

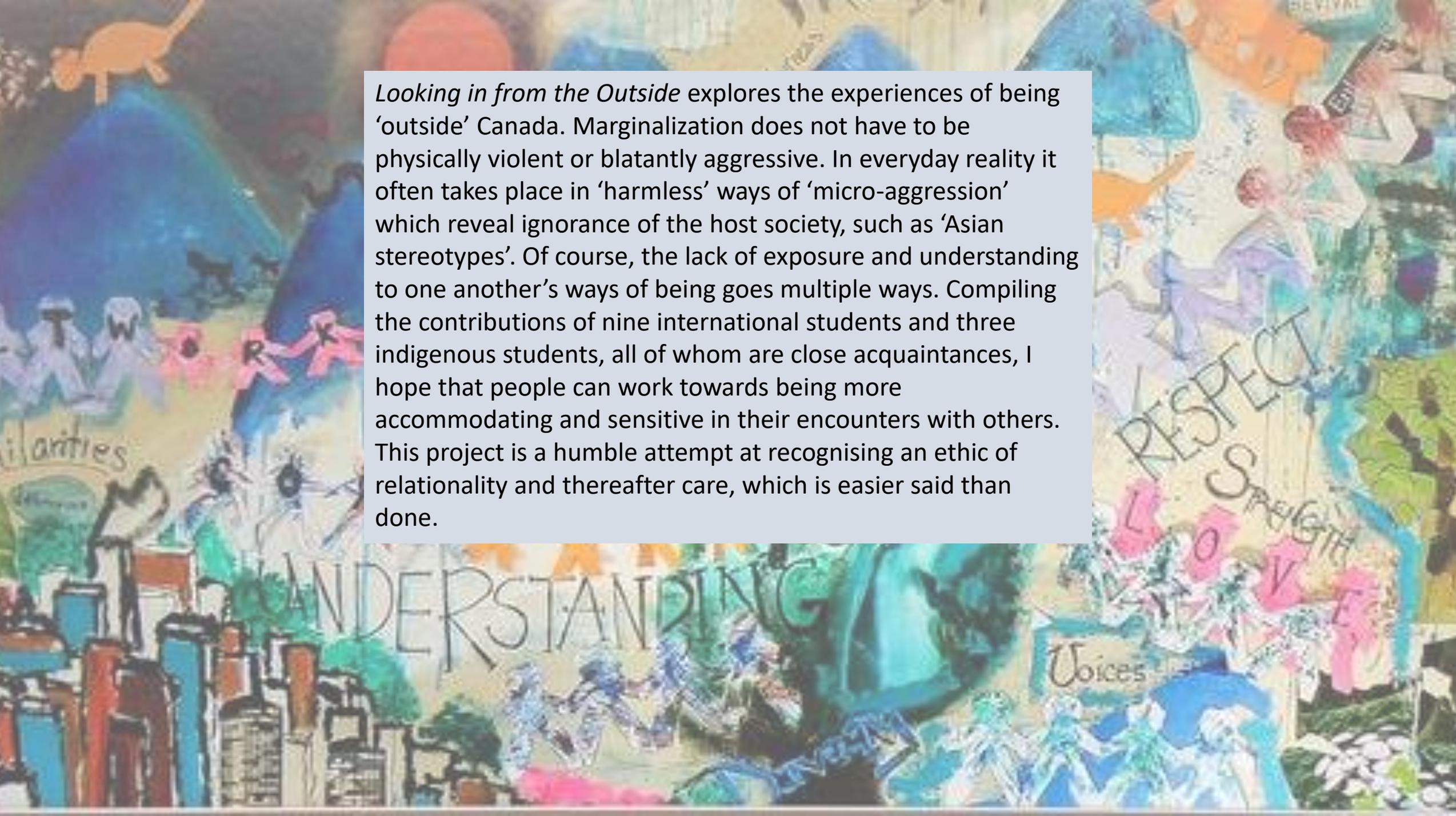
# *Looking in from the Outside*

Lynn Ng Yu Ling

Centre for Asia-Pacific  
Initiatives,  
University of Victoria

Queen Elizabeth  
Crossing Borders  
(Incoming Scholars)  
Program

Singapore-Canada

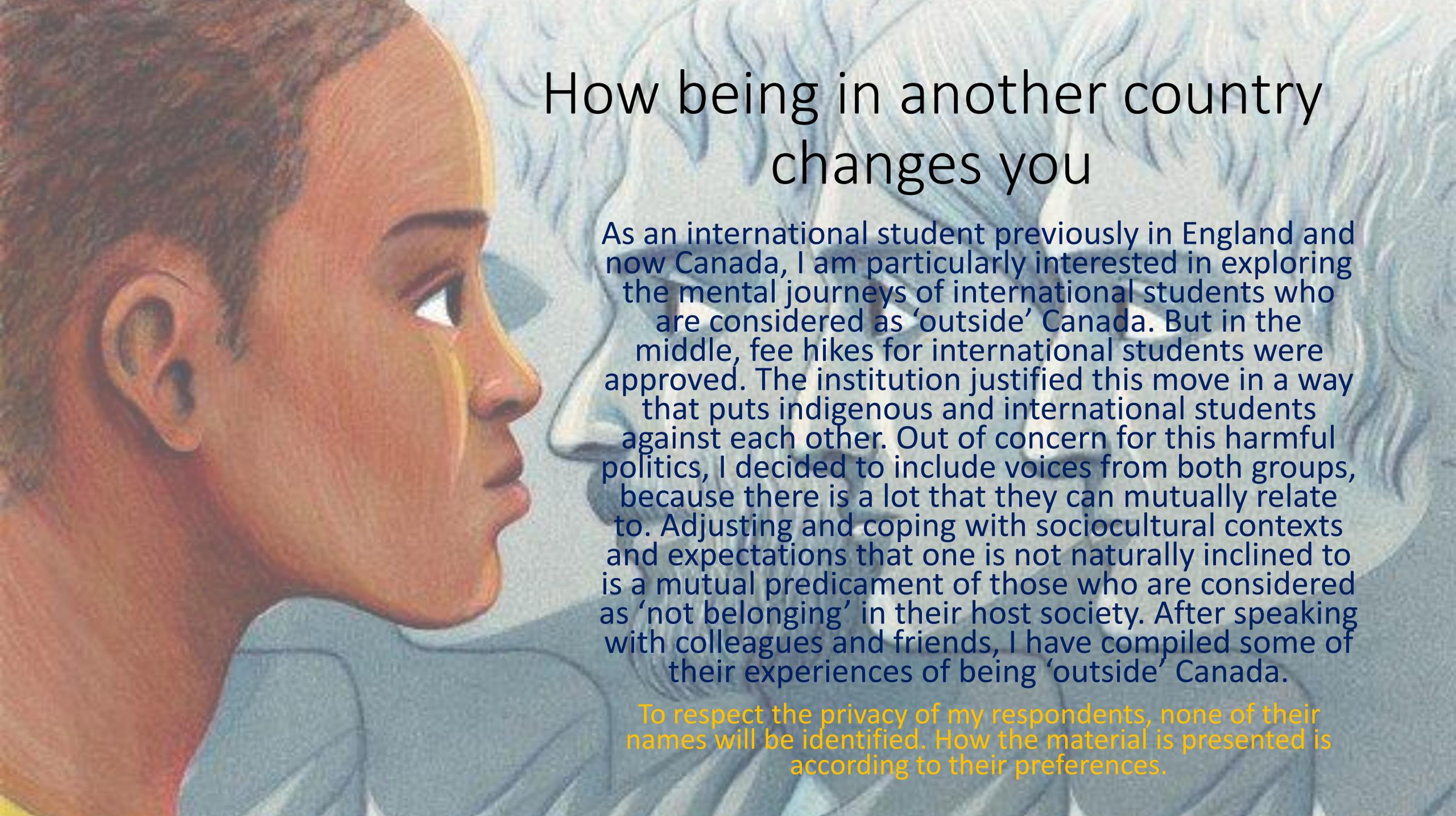


*Looking in from the Outside* explores the experiences of being 'outside' Canada. Marginalization does not have to be physically violent or blatantly aggressive. In everyday reality it often takes place in 'harmless' ways of 'micro-aggression' which reveal ignorance of the host society, such as 'Asian stereotypes'. Of course, the lack of exposure and understanding to one another's ways of being goes multiple ways. Compiling the contributions of nine international students and three indigenous students, all of whom are close acquaintances, I hope that people can work towards being more accommodating and sensitive in their encounters with others. This project is a humble attempt at recognising an ethic of relationality and thereafter care, which is easier said than done.

# Territory Acknowledgement



I acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen-speaking and SENĆOŦEN-speaking peoples on whose traditional territory the University of Victoria stands, specifically the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose relationships with the land continue to this day.



