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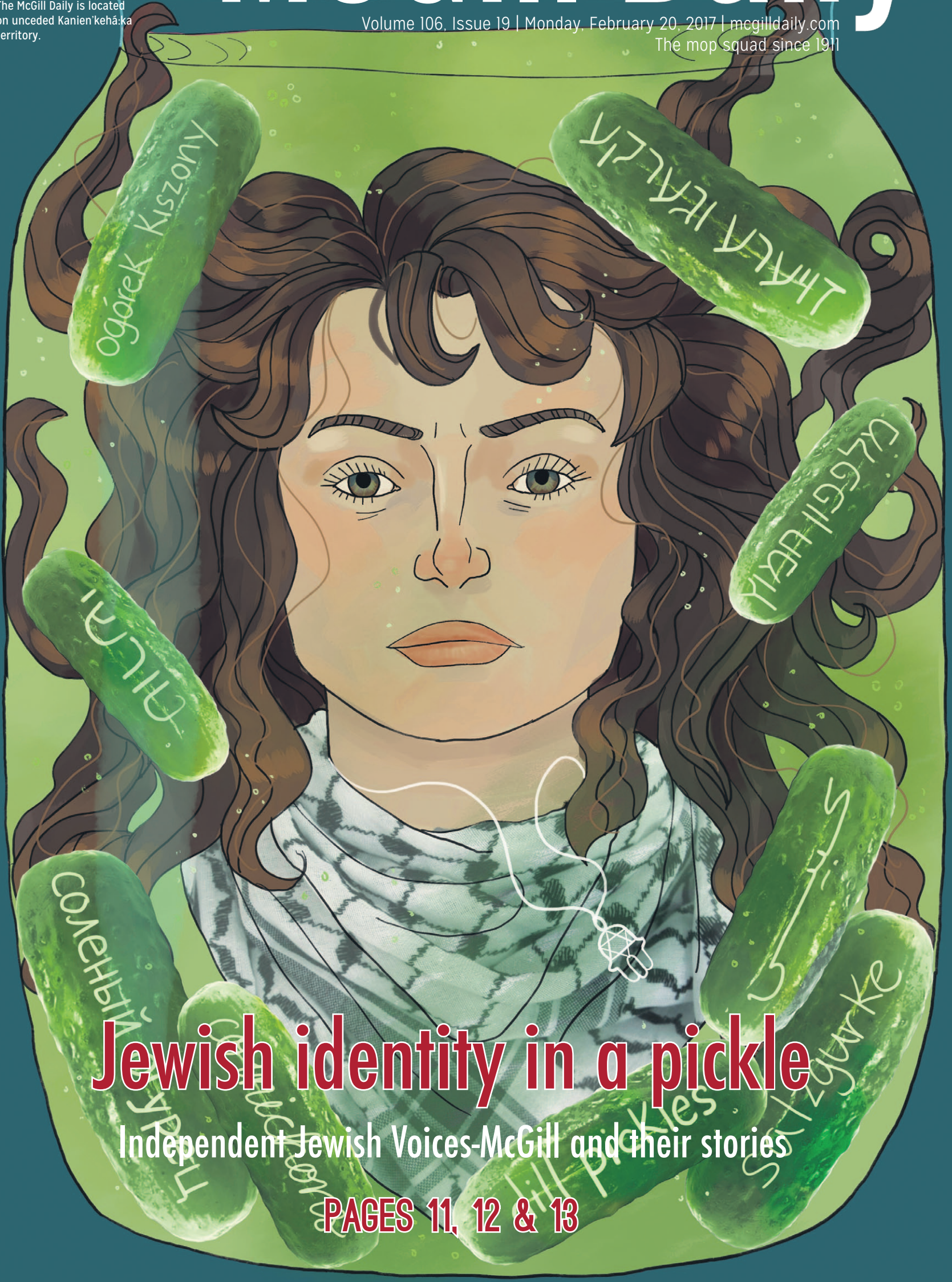
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# THE McGill Daily

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Independent Jewish Voices-McGill and their stories

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# STUDENT JOURNALISM WEEK 2017

MONDAY FEB. 20 TO FRIDAY FEB. 24

**FEB. 20: How to launch your career and avoid burnout**

Panel with Matt D'Amours (CBC, *The Link*), Chris Mills (BGR, *The McGill Daily*), Cecilia S McArthur (CBC, *CKUT*), and Kalina Laframboise (CBC, *CUP*).

6:00 p.m., McConnell 12 (3480 University St.)

**FEB. 21: The Other Side of Journalism: Talking to press relations people**

Panel with Doug Sweet (McGill PR), Danny Payne (Raison D'Être Media), and Talar Adam (Leisa Lee Group).

6:00 p.m., University Centre B-29 (3480 McTavish St.)

**FEB. 22: Alternative journalism: How to start local**

Panel with Jason C. McLean (Forget the Box Media), Ethan Cox (Ricochet), Gretchen King (GroundWire News), and Lorraine Carpenter (Cult MTL).

4:00 p.m., University Centre Club Lounge (3480 McTavish St.)

**FEB. 22: How to pitch the best stories: Pitching Workshop**

Workshop with Philippe Gohier (VICE Quebec) and Andrea Bennett (Maisonneuve).

6:00 p.m., University Centre B-24 (3480 McTavish St., Daily/Le Délit offices)

**FEB. 23: Cyberjournalism, privacy, and you**

Workshop with David Goulet, Pierre-David Oriol and Lex Gill.

6:00 p.m., McIntyre Medical Building 208 (3655 Promenade Sir William Osler)

**FEB. 24: Student Journalists Panel**

Panel with Julia Dick (The McGill Tribune), Ralph Haddad (The McGill Daily), and Ikram Mecheri (Le Délit).

6:00 p.m., University Centre, Madeleine Parent Room (3480 McTavish St.)

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## Musicians' Mental Health

Panelists discuss the stress of musicianship

**MADISON DUENKLER**  
News Writer

**O**n Monday, February 13, McGill students and members of Montreal's music community gathered at the Wirth Music building for a panel discussion, entitled "Musician's Health Throughout a Performing Career."

Claire Motyer, the founder of the Schulich Musician's Health Committee, which organized the event, started the discussion by saying, "I don't think you can really separate emotional, physical, and mental health from each other. We're really just trying to get this conversation started, really just wanting to open up about musician's health [and] bring some faculty, some alumni, and some current students [together] to share their stories so more people open up and feel comfortable talking about their stories."

Speaking with *The Daily*, Motyer said, "I really want students, and faculty as well, just to feel more comfortable talking about these issues, creating a dialogue between all of us as a community, and creating more of a sense of a community around these topics."

Motyer, a U3 Music student and violinist at McGill, has experienced injury herself. "It's only now really that I'm realizing this is what I want to do, bring awareness to these issues, and to musicians' health. At first I found it hard to talk about, but now I feel much better being open about it."

Panelists included Yolanda Bruno, a violinist, Isabelle Cossette, Director at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Music, Media, and Technology, trumpet professor Russell Devuyt, and Renée Yoxon, a jazz vocalist. To start the discussion, each of the panelists introduced themselves.

"I'm originally from Ottawa, and I'm a violinist," said Bruno. "I'll focus on the angle of injury: I've had an injury twice before. The first time, I was still young so I brushed over it quite quickly. The second time was quite traumatic. The second time I had to take a significant amount of time off, maybe three to four months off, which felt like an eternity."

"I had to cancel many concerts and I had to tell people that I was injured and then the word got out and people knew and that was really scary because as soon as one person knew, then more people knew," she continued.

Speaking about her recovery process, Bruno explained that she was uncertain how to move forward because she "received a lot of information from many different people."

"It took a long time for me to find my route to recovery," she said, "which ended up being one-on-one sessions with a Hatha yoga instructor, and acu-

puncture after doing chiropracting, and lots of running and swimming and lots of different things."

Another panelist, Isabelle Cossette, the director of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Music Media and Technology (CIRMMT), was trained as a flute player and got her doctorate in music performance, but decided ultimately to turn to a career in research, focusing on the respiratory mechanics of musicians. Throughout the discussion, she spoke about the importance of accepting and embracing change.

"I'm not here to necessarily discuss a specific injury that I had while I was performing," Cossette said. "I can make a lot of parallels; I had to go through depressions and that is very similar to someone who gets injured and can't play. You find ways to recover. Changes, in fact, can be seen as exciting."

Devuyt, who played for the Montreal Symphony for twenty-four years, focused on injury in terms of the effects it can have not only on a musician's career, but also on their self-confidence.

"In relation to performance injuries, I've been injured three times actually," he explained. "I never thought that I would, you know, you don't think of being injured when you're eighteen years, you think you're infallible [...] you just go crazy, and you just play."

The first injury Devuyt experienced was partial facial paralysis caused by Ramsay Hunt Syndrome.

"I couldn't play," he said. "It was like going to the dentist and getting novocaine and then trying to play. That's the way I felt for a couple of months."

"Coming back from that was a very arduous thing," he elaborated, "because I had two kids, three and five years old, so I just figured okay, my life's over. What am I going to do now?"

Outlining the difficulties of recovery, and his mental health during this time, Devuyt explained how he used new hobbies as a coping mechanism.

"Instead of getting all worried, I just started woodworking," he said. "I got this book on how to make toys [...] I made them for my kids and I said, 'Hey, this is kind of fun.' It took my mind of it."

Devuyt also spoke about his second accident. "The second accident I had, I was riding my bike and [...] I was carrying a bag from the supermarket and the bag got caught in the front wheel and I went over the front handlebars. Even though I had a helmet on, it didn't help because I smashed my teeth."

"I did everything that a trumpet player's not supposed to do and broke my front teeth," he continued.



The panelists.

MADISON DUENKLER | Photographer

"My teeth were broken, my lips were bleeding like crazy, I was looking at the cement and I saw chips of my teeth, so I took my teeth, put them in my pocket, and I went to the dentist and said, 'glue them back,' and they're still there actually."

Devuyt stressed the importance of accepting an injury and pacing your recovery. "The difficulty in coming back after an injury is that your brain knows where you used to be, but your body doesn't respond to that, so you can really hurt yourself if you try to get yourself back into the level [musically] that you were. You have to accept where you are and just start from there and don't expect anything"

Yoxon was the last panelist to introduce themselves. "I'm a jazz vocalist. I'm studying currently in the undergraduate program here at McGill and I have chronic pain. I've been dealing with chronic pain for about ten years; I'm almost thirty now and I started experiencing chronic pain symptoms when I was in my late teens and then I started identifying as someone with chronic pain when I was like twenty, twenty-one years old. [...] For me, my pain threshold is much, much lower, so I'm just in pain all the time, even when there's no injury."

Yoxon continued, "Your pain system is there to prevent injury, so you feel pain before you become injured, which is why you [are] supposed to stop playing [then]. However, in my case, I'm feeling pain all the time and I actually have to play through it a little bit. I would just be stopping all the time if I didn't. So what I'm [...] dealing with is how to adapt singing for me, even though I'm going to be injured forever."

In an interview with *The Daily*, Yoxon stressed the importance of making music accessible to those with disabilities, by "[listing] what accessibility features are on their event information."

They also highlighted the benefits of live broadcasting. "I think live broadcasting can not only bring shows to disabled people, [...] live broadcastings brings shows to people who have lower incomes, people who need childcare. Lots of people don't have the privilege of going out."

Noémie Chemali, an attendee and music student at McGill, has experienced both the physical and mental stress that the panelists discussed. "When I first came to McGill, I was a violin student and there was definitely a huge leap of expectations from what I was used to. I come from a small town in the U.S. and coming here, it's a bigger city. I felt like a very small fish in a big pond basically."

"I'm glad we have more dialogue going on about musician's health, definitely to help people from struggling, the way I did, especially my first two years when I didn't have the courage to stand up and say I'm in pain, I'm not going to play today," Chemali added.

The rest of the discussion focused mainly on methods of coping with the physical and emotional stresses of musicianship. The panelists all stressed focusing on one's own progress as opposed to competition.

Yoxon said, "I feel like in order to succeed at McGill, you need to be like an athlete, and we are, we're athletes, but I think that there's something to be gained by learning music and not approaching it from the point of athleticism."

Later in the discussion, they stated, "We do have a lot of people who are playing from a place of fear. [...] It helps your mental health to not worry about what other people are thinking."

Devuyt, similarly, expressed the importance of practicing to improve, not to avoid making mistakes. He also stressed the importance of "knowing your body, knowing what you can do with your body, how far you can go."

# Kevin O'Leary comes to McGill

## Conservative McGill event sees heavy police presence in SSMU building

**RYAN CANON**  
The McGill Daily

Television personality and businessman Kevin O'Leary spoke in the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) ballroom last Monday as part of his campaign to win the ongoing Conservative Party's leadership race. The post is currently being filled by interim opposition leader Rona Ambrose, who replaced Stephen Harper as leader of the Conservative Party when Harper stepped down after substantive Conservative losses in the 2015 federal election.

### "The Donald Trump of Canada"

Kevin O'Leary has long invited comparisons to United States President Donald Trump. Both men are billionaires who gained mainstream fame through reality television and subsequently launched political careers despite possessing no formal political experience.

In a 2014 interview with the CBC, O'Leary said that he "applauded" the

wealth gap between the top one per cent and the bottom 3.5 billion people in the world living in poverty, claiming that their poor living conditions acted as a motivation for them.

O'Leary was also recently criticized for posting a video of himself at a gun range during a funeral for the victims of the recent shooting at a Quebec City mosque, and has been ridiculed for his past refusal to participate in French-language debates, saying that instead of French, he speaks "the language of jobs."

### Heavy police presence on campus

The SSMU building was swarming with security personnel in the hour leading up to the start of the event, as organizers hoped to prevent protesters from interrupting O'Leary's address. In the end, McGill security and the police kept all protestors outside the building.

Jessica Lyver, Vice-President of Conservative McGill, the Conservative Party's official McGill student chapter, spoke with The Daily about Kevin O'Leary coming to speak at McGill.

"The Conservative Association is not endorsing any specific candidate," she explained. "Every member of our organization has their own unique and personal views."

Two attendees, who asked to remain anonymous, discussed their interest in O'Leary's speech in an interview with The Daily.

