

# Rooted in Rhetoric

## In Stages

Writing by Students in the Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications Program



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## **Introduction**

“In Stages” is the second volume of *Rooted in Rhetoric*, a collection of student writing from the 2016-17 school year in the Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications Program at the University of Winnipeg. The assignments come from a range of 1000 to 3000-level courses and include a variety of essay types, such as analytical, critical, and narrative.

This collection is titled “In Stages” because there is an overlying theme of the challenges and stages of life we all go through to become stronger and more developed people. While our lives traverse through many different stages, the one stage that connects all of the writers in this collection of essays is being a student at The University of Winnipeg.

Thank you to all the students who submitted their pieces to this journal. Thank you to Jaqueline Mcleod-Rogers, Helen Lepp Friesen, Sheila Page, and Andrew McGillivray for seeking out student submissions, and for creating the thought-provoking assignments that allow students to express themselves through words. And last but not least, thank you to the Department of Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications for covering the publishing costs of this journal and for giving these students the opportunity to share their writing with the world.

## Foreword

Life consists of many stages, some rewarding and others that maybe we would like to forget. Rooted in Rhetoric: Volume II, explores many themes connected to the stages of our lives. Within these pages, Rhetoric students from a variety of academic backgrounds, such as sociology, psychology, and philosophy, navigate and weave inventive and insightful personal essays, narratives, research papers, and creative writing pieces that showcase the human experience, and how we are strengthened through life's many challenges.

The authors of this collection contribute articles that connect identity to the stages of life an individual travels through. From birth to death, these life events have a beginning and an end. Along the way, positive and negative experiences collectively influence our lives and, in turn, it is how we deal with these moments that play a significant role in our personal growth. The personal nature of these submissions highlight how events such as birthdays, graduations, and dating, and how people such as family are all significant stages in forming our sense of self. As such, these stories will resonate and connect with the everyday understandings that give meaning to our lives.

For that matter, this volume of Rooted in Rhetoric aims to provide a moment of reflection from the hectic day to day lives we all live. So, wherever you are sitting and reading, take a moment to be mindful of where you are situated in the stages of your life.

Dylan Jones, M.A.

## **The Creature Known as Earth**

**by Janelle Carriere**

This paper analyses the song “Aloha Ke Akua” by Nahko Bear and Medicine for the People. Bear is a Hawaiian singer who aims to educate listeners on important universal issues through beautiful, heart-wrenching melodies. He refers to his music as “musical medicine.” Bear is a lover of the planet and is a firm believer in the importance of protecting and preserving the wonders of the earth. Through his music, Bear hopes to inspire others to connect with the planet and all its creatures to create a world full of caring and respect (Harris). I will be analyzing three key aspects of Bear’s piece. Firstly, I will discuss what inspired the song and why it was created; secondly, I will discuss Bear’s portrayal the relationship between human and creature; and lastly, I will discuss what messages I took from the piece and what it means to me.

Bear wrote this piece in the face of the 2012 Mayan Calendar prophecy which predicted the end of life on earth (Harris). During this period, Bear observed people’s fear of losing not only their lives but losing the only earth they have ever known. I believe it was this fear that inspired Bear to question why people only seemed afraid when faced with supposed imminent demise, as well as why is there no fear in people’s daily lives as they slowly watch our environments and ecosystems turn to ruin. Through his music I believe Bear expresses a view that it is our duty as the sole creatures of this earth to have been granted abilities beyond our fellow animal brethren to protect the earth and all its

inhabitants. In this piece, Bear describes experiencing a vision in which he was told to “move the musical medicine around the planet in a hurry/ cause there’s no time to waste/ got to wake up the people” (Bear). The lyrics explain how the vision was the driving force for the piece as Bear felt it was his duty to show humans that we are taking the planet for granted, and that we must do everything in our power to cease the destruction we are causing. It is my belief that Bear hoped that through this piece he would be able to convince people to be thankful for the earth and to ensure its preservation was a priority for all inhabitants.

One of the most powerful components of this piece for me is how Bear breaks down the difference between human and animal, and instead focuses on the earth as a whole being. Humans are no different from other animals - no more important, nor vital. It can even be argued that humans are by far the most harmful and least vital creatures on earth. We are the only animal that consciously chooses to harm the planet and its inhabitants. Life flourished on earth before the introduction of humans, and life will continue on after we have all returned to dust. Bear highlights this view with the lyric “the more I understand about the human race/ the less I comprehend about our purpose and place.” Humans as a species have been given the gift of conscious thought, and as we have evolved we have harnessed this ability. With each passing generation, new knowledge and technologies lead to new discoveries about the universe and its creatures. However, instead of this knowledge bonding us to the planet, it seems to create a bigger void in between. There is a mentality that humans are

meant to be the rulers of the earth when instead we should be its saviours. It is a mistake to hold ourselves in such a high regard and to separate ourselves from the planet. Every life is precious, and every creature has a purpose. Bear refers to all creatures as being on a unique assignment and that each of us has a reason for being.

I find this piece of music so powerful, and I feel that the pivotal message it contains can inspire change. People need to adjust from their mindset of nobility and move toward one of humility. I know that many people believe that there has to be a greater purpose to human life and that the actions we take on earth merely determine our fate in the afterlife, but I do not believe that to be true. I do not believe that there is a divine reward or punishment after one's life, but that life is an end unto itself. I see the planet as one endless circle encompassing all the contents of the earth. Each creature lives for the beings that will come after. A single seed becomes a tree, and that tree provides oxygen for the animals, and once the animals are gone, their bodies provide nutrients to the soil to support the seed, and so the cycle continues. Each piece of the circle is just as important as the one before it.

One of Bear's lyrics that I feel truly expresses the core message of the song is "I am a miracle/ made up of particles/ and in this existence I'll stay persistent/ and I'll make a difference and I will have lived it"(Bear). It is important to recognize how amazing life is, and how complex and wonderful our planet is. The earth contains so many diverse components all made of the same



star matter manifested in a plethora of entities. The problem is that humans are not taking the time to look at how spectacular the world is. In the song, Bear pleads with the people to put an end to inaction and to instead give all we can to the planet. He sings “lend your ears/ lend your hands/ lend your movement, anything you can/ come to teach or come to be taught”(Bear). It does not matter how insignificant the action seems, it all can have a positive impact. We owe it to every life form present and future to be the best advocate for the planet we can. Every life, no matter how brief or how small, deserves a planet that is unified under the knowledge that every creature is equal in our home known as Earth.

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*Janelle Carriere is a Business student at the University of Winnipeg. The focus of her studies has been Human Resources and her key area of interest is in ensuring equality in hiring practices. In real life she's super into cats, coffee, books, and fuzzy socks.*

## **An Excerpt of “Morality in *LISA: The Painful*”**

**By Tyler Langevin**

Written, designed, and composed by Austin Jorgensen, *LISA: The Painful* is a side-scrolling role-playing video game (RPG), set in a post-apocalyptic world devoid of women. The gamer plays as Brad, a drug addict who fights his way through the dark, perverted land of Olathe in order to find his adopted daughter, making companions and difficult choices along the way. These difficult choices are what truly set *LISA* apart from other games, by making the the player question their morality.

After a prologue sequence in which Brad finds a baby girl and raises her in secret with his friends, Brad awakens to the sound of a dog barking, and the player is given control. The player finds a man named Terry Hintz stuck in a tree, with a dog awaiting him at the bottom. “I’d slay the wild beast myself,” he says, “but I pulled my groin climbing this tree.” So, the player must beat up the “wild beast.” Terry thanks Brad, and decides to join him. Terry at his side, they return home to find one of Brad’s friends bleeding out, with signs of a fight around his home. With his dying breath, Brad’s friend says: “Secret’s out, Brad...She’s gone.” With that, you set off to find Buddy - your adopted daughter, and supposedly the only girl left in the world.

It’s not long before the player makes an important discovery: Terry Hintz is a terrible companion. He literally does zero damage until he levels up twice – at which point he’ll do two damage, a fraction of what Brad does.

Nonetheless, he's all the player has. After making it through a cave with some enemies, the player will venture out onto an open plane, where Brad and Terry are hit by a truck. The screen goes black. Brad wakes up to find they are surrounded by a gang, with Terry still unconscious. The leader of the gang gives Brad two options: give up all his belongings, or kill Terry.

This is the first decision of the game, with very little to go on. No matter the choice, the player goes from having something to nothing. So far, only a handful of items will have been found through exploration...but as far as you know, items may be scarce. Terry is the only companion the player has, and the only person they've met that hasn't tried to kill them...but he's weak. As far as the player knows, he's not getting much stronger. Less than a half hour into the game, this decision intentionally uses lack of information to put the player in a situation where they genuinely consider giving up the life of your sole companion. In fact, during my playthrough, the only reason I even considered giving them my items was the possibility that Terry, being the first companion, was significant to the story – and therefore, the developer had chosen to make him weak so the player would foolishly give him away. Despite this concern, I chose to give him up, as most players tend to do on their first run. Checking my inventory, I had apparently decided this man's life was worth less to me than two pieces of jerky and a diet coke.