# How being in another country changes you

As an international student previously in England and now Canada, I am particularly interested in exploring the mental journeys of international students who are considered as 'outside' Canada. But in the middle, fee hikes for international students were approved. The institution justified this move in a way that puts indigenous and international students against each other. Out of concern for this harmful politics, I decided to include voices from both groups, because there is a lot that they can mutually relate to. Adjusting and coping with sociocultural contexts and expectations that one is not naturally inclined to is a mutual predicament of those who are considered as 'not belonging' in their host society. After speaking with colleagues and friends, I have compiled some of their experiences of being 'outside' Canada.

To respect the privacy of my respondents, none of their names will be identified. How the material is presented is according to their preferences.



UNIVERSITY

Domestic  
in  
Solidarity

GRAD STUDENTS  
AGAINST THE  
DIVESTMENT OF UNIS

Divest UNIS

WARRIORS  
FOR NATURE  
UNIS

Center  
for  
Socially  
Responsible  
Investing

UNIS  
DIVEST



UNIVERSITY OF  
VICTORIA

FOOD  
NOT  
FEES

PEOPLE  
OVER  
PROFIT

FOOD NOT FEES

UNIVERSITY HATES  
INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENTS  
(UNLESS THEY'RE RICH)



YOU  
ARE SO  
LOVED

**WE WELCOME:**

ALL races and ethnicities





“It is within our differences that we are both most powerful and most vulnerable, and some of the most difficult tasks of our lives are the claiming of differences and learning to use those differences as bridges rather than as barriers between us”.

-Audre Lorde, *I Am Your Sister: Collected and Unpublished Writings*.

# Respondent 1

From Bhutan

Lived in India and Australia, now Canada



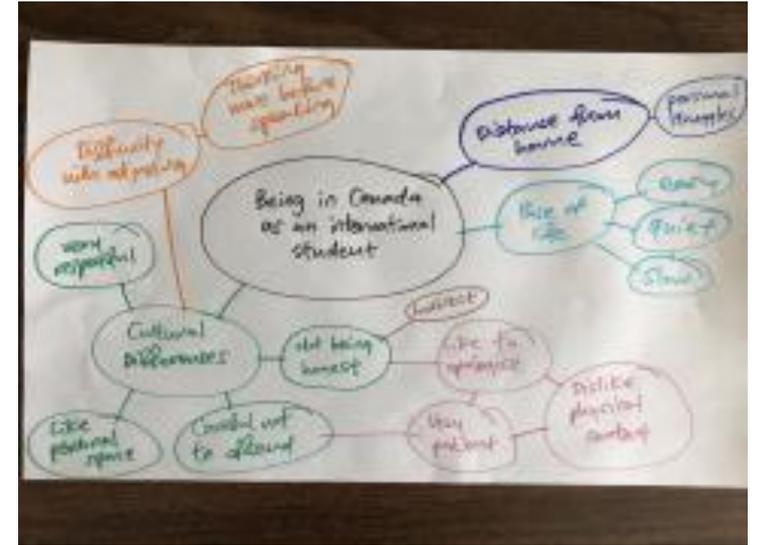
- More critical of one's own thoughts and opinions
- Changed perceptions: one's shortcomings can be seen as strengths
- Attachment to home has only gotten stronger over time

A dirt road with a yellow center line winds through a vast, open landscape. The terrain is a mix of brown and green, suggesting a dry or semi-arid environment. In the background, there are dark, rugged mountains under a clear sky. The overall scene is one of solitude and a long, winding path.

JUST BECAUSE  
MY PATH  
IS DIFFERENT  
DOESN'T MEAN  
I'M LOST.

# Respondent 2

From Israel



- Cultural differences: like to apologise, careful about offending, very respectful, enjoy personal space, dislike overly close physical contact
- Admire some social norms, but still struggling with the long distance from home
  - Easy, quiet, slow pace of life is a welcome change



# Respondent 3

- Changes in identity: visitor to student
- Changes in self-perception: Native > minority
- Struggle with coping with new norms and expectations
  - Language differences is one of the largest obstacles
- Not direct confrontation but soft and subtle social pressure
- Compared to home country, Canada does not seem as strict with social expectations about general manners and behavior

