



THE PHOENIX

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*"Veganism is some white people sh*t."* WHAT CAN A WHITE VEGAN LEARN FROM INDIGENOUS AND BLACK VEGANS?

OPINIONS

BY LUZ-MARINA ROBERTS

WE NEED TO ADDRESS *DISCRIMINATION* IN THE CLASSROOM

The professor used the "n-word" several times in a lecture while trying to justify the more "formal version" of it because it appeared in assigned readings.

Discrimination in the classroom. No one really wants to talk about it, but everyone knows it's there. UBCO, in the aftermath of 2020's Black Lives Matter protests, decided to hop on the bandwagon of launching anti-racism campaigns, of which we have been made aware of through our email, after they were made aware of these harmful ideologies existing on campus. However, many UBCO students have already had the misfortune of being subject to or bearing witness to discrimination, offensive behaviour or language, and problematic ideas before and after the launching of this initiative. The Phoenix asked students via our Instagram if they were willing to share their experiences. The following is a collection of all the anonymous complaints we received. Please be aware that the following entries may cause discomfort or be triggering.

DISCRIMINATION CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

FEATURES

BY BRANDON KOO

Is There Space for Compassion in Conspiracy?

Sift through all the problematic thinking and emotions bungled up with these dangerous lies to reveal the person inside. A person who is trying to make sense of – and find a place to belong and thrive within – an impossibly complex world and time.

So you're at a family dinner. Out of the corner of your eye you see that old cantankerous uncle who's got no license over his mouth. His brow is always deeply furrowed, and whenever anyone says anything about the news you hear a stream of muttering and protests under his breath. Perhaps your uncle isn't so quiet; he sees every conversation as an opportunity to share the truth about 5G technology with a volcanic intensity that you only see on your brief visits to the darkest corners of the internet.

He is a person embroiled in conspiracy: a word that at its core communicates a deep-seated concern that there is a secret plan concocted by hostile others to enact or hide something threatening.

Now let's break the mould. You're on the bus...

CONSPIRACY CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

As a white vegan, I never have a good reply to this. I end up fumbling my words and naming a few non-white vegan celebrities. "Did you know A\$AP Rocky is vegan?" Nice, but there's a problem with that reply. Aside from proving Black people eat plants, my desire to dissociate whiteness from veganism only dismisses the idea that race has something to do with veganism.

So what is the connection between race and veganism? I've long thought that veganism has nothing to do with people and is only about the animals. It's just about the piggies and the cows, right?

This ability to forget about race is some actual white people shit. Failing to see the connections between veganism and race prevented me from understanding the many non-white understandings of veganism that are about much more than just animal liberation. Wanting to know more, I set out to learn from the words of Indigenous and Black vegans.

VEGANISM BY SAM GRINELL CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

CLUBS AND SERVICES SPOTLIGHT THE COLLEGIA

Welcome to the collegia, a "home away from home." These spaces are specifically designed to provide the comfort and amenities a student's living space would have. For those who commute, the collegia are perfect places to hangout between classes.

William Hazen, the team lead for the Global Collegium, believes that:

"These spaces offer a sense of home, feeling, and comfort in an uncomfortable place such as university with all the stress that comes with being a student. Additionally, the collegia spaces offer a place of stability and a feeling of home."

There are three undergraduate collegia spaces on campus with particular themes. However, everyone is welcome to enjoy the services of whichever they find the most helpful:

COLLEGIA BY MADELINE GROVE CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

MEET THE COUGAR LADY

Though the moniker may have been taken before, it doesn't take long in talking to UBCO PhD. student Siobhan Darlington to realize she's more than deserving of the moniker "The Cougar Lady." Siobhan is the one-woman powerhouse at the helm of the Southern British Columbia Cougar Project, a wide sweeping and impressive research project being undertaken with help from Siobhan's super-

BY JONATHAN VAN ELSLANDER

visors, Dr. Karen Hodges and Dr. Adam Ford, biologists TJ Gooliaff and Patrick Stent with the Provincial Government, the Okanagan Nation Alliance (the ONA, the government representing 8 First Nations throughout the Okanagan), and local hunters.

COUGAR CONTINUED
ON PAGE 4



ARTS AND CULTURE

THE WITNESS BLANKET HAS ARRIVED TO KELOWNA

BY RACHEL PICKARD

From January 15th to April 10th, the Kelowna Art Gallery will be hosting a true-to-scale replica of The Witness Blanket, a piece that honours and bears witness to the truths of residential school Survivors.

Hayalthkin'geme - Carey Newman is an artist and master carver of Kwakwaka'wakw and Coast Salish descent. In 2013, he and his team collectively travelled

over 200,000 kilometres over the course of a year to speak with thousands of Survivors and gather objects from residential schools, churches, government buildings, friendship centres, and cultural structures to piece together The Witness Blanket. The following year, the exhibit was launched for the first time. Today, the original piece stands

in the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

This past week, The Phoenix was honoured to be able to speak with Newman about The Witness Blanket, the significance in its creation and its exhibition, and other projects that are related or in the works.