Later on in the game, the player will be accustomed to the harsh land of Olathe. The player can have a party of up to three people (not including Brad)

and by this point, the player will have had ample opportunity to put together a trio of people they prefer. It's quite likely they will have stuck with them for most of the game, possibly even reliant on a strategy that hinges on one or two of the party's members. With some exceptions, most companions only have a little dialogue to offer on meeting them. Given that once they're in the player's party they no longer provide dialogue, the player is unlikely to develop an emotional connection to their companions. Rather, they will be judged based on their practicality. The important point is: even if the player spend a long time with some companions, they're likely to remain almost strangers to the player, with their personality only shown through minimal dialogue and fighting.

Back to the story, Brad has found Buddy. She resents him for his drug addiction, and more importantly, keeping her hidden for all those years. She has learned how important she is to the world, as the last remaining girl. Brad attempts to force her to come home with him, but runs into Buzzo – a man who has a grudge against Brad – and his gang. Threatening harm to Buddy, Buzzo forces Brad to repeatedly take Joy (the drug of choice in Olathe, which Brad is addicted to) while Buddy watches. It's not long before Brad blacks out, and when he wakes up, it appears Buzzo has taken Buddy.

It's not long before the player catches up to them, but unfortunately, Buzzo and his gang get the jump on Brad. With guns pointed, Buzzo gives Brad a choice: Allow his men to kill his three companions, or one of Buddy's nipples will be cut off. This decision provokes the moral question in the player's mind:

“What would I choose in this situation?” Brad considers Buddy to be his daughter. The player has watched Brad raise her and has been fighting their way through Olathe to get her back. Meanwhile, the player hardly knows his/her companions. So, would you choose to allow permanent harm to someone close to you to save the lives of people you hardly know, or would you let those people die to keep your loved one safe? Furthermore, consider the aftermath: What would your loved one think of you? Would a physical scar be worse than the mental scar of knowing they were chosen over the lives of three others? All I know is, I couldn’t bring myself to be the cause of harm to Buddy.

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## **Modernity and Us**

**By Alex Nanton**

An analysis of modernity, or perhaps more accurately, *modernization*, reminds me of a quote from Plato's Phaedrus: "for by nature, my friend, man's mind dwells in philosophy" (146). If we are to substitute philosophy with modernity in the above quote, we are left with an accurate image of how we can approach coming to terms with *modernization*. By this, I am implying that when it comes to modernity, one cannot be transposed into it, for we are already immersed within its constraints and currents of "progress." With this in mind, we can move to analyze what I will refer to as "forces" of modernization which, as I will try to establish, threaten the human being's sense of what it is to be human. By the use of the word "forces" the reader should understand these as modernity's unmitigated and unstoppable creations, which by their "forceful" nature become virtually unimpeded in their "progression" and development. Although these so-called forces are greater in number than what I will analyze below, I have chosen to focus upon two of the more profound which merit particular interest, namely, individualism and a sense of meaning.

We will first turn our attention to the force of individualism as foremost among the consequences of modernity. Within the sphere of individualism, various factors are at play, yet I am concerned here only with that which the philosopher Soren Kierkegaard referred to as a "flattening" or a "levelling" of humans. By this, he understood the individualistic nature to be complicit in

producing dispassionate, complacent, and indifferent human beings. The individualistic sphere, then, results in the following cycle: a society of individualists which all reside on an individualistic playing field, with their own self-interest, which produces the reprehensible doctrine of relativism. If we proceed with this cycle of individualism, we encounter a very strange consequence. This consequence is our freedom of speech beginning to dissipate. J.S Mill spoke somewhere about how “both teacher and student sleep at their post when there is no enemy in the field”. Mill foresaw this consequence well, and it amounts to public discourse consisting of little more than “dead dogma”. In this sense, we in fact narrow our intellectual faculties and we “level” our lives. We dare not infringe or question the beliefs nor opinions of another individual. We are content to preserve our own dogmatic beliefs and opinions which go undiscussed and uncontested – we hold our tongues when another speaks of their beliefs and opinions which we are reluctant to contest or even discuss.

I would like to offer a familiar and personal example of this force of individualism, a highly susceptible group to this individualistic-relativistic force described above is that of students. The students in protest, the students in “resistance to authority”, and the students in “activism,” all suffice as specific examples here. These misleadingly claim to advocate for say, a marginalized minority, or are demanding more inclusion and greater attention to be paid to their “rights.” Meanwhile, what truly lurks behind their protest, resistance to authority and activism, is a desire for an individual self-preservation and self-

interested recognition. A slightly less bleak example could be those who – fortunately for themselves – avoid the banality of the student mentality and instead are merely unintended by-products of individualism in society. They go on with their lives rather tranquilly, and they will criticize whatever they find despicable, which often is conveniently that which the rest of the masses find despicable. Then they return to their own affairs and repeat the process cyclically. We have become nothing more than possessors of our cherished “rights” and laws, and so long as these remain unharmed, we continue on without concern. Lest they be threatened, we demand a “safe-space,” something certain universities seem to happily comply with and offer at the “victim’s” earliest convenience. Or perhaps we conform to the prevailing ideas of the masses, such as an undeveloped and thoughtless criticism of a political leader. This is less pernicious to society, rather it simply makes for a vacuous and boring exchange in public discourse (dead dogma) – twitter will suffice as but one example where this pervades. This force of individualism has a sublime consequence, and such is that this attitude fails to leave room for any sense of meaning in one’s life, and this sense of meaning is what I will turn to analyze below.

As humans, a sense of meaning is a common objective. We pursue meaning in nearly all of our daily tasks. To take a familiar example, some find a sense of solace and meaning in their religious devotion. This however, can become increasingly difficult to preserve under the circumstances and constraints of



modernization, which is partly the result of scientific progress, or “scientism” as some regard the exaggeration of the scientific tradition. Indeed, I am not one to disparage the benefits and comforts that scientific inquiry and discovery offer. Yet some find themselves under scrutiny and potentially regarded as “regressive” or dismissed as incoherent and outright wrong when they dare to contend with science on such areas as human nature or social relations (to name two). In such an instance, this is the consequence of modernization’s devotion to scientific progress.

“Scientism” is not alone in acting as an impediment in our pursuit of meaning. I would like to propose another, slightly abstract example, namely that of devotion to celebrities. Such a form of devotion has arisen as an attachment to a being that is beyond the average human’s attainment, yet possesses characteristics that the average human could envisage themselves possessing. What the admirer reveres in the celebrity, resembles how the religious man or woman holds an admiration for their God. Let us adopt a sceptical eye to religion and assume God, to be a being which was entirely produced by the average human. If this was so, God was made as a depiction of an ideal form of the human. In other words, God was created as an exemplar of the perfect being; it was a projection of what humanity ought to strive to be. Now I will implement the analogy of admirer-to-celebrity with this idea of the creation of God in mind. The slightly vulgar analogy is between how this theory of God (the projection of this man-made perfect being, possessing the most desirable human traits) is

nearly identical with how people regard the celebrity ensemble of the Kardashians. The Kardashians supposedly contain all of the most desirable material assets one can possess in life – beauty, wealth and fame to name a few. The admirer of the Kardashians finds a sense of meaning in concerning themselves incessantly with the lifestyles of these people – their illustrious lives become the vicarious lives of their average human admirers. In an absurd sense therefore, the Kardashians could be said to be modernity’s all too human God(s).

To read those who are critical of modernity can appear to be an exhausting and depleted task. For how engaging can it be, to simply read the work of a writer who simply complains of the times? Yet whether or not their thought resonates seems to me to be not so much a question of how large their readership is, or how engaging their writing may be, but rather how applicable their reflections on modernity appear to be to our contemporary circumstances. I would like to end by making a final remark. That the idea we can embrace modernization to somehow improve future generations is as absurd as it is an empty hope. For much like the reality in T.S Eliot’s *Waste Land*, the forces of modernization will have consequences for generations to come.

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## **Reframing how we view Resources through Art and Literature**

**By Sarah Vaage**

Canada is a country that is known for its wealth of resources, such as oil, water, lumber, and more, and so much of Canadian literature and artwork are focused on these very things. Both Brian Jungen and Esther K. Smith use commercial objects to promote the need to reframe and refocus how we view the way we use resources. Jungen's golf bag totem poles repurpose golf bags to bring awareness to notions of land and water use, and Smith's poem "Goldberg Variations" uses a record player to represent the mass consumption of oil and people's blindness to it.

Jungen's sculptures are each made of five stacked golf bags. I am focused on the image that Catriona Jefferies took of the installation in 2007 in Vancouver. The stacked golf bags resemble indigenous totem poles and are spread out amongst a room in a warehouse. The coloured bags stand out against the white walls and the concrete floor. The stacks in the background look more like totem poles since the features are not as clear, and so the designs on the bags resemble west-coast indigenous art. However, on the bags in the foreground the brand "TaylorMade" is clearly showing, revealing the identity of what the totem poles are made of. One idea that these totem poles raise here is the commodification of land and water. By taking these golf bags and fashioning them into a form of indigenous culture, Jungen repurposes the bags and makes the viewer consider how cultural commodities such as golf have taken large amounts of land and

water from indigenous people. However, these notions of land ownership and water rights are easily overlooked and ignored by people, particularly by people who use the golf courses. This is represented in the difference between the totem poles in the background versus the foreground. The way you look at the issue will depend on where you are standing.

