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Editor's Notebook

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LISA SZABO-JONES
and
PAUL HUEBENER

Editor's Notebook



Kat street art, Montreal. Photo: L. Szabo-Jones

The Goose asks readers to engage with fictional and imaginative representations of reality biannually. This is hardly adequate practice, though, because the political world asks Canadians to do so on a daily basis.

Early on in the 2015 federal election campaign, journalist and NDP candidate Linda McQuaig violated the principle of fictitiousness by stating a fact that is very much at odds with the imaginative vision of reality endorsed by most political discourse in the country. “A lot of people recognize,” she said during a CBC panel discussion, “that a lot of the oil sands oil may have to stay in the ground if we’re going to meet our climate change targets. [...] We’ll know that better once we properly put in place a climate change accountability system of some kind” (“NDP Candidate...”). Many observers, including Prime Minister Stephen Harper, quickly characterized her comment as an ideological attack on Canada’s economy and resource industries. Even the NDP distanced itself from her remarks, stating, “Ms. McQuaig was not referring to NDP policy” (“NDP Candidate...”).

McQuaig appeared to be alluding in part to a 2009 study published in *Nature*, which concludes that in order for the world to meet the goal of limiting global warming to 2 degrees above pre-industrial temperature levels, “less than half the proven economically recoverable oil, gas and coal reserves can still be emitted up to 2050” (Meinshausen et al.). Of course, even this statement does not address whether a 2 degree limit is strict enough to maintain human civilization in a recognizable form: a question we should all be asking, given, among other reasons, the tentative conclusion from James Hansen and other climate scientists that “the 2°C global warming ‘guardrail,’ affirmed in the Copenhagen Accord (2009), does not provide safety, as such warming would likely yield sea level rise of several meters along with numerous other severely disruptive consequences for human society and ecosystems” (20121). The spectre of surrealistic fiction emerges in the creation of political narratives that deny the present manifestations and future implications of climate change. Our larger social narratives need to recognize the twenty-first century as an era of flooding, drought, migration, displacement, and yes, the need to keep carbon in the ground.

When our social and political discourse seems so intractably mired in a refusal to acknowledge reality, it is more important than ever for citizens to develop the skills of critical literacy. We need to foster our ability to carefully assess conflicting representations of the world. We need to understand that the narratives that circulate within our society have real consequences, and we need to encounter diverse narratives thoughtfully and carefully, with imaginative delight and critical skepticism. We hope that *The Goose* plays a part in filling this need.

In this issue, Daniel Coleman introduces us to the urban deer that inhabit his neighbourhood – often in a very prolific way – in Hamilton, Ontario. When news spread a few years ago that some members of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy planned to conduct hunts to cull the deer population within the city itself, controversy erupted. As Coleman writes:

Canadians tend to know in a fuzzy way that treaties were signed somewhere back in history and that they have something to do with why Native people live

on reserves and settlers get to have all the rest of the land, but most people seem to think the treaties somehow went out of fashion and lost their legal clout. So it was more than a shock for many Hamiltonians to learn that a treaty signed in 1701 is still binding and that it continues to give the descendants of its Longhouse signatories the right to hunt in our city.

The situation in Hamilton is an illustrative example, in many ways, of the social amnesia and uneasy coexistences that characterize life across Canada. Coleman digs into the implications of the treaty and the public reactions to the hunt, and, importantly, shares his encounters with the deer themselves. In the process, he dissolves any apparent contradictions between twenty-first century urbanization, close attention to wild nature, and respect for treaties that are both hundreds of years old and entirely contemporary.

Ariel Gordon's darkly humorous creative nonfiction piece "Brushfire" illuminates the uneasy existence of how we use natural spaces, and the transgressive behaviours that urban wild spaces evoke in local residents. Gordon reminds us that we enter these shared spaces each for different reasons, some less salubrious than others.

Tom Bristow's literary review of Anne Carson's *red doc* and *Autobiography of Red*, "Dialogical Interspecies Ethics: Ataraxia, Desire and Hope in the Post-Human World of Anne Carson's Pastoral," explores affect theory as a means to unpack the power relations between humans and nonhumans. Bristow's, Gordon's, and Coleman's pieces, each unique in their own tellings, complement one another, as together they seek to unsettle the stories we tell ourselves about our relations to one another and to the other-than-human world.

Mariève Isabel's editorial discusses recent developments in francophone ecocriticism in Canada, and Camilla Nelson's poetry editorial illuminates the astonishing works of audioecopoetics collected in this issue.

We are also delighted to share the news that Tempest Emery, copyeditor at *The Goose*, successfully defended her Master of Arts thesis at the University of Calgary in April. Her thesis is titled, "Under Serious Threat: Representations of Predatory Mammals in the Literary Nonfiction of Sid Marty, Charlie Russell and John Vaillant." Congratulations, Tempest!

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