Radically different

404mag.org

Beyond Hatred

November 2021
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404 MAG – RADICALLY DIFFERENT

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ABOUT

404 Magazine, an initiative of the Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence (CPRLV), is published once a year and aims to address radicalization, violent extremism and hate-motivated acts from a different perspective.

IT'S OBJECTIVES

• Demystify perceptions on certain sensitive themes
• Take stock of the challenges that compromise living together
• Make a variety of voices heard
• Involve the community by drawing on the creativity and energy of people who want to be heard
• Shed light on the phenomena of radicalization through scientific knowledge, testimonials and field experience
• Offer innovative content that is easy to share on social networks

Editorial

BEYOND HATRED

In this second edition of 404 Magazine, we take you beyond hatred. After the first edition, which focused on “a second chance”, we would like to educate our readers and encourage them to play an active role in preventing certain behaviours that endanger living together.

What are the avenues for individual and collective measures which can prevent provoking hatred?

What are the repercussions of demystifying hatred?

How does one overcome hatred?

Among other things, these essential questions are reviewed in this issue. An interview format is used which highlights inspiring people and high-profile specialists.

We have been living in a pandemic for over a year now. In Quebec or elsewhere, health measures have changed the dynamics of social interactions, but they have also encouraged disinformation online, on social networks or in various discussion forums. Some digital platforms, such as discussion forums, have turned into vessels of hatred. However, the devastating effects of such hate speech are numerous. On the one hand, they undermine the well-being and the feeling of security of the people who are victims of them. On the other hand, these speeches resonate with individuals likely to become radicalized in times of crisis.

In order to resist hatred and avoid sinking into a radicalization process, a “reconnection” to oneself and to others is even more necessary than ever. Whether expressed face-to-face or online, hatred cannot be ignored. Today it represents a critical issue.

To counter this scourge which threatens peace and social cohesion, it is time to mobilize and collaborate so that our real and virtual spaces are safer.

The 404 Magazine team is proud to present their brand-new feature which will address hatred using reconnection.

Enjoy!

404. Team
"Going 'Beyond Hatred' is the importance of not just assuming that there is one magic bullet."
- Barbara Perry, p.15

"I would rather be interested in hate as a process than as a fait accompli or a symptom."
- David Morin, p.18

Decoding
Promoting a multi-sectoral approach to hate

INTERVIEW WITH DR. BARBARA PERRY

Experts in Quebec and everywhere else claim that violence and hatred are on the rise. In light of this, it was crucial for the 404 Magazine team to understand hate in order to prevent it better. What is hate? What are the signs of hate, and how can we detect them? Is hate speech normalized in our society? How can we counter hate speech? Who better to answer these questions than Dr. Barbara Perry, a leading figure in the research community. Currently Director of the Centre on Hate, Bias and Extremism and Professor in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Dr. Perry has world-renowned expertise related to hate crimes, such as right-wing extremism. We had the privilege of interviewing her and hearing her thoughts on how to move beyond hatred.

"Hatred is embedded in so many elements of our culture. It will take that same multifaceted, multi-sectoral response to unpack it at the political, social and cultural levels."

In the past years, your academic work has been focusing on hate crime and right-wing extremism. What led you to become interested in these topics?

I’m almost 30 years in this field. When I came to the field, it was during my first job teaching at University of Southern Maine. There was an incredible uptick of anti-gay organizations mobilizing in the state and the number of hate crimes perpetrated against the LGBTQ community during that time. And there was a gay rights initiative on the ballot in Maine for the fall elections, and it revolved around the extension of benefits to same-sex partners. This is what spurred my interest.
And which groups do you think are the most dangerous on the ground?

I think we must look at the Accelerationist. They are still in small numbers in Canada, but are one of the most aggressive of the movement. They intend to accelerate a Civil War. Some call for what is known as RAHOWA, an acronym for “Racial Holy War.” And so those are much more racist in their orientation. They are more aggressive in their narratives. They are much more likely to promote violence and much more likely to engage in violence as well. So, I find them very dangerous. I also think that what we might call the Militia Movement or the Patriot Movement is very dangerous for three interrelated reasons. One, they seem to draw from former military and active military and law enforcement personnel. So, they got some training and paramilitary tactics. They are often heavily armed. Then you add the Three Percenters, which is the xenophobia and hatred embedded in their ideology.

“ALL CRIME DECREASED BY 10%, HATE CRIME INCREASED BY 37%, THE HIGHEST IT HAS BEEN SINCE WE STARTED REPORTING ON HATE CRIME IN 2009!”

In your article “A Crime by Any Other Name: The Semantics of ‘Hate’” published in 2003, you explained the importance of transcending the term “hate crime,” which has become very popular and often associated with misinterpretations. You also explain the importance of orienting the dialogue towards language that is more direct and honest. So how do you define hate, and what do you mean by moving beyond hatred?

I think we’re so saddled with that term “hate crime”. It is hard for us to back away from it. It is easily dismissed as just an emotion, but it has also been misused and willfully misconstrued. What we think of as a crime is about the exercise of power and control and its attempts to maintain a hierarchy around it. These aren’t just personal feelings, whether through misogyny or homophobia, transphobia, or other forms of systemic bias. These are systemic, biased forms of discrimination that permeate our society. Nevertheless, there is plenty of work to be done in terms of what is more appropriate. There are so many other pieces of terminology that are more direct. I mean, call it what it is: it is anti-Muslim violence or it is anti-gay violence! If we want to find an umbrella term, I think it is a little more challenging so things like ethnic violence have been used in the past. I like the notion of targeted violence because it suggests an explicit focus on a particular community.

“For me, hate speech is not just speech that is offensive; hurts somebody’s feelings or makes them feel bad. It’s dangerous speech that dehumanizes the target communities and actively promotes hatred, violence and vilification of particular communities.”

What are the signs of hate in Canada and how can we detect them?

Across the board, all crime decreased by 10%, hate crime increased by 37%, the highest it has been since we started reporting on hate crime in 2009. That is a devastating and dramatic growth of hate crime in the Canadian context. Although all hate crimes are only reported up to 25%, I think online hate is probably reported specifically to the police, maybe 10% of the time. It is so broadly diffused across communities and is so deeply embedded on online platforms now. During the pandemic, we saw a slight decrease in offline activity of the right-wing in terms of rallies but a dramatic increase in their online activity. And even in the context of the Black Lives Matter protest, we did see far-right activity in terms of attempts to disrupt the Black Lives Matter rallies and trying to co-opt that movement. Moreover, in our first study of far-right extremism in Canada (2015), we identified over a hundred active groups, and over the last couple of years we have identified over 300 active groups in the Canadian context. Those are probably the primary science indicators: hate crime, online hate, and the rise of the far-right.
RAHOWA is “an abbreviation of the expression “Racial Holy War.” RAHOWA refers to a proposed armed conflict pitting whites against their supposed racial enemies that will eventually lead to final victory for the white race and world domination. The expression was popularized by American white supremacist Ben Klassen, founder of the World Church of the Creator (a religion centred around white nationalist ideas). It is now used by various supremacist or neo-Nazi individuals and groups, often in the form of a call to racial violence or to take up arms in the defence of the white race. More recently, the code words boogaloo and big igloo have been used online by individuals associated with the extreme right in reference to this racial war.”

The Militia Movement in the United States is a “right-wing extremist movement with an anti-government ideology and a strong emphasis on paramilitary activity. It emerged in 1993-1994, quickly engaging in criminal activity—often centered around illegal weapons and explosives—and violence, including some murders and numerous terrorist plots. After a significant slump in the early 2000s, the Militia Movement experienced a second major growth spurt starting in 2008 that has resulted in continuous activity since then, including more crime and violence.”

