

WHITE UNCOVERED



PHOTO: TED SALI

As you take a look through this magazine, note the imagery and illustrations that are sourced from around the Okanagan valley. From the iconic white sails and white dolphins, to the Vernon murals which proudly historicize the colonization of the Okanagan valley, to the Father Pandosy heritage site in the mission, it is not too difficult to see a pattern in what history Kelowna has chosen to commemorate. The editors of this magazine hope to challenge themselves and readers to examine what is at stake in the celebration of these monuments. How do these images construct Okanagan valley? Who is welcome here? Where are the monuments of diversity? We challenge you, the reader, to educate yourself on Okanagan history. Try researching immigration in Kelowna, or the Kelowna road blocks, or the Okanagan Indian Band's watershed dispute, and see what comes up. We live here and study here, but if we do not investigate what the politics of here are, privilege will remain covered.

By Meaghan Hume

Table of Contents

White Uncovered	4
No Words	6
Why Canadians are the Problem	7
White Freedom to Gleefully Be	8
A Much Needed Conversation in Canada	10
Whose history have we chosen to commemorate?	14
A Heathen Slum:	16
Chinese Skipping	19
A Re-Presentation Of Privilege	20
Works Cited	26



White Uncovered

BY LINDSAY DIEHL

Fifty-one years ago, a peaceful crowd of over 5000 students, community members and workers gathered outside of the Sharpeville police station to protest the 'pass laws', which limited the movement of people who were deemed 'non-white' in South Africa. The 'pass laws' were a part of South Africa's policy of apartheid, state-supported measures that ensured the separate and unequal development of people in the country based on the colour of their skin. Derived from the Afrikaans word for "apartness", apartheid was enforced by the government of South Africa between

1948 and 1994. Under apartheid the rights of the majority, the 'non-white' inhabitants of South Africa, were severely curtailed for the benefit of the minority, the 'white' inhabitants of South Africa.

The peaceful crowd in Sharpeville had gathered in response to a call from the Pan Africanist Congress, a liberation movement within South Africa, to burn their passes or to leave them at home and offer themselves up for arrest at the nearest police station. Ahmed Dangor, CEO of the Nelson Mandela Foundation, explains that the pass-book was much more than a simple document of identification: during

apartheid, a pass was a passport to life. Dangor further elucidates, "You couldn't get work without a pass; you couldn't travel without a pass, and yet people were brave enough to burn it" (qtd. in Robertson).

The police were informed ahead of time of the planned demonstration by the PAC president, Robert Sobukwe. On March 16 1960, Sobukwe wrote to the commissioner of police, Major General Rademeyer, stating that the PAC would be holding a non-violent and disciplined protest campaign against pass laws on March 21. At a press conference on March 18, he also announced: "I have appealed to the African people to make sure that this campaign is conducted in a spirit of absolute non-violence, and I am quite certain they will heed my call" (qtd. in Bobby-Evans).

Despite the non-violent nature of this well-publicized campaign, protestors were met with violent opposition from armed policemen. Indeed, soon after 1:00 pm on the warm afternoon of March 21 1960, police fired without warning on the crowd. As the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission reports, "the South African Police failed to give the crowd an order to disperse before they began firing and they continued to fire upon the fleeing crowd, resulting in hundreds of people being shot in the back. As a result of the excessive force used, 69 people were killed and more than 300 injured" (qtd. in UN).

The tragedy of the Sharpeville Massacre is remembered and its significance is marked every year on March 21 through the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Proclaiming the Day in 1966, the General Assembly of the United Nations called on the international community to redouble its efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination. In a statement, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, said, "the massacre in Sharpeville represents a much wider tragedy: we mark its

anniversary to remember also the millions of people around the world who are still, today, victims of racism and racial discrimination" (qtd. in UN).

Today, in honour of the sacrifices made by the courageous demonstrators in Sharpeville fifty-one years ago, the editorial board of this magazine shows its commitment to eliminate racism from our communities. Our magazine concerns the topic, "Uncovering 'White' Privilege" and our aim is to raise awareness of racism by shedding

In Kelowna and other Western societies, being 'white' is perceived as the norm and race is only attributed to those who are not 'white'.

light on the privilege of being 'white' with all of its attendant inequities, oppression and sufferings, and to promote another way of being in the world which is more self-reflexive, sensitive and informed. Indeed, all too often racism and privilege are perceived as concerns 'elsewhere,' and we intend to address this misconception.

In Kelowna and other Western societies, being 'white' is perceived as the norm and race is only attributed to those who are not 'white'. In conversations, for example, we will mention someone's being 'black' or 'oriental', but we will not mention someone's being 'white'. Being 'white' is thus not only taken for granted but also largely unacknowledged. Being 'white' also denotes the special status of 'just' being while no other racial group enjoys such a status. Thus, although Canadian culture is typically seen as being accepting of 'other' cultures, it is in fact inherently racist. Indeed, multiculturalism in Canada still designates perceived 'non-white' groups as 'different' and 'other' - and

these groups are correspondingly expected to conform to the norm of being 'white.' The underlying and erroneous assumption is that Canada is 'white.'

Consequently, if you are 'white', you enjoy the privilege of being able to relate your experiences as if they are typical, to be confident that job refusals are not based on your skin color, and to see images of other 'white' people widely represented in the media. If you are 'white', you are also protected

by social and legal institutions which have systematically and severely discriminated against 'other' groups. Indeed, an area of growing concern in Canada is the practice of overlooking the institutionalized government policies of assimilation, and the historical and continuing confiscation of Native lands and resources (Laroque 74).

Discussions about race and racism within our society have tended to focus on the disadvantages of not being 'white', while overlooking the advantages of being 'white'. This oversight has contributed to the general misconception that racism is an issue that only concerns 'non-white' groups. Our editorial board's aim is to address the claim that "something needs to be done: the project of 'making whiteness strange'" (Dyer 4). That is to say, the intention of our topic is to dismantle 'white' privilege through awareness, both of the white homogenization of popular culture as well as of the racism that exists at home, in Kelowna specifically and Canada in general.

No Words

BY LINDSAY DIEHL

Her room smelled like the ginger candies that she kept in an old Hellmann's mayonnaise bottle on the corner of her dresser. There they sat, beside her ivory hair brushes she had brought from China when she was a little girl like me.

Some nights, she'd look after me, and those nights, we'd talk with our hands. She didn't speak English. She'd unfold her fingers one by one. Her fingers were small, wrinkled and bent with age. Holding them up in the air, she'd count them in Chinese, until I'd hold up my small hand to do the same.

Yat. Yee. Sum.

I'd mimic her scratchy voice. And then, she'd smile and clap her hands together. She'd take a ginger candy from the bottle and put it in my opened mouth. Days later, I could still taste the sugary fire on my tongue.

When I grew older, my mother said I couldn't see her anymore. She's too old, she said. Too tired.

But I went to her bedroom door almost every night and listened. Sometimes I thought I could hear her crackled breathing or sudden laughter.

One night, I opened the door and crept in. It was dark in the room and the air was heavy with sleep. It took my eyes a moment to adjust to the light, but then I saw her head, peeking naked above the covers. It was bald but for a few strands of hair, lying limply against her pillow. And her mouth was hanging open. Her teeth were small, jagged and black. I felt afraid of her, this time. She didn't move or make a sound. She didn't seem to hear me at all, as I backed out of the room and closed the door behind me.

After that, I stopping going to her room at night. Except for when my mother made a special effort, for family dinners or special events, to get her dressed and put her wig on - I never

saw her anymore. It seemed she died years before I saw her at her funeral.

My mother said that she went crazy near the end. She refused to wear her wigs - she didn't even remember her name! That's what my mother said.

My grandmother said that when she died, no one could find her papers. No one knew her maiden name. She had come to be a servant for a rich family in Victoria, but had become my great-grandfather's second wife. No one knew anymore than that. She was traditional, my grandmother said. She didn't want to bring shame on the family.

Her room has been empty ever since she left. There are no ginger candies on the corner of the dresser, and no more words for her daughter's daughter's daughter to tell her story.

