

Contours

VOLUME VII

VOICES OF WOMEN IN LAW
VOIX DES FEMMES EN DROIT

co nto urs

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VOLUME

VIII

MCGILL UNIVERSITY 2019

CONTOURS

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VOICES OF WOMEN IN LAW

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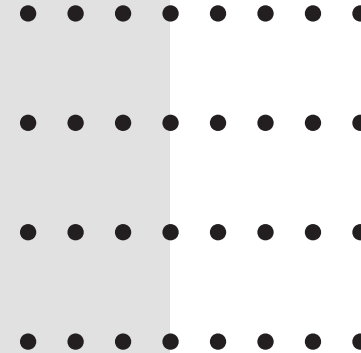
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FOREWORD

MEGAN LINDY, MANAGING EDITOR OF CONTOURS

The idea of intersectional feminist legal writing often seems antithetical. In contrast to a politics that attends to specificity of experience grounded in social location, the law is overtly concerned with categories, aiming to systematize and generalize disputes and the people they affect. In law school, our primary pedagogical tool is case law, a form of writing which creates a unified record of what has happened, authenticated by a judge's ruling. Legal logic is inherently conservative in that its development is self-referential; jurists justify legal evolution by looking to the past. This is particularly problematic when the law has historically been a tool of the elite, easily and often weaponized in service of patriarchal, racist, heterosexist, imperialist, ableist, and capitalist systems of oppression. For a multitude of reasons, we are encouraged to ask "what *is* the law?" rather than "why is the law the way it is? Whose interests does it serve for it to exist as it currently does?" However, it is precisely because intersectional feminism sits in tension with traditional legal contexts that it is all the more pressing to create space for a politics built on solidarity across difference, a politics that allows for complementary and conflicting realities from a multiplicity of voices.

The stories you are about to read contest the law's conservatism and fracture legal narratives. Intersectional feminism centers lived experiences and in so doing, decenters the voices that monopolize jurisprudence and legal reasoning. Our contributors speak to their own lives, their own histories, and the overlapping and intersecting identities that inform their experiences within this faculty and beyond. They speak on a wide range of themes: mental health and trauma, activism, motherhood and abortion, the politics of language, and gendered classroom dynamics to name a few. Their texts range from poetry and artwork to personal reflections and academic



articles, showcasing our peers' ability to express their creativity and intellectual curiosity. They create space for us to reflect upon the diversity within our own community and invite us to meaningfully engage with their writing as part of a feminist legal discourse. *Contours* not only serves as a platform for women and non-binary individuals, but also as a repository of knowledge that resists the assumption that legislation, case law, and doctrine are the only valid sources of legal learning. This in and of itself is a radical political act that has the power to push this faculty and the legal profession as a whole to be more inclusive, progressive, and aspirational.

I want to thank each and every contributor for taking the time, energy, and emotional labour to share their knowledge and experience with us. *Contours* could never exist without the incredible women and non-binary individuals who contribute to the ongoing debates and conversations that happen across these pages. I hope you enjoy reading, learning from, and reflecting on these texts as much as I have.

Thank you for supporting *Contours* and welcome to Volume VII.

Premier in Red Heels

ADRIENNE TESSIER

STUDENT AT MCGILL FACULTY OF LAW

When I was 12 years old, my school offered a one-day fencing class. Upon showing up for this class, I was surprised to be the only girl. A gaggle of grade seven boys looked at me, some with a bemused smile, an "of course it's Adrienne," or a roll of their eyes. As we parried, thrust, and poked—"on guard!"—my gender was omnipresent. "Let's try boys versus girls!" taunted one of my classmates.

Being a woman in masculine spaces is to always be in that fencing class—to always be on guard. It's when you show up to work in a skirt and your female colleague is wearing leggings, prompting a male superior to compare your sartorial choices. It's when you've done all the background research for a meeting, but a male colleague takes over and tells everyone what you did (incorrectly, but I'm not bitter).

This isn't to say that I don't enjoy taking up space. I relished that fencing class. I get a deep sense of satisfaction from walking into a meeting, wearing a power suit, red lip, red heels, and **beating the boys at a game they claim as theirs**.

Debating in high school, obtaining an undergrad in political science, and interning as a political staffer means that I have spent a lot of time and energy justifying my place in certain spaces. However, there is one space where I do not have to be on guard. A space where I do not need to justify my use of space: The Youth Parliament of Manitoba (YPM).

YPM is an independent non-profit organization based in Winnipeg that seeks to empower youth by providing them with opportunities for growth and leadership. Their flagship event is a five-day parliamentary session at the Manitoba Legislature between Boxing Day and New Year's.

I have been involved with the organization for eight years. This past Session, I was honoured to serve as Premier. Although I proudly wore my red heels while taking my seat in the front row, I did not feel my usual thrill of subversive satisfaction. Unlike Theresa May, I have never had to defend my choice of shoes. I was prepared to do so, even (I confess) a bit excited. I deliberately chose to

wear them, a bright, provocative symbol of my femininity, as a dare to those who thought that I did not deserve my spot. But the situation never arose. YPM, quite simply, is the safest space I have encountered for a woman to be in a position of leadership – something that I think all political spaces should aspire to be.

This inclusive atmosphere was not always the case. The YPM first admitted women in 1972, 50 years after its founding (and 50 years after Manitoba's first female Member of the Legislative Assembly took office). There have been 15 female PM Premiers since. In my eight years with the organization, there has only been one female Premier; however, I am optimistic that there will be a number of female Premiers of YPM in the years to come. In my team of five Executives, four of us were women. This upcoming year, for the first time in the YPM's history, we have an all-woman Executive. Given that our Executive functions by moving people up the ladder every year, it is fairly likely that there will be female Premiers for the foreseeable future.

By contrast, the province of Manitoba has never had a female Premier. In the committee rooms that we use to discuss and debate hang imposing portraits of past Premiers. Men—some with excellent beards, some with piercing eyes, and others somber—stare down at us. Women, Indigenous youth, newcomer youth, and others, join a process that was never intended to include them. How many men in these portraits saw us in this space? How many of them worked to bar us from the Legislature? Simply occupying this space and engaging with each other on policy debates, therefore, is a powerful push against history's wrongs.

Despite the YPM being a model Parliament and our tasks bearing little resemblance to our “real” counterparts

in the offices we hold, I felt a deep sense of responsibility when I was elected. Regardless of the fact that I didn't fly to Ottawa, nor meet with my cabinet to discuss political crises, I was a custodian of a small but tight-knit community. I was responsible to my team of Executives, and responsible for being the outside spokesperson for our organization.

I hope that my experience is a peek into the future. I hope that sitting in the front row and being called upon as "Madame Premier" has helped normalize female leadership for at least a few attendees. Growing up, I often didn't see myself reflected in politicians or public figures, but I did feel that it was possible that I could one day hold office. Working in politics, being involved in the YPM, and now studying law has enriched my toolkit as a possible parliamentarian. I hope that one day I can confidently say that all political spaces are as safe for women as the YPM. However, in this moment, this is simply not the case. Even the thought of campaigning and exposing yourself to critiques from the media and Twitter are enough to dissuade people from seeking office. It goes without saying that women, people of colour, and members of other marginalized groups are all the more vulnerable to attacks when running for office.

I hope that the YPM can not only be a model of Parliament, but a model for Parliament. Making politics safer means making it better. It means more perspective, more input, and more democracy. While I wouldn't have minded staying in that fencing class, it was exhausting. Even warriors need a break.



PHOTO BY ANA LUCÍA LOBOS

Looking In and Looking Out: Why I Left Law School

NATASHA GOEL

FORMER STUDENT AT MCGILL FACULTY OF LAW

Growing up, I had always been told that if I worked hard and got good grades, doors would open up for me. I would, of course, have to work twice as hard as others to overcome obstacles of race, class, and gender, but results would come nonetheless. Consequently, I came to believe deeply in a correlation between effort and result. I spent the majority of my adolescence consumed by academic successes in a tireless attempt to silence my persistent self-doubt and prove I was better than any obstacle. At the end of my undergraduate degree, there were many different options to explore. Instead, I did what any risk-averse keener with an interest in human rights issues would do - I applied to law school. Thinking back, I had put embarrassingly little amount of thought into what it actually meant to study law. I saw my acceptance to McGill Law as the ultimate golden ticket. My ability to tell people I was a lawyer was meant to be the final stride, one that would open any door I wanted, which made it extremely difficult to let it go.

“By second semester, I couldn’t recognize myself. My depression and anxiety had become physically debilitating. I felt constantly exhausted, isolated, and disinterested in my surroundings.”

There are many reasons I decided to leave the program after 1L. For starters, studying law is extremely boring. I don’t care if it gets better in 2L, if there’s case law involved, I’m still not interested. Moreover, practicing law didn’t seem to be any more appealing to me. No promise of prestige or financial stability could make me “think like a lawyer.” Put simply, a legal lens was not compelling to

me, academically or professionally. This part was easy to reconcile with. What was difficult was the unpacking of the unhealthy amount of stock I had put in my academic successes which led to a serious depressive episode.

I started iL passionate about various international issues and wanted to get involved in as many extra-curriculars as possible. However, instead of the meaningful year of postgraduate education I had envisioned, my life was quickly reduced to a cycle of reading and partying. I had very little motivation, energy or time to do much else. By second semester, I couldn't recognize myself. My depression and anxiety had become physically debilitating. I felt constantly exhausted, isolated, and disinterested in my surroundings. I wanted so badly to keep up with classes but being inside the Faculty was suffocating and unbearable. It was not just lectures and readings that I struggled with; I also found it difficult to sit through a TV show, a quick bus ride or a conversation with friends. I was ashamed of my perceived fragility and carried that feeling deep in my stomach all the time. It took me a long time to accept that this was beyond my control. I had worked so hard for this opportunity, I couldn't help but hate myself for letting it pass me by. Even now, it's shocking to think about how quickly my priorities shifted when my sense of identity, self-worth, and my desire to live was taken from me. I was really fortunate to be able to see someone at McGill Psychiatric Services so quickly and receive the professional help I needed. Additionally, I believe it was the persistent love and patience I received from the people around me, even when I refused to let them in, and, not to my surprise, the red wine, bubble baths, and expensive candles that helped me through this difficult time.

Unfortunately, my experience with mental illness in law is one of many. These experiences are often only

referred to in passive conversations, jokes, and occasional emails from the Student Affairs Office. Self-deprecating humor can serve as a necessary release of stress and fear and create an important sense of camaraderie amongst law students and lawyers. After all, who doesn't love a good "lawyer joke"? But, it can also be a harmful coping mechanism that contributes to the normalization of substance abuse, depression, and loneliness within the legal profession, which is ultimately no joke. When the sacrifice of mental well-being is a prerequisite for an entire profession, we need to be able to do more than laugh it off. There is no easy way to begin addressing mental health, but the best I can do is start by considering my personal experience. I believe an important attitude shift is necessary within the legal profession and I think it starts with addressing the expectations and realities of law school.

On my first day at McGill, the Dean told us to treat this experience "not as a means to an end, but as an end in itself." I was starting law school with no professional plans and was relieved to hear that I had come to the right place. By the end of the year, however, only a specific career goal could have kept me in that building. In order for an academic experience to be an end in itself, I believe it has to be a space for people to take risks and develop their intentions, passions, and creativity, and that's very difficult in a professional school environment. No matter how many times you're told "grades don't matter in law school," they just do. Anywhere you are in the Faculty, people are talking about grades and even when they aren't explicitly mentioned, the underlying competitiveness is always there. Unless you've somehow worked through every single self-doubt and insecurity, the herd mentality of the legal profession is almost impossible to avoid. Moreover, it is important to remember that relationships with success are deeply racialized and gendered. As a daughter of im-

migrants, a woman of colour and someone with no special talents to fall back on, the luxury of taking risks was limited for me in complex ways.

Due to various social and cultural pressures, my lack of direction in law and inability to simply enjoy the ride, I was quickly trapped by the noise. I always felt like I had to prove myself, to compete for things I didn't want in the first place, all out of fear of falling behind. I could already see myself chasing the comfort of legal milestones, starting with OCIs. However, for better or for worse, because my depression took away my ability to excel on autopilot, I was forced to take a step back. I discovered the importance of being driven by passion and purpose and not simply an obsession with achievements. After all, enjoying something and enjoying being good at something are two very different things. I accepted that at this time it was unlikely I would make it out of law school as the person I wanted to be and that was more important than the security of a professional degree.

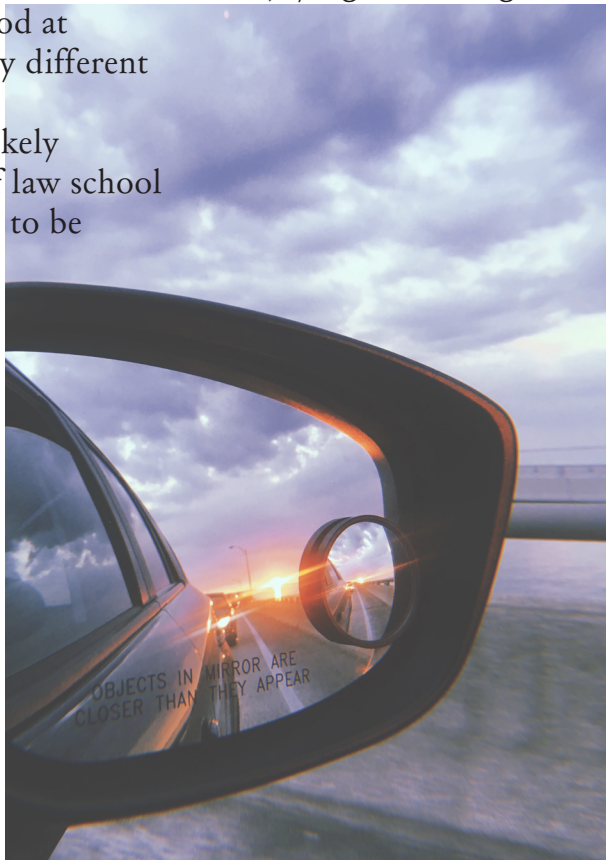


PHOTO BY NATASHA GOEL

Letting go of my golden ticket was terrifying, but I cherish the time I spent at McGill. I learnt that complacency was not an option if I wanted to live a life that was in line with my values. Although I haven't fled the country to work on a coffee farm just yet, I have found a new path that is comfortable despite being significantly riskier. My decision came at an extremely high price, both financially and personally. I recognize this is not possible for everyone, it is however possible for all of us to consider our purpose and be more proactive about our feelings, desires, and goal within our own constraints. If you're unhappy where you are, take time to explore your options and give yourself permission to pursue them – even if it takes time away from your readings. And most importantly, if you are feeling depressed or anxious, know that this does not “come with the job” and you should take the support and accommodations you need.



Letters

IRADELE PLANTE

STUDENT AT MCGILL FACULTY OF LAW

CONTENT WARNING

The following contains three annotated letters that I have sent to real people that (as of the date of publication) have either woefully gone unanswered or have been partially acknowledged. They are letters that touch on sexual assault, the body, and the law. They contain some graphic details about surgery, body hatred, sexual assault, and mental illness. For some, this might be emotionally challenging or triggering.

Some identifying information—like people, groups, and locations—has been redacted.

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TO MY FAMILY:

When I talk about my body, I clench up. I spend so much time imagining that it doesn't exist. I especially feel this way about my breasts. I remember in high school trying on bras at a specialty store and crying in the change room stall as the attendant kept returning with bigger sizes. I remember hopping off a sticky school bus in June, sweat dripping down my back as I wore two bras, a long-sleeved shirt, and a gigantic hoodie to avoid "showing off". In college, I remember taking off my shirt, again and again, for all the men I thought interesting or kind enough to be intimate with. "They're so big," they would gawk before reaching in. I'd laugh it off. Later, I'd hate myself for laughing it off.

I don't remember much about the night I was raped, but I do remember my breasts. I remember the American Apparel shirt I wore. I remember him saying how nice it looked on me as he took it off. I remember the anticipated gawk.

After years of therapy, coming out, and a series of humbling experiences, I went through a phase where I felt like I had "gotten over" my trauma. I could never "get over" my breasts though. Through the media I consume, the playful jokes I hear, and the clothes I buy, I am constantly reminded that my breasts are sexual. They are objects of desire. They are for men. They are for fun. They are the first thing people see. They make me feel like I am never quite taken seriously. The bigger they are, the more they are allowed to be someone else's.

On a good day, I know this is not true. On a bad day, sometimes it's easier to pretend that my breasts don't exist.

It was hard to tell you that I had a breast reduction. Doing so required me to acknowledge that my breasts exist. The conversation necessitated that I admit to you that I don't want

them, and that I never asked for them. That kind of vulnerability is hard in front of you. It's hard enough being vulnerable with myself.

It has been one week since I had the surgery. I am marveled that my body heals. I see bruises bloom around my nipples. They turn blue and then yellow and then disappear. *They disappear!* I can't believe it. There's something amazing about a body that quietly heals after it's been ripped apart and sewn anew. It serves as a reminder that I too can heal after I've been ripped apart. It also reminds me that my body does in fact exist; it's made of flesh, it aches, swells, and scars, and it does a lot of amazing things. Maybe I should try giving it more credit sometime.

Sept
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TO MY SCHOOL:

I would like to share my reflections on my first week at McGill Law. Like many, I was nervous. Like some, I was reluctant to attend orientation because I don't drink. Unlike some, my reasons for drinking are very personal; I was sexually assaulted in the summer of 2010, not far from the faculty. I knew that alcohol is a big part of law school, but I was shocked to see the degree to which this drinking culture was centralized and prioritized.

At first, I maintained decent communication with one of the mentors, but as I began drifting away, no one took the time to reach out or check-in. I couldn't bring myself to show up to the more low-key social events (such as pre-drinks) and barely attended the parties. At the end of orientation week, there was a final event and I noticed my team members were celebrating at the same table. It felt disingenuous to join them in their triumphs for something I chose not

to participate in, but also it angered me that someone else's celebration came at the cost of ensuring inclusivity and belonging. Doesn't this defeat the fundamental purpose of why we hold orientation?

Some may say "the first couple of months are hard for everyone" or "you knew what you were getting yourself into". I would challenge those assertions. For many, orientation week can set the stage for the rest of the year—it can introduce you to new friends who you can turn to for support during a time when many are at their most vulnerable. As a white, cisgender, and able-bodied person, I'm privileged to exist in institutions where I often see myself reflected in others. As someone who has previously organized orientations, I know what kind of work goes into ensuring that everyone feels meaningfully involved. I did not feel that here and I did not feel like I was able to be myself. I know there are others who felt similarly.

It is disingenuous of McGill Law to take two days to explore topics of sexual assault in class but fail to acknowledge how trauma or harm-reduction plays out where binge drinking is present. This lack of care is tokenizing at best, and reinforces the idea that McGill Law is not a place where people like me can seek support and expect to be taken seriously. For that, I am disappointed, and it's my hope that this can change.

