



## Le Centre communautaire des femmes sud-asiatiques

### THE SADEQA SIDDIQUI ESSAY WRITING COMPETITION.

To honour Sadeqa Siddiqui who worked at SAWCC for 28 years, initially as a community worker, but for most of the time as the Coordinator of our centre; who was a major force in maintaining and building the organization and was and still is committed to the mission of SAWCC, an essay-writing competition will be held each year. This is our very first competition and we strongly urge and encourage HIGH SCHOOL and CEGEP students **aged 16 to 18 years** of age to participate. Essays can be submitted, starting from THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2015 up till 12 noon on **FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2015.**

There are two choices for essay topic:

1. **Redefining of Women's Role in Today's Global World**

OR

2. **Use the verse below, written by US poet and writer Maya Angelou, as inspiration for your essay.**

*"When we come to it*

*We, this people, on this wayward, floating body*

*Created on this earth, of this earth*

*Have the power to fashion for this earth*

*A climate where every man and every woman*

*Can live freely without sanctimonious piety*

*And without crippling fear.*

**Length of essay: 750 words.**

Submissions must be by email to: [sawccbulletin@gmail.com](mailto:sawccbulletin@gmail.com) (must put: "Essay Competition" in subject box)

**Your name must only appear on the entry form. IF your name appears on the essay you submit, it will be disqualified.**

Three essays will be chosen – one winning essay and two honourable mentions. Following the announcement of the selected essays, they will be published in sequence in the monthly SAWCC Bulletin.

Let's hear from you!

To access the form, check out our website: <http://www.sawcc-ccfsa.ca/EN/>

### ZINE RE-LAUNCH AND CELEBRATION



On Friday October 30th, 2015 join us at SAWCC from 1:00-2:00PM to celebrate and re-launch the zine: Life Stories on Being A Muslim Woman in Montreal: Struggles and Solidarity. We welcome past participants, supporters and friends to join us for a potluck lunch and celebration. Recently, the women behind the zine were invited to participate in a panel discussion on storytelling and personal narratives at Vanier College.

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#### Qu'en pensez-vous?

##### What do you think?

- Let us know your thoughts about the bulletin.
- Que pensez-vous de notre journal?
- We encourage you to send in your stories and articles for upcoming newsletters in any language by the 25th of every month to:

[sawccbulletin@gmail.com](mailto:sawccbulletin@gmail.com)

- Écrivez -nous à

[sawccbulletin@gmail.com](mailto:sawccbulletin@gmail.com)

## CENTRE UPDATE



### Centre Hours/heure d'ouverture

**Monday & Thursday/lundi & jeudi 9am—5pm**

**Monday & Thursday/lundi & jeudi 9am—9pm (as of September 7th, 2105)**

**Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday/mardi, mercredi & vendredi— 9am-5pm**

The Centre is wheelchair accessible

Le centre est accessible aux fauteuils roulants.

### Volunteers

If you are interested in helping out at the Centre, please contact Homa (Ext. 102 or [homa@bellnet.ca](mailto:homa@bellnet.ca)) to coordinate a meeting!

### Winter vacation

The centre will be closed for winter vacation from December 21st, 2015 to January 1st, 2016 (inclusively). The centre will resume regular hours on Monday January 4th, 2016.

The Centre's annual Year End Party will take place on Sunday December 13th, 2015 at CEDA (2515 Rue Delisle) from 12:00PM—4:00PM

## OUTREACHING (By Sivambikai Sivamoorthy)



The South Asian Women's Community Center's Sri Lankan community workers successfully carried out their 4<sup>th</sup> outreach campaign at the Thiru Murugan Temple on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 2015 on the Chariot day. Every year, the temple celebrates a fifteen day special Pooja. On the 13<sup>th</sup> day of this celebration is the Chariot Festival which is the most popular day of the Pooja. Thousands of people gather from all parts of Montreal and even from Toronto to participate. For the past three years and this year, SAWCC Sri Lankan Community workers provided snacks and iced soft drinks to the devotees to quench the thirst and the heat. Also they distributed the centre flyers about the center's services to the public. This year this event was very satisfying and successful.



## Vide Infra (By Claire Hurley)

The man in the metro has a thousand eyes,  
a dead gaze that seeks to see below.

We are on the platform and it is dark. His eyes  
licking at the shadow of my form.

The man in the metro is asking me to dance,  
and I know now what to do.

All women know how to move this way.

All women know how to make their bodies disappear.

\*

This is the reason for our anatomy  
and how we speak of it.

Images of light, of virgin landscape.  
The warm, wet inside  
of a mouth.

But we fumble, and I only misspeak.

In this light my lips are cracked.  
Exposed, the way I imagine  
a naked thing, left out in the cold,  
to fissure and peel apart.

It is too easy to become broken.  
To become a naked thing alone on the platform.

Don't make me tell you how it feels.

All I want to tell you  
is dripping down my thighs— red  
as a moon on fire.

Claire Hurley is an undergraduate at McGill University, where she (currently) studies English Literature, Religion, and German. She attended the Kenyon Review Young Writers Workshop, which prompted her to begin sharing her work. She is also a member of staff at *The Adroit Journal*.