WITNESS AND RESOURCES CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

CONTENT WARNING

This article includes explicit mentions and discussions of residential schools, racism, and colonialism. In case you feel that you are in need of support, listed are some resources that can help:

National Indian Residential
School Crisis Line
You can reach them by their toll-free, 24/7, Canada-wide phone number: **1-866-925-4419**

The Indian Residential School
Survivors Society
Toll-free #: **1-800-721-0066**,
Main phone: **604-985-0023**, or by
their email (reception@irsss.ca)

KUU-US Crisis Line
You can visit their website
or call their toll-free and 24/7
phone number for BC:
1-800-588-8717



CLUBS AND SERVICES SPOTLIGHT THE COLLEGIA



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
BY MADELINE GROVE

- **Global Collegium** (for international students) - EME 0252
Walk through the main entrance of the Engineering, Management, and Education building (EME) and you go down the stairs. You will find the collegium on your far right.
- **Junior Collegium** (for first and second years) - UNC 336
- **Upper Levels Collegium** (for third and fourth years) - UNC 335
Walk through the first floor entrance of the UNC and walk up the stairs directly in front of you, then the stairs directly to your right. Take a left and walk almost all the way down the hallway and you will find these two collegia.

There is even a **Graduate Collegium** located in ASC 460. Likewise, the campus provides a centre for Indigenous students to connect and hang out in-between classes. The Indigenous Centre is located in UNC 210, next to Indigenous Programs and Services. The website remarks that:

“The Indigenous Centre provides a sense of belonging and community for Indigenous students on campus. This home away from home is committed to enriching the quality of the student experience for aboriginal students by promoting access, providing capacity building opportunities, and celebrating success.”

To get there, follow the above directions, but instead of going up those extra steps to the third floor, go past Student Connect and the Welcome Centre, take a right and walk to the end of the hallway.

- Each collegium contains:
- Kitchen facilities with refrigerators, small appliances, dishes, and cutlery
 - Solo and group study spaces
 - Comfortable lounge chairs, sofas, and fireplace
 - Secure Wifi and plenty of plugs to charge all your devices
 - A social area with board games, cards, and a big-screen TV
 - Senior students who are available to welcome you, answer questions, offer referrals, and plan programs and events.”

William adds that there is free team coffee. He also says, “these resources are within arm’s reach almost, walking distance. I feel as though studying in the collegia allows you to get into your zone better because you don’t have to go to different places to get food or go to the washroom. So, it is very convenient and usually quiet. You can store your lunch there; you can microwave your lunch. We have utensils and plates. You can take a quick nap on the couch... I don’t think you can do that in the library.”

There is relevant information collected inside the collegia, tacked onto the bulletin boards, about the campus and Kelowna. Similarly, questions are always written on the whiteboards. You can weigh in on these discussions by writing your preferences and reading other people’s answers.

A student who has frequented these spaces commented that:

“The collegium was my favourite hangout spot in first year. There was always a great group of people and it was a really welcoming environment there. It always felt like a community and a bit of a home away from home.”

So, if you have quite a bit of time in in-between your classes, are looking for a cozy spot to attend your online classes or are interested in finding a community of like-minded individuals, check out the different collegia around campus.

OPINIONS

WE NEED TO ADDRESS DISCRIMINATION IN THE CLASSROOM

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
WORDS BY LUZ-MARINA ROBERTS

- One professor said that “a girl must have blubber”. The same professor compared a woman’s virginity to rice.

- One professor swore at a student and threw a pen at them.

- One professor gave a “how-to” guide on getting an eating disorder.

- A professor asked their class of mostly cisgender persons to debate on whether a slur for transgender people is a slur.

- One compared the eating of animals to slavery.

- Another discriminated against a student for wearing assistive technology in the classroom.

- A professor constantly makes gas chamber and refugee jokes.

- Someone was told their religious beliefs were primitive and illogical by their professor, TAs, and peers.

- A professor constantly makes jokes about lynching.

This seemingly long list was actually from just a small percentage of people on our campus, but as you can see, the list is long and deeply troubling. The launching of the anti-racist campaigns UBCO initiated in response to Black Lives Matter can, from one perspective can be seen as meaningful, thoughtful, and necessary. On the other hand, to students who are still being subjected to harmful learning environments, it’s just a response to cover their bases when the world briefly turned their attention to these issues—the same issues that many have been complaining about for years before and nothing was done about it.

What good are broad statements of unity and support when students are fighting for their rights in a classroom in which they are spending thousands of dollars to be educated?

Beyond the individual financial cost, there is also the incalculably high cost of perpetuating systemic racism and discrimination under the guise of “education”.

This is not some small issue that occurs in a few courses. The complaints in this article were from the departments of Physics, English, Cultural Studies, Anthropology, Geography, Gender and Women’s Studies, Engineering and Mathematics. There is no one who can say “oh well my department should be fine because we don’t talk about social issues” or claim that any particular faculty might be more “woke” than the other. The fact of the matter is that most of UBCO’s professors are able-bodied, cis, white people from the global north.

- One student’s culture was called immoral because it did not fit Canadian values.

- One professor called part of a student’s country unhygienic as per her standards. It turns out to have been a settlement colony. The conversation had nothing to do with the student’s place of origin. The student went to inquire about an assignment.

- Another student had to take over a lecture because the professor used papers from a white colleague that generalised and diminished an important part of their identity and culture.

- A professor called items from a place in the global south primitive and justified it by saying that it’s a compliment.

- Another professor singled out a global south student before the first class of the semester even started to encourage them to join their class on people from that region.

- The professor used the “n-word” several times in a lecture while trying to justify the more “formal version” of it because it appeared in assigned readings.

- The professor referred to the enslaved as “slaves” and “workers” and used racist imagery without warning and did not critique the fact that it was racist.

Universities in the global north tend to present themselves as liberal and progressive institutions, but the sad reality is that many of the students—such as myself—must be the ones to spearhead diversity and inclusion in the classroom.