"I think the thing about elections," said one, "is it's not the party that you subscribe to, rather it's listening with a critical mind to each side and picking what best represents you as a Canadian."

"I live in Alberta, where we are in a recession," explained another, "so as a young Canadian I find it inspiring that he wants to focus on the economy. The one place where I am critical of Kevin O'Leary is that he seems to lack the social views, which would normally lose my vote in this case, but I guess we'll find out what he says today."

### O'Leary speaks

O'Leary's address painted a different picture of the Conservative Party

than many may have been used to. The candidate claimed that he wished to see the party opened to people of all faiths, races, and sexualities, and called himself a "conservative expansionist."

O'Leary's primary focus was the economy. He struck a very critical tone with regard to the Trudeau administration's policies, and promised to abolish the "Carbon Tax" as his first action if he were to become Prime Minister. O'Leary claimed that his impetus for entering the race had been the debt incurred by the Trudeau's government.

"My entry into this race occurred hours after I read that document by the Trudeau government that told me that for the next thirty-eight years, this country would run deficits, so by the end the people of this country will be \$1.5 trillion in debt," he said. "That means that every child you have is born into \$50,000 of debt before their first breath."

### Question and answer period

O'Leary opted to host a question and answer period.

One attendee, Sophia, a law student at McGill, asked O'Leary "If you become Prime Minister, will you divest yourself from your businesses to [...] reassure Canadians [about potential conflicts of interest?]"

"There have not be too many candidates in Canadian history who come from [a] business [background]," O'Leary responded. He pivoted the question about his investments abroad to reflect how they actually make his case to be Prime Minister better.

O'Leary alleged, though, that if he become Prime Minister, he would put part of his investments into a blind trust, in the trust of a man who was a member of the Liberal Party of Canada.

"I have the only intelligent Liberal working for me," joked O'Leary to thunderous laughter. "You can only imagine those boring conversations about policy." O'Leary elaborated any remaining portion of his assets would be liquified.

*The full version of this article is available online.*

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# Racism in 1990s Montreal

Panel explores the “haunting” nature of slavery in a modern Quebec

**NORA MCCREADY**  
The McGill Daily

Content warning: racism, violence, slurs

On Monday February 13, a group of students and community members gathered for a presentation by Délice Mugabo. Mugabo presented part of her research: “On Haunted Places: Encountering Slavery in 1990s Montreal.” The presentation was followed by an extended discussion focusing on the intersecting themes of Mugabo’s research.

Mugabo opened the panel by detailing the experiences of three Black people living in Montreal in the 1990s: Mireille Romulus, Pierre Moncius Étienne, and William Kafe. All three had faced some sort of violence while living in the city.

## Being Black in Montreal

Romulus, a Haitian-born mother of two, was in her Longueuil apartment when two white male police officers busted in “on the pretext that her sister had an unpaid bill for \$425 at the Simpson’s department store.” After handcuffing her, one of the officers choked her on the kitchen floor, then kicked and slapped her.

“[Romulus] children reported being traumatized by the ordeal and remembered hearing the male officer calling their mother a dirty n\*\*\*\*r and telling her to ‘go back to Africa.’”

Mugabo commented on the event, saying, “Africa, and not Longueuil, is where Mireille Romulus was told she belonged. Africa is not only an elsewhere, but also an out of sight. This process of carefully placing Black people out of sight is a way of landscaping Blackness out of the nation.”

“It is rather unfathomable that they wouldn’t have known of her Haitian origin,” they added, “for not only are the vast majority of franco-phone Black people in Montreal descended from Haiti, the Quebec state had recruited many of them [...] to help build a number of institutions.”

“Had the police officers wanted to emphasize her assumed immigration trajectory, they would have told her to go back to Haiti,” Mugabo continued “but I would argue that ‘go back to Africa,’ refers to the middle passage from Africa to the Caribbean and North America.”

Mugabo continued the discussion by recounting the violence perpetrated against Étienne, a 47 years-old Haitian father of two, when he was waiting for the bus inside the Pie IX subway station.

“A gang of fifteen skinheads ran into the station on the heels of a young Black man who had been trying to make a phone call,” said Muga-

bo. “The young Black man managed to get away, but the skinheads spotted Étienne and started yelling at him past the ticket booth attendant who did not intervene. The skinheads caught up to Étienne and beat him into unconsciousness. As they beat him they repeated ‘we don’t want n\*\*\*\*rs here, go back to where you came from.’”

As a result of his severe injuries, Étienne spent several weeks recovering in the hospital and was fired from his job as a result.

“A year later, he said he still suffered from back pain, feared travelling at night, and had recurrent nightmares about the skinheads. Only four of his assailants were charged.”

Mugabo finally then went on to present the experiences of Kafe, an East Montreal teacher who immigrated to Quebec from Guinea.

“Having endured fifteen years of racial attacks from students at the Deux Montagne school board, the 54-year-old teacher submitted a complaint to the Quebec Human Rights Commission in 1992,” Mugabo explained.

“He testified that over the years students brought their excrement to throw at him and kicked him around in the classroom shouting ‘if the n\*\*\*\*r dies what does it matter,’ and also ‘n\*\*\*\*r crisis – the n\*\*\*\*rs are everywhere.’”

The children also repeatedly told Kafe that he was supposed to be their slave, not their teacher.

“The students’ claims to this Black man’s enslaveability are not due to their ignorance,” Mugabo made clear. “They seemed intent to make it clear to him either that slavery was as much a reality in Quebec as it had been in the states, or that if slavery hadn’t existed in Quebec that it should have.”

Mugabo called attention to the fact that this event was an instance of children expressing society’s thinly veiled prejudice: “Disruptive adolescents unconcerned with political correctness [...] could shout ‘burn the n\*\*\*\*r,’ voicing the feelings of an adult world which dared not to.”

## The “haunting” nature of slavery in Quebec

Mugabo argued that these events illustrate how Black people today are haunted by slavery, even 184 years after its abolishment in Quebec. She also called attention to the lack of acknowledgement of the existence of slavery in Quebec and how that denial seeks to eradicate the experience of Black Quebecers.

“This province continuously denied or minimized its history of slavery,” she said, emphasizing that many in Quebec privilege Canadian slavery by claiming it was better than in the United States.



Délice Mugabo at the panel discussion.

**NORA MCCREADY** | The McGill Daily

“Slavery in Quebec is said to be nicer because they were given Christian names, they were baptized,” Mugabo said.

“The students’ claims to this Black man’s enslaveability are not due to their ignorance. They seemed intent to make it clear to him either that slavery was as much a reality in Quebec as it had been in the states, or that if slavery hadn’t existed in Quebec that it should have.”

—Délice Mugabo  
Researcher and Panelist

Mugabo eventually returned to the theme of haunting, this time as proof of history’s existence. “What we learn from *Beloved* [by Toni Morrison] is that haunting is one way in which abusive systems of power

make themselves known [...] especially when they are supposedly over and done with or when their oppressive nature is denied.”

During the discussion, Rachel Zellars, a professor at McGill, raised a common issue in articulating racism. “One of the things that we’re always pushing against is scale. So the case of William Kafe can be perceived as exceptional and deviant from the norm. In Quebec in particular that narrative is something [...] I’m always working against.”

Mugabo responded: “No violence is ever spectacular enough or bad enough for it to matter or register as violent.” She continued, “It obviously isn’t spectacular enough because the school board didn’t do anything about it.”

“When we talk about systemic racism we talk about it as if it’s something [and we] don’t know how it happens. No one’s racist but you have systemic racism. So for me, [through] these cases, we can really see that this is something that people do, it’s not something that’s in the air.”

## Racism in Canada vs. Quebec

When asked about the difference in racism in Quebec and the rest of Canada, Mugabo responded, “Quebec wants [Black Quebecers] to continuously say ‘you’re not racist, you’re not racist,’ asking us to speak our history in relation to their own political [...] aspirations because [...] people will always claim Quebec-bashing from the rest of Canada and from the rest of the world.”

“The fact that Quebec has wider issues with Canada does negate the fact that I have issues with Quebec,” she

continued. “Quebec’s aspirations are not mine, so I have no interest in defending it or promoting it in any way.”

Elaborating on the theme of Quebec’s denial of slavery and racism, Zellars said, “So we only had two cases of reported lynchings in comparison to 4,000. So we only had 4,000 slaves in comparison to 4 million.”

“One of the things that we’re always pushing against is scale. So the case of William Kafe can be perceived as exceptional and deviant from the norm. In Quebec in particular that narrative is something [...] I’m always working against.”

—Rachel Zellars  
McGill professor

“Whatever numbers we have, we did the same exact things that the United States did [...] you still enslaved the first Black people who came here. Your framework for understanding Blackness was identical to the United States,” Zellars concluded.

# Graduate students' issues at Senate

Senators talk Trump's 'Muslim ban,' Black History Month



SONIA IONESCU & RAHMA WIRYOMARTONO | The McGill Daily

**ELLEN COOLS**  
The McGill Daily

On Wednesday, February 15, the McGill Senate convened for its sixth meeting of the 2016-2017 academic year.

Senators discussed a question regarding graduate student teaching at McGill, a motion regarding the annual celebration of Black History Month, had a lengthy discussion regarding the "McGill University Strategic Academic Plan 2017-2020," and heard reports from a number of committees.

## Opening remarks

In her opening address, Principal Suzanne Fortier mentioned her meeting with other heads of Quebec universities and the Ministers of Finance and Education in December, largely to discuss what is needed for the government to better support its universities.

Fortier noted that the Quebec government had instituted austerity measures which hurt universities, but said, "now that we've passed this period, we made the case to the Minister of Finance that it is time now to reinvest in universities."

The Principal further noted that the ministers seemed to understand this request.

Following Fortier's remarks, one senator asked what the University has done and will do for refugees, in light of the recent executive order from U.S. President Donald Trump, which banned refugees, and immigrants from seven Muslim-majority countries.

In response, Provost and VP Academic Christopher Manfredi said that "some of the measures we put in place for students affected by the executive order were already in place for refugees."

Kathleen Massey, university registrar and executive director of enrolment services, added that "refugees often encounter some unique problems [...]. There are often chal-

lenges related to just ensuring official documentation which may have been destroyed through war or other serious matters. So we practice a level of flexibility around documentation for example."

"There are often challenges related to just ensuring official documentation which may have been destroyed through war or other serious matters.

—Kathleen Massey,  
University Registrar and  
Executive Director of  
Enrollment Services

Massey noted that these measures were already in place prior to the executive order. She further added that for those students who may have dire financial difficulties, the University either waives or refunds their application fee.

Manfredi also added that the University "recently entered into a partnership with the Al Ghurair Foundation based in the United Arab Emirates. That foundation has a mission [...] to provide educational opportunities for students from the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] region mostly, from underprivileged backgrounds as well as from refugee areas, provide them access to high quality secondary as well as post-secondary education."

Manfredi elaborated that following Trump's executive order,

the University reached out to the foundation to see if "they needed [McGill's] assistance either to place students from those seven countries or to place students from other countries in the region who might find it difficult going to the United States, whether because of their country of origin or refugee status."

## Graduate students teaching

Post-Graduate Students' Society (PGSS) Academic Affairs Officer Nicholas Dunn brought a question to Senate asking what the University is doing to ensure a better distribution of courses that graduate students can teach, and if the University is willing to guarantee at least one teaching opportunity for all incoming PhD students.

The question largely concerned the Collective Agreement between McGill and the Course Lecturers and Instructors Union (MCLIU), which allows the University to reserve up to fifteen per cent of courses not allocated to ranked academic staff for graduate students. However, there is a widespread belief that graduate students still lack teaching opportunities, according to Dunn.

Manfredi had provided a written answer to the question prior to the Senate meeting.

Dunn referred to this answer initially: "I take your point insofar as there's a technical point to be made which is that these [positions] can be reserved for a range of individuals, of which graduate students are a part. But I hope that you can understand the spirit of the question, which is that many people are concerned about the way in which the allocation of course exclusions will affect their graduate programs."

"You say that grad students are free to apply to the courses that are posted, and this is of course true," Dunn continued, "however, if they arrived after the collective agreement, they have zero points and so there's no way for them to [enter]

into the system, and even those who were here before but don't have as many points as those who have been course lecturers for longer will never get any courses."

In response, Manfredi said "the annual distribution of [teaching positions for graduate students is] recalibrated on an annual basis, and it's recalibrated first of all on the basis of consultation with faculties to determine their needs, and I think we're in a learning process."

"If they arrived after the collective, they have zero points and so there's no way for them to enter the system."

—Nicholas Dunn, PGSS  
Academic Affairs Officer

"I think the faculties are getting better at determining their needs [...] so I think that's part of the learning process, and at the provostial level, we're in a learning process and getting better at how we do those allocations," Manfredi continued.

Referencing the reserve clause in the collective agreement, Manfredi added that "to negotiate an agreement like this, there are many different faculties, with many different types of teaching needs and teaching program delivery styles, and you have to have a clause that accommodates all those different needs."

Senator Tetyana Krupiy, a post-doctoral scholar, then asked if it would be possible to receive the distribution of these positions by faculty and explanation for the distribution.

She further referenced Fortier's

discussion about the Business Higher Education round table, where the University discussed with local businesses how to further increase engagement and work opportunities for students.

"This is a real example of how [the University's] not doing that, and where we can, we should. I speak as a graduate program director of a department that has 120 doctoral students but only five positions, so I urge you to reconsider these kinds of opportunities and make them available to our doctoral students," Krupiy said.

Another senator asked if there was room in negotiations to recognize the different structure of faculties, as "some faculties clearly have permanent lecturers who require job protection and in whose interest the union exists, and other faculties may have an overarching need to give training to their students, and it seems to me the problem is that it's not capturing that diversity."

Manfredi noted that the University will honor the agreement it signed with MCLIU, but when the agreement comes up for renegotiations "those are things we can take into account."

## Black History Month motion

Arts Senator Charles Keita brought a motion to Senate that asked "that McGill officially celebrates Black History Month," in his words.

"Until this year there was no official body on the campus that celebrated it. This year that mantle was taken up by [the Social Equity and Diversity Education Office] and I have to say that they did a great job for the events that I've gone to and the community definitely seems to have enjoyed them. To keep it going, I propose this motion so that it is followed through that we do this every year and it doesn't become a rare occurrence that McGill celebrates Black History Month," Keita elaborated.