Similarly, Smith's poem uses common objects to make the reader rethink resource consumption. The context of this poem is very important to the understanding of the message, since it is part of a collection of anti-pipeline poetry. In the poem, a phonograph represents the commodities we create with oil. The speaker says they danced to the records before they could walk. The reference to dancing before walking brings up images of innocence and childhood and represents the unawareness to, and up-raising in, an oil culture where we are surrounded by objects made from oil. The speaker also talks about the angel on the label that cannot be seen when the record is spinning. This represents the people in the world who do not stop to consider an object, but only see the spinning disc. It is only when you pause to consider the object will you see the true form.

Each of these pieces pushes for a reframing of how we view resource consumption. Both the artwork and the poem require a shift in perspective: a closer view in the case of Jungen's sculptures, and a slowing down to see the object clearly in the case of Smith's poem. These pieces make me wonder, if we can use artwork and literature to reframe how people think about capitalist

consumption, what would the next step be to change how we consume resources? Is a totem pole made from golf bags enough to stop people wanting to golf, and must we eliminate all these objects entirely to have a healthy relationship with nature?

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*Sarah Vaage is a recent graduate from the University of Winnipeg. She is leaving university with a bachelor of arts in English; and Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications. This is the second year Sarah was part of the RiR editing team.*

# **An Analysis on the Value of Death in Samurai Culture versus the 21st Century**

**by Sarah Victor Dit Vouillon**

Throughout the centuries and within distinct cultures around the world, many similar elements can be found repeatedly despite the gaps in time, distance, and ways of life. Among these elements are the obvious features of human life, such as death. The notion of an "expiration date" to our lifespan provides key insight into the inner workings of a civilization. Based on the values attributed to certain aspects of the natural world—in this case death—specific sets of rules tend to emerge and shape the behaviours, views, and actions of individuals. These rules can often lead to the revelation of the power or weakness of a person. An example of such an order involving the value of death can be found in Japan in the form of the "seppuku ritual" which was favoured under the Bushido code, also translated in English as the "Precepts of Knighthood" or the "Way of the Warrior". Based on the interpretation of the samurai code by author Nitobe Inez, the Bushido's Eight Virtues are: rectitude or justice, courage, benevolence or mercy, politeness, honesty and sincerity, honour, loyalty, and character and self-control. The Bushido is an ethical code belonging to the Samurai that not only propounds absolute loyalty and obedience in all deeds to their master, but also values honour above life.

This warrior code was recognized through the display of the seppuku ritual that consisted of the death of a samurai by his own hand through

disembowelment. Unlike popular belief that this ritual was performed solely by voluntary individuals, there were actually two forms of seppuku: voluntary and obligatory. Undoubtedly, obligatory seppuku was the form used regarding capital punishments, but the reasons for these acts were much more than to punish oneself. Seppuku was especially used to rid oneself of shame; to demonstrate loyalty to his lord by following him in death; as a means of protest; and as a way of expressing grief concerning the death of a revered leader. Through the exploration and sharing of the significance that these ‘suicidal’ deaths had among the samurai society of Japan, I will compare it to the current dominating concepts of death in North American 21st century society by sharing the main reasons responsible for strengthening our controversial view regarding killing rituals such as the seppuku. Lastly, making use of the seppuku I will share my perspective on the subject by setting forth the pros and cons of this particular deadly practise.

The reasoning behind self-annihilation within the samurai’s culture was on behalf of the Bushido code. Embodying the Way of the Warrior, the causes leading to seppuku dealt with the fundamentals of the Bushido’s Virtues including honour, courage, strength, justice and loyalty. Despite the fact that even today these traits in an individual are favourable and praised, many do not expect or think about suicide as a required way to prove one’s claims to such qualities, and therefore often claim that this type of extreme lethal measure must be done only by extremists. The act of taking one’s own life, especially in a slow



and painful way through disembowelment, are elements responsible for many viewing this as being a fanatical, barbaric act. However, through history many acts of resistance or freedom were carried out through sacrificial deaths. Even though the end result was the same —death— these demises were viewed as being ‘heroic’ and deemed more acceptable. An example of a sacrifice that occurred for a purpose was in Britain with the militant suffragist Emily Wilding Davison. Despite many beliefs that dying was perhaps not her intention when she stepped in the path of the King’s horse on June 4th 1913, her ‘suicide’ not only resulted in the Manchester Guardian printing an editorial acknowledging her bravery and resolution, but she was successful in keeping prominent the injustice and militancy occurring regarding women’s right to vote. Similarly, one of the main reasons for seppuku was also to protest against a policy of either a superior or the government. Dying for a cause undoubtedly requires courage and dedication which is another reason for the controversial view that our society has on such a death. Fear has been present everywhere through the centuries and across different civilizations, however it has escalated to higher levels with the rapid evolution of medicine and technology. Improving our lifestyles has brought forth an increase in our species’ life expectancy, a gift that is a double-edged sword. While having longer lives in rather safe surroundings, death is no longer a constant threat, which therefore leads to a terror of it when the time comes. Assaulted by the illusion that our technology has the power to provide a cure against all of nature’s cruelties, our society tends to reject the obligation of death

by trying to delay the inevitable. By overcoming this fear and our natural survival instincts, the samurais who committed the seppuku proved their honour, bravery, and their loyalty to their lords.

Personally, my sentiment and response on the topic is separated into six stages: understand, learn, dissect, extract, apply, and remember. My formula stands for the mere truth that I agree with certain components of the moral aspect of the seppuku while I disagree with others. What relates with my personal concept of humanity and its required responsibilities further enhanced my view of the world and strengthened my desire to be a good person. It is some of the reasons for the rituals that I found to be quite repulsive. Dying to protest against a superior authority is understandable, yet killing oneself to prove devotion and join someone in the afterlife seems extreme. In conclusion, I strongly believe that the morals of the Bushido's Eight Virtues are guidelines that should be upheld in order to better preserve our humanity, and therefore I respect the methods the samurai had in order to demonstrate their esteem and claims to such qualities.

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*Sarah Victor Dit Vouillon is currently a first-year university student at the University of Winnipeg. Officially learning English in grade five, it was not until high school that writing became a passion for Sarah, as well as a means for her to safely express her ideas and emotions.*

## **A Calming Disturbance**

**By Maria Josellee Dabalos**

Whenever January rolls in, I find myself slowly drifting into thoughts of what it was like taking strolls down the majestic beach located behind my grandparents' home: a beach lined with dancing palm trees all firmly rooted in white, soft, powdery sands - sands so white you can almost imagine yourself strolling through the heavens; so soft you can almost feel the clouds underneath your feet; so powdery that it was hard to believe something deemed coarse could actually feel so gentle - just thinking about it makes me daydream on and on about the beauty of that beach and its ability to lure me in with its relaxing sounds of serenity that seemed everlasting and limitless, until . . . the waves crashed into the shore, breaking the silence, creating a kind of disturbance that was oddly soothing - the waves were never bothersome, but if you think about it: how could something be so loud, yet incredibly relaxing?

*Maria Josellee Dabalos is a second-year Rhetoric and Communications major at the University of Winnipeg. She is fond of creative writing and is determined to learn more and improve her skills. Maria Josellee expresses her writing through her fashion blog, and also plans to pursue a career in magazine editing.*

## **Stress**

**By Laura Loconte**

Stress. Just the sound of the word makes me cringe. When will stress not be an issue? Will it ever not be? I was told it gets worse. When you see a sign of stress, make change. I would know. Right now, I admit, I am stressed. Let me tell you why. My mom is sick. The worst part is we do not know why. We see her suffer, but we have to wait. As we wait my stress goes up. I pray and pray, but as of yet, no luck. I pray for my mom daily. I also pray for my stress to go. I can feel the strain of pain in my head. I can taste the salt of my tears. A flow of tears that my heart can't take. My fear is high. That fear is the cause of my stress. It has been hard and things have changed. I have changed. I try to smile, but it is a lie. I know that stress can be tamed. It can also be helped. I do not need to feel this pain. It is time I take my own tip. It is time to make a change.

*Laura Loconte has recently graduated from the University of Winnipeg. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications. She enjoys writing for entertainment, as an outlet to release stress, and as a way to express her emotions.*

## **Stella Blue**

**By Charlotte Morin**

I was merely twelve the day I met her; nineteen the day she became mine. Her name was Stella, or Stella Blue as I called her, because it made me feel like I was a bluesy late-night bar show crooner. Of course, she wasn't actually blue. I would take her out to the countryside, just the two of us, and we would quietly watch the stars come out. With her eyes aglow, I softly steered the way back to the city and into my driveway. That was where we always said goodnight. I could never bring her up to bed with me, we both knew. In the morning we would meet again outside my door, her body gleaming in the sun and eager to go wherever I wanted. It was only on cold winter mornings that it took some coaxing to get her going, but I knew her well, knew her sweet spot intimately; I could find it blind, I'm sure, just feeling the vibrations of the engine and the bite of the clutch before it took hold, igniting the spark and pulling us off down the road.