It is rare that non-white students, especially from the global south, are included in classroom discourses, and many times if they are, the texts are written by white authors with a Eurocentric perspective. Personally, I’m tired of saying, “but this doesn’t make sense if you’re not white” or, “this theory is actually racist if you dig deeper than the three pages in this textbook”. That we have to keep bringing it up means that the professors themselves are not able to make these connections themselves, which means that if we don’t carry this additional burden, we run the risk of being further colonised through our education.

If I have to choose between interjecting and the class leaving the room a little more racist, then there needs to be a change.

Stop draining my bank account and selling me a future that you are attempting to obstruct me from seeing.

Is There Space for Compassion in Conspiracy?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
WORDS BY BRANDON KOO

...and a friend that you’ve known for years to be of sound mind and judgement scoffs at the idea of taking the vaccine. They mention that “Big Pharma” is blowing this “Covid thing” out of proportion to impoverish the working class.

It can be hard, beyond the initial feeling of shock and stupefaction, to come up with the clever retort you need to dismantle the view. No one can blame you.

Many conspiracy theories thrive along the margins of believability, operating in that nothing-space between what is certain and that which is just out of our confidence. Others are completely absurd, but what is common among all of them is the passionate devotion shared by all their believers.

Moreover, the people who fall prey to conspiracy are as varied as the ideas that hold dominion over them. The Manitoba man who stormed the Prime Minister’s residence last year, Corey Hurren, was an ordinary person, a military reservist and a cook who had left a social media trail with Qanon information in it and other Covid-related false beliefs like event 201.

Event 201 was an online pandemic simulation exercise held in 2019 that aimed to help educate senior leaders of government and community on how to deal with the possible threat of a highly contagious virus.

Many believers in Covid-conspiracies have taken the scientific rigor with which this hypothetical scenario (which revolved around a coronavirus that spread from non-human animals) was conducted as vindication that the global elite had formed a cabal against the everyday person.

Hurren also showed evidence of being mentally unwell and an assessment from the clinical psychologist hired by his lawyer gave him a diagnosis of depression according to a report by the National Post. He was driven to deeper fathoms of paranoia through the litany of lies that emerged on social media when the restrictions brought by pandemic ushered upheaval into many people’s lives.

His is one of many examples that illustrate some of the central psychological motivations that bind many believers of conspiracy theories and why they are so compelling.

Conspiracy theories satisfy a need for stability, a need for truth, and a need to belong in a group that recognizes and values that truth.

There is strong evidence that these traits, which we all share, are what cements conspiracy in the world. There is something of the conspiracy theorist in all of us, and it is our greatest asset in overcoming these tenacious truth testers to recognise this.

Let’s demystify the face of conspiracy.

We can help understand the conspiracy theorists we love or with whom we must live by unearthing some of the psychological motivations that drive their behaviour. The need to produce pattern and structure is ubiquitous. It’s how we make sense of our world and our lives.

Humans are constantly receiving and making sense of information. Amongst all the stimuli, there must be some hierarchy of importance in terms of things you pay attention to. Our brains look for patterns to determine what is important. It’s an adaptive way our minds have evolved to seek order in everything.

Our brains often act like top-down managers, imposing reason and cause and effect on what we see based on our previous experiences as well as our attitudes. This is connected deeply to what researcher Karen Douglas calls epistemic motives for a belief in conspiracy. It is one of three motives – epistemic, existential, and social – that her research has found galvanizes people to follow conspiracies.

The epistemic motive captures a need for information.

This becomes especially pressing in the wake of a serious event, in their own lives or in the wider world; they want an explanation that provides the closure and certainty they can accept – what researchers call a need for cognitive closure.

That’s not a problem on its own. We all look to different sources of information to accomplish the same thing.

At the same time, researchers Patrick Leman and Marco Cinnirella have conducted studies on undergraduate students in the UK which show that it may be advantageous to reduce this need for cognitive closure if we aim to inoculate ourselves against conspiracy. In the study, titled “Belief in conspiracy theories and the need for cognitive closure,” they found that reducing this need for closure mitigated people’s belief in conspiracy.

Why might that be? The problem may lie not in the process, but in the pace. The systems we use to understand the world are not entirely reliable. They are even less trustworthy when people are disposed of or prompted to rush to eliminate all ambiguity to get a straight answer. We frequently make errors in logic like making arbitrary inferences (forming a conclusion where there is little to no concrete evidence) which can increase our susceptibility to conspiracy theories.

At the same time, we are an incredibly clannish and anxious band, seeking closeness to others like us because when we are part of a collective that just “gets it” we feel more protected. This introduces some of the other motivations posited by Douglass as driving a belief in conspiracy theories, namely the existential and social drives.

The existential motive captures our need to be secure in our world.

Let’s refer back to our example of Mr. Hurren, who had intended his attack on the Prime Minister’s residence to be a message that Canada should not become a communist state in which people’s “rights” are trampled. That goes to show that the primary fear involved need not be of a direct and physical nature, but merely a threat to their way of life.

The conspiracies Hurren entertained had magnified these smoldering worries for security. They may not have been valid, but they were real. Penetrating the existential dilemma beyond the ludicrousness of the claim is an important starting point for change. Is your uncle just angry or perhaps angry and afraid that the source of the pandemic is in telephone towers and only he and a minority can see it? Those can be two different entry points for a conversation.

Social motivation captures people’s desire to belong and have good feelings about who they belong to.

This factor can affect people broadly and on an individual level depending on the social actor in question. People who are high in narcissism are almost looking for a reason to inflate their ego. They often fall prey to the seductive prospect that they are members of an awakened few who can see the world as it is.