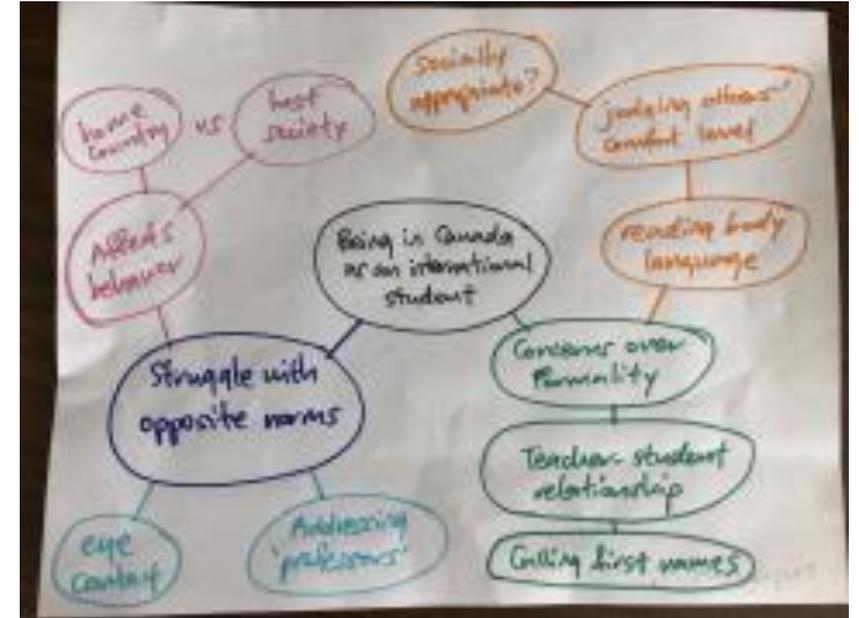




# Respondent 4

From Cambodia  
Lived in Japan, now Canada

- Struggle with opposite social norms
- Eg. making appropriate eye contact and addressing professors
- Concerns over the appropriate level of formality

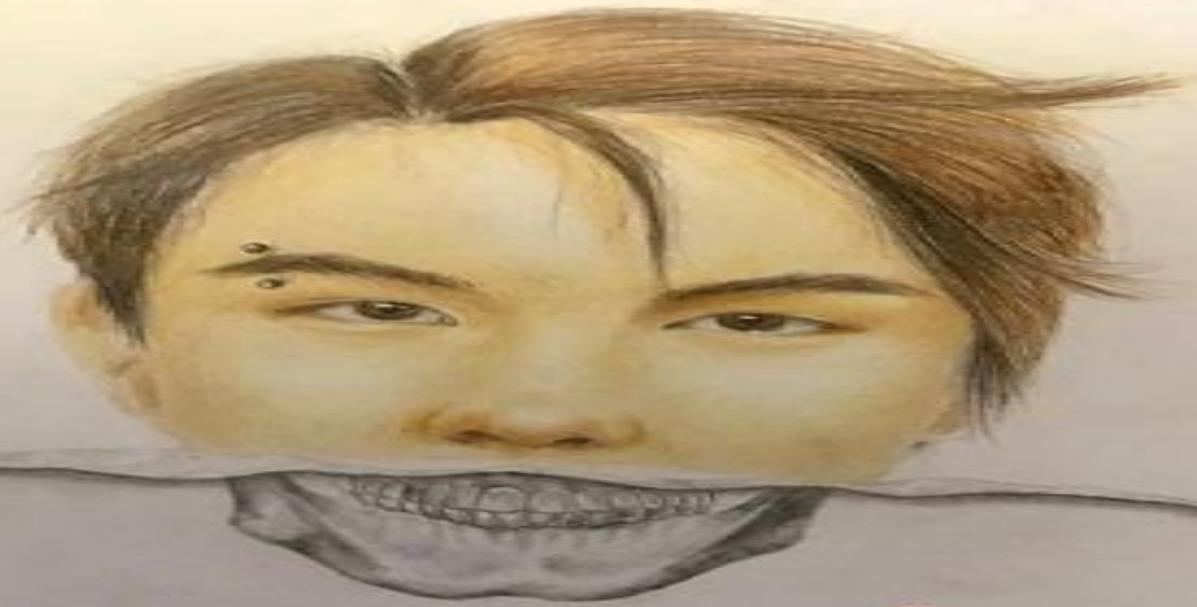




# Respondent 5



- Very liberal social atmosphere; generally individualistic culture
  - Different moral and ethical priorities
- Eg. expectations of ‘rewards’ in career advancement, concept of time and lateness
- Many cultures do not share the norms of materialistic benefits from being on the job
  - Emotion, especially love, is where human beings are all the same
    - “We’re the same in different ways”
  - Internet and digital communication is extremely important
  - A mixture of adjusting/changing and conforming to social norms
    - Internal balancing act



**Equal**  
*beneath*  
**the**  
*surface*



Being in Canada  
as an international  
student

Nice weather  
in Victoria  
😊

Expensive rent  
in Victoria

Everything is  
huge

chips

Milk

Milk  
4L

Far-  
away  
from  
everywhere

Cars (huge,  
noisy, big  
engines.

