

## Comment dit-on “xenophobe?”

WE CANADIANS LIKE TO THINK WE'RE ALL ABOUT diversity; we tout our “cultural mosaic” and our thriving immigrant population. But the truth is that we can be just as xenophobic as the stereotypes we love to pin on our southern neighbours or those half-way around the world.

Case in point: small-town Québec made international headlines this week when the hamlet of Hérouxville, population 1300, declared a set of stipulations for any would-be immigrants to their community. It includes such gentle reminders as letting outsiders know that head coverings are only acceptable on Halloween, and that boys and girls should be allowed to swim in the same pool. But it also noted that, in Canada, stoning people to death is frowned upon.

Ostensibly, this statement of standards was written “without regard to race or to the colour of skin ... religion, or any other form of beliefs.” But it's clear to anyone with a bit of knowledge of the world outside of Québec that this document is aimed specifically at Muslims.

To claim that anyone moving to Canada would disagree with the statement, “We consider that killing women in public beatings, or burning them alive are not part of our standards of life,” is preposterous. Further, by lumping such extreme statements with a ban on cultural practices like the wearing of headscarves suggests that in some parts of the world people are regularly burned, stoned and beat willy-nilly. Human decency necessitates approaching these practices with gravity, not enlightened Québécois culture.

Contrary to what International Week speaker Hamid Abdeljaber told students on Monday, poverty is not the main cause of terrorism—radical ideology is. It's rooted in a history of oppression that saw Western Europe impose its culture, beliefs and systems upon “heathens” who, it was thought, needed desperately to benefit from the enlightenment of the West. Fundamentally, it's racial and religious bigotry that fuels terror—but we must remember that this cuts both ways, as we've seen in Hérouxville this week.

Abdeljaber, in his work with the United Nations, has been looking to outline a specific definition of “terrorism,” in hopes that it will draw nations together against a common threat. But this seems to be a simple academic exercise at the moment, as the kind of bigotry we see in Hérouxville's town council will no doubt continue regardless of any UN resolution.

We can look to Iraq as a stark example of this. As a country, it has only existed in its more-or-less present political form since after World War I, when the Ottoman Empire was divided up and placed under control of various European powers. People of widely different heritages were placed together inside national boundaries over which they have little to no control—borders based on the distribution of natural resources rather than the wishes of the people inhabiting the land.

So what, then, is the root cause of strife in Iraq today? Not poverty, or hopelessness and despair, but artificial national boundaries created by a desire to control oil. It's George Bush & Co attempting to foist abstract values like democracy and freedom onto a disparate and entirely foreign culture. And as the US Administration pours more money and troops into Iraq in a fleeting attempt to address rising violence and casualty rates, it's becoming obvious that the only real solution may be to Balkanize the whole thing and just get the fuck out.

Stemming violence and terrorism is about allowing cultural diversity to play itself out—keeping in mind, of course, certain base human rights—rather than trying to shove a square peg into a round hole. It's about being malleable, not setting useless definitions. Or following Hérouxville's example, by which “any person ... that would like to modify our habits and customs or our general way of life cannot do so without going through a referendum process following all laws put forward by our towns and municipalities. These referendums will be at the petitioner or petitioners' cost.”

Because culture is exactly the kind of thing we want to be defined via legal referendum.

MATT FREHNER  
Editor-in-Chief

## Welcome to Hérouxville / Bienvenue à Hérouxville



## Thank you for not being muslim / defense de muslimer

ADAM GAUMONT

### LETTERS

#### Microsoft cult is worse

(Re: “It's easy to pick on the Apple cult,” 30 January). Well, how about the much larger cult of Windows? People in the Windows cult do nothing but complain about how horrible and slow their computers are. They buy anti-virus and anti-spyware software and then refuse to read the instructions and so their computers work as badly as ever.

Macs have problems because Steve [Jobs] and his crew are human beings. But they are human beings who work harder than anyone on the planet to create a superior user experience. Mac users are cultists because we really love the fact that someone cares that much about how happy we are when we interact with our computers.

Computers take up so much of our time and energy that they are the equivalent of joining some kind of cult, whether the Mac cult or the Windows cult. But one of those cults has happy members and the other has glum members. If I have to be a cult member, well, I know which cult I prefer.

