the Library Improvement Fund is providing more amenities to make students' time in libraries more enjoyable and helpful, such as charging stations throughout the libraries.

"We are looking into specifically more space diversity, as well as [...] making sure that all these resources and libraries are really relevant to everybody," he said.

McGill Mental Health

Following his presentation, which highlighted his office's projects and efforts toward ongoing issues regarding mental health at McGill, Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) Ollivier Dyens sum-

marized his thoughts on the state of mental health at the University, in response to a question from VP Student Life Elaine Patterson.

"We want to create the healthiest possible learning environment," he said.

Creating such an environment necessitates providing students with faster access to mental health and counselling services, he elaborated. Recently, the University implemented a stepped care approach to mental health.

"We know that there's actually eighty per cent or so of cases that just need one intervention," he said. "We're trying to make this a much quicker process so students get that one intervention as quickly as they can."

He further noted that improving mental health requires McGill to review its policies, particularly relating to how it assesses students' needs, and that greater education within the community (including professors, faculty, and staff) is necessary "to understand, recognize, and not ostracize people with these issues."

Midnight Kitchen's discretionary funding

A motion was also brought forward to Council regarding Midnight Kitchen's existence referendum question. The motion asked undergraduate students whether they "agree to the renewal of the opt-outable Midnight Kitchen Fee of \$3.35 per student per semester [...] with the understanding that a majority 'no' vote will result in the termination of all undergraduate fee-levy funding to Midnight Kitchen [...]"

It further asked if students supported Midnight Kitchen in continuing to offer up to twenty per cent of its fee budget in discretionary funding to projects that fall under its political mandate.

Councilors voiced concern regarding this part of the motion, noting that Midnight Kitchen has a recurring budgetary surplus. Midnight Kitchen is a non-profit organization, and should therefore theoretically be breaking even financially.

However, a representative from Midnight Kitchen explained that the surplus was the result of previous members not buying necessary kitchen equipment, such as ovens. The collective is currently working on infrastructure improvements, which will lead to a decrease in the surplus.

VP External David Aird noted that "a lot of organizations function [with a rollover fund]. [So] it does remain a non-profit and [...] there are things like capital projects that they can't accommodate on a yearly budget."

According to Midnight Kitchen's budget, it does not typically spend the full twenty per cent of the



SSMU Council.

ELLEN COOLS | The McGill Daily

budget available for discretionary funding, and thus councilors were concerned about asking students to support this part of the motion.

Engineering Representative Richard (Tre) Mansdoerfer expressed his discomfort with discretionary funding. "The expectation is that [students] pay for services," he said. "I don't think it makes sense to have discretionary funding for any SSMU service."

Engineering Representative Tristan Renondin brought forth a motion to change the Midnight Kitchen's discretionary funding from "up to 20 per cent" to "10 per cent." This motion passed with three abstentions and none against.

Following this, the existence referendum question motion passed with 75 per cent of the councilors in favor, 21 per cent against, and four per cent abstaining.

Free menstrual hygiene products

The free menstrual hygiene products policy will provide pads and tampons, among other products, to those students who need them across campus. Patterson explained the products will be distributed at Healthy McGill kiosks across campus, as well as in the gender neutral and gendered bathrooms.

Arts Representative Maria Thomas spoke in favour of the policy, saying "I think having all these availabilities on campus will be really helpful with the stigma about having a period."

The motion passed with four per cent of councilors abstaining, which led to Council adopting the policy.

However, the motion regarding the menstrual hygiene products fee and health and hygiene products fund referendum question generated more debate. The motion asks students if they support the creation of a non-opt-outable fee of \$0.90 per semester per student to supply menstrual hygiene products to students across campus starting Winter 2017.

"I think having all these availabilities on campus will be really helpful with the stigma about having a period."

—Arts Representative Maria Thomas

SSMU President Ben Ger noted that at the last council meeting, many councilors were concerned about the amount of the fee. The fee is now lower, as it previously accounted for twenty tampons as well as twenty pads per cycle. It now accounts for ten of each type of product, and "we can then start to gauge after the first year to see which product was used more and increase the purchase of [that] product," he said.

He further noted that any surplus money from the fee would go toward a separate fund to be

reserved to purchase alternative products, such as DivaCups.

Senate Caucus Representative Joshua Chin noted that the motion claims up to 56 per cent of undergraduate students will use the products, but the budgetary calculations accounted for fifty per cent of students using them.

SSMU VP Finance Niall Carolan addressed the budgetary issue, explaining that he discovered after calculating the budget that 56 per cent was more accurate, for which he apologized. But he said he does not believe it will have an impact on the purpose of the fee.

"I think it's more important that we make a commitment to reevaluate where money is being spent and making sure that it is being spent in the most efficient way possible," he said.

Science Representative Ashby Gangaram asked for the reasoning behind making the fee non-opt-outable.

Carolan explained that the percentage of students who opt out of fees fluctuates each year, and purchasing products on this scale requires advanced planning. As such, "having the kind of stability of knowing exactly how much money year over year will be available greatly eases our purchasing plan and makes the fund much more manageable."

SSMU VP University Affairs Erin Sobat also noted that "there's a lot of people on campus who wouldn't use this and don't want to pay for it. Part of the suggestion is that men or others who don't menstruate shouldn't [be able to] opt out of this." The motion passed unanimously.

AMUSE votes for strike mandate

Members hope to gain leverage in negotiations with the University

RAYLEIGH LEE
The McGill Daily

On Thursday, October 20, the Association of McGill University Support Employees (AMUSE) held a special general assembly (GA) where attendees discussed the state of the union, ongoing negotiations with McGill regarding its collective agreement, and to vote on a strike mandate.

AMUSE, accredited in 2010, is the main union representing a network of casual or temporary employees at McGill University, 85 per cent of whose membership consists of student employees on campus. The union has been working since May 2015 to negotiate its second collective agreement with the University.

In an email to The Daily, Maxim Bru, AMUSE Communications and Outreach Officer, clarified the problems with AMUSE's current collective agreement. "Unions negotiating their first collective agreements are forbidden from striking, thus severely limiting their ability to bargain collectively," he explained.

Bru further claimed that another issue is "McGill University's apparent commitment to creating greater worker insecurity on campus with the aim to pay people less both directly in terms of low wages, as well as denying us any benefits whatsoever."

Negotiations have taken place in closed sessions between the elected bargaining team representing AMUSE, McGill's negotiation team, and a conciliator.

So far, according to Bru, AMUSE has negotiated "further definitions about what psychological harassment looks like and how the complaint procedure will work," defined clear rest and meal periods provided to employees, further defined employees' rights under Quebec law, and that an employee will get paid within thirty days of beginning their contract.

However, "while we've made progress on some items," Bru wrote, "McGill University's position remains opposed to many items of our basic proposal which aims to bring us up to par with our permanent employee counterparts."

During the special general assembly, AMUSE members discussed collective agreement priorities and the status of ongoing negotiations, and passed a strike mandate with a majority vote of 82 per cent of those who were present.

Bargaining priorities

Prior to entering negotiations with McGill, AMUSE members

voted on bargaining priorities, which included recognition of the contribution of casual employees, increased wages for casual workers, improved job security for those in the Work Study program, and permanency.

The union is particularly dissatisfied with the University's Work Study program regarding its hiring process and posting system.

AMUSE argues that equal treatment of casual workers entails benefits for casual workers, or indemnity for those who cannot receive benefits, contract renewal before contracts are terminated, distinct job titles that accurately reflect the work that is done, and a \$15 per hour minimum wage with regular pay increases.

"As a member of the board of representatives [...] we've been working really hard to mobilize for this GA. It was obviously very important for me, as someone who is active in the union, to be here," said Kirsten Whelan, a student on the mobilization committee.

Whelan expressed her feelings regarding the state of the bargaining process with the university. "Negotiations have been ongoing on for a year and a half and we haven't been getting where we need to be. [...] In a lot of ways it hasn't been meeting the needs of our membership."

AMUSE will be asking for improved posting requirements and hiring priority by seniority for the work study program, as well as ID cards for non-student casual workers. The subsequent bargaining session, on October 24, will focus on the priorities above and call for communication with the union through a committee.

Strike mandate

The strike mandate is part of the union's pressure tactics to move forward on the collective agreement with the University. Previous pressure tactics included putting posters up on campus and handing out pamphlets to McGill Senators before Senate meetings.

To date, the parties discussed "articles on grievance procedure, on the conditions governing access to an employee's personnel file and on the payment of salaries."

However the University and the union have not been able to reach an agreement on issues like job posting and granting of other privileges such as McGill ID cards for casual students.

In an interview with The Daily, Claire Michela, President of AMUSE, said, "We've reached [...] an impasse in bargaining and we're not going to



AMUSE members at the assembly.

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be able to move forward and support our priorities without the vote of the membership in this way."

"The vote would give us a strike mandate," she continued. "So it doesn't mean we will be going on strike tomorrow, what it means is that the members would have the power, [so] they hold the bargaining priorities and [...] the power to call the strike should it be necessary in the coming weeks."

"We've reached [...] an impasse in bargaining and we're not going to be able to move forward and support our priorities without the vote of the membership in this way."

—Claire Michela
AMUSE President

Michela described the strike mandate as "the most significant moment in AMUSE's history since its inception," because "a casual union is very rare in a university campus or anywhere else."

She added that "the labour movement started because workers were dissatisfied with their conditions and they realized that by organizing collectively, they could have the power

to change some things about their workplace and get rid of the harmful aspects of working [...], make their conditions safer, more fair, share the fruits of their labour better, [...] to end exploitation in the workplace. To show our collective will as a casual union would be [...] pretty incredible."

Implications of the mandate

During the question period, AMUSE clarified that the strike mandate would allow the bargaining team to call for a strike at any point during the negotiations; however, a strike will only be used when necessary.

The votes were calculated with ballots, available to all members of AMUSE present at the assembly. If a strike is declared, AMUSE members are protected by the legal right to be absent from work under Quebec law.

After the strike mandate was passed by the members, Heather Holdsworth, the elected Vice President of Labour Relations, spoke about the implications of the mandate.

"Our next bargaining session is this coming Monday morning, and now that McGill will know that we have voted to strike should the bargaining team call for a strike, it means that at this bargaining table, we will actually have leverage and power," she said in an interview with The Daily. "So it's their turn to present something."

"[The University has] been saying no, they've been saying no to everything and for the first time we will really feel empowered walking in there," Holdsworth continued. "It's a threat. I mean, a strike mandate is a very serious implication that we have

the capability to hold the way that McGill will function for an amount of time."