Accelerationism is “a term white supremacists have assigned to their desire to hasten the collapse of society as we know it. Those on the fringe widely use the term, who employ it openly and enthusiastically on mainstream platforms, as well as in the shadows of private, encrypted chat rooms. We have also recently seen tragic instances of its manifestation in the real world [...] Accelerationists believe that setting off a series of reactions, even if they result in changes that directly threaten the white race, can actually be a useful tool for motivating more recalcitrant white supremacists.”

We are thinking that hate is rising in Canada and we can’t say it is just the narrative of the extreme right. What role do governmental mechanisms play in fuelling the informal mechanism that helps perpetuate the marginalization of traditionally oppressed and subordinate groups?

We cannot ignore the role that the government has played historically and continues to play today. That is why it isn’t enough to discuss about the definition of hate just at the individual level, since hate is systemic. Thus, the state has constructed and carefully maintained these hierarchies and governmental mechanisms through legislation and policy through rhetoric. And we need to look no further as our province adopted Bill 21, which has a significant impact on Muslims and Islamophobia. This bill informs and reinforces the narratives of the far right. So absolutely, the foundations of the Canadian and American states in colonialism have been applied. Furthermore, these patterns and practices have been applied, not just to Indigenous communities, but to all racialized communities. Add to this the gender dynamics and the exclusion of women from positions of power at all levels of government and civil society. While the Trudeau administration is much more equitable in terms of cabinet membership, the number of women holding seats remains dramatically low. This is due to the fear and vile rhetoric that is targeted against women. Many women are running away from politics, for fear of not just the online hate, but that might escalate into offline violence.

Do you think that hate speech and hate generally, is normalized in Canada?

Absolutely, and especially in the context of the pandemic. Still, the Trump administration has had a tangible impact on the normalization and expansion of hate speech and hate crime. Amongst others, the vilification of diverse communities, racialized communities, the Muslim Community, LGBTQ+ communities. We’re already seeing glimmerings of that in the Canadian context and in Quebec. But also, at the federal level, under the last Harper administration when we started to hear about barbaric cultural practices in Canadian values, which were very exclusionary and very dangerous forms of discourse. So, we already had some of that percolating here, and I think Trump exacerbated that. And what we have seen in public opinion polls is that people are recognizing that and up to 35%, 40% are saying, yes, it has become more acceptable to express negative perceptions of particular communities that they feel free to express those sentiments. So, absolutely and the fact that it is recognized by the public is a sign of how deeply that runs.
Hate crime prevention requires a multidimensional response to a multisectoral issue. What is being implemented (devices, prevention programs, awareness raising, etc.) on the ground? To what extent should we compromise on democratic principles to fight against hate and terrorism?

That is often one of the things that has stalled the work in this area: the accusations that attempts to curtail hate speech or any other manifestation of hate is also attempting to constrain free speech. And my answer to that is there is not a fine line between hate speech and free speech. It is a very obvious and thick line. Our courts have defined, very explicitly, what constitutes hate speech and hateful expression. For me, hate speech is not just offensive speech; it hurts somebody’s feelings or makes them feel bad. It is dangerous speech that dehumanizes the target communities and actively promotes hatred, violence, and vilification of particular communities. There is a very unequivocal definition of hate speech, and it is often those same sentiments that underlie hate crime. We need to continue to promote a multi-sectoral approach to counter hate. For example, the summit on Islamophobia and the summit on Antisemitism did a outstanding job. In the submission by the National Council of Canadian Muslims, 61 of recommendations had targeted the federal, provincial and municipal levels. And it was an intelligent move to recognize that all three levels of government have a role in regulating hate speech and hate crime, other manifestations of right-wing extremism and white supremacy. Then, if we look at the broader recommendations that came out, we did see that every sector of society has a role to play, and obviously, education. And by that, I mean not just formal, primary and secondary school education. Moreover, educational initiatives in the schools won’t do anything to counter their narratives or to counter their ideologies. We need to think more creatively and work with the labour movement. We could think about what has happened in terms of violence against the Asian community and how new coalitions and organizations have emerged to fight back, to document the extent of the problem and to document the voices of those affected. But also support countering hate initiatives. They were developing at the national level, but often at the local level, to challenge local dynamics. For example, I have done it with my students. We had semesters working with graduate students and undergraduates; that is where I had them develop anti-hate initiatives, focusing online.

In your book “Right-Wing Extremism in Canada”, you developed a theoretical framework to understand how broader social, cultural and political patterns for hate in Canada. Could you tell us about this framework and why you think it might be the best one for addressing the issue?

It is in my first book “In the Name of Hate: Understanding Hate Crimes” where I developed a theoretical account for hate crime around the notion of doing difference. I explained the way historical structures build around identities, maintaining inequality through an array of mechanisms, violence being one of them. There was this cultural permission to hate that is embedded. Moreover, the common stereotypes that we see through the media, through political narratives, and political policy reinforce permission to hate. Also, we put people in boxes and those broader structures of political, economic, religious play a role in maintaining the disadvantaged, the vulnerable position of those targeted communities.

The theme of our second issue is “Beyond Hatred”. How can we go Beyond Hatred?

I guess the one thing I would focus on or emphasize when we are talking about going “Beyond Hatred” is the importance of not just assuming that there is one magic bullet, because hatred is embedded in so many elements of our culture. It will take that same multifaceted, multi-sectoral response to unpack it at the political, social and cultural levels. Every institution is somehow complicit in the problem and needs to be explicitly engaged in the resolution.
“If hatred is a tsunami, a storm, we can build a dike to contain the water. We must ensure that hate speech remains persona non grata in our society and, in my opinion, there is nothing worse than desensitization to hate speech,” said David Morin during our interview for 404 Magazine. Concerned about the rise of hate speech, he called on all sectors of society to mobilize and control this scourge. We could not approach hatred without having his point of view and benefiting from the expertise of this leading academic in Quebec. Mr. Morin wears many hats in the field of the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism: he is a full professor at École de politique appliquée de l’Université de Sherbrooke, co-holder of the UNESCO Chair in the prevention of radicalization and Violent Extremism (UNESCO-PREV), to name just a few of his positions.

“Hatred is everyone’s business, not just the victims of hate speech or the government.”

Regarding your background, how did you come to be interested in civil and international terrorism, extremism, radicalization, and hatred?

I have been working on security issues for almost 25 years. In 2000, I obtained my DEA in International Relations and Security, Military Systems, at the Institute of Political Studies in Toulouse. Subsequently, I joined the army where I was deployed in the former Yugoslavia, and it was there that I became interested in violent extremism and terrorism. Since the mid-2010s, the pervasiveness of the attacks in Western territories has engendered a marked interest in issues of violent extremism and radicalization, whether in Quebec, Canada, and of course, Europe.
Last March, you published a book called “The New Age of Extremes?: Liberal Democracies, Radicalization and Violent Extremism,” co-directed with Sani Aoun and in which some forty researchers and specialists offer a multidisciplinary analysis, as well as keys to understanding the phenomenon of violent extremism in the West. Why did you choose this multidisciplinary approach to understand the phenomenon, and why did you not impose a definition in the book?