## BY AND FOR US

This year, the SAWCC participated in a project entitled, *By & For Us: The Community at the Head of the Organization*. The project has been developed by the *Centre for community Organizations (COCO)* and was coordinated by *AGIR (Action GLBTQ avec les ImmigrantEs et RéfugiéEs)*, with funding from the *Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport*. Bringing together **representatives** of “By and For” community organizations to talk about what it means to be “by and for”, explore our successes and our challenges, to share our experiences, ideas and skills, and exploring how to most effectively centre the voices of marginalized communities in our organizations.

Through participation in afternoon forums, representatives collaborated to create resources that would be shared with the participating community organizations. Participants from DESTA (Shanna Strauss) and SAWCC (Naila Alidina), alongside organizer, Akki Mackay, spent an afternoon putting the finishing touches on a resource around visioning. Participation in this project has proven fruitful in many ways—namely, the continued community and relationship building between participants.







## அவசர முக்கிய எச்சரிக்கை

அண்மை நாட்களில் பல மொண்ட்ரியல் வாசிகள், குடிவரவு மற்றும் குடியுரிமையிலிருந்து அல்லது கனடிய எல்லை சேவைகலிளிருந்தோ மற்றும் கனடா வருமான இலாகாவிலிருந்தோ பேசுவதாக பாசாங்கு பண்ணி வினோதமான தொலை பேசி அழைப்புகளை பெற்றிருக்கிறார்கள். சில அழைப்பாளிகள் தாங்கள் எங்கிருந்து பேசுகிறோம் என்பதை தெரிவிப்பதும் இல்லை. ஆனாலும் அனைவரும் சொல்லுவது நீங்கள் மிக ஆபத்தான பிரச்சனையில் மாட்டியுள்ளீர்கள் என்பதுதான். சிலர் தங்கள் கூறிய தொலைபேசி இலக்கத்துக்கு திரும்ப அழைக்கும் படியும் அப்படி செய்வதனால் மேலதிக ஆபத்தை தவிர்க்கலாம் என்றும் பயமுறுத்துகிறார்கள். வேறு சிலரோ குறிப்பிட்ட தொகை பணத்தை தரும்படியும் அப்படி செய்யாவிட்டால் நாட்டைவிட்டு வெளியேற்றப்படுவார்கள் அல்லது சிறையில் அடைக்கப்படுவார்கள் என்றும் மிரட்டுகிறார்கள். வெளி நாட்டிலிருந்து குடியேறியவர்களே அழைப்பாளர்களின் இல்லைக்கு. வெளி நாட்டவரின் பெயர் போல தோன்றும் பெயருள்ளவர்களையே அவர்கள் அழைக்கிறார்கள். அதுமட்டுமன்றி வயதானவர்களும் அவர்களது இலக்கு. உங்களுக்கு இதுபோல அழைப்பு ஏதாவது வந்தால் தயவு செய்து அவர்களை திரும்ப அழைக்கவோ அல்லது வேறு எந்த விதத்திலும் தொடர்பு கொள்ளவோ வேண்டாம். உங்களுக்கு என்ன செய்வது என்று குழப்பமாக இருந்தாலோ, பயமாக இருந்தாலோ தெற்காசிய பெண்கள் சமூக நிலையத்தை 514-528-8812 என்ற தொலைபேசி இலக்கத்திலோ அல்லது [sawcc@bellnet.ca](mailto:sawcc@bellnet.ca) என்ற மின்னஞ்சல் முகவரியிலோ தொடர்பு கொள்ளுங்கள்.

## SAY/JSA UPDATE

The academic year is upon us! Over the past few weeks we've been in the process of outreaching and preparing for the year's groups and workshops across high schools and cegeps. We're quite excited to get started!

We also held our first SAY meeting to discuss an upcoming anthology project about assault in public spaces. Updates soon!

The SAWCC has a small library located in the Youth Space in the back and we're on the lookout for a bookshelf! If you have any leads, please let us know at [sawccyouth@gmail.com](mailto:sawccyouth@gmail.com)

We're also looking for old magazines that can be used for art projects.

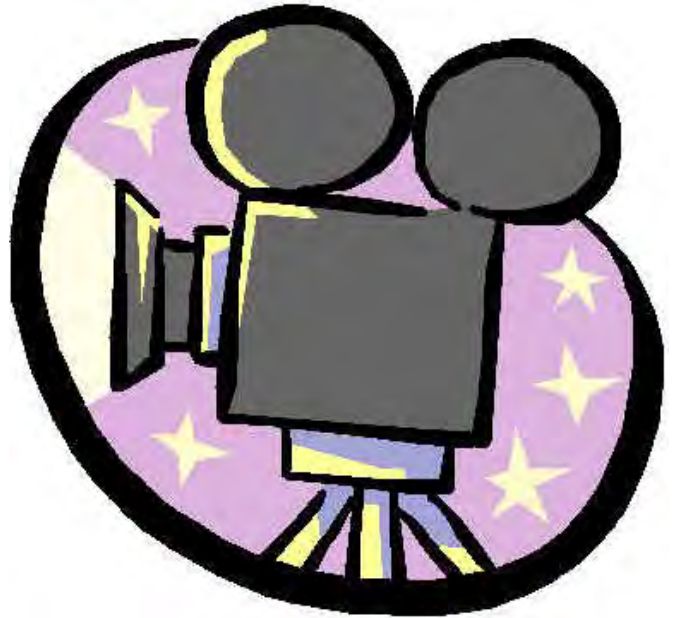
## WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH FILM SCREENING

This year, the SAWCC will be screening the film, "Keepers of the Fire", as part of Women's History Month activities.