In fact, a study in 2014 that looked at the relationship between self love and self hate and endorsement in conspiracies found that people with big egos with little regard for others that might threaten this self-esteem, were more likely to believe in conspiracy theories.

There are, however, other sociological factors at work in the thorny matter of conspiracy.

Most conspiracies are underpinned by a general belief that there is a hostile majority group hiding information from us in a way that will destroy us if we do not act to stop them.

This may be a legitimate source of fear for many depending on their personal or group situation, which can drive them to believe in conspiracy or at least make them more amenable to these ideas. A person’s faith in conspiracy theories is connected to a feeling of powerlessness, and of threatened socio-political control, according to a 2013 study that measured individual differences among conspiracy believers cross-culturally.

In many ways the antithesis of powerlessness is heroism. There is a robust body of evidence suggesting that conspiracy theories often resemble the plot of a hero narrative, with a central figure or the followers taking up that role as the hero who rights the wrong and saves the world. With this in mind, it is easy to reason why persons may be particularly vulnerable to conspiracy theories during times of crisis.

When your personal, social and financial life goes through seismic shifts because of something intangible and unreachable, people search for an anchor.

Perhaps, a new strategy for interacting with the conspiracists we love, or cannot get away from, would be bringing that hero-subplot to the fore and investigating if there is a personal wound the belief helps to cure.

What are some tactics to defuse the conspiracy bomb?

So, we’ve managed to humanize your perception of a conspiracy theorist. They may be misinformed and ill-equipped to digest the problem at hand. They may be holding some secret anxiety that is remedied by the belief and the company of those who share it. So, what is there to be done? The act of merely suggesting to your uncle that he is engaging in a slew of logical fallacies is unlikely to be very convincing.

Firstly, it is vital that we endeavor to improve numeracy skills or assist in translating the meaning of quantitative information in academic articles in order to help people process information more carefully. There is growing evidence that when persons build this capacity it guards them against accepting information of dubious quality.

Importantly, you ought to keep your cool. Don’t go on the offense.

Research shows that attacking or mocking a person’s beliefs prepares a defensive response that entrenches them in the pre-existing viewpoint by virtue of knowing that they are being challenged. Accommodating new ideas about important topics takes emotional and mental energy, to which some people are resistant.

This phenomenon, known as the boomerang effect, has no doubt been the bane of many dead conversations about controversial topics. As discussed prior, stories play an important role in animating the believers in conspiracy.

Narratives can be used to engage people more powerfully and assist them in coming to conclusions. Human beings are inherently social, and our social lives revolve heavily around storytelling.

Although difficult, if you integrate your argument in the form of a narrative, making use of the persuasive elements of a story, storytelling – alongside evidence – can help provide the social and tangible proof you need to convince them. Michael Dahlstrom, professor of journalism at Iowa State University, has written extensively on this topic if you wish to learn more.

So, the next time you encounter your disagreeable uncle or aunt over dinner consider the options before you. You could tell them about the percentage of people with significantly higher mortality from the virus due to old age.

However, you may more successfully get to them through one powerful story about your friend who works at a nursing home and the suffering they see among the elderly with Covid, and the heartache caused by an untimely goodbye.

We all possess a powerful intuition when something is not right. If a deep-seated anxiety can be easily explained by a “it’s them-against us” response, the situation is likely more complex than that.

When you encounter someone in the throes of conspiracy, try to harness that same instinct for truth that you both share to arrive at a more helpful framing of your reality.

By doing this, you can sift through all the problematic thinking and emotions bungled up with these dangerous lies to reveal the person inside. A person who is trying to make sense of – and find a place to belong and thrive within – an impossibly complex world and time.

MEET THE COUGAR LADY:

Siobhan Darlington is a One-Woman Powerhouse Leading the Way in Answering the Key Questions About Cougars in Southern B.C.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
WORDS BY JONATHAN VAN ELSLANDER

Compared to many other large species in British Columbia, biologists know relatively little about cougars, but Siobhan and her team are out to change that. Her research focuses on three areas in Southern B.C.: the West Okanagan, the area from Kelowna to Princeton to the US Border, the Boundary, in the areas between Highway 33 and Grand Forks, and the East Kootenay, South of Cranbrook. In all the areas, there are well established cougar populations, but the nuances between them are cryptic. Siobhan has assembled a team of two winter technicians, two summer technicians, contractors from the ONA, and local houndspeople (hunters who pursue cougars using a team of hunting dogs).

Among a range of questions she has, Siobhan and her team focus mainly on understanding what, where, and how cougars eat. Throughout Southern B.C., the project has put out nearly 40 GPS tracking collars on cougars. By using a technique called “cluster analysis” – where the researchers identify where cougars are hanging out over extended periods (likely on a recent kill) – they are able to find cougar kills and investigate exactly what happened.

Despite dramatized and exaggerated reports from the media, cougars are not out in the woods waiting for unassuming hikers to walk by. They are, in actuality, waiting for unassuming deer and elk to walk by. By exactly to what extent cougars are preying on the different species of ungulates (hoofed animals) in B.C. isn't well known. Siobhan's work builds upon past research by Chloe Wright, also a PhD, student with Dr. Adam Ford, who's studies on Mule Deer – a species in decline in the Southern Interior of British Columbia – found that cougar predation is a key impact on the changes in the deer population. But Siobhan is hesitant to put all the blame for low Mule Deer numbers on cougars. As Siobhan notes, there is a litany of effects that could be compounding the problem:

Habitat change from things like fire and deforestation may make it easier for cougars to take mule deer, or things like black bears and wolves and coyotes push cougars off their kills and they have to kill more deer to make up the calories.