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TO YOU:

I know we haven't spoken in a really long time, and that's been intentional. In light of the media storm that's going on with the U.S. Supreme Court, I feel like it is finally time to come forward.

That night in the summer of 2010 was not consensual. I was too drunk to consent, and it was rape.

At first, I spent many years in and out of counselling. My mental health plunged, and I was clinically diagnosed. I disclosed I was raped to my partners. Some took it well, some didn't. Eventually, I quit drinking and started to speak up in feminist circles. I told my family. I wrote about mental health privately and advocated against rape culture publicly. In time, I pursued a master's in public health and a law degree. In both admission statements, I disclosed this experience, the impact it's had, and my desire to better things for the generation ahead.

Living in Toronto during the Jian Ghomeshi trials was taxing for anyone who picked up a newspaper, let alone survivors. Those months were some of the loneliest I've ever experienced, yet never did I feel the need to reach out to you.

This time, it feels different. I was in my first semester of law school when the Brett Kavanaugh story broke. Three weeks ago, I watched Christine Blasey-Ford's testimony and thought "that could be me one day." As much as I admire Blasey-Ford for her courage, I do not envy her. It dawned on me that I would want to have this conversation with you before it becomes my civic duty to come forward.

I looked you up online for the first time in years. I was surprised to see that during all this time I was ignoring you, you went on living. I want

to come forward because I want to believe that you are a kind person. I want to put this in my past, and part of that means confronting you. I want to believe that you'll believe me, acknowledge this truth, and perhaps grow from it. I never wanted to report the assault because I never wanted to get the criminal justice system involved. That still stands true today—I see other ways of restoring justice.

I hope you see this and respond with kindness.



Please Don't MANopolize the Class Time: Rules for Respectful Participation in Class



Debbie Yeboah
Student at McGill Faculty of Law

Do you like to debate your professors in front of your peers? Does your arm sometimes get tired because of how often you raise it during class? Do you ask very specific questions that are only marginally related to the topic being discussed? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you might be a class time monopolizer.

Though this seems more common among men, anyone can be a class time monopolizer, the effects of which are negative for everyone involved. Class time monopolizers lead to wasted class time, general annoyance, eye-rolling, zoning out, and actual anger building up in my heart.

This is really about being considerate; when it comes to participation in class, the guiding principle is to remember that the class time is for everyone. For those who have trouble putting this principle into practice, here are some general rules to follow:

— 1. The One and Done Rule

Sometimes in class, you disagree with the professor on a point. Cool. Disagree away. But in class, limit yourself to one rebuttal. If you have already responded to the professor's response one time, then regardless of what they say back, it is done. If you are still not satisfied, sort it out on your own damn time. Nobody else in class feels as strong-

ly about this point as you do, so go talk about it in office hours when nobody else is around.

— 2. The Two Will Do Rule

There are times when you ask a question in class and the professor answers it in a way that makes no sense to you. In these cases, naturally, you will need to ask a follow-up question. Ask it! But if after the

professor's second response you still don't understand, then leave it alone. When they inevitably ask "does that answer your question?" just give them that uneasy, tense look that means "not really" and then go see them after class to clarify. In class, two tries on the part of the professor will have to do.

— 3. The Three Is Enough Out Of Me Rule

If you have already spoken three separate times in a class, then that's enough out of you. Unless your fourth comment is going to change my life, don't say it. Let someone else say it or let the moment pass with nobody saying it. Before you speak again, ask yourself this question: will people be fine if they don't get to hear this? Just to save you the trouble, the answer is yes. Yes, we will be fine if you don't say it. So don't say it.

— 4. The 15 Seconds of Fame Rule

Limit yourself to 15 seconds when asking a question or making a comment. If it requires more than 15 seconds to put it into context, then you can bet that it is not sufficiently connected to the topic being discussed in class. Remember that 15 seconds is a generous upper limit - feel free to ask questions that only

take 5, 4 or even 3 seconds to ask!

— 5. The "We can't hear here!" Rule

This rule is simple: speak loud enough for people to hear you. Front row people and quiet talkers, I mean you!

- Front row people, stop leaning forward and lowering your voice so that only the professor can hear you. It's like you are ignoring all the rest of us, and frankly, I find it to be a little rude. So don't be rude, just speak louder.

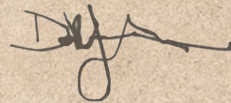
- If you speak often and you know that you have a naturally quiet voice, yet you refuse to make any sort of adjustment when you speak in class, then you are just as rude as the front row forward-leaning whispers! For goodness sake, speak louder! However, if you are a quiet talker because you are shy, then know that I believe that what you say is valuable. The problem is you rob us of the chance to benefit from that value if you do not speak loud enough for us to hear you. So, please make a conscious effort to speak louder. And, when a professor asks you to speak up, do not just say the first few words louder before repeating yourself at the same volume. Please! We want to hear what you have to say.

Conclusion

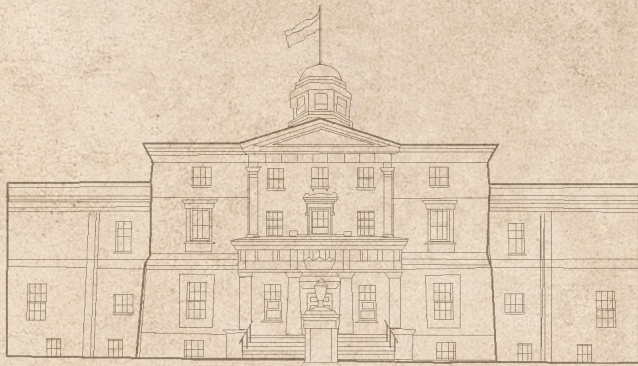
The best part about class time is that we enrich each other's learning experience through our questions and comments. We need diversity at law school because, the more diverse the class, the more we can learn from each other. However, for this to work it must be a diversity that we can both see and hear. These rules are aimed at people who speak too much in class, but stopping class time monopolizers is only half the battle - the other half involves filling class time with a diversity of perspectives. Diversity in the classroom requires that some people make room, but it also requires that different people make noise.

So for those of you who do not usually speak in class, especially women and visible minorities, just know that we need you. Our classroom experience will be enriched by your contribution, and class time can only truly be diverse when you add your unique perspective to the mix. For the sake of the student body, I encourage you to speak up.

But when you do, please remember these five simple rules...



Debbie Yeboah



I was triggered during the first week of law school. Of all words, it was "corroborative" that provoked me. My Criminal Justice professor used it on the first day of class, and it immediately took my mind back to a difficult family situation. I consider myself fairly well-adjusted, so—as far as triggering typically goes—the feeling hit me out of left field.

Corroborative Evidence

ANONYMOUS

STUDENT AT MCGILL FACULTY OF LAW

In the 1980s, my mother was violently raped at a work event by her boss. He harassed her for months afterward and she was eventually bullied out of her job; it took her more than a decade to tell anyone about the assault. He, on the other hand, has since become prominent and well-accomplished in his field. My mother decided in late 2017 that she wanted to call him out.

She has some contacts at a prominent national newspaper and, in the wake of the #MeToo movement, they were interested in publishing her story. A journalist was assigned to her case, and interviewed several family members, including me. However, after a few months of research—and a cease and desist letter from the rapist—the newspaper decided that the story did not conform to their journalistic standards; they did not have enough "corroborative evidence". I was sad, disappointed and—having not

yet started law school—a little confused. But I accepted the newspaper’s decision.

In September 2018, I started iL eager to learn about all facets of the law. I was particularly intrigued by criminal law and hoped to learn about prison justice, one of my motivations for applying to law school in the first place. My professor gave a quick survey of the Criminal Justice course and mentioned there would be a unit on sexual assault. She briefly talked about how the law requiring “corroborative evidence” has relaxed over the past few decades, making claims of sexual assault (to some extent) easier. This obviously captured my attention and, like several of my peers, I lined up after class to ask her a follow-up question. I didn’t feel sad at all—I just wanted to ask her more about this all-too familiar expression. As I was mentally preparing my question, my trauma suddenly bubbled up and my eyes became teary. “Shit,” I thought. I considered ditching the line, but it was suddenly my turn to speak. I meekly asked my professor about her point on corroborative evidence and hardly paid attention as she answered. I quickly thanked her and left.

That day in class, I had the experience of being triggered. This incident led me to reflect on the range of potentially triggering content I would be encountering throughout this degree, and coping strategies in the context of law school. “Trigger” in the psychological sense concerns an emotional or physical reaction to a particular sight, sound, or form of recollection.¹ It is commonly associated with post-traumatic stress disorder, and manifests in different ways depending on different experiences.² Violence, abuse, racism, colonialism, homophobia and transphobia can all be sources of trauma. In the context of universities and col-

¹ Francesca Laguardia, Venezia Michalsen & Holly Rider-Milkovich, “Trigger Warnings: From Panic to Data” (2017) 66: 4 J Leg Educ 882 at 882.

² *Ibid* at 882–883.

leges, trigger warnings allow students to choose whether they want to avoid certain subjects that could agitate them, and the debate around these warnings is controversial. Proponents of trigger warnings maintain that they foster safer spaces and make for a better learning environment, enabling students to mentally prepare for the material.³ Critics, on the other hand, are quick to dismiss student fragility, believing that trigger warnings are an anti-intellectual form of censorship that stifles the learning environment.⁴ I believe that signaling potentially triggering material in advance is valuable. Nevertheless, experiences of trauma will continue to impact an individual’s engagement with sensitive subjects, and trigger warning may not always be a sufficient solution. When even a seemingly harmless word like “corroborative” can initiate a feeling, warnings may not always be effective. Moreover, in fast-paced settings like law school, students may feel pressure to attend lectures regardless of content warnings and, like me, may not want to skip class for the sake of their mental health.

Sexual assault in the legal context presents unique complications, given its inherently traumatic nature, and there has been debate on if and how to approach it.⁵ Globally, one in three women experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime,⁶ and while not all survivors develop PTSD, the subject will often remain a source of pain or shame. In my experience, violent assault can also have an inter-generational effect. It is particularly difficult to approach this subject from a removed and technical standpoint, and the dissonance between having experienced a traumatic incident and studying it in a legal context can be

³ *Ibid* at 884.

⁴ *Ibid* at 885.

⁵ Jeannie Suk Gersen, “The Trouble With Teaching Rape Law” (15 December 2014) online: *The New Yorker* <www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/trouble-teaching-rape-law> [perma.cc/ZJ6A-F26Z].

⁶ “Violence against women” (29 November 2017) online: *World Health Organization* <www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women> [perma.cc/YT9X-KPJC].

hard to grapple with. While reading legislation and case law, many of us will endure distracting, troubling recollections. If I have a follow-up question, as I typically do, it's hard to tell whether I will tear up if I ask it. I want to be professional in front of my peers and professors, and I have learned that I will sometimes have to forfeit my understanding of the subject for the sake of saving face.

Nevertheless, I genuinely want to confront and learn about these issues. A legal perspective can sometimes inhibit our intuitive and creative reflexes, but we all have dynamic backgrounds and good reasons for being here. While I do not believe I will work in sexual assault law in the future, I have a desire to understand it. That being said, this may not be the case for all students, depending on their experiences, and I respect people who recognize their boundaries in our learning environment.

This experience has made me realize what I do and don't want to do in law. Like many 1Ls, I don't have a game plan for my legal career—and I'm happy about that. For the time being, I will remain receptive to the subject matter we're taught, despite how distressing, frustrating (or boring) it may be. Whatever our approaches to law school are, they will positively inform our roles in the legal world, and I believe that our respective choices to face or refrain from triggering subjects will make us equally capable and well-rounded jurists.

Sorry

VALÉRIE BLACK ST-LAURENT
STUDENT AT MCGILL FACULTY OF LAW

THANKS SO MUCH FOR THIS, SORRY FOR... SORRY, I KNOW I'VE BEEN FLOODING YOU WITH ...

I've lost track of the number of times I've jokingly told my female friends to put money in the "sorry" jar for apologizing for things they shouldn't apologize for. If every woman on the planet put money in the same jar, we would have enough money to end poverty— forever. It's nothing new. Studies show that women tend to apologize significantly more for behaviour that is otherwise deemed to be acceptable for men.¹ Women not only apologize more, but also ask for less, particularly in the context of pay raises.² We have been conditioned to apologize not only for achieving success or being in positions of power, but simply for existing outside of what society considers to be "the norm".

I'm no exception. Since my Cégep years, I have held managerial positions in various organizations. Without fail, I find myself apologizing when requesting that my team members complete the tasks that are already part of their listed responsibilities. This article's lede is pretty

¹ Karina Schumann & Michael Ross, "Why Women Apologize More Than Men: Gender Differences in Thresholds for Perceiving Offensive Behavior" (2010) 21:10 Psychological Science 1649.

² Jennifer Ludden, "Ask For A Raise? Most Women Hesitate", *NPR* (8 February 2011), online: <www.npr.org> [<https://perma.cc/36LA-US23>].

much the beginning of every email or message I've sent to so many of my colleagues, regardless of their gender.

From attaining legal personhood to presiding as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, we women have achieved so much. In the legal world and beyond, women, appointed or not, are beginning to fill positions of power. Yet, we are still apologizing for it.

So why all this apologizing? Maybe it's the lack of representation. Despite the progress that's been made, very few women actually occupy positions of power.³ When we do, society doesn't give us a break for choosing a career that requires us to dedicate a significant amount of time to it; it is still expected that women spend time trying to build a family and maintain a clean household.⁴

Our socialization process is also at fault. Unfortunately, it continues to perpetuate the age-old stereotype that women are expected to "behave" a certain way. As such, we have been taught to feel guilty about our actions a lot more than men.⁵ This is namely because we have been socialized to act in ways that please everyone, not to cause conflict and ultimately, not to feel entitled. When a woman who holds a position of power apologizes for asking something within her purview, the subtext is: "I'm sorry I don't conform to gender stereotypes. I feel guilty for asking you to execute tasks because my request requires you to acknowledge me as your superior and thus, defines my duties as being other than changing the kids and fixing you a sandwich." This may seem like an exaggeration, but it reflects many women's underlying feelings when we use apologetic language: we feel guilty about holding a

³ Zameena Mejia, "Just 24 Female CEOs Lead the Companies on the 2018 Fortune 500—Fewer Than Last Year", *CNBC* (21 May 2018), online: <www.cnbc.com> [perma.cc/98UW-ZGLR].

⁴ Kala Jean Melchiori, *Backlash Against Working Mothers* (PhD Dissertation, Loyola University Chicago, 2015) at 94 [unpublished], online: <ecommons.luc.edu> [perma.cc/K9WK-BEDF].

⁵ Schumann & Ross, *supra* note 1.

position of power, as if it was not our place to do so.

Our grandmothers, mothers, and our generation have fought and achieved so much despite still living in a world dominated by middle-aged white men. These women have allowed us to have a place at the table; they have allowed me to write this article without fear of prejudice.

So please, can we stop apologizing for being great and start asking for the recognition we deserve? Can we state oh-so-proudly that we can be CEOs, Board Advisors, Justices, and so much more? That's the least our predecessors deserve. These women fought too hard for us to still be apologizing for turning the tide.

NOT A LUXURY



SHAUNA VAN PRAAGH
LAW PROFESSOR AT MCGILL
FACULTY OF LAW

In November of this academic year, the McGill Jewish Law Students' Association asked me to speak at a community Friday night dinner open to all law students. I was honoured and delighted to have the opportunity to share reflections on the ways in which my identities intersect with what I write, how I teach, and who I am as a jurist. We all bring our stories, our experiences, and our relationships to our projects; examining and sharing them in all their complicated messiness is crucial to understanding ourselves and creating connections to others.

Audre Lorde insists, “poetry is not a luxury.”¹ As I suggested to the 60 students gathered around a Shabbat table, jurists—like poets—work with words, incorporate lived experience, and inspire contemporary choreography of human interaction. Like poets, jurists carry a heavy burden of responsibility to repair the world; it is a burden that never gets lighter even if necessarily shared by those whose identities overlap with, and enrich, our own. So here are some of my thoughts on the intersections of my identities with my roles and responsibilities in law, an exercise profoundly linked, in my view, to the questions and insights provoked by feminism. I will reflect on three domains of life as a legal scholar: first, the research questions I ask; second, classroom conversations; third, community enrichment. Along the way, I talk about three things that a capital “J” has come to signify in my life.

First, research and writing. When I chose a topic for my doctoral work at Columbia University, I decided to focus on children of faith in the contexts of child protection, custody, and education. In all of my handwritten notes, a big “J” always indicated Judaism, or Jewish, or Jews. “J” has become shorthand, next to “M” for Muslim and “X” for Christian, “JW” for Jehovah’s Witnesses—all important letters and communities in my research.

My interest in the implications of strong recognition of community affiliation in children’s lives continues, and a selection of titles of some of my published articles provides a glimpse of longstanding interests: “*La diversité des enfants: un défi pour l’État pluraliste*”; “Dance Me to the End of Law (Rules, Laws and the Dance of Diversity)”; “‘Open Doors’ – ‘Portes ouvertes’: Classrooms as Sites of Interfaith Interface”. In all of my work, I focus on individuals, community membership, the importance of autono-

¹ Audre Lorde, “Poetry is Not a Luxury” in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, (Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1984) 36.

my—however messy—and the avoidance of easy adoption of orthodox, monolithic, or top-down understandings of identities.

**“... THERE ARE ALWAYS WAYS IN WHICH WALLS
CAN BE PERMEABLE, DYNAMIC, FRAGILE,
SUBJECT TO REDESIGN,
TRANSFORMATION, OR EVEN TEARING DOWN.”**

My writing and thinking about Jewish (or big “J”) communities in particular has been deeply influenced by engagement with Israel as a Reform Jewish feminist jurist. Just after my second year in law school, I went to Israel for the first time as a volunteer human rights intern with the Israel Women’s Network. The remarkable women I met taught me to explore, question, and imagine the transgression of walls and borders. Israel has many of both: built and sustained to support, defend, enclose, separate, demarcate, protect, and divide. Much energy goes into ensuring people know on which side they belong. As I reflected on my most recent stay in Jerusalem—30 years after my first visit, and this time as a Visiting Fellow at the Halbert Centre for Canadian Studies—there are always ways in which walls can be permeable, dynamic, fragile, subject to redesign, transformation, or even tearing down.

Second, classroom conversations. If big “J” in my research notes designates Judaism, “J” in my teaching designates Justice. As a law professor, I guide my law students through the places where jurists and judges contrast law and justice, the spots where legal rules sometimes don’t feel fair, the ways in which the administration of justice or access to justice might seem shaky and in need of attention. One of the challenges for law students is how to keep the big “J” in view, to feel the weight of that letter on their shoulders, to recognize their potential as participants in the constant nourishing of the big “J” of Justice.