The big question this book seeks to explore is: “Have we seen a rise in violent extremism in the West over the past 20 years?” And if so, try to explore the causes. I think one cannot understand radicalization and violent extremism without resorting to all kinds of subject areas that shed light on certain aspects of these processes. We need psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, political scientists, jurists, but also philosophers, etc. to think about the issue of violent extremism and its intrusion into Western societies. In this book, we tried to invite all these people to think about this question through their disciplinary field, and or also their national and social context. Unfortunately, in recent decades, terrorism and violent extremism have been strongly associated with Islamism. What interested us was addressing other forms of violent extremism. In fact, there is a lot of talk in the book about the independence nationalism of the “Euskadi ta Askatasuna” (ETA).

The idea being is to reflect on the contribution of disciplines to causes, national situations and solutions, so we finally decided not to impose a definition.

The Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) was formed in 1959 and is headquartered in the Basque provinces of Spain and France. ETA is an organization that has evolved from a group resisting the Franco regime to a terrorist organization. It aims to create an independent Basque state that would contain the six Basque provinces of Spain and France, as well as the Navarra province of Spain.” The group is designated as a criminal organization by the Spanish authorities. It is also on the official lists of terrorist organizations of Canada, the United States, France and the United Kingdom.

What is a hate-motivated act? How can our readers recognize one?

A hate-motivated act is motivated by hating another for all kinds of reasons: their skin color, religion, political opinions, sexual orientation, particular disabilities, etc. Finally, the hatred for another leads us to make a move, which can be a word or a physical aggression against another, motivated by the question of otherness: the one who is different from me, the one whom I do not understand, the one I can be afraid of sometimes, etc. The hate-motivated act itself also falls under criminal law. Afterwards, we often distinguish the crime from the hate incident. I think there is also a lot of anger in hate: fear leads to anger, and anger leads to hatred. The philosopher Averroes touches on something very interesting: analyzing hatred. It is the product of something, and it is important to be interested in the causes of the disease. I think it’s important to look at the source to see what can generate anger and fear, try to analyze hatred, and work on causes that may be legitimate. Hate is not acceptable, but the causes of anger can be, for example: social inequalities, discrimination, etc. I’d rather be interested in hate as a process than as a fait accompli or a symptom.

In 2020, you launched with your colleagues, Ghayda Hassan and Vivek Venkatesh, from the UNESCO-PREV Chair, a massive open online course (MOOC) : “From Hate to Hope: Cultivating Understanding and Resilience Capacities”. Can you explain to us what are the objectives of this project and the strategies proposed in this course to fight against hate?

This course aims to prevent online hate speeches and enables engagement in discussions. In the course, we find several testimonies of ex-extremists who explain their thought process. Thus, they can prevent people from falling into the same traps as they did and help them understand the logic behind violent engagement and radicalization. Finally, it helps to show that, in many cases, it is a dead end: the causes of engagement may seem reasonable, but the means to try to achieve our goals as a radicalized individual and the use of violence is highly counterproductive. The course also allows you to work on a form of resilience in our society vis-à-vis hate speech: how do we approach this collectively? Hate is everyone’s business, not just the victims of hate speech and the government. What is troubling is not necessarily the clatter of hateful people but rather the silence of ordinary people. We have to find how do we approach this collectively? Hate is everyone’s business, not just the victims of hate speech and the government. What is troubling is not necessarily the clatter of hateful people but rather the silence of ordinary people. We have to find how we could collectively mobilize the whole of society to counter hate speech. People should not stop being outraged by hate speech because there is nothing worse than a society that trivializes such speech.
How did the pandemic exacerbate this situation?

I believe the pandemic has increased this. The pandemic has generated a great deal of fear, anxiety and anger among a significant portion of the population. Suppose you put that into perspective, with the fact that people have found themselves looking for information and answers on the internet, being much more connected, being less socially in touch with the rest of the world. In that case, you have an explosive cocktail, which increased the number of extremist groups and speeches that succeeded in reaching people who were usually less likely to join. In addition, extremist groups have been seen attempting to seek more members and popularize their conspiratorial views on social media. It also resulted in a few actions being taken, particularly death threats against elected officials, the media and certain minorities. Communities, whether Jewish, Muslim or Asian, have seen the number of hate messages against them skyrocket. The pandemic is a fairly favorable context for the dissemination of hate speech, but the trend was already increasing in Quebec and Canada. Just look at some election campaigns, whether by our American neighbors or in Western European countries where people, who strongly speak discriminatorily or walk a thin line of what is hateful or not, happen to have very high electoral results.

According to several reports, including those from the Observatoire sur la radicalisation et l’extrémisme violent (OSR), related to Quebec’s hate crimes and incidents are on the rise, especially in 2020. How do you explain this increase?

We see a trend increase. In fact, hate crimes and incidents increased just after the Quebec Mosque attacks. This creates a paradox: on the one hand, the Quebec Mosque attack generated empathy and compassion among a large part of the Quebec population. On the other hand, it spread hate speech often associated with the ultra-right who felt more justified in insulting veiled women in the streets, to put a pig’s head in front of a mosque, to put swastikas on a car or in certain neighborhoods, etc. It is always difficult to know if there are additional hate crimes or if communities have reported more of them to law enforcement, because they were concerned that it could lead to attacks. Nonetheless, in recent years, we have seen a more aggressive, hate speech and tone emerge in the public sector. Without saying there is a complete trivialization; I get the impression one hears it more and one gets used to it more; which is always a sign of concern to me.

According to a Statistics Canada report on hate crimes reported by police, there is a problem of underreporting these. Victims of hate crimes are less likely than victims of other types of crime to report their victimization to the police. To what is this due, and why is it necessary to report a hate crime or hate case?

Underreporting is a phenomenon well known to criminologists. There are several reasons for this, but two of them seem important to me. The first is you’re not quite sure if it’s worth declaring. Take for example, a woman who is insulted in the street because she is veiled, she asks herself the question: “is it worth it for me to go through the reporting process?” The second is the fact of being heard, listened to, of telling oneself that there will be a file that will be opened, a follow-up and that, ultimately, we will enter the judicial machine without necessarily guaranteeing results. A hate crime means charges are laid and investigated. There is also a whole category of incidents that can erode people’s trust in society, in their government, in their police force. Whether it is an insult, spitting, graffiti on the door of your house, it is essential to declare a hate-motivated incident and that the public authorities follow through and listen to the people, hence, showing they are present and they understand. Reporting hate cases is just as necessary for researchers and community organizations that document and implement policies to prevent or counter the rise in hate-motivated acts.
Can we say that hate speech and hate are controlled in Canada and Quebec compared to other countries like France and the United States?

What I’m about to say isn’t necessarily great news. I believe that hate and hate speech will not be eradicated from our societies. What we can do is prevent them from gaining momentum and normalization to an extent where social polarizations become such that we are no longer able to form a society. If we come back to the case in Canada, I have lived here for 20 years and as an observer interested in public space and politics, I think hate speech and hatred are normalizing. For the past ten years or so, we have witnessed a rise in hate and xenophobic speech which can be explained by multiple causes: the 20-year war against jihadist terrorism, the economic crisis of 2008, the fear of waves of immigration, and social networks which are, unfortunately, a sort of echo chamber for these types of speeches. However, social media is less of a concern, what is more disturbing is the emergence of these discourses in the political arena. In Canada, there has always been a caution vis-à-vis this type of speech, even with the Canadian Popular Party. So yes, the notion of immigration has often been instrumented, but always with caution. The other thing I’m looking at is the media. For example, some radio stations play a bit of the confrontation game, which uses the same business template as the United States. Here too, we are not very far from hate speech against people living on social assistance, people with disabilities, women, Muslims, etc. There are all kinds of indicators that allow us to measure this.

