

Why drinking champagne makes me giggle

I'm not quite sure when it first happened.

To tell you the truth, I don't even know if I could pinpoint a distinct moment, or whether it's just been a realization over time.

All I know is that I looked around one day and noticed the change. (This is where I'm supposed to have some funny one-liner that makes everyone laugh and sigh in relief that they haven't roped themselves into reading one of those horrible "serious editorials").

Sorry.

The thing I've realized, this frightening knowledge that has kept me lying wide-eyed and awake some nights, is that we are growing up.

I know it sounds a little weird. I know we've been growing up now all of our lives. Constantly looking upwards and ahead of ourselves. Setting goals and expanding our horizons.

But I guess I just looked around that day and saw that I was absolutely surrounded by mature people. (Not to say that we weren't mature when we went to J.J.'s every Wednesday night, timing our entrances perfectly with power hour, far from it).

There isn't a definition of a grown-up and there isn't a right or better way to get to that point of maturity. There isn't a birthday you can mark as your "entry into adulthood."

It happens at different times for everyone.

What I'm finding though right now is that it's happening for a lot of people here.

All of these people are planning their careers and their futures and they're even achieving some of the goals they set out to do in the past.

Maybe you've all been doing that for the past three years, and I'm just only now starting to think about life. I have always had ideas in my head about where I

want to be in the future, what I want to be doing.

And then the next week I would always think of something better.

EDITORIAL

But now it's exciting to think about the future. So many times I have found myself wondering about where I will be and what I will be doing in five years time. Not only that, but also where I will choose to be and what I will choose to be doing.

Some of us are here for different reasons. Some of us loved the thought of going to Dal. Some of us followed someone else here. Some of us came here because it's just what's done when high school ends. Some of us have known (and oh god I so wish I belonged to this group) since we were five what we wanted to be when we grew up.

No matter why we decided to come to university, we are all here and one way or another we

will all leave this place. You either choose to check out other things than university life or you will make the decision to remain here.

And that's a part of growing up. You're making decisions for yourself.

But it's frightening to realize that you're in this position of power and control now. There are so few days left of dependence on other people. And then there is the pressing knowledge that you are making decisions that will affect your life, not just your evening out.

I don't know when it started for me and when I'll be able to say "I'm past the point of giggling everytime I drink champagne", and I don't know when it'll start for you.

There are benchmarks, though, and celebrations that make us feel as though we're one step closer to becoming who we are.

Some friends have told me about this symbolic tradition that occurs all over Britain. When someone turns 21 they are given a key to open the door of life.

The key is in your hands.

Amy Durant

OPINIONS

Fishing for rights

History shows that fishing treaty should be upheld.

The recent dispute over native fishing rights has raised questions about the constitutional rights of natives, as well as the impact that unlimited native fishing will have on fish and lobster stocks in Atlantic Canada. But in order to understand the conflict it has to be looked at from an historical perspective — in terms of the way natives have been treated by the establishments that govern Canada and the way governments have reacted when natives have attempted to assert their rights.

First, Canada is a land supposedly built upon consensus. When the British came to North America, they brought doctrines hailing the rule of law and respect for all persons. And, while the British subjugated several cultures around the globe during the era of colonialism, they had two compelling reasons to extend this "rule of law" to Canada's indigenous population: France and America.

The threat of French interests and the threat of Manifest Destiny, an American dream that envisioned the United States as the sole governor of North America, created the need for a standing British army in Canada — and if the natives could be brought on side, all the better.

So the British signed treaties granting natives special rights in exchange for their support in warding off the Americans and the French. What the natives were never told is that the British never intended to follow through with their sides of the contracts. Once the border was secured, the true intentions of governing Canadians showed through. The land supposedly "guaranteed" to natives became less and less, and the indigenous culture that was to be preserved by treaties was attacked by Canada as barbaric — practicing an indigenous culture was discouraged, and in some cases, such as that of Northwest Coast tribes in British Columbia, was outlawed entirely.

In fact, the treatment of Northwest Coast tribes shows the true intentions of the British. It is an especially telling case because there was little threat to the British on the west coast — America was kept at bay by the Rockies and the French showed little interest. So, the British outlawed the potlatch, the ceremony that symbolized the strength and togetherness of native communities. Many signs of native culture — art, totems and languages, among others — were outlawed as well. Links to that heritage exist today only because many natives practiced the culture and language secretly. All of this was done in the name of "progress".

The Northwest Coast case is

one where natives weren't needed to advance or protect the British cause. But what about those native tribes that were needed? What about the treaties they signed?

We could say natives were too trusting of the British. Or maybe they felt Britain was the best alternative of the three factions competing for their land. We could even argue that they were poor deal makers — after all, the treaties required the natives to put up their end of the bargains first, with the British coming through in the end. However, as a society that respects the rule of law and the honoring of treaties and contracts above all else, we cannot argue that the treaties should not be respected simply because the British thought they could pull one over on natives.

And that brings us to 1999. The ruling that allows Mi'kmaq and Maliseet natives to fish unlimited quantities is the upholding of one of those treaties that was never supposed to be honored. And, while natives have welcomed the news, it couldn't have come at a worse time. Fish stocks are depleted, and fishermen all over the place are losing their jobs due to years of overfishing and mismanagement by the government and the fishermen themselves.

And that might be the case, but that's not what angers most people.

What really gets people is that natives used the system created by the white establishment, went through the proper legal channels, and were granted rights guaranteed to them under our constitution. Rule of law, that crazy Supreme Court believes, applies to minorities as well.

The argument that natives shouldn't be allowed to fish whatever they want due to sustainability concerns is simply a smokescreen. Most native communities have been holding public meetings with fishermen about responsible quotas and how they will police their members. But that has not appeased the fishermen.

As far as I'm concerned, natives don't have to appease anybody.

After all, who depleted the fish stocks to nothing? It wasn't the natives. It was non-native fishermen. If these non-natives are so concerned about fish stocks, I ask them to accept responsibility for their actions and — now this is radical — stop fishing. It is wrong to place the blame on natives — and even more wrong to deny their rights as a way of correcting the mistakes of others

GREG MCFARLANE.

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