The motion passed unanimously.

# SSMU pressured to call for Sadikov's resignation

## Administration threatened legal action, violating student democracy

**MARINA CUPIDO**  
The McGill Daily

The Daily has been told by several sources close to the SSMU executive that at a private meeting on Wednesday, February 15, McGill Principal Suzanne Fortier issued a threat aiming to pressure the executive of the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) into calling for student representative Igor Sadikov's resignation.

Sadikov – an Arts Representative to SSMU, a member of the SSMU Board of Directors (BoD), and a former Daily editor – has been embroiled in controversy since his tweet reading “punch a zionist [sic] today” was widely disseminated on February 8. At a meeting of the BoD on Monday, February 13, the Board voted against a motion to impeach Sadikov, opting instead to censure him publicly.

At Wednesday's private meeting, Fortier demanded that SSMU release a public statement demanding Sadikov's resignation. According to sources, Fortier reportedly made it clear that, if the executive did not release the statement by the afternoon of Friday, February 17, the administration would release its own statement, condemning the executive team's decision not to do so.

Moreover, Fortier suggested that, should the executive decide not to release a statement complying with the administration's wishes, further legal action might be taken against SSMU. Based on reports of the meeting, it is likely that this would take the form of allegations put forth by McGill that SSMU had violated its own constitution in refusing to demand Sadikov's resignation. If McGill makes a successful case against SSMU, this could have catastrophic financial consequences for the Students' Society.

Under sections 12 and 13 of the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA)

that defines the legal relationship between SSMU and the University, the Society is considered to have breached the MoA if it violates its own constitution. The University could then give a notice of default, and thirty days following the notice the MoA can be terminated.

In case there is a dispute over the existence of a default, SSMU would have ninety days following the date of the notice to submit the dispute to arbitration. Upon determination that SSMU has violated its constitution in a manner that constitutes a breach of the MoA, the fees collected by the University on behalf of SSMU would be temporarily placed into a trust fund administered by a committee composed of two University representatives, two SSMU representatives, and one jointly selected chairperson.

In other words, McGill could potentially withhold all funds collected through student fees on behalf of SSMU, effectively depriving the Society of most of its income.

Asked to comment on Fortier's pressure tactics, SSMU VP University Affairs Erin Sobat condemned them unequivocally.

“This is an unprecedented and irresponsible violation of the political autonomy of student associations,” said Sobat. “The administration is placing funding for vital student-run services at risk while undermining the integrity of decision-making channels already in place to respond to these issues.”

At a meeting on the morning of February 17, Fortier reportedly put further pressure on Sadikov to resign.

“This level of interference in student government is a new low for the University,” Sadikov told The Daily. “The Principal made it very clear that what she cares about in this situation is bending to political pressure from donors and alumni, rather than acting in the best interest of the campus

community and respecting the decisions of the student groups affected.”

“This is an unprecedented and irresponsible violation of the political autonomy of student associations. The administration is placing funding for vital student-run services at risk while undermining the integrity of decision-making channels already in place to respond to these issues.”

—Erin Sobat  
SSMU VP University Affairs

### Tweet controversy

On Monday, February 6, Sadikov, himself Jewish, tweeted “punch a zionist [sic] today” from his personal Twitter account. In the ensuing days, the tweet has been widely circulated both within the McGill community and around the world, arousing a storm of outrage and threats against Sadikov, as well as calls for his resignation from student politics. Sadikov

currently sits on the Legislative Councils of both SSMU and the Arts Undergraduate Society (AUS), as well as on the BoD, which is SSMU's highest governing body.

At a meeting of the BoD which took place on Monday, February 13, the decision was ultimately made to reject a motion to impeach Sadikov from his position on that body.

However, the BoD voted in favour of censuring him, releasing a public statement to this effect on Thursday, February 16. Citing the harm caused as a result of Sadikov's tweet, the BoD declared it their considered belief that Sadikov had demonstrated remorse, as well as a sincere commitment to “[working] towards repairing the harm caused to the McGill community.”

The BoD's statement also included an apology from Sadikov himself, in which he affirmed his commitment to “expanding [his] knowledge on Zionism by continuing and facilitating [...] conversations, both within Jewish communities and in dialogue with Palestinian voices, based on a shared commitment to social justice and human rights.” Sadikov also agreed to “personally reach out to those who have felt harmed as a result of [his] tweet, including members of Zionist groups.”

### Recent developments

On Friday February 17, roughly an hour before the initial 3 p.m. deadline set out by Fortier, the SSMU executive team released a statement in which they complied with the administration's demands and asked for Sadikov to “resign from his position as a Director [of the SSMU BoD] and as an Arts Representative to the Legislative Council.” This stands in contradiction to the position taken by the BoD on February 13. The BoD is the highest governing body and four SSMU executives sit on it.

Fortier herself replied to a request for comment from The Daily on Fri-

day afternoon. She stated in an email that at Wednesday's meeting with the executive team, she and her colleagues had simply “explained that the SSMU had an obligation to abide by the terms of its own constitution,” and “shared [their] strong belief” that the executives should ask Sadikov to resign.

“While we normally do not recommend a course of action to the SSMU leadership,” wrote Fortier, “this situation is exceptional. With any incitement to violence, it is our duty to intervene.”

When a follow-up question pointed out that the tweet had not been intended as an incitement to violence, Fortier replied that “regardless of the intention behind the Tweet [sic], it caused members of our community to feel anxious and unsafe.”

“We normally do not recommend a course of action to the SSMU leadership, this situation is exceptional. With any incitement to violence, it is our duty to intervene.”

—Suzanne Fortier  
McGill Principal

As of Friday night, no further developments on this story have come to light; however, the online version of this article will be updated as necessary, and more coverage of the controversy surrounding Sadikov's tweet will be forthcoming.

## This week in Unfit to Print: The Daily's radio show

### Trans Trenderz & Black to the Future 2

Viola Chen spoke to Lucas Charlie Rose and King Giselle about exciting happenings at their record label Tranz Trenderz, which brings trans musical talent to the spotlight.

The label's upcoming event this month 'Black to the Future 2' is the sequel in the Black History (Future) Month duology, held in collaboration with the #FrootsInDakar series presented by Strange Froots. The two-part miniseries showcases amazing Black talent from Montreal and beyond. Their first event will take place at La Vitrola on February 25th.

### re:asian & Problematizing Asian Identities

Coco Zhou spoke to Elysse Cloma and Michael Stewart, editors of the content platform re:asian, regarding heterogenous Asian identities, intersectional realities, and sites of solidarity with Black and Indigenous communities.

re:asian seeks to continuously navigate Asianness within contexts of white supremacy, settler colonialism, and other forms of power and marginalization.

### Stolen Wages at Déli Sokolow

Nineteen former workers of Déli Sokolow formed The Committee for the Reclamation of Stolen Wages in response to systematic exploitation from the deli's owners. To date, the committee is collectively owed over \$7100 in unpaid wages.

Viola Chen spoke to two former workers on the committee as well as community organizer and scholar Fred Burril about labour precarity and exploitation in relation to small business organizational structures, particularly ones that boast political solidarity and sensitivity.

# We must all stand with Tibet

Chinese colonialism cannot continue to be ignored

**MAX HONIGMANN, KHANDO LANGRY & TY CARY**  
Commentary Writers

The present North American political context is defined by the perpetuation of deep fear, factual inaccuracy, and the subordination of Otherness. It is one characterized by the struggles of neo-liberalism and the politics of greed and fracture which accompany it. In the wake of the recent American election, radical right-wing political projects to limit migrant and refugee rights, and complete destructive pipeline projects such as the Dakota Access Pipeline have made this social reality unquestionably explicit. Even if today's situation may seem unique in recent Canadian and American memories, the projects of the present are mere contributions to a much broader global trend towards unrestrained growth and private ownership. Tibet seems perhaps an unlikely place from which to understand the challenges afflicting today's North American context, though the sustained struggle of its traditional inhabitants offers a model for resilience in the face of powerful oppressive institutions.

In 1950, The People's Republic of China invaded Tibet and by the end of 1951 had annexed the entire Tibetan Plateau. The young Dalai Lama, who serves as the spiritual and temporal leader of the Tibetan nation, sought common ground with the occupying power to no avail. On March 10, 1959, tensions culminated in Lhasa, Tibet's capital, leading to massive uprisings, during which more than 10,000 people are believed to have been killed. Following these uprisings, the Dalai Lama fled his ancestral homeland to exile in India, followed by around 80,000 Tibetans. The Indian city of Dharamsala is now home to both the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration: the governing authority which Tibetans consider legitimate. Due to its significance in the collective Tibetan memory, March 10 now serves as an international day of resistance against China's abusive colonialism.

Lhasa, the historical religious and political capital of Tibet, lies in an area designated by the Chinese as the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). Despite what the name suggests, the region's government largely advances Chinese Communist Party (CPC) directives through a local "people's congress" designed by and answering to the CPC. In order to have any real influence in local politics, Tibetans must join their local Communist Party branch, where the atheism required for membership effectively prohibits representation for the Buddhist majority. International labor and human rights organizations are categorically banned from working in the region, while access for foreign journalists and diplomats



*Demonstrators in front of the Canadian Parliament.*

COURTESY OF THE CANADA TIBET COMMITTEE

is extremely limited and restricted only to government-approved areas.

Despite the façade of modernization propagated by the Chinese government, Tibet is one of the most severely repressed places in the world. The region ranks at the bottom of Freedom House's 2016 'Freedom in the World index,' second only to Syria. Acts as harmless as possessing a photo of the Dalai Lama are met with arrest and beatings, while political dissidents are routinely silenced with lengthy prison sentences and torture. This has led to a frustrating tension within Tibetan society: while the Dalai Lama's pacifist message emphasizes nonviolent resistance, avenues for such resistance have been blocked off by the Chinese regime.

Both culturally and naturally, Tibet is under profound threat. At three miles above sea level, Tibet is the source of several of Asia's major rivers, which leads to its popular characterization as the 'roof of the world.' The detrimental effects of climate change are often first and most intensely experienced within the region through droughts, which devastate local agricultural practices, melting of permafrost grounds which form the foundations for countless communities, and the loss of a myriad of keystone species which provide a crucial source of food in the harsh environment. More directly, Chinese presence within the region has radically disrupted environmental autonomy through the development of invasive damming projects and by way of pollution via mining industries and nuclear waste disposal sites throughout remote portions of Tibet.

Such kinds of ecological domination must necessarily be conceived

of as inseparable from social forms of oppression, wherein Tibetans are limited in their freedom to practice indigenous spirituality and Tibetan Buddhism. Since the Chinese Cultural Revolution from the mid-1960s to 70s, 99 per cent of Buddhist monasteries have been closed at the hands of the state. Most recently, China has begun the destruction of Larung Gar, one of the largest religious communities in the world populated by over 10,000 practicing Buddhists. Due to the nonviolent teachings of Tibetan Buddhism, a radical act of political protest has been popularized: self-immolation. In response to the desecration of their way of life, 146 Tibetans aged 16 to 64 have self-immolated since 2009.

Because of their lack of political rights and meaningful representation in formal governing structures, Tibetans have had to look to alternative forms of mobilization. Direct action such as disruptive protesting has become the norm, as the only practical way to seek change. Within Tibet, significant actions have been undertaken, not by political elites but rather by everyday Tibetans. Outside of Tibet, a transnational social movement has transpired thanks to the advances of social media. Tibetans in exile, despite being scattered across the globe, have set up various issue-oriented interest groups such as the Canada Tibet Committee and Students for a Free Tibet. Unfortunately, countries consistently disregard the situation within Tibet and continue to treat China with deference. In fact, due to Chinese pressure, South Africa has consistently refused the Dalai Lama entry, notably for fellow Nobel Peace Prize laureate Desmond

Tutu's 80th Birthday celebrations in 2011 as well as for the 14th World Summit of World Peace Laureates of 2014. Other countries to act as such include Mongolia and Norway.

Ultimately, globalization has acted as an empowering force for the Chinese state and has granted it considerable commercial, economic and diplomatic power on the international stage. Canada has contributed to Tibet's contemporary challenges in the form of extractive mining developments. Companies previously financed by Canada, such as China Gold, aid the project of colonialism and environmental devastation through mining techniques involving the pollution of local water sources, resource extraction, and exploitive labor practices. Tibetans hired to work at these mines frequently face dire health consequences and become cyclically impoverished as they come to depend on the meager wages they receive from the industry.

In the early 1970s, Canada was one of only two Western nations (the other being Switzerland) to offer resettlement to Tibetan refugees. However, Canada has had a mixed record, choosing to adopt a foreign policy of "principled pragmatism" with respect to China. This has translated into a careful diplomatic balancing act aimed at appeasing the Chinese government on the one hand, while maintaining the carefully cultivated image of a country that recognizes human rights as a cornerstone of its international relations. In fact, having de-linked human rights and trade to the point of withdrawing support for a United Nations Commission on Human Rights resolution on China in 1997, Canada has effectively excused itself from put-

ting meaningful pressure on China. The likely-impending free trade deal between our two nations will likely increase Canada's involvement in the economic colonization of Tibet.

China's far-reaching economic and political influence does not mean there is nothing we, as Canadian individuals, can do to sustain the resistance movement. The Chinese government is extremely sensitive about its reputation and sustained pro-Tibet movements here and elsewhere in the world have had a tremendous impact, leading to the release of numerous jailed dissidents. Showing solidarity with the struggle of Tibetans on March 10 sends an important signal to the government of China that the oppression with which they meet Tibet's nonviolent resistance movement is not ignored by the world. Standing with Tibet means standing against injustice and colonialism everywhere. Bhod Gyal!

All are welcome to attend this year's March 10 rally on Parliament Hill. For more information or to find out how you can show solidarity in other ways, please contact the Canada Tibet Committee at [ctcoffice@tibet.ca](mailto:ctcoffice@tibet.ca).

Max Honigmann is a second year Master's student in Concordia's public policy and public administration program. He also works as a research assistant for the Canada Tibet Committee.