*Charlotte Morin is a third-year student in the Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications department. She writes primarily short fiction and manifestos, but enjoys working on longer stories as well as news articles. She has been published in the Feminist and Queer Review and in the Uniter.*

## **The Residential School System**

### **By Johnathan Henderson**

In 1991, Murray Sinclair and A.C. Hamilton co-wrote the article “The Residential School System”. Sinclair was appointed as a Judge of the Manitoba Court of Queen’s Bench in 2001. Having served since 1988 as Associate Chief Judge of the Provincial Court of Manitoba, this appointment made Sinclair Manitoba’s first Aboriginal Judge, and Canada’s second. Sinclair now serves as the chair of Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission of the residential schools. Hamilton was appointed in 1971 to the Manitoba Court of Queen’s Bench, and as Associate Chief Justice of the Family Division in 1983. He has since retired from the Bench in 1993 to focus on mediation and Aboriginal issues. In writing this article, it is clear they intended to inform their readers about this tragedy in our country’s dark history. By dark history, I mean the treatment of our Aboriginal population, more specifically the impact of the assimilation of the Aboriginal population into mainstream (European) society. In my opinion, this article is short, but very effective in its deliverance. Not only does it state the facts regarding the history behind the residential school system imposed on the indigenous population, but it briefly considers the devastating and ongoing generational impact.

I loved how they began their article with a brief overview on life before the residential school era, what led to it, and eventually the dark details and history of the residential schools. It was nice to have a little piece of reading that

does not just discuss our dark history. As an Aboriginal reader, having a brief glimpse into life before our cultural genocide began was very valuable. Sinclair and Hamilton (2011) inform us of a time when, even with the European presence on this land, that Aboriginal people “continued to live in vibrant, self sufficient communities” (p.368). They also provide a short description on our strong social structure within our communities. Adults and children understood their values and roles such as sharing, self-reliance, how to conduct one’s self, utilizing the land for their economic survival, their spirituality, and understanding the circle of life. The one big thing that stood out for me was that our cultural identity as a people was still intact. This was due to the fact that we were still allowed to use our language and conduct our numerous ceremonies that celebrated our sacred and spiritual connection to the land of this continent; a land that our people called Turtle Island.

In congruence to the history of the relationship of the indigenous population with the government of this country, this is where the article dives into a part of our dark history; the process behind the introduction of the residential school system. Due to my ethnicity, and because both of my parents are survivors of the residential school system, this makes this part very emotional to read. To read that the “indian” was uncivilized and primitive to survive the advancement of civilization in this country, evokes strong emotions as an “indian” reader. Turning to the Americans for help for a more “aggressive civilization policy” (Sinclair & Hamilton, 2011, p.369), it was apparent that the



aboriginal people of this country became irrelevant in the eyes of the government. The decision was made to target the young children and “remove them from the disruptive influences of the parents and the community” (Sinclair & Hamilton, 2011, p.369).

The government decided the best way to implement this plan of cultural genocide was to delegate this mandate to the religious organizations and churches. The plan was to take the “indian” out of the “indian” in an aggressive manner. Every aspect of European life was to be integrated into the aboriginal children “from dress and behaviour to religion and language” (Sinclair and Hamilton, 2011, p.369). Sinclair and Hamilton (2011) made it clear the intention behind the residential schools was a “conscious, deliberate and often brutal attempt to force Aboriginal people to assimilate into mainstream society” (p.369) This was accomplished by denying Aboriginal people their language, culture, beliefs, and their own communities.

After reading this article from an Aboriginal perspective, it is hard not to get emotional about our dark past in regards to our relationship with the government of this country. I strongly believe more of this is needed because we as Canadians need to know and understand the atrocities and history behind the original people of this land. Not to mention, the importance of history in helping our people move forward. Personally, I would have appreciated it if Sinclair and Hamilton could have provided more statistics in regards to residential school survivors, and personal testimonies from such survivors. I also must point out

that Sinclair and Hamilton use of facts are effective in the deliverance of this issue. This article would be effective in providing people with little or no knowledge on this issue with a convincing, powerful and condensed overview of this dark part of our country's past. The passing of this history and knowledge is key in the re-emergence of the indigenous people of this continent.

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## **The Meat Market: Neoliberalism & Tinder**

**By Shanae Blaquiere**

Tinder, the dating app in which users can seek potential sexual and/or romantic partners via geo-location technology, has been called “the crack of our time” (Licea); a phenomenon that has been shown to cause feelings of dating burnout (Blair), a rise in sexually transmitted infections (Flynn), monetary scams (Cho), and sexual assault (Roberts). Despite the innumerable news editorials, scholarly articles, pop-culture references, and brunch conversations about the merits or lack thereof of Tinder, its immense popularity and insertion into the cultural lexicon indicate that it – or at least, apps like it – are here to stay for the foreseeable future. However, there remains little research on Tinder and its relationship to the larger political-economic context of neoliberalism.

In an effort to address this gap in research, my paper argues that Tinder embodies neoliberal ideology, which can perhaps best be seen through its reliance upon self-marketing strategies (i.e., the Tinder profile), use of consumer taste as an indicator of compatibility, and appeals to conceptions of supply and demand. Neoliberal ideology, which requires people to “adopt actions, ways of thinking, and discourses that are congruent with neoliberalism” in order to function, infiltrates “market logic into everyday social relations” (Marwick 5).

We can generally understand neoliberalism as a system that is based in notions of deregulation and privatization (Marwick 5). Neoliberal ideology hinges upon “the idea of the ‘free, possessive individual’” and views the state as

an interference with society and “the God-given right to make profits and amass personal wealth” (Hall 706). Neoliberalism is adaptive and evolves to given contexts, working itself into everyday actions and presenting its ideas as “common sense” (Hall 711). Stuart Hall, in his argument about the relationship between neoliberalism and identity formation, writes:

[For fashion trends] to be realized in the market, they have somehow to acquire the aura, and become the signifiers, of ‘personalized’ choice. Young people seek individuality by wearing variations of the same casual ‘uniform’. The care-of- the-self and self-fashioning industries the punishing rigours of the gym, the skills of self- promotion, the stylistic gendering and ‘race-ing’ of commodities, cosmetic surgery, personal trainers, life-style advertising, the public relations industry feed massively off these trends. (722)

Sex and relationships are not impervious to the encroachment of neoliberalism, which is perhaps best demonstrated in the concept of self-branding. In the context of social media, Marwick argues that Web 2.0 technology is instrumental to self-branding, or “[t]he idea of firmly turning yourself into a brand” which is “firmly instilled in modern business culture” (164). Self- presentation on social media and dating apps utilize self-branding to present oneself as a “salable commodity” (Marwick 166) that can entice future employers, potential sexual and/or romantic partners, and the admiration of one’s peers. Considering the large numbers of potential matches for a Tinder user, one must present a brand

that has currency in the attention economy “which treats visibility as status” (Marwick 143). In the attention economy, “[v]isibility is not something ubiquitous, but rather something scarce” (Bucher 1171-72) which is needed to maximize their social status and user experience.

A successful Tinder user is one whose profile “stands out” from the rest with good branding, not unlike a successful candidate who is selected for a job interview. Heino et. al elaborate upon the use of market metaphors, noting that many of the surveyed online daters evoked marketplace metaphors and often equated one’s dating profile with a résumé (435). Marketplace metaphors in the online dating world, they argue, can be organized into five categories: “assessing others’ market worth, determining one’s own market worth, shopping for perfect parts, maximizing inventory, and calibrating selectivity” (434). They found that market metaphors were ubiquitous in discussions of online dating, indicating that people view dating websites and applications like Tinder as “a place where people go to ‘shop’ for potential romantic partners and to ‘sell’ themselves in hopes of creating a successful romantic relationship” (429).

Time Magazine reported that the most-swiped male occupations were pilots, founders/entrepreneurs, firefighters, and doctors whereas the most-swiped female occupations were physical therapists, interior designers, founders/entrepreneurs, and PR/communications (Luckerson). While the image-centric profile obviously privileges the traditionally attractive, Tinder users whose occupation is perceived to be desirable are also at an inherent advantage in their

self-brand strategy. Users who fall outside of beauty norms or whose jobs are deemed to be unbecoming are put at a disadvantage and must rely on other strategies to promote their brand.

The importance of a potential Tinder match's occupation is one that is clearly tied to class, a hierarchal differentiation that is fundamental to neoliberalism. The aforementioned most-swiped occupations are ones that identify users as middle, upper-middle, or upper class; the desirability of dating a pilot has more to do with money made than with how fascinating you find your match's work to be. More subtly, other features of the Tinder profile operate to locate users within classes and social groups. Because the neoliberal notion that the market is "the optimum context to achieve human freedom" (Saad-Filho and Johnston 65), which reduces the concept of freedom to freedom of consumer choice, one's choices in consumption thus get tied in with their identity. As Weigel indicates, "The idea that the way you someone shoots brunch plates and bathroom selfies might tell you all you need to know takes the idea that what you like reveals what you are like to its logical conclusion" (35). You are the sunglasses you buy, the café you Instagrammed your coffee at, the tropical beach you're standing on in your third photo, the song you've chosen as your anthem on your Tinder profile. Tastes in clothes, music, vacation spots, and so forth are not neutral; rather, "tastes and interests are hierarchically differentiated" and class permeates into everyday social practices (Bottero 995).