What part do government systems play in fueling the informal structure that helps perpetuate the marginalization of traditionally oppressed and subordinate groups?

I think that’s a complex question, because if you look at some of the far-right speeches: are these groups necessarily disregarded by the government? One would be tempted to say no, because the people who participate in anti-sanitation, conspiracy and extremist movements today are between 30 and 50 years old. Statistics show that they often come from majority communities in Quebec and Canada with a level of education that is sometimes a little lower than the average for the population. There are more risk factors when you have a lower level of education and little income, but we cannot say that these are people who the Nation necessarily oppresses. I think the link between social status and violent extremism is not so obvious in Western societies. For example, among the young people who left for Syria, there were many who were educated, more middle-class and who were promised an enviable future. Attention should be paid to the links established between the issue of ostracism, social status and the use of violence. Social exclusion is one factor among many.

For the second edition of 404 Magazine, we have chosen the theme: “Beyond Hatred”. How can we move beyond hatred at the collective and individual levels?

Going beyond hatred evokes, for me, our collective capacity to stop hatred. We must think of hate as a process and work on the conditions that lead to the rise of hate speech. In addition, you have to fight ideas with other ideas. To a certain extent, you have to be able to work on what causes people to adopt hate speech. I think it goes through more social dialogue, that is, allowing people to express their ideas through more interesting channels than just social networks, which are crude expressions of what we would not often say in public. And in order to engage in this social conversation, we must above all think about reinforcing a form of rational critical thinking, which is what we collectively lack a little bit. We see that times of crisis are really conducive to the rise of this type of speech. We saw it with the economic crisis of 2008, and we see it now with the pandemic. For me, the unsurpassable horizon is probably this one. How to build a resilient and united society? “Going beyond hatred” is a good question, but I think the real question is: “how do you confront hatred at its roots?” I think everyone has a role to play. Together we can do something. If hatred is a tsunami, a storm, we can build a dike to contain the water. We must ensure that hate speech remains persona non grata in our society and, in my opinion, there is nothing worse than desensitization to hate speech.
Testimonials

"Would I ever be able to forgive myself for all the hate and gratuitous violence?"
- King’s Jester, p.27

"It is enriching to see that we can talk and understand each other, even between different people."
- Michaël, p.39
A spiral. This is how I feel during the pandemic. A spiral of emotions, negative on one side and positive on the other. Lots of questions lurk in my mind. I belonged, I lived, I did so much in the name of the race and the gang. Too much suffering. Just thinking about it makes me nauseous.

Too many times I have tasted blood: is it forgivable? In these times of loneliness and isolation, I have to fight my demons from the past: those who have protected me from tears, from suffering, from others. Belonging to an ideology ensured that, even alone, I had my fight, my race, my shell for everything around me. It is wrong to say it is only negative, as it gave me comfort. I cut myself off from everything and everyone except the gang.

I feel like I’m swimming against the tide in a whirlpool in the middle of the sea, trying not to sink and keep my head above water. It is not easy to fight your demons and the spiral of hatred: when you have shame in your heart because of the actions carried out, the crimes committed, the life taken.

“Would I ever be able to forgive myself for all the hate and gratuitous violence? The hardest part of all is the feeling of being nobody and offering nothing of myself in life. Before, I was a very violent and feared skinhead. After 15 years of work, I am myself. What does that mean? I have to find my way, so as not to fall into madness, because loneliness is my worst enemy. Being on my own isn’t always easy, but I’m lucky to have good people around me.”

“Belonging to an ideology ensured that, even alone, I had my fight, my race, my shell for everything around me.”

By the King’s Jester (Fou du Roy) (pseudonym)
When Mentoring Makes Sense

By Catherine Bérubé | August 27, 2021

To prevent people going through personal issues from falling into extremism or hatred, the Center for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence (CPRVM) relies on mentoring. “A presence for all” is the mentoring program deployed in Quebec in April 2021, which offers companionship to those who wish to use it. By pairing volunteer mentors and mentees, the CPRLV hopes that meaningful relationships with multiple benefits can be established. We spoke with two participants about their experiences since the implementation of the program.

Michaël, a mentor, is convinced that the program goes beyond hatred. According to him, hatred is part of a social tension palpable around the world, especially since the pandemic. “The mentoring experience just requires putting oneself in a completely different state of mind, even counter-intuitive, compared to the automatism that one can have at the moment in society: either to be cynical, not to believe in humanity or not to believe in the good side of human beings”, notes Michaël.

The latter felt the need to get involved like a call from the heart. Always on the lookout for news on the Internet and faced with a certain sense of worthlessness during confinement, Michaël saw it as an opportunity to get involved and contribute to the well-being of society. “I have a tendency to naturally want to help everyone. In that program, I was invited to use this quality and I think this is the best way to channel this desire to give of oneself”, he confides.

For our second spokesperson, known under the pseudonym the King’s Jester (Fou du Roi), “it’s more than a program”. The mentorship allowed him to develop a relationship that he would have considered incongruous in the past: “I am developing a friendship, something sincere that I have never had in my life”. Previously a member of hate groups, the King’s Jester has decided to give himself a second chance and now enjoys a reassuring companionship: a mentor he can now count on.

“IT’S MORE THAN A PROGRAM: I AM DEVELOPING A FRIENDSHIP, SOMETHING SINCERE THAT I HAVE NEVER HAD IN MY LIFE”

– King’s Jester (Fou du Roi)
The effect of the pandemic

“A Presence for All” began in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had repercussions on its progress. The mentor-mentee meetings, which were initially scheduled to take place in person, were conducted over the phone and virtually. Against all expectations, this unforeseen event was experienced in a positive way by the participants.

Specifically, the use of the telephone and video conferencing platforms enabled those involved in the program to be non-judgmental based on physical appearance. “The fact that we had telephone meetings, that we got to know each other first by voice and then by videoconference, I think that made us perhaps more open,” indicates the King’s Jester. Michaël agrees: “I think it brought the fact of not being able to bear prejudices.” In fact, the two men agree that the information and communication technologies should be maintained for the next groups of the mentoring program.

The strength of the bond

Despite their different backgrounds, a relationship of equals has been built between Michaël and his mentee: “It is enriching to see that we can talk and understand each other, even between different people. It means a lot to me. This is a connection that is really unusual in my life, and I wanted it. I knew I was able to do it.”

The similarity of their personality traits would have contributed to the success of the match. Michaël describes his mentee as a very committed, enlightened and curious person. “He’s someone I can get along with in everyday life: [he’s] really nice and I really want to keep hanging out with him,” he says.

As for the King’s Jester, he told us that he “always looks forward to speaking” with his mentor. “It’s really like I’m talking to a long-time male friend,” he says. His “male friend” in the mentoring program is said to have qualities that make their interactions particularly fluid and enjoyable, such as being an attentive ear, laughing and having a good conversation.

Relationship to masculinity

The mentoring program gives participants the opportunity to open a dialogue on social, religious, political, identity and ideological issues or questions. Masculinity is one of the topics of discussion discussed by the King’s Jester with his mentor. He always felt a certain rivalry with the men around him. Forging good relationships with people of the same sex is now possible thanks to this experience. “Guys close to me have hurt me a lot. So, for me to have someone meaningful who is a guy is a lot in my life [...] I am learning to trust, I realize that it is possible to have a real sincere friend. It’s a strong relationship that is developing,” he says.