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# Eyeliners sharp, lipsticks blue

‘Femmephobia’ is fake, and lacks nuance too

SHIHUAN ZHOU  
Commentary Writer

Content warning: mentions of misogyny, suicidal ideation, sexual harassment and assault, alcoholism, child abuse

Not long ago, Gale\* got into a fight with someone from the queer student group at her school. She voiced her discomfort when the group tried to host an event that was “femmes only.” She got promptly shut down. One of the organizers referred publicly to her concerns as “masc tears” and subsequently joked about flirting with a butch barista in a “self-callout.”

Gale recently got out of an abusive relationship with another woman. Traumatized and dysphoric, she finally found comfort by cutting her hair, getting rid of her feminine clothes, and presenting herself as butch. “Icing on the damn cake,” she said, referring to the organizer’s story about flirting with a butch woman. “[They made] it clear they were referring to butch lesbians as basically men, and so it was hilarious that they were attracted to them. [It’s] straight up objectifying.”

Like Gale, I spent most of my undergrad moving in and out of different activist circles. I am a feminine-presenting person of colour who was designated female at birth, and I’ve been using ‘they’ pronouns exclusively for the past couple of years. I’ve met some of my closest friends while organizing, and I have a great deal of attachment to activist culture. However, I’ve become disillusioned with the gender politics that run rampant within rad queer circles. It’s a politics that is unsubstantiated, ahistorical, and not at all ‘radical.’

At the centre of this politics is the concept of ‘femmephobia.’ An article from good ol’ *Everyday Feminism* defines it as “the fear or hatred of all people [who] are perceived as femme, feminine [...] regardless of their gender.” The author argues that we should recognize femininity as “beautiful, valuable, or strong” and calls for

us to “stop devaluing [anyone] who doesn’t meet some societal stereotype of perfect masculinity.”

To compensate for the cultural devaluation of femininity, we have decided to glorify it as much as possible. Decades following the emergence of queer theory, our activism has gotten to a point where anything and everything can be empowering if we say it is. “Eyeliner so sharp it could kill a man,” we insist. “If you wear your lipstick in the right shade of blue, you’re contributing to the revolution!”

Our uncritical reverence of femininity is a misguided attempt to tackle misogyny. The current conversation about how feminine-presenting people bear the brunt of patriarchal violence fails to account for the experiences of butch and gender non-conforming women, as well as people who may not be women but face specific consequences because they were designated female at birth.

## “A woman like me”

El\* is a self-described “neuroatypical Jewish lesbian” who loved *Star Wars* and baseball as a child. “I was a girl,” they said, “but not a very good one.” It was as if they’d failed “some secret, invisible test.” As a teenager, they tried hard to fix things. “If I style my thick, unruly hair [...] I will be beautiful and worth something,” they told themselves. “If I pluck my defiant eyebrows. If I shave my arm and leg hair every morning. If I start wearing makeup. If I wear the right clothes. If I stop raising my hand so much.”

In high school El started engaging in LGBTQ activism and realized that they didn’t have to be a girl. “I still wanted to be pretty,” they said, “but I wanted to be pretty as a boy, or at least something else.” Like El, I discovered near the end of high school that I didn’t have to identify with the sex I was assigned to at birth. I wasn’t pretty, didn’t know a thing about makeup, and did horribly in my textiles class. I rejoiced in knowing that it was all because I wasn’t a girl – I was “something else.”

Weirdly enough, my relationship to the men in my life didn’t change one bit. When I cut my hair short, my then-boyfriend told me that he preferred me with long hair. I ended up growing it out. When adult men in my family made comments about my body, I told myself that my fear was unwarranted.

El now wears exclusively ‘men’s’ clothing and swaggers a bit when they walk. “I’m usually too scared,” they said, “to even compliment girls out of fear that they’ll find any attention from me unwelcome.” Their more feminine lesbian friends could not relate. El wonders. “Do men [...] agonize like this over the decision to tell a girl she’s cute?”

I’ve become disillusioned with the gender politics that run rampant within rad queer circles. It’s a politics that is unsubstantiated, ahistorical, and not at all ‘radical.’

“Maybe it would be easier for me to be a man,” El admits, “I tried to cope with the crushing realities of misogyny [...] by identifying away from womanhood [...] But I don’t want to be a man. I want to be a woman who looks and acts like me.”

However El and I may identify internally, we move through the world as women. I am almost always read as a woman, and El sometimes gets addressed as a guy. We were raised as girls, or, in El’s words, “girlhood had been assigned to me before I even had a chance to scream at the world for the first time.” Expectations of convention-

al womanhood shape our embodiment, whether we like it or not. ‘Femmephobia’ doesn’t address the fact that femininity is, for us at the very least, not a choice.

By the time she was eight, my mom had been fully tasked with cleaning the house and cooking for the entire family. One time when I was little, my dad drunkenly insulted me in all sorts of creative ways from across the dinner table. My mom said nothing. Maybe she was trying to teach me something. I had yet to learn that her necklaces and heels, that I used to play dress up with, were symbols of submission. Performing femininity, in other words, comes with a demand.

## Say woman, not femme

El told me, “the treatment that I’ve come to expect from the world as a butch lesbian made me wish I could die.” When their then-best friend sent them an article about ‘butch privilege,’ they felt sick. “Was I denying my privilege when I carried my pocketknife with me on the subway just in case? When I avoided public bathrooms as much as possible, expecting to be gawked at in the best-case scenario?”

‘Femmephobia’ is a deeply flawed attempt to name the cause of gendered violence. As a form of analysis, it makes the gross mistake of separating femininity from womanhood. Although the demands of femininity are transient and in no way natural, they are tied up conceptually with womanhood through socialization, which begins as soon as the doctor declares, “it’s a girl!”

From that moment, built-in mechanisms exist on every social level that make sure women are to be exploited for their reproductive and domestic labour at all times. We are obliged to spend large sums of money on cosmetics and an extraordinary level of effort in keeping up with beauty rituals that are time-consuming and painful. We can’t simply opt out of these expectations because we’ve been trained to accept them as good and desir-

able, and there are material consequences if we do refuse them, which includes everything from harassment and assault to lack of job opportunities.

I want to make it clear that I have no issue with people who present as feminine because they can’t afford otherwise. If you’re racialized, fat, trans, disabled, and you need to conform to conventions of femininity for safety, I feel for you – I really do. I’m sorry that we live in a world where deviation from ‘correct’ performances of gender results in various levels of corporeal violence. The fear of punishment for nonconformity is real and devastating.

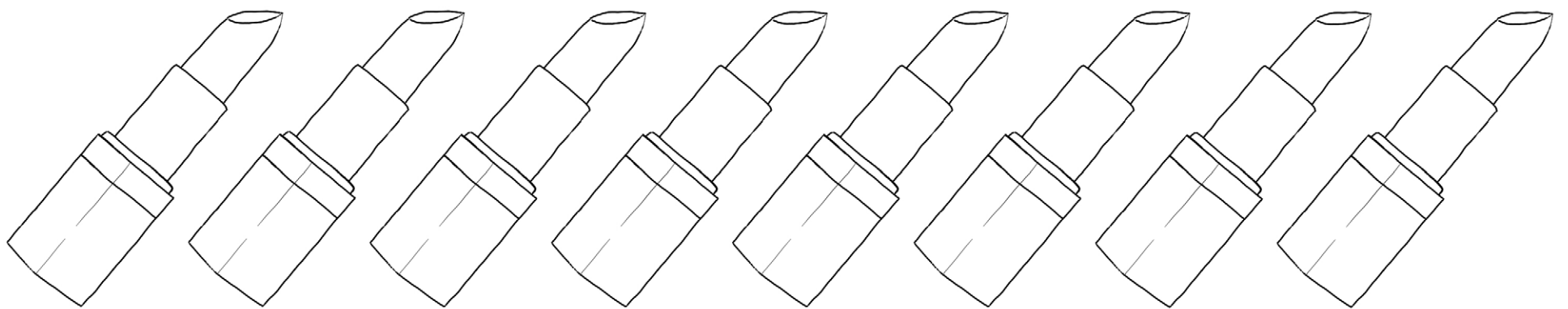
Nor am I chastising those who find it meaningful or fun to reclaim femininity for themselves. For those of us who are denied access to traditional notions of femininity, it can feel validating to be in dresses and heels, all powder and glitter.

At the end of the day, we need to all agree that a structural, historical analysis of gender as a system of domination is more accurate than any theoretical framework that deals entirely with language and representation. Dismantling essentialist ideas about sex and gender does not end with changing our language, not in a world where women’s bodies remain a primary site of patriarchal control. This is not to say that using the right words is unimportant, but addressing the material reality of oppression should always be our top priority.

“I am hated,” El said, “not because I am feminine. I am hated because I am a woman and because I am not feminine.” Next time you get the urge to substitute ‘women’ for ‘femmes,’ note the assumptions you’re making about people whose experiences you don’t understand. The scars we carry for not being and loving men – not until the end of patriarchy would we need another name for this. The word is misogyny.

\*Names have been changed.

To contact the author, email [commentary@mcgilldaily.com](mailto:commentary@mcgilldaily.com)



# What mental illness is 'supposed to look like'

## Reducing stereotypes around the 'proper' ways to be mentally ill

**NADIA BOACHIE**  
The McGill Daily

*Content warning: mental illness, treatment*

An alarming 66 per cent of undergraduate students at McGill report feeling “academic distress” over the course of the school year. Currently, we are being hit with waves of midterms and papers, and soon we’ll be struck with the tsunami known as finals season. Paired with a lack of sleep and excessive amounts of caffeine intake, this academic pressure can create a stressful environment, and is just one of many factors that can trigger emotional turmoil for students at McGill. 90 per cent of students at McGill reported feeling overwhelmed at some point over the course of the year, 56 per cent reported feeling overwhelming anxiety, and 40 per cent reported feeling so depressed it was difficult to function. Repetitive bouts of stress can have different underlying causes

for each student. The competitive academic environment can exacerbate emotional stress. Mental illness manifests in different ways, but those who do not have stereotypical and traditional embodiments of mental illness, or those who are deemed not ‘sick enough,’ are not taken seriously and are often overlooked.

The overwhelming sense of competition among students that exists at institutions like McGill contribute to high levels of academic stress. Among students, a hierarchy forms: those who continue to excel as they previously had and those who find themselves adjusting to their new environment at a slower pace. Undergraduate students are at a stage in their lives where they are attempting to create a platform for themselves. The general idea is that success now will lead to successful endeavors after graduation. McGill students find themselves associating poor academic performance today with a pessimistic outlook for the future. The anticipation and perfectionism that manifests in

McGill students are traits that have been linked to the development of anxiety and depressive disorders.

Students often need external assistance from mental health resources to readjust or learn self-regulation strategies to help cope with emotional distress. It is imperative that students who feel they require mental health services are not denied so because they don’t qualify as ‘mentally ill enough.’ It is imperative that those who are not considered ‘ill enough’ receive care before they are in crisis. Some people go through stressful periods with little difficulty and arrive at the finish line unscathed and there are a few who suffer minor stumbles along the way. But some of us suffer from too many falls, cuts and bruises during the marathon that is an undergraduate degree. Some run through the pain without giving any obvious indication of distress. Others outwardly grimace in pain indicating to others that there is cause for concern. Some find themselves falling behind in the race and create such a gap between themselves and their peers that it becomes hard to ever catch up without external assistance. There is a sort of mental health care rationing that exist at McGill’s Mental Health Clinic. Although they try to provide for as many students as they can, they place priority on only those student who need ‘urgent care,’ while also dismissing many of these students as ‘too ill,’ citing that McGill is “not a hospital.” When McGill students decide to reach out to external resources available on campus, often those who are deemed too high functioning -- the marathoners who may not outwardly grimace in pain -- are not given the appropriate attention they deserve because the don’t fall into the ‘sweet spot’ McGill sees as fit for treatment.

It is imperative that students who feel they require mental health services are not denied so because they don’t qualify as ‘mentally ill enough’.

So what does poor mental health or mental illness look like? Researchers have highlighted genetic and neu-



NADIA BOACHIE | The McGill Daily

ronal variation between individuals based on race, gender, socioeconomic background to name a few. There is no definite answer to the question of what mental illness should look like. Scientists acknowledge that the variation in the human brain means that mental illness will naturally manifest in a variety of ways, but this understanding doesn’t translate similarly in our communities. Several studies have come up with reliable evidence for the deleterious effect of racism on mental health. Similarly, there is evidence of poor mental health in LG-BTQ communities, in comparison to heterosexuals. There is a correlation between lower socioeconomics and the quality of your mental health. We need to acknowledge that mental illness does not have the same causes or look the same among different communities at McGill.

We have all found ourselves guilty of having preconceived notions of what poor mental health looks like. We find it difficult to believe that seemingly happy, ‘high functioning’ individuals may actually be suffering from a mental illness. There are stereotypes that those suffering from mental illness are violent, or must behave in what is often described using pejorative terms like ‘crazy’ or ‘nuts.’ People often wait until these extreme symptoms of mental illness become evident before taking an individual seriously. People believe those with mental illness have bizarre disruptive behaviour or are unable to communicate with others. People with mental illness can be valuable members of society. We expect all mentally ill people to embody their experiences in the same ways, ways that are palatable.

We have spent years battling the stigma of mental disorders. Over the last five years, there has been a 35 per cent increase in students seeking help from McGill Mental Health Services, which is indicative of more students willing to seek help. Yet there are still people who suffer in silence, and are not allowed access to the resources they require. Students have reported being turned away from receiving one-on-one mental health services because they were “too high functioning.” The strain on resources at McGill mental health and counselling services, along with budget alterations and structural changes, have left many students neglected and disillusioned. The school is currently operating with the belief that only certain manifestations of mental illness need immediate medical attention- this does not take into consideration students who are on the margins of the community, or whose mental illnesses exhibit themselves in unconventional ways. Those deemed high functioning are not prioritized until they exhibit extreme signs of urgency which mirror what mental illness stereotypically looks like.

Destigmatization of mental disorders through open discussions does not, by default, allow for their trivialization. Part of the ongoing stigma of mental illness is its constant invalidation. It can be dangerous to get caught in the stigma that homogenizes mental illness and defines it using stringent stereotyped ideas.