Why Canadians are the Problem

BY MEAGHAN HUME

What do you think of when you imagine Kelowna? What images or memories come to mind? Chances are, when you envision this city, you think of some of its iconic sights and activities: memories of sunny days spent lakeside, trips up to Big White, or events at the UBC-Okanagan campus. What probably doesn't pop into mind is "white" privilege. Privilege is a less obvious form of racism because it is often unseen. It involves the unspoken favouring and naturalizing of one race over another—and in Kelowna's case, this race is "white." Because we often think of racism as a concern that exists "elsewhere," you might not see "white" privilege on the surface, but if you look behind the scenes, you will see that Kelowna is full of this form of racism.

One recent example of thinly veiled racial privileging is the treatment of the Jamaican workers that came to the Okanagan in 2007 to work on the construction of the new William R. Bennett Bridge. These workers were recruited to the Okanagan project because of a lack of available labourers as well as an initiative to strengthen "educational partnerships" (Okanagan College News) between Kelowna and Jamaica, implying a mutual equality. Yet, these workers were not treated as equals. An article entitled "No Sex, No Pot for Workers" in The Daily Courier assured Kelowna that these workers were "greeted" at the airport by the Jamaican liaison service in Kelowna which was "[there] to assist Jamaican works as well as monitor them" (Nieoczyn). The article noted that "the Jamaican workers who come to the Okanagan are expected to follow a series of stringent rules." For

example, "they have been told they have an 11 p.m. curfew on work nights and should refrain from drinking when they have to work the next morning." Additionally, "a sheet given to the workers reminds them that the

“they have been told they have an 11 p.m. curfew on work nights and should refrain from drinking when they have to work the next morning.”

use of marijuana or any other non-prescription drug is illegal and tells them they are not allowed to have members of the opposite sex sleep over" (Nieoczyn).

These rules clearly demonstrated a paternalistic attitude towards the Jamaican workers, not an equal relationship geared towards strengthening "educational partnerships." The workers were clearly not viewed or treated on the same level as Canadian citizens, but as inferiors who needed to be monitored. Their work ethic was called into question, and they were stereotyped as drug users and criminals. It is not difficult to imagine the outrage a Canadian would feel if they were met with the same demands when working overseas. This incident calls to mind a similar event in Toronto in 1994.

At this time, a "blurred photograph of black murder suspect whose only recognizable feature was his dreadlocks" (Clarke 102) had been circulating in Toronto newspapers for weeks. The photograph prompted an outpouring of racial prejudice against all black men. The situation culminated when "Michael Valpy, a liberal columnist for the Globe and Mail, contributed to the public hysteria. Valpy linked 'a growing tendency toward random violence crime' in Toronto to 'young black people of Jamaican origin' who he described as fomenters of 'a culture of violence.'" The premier at the time, Bob Rae, then made a public demand that Jamaica take back the lawbreakers. The blatant racism of the situation became apparent when the embarrassing fact that the lawbreakers being referred to were Canadian-born and educated.

These examples run contrary to how Canadian-nation-building constructs itself as a multicultural mosaic wherein racism is a forgotten memory of the distant past. There is a sense that Canada has moved beyond 'that' kind of unsavoury racist behaviour: "White Canada imagines itself to be congenial, hospitable, tolerant. There are plenty of white liberals in Canada, but little white liberal guilt: Canadians do not believe they have committed any racial sins for which they should atone" (Clarke 101-102). However, this racial profiling of Jamaican workers is not some distant memory: it happened right here, in Kelowna, only three years ago. Canadians need to realize the underlying racial privileging that is still present today. That this privileging is unseen an unspoken makes it as powerful as—not less—than outright racism of the past.



BY LINDSAY DIEHL

As many critics have pointed out, Canada's democracy, like the democracy of the United States, can be described as a regime built on 'white' privilege. Indeed, the concept of 'white' as an identity emerged historically in Canada primarily in relation to Indigenous people and as a direct result of European imperialist efforts (Russell 191). As Richard Dyer explains, the identification of being 'white' is a relatively new invention; it has only existed for approximately five hundred years, and it was used in imperial colonies to unite "coalitions of disparate groups of people" (Dyer 19). In the Canadian context, writer Dionne Brand elucidates:

Inclusion in or access to Canadian identity, nationality and citizenship depended and depends on one's relationship to this 'whiteness.' While it is not the only characteristic it is the dominant characteristic. It has a certain elasticity. One can enter not

only if one belongs to the so-called founding nations – the English and the French – but also other European nationalities like the German or Ukrainian. Its flexibility and strength allow it to contain inter-ethnic squabbles, like between the English and the French, without rending its basic fabric of 'white' entitlement. (Brand qtd. in Gunew 142)

Brand underscores the elasticity of 'whiteness' which permits it to expand to include various groups and to constrict to exclude other groups in order to maintain its privilege. For example, in Canada, both Jews and the Irish have only relatively recently become 'white' (Dolby 6). 'Whiteness' is therefore not a fixed identification, but rather a flexible classification that is strategically re-created anew within changing circumstances.

Though whiteness is implicit in the construction of Canada's national identity, however, it goes mostly unnoticed. It is the invisible norm

that under-girds the structures of Canada's society and it survives as the unchallenged power that it has been previously in projects of imperialism and colonialism; as critic George Elliot Clarke observes, "Canadian whiteness [continues] to exist ... as an ethereal force" (Clarke 100). 'White' privilege persists in Canada largely because of the popular illusion of 'racelessness' that is promoted in mainstream conceptions of Canadian identity. As critic Howard Adams writes:

Canadian authorities and historians have ... managed to perpetuate the illusion that Canada has never been a white supremacist society, an illusion that Canadian people continue to believe ... [and] because they are unaware of their racism, they are self-righteous, arrogant, and free from any social conscience with regard to racism. (Adams qtd. in Russell 193)

Indeed, Canadians like to define their national identity in opposition to the

United States: Canada is pristine, unpolluted wilderness; the U.S. is decaying urban centers; Canada built a welfare state; the U.S. built a warfare state; Canadians created a "mosaic" of diverse peoples; Americans produced "melting pot" of assimilation (Clarke 100).

The most significant difference between Canada and the U.S., according to this conception of Canadian identity, is thus that America has a race problem, whereas Canada does not. Put simply, many Canadians refuse to confront their own racist attitudes based on the erroneous assumption that 'their' Indigenous peoples, immigrants, societal and cultural 'others', visible minorities, etc. are better treated than those in the United States (Russell 193). The majority of Canadians are therefore ignorant of:

the existence, as recently as the 1950s, of school segregation in Ontario and Nova Scotia; the \$500 head tax that the Canadian government once slapped on all Chinese immigrants; and the numerous "Black Codes" enacted by various levels of government to control where Chinese, Japanese, Native, and African citizens could work, live, be buried, and even, in some cases, vote. During the Second World War, Canada interned its Japanese (but not its Germans) and refused entry to Jews fleeing Nazi persecution. That Canada, like the United States, also served as a haven for Nazi war criminals has recently made the papers. (Clarke 103)

Some critics have noted that the United States has at least started to acknowledge its history of racism while Canada persists on clinging to its "mythology of racelessness" and "stupefying innocence" (Russell 193). As long as this stupefying innocence or ignorance continues, moreover, so can 'white' privilege remain unchecked – and so can the colonial practices attached to this privilege persist in flourishing.