Michaël also gave us his opinion on the subject and believes that there would be “different masculinities and different ways of expressing it in society”. For him, mentoring makes it possible to share positive emotions and to break out of often reductive male stereotypes.

A favorable commitment

Contributing to positive change, this is what Michaël wishes to achieve through his volunteer involvement. He hopes to pull his mentee “towards something positive and towards his desire to get involved in society to fight radicalization”. The “A Presence for All” program offers not only individual support individual support, but also an opportunity to “make a commitment to make society better,” the mentor concluded during our interview.

The CPRLV mentorship program is funded by Public Safety Canada. For more information on the CPRLV mentorship program, visit the Website: https://info-radical.org/en/support/mentorship/
"Go beyond hatred "by trying not to condemn or judge it, while prioritizing kindness instead".

– Alain Vigneault, p.37

"Violence and hatred being important themes, we realized that there were many more people who needed our services, not just young offenders."

– Audrey Brunette, p.43

"I have been given many chances in life and I know it. But this one I don’t want to throw away, this is the last one I take"

– Gauvin, p.49
The day Alain Vigneault decided to organize a pool tournament to help many people in need, he hardly suspected that, a few years later, this event would have an unexpected influence on his life.

It all took place in the early 90s, when he was working in a community organization in the Thetford Mines region. Due to a lack of human and financial resources, the social worker had to constantly find new tips to help the community. One day, finding himself alone in the organization’s room – where a pool table was enthroned – Alain had a sudden idea: to keep people away from drug addiction by offering them an unexpected activity.

“I thought to myself, if people are playing pool, they’re not using.” Already at that time, Alain had a hunch that this was the right thing to do. “I remember, I found myself alone, for long hours, in front of the pool table. It was at that time I had the idea to go find sponsors and organize a tournament for people who take needles, who smoke or who are alone in the parks,” he says. His passion for social reintegration was still in its infancy.

One has to understand the idea of a tournament came from a very simple instinct, that of offering certain freedom to those suffering from addiction. Thus, during the event, participants were free to return to their consumption or not, unless, of course, they were inside the room. This rule, therefore, promoted better behavior in the establishment, while creating meaningful links, explains the advocate.

“Social reintegration means helping to re-establish links between a person and their society (or their micro-society)”
Go beyond hatred “by trying not to condemn or judge it, while prioritizing kindness instead”.

The expertise of the RESO System

A few years later, this idea made it possible to lay the foundations for a training which is now renowned in the field of social reintegration. After a formative stint at the Ministry of Health and Specialized Studies in Psychotherapy, “I built my entire philosophy and my approach, and I created what is now called the RESO System”.

In addition to being a measurement tool, the RESO System is built around a unique vocabulary and a “philosophy” of specific intervention. “In order to fully understand this tool, you must also be able to discern how it works,” he emphasizes. “For me, it was important to develop a way of approaching social reintegration.”

Since then, this training has become a must in the industry. Indeed, thousands of people have benefited from the RESO System over time, explains Alain. “Since 1996, I must have given […] this training more than 500 times. I gave it all over the place.” Never could this social worker have imagined such great success early in his career. This intervention tool is now used and taught in various fields: in psychoeducation, guidance counseling, psychology, and social psychiatry. A large number of Quebec social reintegration organizations have adopted this approach, and its use is also expanding in Europe. Note that training is now offered in English, so the RESO System is also taught across Canada. “One of my last dreams would be for someone at the doctoral level, maybe in social work or another field, to study the impact of the RESO System. I think it will happen one day. Will I see this in my lifetime? I do not know!” he laughs.

Connect to kindness

Even if we know that social reintegration is an immense challenge for those who try to (re)integrate society, we sometimes forget the social workers can also be confronted with certain obstacles during their careers. Precisely, to be able to establish their approach and their “philosophy” intervention, Alain preferred to choose kindness rather than hatred. So do we have to know how to identify the hatred that inhabits us before being able to help others?

According to him, yes, because anger is an integral part of the human experience. Thus, everyone is capable of both anger and kindness, since we are damaged beings, he admits. “Hatred, I am not trying to condemn or judge it. I’m not trying to qualify it as good or bad. Because if I start calling it that, I’m going to repress a part of me.”

The social worker has decided to face this conflict to take responsibility for himself and do his job better. In fact, if hatred is capable of occurring more easily among people in need, it was also able to manifest itself in Alain at the start of his career. “All my life, for very personal reasons, I have often been filled with anger. Then, at some point, I decided that I didn’t want to take that path anymore,” he confides with emotion.

It was through meditation he was able to better manage his anger. “I decided to face anger, hatred and violence through several meditative techniques and today I am happy. During my studies in neuroscience, I learned that for ten minutes of hate or violence […] our cortisol level increases, and it takes seven hours before regaining a balance. I can’t afford this. Anyway, I can’t afford to waste so many hours of my life,” he adds.

The origin of the term RESO comes from Réinsertion Sociale (Social Reinsertion).

The RESO System is a measurement tool and an intervention template.

SEVERAL ORGANIZATIONS USE IT, INCLUDING:
Corrections Services Canada, the Réseau des carrefours jeunesse-emploi du Québec, as well as a large number of halfway houses and mental health centers.
The training has been given over 500 times across Canada. The RESO System is even used in Europe, in some rehabilitation centers.
High level influence

In addition to his passion for social reintegration, Alain Vigneault has developed another very captivating field of expertise: the optimization of mental preparation, especially among top athletes. This field has allowed him to accompany many professional athletes, even to the Olympic Games; an event that he has exceptionally decided to avoid this year due to health reasons.

Even if he concedes that mental preparation is an advantageous tool for social intervention, he remains mixed on the perceptions that some people have with regard to his work in sports, the feeling of excessive performance is often pointed to. This is why Alain wants to show that the strategies to help someone who is struggling or who is among the best in his discipline are different, of course, but “the objective remains the same”.

“When I help someone with a drug addiction or mental health problems, I will help them activate or recognize certain mental preparation strategies. It’s the same with a young child who does not have confidence or a top athlete who lives for the Stanley Cup or the Olympics [...] For me, performance is not a medal. Performance is about achieving something.”

Still a long way to go

It goes without saying that the RESO System has evolved a lot since its inception, but for Alain Vigneault, all is not yet finished. Society needs to be much more inclusive and tolerant of people with substance abuse or homelessness, he says. “There are still too many people who are far from being able to reconnect with society. In my opinion, our social programs are not very advanced nor tailored to people who have lived in isolation for a very long time. There is still a long way to go [...] to help people experiencing social exclusion.”

The same goes for marginalization, continues Alain. In his opinion, social workers should never prematurely judge what is marginal or what does not correspond to popular beliefs. “Marginalization is seen where we see it. For me it doesn’t matter. At my age, whether it’s hair, tattoos, facial piercings or clothing, it doesn’t have an impact anymore. It’s what is underneath the hair that is important. It is what is found in the brain or the heart that matters [...]”

With these wise words, all we wish for Alain Vigneault is to continue carrying out his passion for many more years to come.

For more information on the RESO System, visit the website: http://www.alainvigneault.com/reinsertion-sociale.html
Last May, the Center for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence and LOVE (Quebec) united their expertise within the framework of the “International Day of Living Together in Peace” to lead an awareness workshop for students of the Louis-Riel High School (École secondaire Louis-Riel). Through viewing a short film and practicing drawing, they were able to express themselves on sometimes delicate subjects such as radicalization, violence, hatred, etc. Breaking the cycle of violence among young people is the very essence of LOVE (Quebec)’s mission, we wanted to know how this organization, established for 28 years, develops the resilience, leadership and confidence of young people in difficulty. For this, we spoke with two members of the team.