And so, finding where exactly cougars are killing their prey, along with determining how long cougars stay with their kills, is key to the goals of the project. Siobhan says cougar's prey are variable across her study area, mainly she thinks, due to different densities of deer species. In the Kootenays where mule deer are uncommon, elk and white-tail deer constitute the majority of cougar food. But in the West Okanagan, where mule deer are common, Siobhan says cougars are getting their fill mostly from mule deer alone. In other parts of North America, “Other studies on cougars found they diversify their diet in



the summer, despite that most studies occur in the winter... but we're finding they eat lots of deer in the summer, and their kill rates increase in the summer.”

But throughout the province, widespread clear-cut logging, in conjunction with enormous wildfires (Siobhan says studies from California have determined cougars have serious distaste for burnt forest, though the research in B.C. has not so far studied the effects of fire) could change how cougars hunt. Siobhan's GPS collars have shown that B.C.'s cougars avoid cut-blocks through the winter but use cutblocks edges as places to ambush deer through the summer. She says that these sorts of newly understood habitat effects could have important effects on the balance between cougars and deer.

In addition to her work on cougar diet and the delicate equilibrium between predators and prey, Siobhan wants to know just how the cougar population is doing in Southern B.C. Despite regular estimates by the provincial government on the density of other species like deer, moose, and grizzly bears, Siobhan says her team is working with the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD) in Penticton to complete the first ever population estimate for cougars in the West Okanagan. It is known however, that the population in the Kootenays is on the decline, though exactly how much it is shrinking is not well understood. What Siobhan is most interested in is whether the fluctuations in cougar density are due to natural eb and flow of predator and prey, or whether hunting pressures from humans, as well as landscape change and forest loss from logging and wildfires, have an impact on the number of cougars.

Siobhan says the population of cougars, like many large, slow growing species, are more easily affected by what are called “top-down effects” – essentially dying, and dying unexpectedly and unnaturally (such as being killed by hunters or vehicle strikes) – than they are by “bottom-up effects” – like the amount of food they can get. So, understanding how many cougars there are, how fast they're reproducing, and whether we are hunting and killing them too often, is key to the project.

The good news is, despite all the things threatening ecosystems and species in B.C. Siobhan isn't particularly worried about the health of the cougar population. But she says they do represent an important point in how we manage nature: there is a never-ending list of connections between species and places that could be causing unforeseen effects from our actions. No matter how much of any species cougars are killing, Siobhan says,

It's important to look at managing habitat better for both cougars and deer.

Due to climate change, wildfires, and forestry, forests in British Columbia are changing rapidly, and the effects on cougars will take time to understand. Siobhan informs us:

What we are already seeing is issues with habitat connectivity and (forest) cover; cougars need a lot of cover to ambush prey, and by clearcutting lots of habitat, that creates a risk for cougars, especially in addition to the (forest loss caused by) the wildfires.

But luckily for cougars, Siobhan and her team are hard at work tracking down the answers to all these questions. Though her project is in the early stages, it has already amassed impressive results, and has a province full of fascinating issues to investigate. Anyone interested in learning more about the Southern B.C. Cougar Project can visit their website (bccougar-project.weebly.com).w



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THE WITNESS BLANKET HAS ARRIVED TO KELOWNA

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RESOURCES

Atlohsa Family Healing Service
You can reach their general phone at 519-438-0068 or through their 24-hour crisis lines:
519-432-0122 OR 1-800-605-7477

Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society
You can visit their office on Leon Avenue in-person or contact them by phone
(250-763-4905) or through email (reception@kfs.bc.ca)

UBCO Health and Wellness
UBCO students can contact anytime Monday to Friday, 9:00am-4:00pm through the website or by phone: 250-802-9270

Additional Help Lines:
BC suicide and crisis line: 1-800-SUICIDE (784 2433)
Kelowna crisis line: 1-888-353-CARE (2273)

Newman has spent most of his life as a practising artist. In 2008, he was selected as the master carver of The Spirit Pole for the Cowichan 2008 Indigenous Games in conjunction with BC150. Since then, Newman noted that there has been a shift in his artistic practice.

“I invited people to carve on it to help bring it towards completion,” he shared. “That was the first time that I really did anything that resembled collaboration or community engagement and it was the first step in transforming the way that I think about art and the power of art.”

“I think it was the most pivotal thing-aside from my dad being a residential school survivor—that led me toward making The Witness Blanket.”

The original Witness Blanket is crafted of cedar and over 880 pieces of residential school history gathered from over 77 communities, Survivors and their families, cultural organisations, churches, and the federal government. Some of the objects and pieces reclaimed include a child's shoe, photographs, documents, braids of hair, and letters from parents asking for their children to come home.

“It was a far bigger project than I have ever taken on before,” Newman stated. “My dad is a residential school survivor, so when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission put out as call for commemoration initiatives—as an artist and keeping in mind the idea of working community that started with The Spirit Pole—I eventually landed on this idea of gathering pieces from all the residential schools in the country.”

As Newman continued to explain, the idea developed to include gathering pieces from government buildings, churches, and traditional structures.

“I was thinking about what this all means, what was the target of residential schools. If culture was the target, then showing the resilience of Indigenous people by including pieces of long houses, sweat lodges, friendship centres, and cultural buildings was going to be an important aspect of telling the whole story, which is what I wanted to do.”