Revelations of past mistreatment of Indigenous people that include scandals of police brutality, disproportionate incarceration rates, deaths in custody, sexual abuse in residential schools and forced adoptions have recently emerged through documentaries, creative works, articles and books, as well as Royal Commissions and National Inquiries. These unsettling disclosures are working to challenge mainstream concepts of Canada's national identity as a congenial, fair-minded and tolerant country. On January 8 1998, the government made a public apology to its Indigenous peoples for having instituted assistance programs over the past 150 years that did more harm than good to their communities. After hundreds of court cases were filed in regards to the physical, emotional and sexual abuse

Because they deny that racism exists in Canada, and because they do not acknowledge the mistreatment of Indigenous people or the need to acknowledge and make amends for this mistreatment, most Canadians persist in 'blaming' Natives for their socioeconomic conditions. As Aboriginal advocate Emma Larocque comments:

Blaming 'forgets' that racism has also been institutionalized in government policies of assimilation, paternalism, and the historical and continuing confiscation of Native lands and resources. These policies have had a devastating impact on Native peoples but the fallout has been explained away as stemming from 'cultural differences.' In turn 'cultural differences' are reduced to stereotypes such as 'Indians can't

'White' privilege persists in Canada largely because of the popular illusion of 'racelessness' that is promoted in mainstream conceptions of Canadian identity.

suffered by Indigenous students in residential schools, furthermore, the government agreed to institute a system of reparations. However, Canadians generally misinterpret these issues as having been fully 'dealt with' – and this means that they feel that they should not have to acknowledge institutionalized government policies of 'aggressive assimilation' (195). Indeed, many Canadians do not even know that the apology has taken place or that a system of reparations has been implemented. As Dionne Brand suggests, the way in which the conflict between English and French Canada still dominates the political scene, regardless of Indigenous claims of severe mistreatment, reveals the predominance of 'white' entitlement in this country (Brand qtd. in Gunew 142).

or won't adjust' to city life. In other words, Indian 'culture,' rather than colonization or racism, is blamed for whatever has happened to Native peoples. (Laroque 74)

Stereotypes, then, play an important role in the maintenance of 'white' privilege – the assumption behind these stereotypes, moreover, is that 'whiteness' is better, more civilized, more advanced, more dynamic than other perceived 'non-white' groups. Thus, the same stereotypes that once justified taking the lands of colonized people now effectively help to maintain the inequity that defines the relationship between Indigenous people and 'whites' in Canada. The underlying understanding is that all other 'races' and 'cultures' must conform to the norm of 'whiteness.'

racism has also been institutionalized in government policies of assimilation, paternalism, and the historical and continuing confiscation of Native lands and resources.

By maintaining these stereotypes, furthermore, 'white' Canadians can deflect the demands of perceived 'non-white' groups to be recognized and respected. By asserting that everyone has equal opportunities in present-day Canada, furthermore, Canadians make it seem as though 'non-white' groups are asking for special status - when it is, in fact, 'whites' who are protecting their special status by not allowing for others to express their legitimate concerns, needs and desires.

In her essay, "Witnessing Trauma in Post-Apartheid South Africa: The Question of Generational Responsibility," Liese Van der Watt warns against denial, repression, or disavowal of the past and pleads for the critical re-evaluation of history and of inherited traditions. According to Van der Watt, "younger generations are indeed co-responsible for the deeds of their forbears" (28). To establish her point, she quotes Jurgen Habermas, who writes:

Our form of existence is connected with the form of existence of our parents and grandparents by a

mesh of family, local, political, and intellectual traditions which is difficult to untangle - by an historical milieu therefore, which in the first instance has made us what we are and how we are today. (Habermas qtd. in Van der Watt)

The issues that Van der Watt and Habermas raise are not directly addressed to the situation in Canada; they are addressed to the situations in South Africa and Germany respectively. However, the issues they present are equally pressing for the younger generations in Canada which are confronted with a troubling reality that must be worked through in "a manner that accurately and critically engages a traumatic past, assists understanding while simultaneously counteracting prejudice ... and helps lay the basis for a legitimate ... democratic policy" (LaCapra qtd. in Van der Watt 28). In other words, the younger generations in Canada have the responsibility to take part in the shaping of a future through a critical re-analysis of the past. To do this, they must honestly confront the horrors of the past; they must ask

questions, search for answers, and accept their co-responsibility in keeping the past alive and providing for a different future.

Nuu-chah-nulth cultural leader, Ki-ke-in, contends that a conversation between 'whites' and Indigenous people has never really occurred, for a conversation requires, at the very least, both parties to "have enough respect" to ask each other who they are and where they are coming from (Ki-ke-in qtd. in Russell 187). Ki-ke-in's conception of a conversation is thus one of equals. In her opinion, this conversation has not happened yet because 'whites' tend to dominate every attempt at dialogue; they are constantly interrupting the Indigenous people; and, furthermore, they insist on speaking only in their own language and advocating their own values. Conversely, the kind of conversation that Ki-ke-in is requesting requires "give and take, a respect for others' positions, a historical and personal situatedness" (Russell 188). If this kind of conversation continues for long enough, moreover, Ki-ke-in believes that both parties will enjoy mutual respect and trust for one another - and then, and only then, will there be an opportunity for the parties to reach a consensus. This conversation is thus a metaphor for what the younger generations in Canada must strive to attain. Before this exchange can occur, however, Canadians must recognize and question their own privilege - for the restrictive norm that is constituted by 'whiteness' forms the greatest barrier to this conversation.

This happened to my friend:

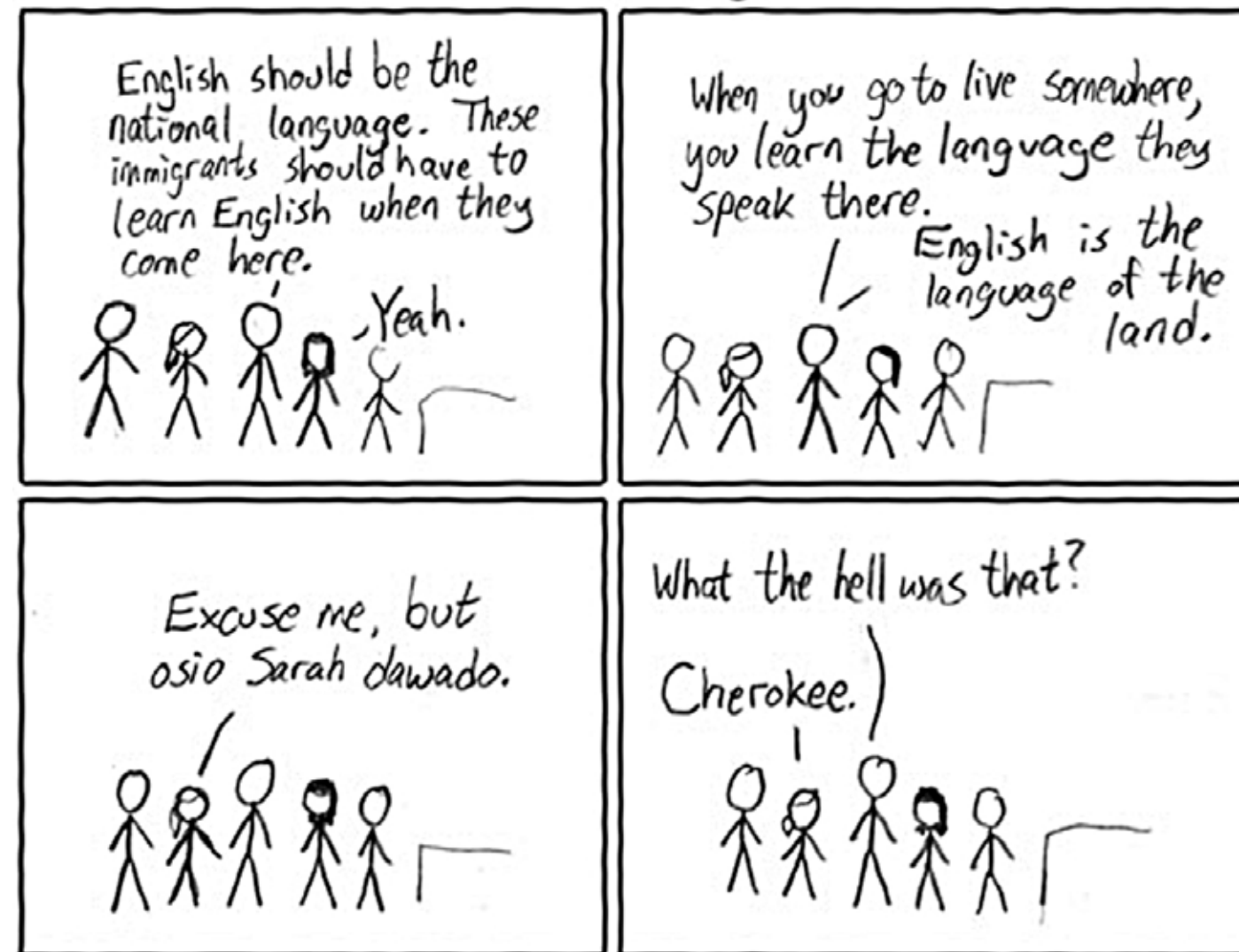


ILLUSTRATION: RANDALL MUNROE

Whose history have we chosen to commemorate?