INTERVIEW WITH AUDREY BRUNETTE AND ZOÉ CARAVECCHIA-PELLETIER

By Pauline Dufour | August 18, 2021

Last May, the Center for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence and LOVE (Quebec) united their expertise within the framework of the “International Day of Living Together in Peace” to lead an awareness workshop for students of the Louis-Riel High School (École secondaire Louis-Riel). Through viewing a short film and practicing drawing, they were able to express themselves on sometimes delicate subjects such as radicalization, violence, hatred, etc. Breaking the cycle of violence among young people is the very essence of LOVE (Quebec)’s mission, we wanted to know how this organization, established for 28 years, develops the resilience, leadership and confidence of young people in difficulty. For this, we spoke with two members of the team.

To begin with, what are your roles within the organization?

AUDREY BRUNETTE: Since the beginning of spring, I have held the role of director of programming. I have also been a coordinator for the past three years. My role was to facilitate programs and offer clubs which consist of 24 workshops. These are a mixture of learning photography, writing, but also discussions on themes that are not necessarily addressed in a school environment. As Program Director, I still give workshops, but I am more involved in curriculum development and team supervision.

ZOÉ CARAVECCHIA-PELLETIER: I started as an intern at LOVE (Quebec) in the fall of 2020, and I officially became the program coordinator and sexologist in mid-June of this year. My tasks consist in planning, facilitating, evaluating and then modifying our programs. I also prepare and plan the sexology workshops.

“LOVE (QUEBEC) CREATED SPACES FOR DISCUSSION. THEY ARE A SAFE SPACE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE ABLE TO SHARE, AND SO THAT WE CAN UNDERSTAND WHERE THEIR PAIN, THEIR INJURIES AND SOMETIMES THEIR HATRED COME FROM.”

– Audrey Brunette, Director of Programming
Sextortion is "a form of blackmail. This is when someone threatens to send an intimate photo or video of you to other people if you refuse to send them money or other intimate images."

**Did you know?**

**BEYOND HATRED**

November 2021 / Edition 02


**For more information on LOVE (Quebec) and its programs, visit the website:** https://loveorganization.ca/qc/en/

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Do all young people have access to LOVE (Quebec)? Who are the young people who benefit from your programs?

**AUDREY:** The largest pool of young people comes from schools where awareness workshops are conducted. Often, young people between the ages of 14 and 15 are asked to start the programs. Participation in the workshops is completely voluntary. In addition, young people who have difficulties and who want to share come to us, because the school does not have enough workers to offer this type of service. At first, the organization was created to help perpetrators of violence. Violence and hatred being important themes, we realized that there were many more people who needed our services, not just young offenders.

What strategies do you use, or your workers use with young people?

**AUDREY:** Strategies vary a lot from one setting to another. Personally, my strategy is to create a bond of trust to give young people the chance to express themselves. First of all, I have an empathetic approach. I try to listen and not impose myself as the expert who will teach them everything. When I hear more discriminatory words, I raise awareness while remaining informal. Being informal is very important, even in contexts that are more formal like in schools, because the bond of trust is created more easily in this way.

What were the challenges encountered in (re)connecting with young people during the pandemic?

**AUDREY:** We got in touch with young people on Instagram. Each speaker has a professional Instagram account, which allows them to get news and remain accessible if young people want to write to them. As young people are often more comfortable with communication via social networks, this measure has made it possible to reach a greater diversity of young people. We were able to intervene remotely with those who were in great distress.

What are the strategies you use to educate young people about the influence of social media on sex or sexuality?

**ZOÉ:** Social media can create and maintain myths about sex, virginity, or other myths about the body in general. Our goal is to analyze these myths using our sexology workshops and our question boxes which aim to answer the questions and concerns of young people. There has been a lot of awareness-raising about sexual violence on social networks, especially about "sextortion" and sharing of intimate images. We want to make young people aware of the risks and impacts of such actions, especially of their rights, so they develop a more enlightened view of sexuality.

**Did you know?**

**Sextortion** is "a form of blackmail. This is when someone threatens to send an intimate photo or video of you to other people if you refuse to send them money or other intimate images."


How does the work of LOVE (Quebec) allow young people to go beyond hatred?

**AUDREY:** LOVE (Quebec) creates spaces for dialogue to start the discussion. They are safe spaces for young people to be able to share, and so that we can understand where their pain, their injuries and sometimes their hatred come from. Often, it is about explaining to them that hatred can come from past situations, experiences or tragedies. After expressing themselves, young people feel better and more confident. This is when we steer the discussion into something more positive and provide suitable tools that can help them in their personal growth.

**ZOÉ:** As a speaker, I have a bit of a professional bias, because I always come back to the concept of education. I have the impression that through education, we can improve prevention work. More specifically, there is the prevention of discriminatory and hate-motivated behavior, but also the promotion of something more positive. Do not just say "Don't do that", but offer avenues for consideration to promote healthier relationships, equal and equitable relationships. Everything goes through a typical education, all the complexity that hatred represents in a society, that is to say through an intersectional vision.
One immediately notices a thin layer of yellowish sawdust, as well as a woody smell upon entering the impressive Boulot vers workshop. It must be said that this socio-professional integration company, located in the heart of the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve district, manufactures furniture full time. For 38 years, this organization has been a real springboard for young people wishing to remake themselves or re-enter the labor market. Without its dedicated team, it goes without saying that many young people in Montreal would still be in a precarious situation. We went to discover this amazing company where you can learn, of course, woodworking, but above all, how to build a future.

An inspiring job

In the middle of August, despite the scorching heat and humidity, the Boulot team set about completing the day’s chores. It is 4 pm, and the last broomsticks are given before the cabinetry shop is closed. Young people will be able to take off their safety glasses and go home with their heads held high. A new day awaits these workers who, in the space of a few months, will not only learn to build furniture, but also to heal old wounds.

The person in charge of the intervention, Simon Bolduc, proudly shows us a bed frame designed here; it will soon be delivered to a youth center in the region. "A construction of this kind makes it possible to provide centers which have already housed some young people on the team in the past," he explains. We quickly understand that working in this workshop is also a way of giving back to the community.
The organization therefore has around 20 trainees aged 16 to 25 who are not stably integrated into the job market. The speaker continues with passion: “Our responsibility is really to welcome these young people and to ensure we work on their socio-professional skills. It’s voluntary here. Cabinet-making is a guise! Most young people do not necessarily end up cabinetmakers ... Some may later carry out another manual trade; others will study philosophy. The goal is to allow some time in their life to regain control, correct past mistakes and look towards the future.”

Throughout the internship, which lasts about six months, each young person will be paid, but will have to find specific objectives, in order to carry out work on themselves. The company is hiring a few office clerks, but mostly apprentice cabinetmakers – both females and males, as well as several trans and non-binary people. Young people at work are followed and supervised by a specialized team of workers, foremen and teachers. Since most have not completed high school, French and math lessons are compulsory, which subsequently allows them to be eligible for vocational training. There is even a kinesiologist who comes twice a week to give sports lessons.

As places are limited, what exactly is the profile sought by the reintegration company? “The young person must have stable housing,” replies Simon Bolduc without hesitation. “We cannot accommodate a young person who is in the street or who is couchsurfing. There are too many risk factors that can defeat them. This is always what we assess in our evaluation criteria. If the young person is not ready, they will be referred to another pre-employability program.”