About the film:

For half of a millennium, First Nations women have been at the forefront of aboriginal peoples' resistance to cultural assimilation. Today, Native women are still fighting for the survival of their cultures and their peoples--in the rain forest and the city, in the courts and the legislatures, in the Longhouse and the media. Keepers of the Fire profiles Canada's Native "warrior women" who are protecting and defending their land, their culture and their people in the time-honored tradition of their foremothers.

(<http://www.omnifilm.com/factual/keepers-fire>)



The screening will take place at the South Asian Women's Community Centre (1035 Rachel est, 3rd floor front) on Sunday October 18th, 2015 from 2:00-4:00PM

# Je veux être une femme voilée

par Francis Dupuis-Déri

*Le devoir*, le 30 septembre 2015

Je veux être une femme voilée, parce qu'il n'y a rien ni personne de plus influent aujourd'hui. Quel prodige pour cette femme voilée d'être tout et son contraire, à la fois l'ombre et la lumière, le zéro et l'infini, le juste et l'injuste, le bien et le mal, le vrai et le faux.

Son impuissance est si puissante que la femme voilée provoque des guerres à elle seule. En Afghanistan, en Irak, en Syrie, la femme voilée est l'infiniment impuissante, la totalement dominée, celle dont le malheur absolu est tel que des politiciens mobilisent leur armée pour la sauver. Sans lui demander son avis, évidemment. Que de belles photos que ces Afghanes complètement voilées qui font la file pour voter lors d'élections frauduleuses. Là-bas, une femme voilée qui vote est la preuve que la démocratie a bien triomphé. Nos politiciens et nos militaires peuvent alors abandonner le pays en ruines avec la satisfaction de la tâche accomplie.

Or, surprise ! En Occident, la femme voilée n'est plus cet être infiniment impuissant qu'il faut libérer à coups de bombes. Non : c'est elle qui nous envahit, de par sa toute-puissance totalitaire, et elle menace la démocratie quand elle veut voter voilée. Combien y en a-t-il au Québec ? Quelques dizaines. Aucune femme voilée n'est politicienne, directrice d'une banque ou propriétaire d'une grande firme, d'un média concentré, aucune n'est journaliste ou chroniqueuse, militaire ou policière, directrice d'un festival, présidente d'un syndicat ou porte-parole d'une association étudiante, artiste ou humoriste adulée, universitaire, grand prêtre, idole du sport ou marraine de la mafia. La femme voilée ne se préoccupe pas de telles frivolités. Par sa seule existence individuelle et son visage voilé, elle impose ses valeurs à tout un pays, toute une population.

Lorsqu'elle prête serment de citoyenneté à Elizabeth II, monarque du Canada et Défenderesse de la foi et Gouverneure suprême de l'Église d'Angleterre (le titre officiel de la reine, selon la religion anglicane) et déclare : « Je jure que je serai fidèle et porterai sincère allégeance à Sa Majesté la reine Elizabeth Deux, reine du Canada, et à ses héritiers et successeurs », c'est bien parce qu'elle se voile le visage qu'elle ruine les valeurs démocratiques et laïques du Canada. Sacrée femme voilée !

## Ni racisme ni islamophobie

Cet être à la fois totalement impuissant et absolument puissant est à ce point paradoxal que même le sens des mots s'efface à son contact. Ainsi, les mots perdent tout leur sens et il n'est pas possible d'être raciste ou islamophobe lorsqu'on évoque la femme voilée. Elle provoque même l'évaporation pure et simple de certains phénomènes sociaux. Depuis que la femme voilée nous a envahis, il n'y a plus au pays, surtout chez les chroniqueurs, ni racisme, ni xénophobie, ni islamophobie, autant de phénomènes qui ne sont qu'illusions inventées par la gauche-progressiste-pluraliste-multiculturaliste-postmoderne-bien-pensante-uqamienne-du-Plateau-idiots-utiles-carrés-rouges-grateux-de-guitare, pour censurer quiconque oserait critiquer les femmes voilées.