"A strike mandate is a very serious implication that we have the capability to hold the way that McGill will function for an amount of time."

—Heather Holdsworth
VP of Labour Relations

Holdsworth concluded by saying, "I'm really hopeful that come Monday, the bargaining tone will be different, now that we have the strike mandate and we can move forward on some of our priorities."

Whelan also shared her sentiments regarding the majority vote, saying that "this strike mandate that we've gotten [from the membership will] be really important going forward in order to ensure that our next collective agreement is stronger than our first one."

Whelan added that "it's really exciting to know that we have a [...] strong mandate from our membership with such a high percentage of support for a strike mandate. [...] I'm really hopeful that this will be productive moving forward in improving our collective agreement."

Seeing red

Canadian relations with China need to involve Tibet, but probably won't

HOLLY QING
Commentary Writer

This September, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau visited China in an official capacity for the first time. The same month, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang paid his own official visit to Canada, the first time a Chinese Premier had done so in 13 years. September signified a historic 'reset' of China-Canada relations, and in the words of the Chinese Premier, "the season for the fiery maple in Canada, symbolizing the prosperity of China-Canada all-round cooperation." China is Canada's second largest trade partner, and the two countries may soon have a free trade agreement, an extradition treaty, and direct trade of the Canadian dollar and Chinese renminbi. In all the talk of trade and cooperation, however, the human cost of free cooperation seems to have been forgotten.

China, despite the Premier's assurances of mutual Chinese and Canadian foundations of upholding "multilateralism and cultural diversity," is actively destroying the prospect of Tibetan culture and self-determination. Instances of this include the kidnapping and disappearance of Tibet's Panchen Lama (the second highest ranking Lama after the Dalai Lama), Gedhun Choekyi Nyima; the restricted use of the Tibetan language in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) and beyond; the exploitation of Tibetan natural resources via mining, some of it taking places on mountains long considered sacred by local Tibetans; and the disregard for more than 140 self-immolations which have taken place since 2009. The destruction of sacred spaces and disregard of Indigenous peoples, however, do seem to be a mutual foundation for both China and Canada.

One of the results of the signing was a memorandum of understanding between China's Ministry of Public Security and the RCMP cooperation in combating crime. In fact the RCMP was subject to a 2013 Human Rights Watch investigation and report titled "Those Who Take Us Away," which found mass allegations of sexual assault and abuse of Indigenous women in British Columbia by RCMP officers. China's Ministry of Public Security, on the other hand, is responsible for the arrests of various Tibetan monks for their support of the Dalai Lama, self-immolation, and other actions that even vaguely promoted Tibetan independence. Both organizations have actively destroyed the security of Indigenous peoples in their respective territories, and the two such groups likely do not have the intentions of promoting justice for the Indigenous communities of either Tibet or Canada. In mat-

ters of combatting crime, Canada should not cooperate with China: it must confront China with its active participation in destroying Tibetan culture and being silent to Tibet's demands to self-determination. Canada, however, is choosing to do the opposite.

In a speech before an elite business crowd in Shanghai, Justin Trudeau did make some progress in the direction to human rights, vaguely encouraging China to "do more to promote and protect human rights." In response, China's state-run Xinhua news agency scolded Canada for allowing "groundless" human rights concerns hinder what could be a productive relationship with China, and encouraged Canada to instead "look inwards" to the "miserable conditions" of its own Indigenous peoples. The Chinese press need not be concerned, however.

China, despite the Premier's assurances of mutual Chinese and Canadian foundations of upholding "multilateralism and cultural diversity," is actively perpetuating the destruction of Tibetan culture and self-determination.

Despite China's abuses in Tibet, Canada nonetheless signed 56 commercial deals with various Chinese groups and organizations, collectively worth \$1.2 billion. In favour of strengthening its commercial ties, Canada is entirely willing to renege on its human rights obligations. It is as unlikely to look towards the conditions of Indigenous Tibetans as it is to look inwards to the Indigenous peoples within its own borders.

One of the five pillars of Canada's bilateral strategic cooperation with China is supposedly the promotion of governance and values, i.e. "inclusive and accountable governance," "peaceful pluralism and respect for diversity,"



SARAH MEGHAN MAH | The McGill Daily

and "human rights," key issues in the 'Tibet Question.' Yet topics like Canadian canola exports have far outweighed the issue of Tibetan rights in the Canadian news cycle during this round of diplomatic talks. The human rights concerns Trudeau did tackle were those of recently released Canadian Kevin Garrat, imprisoned by the Chinese for espionage two years ago, and the issue of female representation in Chinese business and politics. Neither of these concerns, however, have an economic cost for the two governments. So long as it is not imprisoning a Canadian man or threatening Canadian profit, it seems, China is free by Canada's estimation to imprison an entire people in a political system they did not choose.

Canada's disregard for Indigenous peoples abroad and at home, not altogether different from China's disregard for Tibetan peoples, is not surprising. Since his election, Justin Trudeau has largely ignored Indigenous concerns, particularly when they have negative impacts on corporate interests. He has reneged on many of the promises he made to Indigenous peoples in Canada, proving himself similar to his predecessor, Stephen Harper, in a number of ways. The current Liberal government has done little to reverse the environmental legislation of Harper's conservatives, legislations that protected waterways in Canada, among others. Indigenous peoples in Canada still have no say with regards to the development of their land, which allowed the Saskatchewan pipeline spill to poison the water supplies of the James

Smith Cree Nation and several others in July of this year. Husky, the U.S. company responsible, was able to withhold its findings with regard to the water quality of the area with the aid of the Canadian government, which refused to release the findings they had access to, in deference of Husky's own protocols.

In Tibet, Canadian disregard for Indigenous land rights is equally clear: the company responsible for the mining of the sacred mountains in the Gyama valley region of the TAR is the Canadian-based China Gold International Resources Corp. Ltd., a subsidiary of China's largest state-owned mining company. The company was responsible for a mudslide that killed more than eighty mine workers, the forced eviction of Tibetan residents of the region, and the denial of Tibetans' access to sacred sites during its continued presence in the Gyama Valley. Canada's only action has been to review and forward its response to the company, so that it may facilitate dialogue if China Gold agrees to participate. Tibetans, however, were not extended the same right to agreement before China Gold began its exploitation of Tibet's resources.

Canada's failure with regards to Tibet is even more disappointing, as Canada's relationship with China is a unique one.

Unlike other Western nations, Canada did not play an imperial role in China or in Tibet. In the early twentieth century, China was subjected to the "Century of Humiliation", as Hong Kong was lost to the British, the First and Second Opium Wars were lost to the British, French, and US, Manchuria and Shandong were lost

to the Japanese, and the 13th Dalai Lama was forced to open Tibet to relations with Britain. Tibet became important as an emblem of national reunification during this period, with the Chinese believing that their historical right to Tibet had been infringed by Western powers. Those powers did not include Canada, which was absent from both Opium Wars. In the following century, the People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded on the basis of regaining China's sovereignty and national pride from the hands of the West. It so happens that the first Western leader to recognize Mao Zedong's Chinese Communist Party as the rightful government of the PRC was Canada's Pierre Trudeau.

Western nations do have a place of central importance in the 'Tibet Question,' having helped to instigate it at the outset. China's humiliation has translated into the 'Tibet Question' today, turning it into the imperial power it sought to remove. Canada, as a trade partner and 'friend' of China, is in a position to rectify the mistakes of the Western powers by negotiating for the people of Tibet. Attempts toward this were made in 2006, when Canada made a show of support by presenting the 14th Dalai Lama honorary Canadian citizenship. As it stands, however, the concerns of Tibet seem to bear the same weight for Canada as those of its Indigenous Canadian 'citizens': none at all.