Over 25 years at McGill, one notion in the private law of obligations has stayed central to my teaching. In English and Canadian Common Law, it is referred to as the “neighbour principle”; in Quebec, it is embodied in Article 1457 of the Civil Code. In Jewish law, it is located in Leviticus chapter 19 verse 17: “Love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord.” Hillel famously pointed to this principle as the Coles notes version of the Torah: “What is hateful to yourself, do not do to your neighbour – this is the essence, all the rest is commentary.”

Just in case you don’t know the “neighbour principle” passage by heart, here is Lord Atkin in the 1932 case of *Donoghue v Stevenson*: “The rule that you are to love your neighbour becomes in law, you must not injure your neighbour... You must take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which you can reasonably foresee would be likely to injure your neighbour.”² Allen Linden, tort law professor, textbook writer, and judge, states the neighbour principle’s importance as follows: “It inspires those noble thoughts and deeds of which we need more in the modern world, not less. It challenges us to dream of a beautiful world where people care about one another, feel responsible for one another, and even—dare I say it—love one another.”³

While religion might explicitly make it into the titles of much of my published work, it is the notion of proximity that, for me, clearly marks the pursuit of big “J” justice—proximity in the sense of metaphysical neighbours (as in the law of obligations), and the proximity of literal neighbours in the residential neighbourhoods of diverse societies. How do we live together, respect each other, flourish in shared space, shape our responsibilities, and

² *Donoghue v Stevenson*, [1932] UKHL 100, AC 562.

³ Allen Linden, “Viva *Donoghue v Stevenson*!” in PT Burns (ed), *Donoghue v Stevenson and the Modern Law of Negligence* (Vancouver, The Continuing Legal Education Society of British Columbia, 1991) 230.

constrain the harmful consequences of our actions?

Third, community enrichment. When I became a bat mitzvah 40 years ago at Temple Israel in Ottawa, I included in my commentary the famous lesson from Hillel: “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am for myself only, what am I? And if not now, when?”. The questions posed by Hillel have shaped my life, my learning, my understanding of law, my parenting, my mentoring, and my teaching. They taught me to answer questions with more questions, never to be content with a simple answer, constantly grapple with self and community, look in and reach out at the same time.

The interweaving of identity into my life and work underscores the message of the first question, *If I am not for myself, who will be for me?* The second question, *But if I am for myself only, what am I?*, serves as a strong reminder to participate in broad and complex communities. On the Saturday night of the synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh, I went to the opening evening of Montreal’s annual Festival Sepharade. I went to hear Tzachi Halevi—an actor from Fauda, and a musician who sings in Arabic, Hebrew, English, French, and Spanish. A member of the audience asked Tzachi what it meant to him to be a Jew. “Why are you asking?” “It matters to us,” the audience member replied. Tzachi is a Jewish Israeli, fluent in all the languages in which he sings, and recently married to a well-known Palestinian Muslim journalist. He incredulously asked, “It matters to all of you to know what being a Jew means to me?” I imagined him thinking, it’s absolutely none of your business. I too think the answer must be intensely personal, impossible to capture succinctly, resistant to any external characterization. Tzachi did reply: “It means I am a human being.”



That response is beautifully mapped onto the fact that within a week of going to hear Tzachi, I had taken one of my sons to hear the Montreal Symphony Orchestra play Tchaikovsky, had gone with old friends to hear Karen Young sing Joni Mitchell, and had watched contemporary dance illustrating the challenges of mental illness choreographed by Montrealer Jane Mappin. My world, my relationships, my identity may be imbued with my Judaism, but none feels constrained or solely shaped by my faith. So too with the communities to which I belong as a jurist, and the student groups I have supported and mentored over the past years—including the Indigenous Law Association, the “Law Needs Feminism Because” advocacy group, and LEX who are engaged in outreach to high school kids.

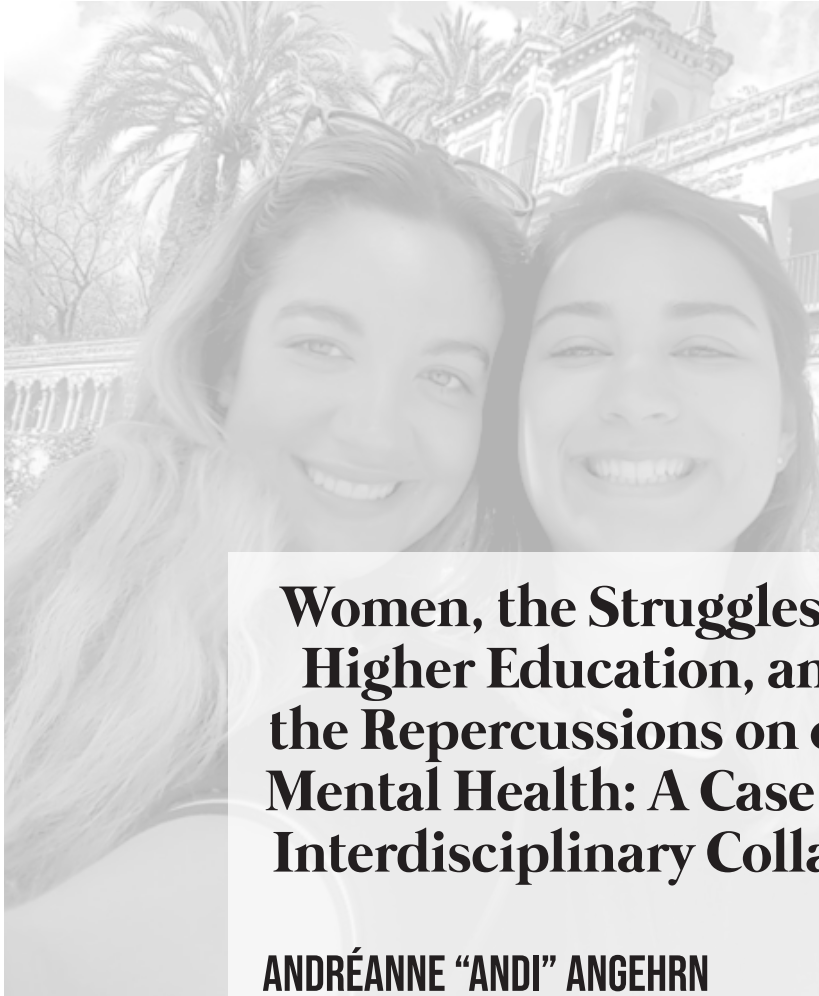
The experience of being the literal and symbolic “other” is woven into Jewish identity—it is part of the fabric of Jewish history. But it goes hand in hand with belonging, with participating, with a willingness to engage in tough conversations, with collaborations across the permeable borders that shape community, with imagining and identifying with individuals and groups who know the phenomenon of otherness all too well, and with the burden of building and sustaining structures of justice.

I promised a third big “J”, and I will conclude with what I think it is and how it belongs in this last set of re-

flections on the complexity of community connections. It is a “J” that comes from my parents, both of whom are journalists. When they talk about where they studied to prepare for their careers and where they both later taught, they talk about J-school. Big “J”, for them, obviously stands for journalism.

The letter “J” in my life stands for Jews, for Justice, for Journalism. Central to understanding each are people, stories, and the importance of learning from the past in order to build the future. A threat to any one big “J” is always a threat to all three. To me—as a Jew, as a jurist, as the daughter of journalists—right now seems like a good time to underscore those connections. *If not now, when?*





Women, the Struggles of Higher Education, and the Repercussions on our Mental Health: A Case for Interdisciplinary Collabs

ANDRÉANNE “ANDI” ANGEHRN

GRADUATE STUDENT AT UNIVERSITY OF REGINA DEPARTMENT OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

SOUHILA “SOUSSOU” BABA

STUDENT AT MCGILL FACULTY OF LAW

There is no doubt about it, law school and grad school are hard. For many of us, higher education comes at great costs: homesickness, separation from friends and family, financial struggles (instant noodles anyone?), having to juggle multiple jobs, having to hide parts of your identity, having to explain certain things to people *all the time*, constant tokenizing, recurring microaggressions...well, you know the rest. Despite all of this, as women pursuing higher education, we strive for excellence. We juggle the expectations of our programs, supervisors, professors, and most importantly, the expectations we have for ourselves. In pursuing our desire to perform, succeed, achieve greatness, and to rightfully take our education into our own hands, we often leave something behind: our personal and psychological well-being.

This is where students pursuing higher education suffer. There is an expectation to achieve perfection in multiple domains: get straight A's (yeah okay, B's), volunteer, secure an internship, serve your community, have a social life, be present for your family and friends, look your best, eat well, work out, also are you dating anyone?

ANDI - Resources made available for students to prioritize their mental health are sparse; yet, the growing need for mental health support and counselling is evident. As a clinical psychology graduate student, I consider myself a mental health advocate. I encourage others and myself to seek therapy and strive to end the stigma surrounding mental health and mental disorders. However, under the pressure of writing my master's thesis, succeeding in my courses, and getting ready to be a student practitioner, am I allowed to feel the injuries of my own mental health? Am I allowed to be honest and open about my struggle? After all, a physician wouldn't be ashamed of her own health failings and she would not be expected to always be in perfect physical health.

SOUSSOU - Of course you can feel, Andi. You have to. One thing I admire most about you is your confidence in being unapologetically (and 'badassly') you. It was your openness about your journey that has allowed me and countless others to come to terms with our own mental health. As the workload gets unreal and the deadlines loom, I always think back to the summer after 1L. I was exhausted, drained, and honestly not down to return to law school in the Fall. I thought long and hard about the sacrifices I was making—were they worth it? I'm still here so you know the end of that story. That summer, I decided one thing that has carried me through ever since: me first. For those of you who know me well, you can understand that this is probably the hardest thing for me to do. But I come back to it every time I'm overwhelmed, every time I feel inadequate, every time I skip yoga (guilty), every time I struggle with my bad habits, every time I lose sleep over situations, and every time I feel like I won't make it to the next day. Part of putting me first is concentrating on things

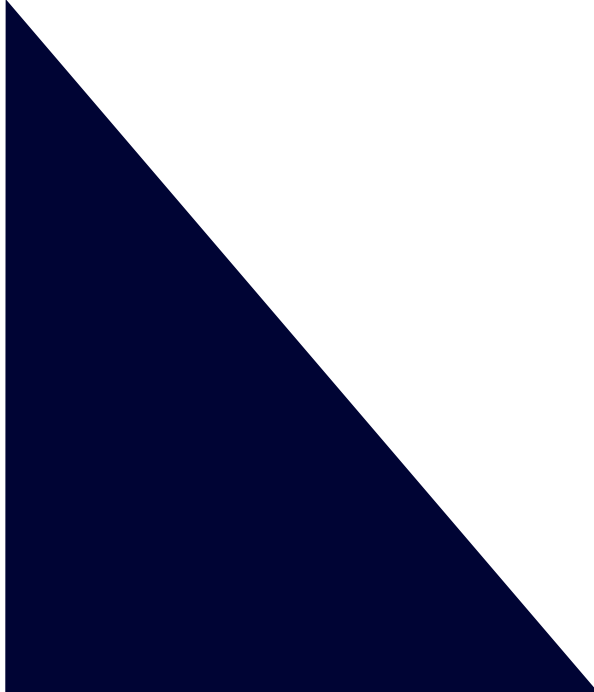
I love: my family, my closest friends, my yoga practice, and yes, my education (I know, I know, I actually love school). You know who always gets me through tough times? Andi.

ANDI - Hearing that you will put yourself first is the happiest news I've heard in a long time. About time, in my opinion. Souhila is one of the most inspiring people I know. She constantly seeks to better the environment for those around her, and her mind is like this well-watered garden: flourishing. She truly cares and tries to understand the philosophy of the law; this extends to all things she immerses herself in. Discussing my ideas, aspirations, and struggles with her—whether collaborating academically, professionally, or personally—is like stepping into that garden and coming out refreshed myself. My own personal garden is nourished by the women around me, like Souhila, who selflessly expose their hearts and ideas and allow for the sharpening of my mind and my own self-empowerment. In my opinion, the case for interdisciplinary collaborations is this: the most beautiful bouquets are varied, the most breathtaking designs are intricate, and the best version of myself—mind, soul, body, and overall well-being—is reinforced through talking with women who have unique expertise, insight, and talent. After all, I wouldn't have discovered the joy of—and necessity for—coffee if it wasn't for my girl Soussou and our trip to Spain.

SOUSSOU - Ahhh yes Spain, remember? Striking colours, enticing winding paths, stunning churches, delicious free samples at *Sabor a España*, creepy rideshare dude, and, well, sunburns. Collaborating with Andi is not just about advancing our work by taking a multi-disciplinary approach, or looking at issues from the perspective of where our fields intersect. While we are physically far apart, when we work together, we are in constant exchange and discus-

sion. We throw ideas around, find platforms to publish on, discuss our theories, and help each other make sense of our thoughts. Of course, we also talk often about non-academic stuff: we fantasize about how much better the world will be post-patriarchy-smashing and relay the high points of our mutual love of coffee (I was going to say reading, but this is more accurate!) When we work together on projects (like this one – *meta*), we get to concretely shape the world in which we operate. We get to be creative, we get to channel our visions, and we get to challenge each other on our assumptions. We grow, together.

So don't be afraid to channel your thoughts; in fact, share them. Find someone you trust, someone with whom these thoughts become ideas, creations, projects, stepping stones. You'll find that letting that person in (or letting yourself out) will help you and help them. Friendships will blossom, well-being will thrive, and collaborations will burgeon.



Dialogues in Colour

THE WOMEN OF COLOUR COLLECTIVE
STUDENTS AT MCGILL FACULTY OF LAW

As women of colour, we are situated in between two worlds - neither of which has a legal system built for us. Awareness of this reality becomes acute in law school, where it seeps through the readings we are assigned, the lectures we receive, and the hallways we walk. At best, we are one of many lenses through which to view a case, and, at worst, we are a question. *Is the law discriminatory?* This question, when asked, gives the Women of Colour Collective and similar groups reason enough to exist.

At the beginning of this semester, our executive team met to discuss the direction in which we wanted to grow as a club. We decided on two major, perhaps contradictory, but theoretically reconcilable goals.

Firstly, we wanted to echo the sisters who built our group by continuing to provide a supportive space for women from racialized backgrounds, Indigenous women, and trans people of colour at our faculty. In this vein, we have hosted events for our members, ranging from social gatherings to professional development programs, and have sought to broaden our community both at the faculty and online, so that minoritized legal professionals, law students, aspiring jurists, and our allies might safely unite in solidarity with one another.

Secondly, in breaking from the mold set for us, we wanted to venture out of the space we've worked so hard to cultivate and start a conversation at the faculty (and beyond) to find understanding and compassion in an increasingly polarized environment. Allyship is an important part of any movement. We understand that to get it we must indeed give it. Moreover, the exchange of ideas, fundamental to any social system, is necessary for change. Achieving this requires, on the one hand, taking up space and getting our voices heard, and, on the other, leaving space for others to disagree with us and engage with our opinions.

This project attempts to reconcile our two goals. These pictures were taken while doing what this club is ultimately about — sharing experiences. These next pages record our thoughts on a variety of topics, ranging from being a woman of colour, the role of WOCC, our hopes for and issues with the legal profession, and, naturally, Mindy Kaling.

We hope that minoritized readers find comfort in our shared experiences. We hear you; we are you. For others, we hope that you gain a more thorough understanding of what WOCC seeks to accomplish and why the space we create is necessary. We offer this piece to you and in doing so invite you into our space.

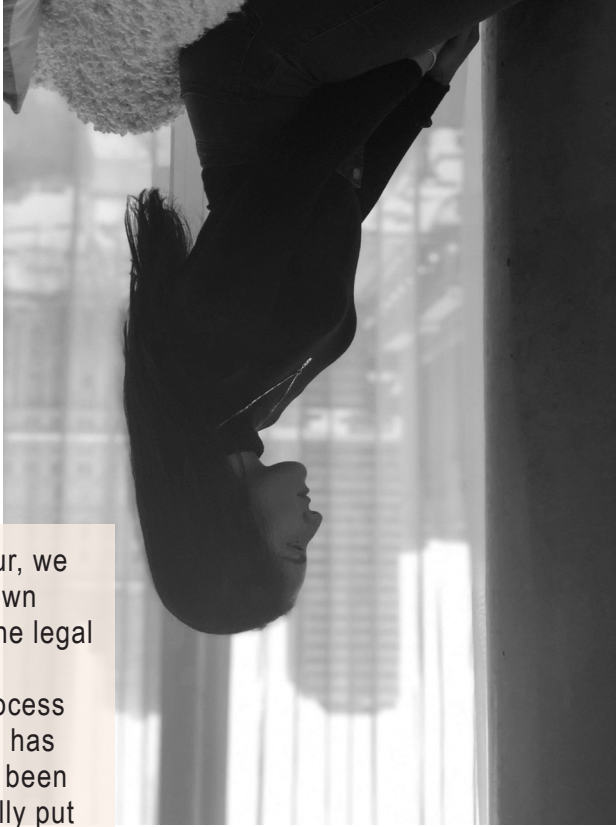
We ask you to
join the
conversation.

“DO YOU THINK DIFFERENTLY WHEN
YOU SPEAK YOUR MOTHER TONGUE?”

- It's like I have two of
me: a self-conscious me
for you and a free me
for me, does that makes
sense?

- I think so”





“As women of colour, we have to make our own community within the legal profession. The recruitment process more than anything has shown me that. It’s been hard but I can’t really put into words why. And so, I’m grateful for the women of colour at this faculty, because they know how it is without me even having to explain it, and their support is there without me even having to ask. They’re more confident in me than I am in myself, and that’s what keeps me going when my insecurities -of which there are increasingly more- tell me to stop.”

“I’m working on being my **authentic** self without modifying the way I self-present to fit a certain ideal.”





“BOUNDLESS I like that word because none of us have boundaries. If there’s no space for you, make space. Even though I don’t know how to do that, and there’s so many institutional problems and barriers... I like that word. And I like strength too. I think the people that we least expect are the strongest people and we can learn from them. And that reminds me of people back home, like those in refugee camps – no, they’re not the most educated, but they are the strongest.”



“Especially if it’s corporate, you have to participate five times as a woman of colour for them to be like, oh, okay, maybe you have a decent opinion.”

“WOCC is a space that has allowed me to be unapologetically myself. A space that has nourished my curiosity and catapulted my academic and spiritual growth. A space that has given me the opportunity to reflect on my identity and to connect the missing dots of my story. A space that has brought strong, smart and dynamic women into my life.

WOCC is a space where solidarity, empathy and debate come together.”



“Perspective taking has been an incredibly useful tool for me in these first few months of law school. It’s been crucial to me in trying to connect with my roots and in deciphering the grey zone in which I’ve always lived. But now, it has unexpectedly brought so much wealth to my law school experience in providing a variety of lenses through which to interpret the grey zone inherent to a legal education.”