Market logics within Tinder can be demonstrated even further; it was found that users ascribed market value to other users and assessed their own worth accordingly (Heino et. al 436). One's own market value was determined by "explicit, immediate feedback, such as the number of hits on one's profile" and the ratio of sending out messages to receiving new messages (Heino et. al 436) within the larger logic of supply-and- demand of desirable attributes. Psychology professor David Buss argues that Tinder and other dating technologies "give people the impression that there are thousands or millions of potential mates out there.... When there is a surplus of women, or a perceived surplus of women, the whole mating system tends to shift towards short-term dating" (Sales). Buss is not only evoking marketplace metaphors and indicating that women are a "surplus" commodity, but he is also arguing that sex and relationship patterns adhere to the same logic that office supplies, superhero movies, and barrels of oil do.

However, this is part of the insidiousness of neoliberalism: it is so carefully integrated into daily activities and ways of thinking that it's hard to imagine Tinder, and even dating at large, as anything other than a meat market. Individuals can maximize their quest for "the one" (or even just "the one-night stand") by downloading an app, rapidly swiping through profiles, maximizing compatibility and desirability via specific age and date ranges, common Facebook likes, friends, and music tastes. Users present their dating résumé, maximizing time and efficiency, and assess the résumés of others. They select

eligible candidates and interview them via messaging apps. At the end of it, instead of getting hired, a user is gratified with a date, sex, or a relationship – but only if you’re cute, clever, or desirably employed enough to get a right- swipe in the first place.

In conclusion, the adaptiveness of neoliberalism allows for its ideology to permeate into everyday actions, thoughts, relationships, and feelings. The contemporary dating and sex world is not exempt from this internalization of neoliberalism. My research indicates that Tinder is not only a technology marked by neoliberal ideas, but it ensures that these ideologies become further embedded into the dating world of 2017 and beyond.

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## **An Excerpt of “Consequences of Downloading in Canada”**

**by Jade Olivia Chapman**

Many Canadians download a song or movie free of charge on the internet without a second thought. Though the practice is illegal, it has become a normal and popular means of entertainment consumption, particularly by millennials. Despite the fact that downloading copyrighted material has become relatively commonplace, many still wonder what would happen in the event if they were caught with a computer full of torrented songs, television shows, and movies. Due to the complexity of file sharing and copyright law in the digital age, it can be difficult to pinpoint the actual risks of downloading content online for personal use. Ultimately, the potential for action by copyright holders is limited due to Canada’s unique legislation, the privacy rights of Canadians, and the government’s current lack of initiative to combat piracy.

Action against piracy in Canada is limited because the country’s laws are different than other countries. Canadians who fear being slapped with hefty fines for copyright infringement often cite examples of cases in the United States involving hundreds of thousands of dollars in damages. In one notable case in 2009, a Boston University grad was ordered to pay \$675,000 to a group of record companies for downloading thirty songs (Panzar). In contrast, Canadian law in regards to copyright infringement is vastly different from the laws of its southern neighbour. Though one of the terms often used to characterize the downloading of free copyrighted content is ‘illegal,’ strictly downloading copyrighted content

is not a criminal offence in Canada, nor is it covered by Canada's criminal code (Government of Canada). Canadian law enforcement does not care about a person downloading season one of *Game of Thrones* onto his or her laptop. Any case against a suspected copyright infringer would be a civil one brought forth by an anti-piracy firm on behalf of an entertainment company, as opposed to a criminal case.

While downloading content in other countries can be both a criminal and civil offence warranting fines and jail time, Canada's legislation is comparatively lax. In Canada, a copyright infringer can be sued a maximum fine of \$5,000 (Shaw), a far cry from the damages sued for in the U.S. that can cost people their homes. It is also worth noting that the \$5,000 fine is per lawsuit, not per infringement, meaning one cannot be charged \$5,000 for each song or TV show episode downloaded (Shaw). For this reason, companies have little incentive to actually sue Canadian pirates when the most they have to gain is a few thousand dollars, minus legal fees. To date, there are no known cases of successful lawsuits for non-commercial downloading in Canada (Geist, "The Copyright Notice Flood: What to Consider If You Receive a Copyright Infringement Notification").

The second factor standing in the way of potential lawsuits is a Canadian's right to privacy. In January 2015, a new law was put forward requiring Internet Service Providers—companies like Rogers and Bell that offer internet to Canadians—to forward copyright infringement notices they receive to

their customers. This is referred to as the notice-and-notice system. Since the system came into effect last year, anti-copyright firms have used these notices as an opportunity to convince Canadians to pay money in order to avoid a potential lawsuit (Harris). Many alarmed Canadians who receive these letters do not realize that they are under no actual obligation to pay any money or even respond, and that their identity is unknown to those threatening legal action against them. While companies like Rogers and Bell are required by law to pass on these notices, they are under no obligation to disclose a user's identity unless given a court order. To date, no court in Canada has granted such an order. In Canada, only a person can be sued, not an IP address. Therefore, it is critical for copyright holders to know the name of the person downloading their content in order to pursue legal action. If a pirate who receives a notice pays a copyright holder out of fear, they are unknowingly giving away their only defense: their previously protected identity. In this way, copyright holders have to rely on Canadians being ignorant about copyright law to even identify a potential plaintiff for a lawsuit, and it is unclear if this process of identification would ultimately hold up in court.

Finally, the Canadian government continues to do very little to combat piracy, restricting the options of copyright holders. In 2004, Justice Konrad von Finckenstein of the Federal Court of Canada ruled that file sharing in Canada was legal (Borland). Though this motion was appealed by the Canadian Recording Industry Association in 2005, it was ultimately dismissed by the

Federal Court of Appeal. The court again denied the association's request to force internet service providers to reveal file sharers' identities (CBC Arts). As stated above, internet service providers are still not required to hand over this information, so, more than a decade later, little has changed. The International Intellectual Property Alliance's (IIPA) stated in 2011 that "[overall] the piracy picture in Canada is at least as bleak as it was a year ago, and it is cementing its reputation as a haven where technologically sophisticated international piracy organizations can operate with virtual impunity" (Haggarty). They also claimed that Canada was home to the majority of the world's top ten BitTorrent sites.

In the five years since this report was released, Canada has not updated its legislation beyond instating the notice-and-notice system. The most recent development in the fight against piracy has been an application by Voltage Pictures to file a reverse class-action lawsuit. In class-action lawsuits, multiple plaintiffs usually sue a single defendant. In a reverse class-action lawsuit, a single plaintiff sues multiple defendants (Tencer). In this case, Voltage Pictures is suing an unknown number of Canadians who have allegedly downloaded five of the studio's movies. Voltage Pictures previously fought to require internet service providers in Canada to provide the identities of alleged file sharers in a different case (Geist, "Voltage Pictures Launches Canadian File Sharing Lawsuit with Reverse Class Action Strategy"), and although they were awarded the names of 2,000 users, all correspondence with the users had to be monitored by the courts.

...

In conclusion, internet piracy remains a hotly debated issue on both sides, often pitting open internet and privacy advocates against artists and industry big shots. Canada's current legal framework, its respect for internet users' privacy, and its lack of government action to date has created an environment for piracy to thrive. As it stands, Canadians who download copyrighted content have little reason to worry about potential consequences. Though little has changed in the past decade, whether or not this will continue to be the case going forward remains to be seen.

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## **Walking Together through the Hourglass of Time**

**By Roger McDonald-Colombe**

Time has always been a factor in our lives; right from birth you have always been there to guide me through life. As the eldest sister of the six of us, we laughed, shared memories, and created moments in time. You have always been my guardian angel, an angel who has always watched over me through the hardships of life. I am grateful that I could run to you to help me through those difficult times. We have always shared an unspoken bond that did not require any explanation, and as time continues to slip through our hands, the bond we share will remain strong.

Do you recall when I was born? You said that I shot out quickly, but thankfully the nurse caught me. Do you remember the feelings you had when you first held me in your arms? I can relive the feelings of joy as you expressed that story because it showed as the smile on your face grew bigger. You kept me close to your heart. You loved and cared for me like I was your own. Thank you for always being my inspiration in life. You have shown me that nothing can bring someone down if they are willing to keep fighting for what they want in life. You have been my strength through a lifetime of hardships.

As adults, we continue to laugh and share memories, but time is still against us. Do you remember my eighteenth birthday weekend? On a split decision, you came to the house and told me to grab my shoes and jacket because the bus was leaving in half an hour. I recall arriving in the city and seeing the

city lights for the first time; I was astounded by how the buildings rose above ten storeys. We arrived at the Place Louis Riel where we were given our own rooms. You told me to get ready because we were going to go out for a night of fun. As we embarked on our night out, we were intercepted by our auntie, and we decided to join her on a night of gambling. Sitting at the Video Lotto Terminal Machine, I was confused and did not know how to play the terminal, but kept pressing the spin button. When you came to check on how I was doing, you looked surprised and told me to cash out because I was already at five hundred dollars. Excitedly, I asked, “So, how much is that in real money?” Then you gave me that look you always did when I asked something ridiculous, and we burst out laughing. That was one of the best birthday weekends of my life.

Do you recall us being in the hospital at the same time? I had just been attacked and you were going for surgery. Do you remember what you said to me that surgery day? You indicated that should you not make it, to watch over your children like you had done for me. I made that promise to you that day, and I will always keep that promise alive. As time progresses, I know our time together is limited, but what we have shared so far has been a great experience. Alas, harder times are coming, but through it all I will remain by your side. Honestly, if I could take your sickness, I would take it as my own.