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Black lives still matter

As police violence continues, the movement continues to fight back

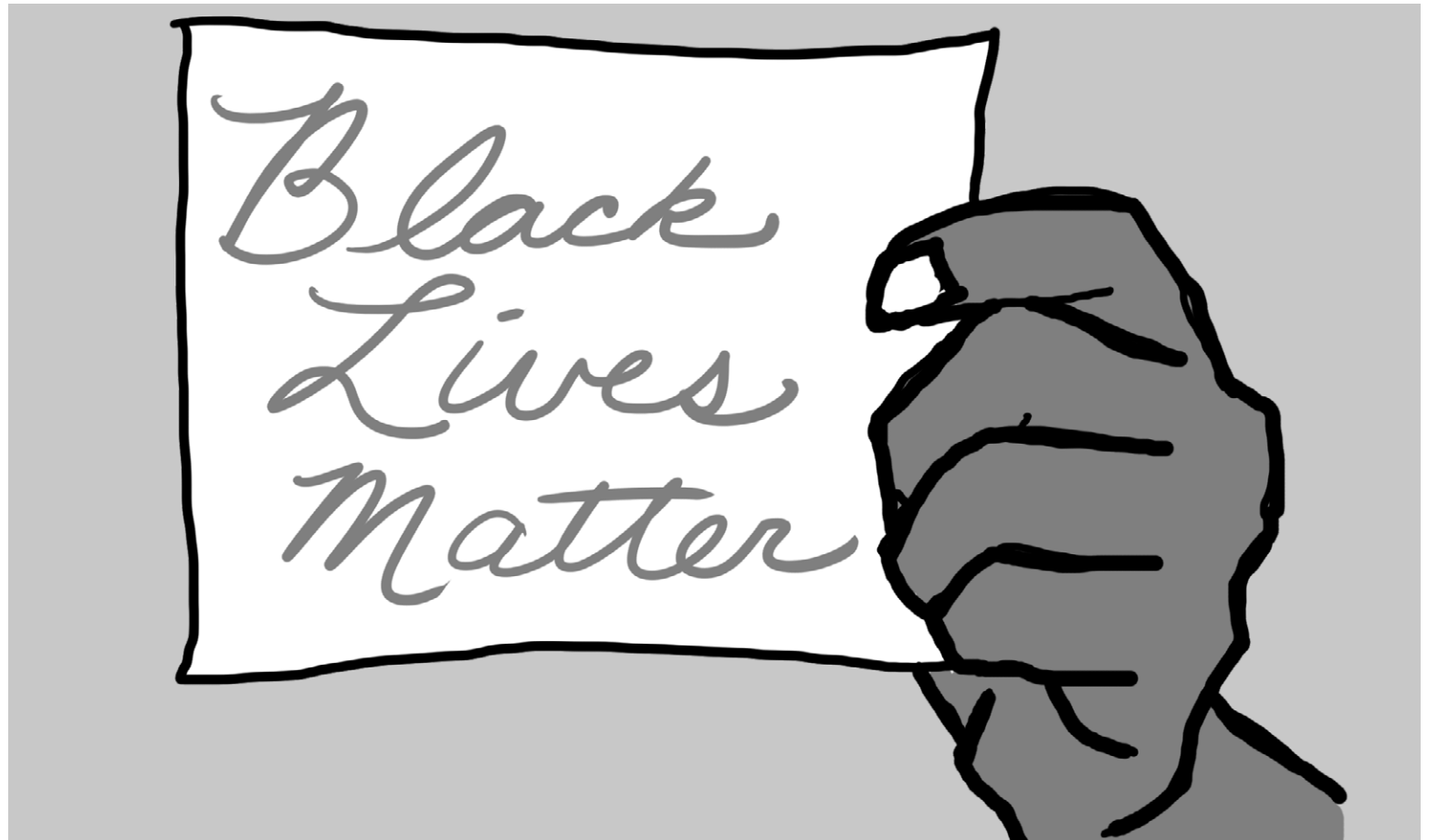
ALAINAH AAMIR
Commentary Writer

CW: Racism, suicide, police brutality

Recently, my mother and I were stopped at Toronto Pearson International Airport customs and asked to wait in a room so that a security check could be performed on our baggage. As we nervously wheeled our trolleys in the direction we had been pointed, I realized that every single individual in the room was brown, just like us. People stood nervously before the members of the security who emptied their bags, scrutinizing all of their personal belongings as if it could explode in their hands at any given moment. One particularly keen guard was looking inside every shoe. That is when I realized that, on the spectrum of racial inequality, we were still privileged. In the hundreds of cases of police brutality that had occurred throughout the U.S. and Canada over the past years, Black people were treated with more force and violence by authorities than any other demographic of people. So as I wheeled my trolley towards the counter for the ‘random’ security check, I looked at my mother, swallowed my anger, and said, “it could be much worse.”

Reginald Thomas, father of eight children and with another baby on the way, was described as a loving man, deeply devoted to his family. He suffered from bipolar disorder, and it was during a manic episode on the night of September 30, that he called the police. The police knew he was a “5150” — an individual recorded in the system as needing psychiatric care. According to Shainie Lindsay, his partner, Thomas called the police on himself for his own protection, as well as to ensure the individuals surrounding him would be safe. Instead, when the police arrived, Thomas was tasered and brutally beaten by six policemen. His girlfriend believes, rightfully so, that the assault killed him: “They was wrestling with him, kicking him in the head and beating him with the baton stick. Then, after that, they was doing CPR and then he was dead.”

Reginald Thomas did not deserve the ending that was written for him that night. The brutal, sickening series of events is unfortunately only one of the countless reported and unreported instances of police brutality against Black people across North America. Other names include Amadou Diallo, Manuel Loggins Jr., Ronald Madison, Trayvon Martin, Kendra James, Sean Bell, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Alton Sterling, Terence Crutcher, Keith Lamont Scott, Alfred Olango, Tyre King, Aiyana Stanley-Jones, and many, many more.



RAHMA WIRYOMARTONO | The McGill Daily

These are not merely names written in the fine print of some news article to soothe the conscience of those who read it under the guise of being politically aware. These are the names of people, real Black people, whose lives were deemed unworthy by a system of white supremacy.

These are the names of people who became victims of a system that feels no remorse for intentionally killing Black people. It is unapologetic in its disproportionate incarceration of Black people, and for manufacturing and perpetuating the circumstances in which Black people are often forced to live in poverty, with inadequate access to housing, education, employment, and basic human rights.

These are the names of people who threw up their arms and cried, “Don’t shoot!”

These are the names of little boys who were shot dead for carrying a toy gun in a playground, of little girls who were sleeping in their living rooms, of men dropping off their kids at school, or women driving home from work.

These are the names of people who once had beating hearts and blood coursing through their veins. Why is it that, even as protesters across North America take to the streets to remind us that “Black Lives Matter,” the people who wear uniforms and call themselves “law enforcement,” whose duty and mandate is to serve and protect, are still shooting and killing Black people? Why is it that, despite years of meticulous training to become a member of the police force, they

somehow still skip out on the basic lessons of morality and justice?

‘Tolerance’ is what many say we should aim for but it is not the word to use here — there is so much more we can work towards. Instead of choosing only to tolerate the fact that the world, or specifically North America, is a diverse mix of individuals of different races, ethnicities, languages, cultures and identities, we should be embracing it.

These were the names of little boys who were shot dead for carrying a toy gun in a playground.

There’s a word for people who believe that difference should be tolerated rather than embraced — racists.

There’s a place for people who commit such atrocities as murdering black people — prison.

But prisons are reserved for people of colour, who make up sixty % of the prison population, despite comprising only thirty % of the actual population of the United States of America. The situation in Canada is not much better. Black Canadians make up a mere three percent of the population, but comprise ten percent of the federal prison population. Meanwhile, the real murderers

are the officers who are killing disproportionate numbers of people of colour and going home without facing prosecution, washing the blood from their hands.

The notion of intersectionality becomes crucial here, as mentally ill Black individuals are even more disproportionately discriminated against, with 124 mentally ill individuals being killed by members of the American police in the year 2016.

Today, the hashtag “Black Lives Matter” remains perpetually relevant, a reminder of the brutality that is ongoing and the lives that have been extinguished and are now memories. This movement developed in July 2013 in protest of the killing of unarmed Black teenager Trayvon Martin, and the movement grew when 18 year old Michael Brown became another victim of police brutality in August 2014. In addition to protesting the deaths of Black people at the hands of police officers, and the social contexts which perpetuate these killings, the Black Lives Matter movement also raises concerns about the militarisation of America’s police forces.

On October 17, Venida Browder died of what was described by her family as a “broken heart.” This had to do with the fact that her son, Kalief Browder was arrested at only sixteen years of age and held in prison for three years on a robbery charge. During his time there, he was beaten by fellow inmates, as well as authority figures, and was contained in solitary confinement for up to

23 hours a day. Upon his release, he excelled at Bronx Community College, but his academic career was interrupted by his paranoia and depression. In June 2015, he hung himself using bedsheets in his own home. Venida Browder, graceful and eloquent, then became a civil rights activist, singlehandedly fighting two lawsuits against the state. The stress of this, coupled with the enormous grief of losing her son, can be seen as contributing to the heart attack that tragically ended her life.

Black mothers have had to deal with their children being stolen from them by the clutches of white supremacy for centuries now. Despite some privileged sections of the populations choosing to believe that the U.S. and Canada have achieved a post-racial society, there is a recognised pattern of violence against Black people which needs to end. Protestors should not have to spend every day reminding us of the validity and value of Black people. Mothers should not be grieving their children, nor children losing their parents so early — but this is what the system of white supremacy, upon which this entire continent is built, has brought us to. Protestors will continue to march and the words will continue to ring out: Black Lives Still Matter. They always have; they always will.

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Fighting for abortion rights

Canada has a way to go before abortion is accessible to all

ALICIA LAPEÑA-BARRY
Commentary Writer

Cw: abortion, medical bodily injury

Advocates for abortion rights are concerned after it was revealed that a new abortion drug, Mifegymiso, lauded as the gold-standard for abortion drugs, will most likely not be available through provincial health insurance when it enters Canada this year. Costing around \$300, the drug will therefore be accessible only to people of a certain socio-economic standing, and will likely be unavailable outside of major urban areas. The inaccessibility of abortion has been an ongoing issue, with Canadian abortion clinics still unavailable to many, and abortion rights coming under threat in other parts of the world.

Widespread accessibility of medical abortion, such as the Mifegymiso drug, is inaccessible to the majority of Canadian public. With a high cost and no coverage under provincial medical insurance, it requires certain economic means in order to gain access to it. This issue presents a severe dichotomy between the fundamental right to medical care, and the realities of inaccessibility within the Canadian healthcare system.

Historically speaking, denying women the right to abortion procedures has had consequences on their agency, economic status, mental health, and well being. A longitudinal study conducted in October 2014 by Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health (ANSIRH) at the University of California in San Francisco, investigated factors of women's economic position, health, and relationship status after being denied abortions, revealing what happens to women who want abortions but are unable to get them due to restrictive regulations. The study concluded that when a woman is denied the right to abortion, she is statistically more likely to wind up unemployed, on public assistance, and below the poverty line.

Canada's history of abortion rights has been one of both tumultuous struggle and progress. Canada is one of the very few countries in the world that has no criminal law restricting abortion. Pressure to liberalize Canada's abortion law began in the 1960s, before which having an abortion was illegal and could result in a lifetime in prison. Support for the legalization of abortion came from medical and legal associations, alongside various feminist groups, who were growing increasingly concerned with the massive number of illegal, extremely dangerous, and often fatal, abortions that took place every year. As of 1967, there were anywhere from 35,000 to 120,000 illegal abortions taking place annually in Canada. That year, Justice Minister Pierre Trudeau introduced



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a bill which included an amendment to section 251 of the Criminal Code that prohibited abortions. The amendments, which decriminalised contraception and allowed abortion in only the most extreme circumstances, were passed within the year.

However, it is not until January 28, 1988, that abortion was decriminalized throughout Canada, this happened following the trials of Henry Morgentaler, a doctor in Quebec who ran illegal abortion clinics in order to provide access to abortion to the people who needed it, and who was tried and acquitted for his actions multiple times. The Supreme Court of Canada declared the abortion section of the Criminal Code to be unconstitutional, infringing upon women's rights to life and liberty, therefore violating section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

There were immediate and ongoing problems following the decriminalization bill. The only women who had relatively good access to abortion tended to be educated, middle and upper-class women who lived in big cities. In northern regions, as well as outside the major urban centres it was common for women to travel hundreds of miles to find the closest abortion provider. For the majority of women who were poor, there was virtually no access to legal abortion at all. Women had to go to extreme and desperate lengths to access abortion procedures. This widespread inaccessibility led to severe and life threatening measures such as self-induced abortion, specifically coat-hanger abortions, which often

resulted in death. The hanger represents the desperation and horror of a time when, lacking all other options, women took matters into their own hands. Sadly, factors of inaccessibility such as these have resulted in the continued practice of self-induced abortions in both Canada and the U.S., as well as elsewhere around the world.

This issue presents a severe dichotomy between the fundamental right to medical care, and the realities of inaccessibility within the Canadian healthcare system.