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## Mini-AGM & Call for Candidates

All members of the Daily Publications Society (DPS), publisher of The McGill Daily and Le Délit, are cordially invited to its **Mini-AGM:**

**Wednesday March 29<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30 p.m.**  
**Location TBA**

The presence of candidates to the DPS Board of Directors is strongly advised.

**The DPS is currently accepting candidatures for its Board of Directors.**

Positions must be filled by five McGill students, duly registered for the upcoming Fall 2017 & Winter 2018 semesters, as well as a Community Representative, who are able to sit from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Board members gather at least once a monthly to discuss the management of the newspapers & websites, and also to make important administrative decisions.

To apply, please visit [dailypublications.org/how-to-apply/](http://dailypublications.org/how-to-apply/)

**Deadline: Tuesday, March 28<sup>th</sup> @ 5 p.m.**



## JEWISH IDENTITY IN A PICKLE

### Affirming non- and anti-Zionist Jewish folks at McGill

Written by McGill Students' Chapter of Independent Jewish Voices | Visual by Marina Dujurdjevic

**I**ndependent Jewish Voices (IJV) McGill is a group of anti- and non-Zionist Jewish students on McGill campus.

In speaking about the origins of Zionism and contemporary anti-Semitism in this article, we have chosen to focus on the experiences and theories of European Jewry. We acknowledge the diversity of experiences, whether those are of violence or of thriving communal life, specifically in the contrasting experiences of Sephardic, Mizrachi, and other Jewish peoples. We also acknowledge the forms of violence and dispossession Zionism has imposed on these communities, like "Operation Magic Carpet" in Yemen, and general erasure from dominant conceptions and narratives of Judaism. For the purpose of discussing mainstream Zionism that evolved from European thinkers, as it is applied in Israel by its government, and how it manifests in North America, we are choosing to focus on Ashkenazi experiences and European political Zionism. However, we hope to acknowledge the failure of mainstream dialogue within and beyond the Jewish community to engage with non-Ashkenazi identities and histories. We hope to include these perspectives as we move forward with IJV McGill's work.

A recent tweet by a student politician, which read "punch a Zionist today," has inflamed

discussion over anti-Zionism, violence, and anti-Semitism at McGill. For many of us, this has been a difficult and turbulent time to be both a Jewish student, and an anti/non-Zionist student on campus. We would like to begin this article with the recognition that the tweet may incite violence against visibly Jewish people and Jewish communities in Montreal and beyond. We hear and support calls for the necessity of emotional, physical, and mental safety from anti-Semitic violence.

The conflation of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism within and beyond the McGill community denies us, as young Jewish folks, the diversity of our Diasporic Jewish identities. We denounce anti-Semitism, and recognize the lived realities of the concerns expressed by the Jewish community. However, this conflation fails to recognize anti-Semitism – an attack on members of the Jewish faith and peoplehood – as separate from criticism of the actions of the Israeli state, in particular its illegal occupation of Palestinian land. The ongoing oppression of other peoples is not a project with the right to invoke Jewish peoplehood or Diasporic Jewish claims in our names. In integrating Israel into the fabrics of our communities, the plurality of political convictions held by Jewish peoples are erased, silencing anti-Zionist voices.

It is vital to state that anti-Semitism was and continues to be a violent threat to Jewish people and communities worldwide – and leftist anti-oppressive spaces are certainly not free from such anti-Semitism. However, it is also vital to note: modern day systemic oppression cannot be justified by historic discrimination experienced by others. In coming from histories of oppression, we are tied to social justice struggles; as Rabbi Jill Jacobs explains, the "obligation to show ourselves as having experienced discrimination [...] means continuously working to alleviate the suffering of others." We are a collective of young Jewish folk identifying as non- or anti-Zionists, who share principles that are grounded not only in political conviction, but also in ethical imperatives of our shared Judaism. In that sense, we define non/anti-Zionism as a spectrum of political, moral, and religious views that encompass an opposition to the Zionist project, whether it be through Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) against the Israeli state, actively fighting the notion that Israel is the Jewish homeland, or criticizing Israel for its injustices. While we each identify as non- or anti-Zionist Jews, we acknowledge that this article does not speak for all non- or anti-Zionist Jewish people.

In this piece, we aim to critically assess the Zionist theory from

which today's North American Zionist communities and actions are grounded, and from which the principles embodied by the government of Israel originate. But beyond just discussing ideology, we aim to share our personal stories of how the conflation of anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism has harmed us.

Students identifying as Zionists have institutional resources and familial support systems at their disposal. As folk that face alienation from our greater Jewish communities and even our families for our solidarity activism, we are systematically and routinely denied these supports. We have expended tremendous emotional labour to publish our views and experiences, and ask that our Jewish identities be respected.

#### Untangling historical Zionism and Jewish identity

"The Jewish State," a pamphlet published by the Jewish reporter Theodor Herzl in 1896, aimed to galvanize Jewish people to adopt a national identity and engage with the Zionist project. The text was written in the greater context of widespread anti-Semitism throughout Europe, and in the specific context of the anti-Semitic persecution of a French military captain in what is known as 'The Dreyfus Affair.' The contemporary manifestation of anti-Semitism that

Herzl responded to was new and radical; it departed from medieval myths of wicked Jewish crimes against Christian Europe, such as the alleged Jewish ritualistic murder of children, or the Blood Libels, and conspiracies against governments. As rising ethnocentric nationalism, the emergence of eugenics, and continentalism were embedded into European culture through academic acceptance and institutional normalization, so too were they embedded into anti-Semitism; the Jewish people became a singular, and more importantly, 'inferior ethnic group,' irreconcilable with European ethnic and societal standards. Anti-Semitism pervaded all communities, from rural peasantry to the highest ranks of European intelligentsia. Violent persecution and nonviolent discrimination were widespread, and many Jewish people were denied their rights to bodily safety, economic security through employment and property, and freedom of movement. It is within this context that Herzl began his work on the Zionist project.

At the time of its conception, Zionism and the intent to leave Europe and form a Jewish state was not a widely accepted political ideology amongst European Jewish communities. Parallel to many other settler-colonialist projects, Zionism was spearheaded by the elite – in this case, the

upper-class Jewish intelligentsia of Central and Western Europe. Poor, mainly Eastern European Jewish communities were largely excluded from the Zionist intellectual project, but were instead expected to perform the labour of settling the land, wherever or whenever that was to be.

Diasporic Jewry were proud of their status in the European secular world – whether that pride was grounded in their insular and rabbinical religious communities, their assimilation into the European intelligentsia, or their radical political work. Many of these Jewish folk did not hold an intrinsic yearning to return to Israel, as Zionists often assert. It is important to note that many disenfranchised and oppressed Eastern European Jewish folk tended to favour workers' organisations like the Bund and advocated for Yiddish Socialism, a Jewish workers movement, rather than Zionism.

Many contemporary Jewish people have noticed, as we do, that much Zionist theory harnesses the same nationalistic, ethnocentric rhetoric utilized by the anti-Semitic European powers at the time – such as the portrayal of Jewish peoples as genetically of one ethnicity or race. These similarities expanded through the political discourse of the early- and mid-1900s. However, as European powers became more threatening and violent leading into World War II, many Jews took comfort in the adoption of Jewish unity as a means for Jewish strength. However, through this process, Jewish oneness, a foundational and ancient element of Jewish religious thought: כל ישראל ערבים זה לזה, became conflated with nationalism and Zionism. Echoing early political Zionists like Herzl, contemporary groups like the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and the Israeli government use this notion of a singular Jewish people to reinforce the myth of unanimous and unwavering Jewish support for the state. This narrative of oneness, rooted in the unification efforts of early Zionism, is a harmful tool of the Zionist project imposed to erase Jewish ethnic and lived diversity.

### Zionism today and the "Palestinian Issue"

Contemporary Zionists draw upon the constructed concept of Jewish unity to suggest that all Jewish peoples are treated with equity within the state of Israel. However, from the initial entrance of these peoples into the land, they have been subjugated and segregated. For example, Mizrahi Jewish children were subject to unhealthy levels of radiation at the hands of Ashkenazi officials. Although the Israeli government long denied it, they recently admitted to forcefully sterilizing Ethiopian Jewish immigrant women

upon entering the country, and the Ethiopian Jewish community in Israel experiences rates of police brutality six times higher than their communities' proportion to the population in the country. From its establishment, oppression has been evident in the social fabric of Israel: day-to-day discrimination and threats of violence are a prominent component of the narratives of non-Ashkenazi Jewry who immigrate to or live in Israel.

***"The obligation to show ourselves as having experienced discrimination [...] means continuously working to alleviate the suffering of others."***

—Rabbi Jill Jacobs

Similarly, the Zionist project responds to the 'Palestinian issue' in a variety of ways: through the delegitimization of Palestinian people, nationhood, and citizenship, the depiction of the Palestinian people as 'primitive' and a violent 'threat' to the Jewish state, and the construction of a paternalistic fallacy that the State of Israel would better serve the Palestinians than the Palestinians themselves. In reality, Israeli Jewish citizens are placed in a position of institutional power and hold privilege over Palestinians; this imbalance of power manifests in a multitude of ways which systematically oppress Palestinians. Israel continues to hold Palestinian youths under administrative detention and deny youths access to education, Israeli forces demolish Palestinian homes, and the Israeli government censors, arrests, and abuses Palestinian journalists and activists.

As Jewish folks with relative privilege in Israeli society, we cannot pretend to comprehend the experiences of Palestinians in occupied lands and do not wish to speak over their narratives. However, there is a discriminatory nature of Israel which we can speak to: particularly focusing on its privileging of white Ashkenazi (European) Jews and creating a class-structured society in which Soviet Jews, Sephardic Jews, Mizrahi Jews, North-African Jews, and African Jews are oppressed, marginalized and exploited. The Zionist project largely ignores the inequities of varying ethnic groups of Jewish folk in Israeli society and presents Israel as the protector of all Jews. The patriarchal saviour

narrative of Israel as a safe haven for the Jewish people inspires steady Jewish Diasporic support for Zionism.

In order to further concretize Diasporic and domestic Jewish support of Zionism, the Zionist project infuses their political agenda into the architecture of Jewish religious life. However, political Zionism can be further distinguished from Judaism through some religious justifications for a Jewish Diaspora or Exile, known in the Torah as "Ge'ulah." We would like to preface these religious claims with an acknowledgement that the following is not the only "true" religious interpretation, but also that these views are far from fringe. Following the Roman destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE, some Rabbis re-interpreted G-d's promise of the land of Israel and Judea to Abraham as a pact, and concluded that only the Messiah can rule a Jewish nation. Under this interpretation, until the Messiah is sent, humans cannot create or self-govern a Jewish state.

Zionism has invaded religious practice, where those forms of prayer and practice that are centered around Israel are deemed superior. In contrast, non-Ashkenazi modes of prayer and practice are deemed 'impure.' Zionism has, through time, modified all practices regardless of geographic or ethnic affiliation, damaging and erasing significant elements of them. Diasporic Jewish spaces and practices should not be invalidated by the Zionist project, nor should acceptance into these spaces be conditional on support of Zionist ideology.

### We will not be erased: Anti/non-Zionist Jewish voices

Zionism is woven into the fabric of Jewish life and tradition, permeating familial, religious, secular, institutional, and emotional aspects of Jewish existence. Jewish day schools are the birthplace of many young Jewish folks' strong Jewish identities; they are a place for teaching prayer, spreading culture, and providing a foundation for Jewish children to carry on the Jewish tradition. Unfortunately, these academic institutions use their position to perpetuate the Zionist agenda and encourage impressionable students to subscribe to Zionism. Like many other mainstream institutions, most Jewish day schools tend to erase the differences between a Zionist identity and a Jewish identity. Furthermore, Zionist conditioning occurs in the home, where Jewish families will preach their support and love for Israel as a distant homeland.

**Hanna\***, who grew up in a Russian Jewish family in the U.S., recounts her story of the pickle jar: "It was the second night of

Passover: I had just sung the four questions, our plates were dotted with red wine, our bellies audibly growling. As the Seder came to a close, my mother left to carry steaming bowls of matzo ball soup in from the kitchen. She also brought a large pickle jar to the table. As my relatives began to slurp, the pickle jar was passed around, and it came to me. My eyes fell to its label: 'Made in Israel.' My mother and I made eye contact as I passed the jar to my brother. Shocked, she said in her heavy Russian accent, 'You're not eating pickles?' I was ashamed, and angered. I thought to myself, 'there are so many varieties on the shelf, mama – why choose Israeli imported pickles?' How was I to explain my logic of abstaining, or my involvement in the boycott of Israeli products at the dinner table, in front of my grandparents? And who was I? A privileged girl, born to immigrant parents, who could choose what to eat, and choose to politically disengage from certain brined foods. Had I taken it too far? I myself, was in a pickle. The post-dinner kitchen clean up was icy, and my pickle-refusal has come up again, many times, as proof of me 'turning my back' on 'our past.' Yet again, Jewish culture was being placed inside an Israeli pickle jar."



**Hadar\***, a member of IJV McGill and a Jewish day school graduate, explains that her experience with Zionist indoctrination started in kindergarten:

"With a Zionist Israeli father and a Zionist Canadian mother, I was enrolled in a Zionist institution by the ripe age of three. As a young girl, I recall looking up to Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers with pride and hoping to join them one day in defence of 'my country.' Throughout elementary school, we performed plays about the state of Israel, wrote short stories about summers in Tel Aviv, and sang songs expressing our emotional connection to Zion. I distinctly recall an experience that I had in grade four: our Hebrew instructors decided to take a break from studying *dik-duk*, or grammar, to screen a film. We saw Kershner's 1977 *Raid on Entebbe*; a film depicting the historical hijacking of an Air France aircraft by the Palestinian Liberation

Organisation. As an impressionable Jewish child, this film and our discussion of it thoroughly frightened me and taught me to fear 'Muslim-appearing' peoples and erased the necessary context of Palestinian resistance to conditions of oppression. I have since worked to unlearn this early Islamophobia, but so much of my elementary schooling and domestic environment conditioned me to view Muslim Arabs as inherently bad and Israeli Zionists as ultimately heroic.