WHOSE PEACE DID WE FIGHT FOR?



WHITEWASHING HISTORY: WE CELEBRATE OUR SETTLERS, BUT WHAT ABOUT OUR INDIGENOUS GROUPS?



WHITE WAR HEROES: WHO GOES UNREPRESENTED IN THIS PORTRAYAL OF HISTORY?



PHOTOS: NATALIE INGRAM

A Heathen Slum:

The Racial Perceptions that Helped Create and Maintain Victoria's Chinatown



PHOTOGRAPH: DOM CRAYFORD

BY: LINDSAY DIEHL

When speculation of gold deposits in the interior of British Columbia became prevalent in the late 1850s, thousands of miners were drawn to the territory by the prospect of getting rich, quick. During this time, Victoria emerged as a major Pacific port of entry to North America. Victoria was the overseas landing site, supply town and jumping off point for the Fraser Valley gold fields (Lai 3). As Chinese miners began to arrive in numbers, Victoria also became the site of Canada's oldest and most firmly established Chinatown (Chan 68).

The creation of Victoria's Chinatown was a "complex process of voluntary and involuntary factors" (Lai 34). Victoria was already racially segregated and 'white' landlords often refused to sell or lease their properties to Chinese settlers. Chinese immigrants were, therefore, restricted to residences on the outskirts of town (Lai 34). As the Chinese immigrants met with hostile racism from the host society, however, voluntary segregation became an increasing factor. Chinese people tended to band together, travel in groups and isolate themselves from

the 'white' community to avoid abuse and discrimination. Chinatown thus formed a collective for the benefit of its inhabitants who were, as individuals, alienated from mainstream society. Once Chinatown was created, it was treated with increasing suspicion by the host community. The Chinese were accused of confining themselves

Stereotyped images of the Chinese were thus advocated to many in Victoria's 'white' community who had never met a Chinese person before.

to Chinatown, not conforming to the English pattern of living and refusing to be assimilated into mainstream society. They were portrayed as sojourners or transient workers who were only in Victoria to make a small fortune before returning to China. Chinatown, therefore, was viewed as a slum for Chinese inhabitants who were not contributing to the larger society. Members of the 'white' community

used these misconceptions and stereotypes to further justify the denial of basic rights and privileges to the Chinese community.

As early as 1858, after the knowledge of gold deposits in the lower Fraser River became widespread, Chinese immigrants had arrived in Victoria.

'White' landowners would not sell or lease their properties to the Chinese unless the lands were on the fringe of town, and thus unattractive to the 'white' settlers (Lai 34). Chinese arrivals thus had little choice other than to "set up tents or shacks on the mudflats in the north bank of Johnson Street ravine (184). In this area of town, which was particularly isolated, Chinese merchants, artisans and

craftsmen erected stores to service the gold miners. These pioneer businessmen formed the nucleus of what became Canada's first Chinatown.

Misconceptions and stereotypes about the Chinese preceded their arrival in Victoria as 'white' miners of the American coast brought to British Columbia their open prejudices against the Chinese community. Newspaper articles in the Victoria Gazette announced the expected arrival of Chinese immigrants and warned that "[d]oubtless ere long the familiar interrogation of 'Wantee Washee?' will be added to our every day conversational vocabulary" (VG June 30 1858). Stereotyped images of the Chinese were thus advocated to many in Victoria's 'white' community who had never met a Chinese person before.

Animosity towards the Chinese increased as Chinese labourers began

Little to no effort was made to understand or to sympathise with the plight of the Chinese settlers from their own perspective.

to arrive. Employers universally paid Chinese workers less than their 'white' counterparts, and thus 'whites' feared that the Chinese would steal their jobs (Baureiss 30). The Chinese also did not look the same, they did not practice the same religion, and they did not exercise familiar customs or otherwise live in the same manner as their host society. Consequently, Chinese immigrants were often confronted with forthright, and sometimes violent, racism as soon as they disembarked. When the Quickstep, the first large ship carrying Chinese coolies landed in 1878, the Chinese workers "were driven like cattle to smaller transshipment vessels in the Inner Wharf and pelted and jeered at" (Gregson 122). The Victoria Colonist commented that "[a]s their

presence in our midst is not desired, the welcome they received was not of the most flattering nature" (VC June 9 1878). Indeed, the same newspaper had earlier that year described the Chinese as the most "undesirable addition to our population" (VC January 9 1878). In Victoria, Chinese inhabitants were frequently the victims of physical abuse. Incidents of violence towards Chinese settlers were often reported in the local newspapers, but the perpetrators were seldom arrested. A Vancouver newspaper "once remarked that unprovoked assaults on the Chinese people by ill-mannered boys and youths were so common that they were hardly worth reporting" (Lai 35).

Chinese immigrants thus tended to settle within the protective boundaries of Chinatown. Chinatown created a "refuge away from unfriendly surroundings" (Yu 119). Within the confines of Chinatown, the Chinese

inhabitants could feel relatively safe and secure: they could speak their own language, eat familiar foods and worship their traditional gods. The establishment of Chinatown was thus a response to discrimination and an assertion of minority community (119). However, the host society viewed Chinatown with disdain. The Chinese inhabitants were described as "a semi-civilized race," and were blamed for transplanting "all the frightful and unblushing vices of their native country" (VC August 13 1873). Little to no effort was made to understand or to sympathise with the plight of the Chinese settlers from their own perspective. Chinatown was thus judged "within the context of Christian white society" (Lai 36). Indeed, few 'whites' even visited Chinatown as it

was considered a separate ghetto for the Chinese.

The 'white' community constantly criticised the poor state of Victoria's Chinatown, but as Chinatown was viewed a separate slum only for the Chinese little was done to improve its over-crowded conditions. Instead of demanding higher wages for the Chinese workers or directing funds to the Chinese community, agitators argued that the conditions of Chinatown were indicative of the inhabitants' degenerate nature. The unhygienic living conditions endured in Chinatown were projected to be the fault of the Chinese who were hoarding money for their return back to China. Chinese labourers were, according to this view, never intending to stay in Victoria nor were they contributing to the economy. In reality, few Chinese settlers viewed themselves as sojourners (Chan 128). Chinese merchants, for example, reported to the 1885 Royal Commission into Chinese Immigration that many Chinese workers would gladly reside permanently in British Columbia; only the laws compelled them to remain aliens (128). One Chinese merchant explained that he desired to have his family come to Canada, but he did not wish for them to meet with such animosity as he had experienced (129). As the sojourner myth became more widespread, however, it became easier for the 'white' populace to harass people who supposedly never wanted to stay in Canada anyway.

By May 1873, Victoria had established its first Anti-Chinese Society. This group capitalized on the racist sentiment already prevalent in the community. Many residents, including influential politicians such as the P.M. Arthur Bunster, began to partake in meetings and discussions about the 'Chinese problem' (Wickberg 69). The organization immediately demanded limitations on Chinese immigration (46). The Society justified its stance by pointing to the perceived dangers presented by the

city's Chinatown. The group was also fundamental in lobbying for Chinese disenfranchisement, which occurred in late 1875 (45).

Intense racism towards the Chinese not only facilitated the creation of a Chinatown, but also ensured its continuing existence as a separate community. Some historians have argued that the Chinese creation of Chinatown and their strong identification with their homeland was symptomatic of a regression reaction to discrimination (Yu 118). These historians assert that if the Chinese had received "better treatment such as tolerance and acceptance, they would have identified positively with a new country" (118). The Chinese inhabitants of Victoria, however, did not receive better treatment, especially after Chinatown was established. Resentment towards the Chinese was so strong that integration with the 'white' community was impossible. The 'whites' did not want the Chinese in their midst, but they also did not want them forming their own community. The real 'Chinese problem' was the very fact that Chinese immigrants were being allowed into to reside in Victoria at all. This sentiment is exemplified in the following years, when the government was petitioned until a Chinese head tax was levied. This also explains why the conditions of Chinatown were never addressed. Chinatown was perceived, or hoped to be, a temporary settlement for a group of unwanted transient workers.