The politicization and active participation through means of protest and lobbying against restrictive government rules and regulations is key to positive change. In May, 1970, a national feminist protest took place, known as the Abortion Caravan. Women travelled over 3,000 miles from Vancouver to Ottawa, gathering numbers as they went. In Ottawa, the Abortion Caravan held two days of demon-

strations. Among other forms of protest, they carried a coffin full of coat hangers, as symbols of those who had died trying to have an abortion. As a finale, around fifty women chained themselves to the parliamentary gallery in the House of Commons, and placed the coffin they had carried at the door of then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. The Abortion Caravan helped politicize and activate women around the country.

In the 1990's, access to abortion improved even more through activists group such as the Canadian Alliance to Repeal the Abortion Law, who are now referred to as the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League. One example was the British Columbia Access to Abortion Services act, which made it illegal to protest outside abortion clinics and medical professionals' houses.

The protests and the dismantling of oppressive government regulations, in order to secure a greater sense of agency and autonomy is vital to breaking down hegemonic, patriarchal regulations on accessible forms of healthcare. Despite being one of the world's leading countries in terms of accessibility and abortion rights, Canada still struggles in maintaining a widely accessible platform for women requiring these procedures and medications. The Canadian government has a duty to guarantee abortion access to women across the country, regardless of social status, geographic location, or any other factors.

The struggle towards attaining abortion rights extends beyond a

Canadian context. On October 5th, Poland's parliament lifted its controversial proposal for a total ban on abortion. Mass protests were held throughout the city's downtown core, with the aim of bringing awareness to the government with the intent of reversing the proposal. As it currently stands, Poland remains one of Europe's most conservative in terms of abortion laws and accessibility. Some 100,000 people, mostly women, went on strike and marched in cities across the country to protest their further loss of reproductive rights, leading high-ranking politicians to distance themselves from the proposed law. Just three days after the strike, lawmakers voted against the new law lifting the near total ban.

The recent developments in Poland may serve as a reminder of the importance of uniting against the oppressions that result from systematic patriarchal authority. Even now, despite abortion being theoretically available to everyone, activists should be aiming to bring awareness to the realities of abortion access in Canada. Taking both Canada and Poland as examples, abortion should be an accessible and universal right to people, regardless of the cause of pregnancy or the cost of medical attention and care. This crucial right, still not fully secure anywhere in the world, is necessary to allow for progress towards equity and justice.

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LET'S TALK ABOUT PEGGING



QUEERING HETEROSEXUALITY AND
THE POLITICS OF PENETRATION

Written by
Ana Petrenko

Visuals by
Sonia Ionescu

The first time I saw an honest, normalized portrayal of pegging was during an episode of *Broad City*. In a show celebrated for its complex, idiosyncratic women, protagonists Abbi and Ilana offered what might be the first depiction of empowered pegging in network television history. Mid-romp with long-term crush Jeremy, Abbi suggests the two “switch positions.” Jeremy obliges; hands Abbi a custom-designed strap-on, crouches down, spreads his cheeks, and motions for her to put it “right in the butt.” Taken aback, Abbi slinks off to the bathroom to call her best friend and enabler Ilana, who denounces Abbi’s hesitation towards this “once in a lifetime opportunity” and tells her to go for it.

For the uninitiated, pegging is a sexual practice in which one individual anally penetrates their partner with a strap-on dildo. Shortly after the *Broad City* episode was released, *NYMag*, *Vice*, *The Stranger*, and a slew of other media outlets posted articles praising the pair’s honest portrayal of penetrative role reversal. Jezebel titled a post “If You Want a More Thoughtful Boyfriend, Try Pegging Him,” while *Broadly* wrote a profile on “The Men Who Love Pegging.”

Both articles namecheck Charlie Glickman, author of *The Ultimate Guide to Prostate Pleasure: Erotic Exploration for Men and Their Partners*, who touts pegging as a way for women to “discover how much work, responsibility and (sometimes) power can be part of fucking someone” and for men to “learn to see things from the other person’s perspective.”

The second time I heard about pegging was through a cis male friend in a heterosexual relationship, who told me that he had enjoyed being pegged by his partner. He, too, argued for its potential to increase male empathy through vulnerability. I thought about how I would carefully fold over and stuff a washcloth into the drain of my bathtub before filling it up with water, and wondered whether I could just as purposefully and methodically insert the tip of a strap-on into a partner’s rectum. I reflected on the anus as a great equalizer, free of gender.

I started thinking of pegging as more than a punchline in a *Broad City* episode; a reflection that extended to greater reflections on gender, sexuality, and societal taboos. I was intellectually enthralled, but felt overwhelmed by everything I did not know; burdened by the sexual and gender norms I held on to, yet could not tangibly explain. Can heterosexual sex be queered through ‘transgressive’ acts such as pegging? How are we to live in a world that is so prone to distilling desire and identity into false binaries of active/passive, dominant/submissive, male/female, and perhaps most destructively, normal/deviant?

In researching this article, I asked a few female friends in relationships with straight cis men whether they would ‘peg.’ Most said they’d be game but “not on a first date,” while one respondent, taken aback at the

casualness of my question, immediately said no, dismissing it as “just not normal.”

We’re taught not to talk about what goes on between the sheets or what goes in between our cheeks. But as pegging penetrates mainstream media, and is being extolled for its gender-bending potential, it’s time we talk about the history, implications, and politics of pegging.

“Pegging is clearly marked as a heterosexual act, unlinking the act of anal penetration from gay men.”

—Jade Aguilar
Professor of Sociology at
Willamette University

Language as a buffer

The name “pegging” was chosen by readers of Dan Savage’s “Savage Love” sex advice column as a new shorthand for female-on-male heterosexual anal sex. By creating a new word – rather than simply using “anal sex” – “pegging is clearly marked as a heterosexual act, unlinking the act of anal penetration from gay men,” writes Jade Aguilar, a sociology professor at Willamette University. In contrast, the acts of “sodomy” and “buggery” fall into the domain of male homosexual sex, and are stigmatized accordingly – they’re often used as synonyms for “unnatural,” “illegal,” and “nonconsensual” acts.

“Pegging,” according to Savage’s definition, can only occur during sexual intercourse between a man and a woman – which I will, from here on, refer to as “heterosexual sex.” In truth, it’s more complicated than that: some women have penises, some men have vaginas, some people have neither, or both, or don’t identify as either male or female. Unfortunately, most academics and media assume that pegging involves a woman with a vagina and a man with a penis, both of whom identify as heterosexual – and this is the intellectual legacy I’m engaging with. There’s a wealth of gender and sexual diversity that complicates and nuances practices of penetration, but I don’t pretend that I have the level of theoretical expertise or lived experience to create a more inclusive theory of pegging by myself.

In her essay “Thinking Sex,” gender theorist Gayle Rubin argues that any sexual behavior that doesn’t involve marriage, love, or reproduction is societally characterized as “destructive” or “dangerous.” For centuries, anal sex has been linked to obscenity, deviance, and most recently, in the 1980s, the HIV/AIDS crisis. The cultural connection

between anal sex and HIV even led some to believe that anal sex did not simply transmit HIV, but actually spontaneously caused the disease itself. Even today, some people still believe that anal sex could lead to an irreparable change, through penetration or being penetrated: it could tear your rectum, make you gay, or otherwise corrupt your sexuality.

The power to penetrate is a key feature of hegemonic masculinity. So a man being penetrated is seen as the ultimate emasculating experience, secession of manhood, and an almost certain admission of repressed homosexuality. And if masculinity is associated with active penetration, its counterpart in femininity is passive reception. This dictum of heteronormativity isn’t even confined to heterosexual sex in itself – *The Joy Of Gay Sex*, published in 1977 by Charles Silverstein and Edmund White, assigned gender roles within homosexual couples based on their penetrative power, wherein the “top is masculine, bottom is feminine.”

Language is used as a buffer to reduce the cognitive dissonance of being a cis man who is occupying, through “bottoming,” a position historically seen as submissive. Language becomes a way to continually reassert masculinity, and provide a ‘safe’ way for a man to enjoy anal play by cancelling out the possibility of homosexual desire. Reviewing incidences of the word “pegging” in letters published in the “Savage Love” column, Aguilar found it shrouded in violent and combative imagery through words like “pounding,” “ravaging,” and “slamming” – a thinly veiled attempt to “masculinize” the practice, thus allowing the male to retain dominance.

“I’m not interested in replicating the masculinity that comes along with penetration.”

—CJ*
McGill student

In English, forceful penetration is colloquially used as a vulgarity – “to fuck over” implies assault and an action of piercing, lessening someone else’s value. Go to any Montreal dive bar during a hockey game and you will overhear the Anglicized “ils l’ont rape” expressed as enthusiasm for a well-placed puck landing in the opposing team’s net. In Portuguese, positions in heterosexual intercourse are designated as “to eat” (comer) and “to give” (dar). Cultural anthropologist Serena Nanda notes, “comer describes the male’s active penetration and domination of the female, and is used in different contexts as a synonym for the verbs “to possess” (possuir) or “to

conquer” (vencer).” Language draws clear lines between genders; in giving, the female passively surrenders herself to possession, consumption, and loss, while the male is engorged, nourished, and strengthened through the encounter.

In gathering opinions for this article, I spoke to CJ*, a McGill student who has pegged one of her partners. She argued that people who are pegging can choose not to buy into the narrative of penetration as dominance. “I don’t think the person penetrating has to be the dominant one – it depends on how you mentally frame sex. It could be either, or both, or on a spectrum,” she told me. “I’m not interested in replicating the masculinity that comes along with penetration.”

Pegging is subversive from the get-go because its goal is pleasure, rather than reproduction.

Queering heterosexuality

Originally an anti-gay slur, “queer” was reclaimed by the LGBTQ community in the 1970s as a political assertion of defiance. In the 1990s it trickled into gender studies departments and was assigned an academic discipline of its own: queer theory. Eve Sedgwick, one of the pioneers of queer theory, rejected the binary of masculine and feminine in favour of a taxonomy that would encompass the variability of gender and sexuality. Sedgwick viewed “queer” as a balm for the rigidity of sex and gender, a catch-all term that allowed multiplicity of meaning and identity. While gender fluidity lives in our beliefs and thoughts, can we conceptualize it as something that could just as easily extend to our corporealities?