“WHAT DO I HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH WITH MY LEGAL STUDIES?”

This could be largely idiosyncratic. But, what has stood out throughout my legal studies is the way in which “The Law” is so deeply invested in rules, categorization and legibility. I’ve found that this perpetuates a narrative of perceived clarity which is mirrored in the structure of law school and our transition into the legal profession more generally. I think that for a lot of law students certainty is the norm which is then punctuated by flashes of uncertainty - it’s all the more destabilizing when uncertainty is your constant reality. It is spaces like WOCC which have allowed me to lean into and embrace the liminality of my law school experience. So when asked what I hope to accomplish with my legal studies my answer is still comically opaque but (ironically) there’s clarity and confidence in my uncertainty.”



“- I don't want to be the first woman of colour at a firm.

- It's unfortunate that sometimes you have to be and that's just not an option. For example, there's this firm I genuinely wanted to work with, loved everything, their business-

- I wish I loved corp as much as you do.

-I was the first Arab to go to this firm - so there's no one like me here, and I don't know how to act. My interview was with 4 white men. And me on the opposite side of the table. And I started talking about how Western legal systems are becoming a standard and that's not necessarily a good thing. One of the questions was like, has your study of the law been satisfactory? And I meant to say yes, because it a legal job obviously. But I was like, no honestly, it's just one narrative that I'm getting tired of. And they were probably like, do we want to take her on? She's a bit much.

- That's amazing.

- And even if we're not choosing to be trailblazers, people assume that for us.

- It's just like, man, I'm not the trailblazer you want. I'm a mediocre student just trying to get a job.”

“How do I feel about Dua Lipa?

-I really like her style.

- She does have great style – and she's very... she's cool.

- My best friend's cousin does her costumes.

- That's actually very cool.

- Best friend?

- One of them - Best friend is a tier.

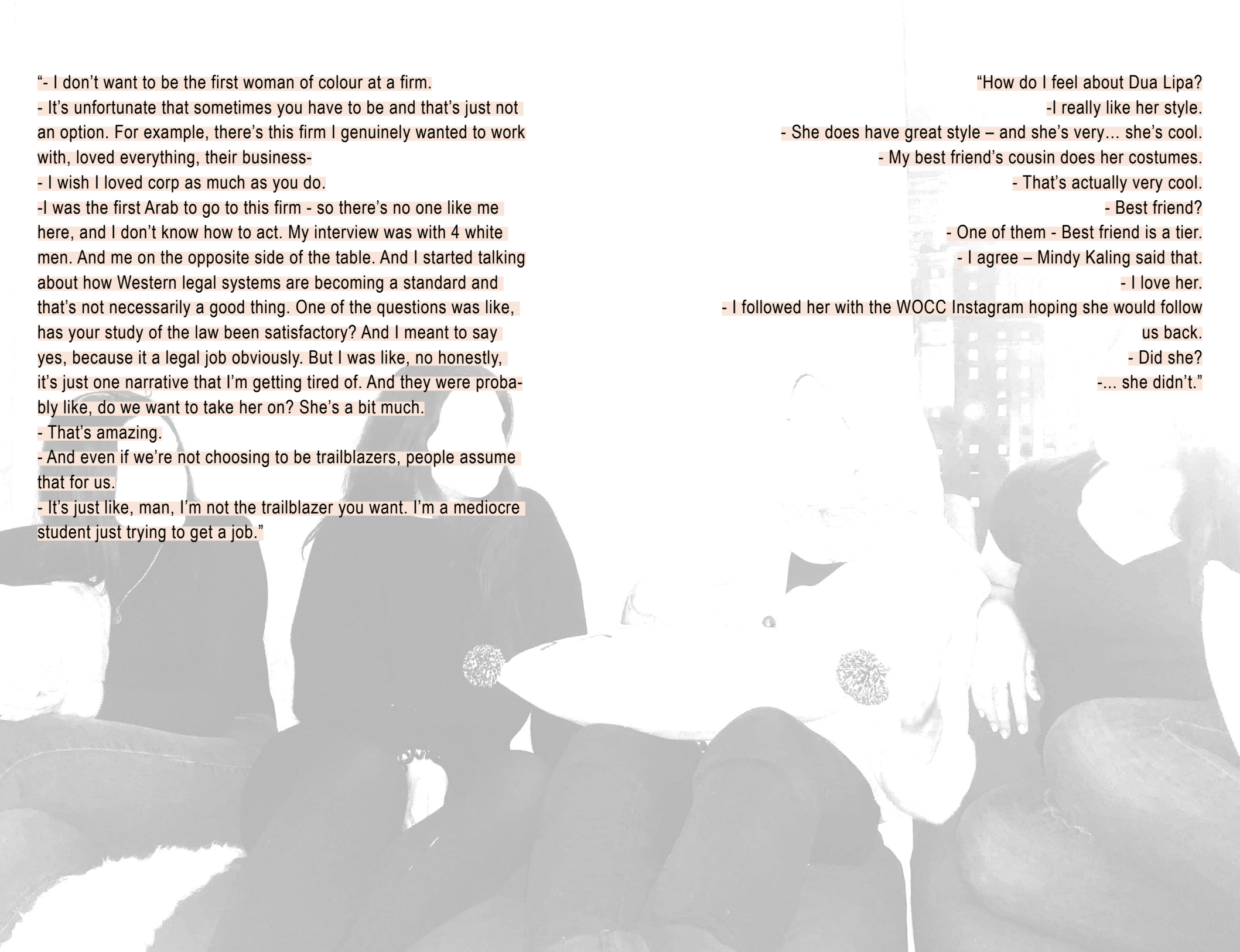
- I agree – Mindy Kaling said that.

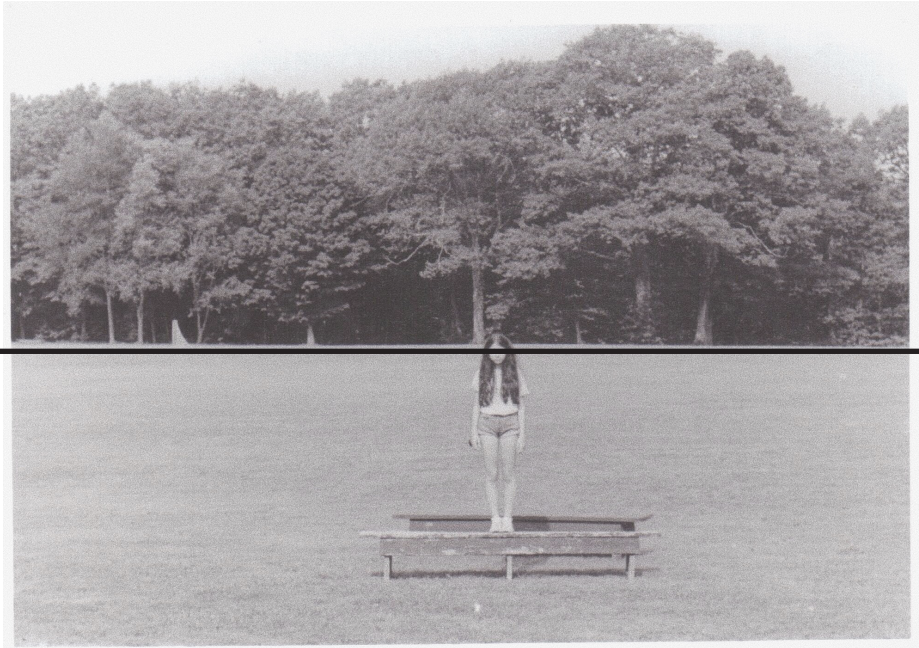
- I love her.

- I followed her with the WOCC Instagram hoping she would follow us back.

- Did she?

-... she didn't.”





An Invisible Community

ALICIA BLIMKIE

STUDENT AT MCGILL FACULTY OF LAW

A dose of anesthetic and a speculum christened
me into an invisible community.

A secret society of sorts,
but the secret is not the society itself, but its
membership.

We walk among you in plain sight,
eat your food, tell your jokes, wear your skin.
But inside, our soft tissues hold imprints of the
memories that mark us as different.

And when you walk down the street,
to your class, to a new terrasse,
around the block, to a coffee shop,
down the hall, through the urban sprawl,
you pass through the translucent web of our
kinship.

Invisible strands like fishing ropes
tossed out into the ocean of
humanity by deep parts of our
souls,
seeking kinship and the words
“you are not alone”.

We are not an elite group
We are every colour, nation, and creed.
No fraternity of Freemasons,
more of a sisterhood of freedom and sin.
Our sisters come from all walks of life.
Many choose to become members,
others are brought to the table through
bitterness and strife.

What we share is our initiation,
 a process known to many, but still taboo.
 The clouds of vapor stole my memories of the event,
 but when light streamed through the fog and I opened my eyes, I knew:
 something inside me had changed.

I felt pure happiness and gratitude, still floating above myself as the drugs
 lingered.

As I opened my mouth to proclaim the news,
 the weight of society's finger came down to close my lips, whispering,
 "Hush. Too personal. Keep your struggles to yourself."

I looked down at my heart strings,
 most extended far across the country,
 connecting to a network back home
 far from this new, foreign land.
 Those reaching out to new friends nearby were thin,
 prone to snap under the weight of too much too soon.

I had emerged successful from a struggle with part of myself
 but I could not share my victory
 and I could not speak of the battle.

Of moments, sitting in a stiff, unforgiving chair,
 being a dutiful student,
 when nausea swiftly crept up my throat.
 And I locked my mouth shut, kept my eyes open, and moved my pen across
 the page.

Ah, morning sickness.
 I understand.
 Breathe deeply, now.

All while a smartly dressed man paced across the front of the room
 repeating "Morgentaler", "changement social",
 and a new word I had learned since I settled in this frigid town: avortement.

Words on paper and in the air
 that helped *those* women.
 An unknown flood of my sisters,
 who may be like me, who may not be like me.
 Looking around, I see people who look like everyone else,
 and I wonder who among them
 are members of that hidden community
 of strength, agency, struggle, softness, and perhaps some shame.

Again, we are invisible.
 My experiences are evaporating
 under the heat of conformity and confusion of society.
 I feel myself drifting upwards with them.
 Do I dare disturb the universe?

There are allies outside of this invisible barrier
 but the gap is breached silently,
 a show of solidarity by wearing black.
 Without words,
 without pictures,
 simply with a colour.

And a colour so dark,
 not one that reflects the lightness I experienced on initiation.
 But at least one that has a depth to it.
 A shade that existed since the universe unfolded itself
 and before the conception of our world.
 The darkness that we were surrounded by in our mother's wombs.

We are atomized, but not alone.

Occasionally, we break through
 the silence,
 hold society firm when it
 squirms at the mention of our
 bodies,
 of our choices.
 And when we speak,
 we are invisible no longer.

« On ne naît pas femme, on le devient¹ » : L'impact du genre grammatical dans la langue de Molière²

ALEXA KLEIN

ÉTUDIANTE EN DROIT À MCGILL

Cette dissertation porte sur l'intersection entre la langue et les droits des femmes et des personnes non binaires³. Elle explore l'impact que la langue que l'on parle peut avoir sur notre perception de ces gens et de leurs droits. L'effet que la langue a sur notre perception du monde est brièvement considéré avant d'analyser le traitement du genre féminin et du langage épïcène⁴ dans la langue française. Cette analyse démontre que parler une langue avec un genre grammatical, dans ce cas-ci le français, peut avoir un impact sur la perception qu'ont les locuteurs de cette langue des droits des femmes et des personnes non binaires.

LA BARRIÈRE LINGUISTIQUE : LA LANGUE ET LA PERCEPTION DU MONDE

La langue ou les langues que l'on parle affectent notre perception du monde. Plus particulièrement, il y a maintenant amplement de recherche démontrant un lien entre l'existence du genre grammatical dans une langue et les associations que ses locuteurs font entre certains noms communs et le sexe féminin ou masculin⁵. Les locuteurs de langues avec genre grammatical ont tendance à associer des qualités dites « masculines » aux mots qui sont masculins dans leur langue et des qualités dites « féminines » aux mots qui sont féminins. Par exemple, un pont est masculin en espagnol (*el puente*) et les locuteurs de cette langue, même lorsqu'on leur demande de qualifier un pont en anglais, une langue sans genre grammatical, ont tendance à utiliser des mots tels que grand, dangereux, long, fort, ou solide pour décrire le pont. En allemand, le mot pont est féminin (*die brücke*) et les locuteurs de cette langue, lorsqu'on leur demande de qualifier un pont en anglais, ont tendance à utiliser des mots tels que belle, élégante, fragile,

³ L'appellation « personnes non binaires, » dans cette dissertation, réfère à toutes personnes ne s'identifiant pas à son sexe à la naissance.

⁴ Invariant en genre.

⁵ Voir par ex Guy Deutscher, *Through the Language Glass: Why the World Looks Different in Other Languages*, New York, Metropolitan Books, 2010 à la p 197 [Deutscher].

¹ Simone de Beauvoir, *Le deuxième sexe : L'expérience vécue*, tome 2, Paris, Gallimard, 1947 à la p 1.

² Je tiens à remercier les rédactrices de *Contours* Jennifer Lachance, Adriana Cefis et Megan Lindy qui ont laborieusement corrigé et raccourcis ma dissertation avec tant de diligence et de patience, et qui m'ont fait d'excellentes suggestions pour en améliorer le contenu.

paisible, ou svelte⁶. Cet exemple démontre que les langues avec genre grammatical peuvent créer une association si forte dans l'esprit du locuteur entre le genre grammatical d'une chose (ou d'une personne) et ses qualités que même lorsqu'il s'exprime dans une langue sans genre grammatical l'association persiste⁷.

La langue parlée n'a aucun impact sur l'habileté d'une personne de raisonner de façon logique⁸, mais l'existence du genre grammatical dans la langue peut tout de même délimiter et diriger la pensée. La langue ou les langues parlées peuvent donc influencer la perception qu'une personne a des femmes, des personnes non binaires, de leurs droits, ainsi que de l'importance de leur place dans la société.

LE DEUXIÈME SEXE : LE FÉMININ EN FRANÇAIS

Le Québec a été l'une des premières nations francophones à prendre des mesures pour féminiser les titres de professions durant les années 60 et est depuis resté en tête du mouvement de féminisation de la langue française⁹. Cela démontre comment, jusqu'à tout récemment, le genre grammatical en français présentait un obstacle supplémentaire à l'égalité des femmes en société. Ainsi, plusieurs auteurs, surtout des linguistes et des théoriciennes de mouvements féministes, ont commenté sur l'invisibilité de la femme dans la langue française¹⁰. C'est un obstacle que l'anglais, langue sans genre grammatical, ne connaît pas.

⁶ Voir Deutscher, *supra* note 5 à la p 215.

⁷ *Ibid* à la p 215.

⁸ *Ibid*.

⁹ Voir Kristýna Žáčková, *La féminisation dans la langue française*, thèse de maîtrise en philologie du français, Université Palackého V Olomouci, 2011 [non publiée] [Žáčková] à la p 15.

¹⁰ *Ibid*. Voir aussi Marina Yaguello, *Les mots et les femmes*, Paris : Payot, 1978 [Yaguello]; Marina Yaguello, *Le sexe des mots*, Paris : Seuil, 1995; Anne-Marie Houdebine-Gravaud, *La féminisation des noms de métiers : En français et dans d'autres langues*, Paris : L'Harmattan, 1998; Céline Labrosse, *Pour une langue française non-sexiste*, Montréal : Les intouchables, 2005; Céline Labrosse, *Pour une grammaire non-sexiste*, Montréal : Les éditions remue-ménage, 2005.

Cette absence promulgue et reflète simultanément les inégalités sociales. Jusqu'au XXe siècle, par exemple, les titres de professions étaient (et ils le sont encore dans certains pays) tous masculins. Il y avait une tendance au Québec à « déséxiser » des textes même avant la publication des premiers avis sur le sujet de l'Office québécois de la langue française (OQLF)¹¹. Ce fut en 1979 que le mouvement prit de l'ampleur quand l'OQLF recommanda l'emploi de formes féminines dans tous les cas possibles¹². Cet avis fut suivi de plusieurs autres qui furent repris par maints pays francophones qui s'en sont inspirés pour féminiser des appellations de métiers¹³.

Dans son avis le plus récent datant de 2015, l'OFLQ a poussé sa réforme de la langue encore plus loin, mandant la rédaction épïcène¹⁴. En d'autres mots, le recours à une formulation neutre doit être choisi lorsque possible. Par exemple, *les lecteurs* deviennent *le lectorat* et *être citoyen canadien* devient *être de citoyenneté canadienne*. Les médias et œuvres de référence ont encore une fois rapidement fait suite à cet avis, bien que certains souscrivaient déjà à de telles pratiques. La société québécoise a évolué et la langue a réagi à ce changement de structure sociale : « Depuis quelques décennies, les femmes accèdent à des postes de travail autrefois occupés avant tout uniquement par les hommes et la langue française [réagit] à cette situation »¹⁵. Le Québec est donc la preuve que la langue peut évoluer avec la société, mais ceci n'est pas toujours le cas. Kristýna Žáčková, une linguiste spécialisant sur la féminisation de la langue française, remarque que « la proximité

¹¹ Voir Žáčková, *supra* note 9.

¹² Voir Québec, Office de la langue française, *Féminisation des titres* (avis de recommandation), Québec, Gazette officielle du Québec, 28 juillet 1979.

¹³ Voir Žáčková, *supra* note 9 à la p 17.

¹⁴ Voir Québec, Office québécois de la langue française, *Féminisation des appellations de personnes et rédaction épïcène* (avis de recommandation), partie 1, 147e année, no 19, Québec, Gazette officielle du Québec, 9 mai 2015.

¹⁵ Voir Žáčková, *supra* note 9 à la p 46.

de l'anglais et du féminisme américain a certainement contribué à déclencher le débat public sur ce sujet » au Québec bien avant qu'il n'apparaisse chez les autres membres de la Francophonie¹⁶. En effet, malgré les avancées remarquables faites au Québec, les pays francophones d'Europe et d'Afrique ont été réticents à féminiser les titres de professions.

Un des acteurs ayant alimenté cette réticence à féminiser les mots en Europe est l'Académie française. En France, l'Académie est gardienne de la langue et son rôle est similaire à celui de l'OFLQ au Québec, mais elle a en plus une large influence sur l'évolution du français dans les autres pays de la Francophonie qui suivent normalement ses recommandations. Ainsi, l'Académie a adopté la théorie du genre marqué, qui suppose que seulement le genre masculin peut être utilisé pour référer aux hommes et aux femmes en même temps¹⁷. La théorie du genre marqué a cependant été jugée discriminatoire par plusieurs féministes, qui y voient une suggestion que la forme féminine est secondaire à la forme masculine¹⁸. Les membres de l'Académie ont même tenu les propos suivants :

Le genre masculin est réputé plus noble que le féminin, à cause de la supériorité du mâle sur la femelle¹⁹.