Finalement, on en vient à penser qu'il n'y avait pas d'antisémitisme dans les pays libéraux occidentaux, vers la fin des années 1930, quand nos gouvernements ont refusé d'accueillir plus de juives et juifs fuyant le nazisme en Allemagne (voir la conférence d'Évian en 1938 et le refoulement du navire Saint-Louis en 1939). Refuser cette « migration » juive n'avait rien d'antisémite, puisqu'on ne pouvait accueillir toutes les misères du monde, sans oublier l'incompatibilité du judaïsme avec nos cultures nationales et que plusieurs juifs étaient communistes et représentaient donc une menace à la sécurité nationale. Mais je m'égare. Revenons à « nos » femmes voilées.

## Le patriarcat, c'est elle !

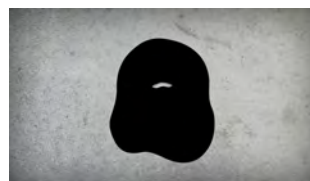
Il serait absurde de laisser entendre qu'il y aurait en Occident un peu de racisme antimusulman après une trentaine d'années de guerre impérialiste contre des pays à majorité musulmane (Irak en 1991, Afghanistan, encore l'Irak en 2003, et maintenant encore l'Irak et la Syrie, sans oublier quelques interventions en Libye et les drones au Pakistan et au Yémen). Contrairement aux barbares, nous menons nos guerres de manière civilisée et sans être racistes.

Nous sommes à ce point dénués de racisme et d'islamophobie que nous sommes les plus fidèles alliés de l'Arabie saoudite, qui a inspiré et financé les talibans en Afghanistan et au Pakistan et le groupe État islamique. Ah ! l'Arabie saoudite. Pays aux charmes exotiques, aux flagellations et décapitations à répétition, aux discrets gisements de pétrole, où nos médecins vont prodiguer leurs bons conseils avant de devenir premier ministre et où il fait si bon vendre de l'armement pour protéger ce régime ami. La femme voilée nous y réserve toute une surprise : hop ! Elle disparaît comme si elle n'avait jamais existé ! Plus personne n'y pense, ne s'en préoccupe.

Cont'd p. 5

## FEAR-MONGERING — Bloc Québécois Attack Ad (21 second animated short)

The ad conveys that a vote for Thomas Mulcair and the NDP means a vote for pipelines and niqabs — and possibly even a niqab pipeline — the Bloc Québécois warn in their ad, in which a drop of oil coming out of a pipeline morphs into a niqab. (Stills below.)



### Bloc Québécois: « La goutte de trop »

Le NPD dit oui à un pipeline qui traversera nos cours d'eau sans aucun bénéfice pour nous. Et il trouve normal qu'une femme puisse porter le niqab pour voter... »

**Bloc Québécois :** "The last straw The NDP said yes to a pipeline that will cross our waterways without any benefit for us. And it is normal for a woman to wear the niqab to vote ... "



## Cont'd. Je veux être une femme voilée

Mais son plus grand coup de force, elle le réalise chez nous par un subterfuge des plus coquins. La femme voilée serait, nous dit-on, sous l'emprise totale de son mari, son père ou son frère. Or elle parvient à se substituer à son oppresseur pour qu'on la stigmatise, elle ! Trop fort ! C'est elle qu'on épingle, critique, attaque, insulte dans la rue et les réseaux sociaux et qu'on veut priver d'opportunité de travail, pour son bien, pour l'émanciper. En fait, le patriarcat, c'est elle ! Je me dis alors que pour enrayer la violence conjugale, il faudrait interdire aux femmes violentées de prêter serment ou de travailler dans la fonction publique. Les hommes violents ne s'en remettraient jamais et la violence masculine serait définitivement éradiquée...

Mais je m'égare, une fois de plus.

Au final, voilà peut-être la plus grande force de la femme voilée : nous égarer...

\*\*\*\*\*

Francis Dupuis-Déry, Professeur de science politique à l'UQAM. Auteur de *«L'éthique du vampire : de la guerre en Afghanistan et quelques horreurs de notre temps»* (Lux, 2007).

<http://www.ledevoir.com/societe/ethique-et-religion/451285/je-veux-etre-une-femme-voilee>

[mechanized translation]

Francis Dupuis Déry

### I Want to be a Veiled Woman

I want to be a veiled woman, because there is nothing and no one more influential today. What miracle for this veiled woman to be everything and its opposite, both shadow and light, the zero and infinity, the right and wrong, good and evil, true and false.

Her impotence is so powerful that the veiled woman causes wars alone. In Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, the veiled woman is infinitely helpless, totally dominated, one whose absolute misery is such that politicians mobilized their army to save her. Without asking her opinion, of course. What beautiful pictures of the completely veiled Afghan women who are in line to vote at fraudulent elections. There, a veiled woman who votes is proof that democracy has triumphed. Our politicians and our people can then leave the country in ruins with the satisfaction of a mission accomplished.

And surprise! In the West, the veiled woman is no longer the infinitely helpless one who must be freed with bombs. No: she is that which invades us, by her totalitarian omnipotence and threatens democracy when she wants to vote veiled. How many are there in Quebec? A few dozen. No veiled woman is a politician, a bank director or owner of a large firm, a media conglomerate, a journalist or columnist, military or police, a festival director, president of a union or spokesperson of a student association, artist or beloved comedian, academic, high priest, sports idol or godmother of the Mafia. The veiled woman is not concerned with such frivolities. By her mere individual existence and her veiled face, she imposes her values on a whole country, a whole population.