Adjustment  
issues 24 hours  
from home.

Stress related  
concerns

challenging  
assumptions

having  
new  
fantastic  
friends

international  
environment

challenging  
cultural  
stereotypes



What about everyone else? That shirt is displaying "REVERSE RACISM."

managing  
finance

managing  
stress and  
workload.

accustom to new  
learning practices

expensive international  
food.

Being in  
Canada

interacting with  
culturally diverse  
people

Difficulties  
in culturally  
integrating

Keeping in touch  
with friends and  
family back home  
through time zone  
differences

Fighting ethnic  
stereotypes

making  
great friends.



WE JUDGE  
BECAUSE  
WE DON'T  
UNDER-  
STAND





Language Barrier

Financial Problem

Problems

met :c:

Visa/Study permit

Accommodation and Rent

Being in Canada  
as an international  
student

Climate and weather

Food

Public transportation

Great environment

Wow!

:> :>

Nice folks

Easy for driving

Beautiful scenery

Relaxed atmosphere

???. More to be explored...

WHY IS COLOR

SEPERATING US?



being an Indigenous Student in Canada

emotionally  
mentally  
taxing  
physically  
spiritually

Stressful

pressure

institutional racism

challenging

over committed  
(family, community,  
school, profession)

balancing act

rewarding  
good friends / relationships  
and connections

emotional  
emotionally taxing  
isolating  
exhausting



EQUALITY



**Love one another, shall we?**



WEST  
LOVE

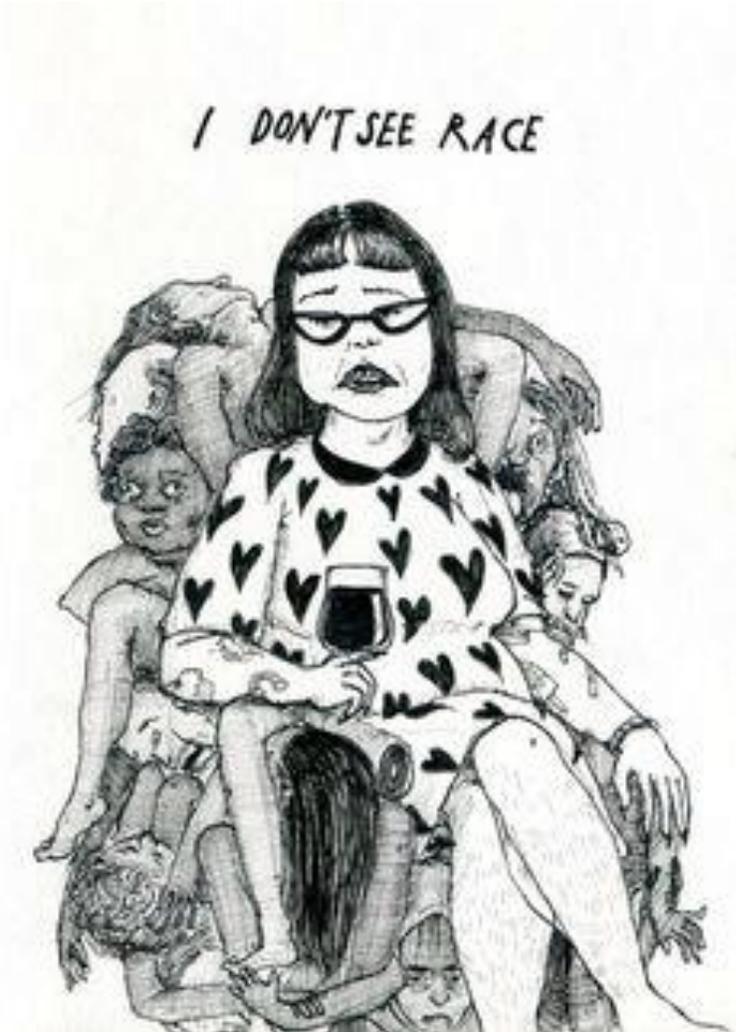
NETBALL

LOVE

LOVE  
LOVE

LOVE  
BONE

Let's face it. We're undone by each other.  
And if we're not, we're missing something.



For if I am confounded by you, then you are already of me, and I am nowhere without you. I cannot muster the 'we' except by finding the way in which I am tied to 'you,' by trying to translate but finding that my own language must break up and yield if I am to know you. You are what I gain through this disorientation and loss. This is how the human comes into being, again and again, as that which we have yet to know.

-Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*