Nous avons (...) pu relever récemment, dans un compte rendu du correspondant du Monde à Bruxelles, l'expression la juge. L'Académie française considère que cette féminisation est abusive et choquante²⁰.

Cette dernière phrase reflète l'approche prise par l'Académie lorsqu'elle a concédé la féminisation de certains métiers vers la fin des années 90. L'Académie distingue deux catégories de noms de métiers : les métiers prestigieux

¹⁶ *Ibid* à la p 14.

¹⁷ Voir Académie Française, déclaration, « Féminisation des noms de métiers, fonctions, grades et titres » (21 mars 2002), en ligne : *Site officiel de l'Académie française* <www.academie-francaise.fr/actualites> [perma.cc/HC83-NMXP].

¹⁸ Voir Žáčková, *supra* note 9 à la p 23.

¹⁹ *Ibid* à la p 13.

²⁰ *Ibid* à la p 29.

ou « haut de gamme » (maire, médecin, ministre, professeur, sénateur, juge, etc.) et les métiers non valorisés ou « bas de gamme » (boulangier, cuisinier, instituteur, travailleur, poissonnier, etc.). Elle considère acceptable de féminiser seulement la deuxième catégorie de métiers²¹. Ainsi, on peut être une cuisinière ou une institutrice, mais pas une sénatrice ou une juge. On dit aussi Madame le Ministre et non Madame la Ministre. La féminisation des noms de métiers selon ces critères crée donc une hiérarchisation sociale qui associe directement la femme au « bas de gamme ». Cet exemple démontre à quel point la discrimination des femmes dans la société peut être reflétée et amplifiée par les langues sexospécifiques d'une façon qu'elle ne pourrait l'être dans un langage sans genre grammatical tel que l'anglais.

Même au Québec, où les efforts pour féminiser la langue ont connu un grand succès, on se fait encore dire des choses comme « c'est toujours le masculin qui l'emporte » à l'école primaire dans nos cours de français. Le message d'infériorité de la femme n'est pas aussi flagrant ici qu'il ne l'est en France, mais il est certainement présent. Une étude faite par Alexandra Dupuy et Benoît Latulippe de l'UQAM sur la féminisation des noms de métiers et des titres de fonctions sur Twitter démontre que les usagers québécois de la plateforme sont portés à féminiser plus souvent que leurs contreparties françaises, mais que le taux de féminisation va en baissant à mesure que le « prestige » du métier augmente chez les Québécois comme chez les Français²². La langue française a donc encore du chemin à faire au Canada en ce qui a trait à l'égalité des femmes avant de pouvoir rattraper sa voisine la langue anglaise en termes de neutralité de la langue.

²¹ *Ibid* à la p 25.

²² Voir Alexandra Dupuy et Benoît Latulippe, « La féminisation des noms de métiers et de titres de fonctions sur Twitter », colloque étudiante des étudiants en linguistique de l'UQAM, présenté à l'UQAM, 17 avril 2018 [non publié], en ligne : <www.linguistique.uqam.ca> [perma.cc/VV76-3CMB].

AU-DELÀ DU GENRE : LE LANGAGE ÉPICÈNE EN FRANÇAIS

L'anglais bénéficie d'une flexibilité par son genre grammatical neutre non seulement en ce qui a trait à l'égalité des noms masculins et féminins —problème auquel l'anglais ne fait tout simplement pas face—mais aussi en ce qui a trait aux options linguistiques qui s'offrent aux personnes non binaires lorsqu'il s'agit d'employer un langage épïcène. Ainsi, il y a une demande grandissante de la part de la communauté transgenre pour un langage épïcène qui aiderait ses membres à mieux exprimer leur identité²³, mais la quête pour un tel langage est sans aucun doute plus difficile en français dû à la présence omniprésente du genre dans la langue.

Levi C. R. Hord argumente que la situation est ainsi parce que les langues avec genre grammatical ont moins « d'espace » pour le langage épïcène que les langues sans genre grammatical²⁴. Ceci est en raison du nombre beaucoup plus élevé de conventions grammaticales basées sur le genre dans le premier groupe de langues²⁵. Par exemple, en anglais on réfère à un groupe de personne de façon neutre en utilisant le pronom *they*, et il est grammaticalement correcte depuis au moins le XIX siècle d'utiliser *they* pour référer à un individu²⁶. Tandis qu'en français, la convention grammaticale est de donner un genre autant à l'individu qu'au groupe en utilisant il/elle/ils/elles. L'étude de Hord à

²³ Voir Levi C. R. Hord, « Bucking the Linguistic Binary: Gender Neutral Language in English, Swedish, French and German » (2016), 3 : 1 WISSLR 4 (Western Libraries) [Hord]. Voir aussi Anna Livia, *Pronoun Envy: Literary Uses of Linguistic Gender*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001 [Livia]; Jila Ghomeshi, *Grammar Matters: The Social Significance of How We Use Language*, Winnipeg, Arbeiter Ring, 2010. Voir généralement Suzan Stryker, *Transgender History*, Berkeley, Seal, 2008.

²⁴ Voir Hord, *supra* note 23 à la p 1 (par « espace », Hord veut dire moins d'opportunité, d'aise et de susceptibilité à développer un langage épïcène).

²⁵ *Ibid.* Voir aussi Jennifer L. Prewitt-Freilino, Andrew Caswell et Emmi K. Laakso, « The Gendering of Language: A Comparison of Gender Equality in Countries with Gendered, Natural Gender, and Genderless Languages » (2012) 66 : 3 *Sex Roles* 268 à la p 271, DOI: <10.1007/s11199-011-0083-5>.

²⁶ Merriam-Webster, « Words We're Watching: Singular 'They' » <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/singular-nonbinary-they>> [perma.cc/EGP3-HRSB].

ce sujet démontre ce manque d'espace. Hord a récolté les réponses à un questionnaire en ligne de répondants s'identifiant comme transgenre, non binaire ou *genderqueer* concernant leur attitude à propos de la ou des langues qu'ils utilisent; si ces langues leur permettent d'exprimer correctement leur identité; et, dans le cas des personnes bilingues, s'il existe une différence lorsqu'elles expriment leur identité dans une langue plutôt qu'une autre²⁷. Ce sont surtout les réponses de ces personnes bilingues (anglais/français et anglais/allemand) qui sont assez frappantes. Des six répondants qui utilisent des pronoms épïcènes en anglais (souvent *they*), seulement une personne utilise aussi un pronom épïcène en français —le pronom iel, un amalgame des pronoms il et elle, parfois utilisé dans la communauté *queer* francophone²⁸. Les cinq autres n'écrivent soit aucun pronom en français/allemand, soit un pronom féminin ou masculin. Les trois répondants utilisant le suffixe *Mx.* en anglais n'utilise rien de tel en français/allemand. Il suffit de faire quelques recherches sur le web pour comprendre qu'il n'y a pas d'équivalent aux termes épïcènes anglais *they* et *Mx.* en français et en allemand²⁹.

Le manque d'appellations épïcènes en français et en allemand est flagrant pour les personnes bilingues de la communauté *queer*. En effet, 51% des répondants unilingues anglophones pensent que l'anglais ne leur permet pas d'exprimer leur identité (31%) ou ne leur permet pas encore assez bien de le faire (23%), alors que tous les répondants bilingues anglais/français et anglais/allemand sans exception

²⁷ Voir la référence à l'étude à la note 23 (les répondants étaient soit unilingues anglophones ou bilingues anglais/suédois, bilingues anglais/français, et bilingues anglais/allemand).

²⁸ Voir Sophie Bailly, *Les hommes, les femmes et la communication : Mais que vient faire le sexe dans la langue ?* Paris : L'Harmattan, 2008 (« les concepts de genre ou genre social se présentent comme des alternatives au concept de sexe pour en préciser la dimension sociale. Mais l'emploi de ces termes semble réservé à certains spécialistes sans pénétrer dans l'usage courant de la langue » à la page 28). Voir Hord, *supra* note 23 à la p 9.

²⁹ D'après mes recherches, certaines personnes dans la communauté *queer* utilisent iel ou on, mais l'utilisation des deux est très peu répandue en raison des difficultés grammaticales qu'ils engendrent.

pensent que l'anglais est adéquat pour leur permettre d'exprimer leur identité³⁰. De même, les répondants bilingues croient tous que l'anglais leur permet de mieux participer en société que leur langue sexospécifique³¹. L'anglais met à la disposition de ses locuteurs un vocabulaire qui facilite la discussion sur de tels enjeux sociétaux, mais aussi la participation des femmes et des personnes non binaires en société et à de telles discussions. Il est aussi intéressant de noter que les commentaires accompagnant leurs choix de réponses démontrent que cette perspective de l'anglais est basée sur une comparaison avec le français ou l'allemand³². La comparaison avec l'anglais révèle donc encore une fois le grand travail que la langue française et les autres langues sexospécifiques ont à faire pour devenir plus inclusives.

CONCLUSION : LA LANGUE, UNE CRÉATION HUMAINE

Ultimement, même si la langue française permet plus difficilement que l'anglais l'utilisation d'un langage inclusif et non sexiste en raison de sa grammaire, il ne faut pas oublier que la langue reste le « miroir culturel »³³ de la société : elle reflète la mentalité collective de ses utilisateurs. À l'Académie française, on a accusé d'imposer à la « langue d'en haut des transformations au bénéfice d'un projet politique »³⁴ et on a résisté la féminisation des noms de métiers *jusqu'en février 2019* avant de finalement capit-

³⁰ Voir Hord, *supra* note 23 à la p 22.

³¹ *Ibid* (« The options that English presents work reasonably well for me and I can express my gender identity and use preferred pronouns [...]. [In] German I struggle a lot with language and [I am] often very unhappy with the situation of German gender neutral language. I lack usable and easy to learn/apply pronouns and descriptions of myself. That the language is very gendered is a big problem in my life (Respondent 98) »).

³² *Ibid* (« [a]s a [bilingual], I can attest that gender-neutral language in French is next to impossible (Respondent 96) » à la p 23); (« [i]t's really painful for me to express myself, my gender identity, in French because of the lack of trans history in the use of language (Respondent 103) » à la p 23); (« [s]peaking a gendered language as an agender person fuckin' sucks. I'm constantly misgendered, or I'm misgendering myself in order to be understood (Respondent 171) » à la p 23).

³³ Voir Yaguello, *supra* note 10 à la p 8.

³⁴ Voir Žáčková, *supra* note 9 à la p 29.

uler³⁵. Ne serait-ce donc pas plutôt l'humain qui décide ce qui est grammaticalement correct et ce qu'il ne l'est pas? Penser que « [la] langue a une vie propre » et qu'elle se transforme « à son rythme » pour refléter les changements de mentalités, comme l'Académie a argumenté pendant quatre décennies, est illusoire. Comme ce texte s'est efforcé de le démontrer, la langue est une création humaine. Elle évolue en fonction de l'évolution de la société. Les femmes ont accédé au fil du temps à des fonctions autrefois occupées exclusivement par les hommes. Leur participation en société a changé. Au Québec, nous avons modifié notre langue pour refléter ce changement, puis éventuellement la Belgique et la Suisse nous ont emboîté le pas, et finalement la France a cédé³⁶. Maintenant, les personnes non binaires sont tranquillement en train de prendre leur place et leur espace en société. Leurs droits se font reconnaître peu à peu. Leur participation en société est grandissante. N'est-il pas temps que cette évolution soit reflétée dans la langue? Voilà donc une opportunité pour le Québec de mener la danse encore une fois et de promouvoir l'utilisation courante du langage épïcène et la création de pronoms neutres dans la langue française.

³⁵ Voir Marie-Eva de Villiers, « L'Académie française capitule enfin! » *Le Devoir* (25 février 2019), en ligne : <<https://www.ledevoir.com/opinion/idees/548547/langue-l-academie-francaise-capitule-enfin>> [perma.cc/6TE7-KZ83].

³⁶ *Ibid*.

On Parole

RAPHAEL SCHMIEDER-GROPEN

STUDENT AT MCGILL FACULTY OF LAW

Parole papers stamped
with pomegranate ink, shades
pass into the world above
and know it is not their own
but its unfamiliar child,
unmet son.

Everything here is new and bright.
Steel temples to washed-up gods
stab at Olympus, square-columned;
sunlight burns.

Ixion blinks wheels
of fire from ashy eyelids. Salmoneus
thinks those gleaming blurs must be
horseless chariots or thunderbolts.

Sisyphus' hands fly out on instinct,
brace against a phantom boulder.
He paces and sweats like a smoker
quitting cold turkey and looks for
something to do with his hands.

Conversations Create Bridges

GABRIELA LOPES

STUDENT AT MCGILL FACULTY OF LAW

I still shiver when I log on, despite my year of practice. I concentrate on breathing and get my fingers to stop trembling long enough to type in my password. At the bottom of my screen, I see the familiar orange notification I am expecting -- *two new replies*. Deep breath again. Here we go.

I am a staunch feminist. I believe in equality of the sexes. I believe in the importance of the prefix *fem* in the name of the movement that strives to make this happen. Yet over the last year, I have been subscribed to the subreddit called MensRights, known as a gathering place for misogynists and their beliefs (the MRA). Every week, I spend time reading their posts and associated comments, sometimes gathering the courage to reply. It's not the inevitable downvotes that require the courage: it's the conversation I'm trying to start. As it turns out, ideological deconstruction is a difficult topic.

IT GOES BOTH WAYS

I began my quest nearly a year ago as I was wrapping up my undergraduate degree and grappling with a newfound awareness of my own ignorance. I can't know the whole picture from my perspective, so I decided that my only choice was to ask people what they see and try to fit the pieces together. I needed to start listening to the experiences of those I had not been paying attention to. And quickly enough, I arrived to the MRA forum.

Many of these men denigrated feminism because of the shocking words and actions of some self-identifying feminists who either hurt them personally and tragically or who monopolize the narrative with their outrage. While I

argued that these extremists do not represent the feminist movement as a whole, the men I spoke to would give me example after example of situations that made them feel directly attacked on the basis of their sex in ways that are intimately familiar to me as a woman. At first I was hesitant to accept the comparisons. *It's not the same... it's not the same... but it's not that different, either...*

As I read and absorbed their opinions, I noticed it would take me longer and longer to formulate my replies. My own ideology began to crack: *What is this "patriarchy" if men are also subject to discrimination?* From the normalization of circumcision to the dismissal (or mocking) of male rape, I could not deny the systemic problems.

FITTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

Throughout this drawn-out debate, my feelings and experiences informed my arguments, yet these were discredited as reasonable sources of knowledge. My reactions to being discriminated against are valid and representative of systemic oppression, despite the seeming contradiction that men also suffer from gender-specific harms. I needed to find the words to legitimize those feelings, to prove their foundation in objectivity – and that's when it hit me. The fact that my feelings are trivialized is the core of the problem.

The oppression society imposes on all individuals is not based on sex, but on gender and the traits that are socially constructed as "masculine" and "feminine". One of the achievements of the feminist movement has been to separate humans and their genitals from behaviours that once were automatically assigned to them -- women can be masculine, men can be feminine. And since then, the masculinization of women has been our war cry:

- WOMEN ARE STRONG AND TOUGH!
- WOMEN ARE LOGICAL AND RATIONAL!
- WOMEN ARE INDEPENDENT AND WE CAN BE THE BREADWINNERS!

This stance has propelled women into the public sphere: we are flooding politics, becoming CEOs and pursuing traditionally male-dominated endeavors. Yet, something does not feel quite right. Are we casting aside our femininity in order to succeed in a patriarchal world?

When Ben Shapiro says "facts don't care about your feelings," he somehow overlooks the reality that my feelings *are* facts. They matter. Our emotions guide us, they serve as our moral compass. Yet as a patriarchal society we have forsaken them, forgotten how to listen to them, and then blamed them for the problems that inevitably result. Men are hurting because they are not allowed to admit to their frailties - aggression and suicide are explosions of bottled-up pain and loneliness. Their need for closeness is vilified as a girlish corruption and they are denied the gentleness of feminine interests. The gendered division of care and the wage gap it has generated exists in part because the family, a hub of feelings and love, is considered a liability and not welcome in the workplace.

There is a hierarchy in our categorization of human traits and it is hurting us all.

A FINAL RESPONSE

I still shake when I log on, expecting a reply. I now understand that the reason is not nervousness or anxiety. It is trauma. Deconstructing ideologies is painful work. Sometimes you are confronted with opposing ideas that you can't refute and are then cast on a tumultuous journey of deep questioning and existential crisis.

Patriarchy is a system that makes men violent and depressed, that makes women afraid and angry, and it is perpetuated by every societal agent - women and men alike. When I try to become someone I am not - tougher, colder, more masculine - at the expense of my softness, my emotionality, and my need for others, I am neglecting the traditionally feminine traits our world desperately needs. MRAs often complain that their masculinity is being attacked, that they are being told to dress in skirts and wear makeup as if that will save society. But the truth is not that masculinity must be eradicated; it must simply be complicated.

I wonder about the men I debated with for so long, sometimes for weeks at a time. What are they doing now? Did I convince them of anything? The answer doesn't really matter, because in engaging with them, I have developed a new world view that I carry with me every day. I realize that what I'm asking of them is painful and I have learned to give them space to reflect, as I have had to do for myself.

Femininity and masculinity are human characteristics. However, to learn from one another's lived experiences, we all need to draw on our feminine side and allow ourselves to be vulnerable.

That's what feminism is about.

Putting Numbers to Feelings: Quantifying the Gender Disparity in Class Participation

ALANNA CROUSE

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Until 6 months ago, I was a woman in science. For the purposes of this article that means two things. First, I am no stranger to the underrepresentation of women, trans and non-binary people in academia. I was fortunate to do my research in a lab dominated by women, but outside that bubble, the gender disparity was clear. The hallways where I worked were lined with pictures of older men wearing lab coats the colour of which matched their skin. On scientific papers, authors who are men outnumber women 10 to 3. And seeing more than one woman's name on a list of conference speakers was a rare treat; even rarer was seeing the name of a woman of colour.

When I entered the McGill Faculty of Law, it was a different story. At first glance, I saw a spectrum of genders around me, with what I estimated to be a relatively even split between men and women. Within my first couple of weeks, however, I found that although the book covers looked very different between science and law, the stories inside were closer than I had expected. Unlike the physical space, the auditory space felt overpowered by men and I wasn't alone in this observation. I would hear other non-male people denounce the phenomenon that has been salient to many of us for as long as we can remember: men taking up space. Though I believed my instincts and the experiences of others, self-gaslighting and a scientifically ingrained affinity for facts nagged at me to get evidence. I needed to quantify.

This brings me to the second thing my background in science has ensured: a long-term and intimate relationship with the scientific method. Ask a question, do background research, form a hypothesis, collect data, analyze the data, draw a conclusion. I had a question—do men participate more than other folks in class? Living in a systemically sexist society my entire life gave me background

research dating back to 1993. I had a hypothesis: men take up more space. Now, I needed the data.