After Newman's proposal was accepted, a team was assembled to help gather the pieces and stories that would shape The Witness Blanket. Emphasizing the importance of teamwork and engagement in assembling The Witness Blanket, Newman explained how its collaborative nature is what allowed it to represent many different perspectives.

“I had to let go of that control that I generally try to exercise in my artistic practice and work with what came. I think The Witness Blanket is so much more because of that,” he stated. “If I had actually been able to go out and travel those two hundred thousand kilometres myself, I think I would have ended up having too much influence over the pieces that I got and it would have changed it, probably not for the better.”

Newman also explained how collaborative engagement continues to influence the transformation of his artistic process and his understanding of himself. “It reveals all of the things that you thought you knew that you do not actually know. For me, because this is personal, it taught me lots of things about who I am and how I became who I am. You learn about your father and you learn about yourself,” he stated. “It becomes clear through the stories that you are hearing and the pieces that are coming in that you are not just shaping art, you are also getting



reformed by the process. I think about that a fair bit and how different I am now than before The Spirit Pole and after The Witness Blanket.”

“You can't help but to be changed by it if you are open to learning.”

With the funding approval in September 2012 and the team's mobilization in early 2013, The Witness Blanket started in the middle of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission process that spanned from 2008 to 2015. Despite this notable timeline, Newman reflected on how The Witness Blanket is still, if not arguably more relevant today. Referring to the confirmation of the 215+ unmarked graves found at a former residential school in Kamloops last year, Newman states that there was “a whole new level of consciousness around residential schools and that starts getting people to actually look deeper into colonialism as a whole. And The Witness Blanket is there.”

“We are still in the truth before reconciliation process that is necessary. It continues to hold significance.”

Newman explained how the significance of The Witness Blanket extends into his family in a more personal way. “I can say that through the process of making it, there has been healing in my family,” he shared. “Getting to go to residential schools with my dad, hearing a little bit about his own stories and also through the words of others, and understanding better what his life was like then. I would say definitively that I am a better person for having been through this. I also have more peace when it comes to the complicated relationships in our family.”

Now in his work, Newman uses art to address things that matter to him. “My current focus is climate but I am also focused on the process of decolonization and looking at the ways colonialism is the underpinning of a lot of the things that matter to me,” Newman stated.

“Colonialism and capitalism and industrialization go hand in hand and those are the things that have put us in the position we are in when it comes to climate. That extends into conversations around gender, patriarchy, racism, and all of those things are critical to me.”



As a parent, Newman emphasized how crucial these conversations are in relation to future generations. “I have an eleven-year-old daughter,” he shared. “Making a world that is not dangerous for her is important to me.”

In regards to his work and The Witness Blanket, Newman stated: “I think that part of the beauty and power of art is that it has the power to transform consciousness. It has the power to be part of systems-level change. To make people ready for change, they first need to understand why the change is necessary. For so many people, colonialism has not been a bad experience. It has been part of the creation of privilege.”

“What I hope for people who go and see [The Witness Blanket] is that they find something on there that they connect with—because it is filled with every-day objects—and that they learn more about that object,” Newman added.

“I want people to see The Witness Blanket to find their way into it and to take their own conclusions from it. Try to go into it with an open heart and an open mind, and afterwards—if there is something that resonates—to follow it up and to learn more.”

Since the launch of The Witness Blanket in 2014, multiple works related to it have transpired with more in the works. Newman's book, *Picking Up the Pieces: Residential School Memories and the Making of the Witness Blanket* details the process of making The Witness Blanket. On the website for Canadian Museum for Human Rights is a page where you can access the documentary on The Witness Blanket called “Picking Up the Pieces: The Making of the Witness Blanket”. The trailer for The Witness Blanket is available on Youtube through the Canadian Museum for Human Rights' channel. Currently, Newman is working on another book similar to Picking Up the Pieces that is shorter in length with simplified language for younger audiences. Another replica of The Witness Blanket is also in the works to travel outside of the country.

The Witness Blanket exhibit is free of charge and open to the public in the Kelowna Art Gallery until April 10th. The Kelowna Art Gallery is located at 1315 Water Street in downtown Kelowna on the unceded and unsundered land of the Syilx Okanagan Nation.

WHAT CAN A WHITE VEGAN LEARN FROM INDIGENOUS AND BLACK VEGANS?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 - PHOTO AND WORDS BY SAM GRINNELL

In a journey to educate myself, I first stumbled upon the words of Margaret Robinson, a Mi'kmaq vegan and scholar living in Toronto. In an interview with Lauren Corman, Robinson turned to Mi'kmaq teachings to explain why she's vegan. Robinson writes:

The animals are willing to provide food and clothing, shelter and tools, but always they must be treated with the respect given a brother and friend. (...) I concluded that dying for food is something that we no longer have to ask our animal siblings to do for us.

Robinson's Mi'kmaq values are centralized in her experience of veganism. Her veganism is informed by Mi'kmaq teachings that emphasize kinship between humans and animals. Certainly, Robinson's interactions with her animal relations are not representative of every Mi'kmaq person. However, that does not mean we should dismiss her thinking and understand her as a mere asterisk to more popular Indigenous ways of knowing. In "Veganism and Mi'kmaq Legends," she explains the power Indigenous peoples can gain through veganism:

At stake in the creation of an Indigenous veganism is the authority of Indigenous people, especially women, to determine cultural authenticity for ourselves.