When she reads the citizenship oath to Elizabeth II, monarch of Canada and Defender of the faith and Supreme Governor of the Church of England (the official title of the queen, according to the Anglican religion) and says, "I swear to be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Queen of Canada, and her heirs and successors", it is because her veiled face has destroyed the democratic and secular values of Canada. Darnn veiled woman!

## Neither racism or Islamophobia

This being, who is both totally helpless and absolutely powerful, is so paradoxical that even the meaning of words disappears on contact with her. Thus, the words become meaningless and it is not possible to be racist or Islamophobic when discussing the veiled woman. She even causes the pure and simple evaporation of certain social phenomena. Since the veiled woman invaded us, there no longer exist in this country – especially among the pundits – neither racism nor xenophobia or Islamophobia, phenomena that are only illusions invented by left-progressive-pluralist-multiculturalist-postmodern-well-thinking-UQAMian-Plateau-useful-idiot-carrés-rouges-guitare-pickers, to censor anyone who dares criticize the veiled women.

Finally, we come to think that there was no anti-Semitism in western liberal countries, in the late 1930s, when our governments refused to accommodate more Jews fleeing Nazism in Germany (see the Evian Conference in 1938 and the turning back of the ship St. Louis in 1939). Refusing this Jewish "migration" was not anti-Semitic, because after all we can't accommodate all the misery of the world, not to mention the incompatibility of Judaism with our national cultures and the fact that many Jews were communists and thus posed a threat to national security. But I digress. Back to "our" veiled women.

## The patriarchy, it is she!

It would be absurd to suggest that there would be in the West some antimuslim racism after thirty years of imperialist war against Muslim-majority countries (Iraq in 1991, Afghanistan, Iraq again in 2003, and now again Iraq and Syria, plus some interventions in Libya and drones in Pakistan and Yemen). Unlike the barbarians, we conduct our wars in a civilized manner and without being racist.

We are at this point devoid of racism and Islamophobia that we are the most faithful allies of Saudi Arabia, who inspired and financed the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan and the Islamic State group. Ah! Saudi Arabia. Country of exotic charms, the multiple floggings and beheadings, the discrete oil deposits, where our doctors go to provide advice before becoming Prime Minister, and where it is so good to sell armaments to protect friendly regimes. The veiled woman here reserves a surprise: hop! She disappears as if she never existed! Nobody thinks about her, no one cares about her.

But her greatest coup de force, she carries out here at home through a rascally subterfuge. The veiled woman is, we are told, under the total control of her husband, father or brother. Yet she manages to substitute herself for her oppressor as the one to be stigmatized! Too much ! She's the one needed, criticized, attacked, insulted in the street and on social media and that we want to deprive of the opportunity to work – for her own good, to emancipate her. In fact, she is the patriarchy! So I tell myself that in order to stop domestic violence, abused women should be banned from swearing oaths or working in the public service. Violent men would never recover and male violence would be eradicated for good ...

But I digress, again.

Ultimately, this is perhaps the greatest strength of the veiled woman: to make us digress...



Steve Neese, Durhamregion.com

## LOOK SHARP – CAST YOUR BALLOT – WITH CARE

Dolores Chew

As we enter the home stretch of the federal elections the totally reprehensible and bold-faced racist scare-mongering tactics of Stephen Harper and the Conservatives reaches new heights daily. We all knew when he enlisted Lynton Crosby – the controversial Australian ‘fixer’ who’d helped the erstwhile Australian PM win and then was hired by the Cameron campaign and is credited with helping David Cameron gain a Conservative majority in the May election in the UK – that he’d look for a wedge issue, because he’s known to prey on things like fears of immigration. And he’s found it with the niqab!

Harper says, he would never tell his daughter that “a woman should cover her face because she’s a woman”. To hear him tell it, you would think that Stephen Harper is the greatest preserver and defender of women’s rights. But his anti-feminist ideological positions and his anti-women actions tell a completely different story. Under his government Canada has stopped funding abortion as part of its overseas maternal, newborn and child health program. Harper said that it was too divisive in Canada. The Quebec Native Women’s Association lost federal government funding it has received for 40 years because they were moved from Heritage Canada to Aboriginal Affairs and were told that they were not an “aboriginal-representative organization”. Under Harper the government has shut down 12 of 16 Status of Women Canada offices saying that saying they are not doing enough to “serve women directly”; that there was a lot of “lobbying” and “advocacy”. His government cut the court challenges program that helped pay for court cases that dealt mostly with equality rights cases. It is his minister Chris Alexander who deported refugee claimant, Jamila Bibi, aged 63, in Canada since 2006 after escaping accusations of adultery. She was returned to Pakistan and went into hiding because she feared death by stoning. He also deported Winifred Agimelen and her children to Nigera, to Boko Haram, where her daughters face genital mutilation. And the list goes on. (For more, see excerpts from “Shush Baby!” in this issue).