By the 1880s, when more than 15,000 Chinese labourers were contracted to build the British Columbian section of the Canadian Pacific Railway, Chinatown was already a conspicuous facet of Victoria's human landscape - so too unfortunately were the racial and discriminatory feelings that created it.



PHOTO: FERBERT, MARK

Chinese Skipping

BY CARRIE KARSGAARD

Ankles!
In—out—side to side—in—ON!
Of recent recesses, we had changed our tune
From regular skipping games of Cinderella and Zero to Hero
To the contained rectangle of Chinese skipping.
Like Chinese baseball, Chinese checkers
A welcome aberration to our recess routine.

Knees!
In—
Vicky leaps into the elastic rectangle,
Her feet swimming with our feet
In the mess of preteen joys
Of boys,
Sleepover secrets,
And notes folded into tiny paper stars.
Together we stand in the bathroom and pinch our hips, our thighs,
Wishing to be thin like models,
Wishing to be beautiful.
To be in.

Out—
Trying to be beautiful like us,
Vicky contours her eyelids with dark shadows and
Strips her hair to a flat brassy blonde.
"I'm a banana!" Vicky shouts.
Proud to be loud, and white, like us.
Defying quiet.
Defying math. Punctuality. Hello Kitty.
Hard work. Piano lessons.
Vicky's feet spread wide to straddle the elastic ropes,
Poised to jump back in.

But—
Outside our ken now.

Side to side—
Weaving her feet with ours,
Her identity,
Her culture,
Her friendship with ours.
Vicky fluidly defies the elastic borders
Making the rope invisible with her quick steps.
What is Asian after all?
Vicky is Vicky.

In—
She's one of us.
Proud to be Canadian, she reminds us:
The Ng's have a long memory.
Long as a boat ride—
No plane ride for them!—across the Pacific,
Long as the railroad across the Roger's Pass,
Her family a fixture not FOB.

ON!
Her feet land flat on their marks,
On our boundaries,
Pressing elastic to concrete.
We feel our knees buckle,
But hold strong. We don't let go.
Don't let the game down.

Waist!
We stretch the elastic higher,
Raising the stakes.
Outside the rectangle, Vicky appraises the challenge.
Winding up,
Ready to jump back in.
To fly.

A Re-Presentation Of Privilege

BY: NATALIE INGRAM

Privilege isn't determined only by whether one is subject to obvious or deliberate racist acts, nor is it something that only occurs in—for lack of a better term—everyday life. This is why, in a magazine dedicated to exposing white privilege, we've chosen to write, and write about, popular entertainment. We include fiction, poetry and discussions about TV shows. What does Glee have to do with white privilege in the Okanagan?

Arts and entertainment don't exist in a bubble. The same privilege which informs our everyday experiences also appears in our artwork, and it often appears in the same way—unquestioned, invisible. Even a show like Glee, ostensibly about celebrating difference, privileges only certain kinds of difference, while the “multicultural” murals of “historic downtown” Vernon are placed side-by-side with murals that proudly showcase our colonial history. Privilege is just as difficult to escape from in art as it is in everyday life, whether or not one is “white.”

In the fiction I present here I've presumed to take on the voice of a particular group of people to which I do not belong, and to speak about things that I, as a white author, have never had to experience. I do this not to suggest that privilege is easily cast away, but rather to suggest that art, an imaginative venture after all, provides another way to engage with the concept of “white” privilege. In fact, I believe that this sort of engagement is necessary. By writing only “white” characters, I create yet another world where “white” is normal, a fiction which I believe would be deeply irresponsible. By the same token, simply ignoring the very real inequities faced by people who are designated “non-white” is impossible as well as irresponsible.

“Impossible and irresponsible” might sum up any attempt on my part to write these experiences, as well. Writing characters of a particular “race,” with the particular aims of addressing white privilege, threatens to reduce the characters I write to only their race, in a world where race and racism are only ever an “issue.” Nevertheless these pieces are very much about being racialized in a particular way, and deliberately so, not because I want to be reductive but because I hope to provide another way in to the discussion about “white” privilege. These pieces aim to expose “white” privilege as something far more subtle than only obvious and deliberate acts of racism, such as those discussed elsewhere in the magazine, and to call attention to some of those things that those who are “white” often don't have to think about. With the caveat, of course, that these pieces are not intended to be representative of the totality of a “non-white” person's experience, or even representative at all. These are stories: not insignificant ones, but a small number among many stories, all of which are worth listening to.



My Name Is

BY NATALIE INGRAM

“I'm sorry I can't go with you on your first day,” Idihi said at the dinner table that night, and Jason knew she meant it. Late morning shifts had meant that Idihi was always the one to take Amana to school in the mornings. Now that she was opening her own practice, though, she didn't have that luxury.

“It's okay.” Their daughter accepted the apology with all the magnanimity of a girl who is suddenly freed from parental supervision. “It's not the first day anyway.”

“Well, your first day here.” Amana, whose attention was mostly on her plate, shrugged. The biggest blessing of the move so far was that Amana didn't seem too distressed by starting at a new school two months into the school year. “She'll be okay,” Idihi had assured him weeks ago, sounding doubtful. “She likes meeting new people.”

“I can walk to the bus stop by myself.” Amana swallowed her food just in time to avoid catching an earful from her mother. “I'm old now!”

Jason managed to keep a straight face, but only just.

“You don't even know where the bus stop is.” Idihi sounded serious enough, but her lips were twitching.

“I'll find it.” Amana grinned at them both.

It was time to reign this conversation. “Well, I hope you don't mind finding it with your dad, even if you're too grown up for your old mom.” Idihi raised an eyebrow at him, and he shrugged.

“Oh.” Amana looked crestfallen.

Jason did laugh out loud this time. “Try not to get too excited.”

“Don't worry,” Amana promised, her small face solemn. “I won't.”

#

“Still think the bus stop's not that far away, huh?” her dad said to her now. She took her hands out of her pockets, where she'd been hiding them from the morning air. It was cold for October, and the wind bit at her gloveless hands.

“Not that far.” She kicked at a pebble and watched it skitter down the street. She'd already discovered that she didn't know where the bus stop was after all. Well, they'd just gotten here. How was she supposed to know where everything was in this stupid new town?

She heard the bus stop before she saw it, not that there was much to see. It didn't have a sign like a real bus stop, just a group of kids bunched together on the sidewalk, laughing and shouting.

“It is,” her dad agreed. “Well, have a good first day. Sort of first day,” he said when she opened her mouth. Then he bent over and hugged her. “I'll see you here at three-thirty.” She hugged him back, then wriggled out of his grip and was off across the street. She waved; he waved back, but didn't leave. He wouldn't go home until the bus came, she knew. Oh well. Mom would have walked with her all the way across the street, and Amana didn't need that. She was in grade two now: practically a grown-up herself.

She stood a little apart from the others, trying to ignore the sudden flutters in her stomach. She wasn't shy. She hadn't even been nervous on the first day back at her old school...but everybody here knew each other already. She could meet everybody later. For now she'd just watch.

Most of them had light skin and light hair like her dad did. There were a couple of kids who looked Asian, but Amana didn't see anybody who looked like her mother. Or like her. That was all right, though—she did see several

girls her own age.

It was a boy who noticed her first. “Hi, I'm Colin. Are you new?”

“Yeah,” she said. “I'm Amana.”

“Oh,” he said. “That's a pretty name.” He might have said something else, but just then a pebble bounced off his bright blue jacket. “Hey!” he yelled, turning to face whoever had thrown it.

“Colin!” someone shouted back. “Look what we found!”

Colin made a face, but he just said “okay, see you later,” and went trotting back to his friends.

The bus came not long after, and Amana piled onto it with everybody else. The bus driver said hello when she climbed aboard. Nobody else talked to her. She had a seat to herself on the ride to school.

She'd seen the school once before, but she'd never been inside it. Her mom had written down the classroom number and the teacher's name, and she clutched the crumpled paper in one hand, even though she knew exactly what it said.

She was one of the first ones into the classroom when the bell rang, and then realized that she didn't know where to sit. Her other grade two teacher had made everybody sit alphabetically.