We have been challenged in life, and we must remember to keep fighting, for only time can separate us. I know you are a strong woman that can put up a great fight, and please continue to fight it for a little bit longer. When you get

tired, I will be your strength. I will be your guardian angel through it all, and I will ensure you are well cared for and loved. Knowing now what I refused to accept then has only made me stronger. Though the cancer has run its course, I want you to know that I will hold tight and enjoy the remainder of our time together. Only time can separate us in this journey of life we have made together. Until that day arrives, let us keep living life in reflection of what a journey this has been. The journey we began thirty years ago brought our spirits together, and for that I am grateful for all the time spent with you.

*Roger is a first-year University of Winnipeg student pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration. "It has been an obstacle," he says, "but with strength and courage, anything is possible. Life is limited, so pursue your dreams to make them a reality.*

## **Daughter of the Prairie: My Sense of Identity and Place**

**By Colleen Coulter**

I am comfortable in my own skin. I like myself. I like my place in life. I like my surroundings of home and hearth. I even like where I live. I am a child of the prairies, born in Indian Head, Saskatchewan and transported to Winnipeg as a seedling. I was planted, so to speak, in the Red River gumbo, and there I grew into my adulthood while my parents trimmed and shaped my character into some semblance of normalcy. Suddenly, presto, there I was all grown up.

To state the obvious, the prairies are flat. They are so flat that a bump in the road seems like a hill and a real hill becomes a mountain. Flat is good. Flat is comfortable and safe. You can't fall off of flat and you can't jump from flat to the hilltop. Now, life is full of hills and valleys. There is the actual topographical type, and, as the metaphor implies, there are triumphs and disasters, mental and emotional highs and lows, or quite simply, the good and the bad. The level landscape represents a calming place; a place full of restful and neutral emotions. This is our recovery zone and where we feel safe.

Prairie dwellers are strong and hardy. Our weather is the object of laughter across the nation. Our summers are short and full of very hot days mixed with severe thunderstorms, hail, and even tornadoes, in ever increasing numbers. Tossed into this mix, are our infamous swarms of mosquitoes, notorious for spreading heartworm to our livestock and pets, and threatening the populace with the now feared West Nile Virus. Our dreaded winters are thought

to be about eight months long and consist of severe freezing cold usually accompanied by high winds and several feet of snow. It is not uncommon for our temperature to go as low as minus forty degrees below zero with the wind chill and stay there for a week or two. Often it is impossible to see more than a couple of feet in front of your face, and vehicular traffic moves along at a brisk pace of five to ten kilometres per hour. You get all the exercise you need, and more; shovelling snow. Spring and fall exist only as punctuation marks between our insufferably short, hot summers and our gruelling winter months.

The prairies get more sunshine than anywhere else in the country. This accounts for our friendliness and cheerfulness in the face of adversity. We openly embrace our seasons and make the best of everything. We take advantage of our beautiful lakes, rivers, forests, and our sports facilities in the summer heat, but we really excel in the cold. In the winter, there is ice hockey everywhere, both indoors and out. There is figure skating, plain skating on the river trails, skiing, and tobogganing. We even have dog sledding, sleigh rides, ice climbing, and snow sculpturing at our famous Festival du Voyageur. Oh, and let's not forget the snowmobiling. Many people on the prairies are crazy about their snowmobiles and the adventures that they have in the dead of their cold and miserable winter.

More than a few years ago, my Dad and I entered into a snowmobiling poker derby. That is where you start in one town and snowmobile to four other towns. At each town, you are given a playing card, and when everyone finishes, the best poker hand wins. The route was cross country and was marked by signs

put up by the organizers for the event. As usual, it was a cold, blustery, winter day, but Dad and I were dressed for the occasion and ready to go. About halfway through the derby, we got lost. We couldn't find the sign to guide us and the wind had picked up until it was almost a complete white out. Dad and I had stopped our snowmobiles side by side and were looking around hoping to figure out where to go next. I gave up looking and went to say something to my Dad, and I discovered that he had moved. I saw him through the white out and I made a beeline straight for him. The next thing I knew, I was flying through the air. I had managed to get onto the edge of a small bridge that I couldn't see, because it had no railings, and because of the weather conditions, and then I sailed right off of the other side. As I was flying through the air and holding on to the handlebars for dear life, all I could think of was that I should pretend I was jumping a horse, and while continuing to peer through the blowing snow, all I could see was my Dad looking on in horror. My mind was trying to stop this from happening, so time moved in slow motion until I finally landed with a kind of hard thump. I had tunneled into the soft snow between the two hard packed banks of a little river and buried my snowmobile to the top of the windshield. My father immediately hollered, "Are you trying to give me a heart attack?" Luckily, I was unhurt and the snowmobile was equally unscathed, and Dad was just worried that he wouldn't be able to unbury my machine and get me mobile again. He persevered, however, and soon we were on our way. We even managed to find the trail and finished the derby. We found out that someone had moved the sign

for a practical joke. That joke could have been a disaster. I could have been hurt, my snowmobile could have been disabled, or my Dad could have had a heart attack from shock or the overexertion of digging me out. Any one or all of these things could have happened while we were off of the main route and lost in the white out. None of the worst scenarios came to pass, and this experience became one of my fondest memories of an outing with my Dad. We had many a laugh over it in later years.

The point of my story is that we overcome our difficulties. There is always good and bad, and you try to make the most of everything as we are no strangers to adversity. Prairie people are really accomplished at doing this. With our level heads on our level ground, and our sunny optimistic spirits, we can outshine the sun which looks down on us for over three hundred days a year. In short, I am proud to be a prairie daughter.

*Colleen Coulter is a a 64-year-old, North End Winnipeg widow sponsored by the Opportunity Fund, and is attending the University of Winnipeg as a full-time student. She is actively supporting the Walls to Bridges university program and is currently helping to make university courses available to all prisoners in western Canada.*

## **Feeling Like Ten Thousand Bucks**

**By Bethany Fontaine**

My birthdays are never really exciting and sometimes I even dread them. On my 16th birthday, I was a little more depressed than usual. It was a disappointing day for me, as my plans fell through and other things clouded my mind. Though, my family still had a barbecue, and it was probably the sunniest and crisp warm September day I had ever experienced. So, I decided to emerge from the dark abyss of my house and try to make the most of this day.

I was pleasantly surprised to see my relatives, who didn't live in the city, come for a visit. We indulged in my mom's homemade burgers and the ole' traditional macaroni that we usually make at our barbecues. My cousins even brought some food as well. It was all delicious and brought my spirits up. It was turning out to be an alright occasion.

Afterwards, my family, specifically my older sister, wanted to give me gifts. I was not expecting anything so it was another pleasant surprise. My little brother pulled out a digital camera and immediately started recording. Strange, I thought. Then, my older sister handed me a birthday card with a big grin on her face. I eagerly opened it to find a neon, orange scratch card sitting inside.

"Scratch it, maybe it's a winner," she said.

So, I did, and what do you know, a big, silver "10,000 dollars" was shimmering on the card. My eyes widened, and I instantly jumped for joy. I waved it at everyone to see, and they all looked astounded. I remember thinking;



I could do so much with this money. However, my sister, Fran, did not seem so shocked to see this all happening.

“Hey Beth, where do you claim the money? Read the back!” she urged.

With that great smile still stretched across my face, I flipped the card over and began reading it out loud. It was all in tiny, black font at the top.

“Congratulations, Santa Claus has your money waiting for you at the North Pole.” Fran and my brother Ryan instantly burst out laughing after I read those words. It did not take long for me to realize that the card was fake, and this was just another one of Fran’s pranks. My smile was still awkwardly glued to my face, but I turned away slowly as tears started to slip down my cheeks. My mom snapped at Fran and said I was having a bad day. She was shocked at my reaction and kept apologizing, saying she wasn’t expecting me to cry. It was a bit embarrassing to be seen like that in front of all my family, but that card was kind of a crushing disappointment. I remember feeling like the world was taunting me that day.

To this day, my sister and I still bring up this story and chuckle about it. I am not mad at all about it; I was a little dramatic, and I should have expected Fran to have another devilishly good prank up her sleeve. She will just have to be careful though when I take advantage of a good opportunity to get back at her!

## **The Day I made a few Friends and almost burned down the Home**

### **Economics Department**

**By Jordan Mason**

It was another cold morning at GCN on December 12th, 2014, the day before the samosa lunch sale that the class had voted on. As soon as everybody got settled in, Mr. Steiner had everybody show him the posters so we could get our 100 marks, an easy assignment. I had barely finished mine, but it was adequate enough to be posted around the school. My friends Gary, Mary, and I were tasked with cooking and preparing the chicken, which we were to do sometime in the evening. Mrs. Gin of "cooking class" came into the room and recognized me. She made matters worse by assigning me to clean up the kitchen after the event, and simply handed me the sanitation supplies.

During class, we took turns getting up to put up our posters around the school. Mine was posted near the English Department on the second floor near the middle stairs, quite a spot for such a horrid and lazy poster. The signs my friends made were near the cafeteria and the library. I like to think I was fortunate enough to get the location I did, even if it was a spot that everyone could see; although the hallway was dark most of the time, since the lights were dim and needed to be changed.

When we got back into the room after hanging posters, Mr. Steiner was totaling up the costs and the break-even point. "It's a big risk," said Mr. Steiner. "We know that not everyone will buy a samosa." To keep the cost down, we all

chipped in to buy a big supply of chicken, seasoning, chips, and cartons of canned drinks to round out the lunch.