When I could, which is far more infrequently than I would have liked, I tracked who was speaking in class, how many times men participated, and how many times women and non-binary people participated. I also documented the population of each group by measuring the total attendance for a given class, as well the proportion that was men. Among the discussions about federalism, good faith, and the reasonable person, I took notes for class while simultaneously swiveling my head around to measure class demographics.

Next step: Analyze the data. Using the data I collected, I was able to determine how often it would be proportionate for men to be speaking during class and compare that to what I observed. If the class was 50% men, then men would be expected to make up about 50% of the remarks. I combined the data I had across different classes and courses, finding that despite making up on average 40% of the class, men spoke 55% of the time. For my fellow scientists out there, this 15% difference is statistically significant ($p = 0.034$). Thus, my findings showed that a group comprising less than half the class was speaking the majority of the time.

To get a better idea of what was going on, I broke down the data and analyzed it per course (Table 1). In Constitutional Law, men comprised 40% of the class, yet spoke 60% of the time ($p = 0.005$) while, in Contractual Obligations, men comprised 36% of the class, but spoke 61% of the time—a 25% difference ($p = 0.0004$). Criminal Justice saw an average class make up of 40% men who spoke 52% of the time (not statistically significant) and, in the opposite direction, Extra-Contractual Obligations was made up of 44% men who spoke 39% of the time (not statistically significant).

What conclusions can we draw from this? First, to all the women and non-binary people who feel like men take up a lot of space in their classes: your experiences are valid and can be supported by science! Second, representation is not enough. Having adequate representation is an invaluable first step, but that's all it is: a first step. A cultural and academic shift is necessary to help women and non-binary people take up the space that we deserve.

Unfortunately, like any question in science, finding the answer only leads to more questions—do men realize this trend? How do other demographic factors like age and race contribute? Will these trends change over time? Why do different courses encourage different levels of participation? I have continued to form hypotheses, with the impact of other demographic factors, and variation among courses being my new interest. My preliminary observations hint that a sizeable portion of the men who participate more frequently are younger and many have entered law directly from Cégep. My only foray, so far, into assessing the relationship between race and class participation came from a Criminal Justice class on carding and racial profiling in which 70% of the contributions were made by white or white-passing students. In terms of variations across courses, there's a little more guesswork involved. Each of my courses is instructed by women, eliminating one potential variable. However, there are still any number of factors which either independently or combined may contribute to the difference, including subject matter, style of teaching, the particular individuals in each class, etc. My current hypothesis is that the type of questions asked in class, in part, reflects the type of participation. While Contracts can breed “straight-to-the-point” questions with an objectively right or wrong answer (“what is the equivalent in civil law?”), my experience in ECOs and Criminal Justice has included more open-ended questions (“what did you think

about the conclusion?”). For women and non-binary people, inserting ourselves into a conversation dominated by men can be risky. That risk is multiplied when there’s a chance of being wrong. Ultimately, only more data will answer these questions.

To end, I have to be transparent. Every scientific study has its sources of error, and this one is no exception. My sample set was low, I was multitasking while collecting the data, and, importantly, this system works as a binary (men, not-men) with me assuming others’ gender identities by merely seeing them from across the classroom. Even so, the gender disparity is clear and with hard data or not, my experiences, and the experiences of those around, tell me that our instincts are right.

	CONSTITUTIONAL LAW	CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS	CRIMINAL JUSTICE	EXTRA-CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS	CLASSES COMBINED
EXPECTED % OF MEN'S PARTICIPATION	40	36	40	44	40
ACTUAL % OF MEN'S PARTICIPATION	60	61	52	39	55

Gillette: The Best an Ad Can Be?



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The year is 2019 and toxic masculinity just made a new enemy. And that enemy, readers of *Contours*, is Procter & Gamble. The new two-minute ad for Gillette puts a new spin on Gillette's old slogan "The Best a Man Can Get," by challenging gender norms and addressing bullying and sexual harassment. To support its new "The Best a Man Can Be" campaign, Gillette also pledged to donate \$3 million over three years to non-profit organizations that encourage men to "achieve their personal best."

I believe that, from a feminist perspective, this ad merits analysis. The first order of business, however, is a preliminary one. A valid concern levied at the ad is how genuine a message about toxic masculinity can be when it comes from a profit-seeking corporation, especially one that sells pink razors at double the price.¹ Granted, P&G is not a company to shy away from social engagement (see: "I'd Rather Get Paid" for Secret, #LikeaGirl for Always, and "Thank You, Mom," P&G for the 2018 Winter Olympics). The Gillette ad, then, is part of P&G's larger strategy of emotional branding, designed to engage with social topics such as sexism and prejudice and, in the process, tug on your heartstrings a little. Personally, I am a proponent of subtlety in ads, probably because of a long obsession with AMC's *Mad Men* and since, generally, ads are least effective when they tell people what to do. However, market studies have indicated that "social good" ads help build brand loyalty and are ultimately good for the company purse.² In the case at hand, Gillette has openly admitted that the ad is meant to attract a new, younger market.³ This certainly makes the Gillette ad seem more disingenuous, and fits it

¹ Anne Kingston, "If Gillette Wants to Fix Gender Inequity, it Should Start With its Razors", *Macleans* (15 January 2019), online: <www.macleans.ca> [perma.cc/8AA6-SGWW].

² Kyle Williams, "Controversy Sells: Why Super Bowl Ads Have Gotten so Political", *The Washington Post* (3 February 2019), online: <www.washingtonpost.com> [perma.cc/5CPR-ARXJ].

³ Jenny Rooney, "P&G Marketing Chief Marc Pritchard On Gillette Ad Furor, New Research Revealing Millennial Support", *Forbes* (28 January 2019), online: <www.forbes.com> [perma.cc/UD2J-WR4X].

squarely within the current trend of tearjerker advertising. It is also fun to note that this ad directed at men mirrors the countless campaigns aimed at affirming women, such as the long-running Dove “Real Beauty” campaign. Consequently, for me, a natural part of watching this ad was smirking at a corporation’s dogged determination to prove that yes, YOU can change the world. And a vital part of that is buying soap or shaving gel, or perhaps texting about mental health one day per year. However, cynicism should not detract from the work of the director of the ad, Kim Gehrig, or from the positive externalities of corporate social responsibility.

With “The Best a Man Can Be,” Gillette entered into the thorny debate surrounding gender roles and feminism by highlighting the pervasive problem of toxic masculinity. Toxic masculinity is defined as a set of behaviours that associate “manliness” with physical strength, hyper-competitiveness, and sexual aggression. Therefore, a “real man” suppresses his emotions and uses violence or intimidation to reinforce his power over those weaker than him.⁴ This pressure to be a “tough guy” is often at the root of domestic abuse, sexual harassment, and fistfights at your local bar. The ad addresses not only how the reinforcement of this hegemonic ideal of manliness is detrimental to the status of women, but also how it is harmful for men. As such, the ad concludes that men need to look in the mirror (quite literally, and preferably while shaving with Gillette products), and challenge themselves to be better.

To me, the underlying message of Gillette’s short film is that as our society changes, men need to reflect on the status quo and hold each other accountable for bad behaviour. In doing so, they have the power to be agents of positive social change. Elsewhere on the Internet, I heard

⁴ Maya Salam, “What Is Toxic Masculinity?”, *The New York Times* (22 January 2019), online: <www.nytimes.com> [perma.cc/6ENW-PMAJ].

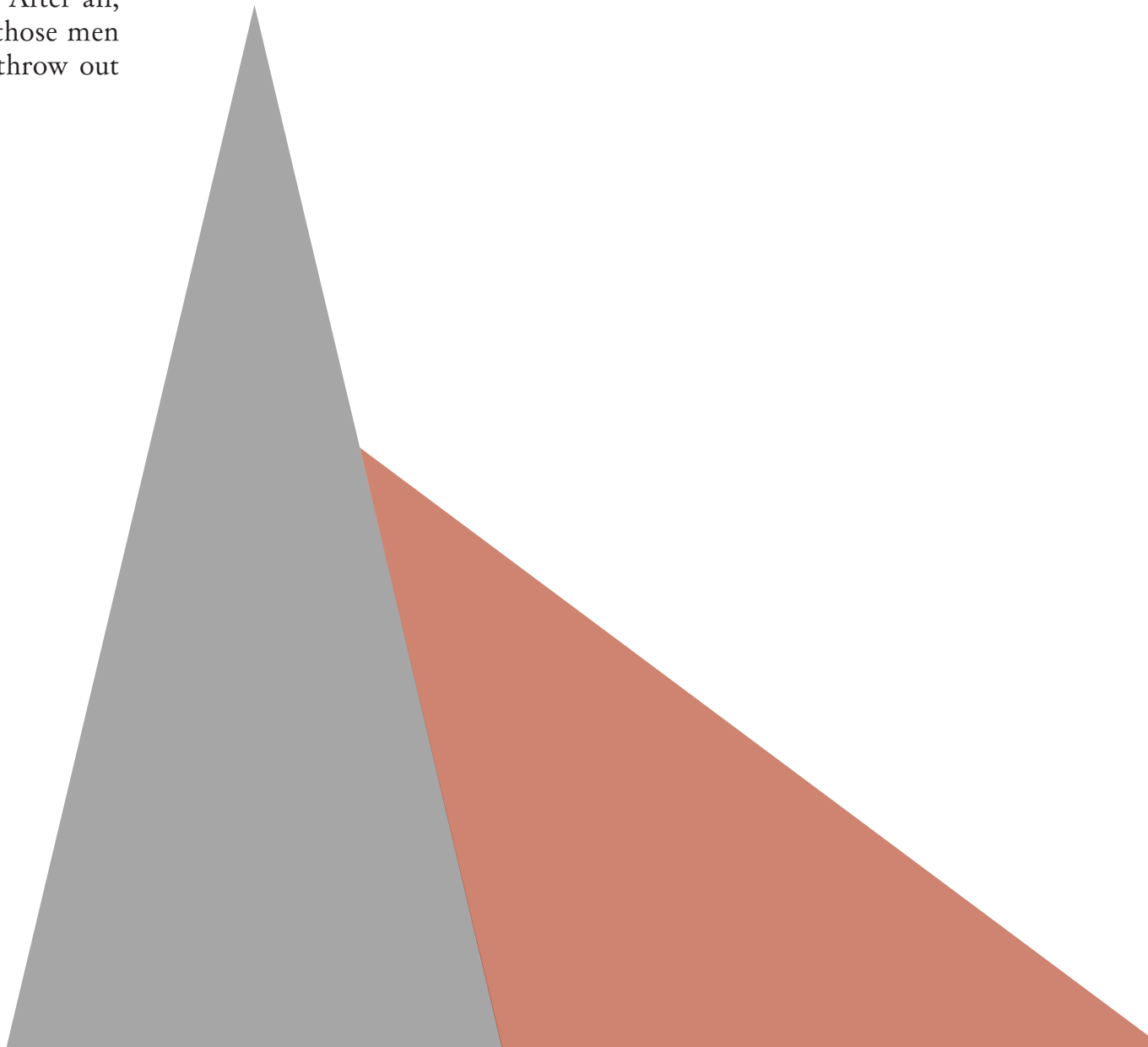
other things. “The ad is liberal propaganda.” “Masculinity is under attack.” “Gillette thinks being a man is bad.” “Gillette is shaming all men due to the behaviour of a few ‘bad apples’.” “Let boys be boys, let men be damn men.”⁵ Apart from the fact that reactions such as these reinforce Gillette’s point more than anything, I imagine that the ad’s detractors prefer the 1989 Gillette ad, which showcases very manly things like Wall Street, weight-lifting, and women running into men’s arms.

The easiest way to respond to these criticisms is to reinforce the idea that toxic masculinity is a systemic problem that requires a systemic remedy. It does not start, or end, with one man. Nor does it only concern overt violence or sexual assault. As the ad rightly indicates, it includes cat calling, “bro culture,” and the infernal “smile, sweetie!”. Toxic masculinity, like other forms of pervasive social ills, is reproduced through obvious as well as subtle gestures. For example, studies have shown that subtle sexist or homophobic behaviour contributes to unsafe environments and increases the risk of escalation.⁶ The ad, then, does not point fingers. It simply communicates that hypermasculinity and the Harvey Weinstens of the world are symptomatic of an environment that is permissive of bad behaviour. I imagine that to change, some men might have to take a good hard look at themselves. For the vast majority of others, though, change may simply involve keeping an eye on the behaviour of men around them, or becoming conscious of how they themselves reproduce harmful stereotypes. I might add that this is an equally valid message for any human being, man or not.

⁵ This gem is brought to you by Piers Morgan’s Twitter. See Piers Morgan, “I’ve used @Gillette razors my entire adult life but this absurd virtue-signalling PC guff may drive me away to a company less eager to fuel the current pathetic global assault on masculinity. Let boys be damn boys. Let men be damn men.” (14 January 2019 at 11:12), online: *Twitter* <twitter.com/piersmorgan/status/1084891133757587456> [perma.cc/LNS7-WARUJ].

⁶ Deborah L Brake, “Back to Basics: Excavating the Sex Discrimination Roots of Campus Sexual Assault”, (2017) 6 *Tenn J Race Gender & Soc Just* 7 at 9, 34.

Sure, the ad is a little corny. However, I did feel a twinge when a woman is interrupted by her male colleague (“What I actually think she’s trying to say...”). To me, the ad is a signal, more than anything, of a society for which action against discrimination has reached a critical mass. So while the ad may not be perfect, it has certainly succeeded in starting a much-needed conversation. After all, advertising is meant to reflect society. And for those men who think that Gillette is trying to make you throw out your barbecues, you’re missing the point.



La théorie du *Standpoint* : Pourquoi est-il important que les revendications féministes émanent des femmes?

LAURENCE BOUDREAU
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Dans son texte *Introduction: Standpoint Theory as a Site of Political, Philosophic, and Scientific Debate*¹, Sandra Harding aborde les controverses liées à la théorie du *Standpoint*. Cette théorie prône l'utilisation de l'expérience de l'opprimée comme méthode pour guider les recherches féministes. En d'autres termes, les groupes opprimés sont les sujets et les auteurs du savoir.

La théorie du *Standpoint* attire toutefois certaines critiques, dont quelques-unes visent sa neutralité. En effet, on lui reproche de concevoir la connaissance féministe comme étant renfermée dans l'expérience personnelle et unique à chaque femme, entraînant ainsi un certain relativisme² dans son approche aux problèmes vécus par les femmes. Cependant, Harding démontre que cette théorie permet de développer une meilleure vision de la réalité : “[s]tandpoint theory [...] can transform a source of oppression into a source of knowledge and potential liberation [...] as well as to our understanding of precondition for the production of knowledge.”³

L'approche véhiculée par la théorie du *Standpoint* permet entre autres d'approfondir la compréhension sur l'oppression. Elle permet aux personnes marginalisées de faire entendre leur voix et de développer ainsi une vision globale, et ce, dans le but de guider le mouvement et les recherches féministes. Il s'agit d'observer et de critiquer certains aspects de la société qui, autrement, seraient passés sous silence.

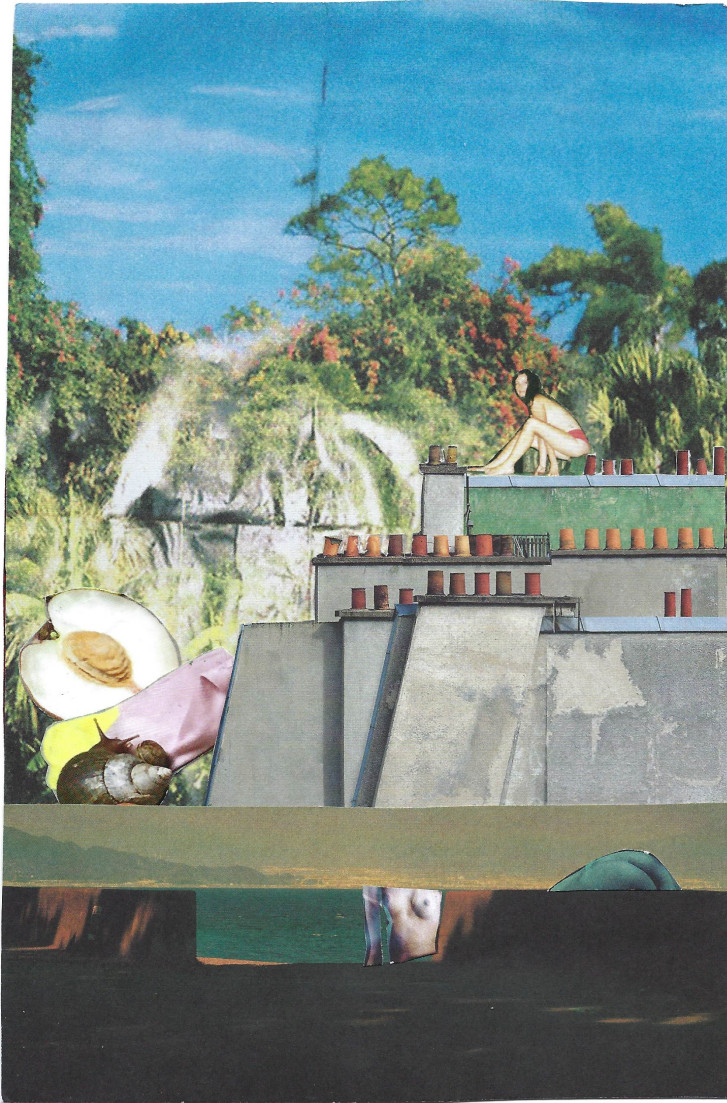
La théorie du *Standpoint* est pertinente à la prémisse du discours féministe, mais peut être risquée si le discours est uniquement basé sur celle-ci. En effet, on peut craindre que le sous-aspect adversatif (opresseurs-opprimés) de

¹ Sandra Harding, *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*, New York, Routledge, 2004, p. 1 à 15.

² *Ibid* à la p 10.

³ *Ibid*.

cette théorie ne serve pas son rôle féministe et isole davantage la femme. Cette théorie demeure toutefois une base pertinente et solide au mouvement féministe.



COLLAGE BY LAURENCE BOUDREAU

**OUI À UN ESPACE OÙ TOUTES LES
FEMMES NE CRAIGNENT PAS DE
S'EXPRIMER LIBREMENT.**

**OUI À LA POSSIBILITÉ D'UNE
NON-MIXITÉ DANS LES
REGROUPEMENTS.**

**OUI À L'UTILISATION DE SON
EXPÉRIENCE ET DE SES ÉMOTIONS.**

OUI AUX VOIX DES FEMMES EN DROIT.