Most recently, queerness has fallen prey to commodification. Queerness has become “chic”: girls kissing in H&M ad campaigns, and rainbows plastered above TD ATMs and on Burger King wrappers. Today, corporations and individuals alike are monetizing queerness for social and cultural capital. As Jenna Wortham notes in the *New York Times*, the media hype of ‘queerhood’ champions an inclusivity that “offers a false promise of equality that does not translate to the lived reality of most queer people.” Wortham poses the question: when everyone can be “queer,” is anyone? Can queer straight people even exist, and are they rendered such through how they choose to have sex?

The short answer is no. Pegging, despite its close ties to queerness and “deviant” sex, exists within the confines of heterosexual sex. Granted, it is a far cry from vanilla, missionary-only, lights-off sex; it’s subversive from the get-go because its

goal is pleasure, rather than reproduction. It emulates the queer sexual practice of anal penetration that has historically been the domain of men who have sex with men. However, any couple that enforces heteronormativity in other aspects of their sex and relationship, or identifies as heterosexual, is not made queer through integrating anal play into their sex life.

CJ, who identifies as queer, told me that she'd been interested in trying pegging for about three years but was hesitant to bring it up, since her partners during that time were all cis straight men. "I've talked to my sexual partners in the last year about pegging and the ones who are queer are definitely more open to it," she told me. "One partner said he thought it would 'damage his idea of masculinity' and said he needed time to think about it."

"This year, I pegged for the first time, and it was a great experience," she continued. "The guy – I trusted him, and he's also queer, which I think contributed to it."

When some of my friends (understandably) recoiled at the idea of being interviewed about pegging, I turned to the Internet for opinions. Kat, a student from Ontario who I met on the Facebook group Bunz Helping Zone, told me that she had a variety of pegging experiences that ranged from "fun/empowering/hot" to "gross/coercive/unsanitary/never again," saying that "the attitude absolutely dictates the nature of the experience." She identifies as queer, and mentioned that she felt that "sometimes queerness is a fetish rather than a sexual orientation." Another person I contacted through Bunz, Chloe, told me that "pegging was originally brought up as part of a D/S [dominance/submission] dynamic" and led her to a "new way of looking at sex and genitals and the way they relate to one another." To Chloe, "sexuality and what is/isn't heterosexual has nothing to do with the sex act or the genitals involved, but rather the people as a whole."

"What is/isn't heterosexual has nothing to do with the sex act or the genitals involved, but rather the people as a whole."

—Chloe
Member of Bunz Helping Zone

In homosexual relationships between male-identifying partners, a preference for playing a active or receptive penetrative role is referred to as "topping" and "bottoming," respectively. The language includes a set of qualifiers that shift the locus of control: "a power top" connotes a greater aggressiveness while a "service top" tops under the

direction of a bottom, and a "versatile top" drifts between the two (ditto for power-versatile-total bottoms). According to Steven Gregory Underwood, author of *Gay Men and Anal Eroticism: Tops, Bottoms, and Versatiles*, notes that "versatility is a unique and important feature of male anal sex," and the scenario where "both men take turns fucking each other is often exercised as a celebration of equality." BDSM communities have also adopted the terms "top," "bottom," and "switch" (someone who enjoys being both a top and bottom) as part of their vocabulary – another instance of sexual deviance following in the wake of queer sexual practices.

Straight people get all the fun of queer sex without the violence, ostracization, and silencing that actual queer people face on a day-to-day basis.

The freedom to choose whether one is a top or a bottom is usually not made explicit in heteronormative relationships. However, in homosexual and BDSM relationships, such freedom is allowed because the relationships are situated in a different realm from heteronormativity, in an 'inherently deviant' context. Although female-on-male anal play exists within private sexual lives, its linkage to homosexuality makes it a topic that not many would venture to discuss in the outside world. Prostate stimulation is taboo because it ostensibly requires the male to relinquish any claim to hegemony. Male-on-female anal sex is more palatable, easier to talk about, since the female in question never really had any claim to power to begin with.

Can straight people have queer sex?

Some people who identify as heterosexual feel compelled to stray from the restrictive framework of heteronormativity and assert a form of queerness through 'subversive,' 'queer' sexual practices such as pegging. But straight couples can peg with the certainty of the privacy of their acts, a symptom of societal privilege. They get all the fun of queer sex, without the violence, ostracization, and silencing that actual queer people face on a day-to-day basis. In these cases, being queer is a temporary costume that a straight person wears, without committing themselves to any of the negative repercussions, or engaging with the politically-charged history of queerness.

CJ, who is an East Asian woman, told me that the protection that heterosexual people are afforded when trying pegging

is often compounded by white privilege. "In my experience, white queers have more space to do what they want and have it be more normal or accepted because they are white," she said. "As a racialized woman, pegging is kind of empowering and just a total reversal of what I am used to in sex and what I have been socialized to expect in sex."

In the *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, Annette Schlichter argues that the notions that "intellectual and/or sexual queering of straightness could in itself transform the heteronormative apparatus have to be taken with a grain of salt." She adds that self-identifying as a "queer straight" or a "queer heterosexual" goes against the very conception of queerhood as explicitly non-heterosexual.

Is queerness authenticated through beliefs or through practice? Can we, in good consciousness, deny someone their self-identification as queer if we fail to see them visibly enact it outside the bedroom? If pegging is a form of genderfuck – a way of subverting the gender binary and associated expectations – does it compromise the heterosexuality of those that practice it?

On one side, policing others' sexual practices seems to contribute to erasure of curious and questioning women and men, who never quite felt comfortable with the label of straightness. For these people, pegging could be used as part of a transition to queerness. However, it can also be used by straight people to co-opt queerness, what Kat called "the whole 'I kissed a girl and I liked it' crap." Bluntly put, if you weren't queer before you tried pegging or being pegged, you don't automatically become queer the second you attempt it. There is a distinction to be made between heteronormativity and heterosexuality: heteronormativity is an institution that promotes heterosexuality as the default and natural expression of sexuality, while heterosexuality is an attraction to a person of the opposite gender. A heterosexual person can challenge heteronormativity by pegging her boyfriend, without any claims to queerness.

Perhaps there is some truth to Charlie Glickman's original claim that pegging fosters empathy across the gender binary, and can help break down rigid gender norms. The institution of masculinity itself is holding back men, restricting them in movement and disavowing the textures of desire that may compel them. By enforcing the male-as-penetrator as the strict norm, we are also buying into the narrative of woman as a passive vessel for male desire. While it's true that straight couples shouldn't co-opt queerness, there are also clear benefits to making space for so-called "sexual deviance" within heterosexuality; benefits that start in the bedroom and extend far outside its boundaries.

That being said, even queer sex is not the post-gender egalitarian utopia some straight people may imagine. "A relationship

between pegger and peggee can be just as beholden to patriarchal and heterosexual dynamics as any other relationship," said Grace, a member of McGill's Union for Gender Empowerment collective, in an email to me. "Just because you're introducing a new sex act doesn't mean it's going to change your power dynamic," agreed CJ. Even as pegging inverts the typical male-as-penetrator and female-as-penetrated sexual script, it may still reproduce the heteronormative idea that sex necessarily involves a dominant and a submissive party. And perhaps it's because egalitarian sex doesn't exist – as long as we live in a society where identities like gender, sexuality, and race afford individuals differing levels of privilege, perhaps every interaction represents an uneven power relation.

The institution of masculinity itself is holding back men, restricting them in movement and disavowing the textures of desire that may compel them.

Particularly during sex, this power relationship is implicit, goes undiscussed, is assumed to be "natural," and is often non-consensual. Pegging, however, renders the always-existing power imbalance explicit, acknowledging its presence and allowing participants to consensually engage with it. As CJ noted, since the act of pegging departs from the heteronormative sexual script, it arguably requires more personal deliberation, conversation between partners, as well as a greater financial investment (costs of a strap-on range from 50 dollars to over 200 dollars). "So much sex lacks clear communication and consent," she told me. "If you're not even talking about 'normal' sex – cis men penetrating cis women – then how are you expected to talk about pegging?"

In an ideal world, pegging represents a movement away from rigid heteronormativity and towards embracing our own kinks and desires. Anal sex is not inextricably linked to the practice of homosexuality, demonstrating the fallacy of enforcing certain practices as "proof" of one's identity. Idealistically, pegging offers us the potential to dismantle institutions that do nothing but police and control our bodies. At the very least, it allows us some room to rewrite the script on what it is to be a gendered body, to live in society, and to fuck.

*Name has been changed

In Search of the “Shadowman”

Don't sleep on sleep paralysis

SAISHREE BADRI
Sci+Tech Writer

CW: eating disorders and bodily injury

At the Musée des Augustins in Toulouse, France sits a haunting sculpture of a woman being tormented by a demon sitting on her, while she is asleep. Sculpted by Eugène Thivier in 1894, “Le Cauchemar”, which translates to “The Nightmare,” is this sculptor’s most noteworthy masterpiece. It is believed to be inspired by the famous Henry Fuseli painting “The Nightmare” which was exhibited at the Royal Academy of London more than a century before the installation of this sculpture. With wide interpretations ranging from the depiction of heartbreak, loss and sexual desire to the visualization of dreams and nightmares, this painting has proven to be an inspiration for many artists and poets alike.

Following its exhibition, Erasmus Darwin, the famed poet and naturalist philosopher described an unsettling experience of feeling helpless, immobile but awake during sleep in his poem titled *The Lover of The Plants* in 1792. He adeptly goes on to describe the state of paralysis and the vision of a demon-like creature upon the chest of a woman. Along with him, many great authors such as Charles Dickens, Edgar Allen Poe and Herman Melville have all written about such experiences in their books. However, it wasn’t until 1928 that a famous British neurologist, Kinnear Wilson first set out to describe these attacks precipitated by a terrifying dream as “sleep paralysis.”

Today, sleep paralysis is described as a phenomenon in which an individual experiences brief periods of immobility, inability to speak or react while falling asleep or awakening. Why has something so simple been described as a terrifying experience?

Imagine that you have had a long and productive day. You are tired and all you want to do is sleep on your comfortable bed. You fall asleep, but instead of dreaming, you are awake and confused. You see a shadow-like figure approaching you. You want to move to get a clearer view, but you can’t because you are paralyzed. This shadow-like creature is inching closer and closer to you. You want to scream for help but no words come out of your mouth. You now feel something heavy sitting on your chest and feel an unsettling presence in the room which you can’t shake off. You are locked in, helpless and terrified.