“Young people who come here sometimes unwittingly use hate speech, or they have a vocabulary that is violent, and they don’t realize it. Our goal is to defuse this kind of discourse and to work with them. It’s not a five-minute meeting that will settle everything for the youngster. The important thing is to follow up.”

– Simon Bolduc, in charge of intervention at Boulot vers.

A checkered past

So, it’s people like Gauvain that we hire at Boulot vers. At 21, this young Montrealer decided to knock on the organization’s door after having recently experienced moments of impulsiveness, isolation and overconsumption, he explains very frankly.

“Before, I worked nights, weekends, in a convenience store. So, I spent the week at home doing nothing and sleeping all day. The pay wasn’t even good. Plus, there was a curfew...I was on my own all the time. I played video games and consumed a little too much,” he admits. The hardest part for him was to maintain his social relationships. “I was not socially fit to be a good person...because of a background ... in which ... in which there were fights,” he said with a sigh.

Then, one day, things changed for Gauvain. Specifically, when his girlfriend’s mother showed him a stimulating job offer that exactly matched his needs. “I had a pretty unstable situation with my parents, so we had to end the cohabitation [...] and my girlfriend’s parents took me in. After a while, I wanted to have a more motivating job, but I didn’t know where to go. On my own, I couldn’t do it. It was my girlfriend’s mother who saw the ad on the Emploi-Québec Website.”

It turns out that this offer allowed him to discover a new passion. In fact, for two months now, Gauvain has been part of the Boulot team and is regaining control. This suits him quite well since his girlfriend – whom he considers to be his greatest confidant – also works in the cabinetmaking industry. The two lovers now have a common passion and projects.

“HATRED IS AN OBSTACLE. IT FEEDS NEGATIVE ENERGIES, BAD THOUGHTS AND BAD WILL. I FELT TOO MUCH... WITH MY IMPULSIVENESS, IT DIDN’T MIX WELL. IT COST ME SO MUCH WORK.”

– Gauvain, 21 years old, trainee at Boulot vers.
Without forgetting Mondays

However, Gauvain’s first few weeks of internship were not all rosy. As the person in charge of the intervention, Simon Bolduc, mentions: “At the beginning, his internship was more difficult, and we almost stopped him.” You have to understand that, at work, if you want to work with wood, a hangover is not an option.

In fact, here when interns make excuses for not showing up on a Monday, a very specific term is used: “Mondays” [lundites]. Because even if the lack of motivation may appear following the weekend, young people must be present and build up consistency if they want to complete their training. In Gauvain’s case, he had been jokingly “diagnosed” with “acute Mondays.”

And on a personal level, what did he learn? “I am developing good habits for myself. I work on my impulsiveness and learn not to push back. I now take things as they are: not even one day at a time, but one hour at a time. And I catch up on my sleep! Wow, I found out I like sleeping,” he says, laughing gleefully.

What stands out most about Gauvain, besides his imposing size, is his unwavering resilience and wisdom – very impressive for his age. The more you get to know him, the more admiration he has for his quick-wittedness.

Towards a greener future

Despite the obstacles experienced, Gauvain seems delighted with his journey so far and looks to the future. “I have been given many chances in life and I know it. But this one I don’t want to throw away, this is the last one I take,” he admits with emotion.

Simon is also very proud of the interns: “From start to finish, the team accompanies them on their journey here. I see the growth. This is worth my pay. Gauvain has been here for two months, and I would have liked to have had a video of him two months ago. The changes are really noticeable and tangible!”
Regarding change, he admits in passing that reintegrating young people into society is “a form of sustainable development”. The company has also recently implemented certain environmental measures: recovery of wood scraps, networking with other companies to limit the loss of wood and sorting of food waste from the cafeteria. A sustainable development committee, led in large part by some young people from the company, looks after these initiatives, explains Simon. He says this tip is a good way to introduce trainees to the environment, emphasizing that going green isn’t just about sorting out your waste.

And what exactly are Gauvain’s future plans? “Not living in Montreal,” he replies quite simply. That way he could get closer to a more wooded area, to nature, he admits. One of his dreams would be to continue his education and enter a cabinetmaking or carpentry program, in order to someday work with his girlfriend. Both would like to have their own company, as well as their woodlot. The intern also juggles the idea of pursuing higher education, either in archeology, anthropology or marine biology. “Keeping in touch with nature and a lot of study, I would like that,” he adds.

Like a tree that can take root for tens or even hundreds of years, this apprentice cabinetmaker still has time before him to reach his full potential. He says it so well himself: “Often with time, you get the best result.”

In other words, sometimes you have to let nature take its course. And this is what we wish for the team at Boulot vers: continue their mission for several more generations of trees.
Let the Citizens Be Heard

Moving beyond hatred is everyone’s business, whether on a small or large scale. This summer, the editorial team reached out to the public—online and in person—to answer these three questions: What to do to combat hatred on social media? How to overcome hatred at the individual and collective levels? How do you imagine a society without hate? Here are the solutions and messages received.

What to do to combat hatred on social networks?

Block the hate if the person is unwilling to listen. If people are calling you rude names and you tell them you don’t appreciate that but they still continue, block them, it’s what that button is for. You don’t have to and you shouldn’t have to feel like you need to deal with that hate.

By responding, and thereby making obvious our convictions and opinions in an attempt to positively influence the authors of these hate messages.

Establish a clear legal framework and, therefore, ban harmful behavior. Above all, we need to make social media users aware of the possible violence on these platforms, as well as the impact of our behavior on others.

Know how to identify it, report it quickly, zero tolerance. Free expression does not include hate speech.

Perhaps respond positively by saying that we do not understand the meanness behind these words, which perhaps express fear or great suffering... Ask if the speaker could explain the reason they use such words, because by speaking, we can make ourselves understood better... And respect for differences attracts respect for our own...

In our opinion, there are several tactics that we can use. First, we have to denounce it and even censor it, depending on the situation. Then there is the Socratic method, that is, asking questions of the person until the false knowledge of the latter is removed. Finally, there is awareness that attacks hatred indirectly. This is all the more important as technology entered our lives quickly, even before there were any standards of etiquette attached to its use. Young people talk about cyberbullying in schools, but not everyone who uses social media is aware of it. We believe that there is not just one way to deal with hatred, but a variety of actions depending on the context and within our own limits.

Send and be love.

Continuing to denounce bullies, because it is by uniting our voices that we can shake things up.

Prohibit all comments that insult or insult a group, in particular on the basis of race, religion, sexual or political orientation, gender or ethnicity!

Decrease time spent on social networks!

Create a system that “eliminates” shameful messages.

Remain closed: no response, no stimulus.

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I don’t engage with it directly. I believe it’s very hard to manage hate on social media. I engage with it offline via conversations with people and ask them how these situations make them feel and have a discussion surrounding how we can avoid such situations from unfolding in the future.

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Teach people that, if you don’t have anything positive to comment on, don’t comment at all. Always have respect for the other person.

Establish a clear legal framework and, therefore, ban harmful behavior. Above all, we need to make social media users aware of the possible violence on these platforms, as well as the impact of our behavior on others.

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Imagine: A society without hate is a society that...

- communicates and shares.
- is safe, peaceful and inclusive.
- is a society with an open mind.
- ensures respect and safety of all. A society of well-being.
- can go very far.
- is more beautiful.
- puts its energies in more constructive places. That allows themselves to dream, question themselves, grow!
- would be paradise.
- which is very open-minded, a society which is human.
- an inclusive society.
- evolves in peace.
- is egalitarian.
- starts with education.
- is just.
- includes all types.
- that can heal from all forms of violence against one another. It’s where people will be heard without judgement. Society could become more if we cared more about what our next step is towards a better future and not about how to erase one another out of existence.