As many have already said and we know this, it is simply an issue of ‘weapons of mass distraction’. However it is despicable and totally irresponsible for a government and a Prime Minister to act and behave in this way (the most recent being the so-called ‘barbaric cultural practices’ snitch line!); to use such divisive tactics in hopes of garnering a few more votes at the ballot box and also to distract us from the issues at hand. Let’s ensure these tactics boomerang. How can there be faith in a political leader and party who consciously and deliberately misrepresent facts and realities on the ground, to incite racism and misogyny simply to garner votes? Let alone all those policies that privilege the most wealthy and grind those, already having a tough time, under heel? We have just signed onto an economic deal which will have a huge impact on all of our lives. But there has been little or no coverage of this. And in this regard we need to call the media on their reportage. (If the media doesn’t give something air time it fades. If Harper isn’t reported and quoted and re-played on the niqab issue, it disappears.)

In fact, we need to hear much more about the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) deal which is like NAFTA on steroids. And if NAFTA had such a devastating impact on our economy and on jobs for Canadians, how much more with the TPP? Maude Barlow of the Council of Canadians warns that we will only know the details of what we have signed onto after the elections; that the deal will result in the lay-off of thousands of auto workers and put dairy farmers in jeopardy, while giving foreign corporations “the right to dictate Canadian policy”....Stephen Harper has no right and no mandate to sign a deal that we are just learning about during a federal election.” She urges Canadians to vote against the TPP. (Also see [leapmanifesto.org](http://leapmanifesto.org))

Bill C-51 (so-called anti-terrorism law) and Bill C-24 (so-called “Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act” – which can be used to deport Canadians) which are now law, all in the guise of security, also demonstrate deep-seated racism. (In

these pages we have been covering the Kafkaesque predicament of Deepan Budlakoti who also is a pawn in the politics of racism and exclusion.) As we have said *ad nauseum*, we already have laws in place that can deal with potential threats. Layering even more laws onto them, more draconian than before, without any oversight provisions erodes equality and democracy. We have slid into dictatorial territory. And we need to look sharp!

In Quebec, we have already rung the alarm bells with respect to the Quebec Liberal government’s tabling of reactionary bills 59 (“to prevent and combat hate speech and speech inciting violence”) and 62 (which would ban the wearing of the niqab or burqa while delivering or receiving public services), which are racist and divisive. In fact Harper has referred to these bills to bolster his own racist positions about face coverings. He said, “Quebec has legislation on this. And we are looking at that legislation of openness and equality and that is what we want to promote.” And the Bloc Quebecois in this federal election has also resorted to racist scare tactics. (see p. 6) We are living in times when as minorities and as women we are used like political footballs – tossed around at will and at whim. We need to stand up and say no! And most immediately we need to get to the ballot box and use our votes to send the strongest possible message. We will have nothing to do with racists, bigots and misogynists.



**“Shush baby! Just look pretty.” 17 ways the Conservative government has controlled you like a terrible boyfriend.**

[http://www.shd.ca/feel\\_like\\_a\\_woman](http://www.shd.ca/feel_like_a_woman)

You will be happy to know that over the last 9 years Harper made cuts to essential services for women. ... The shocking treatment of over half of Canada’s population includes **ignoring 1181 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. Ignoring murders.**

Meanwhile Stephen Harper was busy **giving tax cuts to the rich, dismantling the long-form census and clear cutting our hopes of bridging the income gap between men and women.**

In 2015, Canada is barely recognizable. **Our environmental policies are an embarrassment, our economy is in the toilet and we are starting to look like our weird cousins down south.** And women are further behind than they were a decade ago. We crunched the numbers and the Conservatives did a smash up job in putting on the brakes and reversing hard over the advancement of Canadian women.

When Conservatives asked about **important issues for women today, they took very specific notes and then shredded them along with the Long Gun Registry.** So we would like to congratulate all of the women who survived domestic violence during the past 9 years, you did it with less resources than some of the women before you!

The conservative government just can’t come out and say how much they hate women, that would be weird. But they can,



and they have, taken everything they could away from us!

**Ladies, maybe he just isn't that into you. 17 ways Harper and the Conservatives have hurt and ignored women.**

1. Harper just can't really be bothered to address gender inequality. "According to a report issued by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives last fall, Canada lacks the political will to achieve equality between men and women."

2. Harper would rather not talk about women. Plans for a women's-issues debate in the current federal election campaign collapsed after the Prime Minister declined to participate and NDP Leader Tom Mulcair later chose not to participate without Harper's attendance.

3. They voted against a national action plan to end violence against women, despite the fact that on average, every six days a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner.

4. They closed 75% of Status of Women offices.

5. They voted against a pay equity bill despite the fact that Canadian women make \$8000 less yearly than their male counterparts at the same job - a gap that's double the global average.

6. They closed the long gun registry, a crucial form of gun control created in the wake of the 1989 Ecole Polytechnique femicide, where 14 women were shot and killed by a man. Long guns are the most common type of firearm used in spousal homicides. Over the past decade, 71% of spousal homicides involved rifles and shotguns.