If this sounds familiar, you are not alone. According to a study conducted on over 36,533 people by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania, about seven per cent of the general U.S. population have experienced an episode of sleep paralysis. With erratic working hours, high amounts of stress and anxiety, it comes as no surprise that over 28.5 per cent of students have reported experiencing sleep

paralysis. While sleep paralysis itself isn’t fatal, it is considered to be one of the most frightening experiences one can face. Many have wondered what separates sleep paralysis from a scary dream, the difference lies in the fact that during an episode of sleep paralysis, the sleeper is awake, paralyzed and begins to hallucinate. All this occurs in a sleep state known as the Rapid Eye Movement (REM) phase. While a scary dream or night terror occurs when the sleeper is in the non-REM state (NREM). The hallucinations that accompany the brief periods of immobility are described to be the terrifying aspects of sleep paralysis.

These frightening experiences have been cited in a number of ancient mythologies and folklore across various cultures, going on to show that these haunting episodes have provided for a common source of nighttime terror across the world. Interestingly, the majority of hallucinations experienced by people are influenced by folklore and stories from their culture. With various accounts of spiritual and supernatural explanations ranging from witchcraft to extraterrestrial attacks the influence of cultural entities is remarkable in sleep paralysis. Further described in depth in the book *Sleep Paralysis: Historical, Psychological, and Medical Perspectives* written by Brian Sharpless and Karl Doghramj, the multitude of references that have been made to the phenomenon of sleep paralysis is clearly explained. But why does the brain create these episodes?

With erratic working hours, high amounts of stress and anxiety, it comes as no surprise that over 28.5 per cent of students have reported experiencing sleep paralysis.

There have been many theories put forth to try and explain the mechanisms of sleep paralysis. One of these stems from the understanding that the brain switches from one state of sleep to another far too quickly. Adrian R. Morrison in *A Window on the Sleeping Brain* describes the neurophysiology of sleep. When we sleep, our brain moves through five stages, of which



NADIA BOACHIE | The McGill Daily

one of the most prominent is the REM phase. During REM, the brain electrical activity is very similar to that of a person who is awake and the person begins to dream. The dreamer’s muscles are paralyzed to ensure that they don’t act out their dreams. To enable this paralysis, certain chemicals in the brain that activate the neurons responsible for motor function are inhibited. It is believed that as we cycle between phases of sleep, the body ensures that the required levels of these molecules are also maintained. However, in the event of improper regulation at an unexpected phase, the body can remain paralyzed when it is required to achieve a state of arousal. While the muscles are still paralyzed, the person can begin to wake up from slumber only to be unable to move. Thus the sleeper experiences the dream-like characteristics of REM accompanied with paralysis.

However, what was assumed to be a simple interplay between molecules has now been shown to be a very complex mechanism. A study focusing on the neural substrates responsible for sleep paralysis at the University of Toronto has indicated that the specific role of the inhibitory molecules and their ability to override the subsequent activation of the muscles is to be re-evaluated. With further work being done in their lab, they have found that no single mechanism is responsible for the REM sleep paralysis. They were able to investigate the role of an additional inhibitory neurotransmitters (endogenous chemicals allowing communication within the brain) such as GABA, and found that this, along with glycine, play a key role in regulating the state of paralysis during REM. What remains to be investigated is how these molecules regulate this paralysis.

Scientists are still searching for the root cause of the episodes themselves. Many studies have pointed toward a disrupted sleep cycle and anxiety as important triggers. Combined with tiredness and high levels of stress and mental health conditions, it is surprising that more research is not devoted to elucidating the mechanisms of sleep paralysis. Sam Kean, in his book *The Tale of the Dueling Neurosurgeons*, describes his encounter with sleep paralysis. He attributes sleeping in a supine position (on the back) to be a reason for his sleep paralysis episodes. In “The Nightmare,” a critically acclaimed documentary directed by Rodney Ascher, eight people chronicle their struggles with sleep paralysis. All of them have different prompts that provoke an episode of sleep paralysis, where each episode is more horrifying than their previous one. While the underlying causes of sleep paralysis are still unclear, what remains a mystery is how the brain conjures vivid and frightening life-like figures when it happens.

During episodes of sleep paralysis, hallucinations involve all the sensory regions of the brain thus enabling people to see, hear or sense the presence of an outsider in their room. Commonly viewed as a shadowy figure, this intruder usually has the characteristics of a human being – in terms of height and body shape. While in most cases, the shadow figure does not have facial features, most experiencers interpret this shadow-like figure as per their cultural ideas. Baland Jalal and V.S Ramachandran from the Centre of Brain and Cognition at University of California at San Diego postulated that when a person experiences sleep paralysis, they have a distorted sense of their body image. They go on to say that specific brain regions such as those in the right

parietal region are altered, which may lead to an “alternative sense of self” that is able to feel movement in limbs despite being paralyzed. Interestingly, they hypothesize that this alternative viewpoint is a result of the “internal hard-wired body image.” For example, they say that should a person with an amputation or body image disorder like anorexia nervosa face an episode of sleep paralysis, there is a higher probability that they will hallucinate a “shadowman” mirroring their own internal body image. While this provides for an interesting albeit peculiar theory, we still wonder if there is a way to combat the shadow-people.

Many people who have experienced sleep paralysis have noted that keeping a sleep log and maintaining a sleep routine involving a regular sleep time and sufficient hours of sleep can help in minimizing the onset of sleep paralysis episodes. Baland Jalal, in his paper titled “How to Make the Ghosts in my Bedroom Disappear?” talks about using a focused-attention meditation in conjunction with muscle relaxation therapy as treatment options for sleep paralysis intervention. He shows that using four steps namely, understanding the meaning of the attack, using emotional and psychological approaches to distance from the attack, meditating while that involves inward focused attention, and finally, utilizing muscle relaxation could help alleviate the fear and anxiety associated with sleep paralysis.

In search for answers to this terrifying phenomenon, people around the world have begun to share their experiences. While still preliminary in their approach, scientists have begun to pay more focus and attention to what’s responsible for the “shadowman.” Sleep paralysis, though a terrifying experience, could pave way for examining the fascinating biology behind sleep and why we dream.

A living herstory

The Daily sits down with Imago Theatre's Micheline Chevrier



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CONNOR SPENCER
Culture Writer

Montreal has a fascinating history of feminist theatre mainly discussed in the past tense and restricted most often to history classrooms. Although the Montreal Théâtre Expérimental des Femmes – founded in 1985 with a mandate to produce feminist theatre – no longer exists, there is another a company that receives little acknowledgement of their place in this history.

Founded in 1987 by André Hausmann, Imago Theatre began as a bilingual company intent on producing socially relevant work, which remains in their mandate to this day. Imago continues to produce new work by women and femmes that unpacks some of their lived experiences that theatre is oftentimes hesitant to address. In 2013, Micheline Chevrier became the company's Executive and Artistic Director, focusing the company's mandate towards supporting both emerging and established female artists, or artistas, and telling their stories.

The Daily sat down with Chevrier to talk about supporting women's work, making theatre accessible, and why socially responsible theatre matters.

The McGill Daily (MD): Imago embraces the idea of a women-led initiative towards making art accessible to all – could you speak about accessibility and what that means to you and your company?

Micheline Chevrier (MC): We

want to make sure that everyone can come and see what we've produced, so we've removed any financial or physical impediment for coming to see our work. We've started to have a Pay-What-You-Decide policy [...] People can pay for their ticket beforehand, and they can also pay for their ticket after the show. They can pay whatever they want – anywhere from a nickel to a hundred dollars [The policy] is there for people to have complete accessibility to have no financial barrier. It is also important to us to make sure we're in theatres that are [physically] accessible to everyone.

Imago [produces] new work by women and femmes that unpacks some of their lived experiences that theatre is oftentimes hesitant to address.

MD: Do you feel that Imago's emphasis on financial accessibility addresses a lack in the Montreal, or even Canadian theatre scene?

MC: There is a misconception on the part of many theatres that if you don't give [the show] a price, you are removing value

from the product, which I couldn't disagree with more because there is a lot of work that is offered for free either by the city or by the provincial government and I don't think it diminishes [its value] at all. For example the Jazz Festival, the outdoor shows at Place des arts – you can see all these things for free, and I don't think it diminishes the value of the art. I don't know if we're addressing a lack – it's more bringing in a belief within the company. We believe in making things accessible.

MD: Could you tell us about your "Artista" program?

MC: "Artista" is a mentorship program for women between the ages from 16 to 21. It's a free mentorship program [...] The idea came from us wishing to [facilitate] a safe space for young women who are really working at identifying the conversation they want to be having, or finding a creative way to manifest what they're thinking [...], experiencing, [and] feeling, and then being able to share that with more established artists under their guidance and with their advice [...] So [we are] creating an environment of learning but also of pursuing a conversation about being a young woman in 2016 [...] That's the idea behind the Artista program. It takes place over 13 weeks, between January [and] May [...] These young women [will be] taking workshops in all kinds of theatre disciplines.

MD: It is in your mandate to take up urgent social themes. Why

do you think theatre is the best medium for these stories?

[We are] creating an environment of learning but also of pursuing a conversation about being a young woman in 2016.

—Michelle Chevrier
Executive and Artistic
Director of Imago

MC: First, theatre chose me and then I developed a way to use it. It's funny because when I started out, I really wanted to tell stories. I loved the immediacy and the intimacy of theatre – it's live, [and] it's never the same night [to] night. Your connection to the audience is extremely unique every night and I liked that immediacy and the physical, sensorial experience of theatre. I always have felt that stories are what define us – they help us link [ourselves] to the past and to the future, they tell us where we're from, where we're going. [Theatre is] fiction based on truth, based on real events – sometimes inspired by them – but it's a safe place to experience them and discuss those particular issues. [For example] the last production we

did [about] Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (Pig Girl) [tackles] a really difficult, complex topic. And we can do that while creating characters that are involved in the situation, but they are fictional [...] Theatre to me feels the best way to experience both emotionally and intellectually a discussion around [difficult] topics.

MD: What is your five year plan for Imago?

MC: What I love about a small company is that you are free to let it become what it needs to be, so that it's leading the conversation, but it's also responding at the same time [...] It's hard for me to say where I think we'll be in 5 years [...] I hope we're still doing the kind of work that we're doing now, [and] I hope that we're able to do more of it. I [hope] that we would have more activities involving more artists, that we would be able to diversify our activities so that we can have a [broader] conversation. [I hope] the work that Imago does [continue to excite] both artists and audiences alike to the point where it could have an impact on the community here in Montreal and beyond. Inspiring people [...] to put on theatre that provokes, that takes risk, that is dangerous, work with a consciousness, and also that has a responsibility attached to it. So that's what I would hope, is that we would lead the way of people saying "I feel braver" and put on plays that really get us to talk and to think and all the while making great art, of course.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Not your typical nuded

Montreal's new literary magazine kicks off

LOUIS SANGER
Culture Writer

New Montreal-based literary magazine, *Bad Nudes*, celebrated the release of its first issue on October 15. The magazine publishes poetry, fiction, and visual art. The content is wide-ranging, incorporating modern poetry along with comedic short stories and drawing. Many guests squeezed into the apartment of Fawn Parker and Thomas Molander, the magazine's founders and head editors, to hear the readings being performed by several contributors from Issue 1.1.