Robinson's readings* of Mi'kmaq stories give her the authority to determine what Mi'kmaq traditions mean to her and how they should be understood in her present day. She says:

Dominant white discourse portrays our cultures as embedded in the pre-colonial past. This perspective must be replaced with the recognition that Indigenous cultures are living traditions, responsive to changing social and environmental circumstances. In retelling our stories, bringing postcolonial and ecofeminist interpretations to them, or in creating new stories, Indigenous women claim authority over our oral traditions. In doing so we recognize that our oral culture is not fixed in time and space, but is adaptable to our needs, to the needs of our animal siblings, and to the needs of the land itself.

As she retells stories, she asserts how traditions are fluid and adaptable. She shatters the colonial narrative that says Indigenous traditions are antiquated and fixed in the past. Traditions are grounded in ways of thinking that can respond with fluidity to the world around them. Practicing traditions how she sees fit is a way for her to define herself.

Whether it's hip hop or graffiti art or veganism, these cultural expressions are often dismissed as "not Native enough." My Ancestors didn't fight 400 years of colonialism so I could be told what makes me a real Mi'kmaq and what doesn't.

Robinson's experience of veganism is a way of claiming authority over her own identity. It is also a rejection and dismantling of colonial stereotypes that see Indigenous people as unchanging since pre-contact. Robinson uses veganism to determine who she is, by herself. For her, veganism is a tool for self-determination and anti-colonial resistance.

Veganism can be a very political expression of identity. Let's switch gears and look at Black veganism now and specifically the Black-authored book Aphro-ism, which was written by Aph and Syl Ko. They taught me how deeply concerned and interconnected veganism is with race. Aph and Syl aren't afraid to throw out some shocking ideas. They argue that we understand humans because of how we understand animals and vice versa:

One of the clinkers introduced by colonial thinking is that we (humans) are not just different and special when measured against all of the other animals, but we are their opposite. (...) If the human is the definitive representation of value itself, then, following the golden rule of the human-animal opposition, the animal is the definitive representation of the absence of value itself.

Humans and animals are defined in relation to one another. So, if we understand humans and animals as opposites, then if humans have value, animals don't. Of course, this enables violence on animals:

Animals are inferior or nonexistent members of our moral imagination for the same reason that many humans are: they are not "human," understood in the social sense.

Here Aph and Syl ask who is considered human. White boys like me would stick up our hands because we always get to be considered human. However, Black women like Aph and Syl don't necessarily fit so neatly into colonial and white supremacist understandings of what it means to be human. They are historically (and still sometimes) excluded from humanity. Aph and Syl explain that this exclusion from humanity is because of the white supremacist construction of the social category "human."

If "the human" is really an expression of whiteness as the ideal way of being homo sapiens, then "the animal" is supposed to express a deviation from this way of being.

Syl says that those who are non-white are excluded from humanity and are included into the social category of "animal." Throwing people into this category is harmful:

One of the easiest ways to violate a person or group of people is to compare or reduce them to "animals."

Nobody wants to be called an animal. So say you're not an animal! But there's a problem with that. Syl writes:

I used to be that kind of black activist. You know: "We're human, too!" But now, I question this strategy and want to investigate it.

Here Syl talks about how Black people often establish their humanity by proving their similarities to white folk. It's a common anti-racist strategy that is deeply problematic because it upholds white people as the criteria for what it means to be human. Syl explains that

humanization is the act of asserting one's resemblance to "humans"—white people.

So maybe proving one's humanity isn't the move. Never before had I considered that being included into the category "human" could be problematic. White supremacy says humans have to be white, so in the words of Syl,

when we attempt to "humanize" ourselves, and when we glamorize "the human," we uphold the superiority of whiteness.

Seeking inclusion into the category "human" upholds harmful white supremacist ideas of "the human." Thankfully, Aph and Syl have some ideas on how to resist white supremacist understandings of "the human." They believe the answer lies in "the animal." They think Black peoples' attempts to distance themselves from the category of "animal" isn't the best way to resist racism. Instead, Aph and Syl suggest a rethinking of the social category of the animal and a resistance to its supposed inferiority that white supremacy preaches.

Racism is simultaneously anti-black and anti-animal, as seen by racial ideology's elevation and celebration of "the human" and "humanity" particularly as Western and white.

This inferiority of the animal is a crucial and surprising foundation for the functioning of racism and white supremacy, which moves people from the social category of "human" (because they're not white) and into the supposedly inferior social category of the less than fully human, a zone populated by the "animal." Therefore, perhaps rethinking the social category of "animal" as inferior could dismantle the anti-animal framework that enables racism to function. Aph and Syl explain:

"Animal" is a category that we shove certain bodies into when we want to justify violence against them, which is why animal liberation should concern all who are minoritized, because at any moment you can become an "animal" and be considered disposable.

Thinking about animals –and their socially-prescribed inferiority– can be revolutionary for anti-racist thinking and activism. Challenging the animal's supposed inferiority

would disarm racist structures that rely on animalizing non-white folk in order to categorize them as inferior.

Veganism unsettles the idea that animals are innately inferior and therefore, can be abused and exploited. Aph and Syl argue that the animal's inferiority is only imagined, which rips apart the justification for abusing and exploiting animals because they're "just" animals. Aph and Syl show how veganism can be a way to trouble the idea that some beings are innately inferior. The inferiority prescribed to both animals and racialized humans is fictional.

What's necessary in order to decolonize (from) the system is to unlearn myths about our own bodies as well as all other bodies (animals) that are provided with "inferior" citizenships; that's because our inferiority is fictional.

Recognizing this fictionality provides a way of moving forward into an anti-racist future:

When minoritized people understand that our collective inferiority is fictional, the energy we have been using to disprove our inferiority and show our humanity will no longer be necessary. Once this is realized, we can re-imagine citizenship for ourselves as well as for animals and other beings labeled "inferior."