She was getting funny looks anyway, so she whispered to a blonde girl standing nearby. “Can we just sit anywhere?”

“Yeah, anywhere,” the girl said, and went back to chatting with her friends. Amana shrugged and took a desk near the back of the room.

The teacher smiled at Amana when she came in. When she finished the roll call, Amana held up her hand. “Um, you didn't call my name.”

“Right.” The teacher pulled out another sheet and peered at it. “Class, this is

Amanda.” There was a muttered chorus of “hellos” and “Hi Amandas.”

“Umm...”

“Yes?”

“You said my name wrong. It’s Amana.”

“Oh, I’m sorry!” The teacher hesitated. “Amana.” She still said it like “Amanda,” only without the “d.”

“No, it’s Amana. Ah-ma-nah.”

“Right.” The teacher nodded, but didn’t try to say Amana’s name again. “Well, class, I hope you’ll all make Am... make our new student welcome.”

“It’s Amana,” Amana said again, but she said it very softly.

At recess she played with the girls that she’d sat beside in class. “So where are you from, Amana?” asked Jennie.

“Kelowna,” she said.

Jennie looked disappointed. “That’s not very far away at all.”

Amana blinked at her. “Is that bad?”

“No-o, it’s just... I dunno, I thought maybe you were from somewhere exciting.”

“Exciting?”

“Never mind.” Jennie looked relieved when she was cut off by shouts from behind them. Two girls and a boy made their way over to where Amana and her friends were standing.

“Amanda! Hey, Amanda!”

“Uh, they’re talking to you,” Michelle said.

Amana blinked. “No they’re not.”

The newcomers paused a ways away. “How come she’s ignoring us?” she heard one of the girls say in a not-very-quiet whisper. “You were talking real loud.”

Oh. They were talking to her after all. They’d just gotten her name wrong, just like the teacher had.

The other girl laughed. It sounded like something honking. “Dunno. Maybe she’s deaf.” The goose-honk laugh again. “Or dumb.”

Amana felt her face get hot. “I’m not deaf!” She decided to ignore the other thing they said. “You said my name wrong!” Amana glanced at her new friends, hoping they would decide to stick up for her. None of them seemed to have heard.

The boy hit goose-honk girl on the arm. “Hey!”

He ignored her. “I’m Dominic. How do you really say your name?”

She told him.

“So where are you from?”

“Kelowna,” Amana said. “I was just telling these guys.”

“Oh. Well, why’d you come here?”

“My mom got a new job,” Amana said. “She’s a doctor.”

“Cool. What does your dad do then?”

She shrugged. “He does some computer-y stuff.” Her dad didn’t have a real job yet. He’d quit so they could come here. Now he did “freelance” work. Amana wasn’t sure why her dad wanted to work for free, but he said it was only until he could find a new job. Still, she wasn’t going to tell these people any of that.

“That’s cool. My dad...” But the bell rang before they could find out what Dominic’s dad did. “He’s an engineer,” Dominic finished anyway. She would have laughed at the way he said it, but she’d done the same thing when she’d told him what her mom did. It was the sort of thing that impressed people.

“Well, see ya.” Dominic and his friends drifted back towards the school.

Amana trudged inside with Jennie and the rest. It was better than walking inside by herself or with goose-honk girl, even though they’d never said they thought she wasn’t dumb.

She looked for the bus-stop boy, Colin, on the way home—he seemed nice—but didn’t see him. Her dad was waiting, though. She was glad to see him.

“How was your day?” he asked when she crossed the street to meet him.

“Oh. It was okay.”

“Just okay?”

She scowled. “Stupid teacher couldn’t say my name right.”

“That’s not very nice.”

“Nope.”

Her dad laughed a little, but what he said was, “I mean, you shouldn’t say things like that about your teacher.”

She knew she shouldn’t, but she didn’t care. “That sounds like something Mom would say.”

“She’d be right,” her dad said. He didn’t sound angry, but she knew he wanted her to leave it alone. She was quiet after that, but her dad didn’t stay silent for very long.

“So did you make any new friends today?”

“I...” She wasn’t sure if she had or not. She knew they’d heard that girl call her dumb. But then she looked at her dad’s face, interested and hopeful all at the same time. “Yeah. I met Jennie and Michelle and Tammy and Alice...”

A Picture’s Worth

BY NATALIE INGRAM

Her school’s grade two classes took an afternoon field trip to the Vernon museum, to look at all the old things they kept in the archives. They went to the library afterwards. Amana didn’t take any books home, but she liked walking through the endless shelves. She even went through the sections for big kids and grown-ups, though when the teacher couldn’t find her she was mad at Amana for “wandering off.”

The library was right where her mom worked, which meant she didn’t have to take the bus home. That was the good part. The bad part was that the teacher insisted on walking her to her mom’s work even though it was right nearby. The teacher made her wait until the whole class was on the bus before she would let Amana leave. And now she was making the bus wait, Amana guessed. She didn’t really think that the bus would leave without Mrs. Cready, but annoyed at being made to wait, she imagined that it would.

Amana slowed down to examine one of the painted buildings that the teacher had walked right past. The mural showed a bunch of people dressed like they’d seen in the museum, wearing old clothes and standing next to an old-fashioned carriage: a man, a woman, a crying boy and a girl who was probably her own age.

“Amana? Are you coming?”

Amana followed reluctantly. At least Mrs. Cready had her name right now, even if she always said it like she was a little bit afraid of it.

She’d hoped that she would be able to see the mural from her mom’s office, but it was farther down the street than Amana remembered. Mrs. Cready walked all the way up to the second floor with her.

The receptionist greeted Amana when they came in. “Your mom should be

ready in a few minutes.”

“Okay,” Amana said. She sat in a chair swung her legs. “Bye, Mrs. Cready!”

The teacher smiled. “See you tomorrow.”

The only window looked out on an empty street with buildings that didn’t even have murals on them, so Amana picked up one of the magazines sitting on a nearby table. It said “People” on the front in big blue letters, but she ignored the headlines, even the brightly coloured ones. It would be something to do until her mom came out, but instead she found herself staring at the woman on the cover. She was pretty even though she was making a funny face (why didn’t people in magazines ever smile?) Her hair was dark like Amana’s, but it was long and straight.

Amana tugged at her own hair. Her hair was all tiny curls which poofed out in every direction. Nobody she knew had hair like hers, except her mom, and she always put it in little braids so it didn’t poof out everywhere.

The other magazines were the same. More cluttered covers with bright headlines. More women with long, straight hair. She built up a tottering pile of discarded magazines, and had already run out of magazines to add when her mother came out. Amana jumped to her feet.

Her mother was talking with someone. Amana tried not to fidget too much while finished up what she was doing. At last it seemed like her mother was done. “Ready?”

“Yes,” she said, and her mother laughed. Amana didn’t know what was funny, but she was glad to be going home.

“How was the museum?” her mother asked as they tromped down the stairs.

“Boring.”

Her mother waited a moment, then

said, “Oh? Why’s that?”

“I dunno. It’s just stuff about old people doing old things.”

“I think you mean old-fashioned.” Her mother held open the glass door for her.

“I guess. The library was better.”

“That way,” her mother said, pointing in the direction of the mural. Amana walked. She didn’t even notice that her mom wasn’t beside her anymore until a voice behind her said, “Amana, the parking lot’s over here.”

“Oh,” she said without turning around. She kept walking—she wanted to see the mural again, and it wasn’t far—but she did slow down. Her mom came up behind her to see what she was looking at.

“Neat, isn’t it?” her mom asked.

“Yeah.”

Even the little girl in the picture had long hair that was only a little bit curly. The older lady had her hair pulled back and covered by a funny hat, but Amana imagined that when she took off the hat she had long hair too, longer and straighter than even the little girl’s, only dark, almost like Amana’s own.

“We should go,” her mom said. “Before your dad starts wondering where we are.”

“Okay.” She didn’t really want to look at the mural anymore anyway. She followed her mother back to the parking lot, watching her mother’s braids peek out from under the read bandana she wore.

Maybe Amana should wear one too. Then she could cover her stupid poofy hair and pretend it was long and straight. Just like the lady in the mural.