Bad Nudes 1.1 is currently available online at badnudes.com. However, Molander says the magazine is hoping to publish further issues in print. "The real problem is cost, but we're hoping to get some grants," Molander said.

Molander, who comes from British Columbia, and Parker, from Toronto, are both creative writing students at Concordia University. *Bad Nudes* is a project they came up with together several months ago when they were reading their friends' writing, and realized the need for a new platform to showcase the talent they saw. When asked about where they got the idea for the name, they said they had originally come up with it as a band name, but instead, decided to use it for their magazine.

Bad Nudes 1.1 features mostly fellow Concordia students, plus a few writers based in Toronto, the U.S., and British Columbia. Most of the authors are well established writers, with publications in their portfolios ranging from *The Globe and Mail* to *Metatron*.

Brad Casey, founder of Toronto-based literary journal, *The 4 Poets*, came all the way from Toronto to perform at the launch. Casey expressed his appreciation for *Bad Nudes*, saying that they're filling a niche in terms of quality online literature. "[Molander and Parker have] got it pretty figured out [...] There's not many websites out there publishing this kind of work," Casey said. "I'm happy that *Bad Nudes* is around now."

Everyone involved in *Bad Nudes* is extremely enthusiastic about the magazine, and excited to see where it will go in the future. Those who attended the launch party were treated with interesting performances ranging from traditional form poetry, to experimental poetry, to short stories that had the entire audience laughing.

The Daily spoke to Brad Casey and Fawn Parker via email about their involvement with *Bad Nudes*.

The McGill Daily (MD): You're a contributor to the first issue of *Bad Nudes*. How did you hear about the magazine?

Brad Casey (BC): Fawn Parker is a label mate, of sorts [...] We've both been published by *Metatron*,



Audience fills apartment in anticipation of magazine launch.

COURTESY OF ELEA RESEMBAL

so we've met and follow each other online. She posted on Facebook asking for submissions [...] Fawn Parker is a wonderful writer who I admire and so I trusted that whatever she created would be something I'd want to be involved in.

MD: As the founder of another literary magazine, do you see any differences in the approach that *Bad Nudes* is taking?

BC: Both publications are seeking out new, exciting writers in the Canadian landscape who may not necessarily be published elsewhere. And it's a healthy environment right now. Everyone is supportive and open to sharing. It's like all ships rise with the high tide.

MD: What makes *Bad Nudes* different than other literary magazines, here in Montreal and elsewhere?

BC: There's a great literary scene being fostered in Canada right now which includes young writers frustrated with the state of publishing. Many literary magazines are highly academic and don't recognize less formal writing from young, talented writers full of potential because it wouldn't work with their audience, [who are] used to a cerebral, emotionally flat form of writing. There are also so few literary presses publishing new writers. The major presses like Harper Collins, in Canada, no longer actively seek out new work unless it's from authors already established. *Bad Nudes* is one of the few magazines stepping in to foster those great, highly undervalued writers.

MD: *Bad Nudes* is exclusively online at the moment. Do you see this as an advantage or disadvantage for the magazine?

BC: Print and online have their own unique advantages and disadvantages. Online can be a jumping off point to be published in print. But [you can also] work with many writers, quickly, from all over the world and develop a much larger audience.

MD: Your own poetry features a diversity of forms and content. Do you think this reflects *Bad Nudes* as a magazine? In your opinion, what does *Bad Nudes* offer the reader?

BC: I didn't write those pieces exclusively for *Bad Nudes* so I don't know how it might reflect on them. It was only what I had to offer. As far as what they have to offer the reader, I think, [they can offer] a good look into some talented writers who will be our generation's next great voices.

The Daily also interviewed Fawn Parker about founding the magazine.

MD: What makes *Bad Nudes* different than other literary magazines, here in Montreal and elsewhere?

Fawn Parker (FP): What's different, I think, is that we really don't have anyone to look up to in a literary sense. Like I think partly this thing was birthed out of a frustration with the literary community. It's so rare that I will pick up (or go online and look at) a lit mag and feel [...] excited about what I'm reading [...] What [this current state of publishing] does for us, in my opinion, is it forces us to really scrap all of

our ideas about how a magazine should be and build something new. We just publish what we think is good, and we make it [look] cool and that's about it. So I think that we're really just pushing out good work and we have no other agenda. If we never make a dollar, at least we have this space where all of this good stuff is collected.

MD: What made you want to create an arts magazine?

FP: I think it's just one of those natural points in a certain series of events. You know, you get a degree in literature, you're not really good enough to get a book out there but you're starting to get into all of these magazines. I've been working for journals for about 4 years now and I guess I just started to feel [confident]. Plus Thomas [Molander] is so on my wavelength creatively — we really just get shit done when we work together, and I think it's mutually [...] inspiring. Sandy [our designer], too. When we asked him to join the team it was a good idea.

MD: What are the advantages and disadvantages of your magazine being only online?

FP: The advantages are that it's incredibly accessible. Sandy introduced us to the "web brutalism" movement, and I'm going to get this wrong if I say too much but one sweet thing about it is that you can load it on [...] any connection speed, probably. It's just this really simple page with a bunch of text. On the other hand, going to print is kind of like making it. That takes money,

which is a pretty obvious signifier of success. And you know, I would of course just like to be able to have our stuff on my shelf.

MD: Does *Bad Nudes* have an overarching philosophy behind it?

FP: I'm not sure. We talked about this a lot at the beginning and then kind of dropped it. When you're applying for grants, it kind of forces you to think about that kind of thing. But really we just want good work to be pushed out there. Politically, we are careful, of course. We won't publish anything that we feel is bordering on [...] sexism, racism, transphobia, homophobia, that kind of thing. I feel a certain responsibility as a woman working with 2 men to really make sure we're representing female-identified voices. I won't organize a reading if less than half of the readers are women and/or queer people, and if I'm soliciting I reach out to them first.

MD: Is there a specific type of art that *Bad Nudes* hopes to exhibit?

FP: What we really want, I think, is stuff that just has an awareness to it, and a certain amount of restraint. I like funny stuff, but obviously it can't all be funny. Emotional [writing] is good too. Anything [goes] as long as the timing and delivery are good. We just want people who have something to say and have an idea of how to say it in an interesting way.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

The sweet agony of connection

Kathy Page explores interpersonal intimacy in *The Two of Us*

MARIA LOTFI
Culture Writer

The internet has allowed for anyone who writes to consider themselves ‘authors.’ While this creates a greater platform for self expression, oftentimes writing found on Facebook or Instagram falls into the trap of cheesy quotes or bad haikus. However, Kathy Page, a British novelist and short story writer, is someone who can proudly call herself a modern author. Her most recent work, *The Two of Us*, published recently by Biblioasis, is a collection of short stories that proves her undeniable writing skills.

Each short story in *The Two of Us* explores aspects of a specific interpersonal relationship. Page analyzes, for instance, the relationship between a mother and her gay son, a hairdresser and his ill client, two teenagers in love, a teacher and her student, and a girl and a fox. Each relationship exhibits different psychological and emotional characteristics. Throughout the stories, Page keeps a consistent style of writing in order to achieve a sense of cohesion. However, she also manages to hop from one story to the next without neglecting nuance.

Page is capable of putting herself in other people’s shoes. When you read these short stories, you forget they’re even fiction. The author also knows how to avoid stereotypes, which makes *The Two of Us* both refreshing and true to life. Instead, the stories embolden us to focus on the human desire for intimacy and connection – an underlying element that ties the book together and makes it ultimately relatable on a thematic level.

The Two of Us has been longlisted for the 2016 Giller Prize. Here are some highlights from the book.



NADIA BOACHIE | The McGill Daily

The stories embolden us to focus on the human desire for intimacy and connection.

“The Last Cut”

It’s sometimes hard to imagine that you can open up to a stranger. Your hairdresser might not be a complete stranger, especially if you see them regularly, but you wouldn’t necessarily open up to

them about your long battle against cancer. Or would you?

In “The Last Cut,” Page presents the story of Eric, a professional hairdresser who can’t wait to go home from work every day, until one of his clients, Mrs. Swenson, insists on taking a last minute appointment. Eric is at first irritated, but when he sees how tired and sick Mrs. Swenson looks, he senses that something must be wrong. Later, when Mrs. Swenson opens up about her condition, Eric realizes that this would be her last hair cut. He stops looking forward to going home early and comes face to face with the precarity of life.

“Sweet Agony”

“Sweet Agony” is one of the shortest stories from the collection. Page proves that you sometimes don’t need to write a very detailed and long story to describe a loving relationship and evoke an emotional response. It describes two lovebirds making love on a hot day of summer while no one’s home. The story evokes the feeling of nervousness, confusion and awkwardness surrounding being intimate with one’s childhood crush.

“The House on Manor Close”

The interesting element of this story is that the author presents

three different point of views. Three sisters describe their relationships with each other and with their parents, allowing Page to work with different voices and to analyze different personalities and emotions within one household. Every sister relates to her parents in a unique way that at times incites conflict, but the sisters all recognize the need to move past those differences due to the shared bond of familial love.

The Two of Us is \$19.95 and available for purchase at Biblioasis’s website.

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We stand with AMUSE

The Association of McGill University Support Employees (AMUSE) is the union that represents the 1,500 casual employees at McGill, most of whom are students, and is currently engaged in negotiations with the McGill administration about its collective agreement with the University. On October 20, AMUSE held a special general assembly. 82 per cent of the membership present at the event voted to approve tactics, up to and including a strike, that would pressure the McGill administration to comply with their basic demands. The collective agreement covers the working conditions of all temporary full-time and part-time support employees on campus. In these negotiations, the University must prioritize the rights and livelihoods of AMUSE workers, and meet AMUSE's core demands.