26 Going on 90

ALEXANDRA KLEIN

STUDENT AT MCGILL FACULTY OF LAW

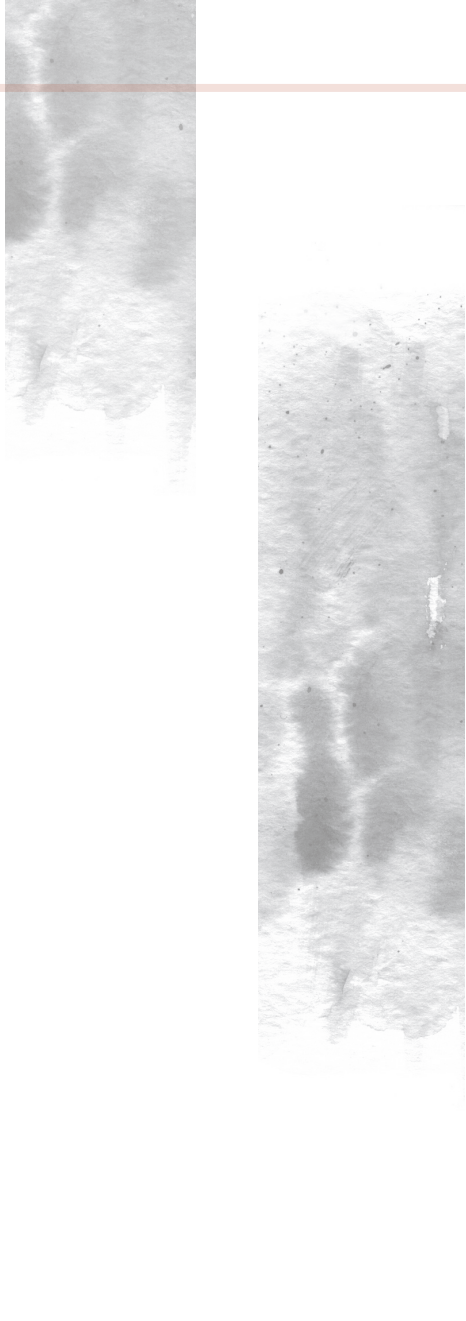
Embroidery has a long history as "women's work": often unpaid and done in the privacy of the home. Consequently, it has historically, and still today, been characterized as "craft" rather than "art". While I think that in many ways it is still looked down upon, this is changing. What I find fascinating about embroidery is that the materials and techniques have hardly changed over time. I, and so many others, have a direct connection to the past. What have changed are the context and the subject matter. There has been a great resurgence in hand embroidery, and people—primarily women—have flocked to the art as a form of modern, and often political, expression. I have yet to see an explicitly non-feminist piece. I believe that, by virtue of the way in which embroidery is being reclaimed, most pieces, although perhaps not overtly feminist, are still so. This could be a result of self-selection; I have little patience for artists spouting the opposite view. I wouldn't say that I am at the forefront of this movement (a quick internet search will uncover many other artists producing radical, impressive, and beautiful work) but I am proud to be a part of it.

In reality, I used to be very uncomfortable telling people that I had an embroidery business. I'd prefer to believe that this discomfort did not originate in internalized understandings of embroidery's history and place in the world, but it probably did. I thought people would make fun of the medium and devalue my business because of its status—and some people did. And, too bad for those people. I will never support myself with this business alone, but I've reached a level of success that I didn't think was possible—my barely-thought-out business name (Alex's Embroidery) is a testament to how doubtful I was that people would actually buy my work. However, my confidence in both my work and its value has grown. I have also accepted and embraced that I am a 90-year-old grandma trapped in a 20-something year-old's body. I will never be good at self-promotion—just try and listen to me stammer through pitching my art—but now I do that stammering proudly.

Embroidery has become a core part of who I am and how I relax. When I started law school I knew I needed to keep making embroidery as a creative outlet for what I imagined—correctly—would be a difficult three and a half years. Between balancing school and work, finding time for my art hasn't been easy, but it has helped keep me sane. And it's a way to express myself. My favourite part of the process is selecting the colour palette, and I am particularly drawn to my most colourful and vibrant pieces. While I don't see myself as a colourful or exuberant person, my work allows me to explore that side of myself.

I don't plan on stopping embroidery anytime soon. I will continue to create art and express myself through my embroidery. Embroidery has evolved into a means of empowerment for myself and for so many others, and I'm excited to see how it will continue to grow. And on that note, stay tuned for my upcoming line of totes, t-shirts, and magnets ;)





Bon Père de Famille? // How Reasonable is the Man?

Law, like love, is only as good as the people sharing it.

Law, like love, can be good.

Law, like love, can be bad.

Law, like love, can be many things, some things, nothing, everything.

Like an abusive husband, law's partners may stay out of adoration, convinced the cruelty within this relationship is better than anything outside it.

Like an abusive husband, law's partners may stay out of fear, convinced that any attempt to escape this relationship would result in death before they ever managed.

Like an abusive husband, law's partners may stay out of fidelity, convinced that they deserve the punishments they suffer, because law says it is so.

Like an abusive husband, law's partners may rise up in anger, topple the relationship and start anew, for better or for worse.

Or, like a caring husband, law's partners may stay, comforted within the embrace of mutual respect, safety, history and understanding.

Let us not expect less from law, let us expect more from people.

Let us not expect less from love, let us expect more from people.

Inspired by the poem *Law, Like Love* – WH Auden

Dirty Computer, or the Political Nature of Personal Stories

ATTOU MAMAT

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If you love music as much as I do, you might know that the 61st Grammy Awards took place last February 10. You might also know that among this season's Album of the Year nominees stood Janelle Monáe's *Dirty Computer*, the singer-songwriter's most personal opus to date.

Indeed, *Dirty Computer* is a vibrant musical masterpiece in which Monáe explores her relationship with queer black womanhood and the meaning of such an identity in today's America. The collection of songs is supplemented with a visual album, which Monáe calls an "emotion picture" (and rightfully so—the composition takes the viewer's consciousness through a journey of bliss, heartbreak, anger, tragedy, confusion, and fascination).

Most importantly, in *Dirty Computer*, Monáe exposes the political nature of personal stories. Through her lens, her emotion picture showcases interactions between black and LGBTQ+ individuals on the one hand, and the law – i.e., a manifestation of state power – on the other.

"THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL": RECOGNIZING THE POLITICAL NATURE OF PERSONAL STORIES

In *Dirty Computer*, Monáe brings to life this slogan of second-wave feminism: "The personal is political." The idea behind the argument is that individual experiences are necessarily connected to political and social structures. It follows naturally that personal stories play a crucial role in the transformation of those structures.

As articulated by political science student Paige McAdam: "[o]ur human suffering, and the ways that we express ourselves in order to survive it, can be a way to teach others and to enter into political conversations." McAdam adds: "Sharing our stories and perspectives with one another puts our individual experiences on the public

stage, and it is on this public stage that politics take place. Ultimately, politics is where the relationship between our private thoughts, values, and grievances takes shape in a public forum.”¹

DIRTY COMPUTER: WHEN THE PERSONAL SPILLS INTO THE POLITICAL THROUGH ART

The narrative in *Dirty Computer* is set in a futuristic, dystopian society which calls its people “computers”. The state stigmatizes marginalized people as “dirty”—contaminated by “bugs”. Dirty computers are “cleaned” in a facility which erases all memories that are contrary to the state’s ideology through a process called “the nevermind”.

“The literal erasure of Jane’s memories parallels the social erasure of certain narratives from the public sphere, particularly those of marginalized individuals and groups.”

Through the film, Monáe’s character Jane—a loosely-based self-insert—is subjected to this process. The literal erasure of Jane’s memories parallels the social erasure of certain narratives from the public sphere, particularly those of marginalized individuals and groups.

In the first memory, the viewer sees Jane driving on the highway, jamming to “I Got the Juice” with her (black) friend in the passenger seat. They are interrupted when a law-enforcing robot asks them to pull over and to show their I.D. This scene is the viewer’s first introduction to Jane’s history of interactions with the law. It recalls police road checks as a tool of state control that is disproportionately used against the black community.

¹ Paige McAdam, “Storytelling Intersects the Personal and Political” (29 May 2015), online (blog): *Firesteel* <<http://firesteelwa.org/2015/05/storytelling-intersects-the-personal-and-political/>> [perma.cc/7HFW-YB79].

Then emerges the first full song, “Crazy, Classic, Life.” Its bright synth chords and funky bass lead into a celebration of marginalized folks, with bodies of all colours appearing on screen dressed in counter-cultural outfits, dancing in an empty swimming pool. In that scene, Monáe paints a utopia where the carefree black girl in her can thrive (“young, black, wild, and free” are the first words she sings). She sets the tone—musically, visually, and narratively—for the whole piece. This chapter of *Dirty Computer* illustrates the purpose behind Monáe’s creation of the tale: “One of the things that was most important to me... was to make sure I was coming from a very honest place... You know, it’s an album to really celebrate those that I felt needed to be celebrated most. Those in marginalized communities.”²

However, Monáe is sure to remind the viewer that the dream is not yet reality. In the song’s outro, Monáe raps about double standards in the treatment of black women and white men by law enforcement: “Handcuffed in a bandeau / White boy in his sandals / Police like a Rambo / Blow it out, blow it out like a candle, Sambo / Me and you was friends, but to them, we the opposite / The same mistake, I’m in jail, you on top of shit.”

Upon the song’s conclusion, the sweet celebration turns sour: the utopia is shattered when sirens, helicopters, and gunshots announce the beginning of a police raid. Screams erupt as party attendees run away from law enforcement. Once the height of the commotion has passed, the scene cuts to a row of (mostly) black people, on their knees, handcuffed, facing the viewer. This poignant image invites a reflection on the difficulty for marginalized individuals to escape the criminalisation of their very exist-

² “Janelle Monáe on the Meaning of ‘Dirty Computer’ and What She Promised Her Grandmother”, *CBS News* (25 October 2018), online: <www.cbsnews.com> [perma.cc/7VSW-N8RG].

tence. In that moment, the carefree black girl evaporates, and Monáe's plea of "just let me live my life" resonates loud in the viewer's mind.

CONCLUSION: ART IMITATES LIFE (AND LAW)

Although *Dirty Computer* did not win Album of the Year (the award went to Kacey Musgraves' *Golden Hour*), it remains a culturally and politically significant piece. So much more could be said about it, but instead of continuing with my analysis, I urge you to listen to the album and to watch the emotion picture. As jurists, we have so much to learn from personal stories expressed through art such as this one. They provide a safeguard against ivory-tower syndrome by reminding us to connect the law to the people it affects daily and by highlighting the importance of everyday phenomena that could otherwise escape the eyes of academics. Such stories give meaning to our work by giving it "a personal touch", as my Constitutional Law professor would say.

Most importantly, through their inherently political nature, personal stories remind us that the law's ultimate purpose is to serve the people, something we should remind ourselves in all our interactions throughout our careers.

A N O N Y M E

ÉTUDIANTE EN DROIT À MCGILL

Il est difficile de prendre la plume et de se mettre à écrire pour parler de soi. De ce que l'on a vécu. Essayer de tout se remémorer n'est déjà pas chose facile. On ferme les yeux et on rembobine. On se repasse le film du début à la fin, de la fin au début. Chaque pensée ravive un douloureux souvenir. Bien entendu, si c'est une histoire heureuse, c'est un exercice qui se fait volontiers. Et plus facilement.

Et puis, on ne veut pas parler de soi. On ne veut pas que ce soit *about us*. Écrire, et partager, c'est accepter une certaine réalité. Une réalité sur laquelle on préférerait tirer un trait.

J'aurais peut-être dû tout coucher sur papier plus tôt. Au jour le jour? Mais en avais-je seulement envie? A-t-on réellement envie de partager avec d'autres la honte qui nous colle à la peau, qui nous parasite pendant des jours, des semaines? A-t-on envie de l'expliquer?

Non. Non, et j'ai repoussé ce moment le plus possible. Parfois, bien sûr, on écrit ce qui nous passe par la tête. L'écriture et ses bienfaits thérapeutiques. Plus de clarté? Écrire, non crier. **Liberté?**

C'est difficile aussi de décider par où commencer. D'ailleurs, est-ce que vous me suivez? Je vous ai peut-être déjà perdu.

Commençons.

Le réveil. On regarde, à gauche, à droite. Quelques secondes passent. On comprend. Bouffée de honte. On sent le rouge et la chaleur nous monter aux joues. Transpiration.

Mais il nous faut rester impassible. On transpire, mais rien ne transparait.

« Tout va bien, oui oui. »

On a oublié et on se dit que c'est de notre faute. On boit un verre de trop et on nous dit que c'est notre faute. Au mieux, que ce n'est pas grave. Alors on intériorise. Ma faute? Compris. Ma faute. D'ailleurs, on le savait.

« Désolée. »

Culpabilité. Coupable, je l'étais. L'étais-je?

Quelques jours passent. Une boule nichée au fond de la gorge, pas décidée à partir de sitôt. Malaise profond. Mal-être qui s'empare de notre corps. Alors pour la première fois, on réfléchit. Quand même, quelle drôle de responsabilité. « Sachez combien de verres vous pouvez supporter. » Et bien, je ne « sache » pas. Non, je ne « sais » pas. Coupable? Responsable?

Me suivez-vous?

La honte. Celle qui nous empêche de parler, de dénoncer. Celle qui nous ronge de l'intérieur et qui nous fait culpabiliser. La honte nous enferme, elle nous garde prisonniers. Nous, et notre secret.

Il faut bien que quelqu'un soit responsable. Si ce n'est pas lui, c'est nous.

L'intériorisation des derniers jours rend parano. On sent des regards inquisiteurs et emprunts de jugement posés sur nous. Était-ce notre imaginaire? Peut-être. De l'exagération? Certainement. Mais au premier jour, au plus bas, on nous avait fait comprendre que « c'était notre faute ». Alors jusqu'au bout, on se dit « c'est notre faute ». Jusqu'au bout, on refuse de croire qu'on puisse être soutenue. On a merdé. Merde.

C'est flou, ce texte.

C'est flou.

Pensées, souvenirs, sentiments, tout se bouscule.

C'est flou. Et on voudrait tout oublier. On voudrait que ça ne soit jamais arrivé. Et pourtant, tout est pardonné.

Tout est pardonné. Et tout le monde?

Non. On s'en veut toujours. On ne se le pardonne pas.

Une partie de nous-même refuse de tout se remémorer et de tout partager. Une autre partie refuse encore d'accepter que ce qui lui est arrivé n'était pas de sa faute. Une partie de nous-même a encore honte.

J'arrive à la fin. C'est vrai, écrire, ça fait du bien. Je me détache du texte, j'écris au nous. Je ne veux pas que ce soit mon histoire. Tu as peut-être décroché. Je m'accroche. Et je vais mieux.

Bill C-13, (Cyber)bullying, and Socialization of Female Gender Stereotypes

A.D.

STUDENT AT MCGILL FACULTY OF LAW

Recent updates made to the *Criminal Code of Canada* (“*Criminal Code*”)¹ in Bill C-13 (*Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act*)² have been championed by the Women’s Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) as an important step in addressing cyberbullying’s disproportionate effects on women and girls.³ The bill added, among other adjustments, “telecommunication” as a criminalized means of transmitting “false information” under s. 372 of the *Code*.⁴ However, the *Criminal Code* contains various sections which are broad enough to encompass conduct that can be considered bullying in both on- and off-line interactions; the legislature has seen harassment, defamation, and spreading falsehoods (such as rumours) about another as conduct which merits punishment and denunciation.⁵ Rightly so, as bullying can cause tremendous harm for youth of any gender with effects lasting a lifetime.⁶ While I agree that the adjustments were a step in the right direction, I argue that criminal law is not the right tool to address the underlying issues disproportionately faced by female-identifying youth in their experience of bullying, whether cyber or otherwise.

Watching TV and movies, I have noticed that boys are often socialized to fit a stereotype of physical aggression or confrontation, while girls and female-identifying individuals from a young age are socialized to behave in catty, gossipy ways. This stereotype permeates our culture

¹ *Criminal Code*, RSC 1985, c C-46.

² Bill C-13, *Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act*, 2nd Sess, 41st Parl, 2014 (as passed by the House of Commons 9 December 2014).

³ West Coast LEAF, “Using and Strengthening Canadian Legal Responses to Gendered Hate and Harassment Online” (2014), online (pdf): *West Coast LEAF* <<http://www.westcoastleaf.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/2014-REPORT-CyberMisogyny.pdf>> [perma.cc/H5H2-U2YH].

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ See *Criminal Harassment* at s 264, *Defamatory Libel* at s 298 and *False Information* at s 372 of the *Criminal Code*, supra note 1.

⁶ William E Copeland, “Adult Psychiatric Outcomes of Bullying and Being Bullied by Peers in Childhood and Adolescence” (2013) 70:4 *JAMA Psychiatry* at 419-426.

through media such as the *Mean Girls* movie, which is undoubtedly a classic of our generation. Quotes like “She doesn’t even go here!”, “Get in, loser, we’re going shopping!” and “Boo, you whore!” celebrate bullying behaviour which has been immortalized in meme culture.⁷ After this film, the *Gossip Girl* TV series took center-stage, based entirely on cyberbullying of elite students in the Upper East Side of Manhattan.⁸ Because of the presence of such media in their formative years, many girls have only these stereotypes as models for gaining popularity in school and making friends. The behaviour is normalized and even glamorized by systemic gender stereotypes saturating the media which young female-identifying individuals are disproportionately invited to follow in our culture.

Using criminal law to resolve bullying issues could unfairly punish young female-identifying individuals for behaviours in which they have been socialized to engage. By pressing criminal charges, both the complainant and the accused step into the realm of the criminal justice system which is tiring, costly, and associated with great stigma in the community, regardless of whether a conviction is obtained. This alone is a burden on the parties involved and their families who support them. Additionally, if a conviction were to be obtained, the result would be a criminal record which could take years to be cleared, depending on the sentence given. Though judges recognize the sensitive nature of these issues in youth courts and a variety of sentencing options are available, comments such as those made by Chief Justice Rounthwaite in the case of *R. v. D.W. and K.P.D.* show that the subtler underlying gender-based issues appear to be almost entirely ignored. Rounthwaite, CJ states in comments annexed to her judgement, “I was particularly dismayed that none of the bystanders had the

⁷ *Mean Girls*, 2004, DVD (Hollywood, Cal: Paramount Home Entertainment, 2005).

⁸ *Gossip Girl*, 2007 – 2012, TV Series (The CW: Warner Bros. Television Distribution).

moral strength or the courage to stand in front of [the victim], to tell the bullies to stop, go away, leave her alone. Only two friends said no.”⁹ In this case, the victim was bullied relentlessly by her “frenemies”,¹⁰ experienced depression and ultimately committed suicide. Yet, the judge’s comments show few solutions to the struggles that young female-identifying individuals face when fitting-in, making friends, and ultimately breaking ranks to reach out for help when the behaviour which they are socialized to expect is harming them. This attitude shows how the criminal justice system can bluntly punish behaviour, while not offering solutions to the subtler influences of gender stereotypes and norms which contribute to the perpetuation of this behaviour among female-identifying youths.