Continuing on with my Zionist activism, I joined my day school's own AIPAC club, assumed a leadership role in it, and travelled to Washington D.C. to lobby for the pro-Israel super-PAC. I didn't buy into it unequivocally – I questioned the Islamophobic speakers and presentations and was wary of evangelical Christians that preached their support for AIPAC – but I felt proud, empowered, and part of a larger purpose. I admired the Columbia and Barnard students that led a workshop on combating anti-Zionism – in which they implied that this work also combated anti-Semitism – on college campuses. I struggled with my connection to Judaism in a religious sense, but I thought that I had finally found my place in the Jewish community; my Zionism was my Judaism.

In Beit Knesset (temple), school, summer camp, and extra-curriculars, I was conditioned to unequivocally support Israel. After reading about the atrocities of Operation Protective Edge, when over 2,100 Palestinians were killed in the Gaza Strip by Israeli airstrikes, I completely abandoned my Zionism by the start of grade 11. I knew that my morals and my values hadn't a shred in common with those of the Zionists, who could avert their eyes from or even justify the massacre. Through interaction with anti-oppressive Jewish communities that acted as alternatives to my Jewish school community, I realised my Judaism once more and reclaimed my Zionist-free identity. However, my immediate community was still Zionist. I sat through my mandatory Israel-Advocacy course as a senior in high school as a *mishloach*, or representative, from Israel came to inspire us to further support Israel. He asked: 'Is Israel a racist country?' Expecting an overwhelming 'NO,' I raised my hand and curtly answered, 'yes.' My fellow students looked at me in awe, processed my answer, and raised their hands to agree with me. I turned to our *mishloach*; I'd never seen a more shocked look on someone's face.

To this day, my views would be met with the same shocked look coupled with an accusation of being a 'self-hating Jew' at any given Zionist institution. I beg these Zionist organisations to

validate and acknowledge that yes, anti-Zionist Jews exist and we are proud of it. I hope for non-Zionist spaces in which Jews can practise. I hope for Jewish schools that do not condition their students to support Israel. However, spaces on college campuses like Independent Jewish Voices are a step in the right direction for the creation of Jewish communities free of Zionist ideology.”

**Reba\***, an IJV McGill member, recounts her journey towards separating Zionism from her Jewish identity:

“In pursuing an active Jewish identity in the Diaspora, I am repeatedly confronted by a frustrating message that Jewish fulfillment is only possible in Israel. It was only recently, in the past couple of years, that I felt able to call myself religious even though I have no intentions of associating my Jewish identity with Zionism. My whole life, I learned that I should feel ‘the most Jewish’ and the most ‘at home’ when in Israel, despite its distance and difference from anywhere I’ve lived long-term. I grew up being taught that the true uniting force of Jews all around the world was a shared ground, a sovereign land. I now find this argument, that is extremely normalized in Jewish communities, offensive and invalidating to the work I do in the Jewish community in

the Diaspora. When I spent nine months living in Israel at the age of 18, I was still confused about how Judaism could mean so many different things to different people, yet by living within certain borders, we were fulfilling ‘the most important Jewish demand.’ It angers me that Zionist rhetoric conflates a religious, spiritual identity with nationalism. As I have personally stopped holding nationalist ideology and supporting borders, Zionism sits in contradiction with more and more of my personal values.

**Yet again, Jewish culture was being placed inside and Israeli pickle jar.**

—Hanna\*

I’ve always connected to Jewish texts, holidays, and practices, and felt satisfied as an active member of Jewish communities in Montreal and Vancouver. However, the conflation of Judaism with Zionism gives rise to a disappointing erasure of Jewish practice and culture that occurs in the Diaspora independently from Israel. Consequently, claims of anti-Semitism in the face of anti-Zionist efforts have struck me as reductive and misguided. In response to criticisms of Israel, Jewish communities will tend to defend the rights and safety of Jews. If we are trying to defend the rights and safety of Jews, why is there not a

more inclusive, diverse Jewish community on campus? Why don’t we recognize the role of Yiddish and Arabic in Jewish history? Why don’t we promote celebrations of Jewish holidays outside of Ashkenazi, European practices?

Furthermore, conflating anti-Semitism with anti-Zionism allows for an acceptance and ignorance of Israel’s violations of human rights. Rising to protect the rights and safety of Jews in response to anti-Zionism ignores Israel’s settler-colonialist oppression and violence. These kinds of responses have often left me wondering what Israel Zionist groups even support, since the country they choose to defend is an idealized, peaceful land of milk and honey – so very far from the brutal reality on the ground. Zionist structures will often pick and choose what parts of Israel they portray and validate; on Birthright trips, for example, Israeli tourism is glorified and violence is hidden. Continuing to live with such a narrow understanding of Israel will only continue the oppression of Palestinian people. Jews must be honest with themselves about Israel, for its violations of human rights does warrant a global response that is not inherently anti-Semitic.”

**Anti-Zionism on campus**

Recently, the *Algemeiner*, a Jewish and Zionist paper, named McGill as one of the “worst universities for Jewish students” in North America. The article argues that the McGill student

body largely supports BDS, and is therefore anti-Semitic and hostile toward Jews. Due to its refusal to publish Zionist articles, The McGill Daily has been accused of anti-Semitism by the *Algemeiner*, as well as in articles by B’nai Brith Canada, McGill Hillel, Honest Reporting, and other Zionist organisations. This criticism is rooted in the above conflation, as Zionist is assumed as “Jewish,” and thus criticism of Israel is anti-Semitism. This continues to silence non/anti-Zionist Jewish voices – many of which have appeared in the pages of *The Daily*. By clarifying the distinction between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism, we would like to show that such accusations of anti-Semitism against *The Daily* are baseless, and that refusing to publish Zionist opinions is compatible with an anti-oppressive mandate.



Dominant narratives that conflate Zionism with Judaism result in the marginalization and negation of these non or anti-Zionist Jewish voices. At McGill, Jewish community groups either

take an assumed Zionist stance or are ‘apolitical’ – which means upholding the status quo of conflating Zionist and Jewish identities. Apart from Independent Jewish Voices McGill, there is no other non/anti-Zionist Jewish group on campus organising around and speaking openly against Zionist abuses of power. Furthermore, there is not a single other Jewish institution on campus which has committed to a radical anti-oppressive mandate. Radical Jewish folks are left without the familial, communal, material, financial, and institutional support or resources with which to create radical Jewish spaces. Even when recognized, the non/anti-Zionist Jew identity continues to be a taboo on campus, which IJV McGill seeks to deconstruct and combat. The emergence of IJV McGill and non/anti-Zionist spaces for Jews echoes a growing transnational Jewish resistance movement, which includes organisations like Jewish Voice for Peace in the U.S. or Jewdas in the UK.

Independent Jewish Voices McGill is here to affirm that we will not be silenced. Opposing Zionism, an oppressive and violent execution of colonisation, is not an act of anti-Semitism. Furthermore, we aim to challenge the unquestioned harm inflicted on Jewish folks and communities by the Zionist project. We are proud Jewish folks who stand in solidarity with Palestine, *The Daily*, and criticisms of Israel and Zionism.

\*Names have been changed.

SPORTS

**Are we waiting for another scandal?**

McGill Athletics and sexual violence after 2013

**PANIZ KHOSROSHAHY**  
The McGill Daily

Content warning: sexual assault

The Hunting Ground, the groundbreaking movie on campus sexual violence in the U.S., opens with various shots of football players, looking hideous and sinister underneath their black helmets and shoulder pads as an ominous soundtrack plays in the background. The narrative of the sexually violent student-athlete isn’t unfamiliar to anyone who follows discussions of campus sexual assault. Male student-athletes tend to dominate the headlines and conversations. It’s only logical to wonder: do athletes rape more often?

We don’t even have to look too far for evidence. From the termination of the football season in 2005 over

brutal hazing incidents to the suspension of multiple players charged with sexual and domestic violence in the past few years, McGill student-athletes – particularly football players – have been consistently in the news due to Athletics’ poor treatment of sexual violence. This is while student-athletes make up a tiny proportion of the overall student body.

It’s been almost four years since the storm that took over campus about McGill’s treatment of the reports of a sexual assault by three R\*dmn players, and a few months since the passing of McGill’s Policy Against Sexual Violence. So I had to wonder: how much has changed in Athletics since?

**Why is sexual violence prevalent among student-athletes?**

Since 1992, numerous studies have shown that male student-

athletes are indeed more likely to commit sexual violence. According to a review of the literature on college athletics and sexual assault by Kristy McCray of Otterbein University, male student-athletes are grossly overrepresented in official campus rape reports and are more likely themselves to admit potential or past sexually abusive behaviour than their non-athlete peers. Moreover, athletes are also self-identified as assailants by survivors of sexual violence at disproportionate rates.

The research McCray reviews attributes this violence to a variety of factors, such as the increased likelihood for athletes to be physically and sexually aggressive. Immersed in a male-dominated environment, they are more likely to feel the need to

prove their masculinity, display misogynistic attitudes, receive and cave into peer pressure, have a sense of celebrity entitlement and believe in rape myths – false and widely held attitudes about rape. Athletes’ impunity is not baseless: often, athletics departments and universities do their best to protect their star athletes from criminal allegations or charges, as has been the case at McGill.

Last year, a study published in *Violence Against Women* showed that recreational athletes often display the above attitudes and behaviours seen in varsity athletes. In fact, the study found no significant difference in rape myth acceptance, attitudes toward women, and sexual coercion between the two types of athletes.

All this research, however, is almost exclusively conducted in

the U.S., and the similar studies in a Canadian context are scarce. Even the 2016 independent investigation funded by the Government of Ontario – considered as offering some of the most comprehensive findings in Canada – barely mentions the unique nature of Athletics and the abusive dynamics that often exist in its culture. Now, unlike the U.S., Canadian university life is not centered around athletics and R\*dmn particularly do not enjoy the same status and prestige of their American counterparts.

But I think this is exactly why we need to pay more attention to athletes’ sexual violence in Canada. It is in the absence of such athletic prestige that, time and again, R\*dmn’s sexual violence has dominated headlines and galvanized the student body. If, in the absence of empirical data, our own university

is to be a lesson for others, it is clear that something is wrong with the culture of Athletics at McGill, and it's important to actively acknowledge and address that.

The study found no significant difference in rape myth acceptance, attitudes toward women, and sexual coercion between the [varsity and recreational] athletes.

#### McGill R\*dmens after 2013

In 2014, Ian Sheriff was employed at McGill's sports summer camp for 6 to 15 years-old children while still undergoing investigation for the sexual assault with a weapon of a female Concordia student. This was the third summer Sheriff was working at the summer camp following his arrest. His hiring would have been censured by the guidelines of Quebec Association of Certified Camps, but McGill wasn't affiliated with that association at the time.

The *CBC* revealed the news about Sheriff's employment on July 23, 2014. Drew Love, the executive director of McGill Athletics at the time, was quoted by the *CBC* as saying that all new employees undergo background checks. However, he added, "We are bound by the presumption of innocence, and by an accused's right to due process."

The next day, Anthony Masi, who was Provost of McGill at the time, chimed in to disagree. The hiring of Sheriff was now, according to Masi, a "lapse in judgement." He also told the *CBC* about his call for a "thorough review of the circumstances that led to this hiring at the sports camp and a full and complete examination of employment procedures at McGill Athletics and Recreation."

This report, however, was never released to the public, and the administration did not respond to my request about these investigations.

Those of us who have been around long enough still remember the storm that took over campus when it was revealed that Sheriff, along with Brenden Carriere and Guillaume Tremblay, had been allowed to remain on the R\*dmens' roster and stay at McGill after being charged with sexual assault with a weapon and forcible confinement in 2011.

At the time, Deputy Provost (Living and Learning) Ollivier Dyens told the *Montreal Gazette*, "It didn't happen on the McGill campus

and she wasn't a McGill student [...]" He claimed to have been unaware of the charges. However, the *Gazette* claimed to have contacted McGill after the attack in 2011, and the then football head coach Clint Uttley was informed of the arrests in 2012. The publicity crisis resulting from Dyens' comments, Uttley's knowledge of the charges and the overall lack of transparency about the situation led to the athletes' suspension.

In 2014, star athlete Luis Guimont-Mota was charged with domestic violence. This wasn't Guimont-Mota's first criminal charge: he had previously been sentenced to ninety days in jail – served on Sundays to avoid interference with his athletic career – and 240 hours of community service after pleading guilty to assaulting a man in 2010.

This time, the administration seemed to have learnt its lesson. "In line with the University's varsity athletics guidelines," read a statement released by Dyens, "effective immediately, this player is suspended from the football team pending resolution of his case by the Court."

To be clear, according to my correspondence with Dyens about the Guimont-Mota case, there is no such clause in the "University's varsity athletics guidelines." This claim is likely an interpretation of section 21 of the Student Code of Conduct: students can be excluded from university premises if there exists "reasonable grounds to believe that the student's continued presence is detrimental to good order, or constitutes a threat to the well-being of others."

A policy [...] that doesn't seek transparency about past and present negligences, or addresses the special dynamics at work in Athletics, isn't enough.

Dyens also told *CBC* news, "[Guimont-Mota] should not have come to McGill University. We take full responsibility for this." Similar to Masi in the 2013 case, Dyens is reported to have called for an inquiry, this time into Guimont-Mota's recruitment. He said, "We want to know who knew what, when and how." According to Guimont-Mota and Uttley, the administration was aware of the charges at the time.

I requested an interview with Athletics' eligibility officer, Caroline James, current football head coach,

Ronald Hilaire, executive director, Marc Gélinas as well as Dyens regarding this investigation and the ramifications for future recruitment and background screening.

James and Hilaire never got back to me, Gélinas told me to talk to Dyens. And then Dyens told me that he couldn't discuss the investigation. Let me reiterate: in response to publicity crises, the University's senior administration reported the launch of investigations about the University's most high-profile sexual assault cases. Now that everything has blown over, the University refuses to publish these findings, and puts a gag order on anyone else that may dare to speak of the incidents.

I believe that is important to be transparent about Sheriff's employment at or Guimont-Mota's recruitment to McGill. Even if the University doesn't want to "comment on any individual case," as Dyens told me, it ought to make the general conclusions and ramifications of these investigations public. This is not only because the University made a promise, but because, as students, we deserve to know.

Guimont-Mota, needless to say, was reinstated in early 2015 once the charges against him were dropped. This is while Dyens had said his recruitment had been a mistake in the first place. Guimont-Mota went on to play for R\*dmens for the next season, as well.