AMUSE's current collective agreement expired in April 2015. While the union is in the process of bargaining a new contract with McGill, union members have continued working under the expired agreement, which fails to adequately secure their labour rights. For example, McGill's Work Study program, designed to provide financial aid, fails to guarantee either employment or minimum wage for students deemed "in need" by the University. According to students who have participated in the Work Study program, hours are often erratic, and students work for more hours than they are paid. Moreover, temporary workers, who fall under AMUSE, are sometimes paid as little as half the wages of their permanent counterparts, and have no guarantee of minimum hours or contract renewal. They receive no health and dental benefits or parental leave, even if they are replacing a permanent employee who received

them. Under the current agreement, AMUSE itself is also prevented from gathering important basic information on its members, including the exact membership numbers, which impedes its ability to organize. AMUSE is thus unable to call meetings with all of its members, and to inform its members of the rights they have access to as part of a union – in fact, many are not even aware they belong to AMUSE.

One of the priorities outlined by AMUSE during its assembly meeting was the creation of ID cards for non-student employees. ID cards are necessary to access the buildings in which employees work, and to allow them to use the washroom – two things that non-student employees have had to depend on students and coworkers for. AMUSE is also working towards creating clearer categories for the employees, as unclear job titles and descriptions have led to job casualization, in which employees are being made to perform substantial tasks which are neither listed in their job descriptions, nor adequately compensated in their wages.

SSMU and the Arts Undergraduate Society (AUS) endorsed AMUSE's demands last week, calling on the University to pay its workers a living wage of \$15 per hour, and to prioritize adequate student employment. AMUSE members are subject to untenable conditions of employment, and the administration needs to acknowledge this and take decisive action to remedy it. We stand in solidarity with AMUSE, and call on the administration to accept their demands in order to improve worker conditions under the organization.

—The McGill Daily editorial board

“Yes” to CKUT's existence referendum

The Daily endorses a “yes” vote for the CKUT existence referendum question, which asks whether CKUT should continue to receive McGill student fees of \$3.00 a semester. Currently CKUT is an independent, grassroots, non-profit radio station that is a crucial part of alternative media at McGill and in Montreal. With both community and McGill volunteers, CKUT provides a space where McGill students can connect with the greater Montreal community through technical training and events. CKUT's content and programming includes music, news, and culture that are not covered or given space in mainstream radios, with shows like Native Solidarity News, Prison Radio, and OWL (Older Women Live).

Readers should note that The Daily holds an interest in the outcome of the CKUT referendum question, as it produces its radio show, Unfit to Print, with CKUT.

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Lies, half-truths, and minimum acceptable levels of heat.

“Fuck this!”

Fuck casually bigoted relatives. Fuck those family occasions where someone will say something appalling and you'll have to be like “ahahaha that's an interesting opinion but have you perhaps considered the literal opposite?” instead of smacking them upside the head with their own plate of seasonal hors d'oeuvres and strolling off into the sunset. Fuck having to engage politely with people who are unwilling to educate themselves and yet demand that your arguments come fully fucking annotated with footnotes from “impartial sources,” whatever the fuck that means. Why the fuck should I have to hold myself in check to spare your feelings, when you clearly couldn't care less about mine?

Fuck surprise raisins. Fuck cinnamon buns that look raisin-free until you bite into them and – surprise! Raisins. Fuck grocery store butter tarts that are secretly – surprise! Raisin tarts. Fuck chocolate-chip muffins that turn out to be carrot raisin, and oatmeal chocolate chip cookies that are actually oatmeal raisin.

Fuck war. Fuck imperialism. Fuck capitalism. Fuck the Lebanese garbage crisis. Fuck Seasonal Affective Disorder. Fuck inaccessible academic theory and fuck academia. Fuck the job market. Fuck convocation. Fuck settler-colonialism. Fuck the immigration industrial-complex. Fuck Justin Trudeau. Also, fuck the fact that there's nowhere to go except back home or staying in Canada? What is home anyway? What do you do if you're not rich? Fuck money honestly. Fuck weapons development research that McGill students undertake, fuck universities that sell weapons research to the highest military contractor who uses it on real-life brown people next door.

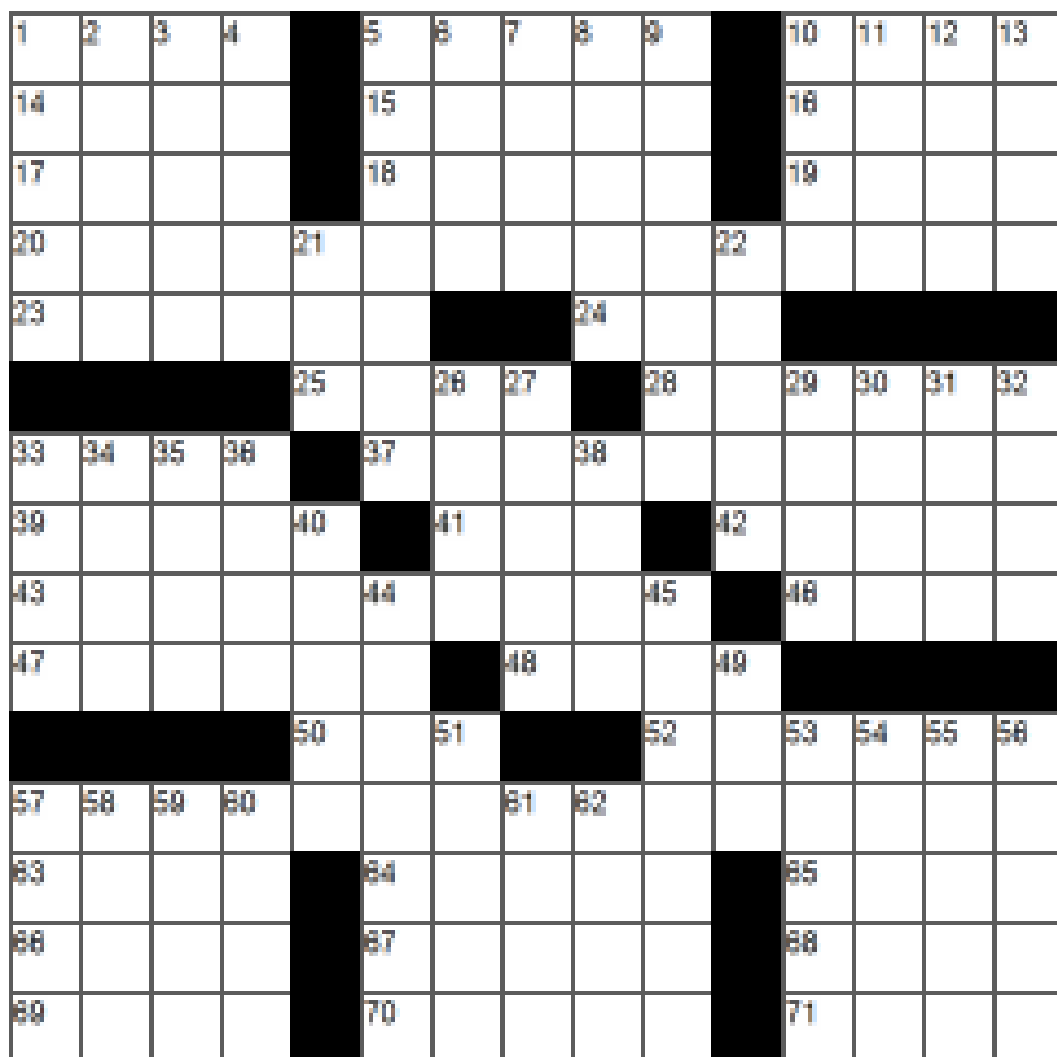
Fuck profs who seem cool until you find out that they sleep with students. I was looking forward to going to your class until I heard! Fuck how, now whenever you make a funny joke I don't want to encourage you! Fuck the cool music you play, fuck the fact that nothing good ever stays good. Fuck the fact that there seems to be one of these profs in every faculty.

Fuck the fact that strike wages are higher than my actual job wages. What the fuck? Do you not get how messed up that is? Like, picketing could actually be profitable to me. Fuck the casualisation and undervaluing of employees. Fuck suppression of worker's rights in the workplace. Fuck capitalism, of course. And fuck my boss.

Fuck my meds. I feel bad when I take them and feel bad when I don't. Fuck my ableist parents. Fuck being told my entire life that I was bad for not being able to be productive. Fuck my psychiatrist and the psychiatric system. Fuck not having money for therapy. Fuck being made to feel like my abuse wasn't “that bad.” Fuck unhappy and traumatic childhoods. Fuck feelings of self-hatred and inadequacy. Fuck Hollywood horror films that cast psychotic people as inherently villainous. Literally fuck everyone who will dress up as a psychiatric patient for Halloween.

Crossword

JAY VANPUT
The McGill Weekly



ACROSS

1. ___ Club (Walmart membership club)
5. Revenue
10. Famous inventor Musk
14. David Copperfield's enemy
15. Being Fr.
16. Dorothy's dog
17. Location
18. ___ D'Arthur
19. Prefix with plasm
20. Memorable mental image
23. Join forces
24. House extension
25. Does wrong
28. April holiday
33. Apple tablet
37. Vacuum
39. Adjusted a radio
41. ___ Aviv
42. Unskillfully chops a tree
43. What many immature adults have
46. Base
47. Type of sound
48. Food, water or shelter
50. Response to a ques.
52. Ties for dogs?
57. Scramble to finish
63. Turn ___ (become)
64. Gemstone weight
65. Brainchild
66. Multiplying binomials (hint to the long clues)
67. Love
68. Coat holder
69. ___ of Sandwich
70. Clark's friend
71. This. Sp.

DOWN

1. Part of an arrow
2. Eagle nest
3. Bran's aide in Game of Thrones
4. Convulsion
5. Almost in the NBA
6. Molecule component
7. Real life Dungeons & Dragons
8. Between, to Francois
9. Metal worker
10. Hot times of the year in Montreal
11. Positions
12. Palindromic German prince
13. 12 o'clock
21. Day after Mon.
22. Guitarist for Guns N' Roses
26. Baseball great Babe
27. Beer mug
29. Shadowboxing, for example
30. Mexican cuisine
31. ___ Unltd (Clothing Company)
32. Part of R&R
33. Disease prefix
34. Start to a football game
35. Actress in Les Mis, Hathaway
36. Cause for many vehicle accidents
38. Women's fashion magazine
40. Fear
44. Party hat shape
45. What Hillary Clinton does to e-mails
51. A Nice stadium
53. Burning
54. Fizzy beverages
55. Stand tall
56. Common place to get burned?
57. What biologists study
58. Indonesian buffalo
59. Mix up
60. Type of booth
61. Soak Up the Sun Singer Sheryl
62. Mata ___ Famous spy/ dancer

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