Suddenly the bell rang, and everybody got up to get to their next class. How quickly the class flew by, and I noticed that I was enjoying myself, something that didn't normally happen in other classes. I never thought of making many friends in that class, but suddenly we were all excitedly talking about how much money we were going to make at the samosa lunch sale. I otherwise struggled with anxiety and may have seemed anti-social to some people, but I enjoyed the conversation during that class.

The evening before the samosa lunch sale, my friends and I arranged to make the samosas. Around 3:30 pm, we met up to see Mr. Steiner, and he took us to the Home Economics Department to start cooking. I was really nervous around Mary, and Gary made some jokes about us. It seemed obvious that he knew that I had these feelings. I mean, she was beautiful.

I heated one of the pans for the chicken. To pass the time, we all started to talk about random stuff, and we noticed Gary always laughing. He just wanted to shout it out; luckily, he didn't. After a while, we heard strange sounds in the hallways. There was a spooky atmosphere with us being at school so late into the evening, and the janitor was making noises as he cleaned the hallways.

Gary and I stepped out to use the restroom and ran down the hall quickly. Coming back, I noticed a burning smell coming from the department. Mary quickly ran to tell us that the pan was on fire. My first thought was to use the fire

extinguisher, but then it occurred to me that it would contaminate the other food. I quickly grabbed the pan. In a panic, Gary ran the water on full blast as I put the burning pan into the sink. Luckily, the fire alarm didn't go off, or all three of us would have been in serious trouble.

It was a good thing I cleaned up the room really well and the burn marks on the pan were not noticeable, but I did inform Mrs. Gin about it and replaced it at my expense. I really enjoyed myself working with my friends preparing samosas for the sale the next day. The following morning I was really tired, but I knew I wasn't alone, and today was the sale.

*Jordan is a student willing to learn and explore all different opportunities that are presented. He loves to take risks and doesn't worry about the outcome. He writes to explore his thoughts and sees writing as a useful tool to keep organized.*

## **Remembering the Plane Crash**

**By Yolanda Thompson**

When I was a young girl, maybe around seven or eight years old, I was flying with my parents, two uncles, my younger brother Tim, and the pilot. Everyone had seats, except my younger brother, so my Dad held Tim on his lap. What I remember about this day was we were heading home from Norway House to Poplar River, which was a 30 minute ride. The plane took off, but as soon as we were in the air, the plane's motor stuttered. Looking frantically at everything on the dash boards and then outside, the pilot noticed that our left propeller wasn't turning and we were already high up in the air.

The pilot tried to turn the plane around to land back on the airstrip, but we were quickly going down. Everyone on the plane prayed for mercy, for safety, for everything. Before the plane crash landed, I could see a big tree in front of us. There was no way a big tree would suddenly be there. I looked out of my window and saw the plane going down, trees getting closer, and all of a sudden a loud bang. We crashed into that big tree, a big rock, and muskeg. I was so young I didn't know what "fear" was until we had that crash. My little brother screamed.

With shock, the pilot turned to look at us, "Is everyone ok?"

There was blood in the front cockpit, but no one had blood on them, not on their clothes or anywhere.

My mother, who was stuck in the back seat had dislocated her shoulder. She yelled, "Just leave me. Take the kids out! Hurry."

My brother and I yelled back, "Hurry up and get up."

My dad went to the back to help her out. Everything happened so fast and I always remember smelling the airplane fuel. Everyone stumbled out of the plane quickly in case of an explosion. We ran through the deep, cold, wet muskeg while the pilot yelled, "Run for safety. The plane is going to explode."

When he yelled, it terrified us all. I didn't want to run in the water because I was wearing my new shoes. My dad consoled me, "It's ok. You'll get new ones at the hospital."

We all ran until we could barely run anymore. Soon we heard sirens and people yelling as they looked for us in the bush. Fortunately the plane didn't explode.

The pilot told my parents and uncles, "God was with us," which we truly believed, because my parents are ministers of the gospel. We didn't go on an airplane for five years straight after that, as I was too traumatized by the plane crash. I heard the Airplane Company shut down after that, because another plane crashed. I am glad that we were all ok, alive, and able to walk away unharmed from the plane crash. I will always remember the sickening fear, the smell of airplane fuel, my ruined new shoes, and running as if my lungs would burst.

*Yolanda Thompson wanted to tell this story because it is one of her clearest memories of childhood. She wanted to share her memory of experiencing this plane crash, and is thankful to be alive to tell the story. When it comes time to travel, flying is not her favourite means of transportation.*

## Graduation

By Dylan Jones

At the crack of dawn, I woke up, tired as a dog and on the wrong side of the bed, with a splitting headache. “Rise and shine”, and “wake up and smell the coffee” my mom yelled from the kitchen. My dad chimed in “the early bird catches the worm!” However, all I could think about was the perfect storm of a party last night. At the party of a lifetime, I was drunk as a skunk which explained my hangover, so I grabbed a beer for a little hair of the dog. I slammed the can back and, as quick as a bunny, ran downstairs. On the way to the kitchen, I overheard man’s best friend barking outside. For crying out loud, what is he doing outside? It was raining cats and dogs and I was not looking forward to cruising the streets to my grad convocation. “Enough funny business” my mom said as I entered the kitchen. Angering mom was similar to playing with fire and I didn’t want to be on thin ice, so I stopped horsing around and started to act as if I were a knight in shining armour. Breakfast was served and I ate everything but the kitchen sink. Wolfing my food down, my mom remarked, “like father like son” followed by “boys will be boys”, as she watched my dad and I pig out. I had a comeback on the tip of my tongue, but I decided against opening up a can of worms, and, instead, became a team player. Besides, it was raining buckets and my mom was my ride to the convocation.

I made it to the convocation in the nick of time. I walked into the gym and noticed people were dressed to the nines while others were dressed to kill. It



was a blast from the past to see my grade nine teachers, who were all pretty down to earth. Thankfully, I never burnt any bridges. Even the loose cannon, the old gym teacher, who was blind as a bat, stood in the hall. I really thought he would have kicked the bucket before the end of the year. But I guess it wasn't his time to bite the dust. He would have been better off six feet under than having to endure the broken record of a valedictorian speech in a few moments. I expected an emotional roller coaster with a ton of clichés making the audience hang on to every word, causing them to cry like babies and drop huge crocodile tears. I'm not throwing the valedictorian under the bus; I really do hope he knocks it out of the park up there instead of dropping the ball while delivering the same song and dance. So, break a leg I thought, as the curtain opened.

Sweating bullets, with butterflies in his stomach and a frog in his throat, the valedictorian, who was sharp as a knife, addressed the crowd “You are the future! Your high school experience was nothing to sneeze at; in fact, it was the stuff dreams are made of! And no one can hold a candle to it! Class of Kelvin High school, it goes without saying that we are the best and brightest, the cream of the crop! This isn't the end, but rather the beginning. The future is in your hands and not written in stone. You are the authors of your own destiny, so believe in yourself, trust your instincts, and dare to live your dream. On your road to success, leave no stone unturned and shoot for the moon! And remember that it is our time to step up to the plate because we have a capacity for greatness to make the world a better place. So, don't go with the flow or drink the Kool

Aid. And most importantly, do not put all your eggs in one basket! Instead, read between the lines, push the envelope and think outside the box! Give 110%! Grab the bull by the horns and never look back, because the world is your oyster! In no time, you won't need to keep up with the Joneses because you will hit the ground running, firing on all cylinders, with money to burn. And remember, if at first you don't succeed, try try again! At all times keep your chin up and you will not hit rock bottom! Life's a grind, and if you do come across a problem, you will cross that bridge when you come to it. Because, when you have lemons make lemonade! Now go forth graduates and seize the day!"

As the valedictorian finished his two cents narrating the redundant and repetitive rags to riches story that paved the way for our futures, I realized that there's not a snowball's chance in hell of ever hearing a speech without clichés. For Pete's sake, it was as clear as day that he was running circles with his narrative! I was bored to tears! I will never attend another graduation ceremony again unless hell freezes over or pigs fly. Oh no! Now my train of thought has become a string of clichés!

*Dylan Jones graduated in the spring of 2016 with a four year Bachelor of Arts with a double major in Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications, and Sociology. He completed his Master of Arts in Cultural Studies in the Summer of 2017. Today, he is enjoying some much needed rest.*

**An Excerpt of “Truth, Retribution, and Self-Determination: Moving Forward in Canada's Reconciliation Process”**

**By Caitlyn Gowriluck**

For many Canadians, the reconciliation process between Indigenous people in Canada and the federal government entered the public consciousness in 2008 when former Prime Minister Stephen Harper released a statement apologizing to the survivors of the Indian Residential School (IRS) system in Canada. The IRS system, which did not cease operation until 1996, separated Indigenous children from their families. This system has become notorious for the abuse children often experienced while in the care of the schools, as well as the intergenerational trauma it has caused survivors and their families. Harper's apology was initially criticized for not including Indigenous leadership in the event (Cels), and later for allowing Indigenous chiefs to speak only during the official session as a last-minute addition (357). In this way, the contentious state of the reconciliation process in Canada becomes more apparent, as does the significance of the conflict between Indigenous sovereignty and state-centred interests.