#### McGill's response to sexual violence in Athletics

In the Senate meeting of September 17, 2014, Dyens said that he won't be institutionalizing consent training for athletes; he was "not going to target one group of students."

In some ways, Dyens has changed his mind. He told me in an email that, since 2014, the University has offered consent and bystander prevention workshops to coaches. Athletes themselves, in collaboration with Consent McGill, have produced a consent video and other "educational information." But that's it.

That's all that McGill's accountability with regards the sexual violence committed by male athletes has consisted of: workshops for coaches, and making videos. In an article titled "#ThisIsNotHelping" published in *The Daily* last year, I outlined the shortcomings of consent education in depth, particularly when used as the sole measure to combat sexual violence, and it seems to be the case at Athletics as well.

However, my skepticism of consent education's effectiveness does not hinder me from believing that such training can indeed do some good in the case of McGill Athletics. Uttley, after all, was fully aware of Guimont-Mota's conviction and the charges against Sheriff, Carriere and Tremblay. He just didn't think it was important to do something about it. Perhaps if he

had received some consent training – empirically shown to change attitudes about the gravity of sexual violence – he would have thought otherwise. But what if coaches are abusive themselves?

Even if the University doesn't want to "comment on any individual case," [...] it ought to make the general conclusions and ramifications of these investigations public.

#### Let's talk about the coach

There has been a lot of conversations on our campus about professors' abuse of power to groom and sexually harass or abuse their students. Perhaps due to the disconnect between Athletics and the wider campus community, not much discussion has revolved around similar abusive dynamics between athletes and coaches.

The focus on changing coaches' attitudes about sexual violence, as seem to be McGill's focus, may prevent Uttley-like coverups in the future. However, attitude change can only take you so far, particularly when men are set on abusing their authority. No study has, to my knowledge, shown that consent education leads to long term behavioural change. Understanding this has serious ramifications for the role of coaches in sports and athletic environments.

Perhaps the most high-profile case of coach misconduct in recent memory is that of Penn State: in 2011, Jerry Sandusky, former coach for the school's football team, was convicted of 52 counts of sexual abuse and sentenced to 442 years in prison. In the nearby City of Wesmount, it was only last month that a class action suit against against the city representing the child abuse victims of the city's former hockey coach, John Garland, was settled.

In a study published in *Canadian Woman Studies*, one in five athletes among the 1,200 Canadian national team athletes surveyed (ninety per cent of whom are female) reported having had sexual relations with people who held positions of power over them. Moreover, in the survey, the female respondents wrote four times as many accounts of harassment and abuse involving coaches (48, to be precise) than others.

What this all means that, coaches are likely to abuse the responsibility

and power they are entrusted with. They are not always potential "active bystanders," but potential abusers. And as others in position of authority over students, they ought to be subject to regular reviews and subject to an accountability process that prioritizes students' safety over the University's reputation.

#### On second chances

I'd like to end this piece with a note on second chances. Uttley resigned over Dyens's statement that Guimont-Mota should have never been recruited. Uttley defended his choice of recruitment by saying that the University was aware of Guimont-Mota's charges. He also said, "I believe in rehabilitation."

I'm also of the unpopular belief that people do deserve second chances. However, reintroducing or keeping an abuser in the community poses significant challenges and responsibilities to community leaders. Wrongdoings require meticulous investigation, monitoring and counseling. This form of rehabilitation also requires full transparency about the situation with the wider community – in this case, the football team, other varsity teams, McGill's student body – and always keeping the safety of the victims and the community as a priority.

Attitude change can only take you so far, particularly when men are set on abusing their authority.

This is not what Uttley did. McGill, as well, has kept the results of its investigations confidential and neglected to introduce any meaningful measures to change Athletics culture or hold abusive students and coaches accountable.

When I asked Dyens about the measures in place to increase transparency about male student-athletes' criminal activity and holding them accountable, his first instinct was to remind of the existence of the Sexual Violence Policy. The policy, according to Dyens, demonstrates "McGill's firm and ongoing commitment to increasing awareness of, and responding to, sexual violence across all parts of our campuses." But does it really?

A policy, particularly one that doesn't seek transparency about past and present negligences or addresses the special dynamics at work in Athletics, isn't enough. You'd think that with such a troubled history, McGill Athletics may have learnt its lesson. Perhaps we need another scandal to get McGill to spring into action.

# Autism and the plastic brain

It's all about communication and connectivity

**SHANE WIEBE**  
Sci+Tech Writer

According to the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an estimated one in 68 individuals in the United States are currently diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD); a prevalence that has been rising since the 1970s. Although the increase in numbers is likely a primary result of broadened diagnostic parameters, these statistics have been turning heads in recent years and drawing the public's attention. Accordingly, researchers have begun seriously considering a long-standing question: what is ASD and how does it occur? To be clear, vaccines, are not the correct answer to the latter.

ASD, colloquially known as Autism, is primarily characterized by difficulties with social interaction, lack of verbal and nonverbal communication, and repetitive or restrictive behavior, such as lining up and ordering objects. In addition to these core challenges, individuals may also present with altered learning and memory, epilepsy, aggression, sleep disorders, anxiety, and depression. Because it is a spectrum disorder, different individuals with ASD will experience these problems to a greater or lesser degree, which will differentially affect their lives. As a consequence, the journey to understand and treat ASD is complicated and has historically been misguided.

Up until the late 1960s, it was common belief that Autism was due to a lack of maternal affection toward their child and the derogatory term "refrigerator mothers" was coined as a description for the cause of the condition. This non-evidence-based label undoubtedly caused distress, and certainly did not provide suitable grounds for thorough biomedical investigation.

We now understand that the genetic makeup of an individual, in combination with certain high-risk genetic mutations, is paramount for ASD etiology and susceptibility. The problem is that ASD is largely polygenetic in nature, meaning it results from alterations of multiple genes involved in a variety of functions. This makes studying ASD particularly challenging and has necessitated the use of tedious investigative paradigms.

The current strategy for understanding ASD implements a ground up approach. Scientists start with the identification of genes involved in the development of ASD, particularly in patients with *de novo* mutations compared with unaffected



**RAHMA WIRYOMARTONO** | The McGill Daily

family members. With this information, scientists can understand how certain molecules and proteins work in neuron to neuron communication, how these connections make functional circuits in the brain, and how these circuits function in one or multiple brain regions ultimately governing behavior.

We are starting to identify clusters of genes involved in common functions, thereby giving us clues into the cellular and molecular basis of ASD. The regulatory mechanisms of protein synthesis and neuroplasticity have become a major candidate in this regard.

mRNA translation is the process by which new cellular proteins are synthesized based on the genetic code of an organism. This is required for cell growth and function throughout the body, and maintains physiologic homeostasis. In the brain, protein synthesis is elaborately regulated to ensure appropriate communication between neurons and within neural circuits.

Connections that are too strong or too weak can lead to aberrant brain function. Neuroscientists are speculating that this imbalance between excitatory and inhibitory (E/I) neural activity is involved in ASD pathogenesis. Importantly, the Sonenberg lab at McGill University described how dysregulation of the translation machinery resulting in enhanced synaptic protein synthesis leads to an ASD-like phenotype

in mice. Can we, then, therapeutically target regulatory mechanisms of translation, correct E/I imbalance, and reverse ASD pathophysiology? The answer is: maybe, but it's not easy.

Because it is a spectrum disorder, different individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder will experience these problems to a greater or lesser degree.

Current drug treatment options for ASD are scarce and offer little support for the core symptoms. Unfortunately, since Autism is a spectrum disorder with a wide range of genetic heterogeneity, researchers are unlikely to find a therapeutic for every genetic cause of ASD or to find one common treatment for every case.

Furthermore, the process of designing effective neurological medication is complicated by poor drug delivery into the central nervous system (i.e. penetration of the blood brain barrier), in addition to off-target effects when it does enter the brain. Since neural function is fun-

damentally interconnected, correcting one problem often causes new complications to arise. In general, these challenges have made the quest for discovering effective neurologic pharmaceuticals slow and frustrating.

The future of ASD research, however, is more promising. Similar to the current strategy of targeting the translation machinery in cancer, we may be able to use this approach in the case of ASD.

Since translation is regulated at many levels, there are likely druggable targets that, when their function is attenuated or enhanced, may correct core deficits in ASD. This would indeed, on a physiological level, necessitate profound rewiring of neural circuitry and reshaping of cell-to-cell connectivity. Is such a phenomenon even possible? Should we even pursue such an end?

It was once thought that connections between neurons are hard-wired and unchanging but we now understand that they are flexible, plastic, and can change over time. Regulated protein synthesis is indispensable for appropriate neuroplasticity. This ability has considerable implications for how memory is stored in the brain, the way we learn to interact with our surrounding environment, and ultimately how we experience life. The issue is, then, how would chemically altering neural activity with therapeutics change that experience? Furthermore, can we correct behavioral de-

fects without altering other aspects of one's life, such as their personality or even their memories?

Even though our relatively plastic brains can be rewired, this does not necessarily mean that they should. ASD may be experienced as a real disorder to some, but for others this may not be the case.

Steve Silberman, in his book about *Autism and Neurodiversity*, states that "By autistic standards, the "normal" brain is easily distractible, is obsessively social, and suffers from a deficit of attention to detail and routine. Thus, people on the spectrum experience the neurotypical world as relentlessly unpredictable and chaotic, perpetually turned up too loud, and full of people who have little respect for personal space." In part, the lack of understanding, on a personal level, makes integration into typical society difficult for some with ASD.

However, the lack of understanding, on a scientific level, makes it nearly impossible to find real and effective solutions. In seeking to understand ASD, we are not only taking steps forward to help those in need, but we are given the opportunity to see into a new world from a new perspective. If we can communicate, we can connect; if we can connect, we can understand; and if we can understand, we have a hopeful future. I am talking, of course, about the inner workings of Autism and the plastic brain.

# Fight the government with song

On martyrdom in Opéra de Montréal's *Dialogue des Carmélites*



COURTESY OF THE GLOBE AND MAIL

**CARLY GORDON**  
The McGill Daily

In 1794, at the height of France's Reign of Terror, fourteen Carmelite nuns were sentenced to the guillotine.

Religious organizations stirred paranoia in the new Jacobin government: cloistered and secretive, might the nuns be plotting against the Revolution? The fourteen nuns were ordered to disband their convent – their home and community – but instead, they took a vow of martyrdom, willing to die for their beliefs. As they marched to their deaths on the scaffold, the nuns didn't cry or scream in protest. Instead, they sang.

The true story of the singing Martyrs of Compiègne inspired a screenplay by French writer Georges Bernanos, which in turn inspired composer Francis Poulenc's landmark 1956 opera *Dialogues des carmélites*. One of few regularly programmed postwar operas – most are overshadowed by the celebrated earlier works of Verdi and Puccini – *Dialogues* is a meditative and tragic reflection on friendship, faith, and hardline ideology in times of danger and fear.

As they marched to their deaths on the scaffold, the nuns didn't cry or scream in protest. Instead, they sang.

Opéra de Montréal presented *Dialogues des carmélites* in Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier for a four-show run between January 28 to February 4. The performance on January 31 featured successful delivery by an all-Canadian cast, bolstered by the phenomenal Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal under the baton of conductor Jean-François Rivest.

At first, the production seemed marred by a sense of cold detachment, with physical distance separating the characters and isolating the audience. Nuns sat in chairs spaced far apart along the perimeter of the stage, and a gauzy, semi-sheer curtain acted as a physical barrier between characters and scenes. Life in the convent felt bleak and lonely; even the long-winded death of the convent's Prioress – sung with ample gravitas by mezzo-soprano Mia Lennox – failed to enact any sense of intimacy in shared sorrow among the community of nuns.

Protagonist Blanche de La Force – soprano Marianne Fiset – and Sister Constance de Saint Denis – soprano Magali Simard-Galdès – provided an intimate antithesis to this staged detachment. Blanche is the nervous, flighty daughter of a deposed Marquis. Frightened of the increasingly violent Paris streets, and professing her desire to “lead a heroic life,” Blanche enters into the Order of Carmel as a novice nun. There, she meets another novice, Sister Constance, a bubbly and blithe foil to Blanche's anxious pessimism. The two become friends, even as Blanche is shaken by Constance's eerie premonition that the two would die young, together, on the same day.

Simard-Galdès stole the show in the role of Sister Constance, effortlessly nailing each bright, leaping melody. She lent her character a sense of the supernatural – angelic, prescient – in contrast with Fiset's overwrought Sister Blanche. Fiset sang the demanding role with musical success, while Blanche's stiff, melodramatic arias echoed the cold, spacious staging of the opening two acts.

At first, the production seemed marred by a sense of cold detachment, with physical distance separating the characters and isolating the audience.

However, in Act III, the audience witnessed a shift. Jacobin officers forced the nuns to exchange their habits for plainclothes, and urged them to declare allegiance to the Revolutionary government. Resolute in their refusal, the nuns – now unrecognizable in threadbare civilian cloaks – gathered closely in a crowd, finding warmth and strength in one another, and bridging the icy distance that stretched through the previous acts. Suddenly,

closeness became a theme of the final act – closeness of community, both physical and emotional; the encroaching nearness of death; and closeness to God, on the threshold of the nuns' martyrdom.

*Dialogues des carmélites* counts among a series of sacred and spiritual works composed by Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) after the 1935 death of his father spurred his return to the Catholic Church. A member of Les Six – the six most prominent Parisian composers of the 20th century – Poulenc struggled to reconcile his devout Catholic faith with his queer sexuality. *Dialogues* sees traces of these identities: the intimate relationship between Blanche and Constance could easily be read as romantic, culminating in a literal “til death do us part,” within a community of women and femmes devoted to serving God, and ultimately killed for their devotion.

When the nuns vote to take vows of martyrdom, Blanche's faith wavers: she flees the convent, taking to the streets of Paris. However, on the day of the execution, she arrives at the city square and calmly takes her place on the scaffold, Sister Constance at her side.