- a society of compassion and love, because where there is listening and empathy, hatred cannot survive.
- is healthy and united.
- accepts diversity, encourages safe space, motivates their citizens to learn from different people/cultures, embraces what works while reducing what doesn’t.
- equality or equal opportunity.
- grows with strength.
- is free.
- is more likely to have cohesion.
- learns and applies kindness, respect, autonomy and responsibility at an early age. This society then becomes stronger since everyone's potential can emerge!
- is caring and prepares the basis for the growth of each individual.

How to overcome hatred at the individual and collective levels?

- Respect and love each other.
- Look into yourself and ask how others see you so you can have a full view of who you are and what you don’t like or wish to change, learn why you want to change this aspect and grow from there as an individual to stop self-hate. Once you have grown as a person and evolved to love yourself at your truest form, you can be comfortable with the people around you. When you understand and stand your ground as to who you are, you’re more willing to understand the people around you and stand to protect everyone else.
- Never respond to hate with hate. Respond to hatred with reflection and knowledge. A hateful person is only someone who is afraid of what they don’t understand.
- Educate and raise awareness at an early age.
- Empathy, compassion and non-violence.
- “Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that” — Martin L. King
- Patience too. It’s going to take a long time to get everyone on the “Love & Peace” boat.
- Reply until you gain a more favorable opinion from detractors.
- With a lot of love, tolerance and respectful communication.
- Understand that hate messages say more about the person who wrote them than about us. Give a firm response (setting boundaries), but with respect. Kindness breeds kindness.
- Know how to identify it and not remain passive. We have to name it as unacceptable and report it.
- Let’s get to know each other personally and collectively in all kindness, in all openness. Let us have faith in the idea that people’s needs, rights and world-views are as important and just as our own. Let us make all sorts of violence really unacceptable.
- Without accepting hatred and without minimizing it, we believe in taking the first step in kindness towards others. Hatred is often the symptom of misinformation that leads to fear of others, or unease that is transferred to the other. By offering the first olive branch to the other, we then break the vicious circle of hatred.
Create a Positive Change Using Art

Interview with Tina Struthers
By Catherine Bérubé | August 5, 2021

Multiculturalism, diversity and inclusion are among the favorite subjects of Tina Struthers, visual and textile artist. Her works are inspired, among others, by her country of origin, South Africa, but also by her immigration to Canada 13 years ago. She has participated in numerous artistic projects at local, national and international levels. For example, in Quebec, the cultural mediation project entitled “I am” (Je suis) in the city of Vaudreuil-Dorion brought together several leading artists, including Mrs. Struthers, to create collective works aimed at bringing different communities together and combating prejudices. As part of 404 Magazine, she explains how art can create links, interrogations and impromptu encounters to go beyond hatred.

Tell us about your background and your artistic approach?

I am a visual and textile artist from South Africa. I immigrated to Canada in 2008, but I have lived in Quebec since 2011. As an immigrant artist, I fell into the francization system from the start. I have always had a great interest in the needs of others. I try to break down the different barriers between individuals: languages, cultures and origins, religions, etc. These barriers can sometimes create discomfort between individuals. I am very lucky because in the community of Vaudreuil-Dorion, where I settled, there is the “I am” (Je suis) project headed by Michel Vallée, the director of the Recreation and Culture Department at the City of Vaudreuil – Dorion. The idea is to create openness, integration and encounter in the community. I was very lucky, because it was a period when cultural mediation programs and projects were in development. I started with small projects and since then have led over sixty projects in the Montreal area. I also have a background as a professional artist in textile art. I have numerous exhibitions and I am often selected in contemporary textile art internationally. I have received several grants from the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec and the Canada Council for the Arts in research and creation. I think it’s really important to get involved in the community and build bridges between artists and citizens, but also between individuals. At the centre of it all, I believe that a joint creation between two individuals helps to break down barriers through natural conversation. Openness to others reduces fear and, therefore the risk of feeling hatred.

For the second edition of 404 Magazine, we have chosen the theme: “Beyond hatred”. How does this theme echo your work and how does your artistic approach fit into a movement of social mobilization and the fight against hatred?

For my community art, I always choose themes or subjects that unify. It’s very interesting in my personal approach because in the interactions I have with citizens; they tell me all kinds of stories. Often, in these privileged moments of trust, people tell me terrible stories. In my personal works, I react to more violent situations and subjects, as well as to the fact that one becomes less tolerant of violence and hate-motivated acts. I recognize that, in my social and community projects, I do not act in a concrete or conscious sense to fight hatred, but I try to create balms of love. I don’t see myself as an anti-hate activist, but I think, if you want to fight hatred, you have to create an eye-catching moment for the audience. Create a moment where, for example, you have a Muslim woman sit next to a Christian woman who would not necessarily cross paths in normal times. In this moment of sharing and openness, we learn that there is no reason to be afraid, that they have the same dreams for their children and the same concerns.
What are the thoughts and reactions stimulated by your works?

It depends on the type of project and the type of work. I did small projects with targeted groups. I followed them for several sessions or several months to create change in individuals. There are also sometimes large-scale public art projects, and these create a bond with the community or place. I try to create a community identity that is catchy in the shared memories. I find that there is nothing better than public art created in a participatory way. It generates a kind of pride and a sense of belonging. This sense of belonging or inclusion is very important because when you feel excluded from society, you can feel victimized, and this can feed hatred. It is essential to avoid this.

As an artist, what part do you play in changing attitudes and putting an end to this hatred?

For me, it’s important to use the power of art to try to create change. You should never underestimate the intelligence of the audience or that of the spectator. I prefer to create a place for reflection for the viewer and arouse curiosity. I try to be a bit of an instigator, in the sense that I sometimes talk about heavy topics without forcing my opinion. I want the spectator to be able to question themselves to leave a more positive mark on the planet.

In your opinion, what have been the impacts of the pandemic on social mobilization through art?

The pandemic has had a big impact on social and interactive projects. Several projects have been stopped or postponed. Nevertheless, the pandemic gave birth to several interesting projects. It was tough on the participation side, but we adapted by doing the activities and workshops virtually. We presented art and creation workshops and had conversations about contemporary arts. We were trying to create weekly meetings for the individuals who were stuck at home. They really enjoyed the experience. Having this exchange allowed them to forget the worries and stress of the pandemic. For visual artists, it was a tough time, but suddenly we had an opportunity to access exhibitions all over the world, as artist conferences were made accessible through Zoom.

What do you think of the current artistic community in Quebec? Are there any changes that should be made to render it a more inclusive environment?

Always, and not just in Quebec. As an immigrant woman who works with textiles, it has not been easy to be taken seriously in the arts. Right away, when you’re doing public art and you come up with some pretty different ideas, you have to be organized to be taken seriously. It’s hard to be understood as an artist. It’s important to talk, to explain, and to be patient. In Quebec, we are lucky to have the Conseil des arts et des lettres, which offers very innovative and very interesting projects in support of artists. There are also several organizations in Montreal, and I find it increasingly inclusive. It allows citizens and artists to benefit from a very diverse visual voice. But there is still work to be done. There are always preconceptions and archaic notions that we must fight against. There is a way to create more lasting change that doesn’t involve violence but revolves around respecting others and their opinions.

In closing, what message do you want people to take away from your art?

That we have to question our truths and not just accept them. You have to be the change to create the future you need.
Radically different