7. The Conservatives removed a question on unpaid work like domestic chores and childcare (done primarily by women) from the long-form census. In the 2006 census, StatsCan reports that, on average, "women spend about an hour a day more on basic housework chores than their male counterparts."

8. Omnibus bills C-38 and C-45 significantly dismantled Canada's environmental protection WAVAW (Women Against Violence Against Women) staff suggested this item for this list because, "as Lee Maracle Says, "Feminism begins with considering the earth our Mother. All violence against earth is violence to us."

9. Harper ended the Court Challenges Program which provided an essential source of financial assistance for important court cases that advance equality rights guaranteed under Canada's Constitution. The cuts effectively silence very marginalized groups of Canadians as it removes from them an opportunity to challenge federal and provincial laws which may affect them at some point in the future. When questioned, Harper said, "Mr. Speaker, this government intends to behave in a constitutional manner."

10. They cut \$1 billion in childcare funding within 3 hours of being elected.

11. There are 1181 documented murdered and missing Indigenous women across Canada and the United Nations has called for urgent action. In response the Prime Minister said the issue "isn't really high on our radar" then lied and said "I haven't said that all."

12. They eliminated funding to six different Canadian women's health organizations.

13. They changed immigration rules to force women to stay with a spouse who sponsors them for a minimum of two years. This forces untold numbers of migrant women to stay in relationships with abusive spouses.

14. They eliminated a human rights agency that provided women's health, training and counselling projects in 17 countries around the world.

15. Women of colour are 48% more likely to be unemployed than white men. The Conservatives have eliminated the National Council on Welfare which had existed to advise the government on effective welfare policy for 43 years. They then changed Employment Insurance rules require laid-off workers to take jobs they might previously have considered unsuitable, possibly with up to 30 per cent less pay or lose their EI benefits.

16. Canada has fallen to 23rd in the United Nations world ranking of gender inequality.

17. The Conservatives have the lowest percentage of female politicians and Canada now rank 42nd in the world in terms of female political empowerment.

You might read this and think "Man! He makes me feel like a woman...from the turn of the century." Get angry, sign our petition and know that **we are half of the population and we can vote out Harper.** On October 19th, be a voter.  
<http://www.shd.ca/feel-like-a-woman>



# Far, Far Away

by

Kristina Lalic

"I want to be Madame La Fayette in the play!" I shouted pointing at the portrait of a young French Canadian bourgeois woman dressed in her Sunday best. The classroom went suddenly silent. All the students turned towards me, staring at me as if I had just landed from Mars.

What had I said wrong?

I was twelve years old. I went to a small public French school next to the Bois-de-Liesse forest. In my sixth grade classroom, twenty-one wooden desks and beige chairs were placed in straight rows. The floors were always spotless. Every book was placed on the shelf in alphabetical order. Not one Lego block was misplaced. My school principal, Monsieur Dubois, had a strict policy about keeping the school organized. We called him a "clean freak."

That day, Madame Gagnon, my sixth grade theatre teacher, had written a short play for our class to present in front of the school on Quebec culture day. The story was about a family that traveled the Atlantic Ocean and landed in New France in the 1650s.

Madame Gagnon passed out copies of the script. Then she pulled down the projector screen and set up a PowerPoint with portraits of all the characters in the play. As soon as I set eyes on Lady La Fayette, a young French Canadian bourgeoisie who owned a small market in the heart of Ville-Marie, I knew I had to play her. She only had about four lines and one short crying scene. I figured with a bit of practice I could nail the breakdown.

I raised my hand to let Madame Gagnon know that I had picked the role I wanted. But as soon as the words La Fayette came out of my mouth, the other students turned towards me. Their smiles were strange combinations of surprise and disgust.

I rubbed my finger against my nostrils to see if there was anything hanging from my nose. Then I ran a fingernail in between my front teeth to check if any left over lunch was stuck there. There was nothing. So why was everyone staring at me?

"How can you be Madame La Fayette? Your hair's black," said a girl named Claude.

"Yeah, you're Chinese! You're yellow!" exclaimed Philippe.

"I'm not Chinese," I replied.

"But your eyes go like this," said Marie, squinting her eyes to make them as small as she could.

"My family's from the Philippines," I answered.

"Where's that?" asked Marc-André.

"It sounds far, far away," said Philippe.

"Southeast Asia," I said.

Claude's hand shot up in the air: "I think Fanny should play La Fayette. She looks just like her. Plus she was born in Quebec City. She's a *real* Québécoise."

I did not understand why I could not play the role of Madame La Fayette. Sure, I was Asian. But I was born in Quebec. Was I not a Québécoise too?

I thought about what my classmates had called me earlier: a Chinese girl with small eyes. My eyes were not even slanted; they were round. And Kristina Lalic did not sound like a typical Chinese name.

Madame Gagnon jumped into the conversation, ordering all the students to stop talking. Then she walked towards Fanny and Claude, who were already studying Madame La Fayette's lines.

"Fanny, you can be Madame La Fayette if you want to. Claude, you'll be Madame Archambault," said Madame Gagnon.