Not A Country

BY NATALIE INGRAM

Her grade five class did a “world culture” social studies project. Her partner John wanted to do Ireland, because his grandma was Irish. Amana was just relieved that she didn’t have to do Africa. All of the other places on the list Mr. Ross gave them were countries: France, China, Russia, Mexico, a bunch more ... and Africa. Like it was all one place. She knew it wasn’t, because her mom had gone to Tanzania this summer, and when she got back she complained about how people called Africa a country. “They’re flight attendants,” she said. “They travel for a living. They should know better.”

John read the boring parts of their poster to the class, like what the capital city was and how many people lived there—he’d picked that stuff because it was short—and Amana read out the interesting bits like the history and the major tourist locations. Secretly, she thought theirs was one of the most interesting projects; a little guiltily (her friend Lisa was part of that group), she decided that Africa was one of the boring ones. Lisa’s group talked mostly about Nigeria, and how the people there were poor.

“You forgot to include a list of the major religions in Nigeria,” the teacher pointed out, and Lisa’s group exchanged guilty glances. “Oops,” Lisa said.

Mr. Ross smiled. “That’s okay. Can you name some right now? Anybody?”

There was silence for a few seconds. It was a dumb question, Amana thought. If Lisa’s group didn’t know, why would anybody else? Nobody she knew read encyclopaedias for fun.

The teacher didn’t seem in a hurry to break the silence, though. People started shifting in their seats. Amana was starting to feel fidgety herself, the more so when she realized that people were looking in her direction. Even

Lisa was watching Amana with an expectant look on her face.

Amana could feel herself flushing. “Why are you looking at me?” she demanded without thinking. She hadn’t meant to say it out loud. Now she felt even stupider.

“Your mom’s from Africa, isn’t she?” At least it wasn’t Lisa who asked that. She didn’t want to get angry with her friend for making her feel dumb.

“Well I’m not from Africa,” Amana said. “And my mom’s not from Nigeria anyway.”

“It’s still Africa, isn’t it?”

The teacher finally stepped in. “Africa’s a big place,” he said. “Amana’s right. Now, the major religions in Nigeria are...”

Amana glared at her desk. She hated feeling stupid. It was her classmates who were the stupid ones. Why should she know anything about Nigeria? She told them she’d never been there. Even her mom wouldn’t know that.

At least her mom used to live in Africa—Tanzania—had even been there this summer. Amana wished now that she hadn’t stayed home with her dad. At least then she’d know something about it, since everybody seemed to think she should.

After the last group they had free time to look at everybody’s posters. The teacher had made everybody bring in a food from the country they picked, so mostly the posters got ignored while everyone pretended to hate each others’ samples.

Amana went over to the Mexico poster, mostly because it was on the opposite side of the room from the Africa poster. Mark handed her a miniature taco. “It’s veggie,” he said in disgust.

“I know,” Amana said. The whole class knew. He’d gotten into an argument with the teacher about that. They had nowhere to cook the meat, Mr. Ross

pointed out, and if he brought it from home they had nowhere to keep it cold. It would just go bad.

“Whoever heard of a veggie taco?” She wasn’t even sure if Mark was still talking to her. Amana ate her veggie taco and ignored him, pretending to be absorbed in the yellow-and-green construction paper poster.

“Amana! Hey, Amana!”

It was Lisa’s voice. Amana turned around a little reluctantly.

“I brought one for you before they’re all gone.” Lisa held out something small and round that smelled like peanut butter. “Debbie says they’re gross. But you’ll like them.”

Amana took the whatever-it-was from her friend and, hoping it would make Lisa go away faster, took a small bite. She just managed to refrain from making a face. Definitely peanut butter. Burnt peanut butter.

“It’s good,” she said to Lisa’s hopeful expression.

Lisa grinned broadly. “I’m so glad!” She took a veggie taco from Mark and wandered back over to her poster.

When she was sure Lisa wasn’t looking, Amana threw the rest of the whatever-it-was away.

Cornrow Braids

BY NATALIE INGRAM

Her mother didn’t go back to Tanzania that summer.

She first mentioned postponing the trip in January. After that she spent more and more time on the phone to her family in Tanzania. She spent so much time explaining herself that at first Amana thought that she must be getting into fights about it. That was before the trip, or rather the possibility of no trip, become common conversation around their own dinner table. The other doctor who shared Idihi’s office had gone on a lengthy leave, she explained, she was trying to accommodate some of his patients while he was gone. She was more than happy to help, but as for going on vacation right now, she just didn’t see how she could manage it...

“I’m sure you’re doing the right thing,” Dad would say. Sometimes Amana would pipe up, more to be saying things than because she thought she was really contributing. “I’m sure they understand.” Her mother would shrug noncommittally and lapse into silence.

Her mom agonized over the decision for at least a week, but once she decided to stay at home this summer the topic vanished entirely. If she still talked about it with Dad, Amana didn’t hear about it. She talked about the trip that she’d make “next year” as if that was the way she’d planned it all along. She was more of a workaholic than ever, but if you ignored that you almost couldn’t tell anything was wrong. Sometimes things seemed downright normal.

Like now. It was a Sunday afternoon. Mom had left for Tanzania on Sunday at about this time last year, but despite a phone call to Tanzania earlier today, she had either not noticed the date or was pretending she hadn’t. Instead, she was redoing the cornrow braids her hair. The braids came down past her shoulders but it looked like a lot less hair this way than on the rare

occasions when her mother left it down.

“That takes forever,” Amana said, watching. “I can’t believe you wear your hair like that all the time.”

Her mother laughed. “Keeps it out of the way. Besides, they last forever if you take care of them.”

“Maybe I should try them,” Amana said. She kept her hair pulled back from her face with a bandana, and it was forever escaping and getting in her eyes.

“Want me to do yours next?”

Amana blinked. Her mother had never offered to do her hair before. Not that she’d ever asked, but still... “Um. Sure.”

“Your hair’s much shorter than mine,” her mom said. “It won’t take nearly as long. Do you want yours up or down?”

“Not nearly as long” proved to be quite a while. They talked a bit—her mom told her that she hadn’t started braiding her hair until she’d moved to Canada, and she did it now because she liked the way they looked—but mostly they sat in silence.

Mom was just finishing Amana’s braids when Dad came into the kitchen. He raised an eyebrow at them. “What is this, a girl’s night in or something?” Amana rolled her eyes, but she could hear the smile in her mom’s voice when she said, “Something like that. We’re almost done.” Amana wasn’t sure if that last part was meant for her or for Dad.

“There!” Mom gave her hair one last tug and misted it with some hair spray. “Go tell me what you think.”

Amana obediently went off to the bathroom and clicked on the light, Then she stared. Rows of tiny braids clung to her skull like a cap, then fell straight down behind her ears. Her hair looked much shorter this way, too—the braids stopped well above her shoulders. It was nothing like the kinky, every-which-way locks that she’d

long since given up trying to control.

“Well?” She hadn’t even heard her mother come into the hallway after her.

“It’s... different.”

“Ouch.” Her mother smiled. “I’m no professional, I know—”

“No,” Amana said. “I like it.”

“I’m glad.”

It was only then that Amana realized how much her mother had been hoping for that answer. “Thanks, Mom.”

“Anytime.”

#

She sat outside the Starbucks at Polson Mall, and was just starting to wonder where the hell Heather was when she heard a voice call her name. “Amana! Over here—Wow, your hair! You look different.”

“Oh yeah.” Amana grinned and shook her head, feeling the braids brush against the back of her neck. At first she hadn’t been able to stop herself from fingering them, but two days later she had already forgotten they were there. “Mom did these for me. Cornrow braids. You like?”

“I know what they are,” Heather retorted. “They look great. They make you look Jamaican or something. Or more African, I guess.”

“Oh.” It still bugged her when people, even people who knew, expected her to look “African.” Like that even meant anything. “Well. Great.”

Heather hesitated as if she sensed she’d said something wrong, then bulled ahead as if nothing had happened. “The others are waiting in the park. They found a nice shady spot and decided they would rather stay there than come find you...”

Amana let herself be pulled along, resisting the temptation to reach up

and fidget with her new braids.