As shown in *R. v. D.W. and K.P.D.*, bullying behaviour most often occurs in tightknit groups of «frenemies». This context can reduce the likelihood of reporting.¹¹ In a bid for popularity among peers that they believe to be their friends, youth may endure or engage in bullying behaviour themselves. Once such reciprocal conduct is established, youth may fear coming forward as they too could be punished by adults while losing their friends along the way.¹² The fear of reporting could be intensified by involving governmental authorities, as the prospects of criminal sanctions are more apparent when speaking to police officers, and the presence of adults with firearms can be intimidating. For these reasons, it appears that criminal law would be neither an effective mechanism to empower young women to come forward proactively, nor a sensitive tool to resolve issues once identified.

⁹ *R v W(D)*, 2002 BCPC 96 in comments annexed to the judgement.

¹⁰ The term “frenemy” is commonly used to refer to a person who is a friend, but also engages in backstabbing behaviour or is secretly an enemy.

¹¹ Patricia I Coburn et al, “Cyberbullying: Is Federal Criminal Legislation the Solution?” (2015) 57: 4 Can J Crim Justice.

¹² *Ibid.*

Since young female-identifying individuals are socialized by systemic gender stereotypes in the media to behave in catty, gossipy ways and the criminal justice system appears ill-suited to address the issues regarding bullying or its novel cyber-iterations, solutions outside the court may be a better option. Gender stereotypes can be addressed holistically by the elevation of the status of women in society and educating youths on the dangers of media stereotyping and bullying. This could be done, as often stated by LEAF, by engaging the federal Ministry on the Status of Women, to conduct research, facilitate dialogue, and make recommendations to government about appropriate legal responses to the challenges of protecting and promoting the equality of women, girls, and other vulnerable communities.¹³ Another solution could be to focus on cyber-bullying specifically by investing more funds toward in-school bullying prevention programs that could educate students and teachers as to how to proactively identify, report and resolve problems among peers. Such programs could more effectively empower young female-identifying individuals to report such behaviours. Finally, education about these issues can ultimately empower youths to challenge stereotypes present in the media.

¹³ See LEAF, *supra* note 1.

INTRODUCTION

In 2014, I got involved with mining justice work in Toronto. The majority of mining companies around the world are headquartered in Canada and the Mining Association of Canada has dubbed Toronto the “global centre for mining finance.”¹ In resisting Canadian mining operations abroad, we address that we, as Canadians, are complicit in a system of extraction and exploitation, and that we profit from the mining industry. Canadians who do not profit directly from the mining industry still benefit: our social democratic institutions, such as the Canadian Pension Plan, invest public funds in these same companies.²

In Toronto, I organized with a grassroots network whose members had relationships with communities, often in Latin America, who were resisting Canadian mining on their territory. This enabled the group to respond to the communities’ calls for support and target companies headquartered in Toronto as a form of transnational solidarity. I (in part) came to law school to develop tools for doing this work. I was inspired by the *Hudbay*, *Chevron*, and *Nevsun* cases but also knew that court cases were only one aspect of this movement.³ I was guided by the question: **How do we hold corporations accountable?**

There are countless mechanisms in place that seek to regulate corporate accountability, from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), to international guiding principles, to litigation. There are also actions being taken outside of these frameworks, from protest, to boycott, to disruption. **However**, the majority of events that I have attended

¹ The Mining Association of Canada, “Facts and Figures of the Canadian Mining Industry” (2017), online: <<http://mining.ca/sites/default/files/documents/Facts-and-Figures-2017.pdf>> [perma.cc/QKU8-L7R6].

² Tim McSorley, “Canadian Pensions are Being Invested in a Mining Company with a Questionable Human Rights Record”, *Vice* (May 22, 2014) online: <https://www.vice.com/en_ca/article/xdm7zj/canadian-pensions-are-being-invested-in-a-mining-company-with-a-questionable-human-rights-record> [perma.cc/8TPE-B6M7].

³ *Yaiguaje v Chevron Corporation*, 2017 ONCA 827; *Choc v Hudbay Minerals Inc*, 2013 ONSC 1414; *Araya v Nevsun Resources Ltd*, 2017 BCCA 401.

Towards an Anti-Capitalist Corporate Accountability

SYDNEY LANG
STUDENT AT MCGILL FACULTY OF LAW

recently on the topic of corporate accountability analyze the strength of a particular mechanism and suggest next steps within these same frameworks. Maybe the solution to my question will involve multiple mechanisms putting pressure on corporations from multiple directions: for example, supporting increased legislative action while also pushing for regulation on an international level. Or maybe we should think about how those mechanisms are rooted in systems that don't support our ultimate struggle.

There are academics, lawyers, and organizers writing extensively on the topic of corporate accountability. I in no way want to diminish the complexity of their work but rather wish to reflect on my experiences as an organizer and law student and to share my ideas on how we might rethink the work that we are doing moving forward, inside and outside of the aforementioned structures.

AN ANTI-CAPITALIST CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY

The idea of corporate accountability itself is a contradiction. Often, the harm caused by the company we are resisting is a result of the company's existence in and of itself. For example, we might oppose a tailings pond breach as a result of a mining company's negligent safety protocols, but we might also oppose that the company set up operations on that land in the first place, displacing the local population, creating irreversible environmental damage, and then profiting. Eduardo Galeano states that Latin America "continues to exist at the service of others' needs," its resources "destined for rich countries which profit more from consuming them than Latin America does from producing them."⁴ It is resistance to this systemic inequality, or "chain of dependency",⁵ that must be at the foundation

⁴ Eduardo Galeano, *Open Veins of Latin America* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997) at 1.

⁵ *Ibid* at 3.

of our work on corporate accountability. However, we often lose sight of this when pushing for stronger regulations or lobbying the Canadian government to take action against corporate harm abroad.

Corporate accountability work thus straddles an interesting space for myself and other organizers: we try to regulate corporations while also questioning their existence and role in society. Sometimes this can feel like reform work, which is tricky for anti-capitalist organizers. John Peterson states that we must "support any and all reforms that improve the lives of the workers and the poor, even within the limits of capitalism." But we cannot believe that capitalism can ever be "reformed out of existence."⁶ We need to find a balance between supporting calls for regulation, developing case law, and existing soft law mechanisms while remembering that they are only temporary solutions to the problem of capitalist and imperialist extraction. An interesting example of this is movement lawyering. Purvi Shah describes movement lawyering as an intentional collaboration where "lawyers can use our traditional tools—whether impact litigation or direct services or policy work—paired with grassroots organizing and social movements to lead to more systemic transformation."⁷ It recognizes that the law can act as a tool to support a community but ultimately, it is not a solution to the systemic oppression in which a community's challenges are rooted.

⁶ John Peterson, "You Can't Reform Capitalism—It Must be Overthrown" (January 29, 2018), online: *In Defence of Marxism* <<https://www.marxist.com/you-can-t-reform-capitalism-it-must-be-overthrown.htm?fbclid=IwAR0PjnF8ZIGGJfowuf6weOwr710wEmDnSqFzr6QdRWVybngGnYI07XITdw>> [perma.cc/U259-6644].

⁷ Angela Morris, "Purvi Shah is Perfecting the Art of 'Movement Lawyering'" *Law.com* (November 28, 2018), online: <<https://www.law.com/2018/11/29/purvi-shah-is-perfecting-the-art-of-movement-lawyering/?slreturn=20190117110401>> [perma.cc/J23P-S8G4]; Charles Elsesser, "Community Lawyering - The Role of Lawyers in Social Justice Movement" (2013) 14:2 *Loy J Pub Int L* 375. Check out the Justice and Corporate Accountability Project based out of Osgoode Hall for a good example of community-based lawyering.

DO THE WORK ON YOUR OWN

The summer after my first year at law school, I met with a professor to talk about corporate accountability work in the legal context. He told me that I won't be taught how to do this work in law school. As Dean Spade said, "the things that interest you about law are not what the classes are about."⁸ This professor encouraged me to take corporate law courses, like tax and securities, and then to do the rest of the work on my own. This involved applying what I learned in class to the systems I was resisting outside of it; using corporate research skills to understand how corporations evade liability; understanding the corporate structure and how it operates.

It is important to create spaces where we can think critically about what we are learning in class and apply that to issues that we think are important. In the Fall of 2018, I co-facilitated a Student-Initiated Seminar on the topic of corporate accountability and globalization. My personal intentions for this course were to create a space where students could learn about human rights and social justice issues while developing corporate law research skills. I also learned from the course that in these spaces we create, we must think critically about our role as law students and future lawyers and reflect on where we fit in the transnational movement for corporate accountability.

This past year, especially during organized recruitment, I saw classmates with long-held dedication to human rights and public interest law accept positions with corporate law firms. "I don't love the work that the firm does, but it's good training," they would tell me after. I understand the pressures that push some students to accept these positions: money, social capital, a chance to get

⁸ Dean Spade, "For Those Considering Law School" (November 2010), online (pdf): <<http://www.deanspade.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/For-Those-Considering-Law-School-Nov-2010.pdf>>.

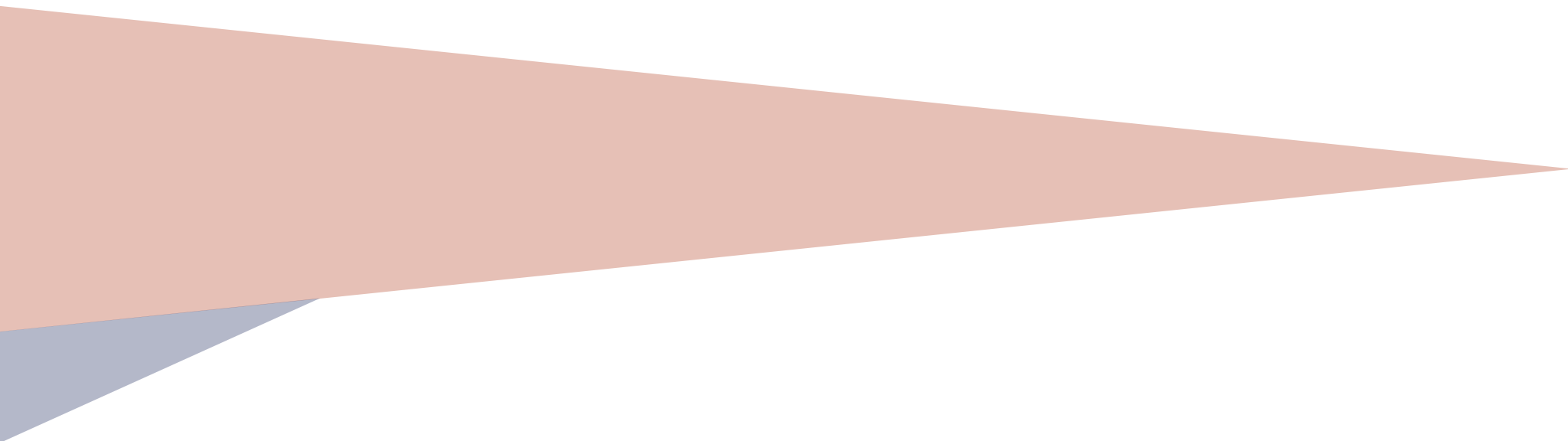
your foot in the door, networking, training. However, law school also pushes us into these positions and certain ideas of success. It is important to be able to imagine other career paths after graduation, but it is also important that students receive corporate law training in law school—we can learn about corporations without working for them. The spaces I identified above that encourage critical and structural thinking and training could potentially counteract the belief that experience in a corporate firm is the most strategic or valuable experience required for a fulfilling law career, in public interest law or otherwise.

CONCLUSION

I've been thinking more about who organizes and who litigates; who supports a movement and who advances it in court. How and why do some people have more access to one space than the other? Imagine if there were mandatory business and corporate law courses at law schools that focused on issues of corporate accountability and human rights.⁹ These skills are important for students who want to pursue a career in public interest law or to practice movement lawyering, but the courses where we develop these skills can often feel intimidating and unwelcoming. This could be attributed to the gendered nature of corporate law, the jargon, and the inaccessibility of those spaces to some students. Talk of corporate accountability and human rights issues can act as an entry point into conversations about corporate law for those students. The fact that our seminar was co-facilitated by students was important in resisting some of the structures that regular law courses end up adopting. Now imagine a law firm, or collective, that is grounded in principles of community-based and movement lawyering. Lawyers and organizers would

⁹ This comment is particularly timely since McGill University, and others, recently made the Business Associations course – some students' only exposure to business law – non-mandatory.

be trained in corporate law but would not work in corporate-law structures... How can we build up spaces where we do this work on our own? What could this space look like and how can we institutionalize it without co-opting it? Should this space be institutionalized, or are there alternatives that exist outside of the corporate university? How can we do corporate law in a way that is anti-capitalist, feminist, and community-informed? These questions should guide us as we question our role as law students and future lawyers, and as we find our place working within and for the movement for corporate accountability.



THE SIGNS AS LAW STUDENTS

MEGAN LINDY AND MARIAM SARR
STUDENTS AT MCGILL FACULTY OF LAW

ARIES

- * WILL START A HEATED DEBATE IN CLASS
- * SPENDS ABOUT 20 MINUTES OF THE LECTURE ACTUALLY TAKING NOTES AND THE REST SURFING THE WEB AND CHECKING EMAILS
- * IS INVOLVED IN THREE DIFFERENT MOOT COMPETITIONS

TAURUS

- * GENUINELY BELIEVES IN THE VALUE OF TRANSSYSTEMIC LEGAL EDUCATION
- * HAS THE MOST STABLE STUDY SCHEDULE OF ANYONE YOU KNOW
- * ALWAYS SHARES THEIR NOTES FROM THE CDO/SAO INFO SESSIONS

GEMINI

- * ALWAYS LATE TO CLASS
- * FIRST IN LINE TO TALK TO A GUEST LECTURER
- * HAS AN ENDLESS SUPPLY OF QUALITY SUMMARIES THEY'LL SEND YOU IN A HEARTBEAT IF YOU ASK

CANCER

- * WILL OFTEN BE FOUND CRYING IN THE THIRD FLOOR BATHROOM
- * CARES DEEPLY ABOUT HOW THE LAW AFFECTS PEOPLE'S LIVES
- * TAKES BEAUTIFUL, HANDWRITTEN NOTES

LEO

- * KNOWS THE NAME OF EVERY STUDENT ON THE DEAN'S LIST
- * PUBLICLY TRIES TO CHALLENGE THE PROFESSOR'S EXPERTISE
- * ATTENDS EVERY COFFEEHOUSE AND IS FRIENDS WITH EVERYONE

VIRGO

- * DOES ALL THE READINGS AND ALWAYS COMES TO CLASS
- * MARRIED TO THEIR AGENDA
- * IS A CITATIONS EDITOR FOR THE MCGILL LAW JOURNAL AND LOVES IT

LIBRA

- * THINKS OF DROPPING OUT EVERY SEMESTER AND WAITS UNTIL THE VERY END OF THE ADD/DROP PERIOD TO FINALIZE THEIR SCHEDULE
- * INVOLVED IN EVERY CLUB BECAUSE THEY HAVE A HARD TIME SAYING NO TO PEOPLE
- * FINDS SOMETHING TO LOVE ABOUT EVERY CLASS

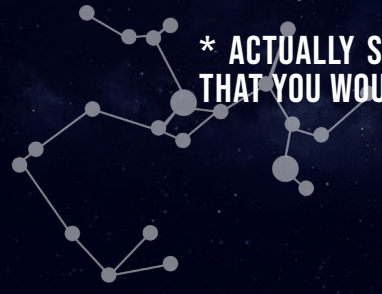
SCORPIO

- * WILL FOREVER REMEMBER THAT ONE TIME YOU FORGOT TO ADD YOUR SUMMARY TO THE READING GROUP
- * LIVES FOR THE DISSENTING OPINIONS
- * DOES THE OPTIONAL READINGS



SAGITTARIUS

- * WILL CONFIDENTLY ARGUE THAT THEIR ANSWER IS RIGHT EVEN AFTER THE PROFESSOR TELLS THEM THEY ARE DEAD WRONG
- * PLANS AN ADVENTUROUS TRIP EVERY FOCUS WEEK
- * ACTUALLY SMART AS HECK BUT ACTS LIKE SUCH A FOOL THAT YOU WOULD NEVER KNOW IT



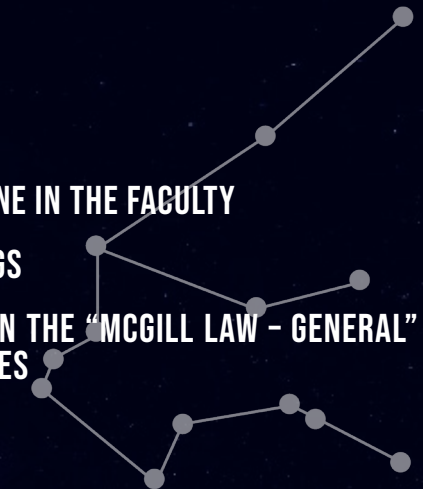
CAPRICORN

- * LIVES IN THE LIBRARY
- * CHRONICALLY OVER-COMMITS EVERY SEMESTER AND THEN IS OVERWHELMED, YET MIRACULOUSLY PULLS IT ALL OFF
- * HAS ACCESS TO ALL THE OLD EXAMS AND INCREDIBLE NOTES FROM FORMER STUDENTS THAT WERE NEVER UPLOADED TO PUBDOCS



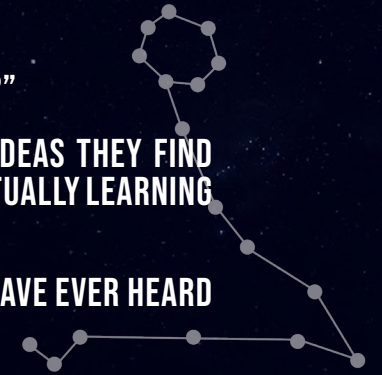
AQUARIUS

- * IS FRIENDS WITH EVERYONE IN THE FACULTY
- * NEVER DOES THE READINGS
- * ACTIVELY PARTICIPATES IN THE "MCGILL LAW - GENERAL" FACEBOOK GROUP SQUABBLES



PISCES

- * "WHAT WERE THE READINGS FOR TODAY??"
- * GETS LOST IN HIGH LEVEL THEORY AND IDEAS THEY FIND INTERESTING TO THE DIRECT NEGLECT OF ACTUALLY LEARNING THE COURSE MATERIAL
- * WRITING THE COOLEST TERM PAPER YOU HAVE EVER HEARD OF



Contours
VOL VII

Contours est un projet visant à cartographier et à donner forme aux contours des débats, des expériences, des préoccupations et des aspirations.

It is a space for women and non-binary individuals' voices, and an invitation for us all to join the conversation.