"But I asked for it first," I thought to myself.

I pretended to skim through the script while Madame Gagnon assigned roles to each student. When it was my turn, she stopped and scratched her head for a minute.

"I have a special role for you. It'll suit you," she said patting my shoulder.

At that young age, how could I have known my teacher and peers had just demonstrated racism against me? I did not know what racism was. I thought racism was when people called names, like calling Asians bad drivers. It was only later that I realized that not allowing a child to play a certain role because of her ethnicity was racist.

"Here we are! I have just the thing!" exclaimed Madame Gagnon.

She pulled out a black plastic bag from the tall white cabinet in the back of the class. It was a large circular bag. It was hard to tell what hid inside. Then Madame Gagnon walked back towards me, smiling.

"You'll be our narrator! I know it's not really a character, but it'll be fun."

I opened the bag. It was a large mask in the shape of a sun. Madame La Fayette lived on Earth. But a sun? A sun sounded so far, far away.

I tried the mask on and looked in the class mirror.

The mask was yellow.

A bit like my skin.

I do not hate Madame Gagnon. She did a great job with that play. She taught me many things about the life-style in New France: the agriculture, the hunting, the fishing, the clothing and even the Church.

But looking back, I understand the most important lesson Madame Gagnon taught me was one she never planned.

Born in Montreal, Quebec with a Filipino background, Kristina Lalic is an avid writer and social activist currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in Political Science and English Literature. She has an unwavering passion for writing, literature, and legal studies, and has served as a leader in her community, in academics, and in extracurriculars whilst maintaining a smile under pressure. Her objective is to obtain a position in or related to the fields of law and writing, which would allow her to gain experience, apply, and develop her critical and creative thinking to contribute to her community. She originally wrote this piece for an English personal essay assignment at Marianopolis College. She had not intended it for an audience, but when her professor, Monique Polak, encouraged her to read it for ArtsFest at her college, she gave in. As Kristina writes: "Reading my essay in front of a large group was empowering, as if all the negative emotions I had kept inside of me for so long were finally released and gone. And it wasn't until after ArtsFest, whilst chatting with a few other writers, that I realized that when you stand and share your story, your story will not only heal yourself, but somebody else as well. 'Very poignant essay!' and 'I totally empathize with you on that one', some told me. Thank you for this unique opportunity. [To publish in the SAWCC *Bulletin*.] I love researching and writing about issues touching nationality and ethnicity, especially the ones in our province and country. I am glad you enjoyed my essay."



Dr. Lucy Gilbert, head of gynecological oncology, MUHC

## OVARIAN & ENDOMETRIAL CANCERS

DOVE —Diagnosing Ovarian and Endometrial Cancer Early, will be launching a roving mobile clinic to augment their satellite clinics that started opening in Montreal in 2013. The objective is early detection of ovarian cancer which generates symptoms that are vague, such as bloating, pelvic or abdominal pain, frequent urination, lack of appetite or feeling satiated quickly. Dr. Gilbert, who has pioneered this, says that with testing and early diagnosis, you can get the disease when it's completely operable, and you are much more likely to be cured. Because early detection does not happen, the cure rates have not changed in 30 years and Gilbert finds this shocking. The statistics for ovarian cancer are: fifth leading cause of cancer-related death in women in developed countries; currently, one in 55 women will develop the disease over her lifetime, up from 1970 when the rate was one in 70 women.

Info on the DOVE project: <https://www.mcgill.ca/dovee/>



**South Asian Women's Community Centre**  
**Centre communautaire des femmes sud-asiatiques**

1035 Rachel East (3rd floor A)  
 Montreal, Quebec  
 H2J2J5

Phone: 514-528-8812  
 Fax: 514-528-0896  
 Email: sawcc@bellnet.ca

[www.sawcc-ccfsa.ca](http://www.sawcc-ccfsa.ca)

Oct 2nd—Eid Party (12PM)  
 Oct 6th—National Day of Women's Centres  
 Oct 13th—Info session on tuberculosis and STIs (10:30AM)  
 Oct 18th—Women's History Month film screening 2:00-4:00PM  
 Oct 20th—Info session on legal aid Canada (10:30AM)  
 Oct 26—SAWCC Executive Council meeting (6PM)  
 Oct 27th—Info session on job search (10:30AM)  
 Oct 30th—Potluck Zine re-launch celebration 1:00-2:00PM

2 oct—Fête de Aid (12H)  
 6 oct—Journée Nationale des centres des femmes  
 13 oct—Session d'information sur la tuberculose et les ITS (10H30)  
 18 oct—Mois d'Histoire des Femmes, projection du film 14H-16H  
 20 oct—Session d'information sur l'aide juridique  
 26 oct—Réunion du Conseil exécutif de CCFSa (18H00)  
 27 oct—Session d'information sur la marché du travail  
 30 oct—Dîner communautaire et fête du zine 13H-14H

## October 2015

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				1	2 	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 	14	15	16	17
18 	19	20 	21	22	23	24
25	26 	27 	28	29	30 	31