#

She enjoyed the compliments she got about her new hairstyle, even after she got tired of telling people that no, she didn’t know how to do the braids herself. But she didn’t get truly sick of people’s reactions until Chris told her that she should “put things” in her hair. Not beads, either, which some people actually did. When asked what kinds of things he only muttered “I dunno” until his girlfriend made him answer. “Whatever. Like, feathers or something.”

Fortunately she didn’t have to respond to that herself. “Come on, Chris, don’t be stupid. Why would she do something like that?”

He shrugged, looking uncomfortable. “I dunno. Isn’t that what people do with their hair like that, put stuff in it? Hey, I’ll grow my hair out. You can braid it and then I’ll put stuff in mine instead.”

Heather snorted with laughter. “You

would look ridiculous with long hair.”

Amana was tempted to start unravelling the braids then and there. But her mother had spent a long time on them, and they were supposed to last a month.

The next time she left the house, she grabbed a bandana out of her dresser drawer. She’d been just about to slide it over her head when her mother called. “Amana! Your friends are here!”

Amana hesitated, then stuffed the bandana in a pocket. She didn’t want her mother to think that she was hiding her hair... even though that was exactly what she was doing.

“Thanks, Mom. See you later!” she called back. She got a muffled answer from the living room, but that was it. Amana paused at the front door to knot the bandana over her hair, then left before her mother could see her wearing it. She meant to take it off before she went back in the house, but by the time she got home that night she’d forgotten all about it.

Her mother greeted her when she got into the hallway. “How was your day?”

Amana felt like a bug under a microscope, not sure why her mother was scrutinizing her so intently. “It was fine. We—oh...” She realized suddenly that she was still wearing the bandana. Her hand twitched upwards, but it would be way too obvious to take it off now. “We ditched the mall after all. Too nice a day. Uh, I, um, I think my scalp got a little sunburned...” At least it was a plausible excuse. She felt like a disappointment. Just because she’d covered her stupid hair.

Her mother shrugged. She was hard to read sometimes. “You have good timing, anyway. Dinner’s almost ready.”

Her mom redid her braids a few weeks later. She took Amana’s braids out then, too. She didn’t offer to re-braid Amana’s hair, and Amana didn’t ask her to, but the whole time she felt like her mother was hoping she would.

WHITE FREEDOM TO GLEEFULLY BE

Bhabha, Homi. “The Other Question.” *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory*. Eng. 525. *African Studies*. U of British Columbia. Sept. 2010. Class notes.

Dyer, Richard. *White*. New York: Routledge, 1997.

Phillygrrl. Sepia Mutiny. “Glee’s Principal Figgins aka Iqbal Theba.” [Weblog entry.] 21 Sept. 2009. <<http://www.sepiamutiny.com/sepia/archives/005958.html> . 20 Nov. 2010>.

Rolling Stone. “Glee Gone Wild: The Dark Side of TV’s Most Popular Show.” *Rolling Stone*. 31 March 2010. <<http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/news/8813/52304>>.

A MUCH NEEDED CONVERSATION IN CANADA

Clarke, George Elliot. “White Like Canada.” *Transition* 73 (1997): 98-109.

Dolby, Nadine. “The Politics of White Youth Identity in South Africa.” *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 22:1 (March 2001): 5-17.

Dyer, Richard. *White*. New York: Routledge, 1997.

Gunew, Sneja. “Rethinking Whiteness: Introduction.” *Feminist Theory* 8 (2007): 141-147.

Laroque, Emma. “Racism Runs Through Canadian Society.” *Racism in Canada*. Ed. Ormond McKague. Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1991. 73-76.

Russell, Lynette and Margery Fee. “‘Whiteness’ and ‘Aboriginality’ in Canada and Australia: Conversations and Identities.” *Feminist Theory* 8 (2007): 187-208.

Van der Watt, Liese. “Witnessing Trauma in Post-Apartheid South Africa: The Question of Generational Responsibility.” *African Arts* (Autumn 2005): 26-35.

HEATHEN SLUM

Baureiss, Gunter. “Chinese Immigration, Chinese Stereotypes and Chinese Labour.” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 19:3 (1987): 15-34.

Chan, Antony. *Gold Mountain*. Vancouver: New Star Books, 1983.

Gregson, Harry. *A History of Victoria, 1842-1970*. Victoria: Victoria Observer, 1970.

Lai, David Cheun-Yai. *Chinatowns*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988.

Yu, Mariam. “Human Rights, Discrimination and Coping Behaviour of the Chinese in Canada.” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 19:3 (1987): 114-124.

Wickberg, Edgar. *From China to Canada*. Toronto: McClland and Stewart Limited, 1982.

Victoria Colonist (Victoria, BC): August 13 1873
January 9 1878
June 9 1878

Victoria Gazette (Victoria, BC): June 30 1858be, a temporary settlement for a group of unwanted transient workers.

IMAGES

Biehler, John. “Hello Kelowna & your -16 degrees.” 23 November 2010. flickr.com. 28 November 2010. <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/retrocactus/5202226106/>>. Creative Commons Lisence: CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Bell, Darwin. “I got your white picket fence right here.” 14 February 2007. flickr.com. 28 November 2010. <<http://http://www.flickr.com/photos/darwinbell/392308706/>>. Creative Commons Lisence: CC BY-NC 2.0

cecilia_zuniga001. “MS0363FB (2).” 18 October 2001. flickr.com. 24 February 2011. <<http://http://www.flickr.com/photos/58376641@N08/5364700245/>>. Creative Commons Lisence: CC BY-SA 2.0

Crayford, Dom. “Victoria Chinatown.” 9 May 2009. flickr.com. 28 November 2010. <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/domc/3849243550/>>. Creative Commons Lisence: CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

doug88888. “White Rubik’s Cube.” 15 November 2008. flickr.com. 28 November 2010. <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/doug88888/3051933083/>>. Creative Commons Lisence: CC BY-NC 2.0

Ferbert, Mark. “Kelowna - 3 Dolphins Statue.” 14 August 2000. flickr.com. 28 November 2010. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/sleepless_in_somerset/35301493/>. Creative Commons Lisence: CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

McDuffee, Keith. “Glee Cast.” 17 August 2009. flickr.com. 24 February 2011. <<http://http://www.flickr.com/photos/gudlyf/3831220548>>. Creative Commons Lisence: CC BY 2.0

Munroe, Randall. “National Language.” n.d. xkcd.com. 28 November 2010. <<http://xkcd.com/84/>>. Creative Commons Lisence: CC BY-NC 2.5

Sali, Ted. “Sails Redux.” 22 May 2007. flickr.com. 28 November 2010. <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/tedsali/2355941647/>>. Creative Commons Lisence: CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Shankbone, David. “Lea Michele by David Shankbone 2010.” 7 May 2010. flickr.com. 24 February 2011. <<http://http://www.flickr.com/photos/shankbone/4587484467/>>. Creative Commons Lisence: CC BY 2.0

Works Cited

WHITE UNCOVERED

Bobby-Evans, Alistair. “Sharpeville Massacre: The Origin of South Africa’s Human Rights Day.” About.com. The New York Times Company, N.d. Web. 19 November 2010. <<http://africanhistory.about.com/od/apartheid/a/SharpevilleMassacrePt1.htm>>.

Dyer, Richard. *White*. New York: Routledge, 1997.

“International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.” United Nations Human Rights: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. OHCHR, 2010. Web. Web. 19 November 2010. <<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NEWSEVENTS/Pages/IntDayEliminationofRacialDiscrimination.aspx>>.

Laroque, Emma. “Racism Runs Through Canadian Society.” *Racism in Canada*. Ed. Ormond McKague. Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1991. 73-76.

Robertson, Delia. “Fifty Years On, South Africa Remembers Sharpeville Massacre.” *VOANews.com*. N.p., 19 March 2010. Web. 19 November 2010. <<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/Fifty-Years-On-South-Africa-Remembers-Sharpeville-Massacre-88705647.html>>.

WHY CANADIANS ARE THE PROBLEM:

Clarke, George E. “White like Canada.” *Transition* 73 (1997): 89-109. JSTOR. Indiana U P. 23 Nov. 2010. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2935447.pdf?acceptTC=true>>

Nieoczym, Adrian. “No Sex, No Pot for Workers.” *The Daily Courier*. 23 Sept. 2007.