As Aph and Syl unpack, their articulation of Black veganism offers a framework to unlearn supposed inferiority and reimagine what life can look like for everyone –including animals– who are deemed inferior by white supremacy. Through a thoughtful consideration of animals, Aph and Syl develop a strong anti-racist framework to operate under.

Before encountering the words of Indigenous and Black vegans, I had such a minimal understanding of veganism. Now I feel silly saying I thought it was just about the animals. I think my narrow view is a prime example of how whiteness is entrenched in my experience of veganism. By failing to consider race in conversation with veganism, my experience of veganism was entangled in white supremacist modes of thinking that made race invisible. Perhaps my veganism was colourblind. Yuck!

Veganism can be some white people shit. But if you listen to the right voices, it can be really inspiring. Margaret Robinson is one of the many Indigenous vegans doing important decolonial work. Aph and Syl Ko are a couple of the many Black vegans who are using veganism as a tool for imagining an anti-racist future. I encourage you to find more voices like these if you've only encountered white perspectives on veganism.

Veganism can be interested in a variety of issues at once. It can be about animal liberation, anti-racism, and decolonization. It can be a political challenging of how inferiority gets assigned and who gets labeled inferior. Fundamentally, veganism can be a rejection that some beings are worth less than others.



STUDENT SKI DAY

PHOTOS BY CONAN SHING

UBCO students recently got the chance to ski and snowboard at Big White Ski Resort for an incredible price during UBCO's Student Ski Day! Check out the photos from our talented photographer:



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Why You Should Start Networking Today! (And How To Do It)

SUBMITTED BY MOHAMMAD KHANBABAIE

in one basket. Reach out to as many people as you can. Many people won't respond and many others will not be helpful. Scale is your only savior.

The second don't is to never get discouraged by getting ghosted. It happens, and all you can do is move on to the next person. People are generally helpful, so if one person won't help you, someone else will.

The third pointer is to always make the ask. If you want to get referred, let the person know. The worst that can happen is they say no and you move on. A "no" is a better outcome than a lot of wasted time followed by a "no."

The final point is to not be pushy. I have lost helpful people by doing this. Follow up once or twice and if you don't get a response, it could be due to one of two things, either the person is busy, or they don't want to help you. In both cases, it is better to move forward with other people and see what happens. In the end, I wish you all good luck in your internship/Co-op/job searches.

The best time to start networking was yesterday and the second-best time is today. Now, one might wonder what networking is and why you should care. For that, there are plenty of responses. For instance, the response rate for online applications at large companies such as the FAANG is about 4-5%. The addition of a referral would push that up to about 60%. In fact, 30-45% of all hires are referred candidates. So, from all of these points you can see that getting referred could make or break your career. And, as you know you can't get referred unless network. Now that we are at this point, I must add that I am a freshman at UBCO who has been able to have coffee chats with people from Google, Amazon, Microsoft, GM, Qualtrics, and Apple. I have also received referrals for Microsoft, Qualtrics, and GM. The key to how I did this was LinkedIn networking. I will share a couple of things I learned in the process.

Firstly, you have to find people to network with. A good rule of thumb is that you should approach family, friends, acquaintances, and Alumni first. These people know something about you so will be more likely to respond and will be happier to help.

Secondly, once you find them you should message them. The content of the message should be short and sweet and

somehow connect you to them. (Example: "Hi ----, It's great to see a UBC alum doing as well as you are in a company as reputable as -----. I was looking to get some advice on how to break into companies like the one you are at"). A message like this will usually get a response rate of above 50%.

Thirdly, you should ask them a series of questions about their role, the recruiting process, and all things that could help you out in the process. This phase usually leads to a coffee chat. You can ask them for 10-15 min of their time and, again, usually 50% will agree to do so. An example of such a message: "Thank you so much for your response. I was wondering if you would lend me 10-15 min of your time to have a coffee chat over zoom. I have tried with other successful people but communicating over text has been very difficult. Would a short coffee chat be possible for you?"

Furthermore, you should ask them as many questions as time allows, and in the end, you should ask for a recommendation. Again, at this point you should expect about 50-80% to agree to refer you. Lastly, you should always maintain a relationship with your network and stay in touch as they can be very helpful down the line.

Finally, after having gone through what you should do, I will give you a couple of don'ts. The first is don't put all of your eggs

WATCH FACE

The faces that watched me I now watch as they become faceless, my place is a little more uncertain, still my watch doesn't show me time just my time left, I'm watching, as my gold reveals itself as golden sand, flowing, through and through, my palms straining, red turns blue, but sands blew, while my eyes read between lines of palms clutched, my mind and heart, players of a beautiful Double Dutch, musical chairs, as I chair the committee of dancing lions and bears, a king size is needed to lie on, after I find my bearings, then I can unburden my bare back and then bare the ability to back out of this barren cave, and then I might be able to breathe.
- consiglieri

OBSCURE

My search for beauty in boredom
Longing to access the prior locked off intricate,
Intriguing, exquisite world behind the virtual
Oh, for the resolute power against the allure,
Temptations, that which pulls in only to obscure,

My speech into the future is that I come into
Understanding and
Connection
With
Time,in the way I attempt to connect and relate with this
rhyme.

Got bored searching for beauty. Then found it. The loop may now begin again.
The beginning and end, at the same part of this line.

- consiglieri. WATCHFACE & OBSCURE SUBMITTED BY KOFI ESSEL-APPIAH

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