Incidentally, I have yet to hear of a Mac OS X virus or spyware program that's spreading in the wild. There have been some proof of concepts, but they rely on absolute user stupidity (or curiosity) to spread.

If you know of a serious virus or spyware problem affecting Macs, you owe it to your readers to tell them. Otherwise, I suggest that you do not consider the records of the two platforms in any way equivalent.

Hope that helps you understand the cult better. Perhaps in time you will even consider becoming a member.

DAVID DENNIS  
Via e-mail

#### Doctor may still one day be cured

(Re: “It's easy to pick on the Apple cult,” 30 January). It certainly is with your astute observations and shallow research. Clever and cute writing from someone who obviously may never get it. Fair enough.

I wouldn't call myself a cultist, nor am I raving idiot. I'm not into hurling insults. I like well designed, elegant products that work. I like that I haven't wasted my time and money on an OS by a company that has laboured for over ten years on an imitation product that is just about like the Mac OS and good enough for me.

Nice job implying Macs are expensive with that markup comment. That is so out of touch and cheap. Sorry Apple doesn't want or need to compete in the low-end junk PC market. It doesn't need to sell dumb terminals to Wal-Mart's paint department.

Just for you, I'm writing this e-mail in Mail Mac OS X 10.4.8 (the latest) running beautifully on a PPC Mac I bought in 1995 when the reigning PC was a 386 66mhz.

Go ahead an upgrade to Vista with Microsoft's latest imitation—I mean innovation. Buy the expensive new capable-enough-to-run-Vista PC to run it. Or get a new Mac and run both OS X and Vista.

If you got the Intel Mac and ran Vista and Mac OS X, then gave the Mac OS a sincere chance, until you unlearned your Windows habits, the light just might go on. You might see why people rarely go back. If not you're running Windoze on very cool hardware.

But then it may be uncomfortable for you to have a MacBook in hand in public.

WILLIAM STEWART  
Via e-mail

#### An Apple a day keeps the ladies saying “ehhhhhh”

Artists in music and graphics are always getting laid. And what OS do they prefer? Mac OS X.

Of course, they don't like the Mac just because it is beautiful. An appreciation for aesthetics and fine craftsmanship is not naturally effeminate, either. Mac OS X makes these artists money. I know it's different for you geeky IT people. Your anal-retentive, anti-social attitudes as expressed in this article are just perfect for picking up girls. Not.

But sex aside, there are many reasons for choosing a Macintosh. But, the thing that you must remember is that the Apple Macintosh, for all its robust Unix underpinnings, is geared toward the consumer market. Why? Because the business market is practically tapped out; it's a flat replacement market. The real growth is now on a personal, consumer level. As the market for computers expands, we can expect that the real innovation and excitement to be on the Apple side. Naturally, you can pretend otherwise if you wish.

But can't we all just get along? Just because Apple is hot right now, does that mean that you must take offense? Apple is not attacking your PC bastions; it is growing its own market. The converts from the Wintel side are from people disgusted at Microsoft Windows' many flaws. If Linux was easier to use, then they might go there.

Now that Vista is out, perhaps that migration from the Windows computers will [be] slow. But let's leave that up to the customers. If people do convert to the Macintosh and they stay there, it must be because Apple is satisfying their computing needs. Let's not imply that those needs are irrational, simply because your needs are different. There is a place for diversity in computers, isn't there?

I don't expect that Apple will ever satisfy your computer needs. A loss to Apple is not a personal loss. It's not as if you lose being friends with people who convert to the Mac, is it? Anyway, you have tons of friends and lovers, so losing a few won't matter, right? So you can give up being so defensive.

LOU WHEELER  
Via e-mail

#### Gateway finds promising cancer drug, apparently

(Re: “U of A finds promising cancer drug,” 25 January). I lost my father to cancer years ago and just yesterday learned that my mom's breast cancer has returned in her liver. I have seen the nasty side effects of chemo and radiation, and believe that it is sometimes worse than the disease.

Your study, though not yet ready for the general public, gives me hope that someday we will have a cure. And if not a cure, a more friendly remedy than chemo and radiation. Thanks, and keep up the good work.

DEANNA DUCAT  
Via e-mail

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