L'Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal delivered a colourful interpretation of Poulenc's richly layered score. Woodwind melodies shone – especially a mournful, chant-like cadenza played by Pierre-Vincent Plante on English horn – while Brasse lent militaristic precision and resonant cellos and basses kept the orchestra grounded in a low, sombre range. The powerful ending featured the nuns' final song: a harrowing ren-

dition of the prayer “Salve Regina” as they approached the guillotine. Thunderous percussion paired with an electronic sound effect imitated the slicing of a blade, while each nun's spotlight went out one by one, leaving the dead in darkness.

Written in a France still reeling from fascism and war, and recounting an earlier France similarly caught in the throes of extremism and terror, *Dialogues des carmélites* continues to feel relevant in light of the perilous populism globally on the rise. But there is a certain danger in ascribing heroism to Poulenc's martyred nuns: they were willing to die for their beliefs, but not to stand and fight.

*Dialogues des carmélites* continues to feel relevant in light of the perilous populism globally on the rise.

Nonetheless, *Dialogues* tells the story of a community of strong women and femmes who support one another, love one another, and uphold their faith and their values with outspoken pride in the face of violent political oppression – and who meet their fate not with resignation or fear, but with song. Here, song – music – becomes a political act: the voices of the oppressed, raised in unity, are impossible to ignore.

# Music as refuge

## The Daily sits down with People and Space

**RAHMA WIRYOMARTONO**  
The McGill Daily

**C**rammed into a makeshift four-seater table at the Java U across from Strathcona Music Building, three members of People and Space bounced their ideas off of each other as they told their story.

The Montreal-based pop-rock and alternative band came together during the starting members' first year at McGill.

Speaking to The Daily, vocalist Sid Ahmed, lead guitarist Zia Zakaria, and vocalist and guitarist Atanu Chowdhury explored the merging of musical genres, music as a form of self expression for the diaspora, and the balancing act of playing gigs and shooting music videos amid working nine-to-five, post-graduation. Bassist Andre Homier and drummer Guillaume Lauzon were not present at the interview.

**THE MCGILL DAILY (MD):** So how did you all meet?

**SID AHMED (SA):** It was the first week of school, and Zak and I met through the BSA [Bangladeshi Students Association]. I was in New Rez, and when we met, we were like, 'oh wow, we're from the same country.' So we kept meeting, kept jamming, and doing covers. Then this one time, Zak's like, 'do you have any originals?' I was too shy to show anyone – I had never really done that before – but that was how our first song happened. We found these two buddies from rez to play shows, and after our first charity show, we kept playing as much as we could.

**ZIA ZAKARIA (ZZ):** When you're playing with students, a lot of them have to pursue their own future. So they have to leave the country and stuff. We went back to square one at one point after graduation, and it was just me and Sid again. That's when I suggested to take Atanu into the band.

**ATANU CHOWDHURY (AC):** We had a lot of free time after gradua-

tion. The biggest problem is that most people involved were engineers, so, you know, they've got internships – but we're science kids; we were here doing our research. But we always jammed together, played a lot of Eastern classical music, [even though] we [were used to] different genres.

**MD:** *In terms of genre, what would you identify as your present music and influences, compared to what you started off with?*

**SA:** When we all got together, it was kind of like magic. We were both vocalists, and [Atanu] was trained in Eastern classical music. I was kind of trained on the fly during People and Space, but I grew up with punk rock.

**ZZ:** I was mainly into heavy metal, and then we needed a drummer and bassist. That's how we got Gui, who's also punk-influenced, and our bassist is into the jazz and blues kind of thing. So it was a really good mix. Eastern classical mu-

sic is a lot different from Western classical music. It has a lot of like, vocal vibratos, [and] a mix of both major and minor scales. It's really different, so when you fuse it with rock and pop, that creates an interesting element.

**MD:** *You're juggling nine-to-five jobs, but you still make music a priority. How do you manage that?*

**AC:** If you ask me, music is something I did since forever, [ever] since I knew what it was. So when I came here given the struggle, given schooling, living alone – it was the thing I knew I was good at. It was the constant thing that I could bring from home. I brought the culture with me. So no matter what happened, that was always the standard. So even if I was working nine-to-five, I would always come back home. Even if it wasn't jamming, I would just take the guitar and play two songs by myself.

**ZZ:** After I graduated I felt like that part of my life was missing.

And you know what, the nine-to-five life gets redundant. It's the same: you wake up, you work. But starting music again was an escape from that redundancy.

**SA:** In my point of view, music was like refuge. Coming here from so far away was kind of a shock, all of a sudden. The transition was so fast [...] I didn't feel like I belonged anywhere. But when we played music together, that was like a safe refuge. It was like a shelter. It would hold us and embrace us. Music gave [me] a chance to identify myself in society, to represent myself. It helped me make new friends, and since I used to write poems and sonnets, it gave me a chance to get those poems out. All of those experiences that I trapped in tiny boxes, [music] helped me release [them] and share [them] with people.

*This interview has been edited for length and clarity.*

## The Daily Reviews: Racine's *Des milliers de fenêtres*

**F**ebruary 13, 2017 marked the day of last-minute Valentine's Day shopping, as well as the release of *Des milliers de fenêtres*: an ambient electronic album by Racine, a Montreal-based multidisciplinary artist.

The album, translating to 'Thousands of windows,' consists of seven tracks that experiment with rhythm and density. Highlights include the eponymous title track and "le lac noir qui nourrit les sources souterraines" – roughly translating to 'the black lake that nurtures underground springs.'

*Des milliers de fenêtres* cracks the code of ambient music through the texture and tonality of sound. Electronic beats, static noise, and ethereal sounds compliment and battle each other, creating a sensory experience that challenges how we react to and envision what we hear. The songs travel through both emotional and physical space – or, as Racine himself puts it, "memories of a lost city and sensations of a room." Melodies are pierced through, and dissipated to make way for new ones within the same track.

Racine, also known as Rabieto, or as band member of the Dolphin Dream pyramids, has self-published eight albums in Montreal. In 2015, he performed at MUTEK – the international summer festival dedicated to electronic music and digital arts – where he worked among artist collectives such as Daïmôn.

This album is the first collaboration between Julien Racine and the signing record label Archipel Musique. He has recently performed as a DJ at one of Archipel's events where he combined visual imagery and film projected in the background, with live music. In fact, the last track of *Des milliers de fenêtres* scores a short film, which has been created in light of the upcoming release.

[Check out *Des milliers de fenêtres* at [soundcloud.com/julienracine](https://soundcloud.com/julienracine).]

—By Mariam Salaymeh

## Culture picks: This week in Montreal

Monday, February 20

### Manufacturing Consent

A screening by Cinema Politica Concordia, *Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media* is a seminal work that documents the life and activism of the famed professor and political theorist.

1455 Maisonneuve / 7-10pm / Free

Tuesday, February 21

### Sanad Collective and MSA McGill poetry and music performance

An evening of tales for the diaspora, featuring Muslim rapper and poet Baraka Blue, whose spoken word follows the traditions of Rumi and Hafiz.

McConnell Engineering, room 204 / 3480 University / 7:30pm / \$15 for students, \$20 for general

Wednesday, February 22

### Players' Theatre presents *Art*

Can a white square be called 'art'? Player's Theatre seeks to comically contemplate this question in their new play, *Art*.

Student's Society of McGill University, third floor / 3480 McTavish / 8-10pm on selected dates / \$6 for students, \$10 for general

Thursday, February 23

### "Writing While Black"

This event is part of Black History Month at McGill, hosted by the Social Equity and Diversity Education Office (SEDE). The acclaimed writing workshop will be presented by multidisciplinary artist Whitney French.

Location TBA / 6-9pm / Free for McGill students, staff, and faculty, \$10 in advance for general, \$15 at the door

Friday, February 24

### A night of music at Divan Orange

Dear Denizen - a hazy electric rock band led by Congolese-Canadian performer Ngabonziza Kiroko - and Radiant Baby - a playful pop band vying to bring back 80s' flamboyance - will take the stage at Divan Orange.

Divan Orange / 4234 St. Laurent / 9:30pm

Saturday, February 25

### Tell Them We Are Rising

This Stanley Nelson film explores the history of Black Colleges and Universities in North America, and their pivotal role in educating and inspiring the Black Panther movement.

1455 Maisonneuve / 7-10pm / \$15 in advance, or \$20 at the door

Sunday, February 26

### "Métamorphoses"

Last day to see the multidisciplinary work of Haitian artist Kristo Nicolas! The exhibit is hosted by the Henri-Bourassa Public Library.

5400 Henri-Bourassa / 10am-5pm / Free

Monday, February 27

### "Urbania Design"

Vues d'Afrique hosts "Urbania Design," an exhibit that showcases a collective of African and Caribbean artists.

Galerie Art-Urbain / 1720 St. Hubert / 10am-8pm / Free

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## Feeling BoGged down by lack of accountability

**O**n November 29, 2016 the office of the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) President released a report called "A Seat at the Table: An Analysis of the McGill University BoG [Board of Governors]." The SSMU press release announcing the research report stated that "the current state of governance at McGill University has perpetuated an environment where community members feel disenfranchised and unheard by the Board of Governors [BoG]." Among other things, SSMU asked to expand member-at-large seats (Board members who are not faculty, staff, or students) from the McGill community, the public nomination of said members-at-large, greater diversity, tracked voting for all decisions, and consultative protocols for student input in decision-making. Only the last of these demands was met, although the procedure implemented to meet the demand was ineffective, and showed a lack of true commitment to increasing student input. If the BoG claims to be open to the McGill's community input, they must be held accountable. Instead, they are leaving no space for student engagement, activism, or dissent.

At the December 1, 2016 BoG meeting, the Board passed a resolution which established twenty minute community sessions twice a year in response to SSMU's calls for consultative protocols. Members of the McGill community can submit written questions prior to the community session, and receive a written response. If they have follow-up questions, they are allotted five minutes to ask them at the Board's community sessions.

However, community sessions are an ineffective solution to the BoG's lack of accountability and transparency. The Board not only gets to choose which questions it gets to answer, but also retains the right to decline a question if an individual or group has previously appeared before

the Board meeting asking a similar question, even if the question was inadequately answered or dismissed in a previous session. While the Chair of the Board, Stuart (Kip) Cobbett, has called the community sessions a "step ahead," in reality the community sessions are a weak façade of democracy. Five minutes per interaction simply isn't enough time to explain an issue and receive a substantial response. Moreover, during a community session, the Board has proven that it reserves the right not to clarify a response when pushed for additional details, and thereby shut down the discussion.

As pointed out by SSMU in "A Seat at the Table," too many important discussions at McGill happen behind closed doors. The decision-making process lacks transparency at the best of times, and is riddled with conflicts of interest at worst. The Chair should relinquish their right to reject a question if a similar one has already been asked. Moreover, the choice of which questions get answered should not solely be at the discretion of the Chair: student representatives should have a role in deciding which questions get heard. In order to ensure that the BoG is held accountable to the McGill community, there must be a greater representation of students on the board – as of now, the only students who sit on the board are the SSMU president and the PGSS Secretary General, which is insufficient representation of a vast and varied student body. Additionally, the Board must heed SSMU's recommendations on actively recruiting and creating designated seats for governors who reflect the diversity of the wider community, such as Indigenous people, people of colour, trans people, and people with disabilities.

– The McGill Daily editorial board

## SSMU General Assembly endorsements

### Motion Regarding the Formal Ratification of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals - ABSTAIN

The McGill Daily feels that the purpose of this proposed ratification is made unclear by a lack of recommended policies or actions under 'Be it resolved that'. For this reason, The Daily has chosen to abstain from an endorsement on this motion.

### Motion Regarding Policy Against Ancillary Fee - YES

The McGill Daily is committed to holding the Administration accountable. In this case, the Administration's is asking for a 2123 per cent increase in overhead charges on Student Services from 2010 to 2017 and major cuts in funding transfers, amounting to \$2.5 million lost from Student Services. Furthermore, the Administration has refused to be transparent about these increases, failing to submit a provincially mandated yearly report to SSMU. The Daily supports SSMU for holding the Administration accountable, and refusing to consider increases to ancillary fees until the University meets their demands for consultation and transparency. As such, The Daily endorses a "yes" vote on this motion.

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Lies, half-truths, and snake people, or sneaple.

# Oscars are not white; Oscars are gold

It's time to see colour



**OVERLY  
OPINIONATED ED**  
The McGill Weekly

Race is a contentious issue in American entertainment, as reality TV star Donnie Drumpf recently showed by making America a live, 24-hour Survivor sequel starring marginalized people. Should race dominate the upcoming Oscars discourse, though, or are there more important Hollyweed issues to talk about? Like the fact that some ignoramus has changed the Hollyweed sign to read "Hollywood" for over a month now, perhaps? Or, as I, and several Hollyweed notables argue, the startling fact that the Oscars were never white – they were always gold.

2017 Oscar nominee Emma Pebble, an advocate for dismissing the race discourse (she's totally Asian, so she's got cred),

was recently quoted as saying, "you know, I've been to a lot of these ceremonies, despite there being other actresses a lot more qualified, and, some would argue, more Asian than me. I can say with certainty though that those statues have always been gold."

In the course of the same interview, Emma Pebble bid "Aloha" to another totally Asian actor, Matt Demon, star of the upcoming Chinese documentary picture, *The Great Wall*. Demon, who was not nominated for an Oscar, later admitted that, "maybe if I could play a black woman, I'd have received a nomination this year – not a win, of course, but a nomination. Being born as the race that I am, it's limiting."

Indeed, as Demon said, the Academy nominated a significant number of Black films, actors, and filmmakers this year, in an effort to enable all its white members to

say with certainty that they have a Black friend. William Smith may even return to the ceremony, allowing white people to rap the Fresh Prince theme song again, as opposed to accusing Smith of obscurity. Some films, however, may be too much for the populace – *Moonlight* contains not just queer Black men, but queer Black men who are not slaves. No actors of colour could be reached for comment about this topic, however, nor would any deign to sidestep racial issues in favour of chatting about the colour of the statuettes.

The race problem, then, is solved – Black voices can be thoroughly relayed by white people speaking for them in appropriated Black slang. But who will speak for the gold Oscars? I nominate Peril Streep, whose Liberal Status™ was renewed this year by her earth-shattering denunciation of Donnie Drumpf – margin-



MARINA DJURDJEVIC | The McGill Daily

alized actors had only been doing yourself this: who is more marginalized than a white woman?

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