While some have argued that the "staging and scripting of this apology visually demonstrated the moral inclusion of the victims in the same forum .... enabling them to actually function as primary interlocutors who could literarily contribute to the moral discourse" (357), others have contended that the apology, symbolic of Canada's reconciliation process at large, in fact served as an attempt

to sever this "moral discourse" (357) altogether. Paul Bunner, who served as Harper's head speechwriter between 2006 and 2009, wrote in a 2013 article that "[the] best that can be said of Harper's apology is that it was a strategic attempt to kill the story" (Barrera). While Harper's apology had ostensibly good intentions towards ongoing reconciliation processes, the context of the apology also illuminated some of the nuances of Canada's relationship with Indigenous people. As Cels notes in regards to interpretations of "political apologies", "[m]eaningful apologies do not solely depend on performance. Other variables, such as the nature of the wrongdoing, the personal intentions and the status of the apologizer, can be crucial, and ... the timing of the act can be important as well" (358). In this way, both the impact of Harper's apology on Canada's reconciliation process and the complicated nature of this process become more apparent.

While apologies like the kind Harper gave may signal a step in the right direction towards reconciliation efforts, they are not an all-encompassing step towards reconciliation, or even always necessarily effective at all. As Wohl, et al. note in this regard, "assumptions about the power of apologies to heal intergroup relations may not be sustainable in reality" (95) for various reasons. For instance, "apologies on their own may not respond to the true psychological needs of the victim group", and "cannot alter systematic discrimination and disadvantage that is often associated with intergroup harm" (95). In this way, while apologies and other conciliatory efforts by the government may provide symbolic change, they

do not – and perhaps cannot – create the type of immediate, tangible change necessary for meaningful reconciliation. As Wohl, et al. note, although "no apology is an eraser of history, if executed properly, it may move groups toward peace" and, particularly relevant in this case, "reconciliation" (95).

While a significant aspect of reconciliation is to foster healing on a national level while also providing justice to victims, it is also this link that has become a cause for contention. As Corntassel and Holder note in an analysis of government apologies and truth commissions, it has become "generally recognized that truth commissions involve a trade-off between justice for victims and national healing" (486). Further, they note that "this trade-off may frame the discourses of truth and of justice so as to de-emphasize restitution to and for indigenous communities and emphasize forms of repair that are conducive to state building," effectively orienting reconciliation "toward symbolism and individual reparations and away from material restitution and reparations to communities" (486). In Canada specifically, Corntassel and Holder note that "official apologies/acknowledgments did not succeed in transforming existing colonial relationships with indigenous peoples," but instead illustrated "the dangers of co-opting the language of reconciliation without first establishing meaningful forms of restitution and group compensation" (486). By taking this state-centred approach to reconciliation in order to ensure minimal governmental culpability rather than creating a meaningful public discourse surrounding reconciliation, the Canadian Government displays what Corntassel and Holder

term the "politics of distraction" (486) in their reconciliation efforts. Instead, Cornassel and Holder argue for a more meaningful reconciliation model centring "indigenous histories, ongoing relationship to their homelands, and self-determination strategies" to counter previously state-centred strategies.

Another aspect of reconciliation processes in Canada that has been largely overlooked is the role of gender in decolonization efforts. As Grey and James note, "a deep ignorance of (or willing blindness to) the gendered nature of past and present colonial harm persists" (323). Further, they note, "[i]n moving toward reconciliation in Canada ... a decent start would be offering a gender perspective on what residential school survivors have said they see as justice" (323). Specifically, they argue that "it is necessary to conceptualize reparations as including work for gender justice, including a substantive plan to address the phenomenon of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls" (323). In this way, ongoing reconciliation processes, which are also informed by gender – and which, by definition, includes the voices of Indigenous women – would provide the opportunity to, as Grey and James note, "seed a just and mutually respectful Indigenous-settler relationship" (323). This type of approach to reconciliation efforts would not only improve upon Indigenous-settler relations, but would also allow Canada to set an international precedent in, as Grey and James phrase it, "how we might conceptualize and enact transitional justice in settler-colonial states" (324). It follows, then, that the inclusion of

considerations of the role gender plays in decolonization is not only helpful to reconciliation processes in Canada, but imperative to their success.

...

Through an analysis of efforts in the Canadian reconciliation process and their effects on Indigenous-settler relations thus far, several points become clear. For instance, previous apologies and conciliatory efforts by the Canadian government have been largely state-centred in order to minimize responsibility for historical wrongdoings. Further, past reconciliation efforts have not sufficiently acknowledged the role that gender plays in decolonization, nor the importance of Indigenous self-determination in such efforts. The respective roles of collaborative governance approaches, internal colonialism and struggles over recognition have also been largely overlooked in reconciliation efforts thus far. Moving forward, reconciliation efforts must address these issues and shift towards a reconciliation and retribution model that centres Indigenous points of view and, in particular, emphasizes Indigenous self-determination in order to achieve any meaningful changes.

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## **The Residential School Effects**

### **By Evan Joseph Keith Lilley**

The issue facing most if not all Aboriginal people today is the effects of residential schools. Before we can talk about the effects of residential schools, we must clearly define what a residential school was and what happened during one's stay at one. Residential schools were government-sponsored religious schools established to assimilate Aboriginal children into Euro-Canadian culture, as stated by J.R. Miller from The Canadian Encyclopedia (Miller). It is estimated that over 150,000 Aboriginal children were taken, separated from their families, and forced into residential schools. During their time there, Aboriginal youth suffered through tremendous trauma. Abuse, poor education, the loss of identity and culture are types of things they went through. These church-ran schools were intended to kill the Indian in the child, and kill the Indian in the child they did.

Beverley McLachlin, chief justice of the Supreme Court said that Canada attempted to commit "cultural genocide" against Aboriginal peoples. The abuse that happened within residential schools was horrendous. Sexual, emotional, and physical abuse were most prevalent. Rita Flamand, a Metis Elder, discloses moments of abuse that happened to her stating, "The priest would get the women to try on tops and blouses, touching them on the breasts and saying, 'Oh, it's too big" or "too small,' while running his hands down the breasts pretending to

straighten the blouse” (Flamand 77). The abuse wasn’t the only thing Aboriginal youth worried about, they were also getting a poor education.

Residential schools were not put in place to give Aboriginal youth a good education. They were made to assimilate. Classes were taught in English or French depending on the surrounding area, and none of the children knew any other language but their own. Education was slow and grade levels were non-existent, so much so that “few Aboriginal people achieved more than a grade five level of education” (Sinclair and Hamilton 370). Education was not a priority.

One way they thought to kill the Indian in the child was to separate them from their home. Most Aboriginal children were taken far away as to act as a deterrent. This way, if the child ran, they would not know the land and either die, or be forced to return. When the child arrived at the residential school, the nuns would cut their hair, wash them, change their clothes, and give them a new name. Now, all of that sounds nice today but of course the circumstances are far different. Cutting a person’s hair would mean that they would be cutting off their braid. The braid is a symbol of power and has a way of connecting with one’s self spiritually. Cutting it off means they would lose a piece of themselves. The change of clothes given was “ill-fitting, shabby and, in the case of winter clothing, not adequate protection for the season” (Miller). Changing one’s name speaks for itself. Having your named stripped from you would not only be a frightening experience but a disheartening one as well.

Residential school has arguably had the most effect on Aboriginal language. Per the 2011 Census completed by Statistics Canada, 1,400,685 citizens of Canada have identified as being Aboriginal. Statistics Canada reports that only 17.2% of the 1,400,685 Aboriginal people can speak an Aboriginal language and only 14.5% reporting an Aboriginal language as mother tongue. Those numbers are horrendous. Aboriginal language is sacred and should be preserved as such. Marie Annharte Baker, an Anishinabe poet, tells us that “native people frequently say that English is impersonal or, if used in translation, it fails to carry the spirit of what was said” (Baker 461). Being able to express your emotions in your mother tongue is something that can’t be felt when translated into a “borrowed language” as Baker would say. Residential schools have had a huge impact on Aboriginal language and it was not easy to transition to a new language, as the nuns had hoped.

An apology was issued by the Canadian government on June 11, 2008, and former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper addressed the nation with the apology. The issue many Aboriginal people have with Stephen Harper’s apology is whether or not it was genuine. We want to know if the apology was issued because it was needed and right or was it issued because Harper was made to address it. Paul Bunner, who was the head speechwriter for Stephen Harper from 2006 to 2009 stated that “the best that can be said of Harper’s apology is that it was a strategic attempt to kill the story and move on to a better

relationship between Natives and non-Natives” (Bunner). Paul Bunner never attended residential schools. He never had to experience the trauma the students went through, and even he was unhappy with the apology. I believe the apology was not genuine, and clearly I am not alone in thinking that.

Canada’s biggest regret will forever be the residential school system. The countless lives it has impacted is unmeasurable. The effects felt, whether direct or indirect, will always play a part in Aboriginal people’s lives, unless we seek change now. I believe that the only way to move forward and change is through the power of education. People must be more educated on the issue of residential schools and the effects it has had on the Aboriginal culture. In addition to the education of residential schools, we also must educate and have more programs available for Aboriginal people to learn their native language. We must prove that there is hope and that change can, and will happen. As I stated before, recovery will be slow, however it can be done.

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# Rooted in Rhetoric

## **In Stages**

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