



THE PEP

GAZETTE

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FOREWORD

Of all the fields in the social sciences and the humanities; political science, economics, and philosophy represent the areas of study that have the most concrete implications for the decisions we make in our daily lives. Each field is fundamentally about decision making; how we make decisions as groups, how we decide to process and distribute resources, and how we choose to think about things. Each deeply influences the others, which is why it is important to take an interdisciplinary approach to the study these important subjects. Our goal with the *PEP Gazette* is to provide an outlet for students to explore these subjects through their own research and writing in an extracurricular capacity. Often times we find ourselves interested in a particular topic but do not necessarily have a way to explore it in whatever courses we happen to be taking, this is a place for those interests. We welcome any MSVU students and alumni to contribute articles, opinion pieces, research projects, or any other pieces of writing relevant to the fields of politics, economics, and philosophy.

We are looking forward to hearing what you have to say,

Scott Ripley, President of the MSVU PEPS



ACCESSIBILITY IS KEY TO KEEPING THE MONARCHY RELEVANT IN CANADA

Natalie Locke

Nova Scotia's Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Arthur J. LeBlanc, hosted the annual garden party on June 15. This year's event celebrated the Queen's 70th jubilee. The party is, surprisingly, open to the public. Attendees wait outside the Government House to be greeted by their Honours and make their way into the "backyard" for deserts, lemonade, and tea served in China cups.

While public, the event feels private, with the majority of the garden occupied by invited guests and plus ones. Residents of Halifax appeared to be unaware the celebration was taking place. While waiting outside the Government House, a woman in a vehicle asked, "what are you in line for?" The annual gathering is not advertised. The knowledge of its occurrence is fairly limited to government officials, their staffers, military, and die-hard monarchists.

Advertising the garden party would give the average Nova Scotian a taste of their royal connection. The flags, banners of the Queen, and formal attire (especially fancy hats) help to create a sense of importance for the British monarchy, the Queen, and everything it represents. How can the monarchy be appreciated if its benefits go unexperienced and undetected? The garden party is a secret gem and one of the monarchy's greatest tools for maintaining relevance in Canada.

It is also an opportunity to meet MLAs and get a photo with the Premier. Next summer, keep an eye out for the date and time of the next garden party (<https://lt.gov.ns.ca/news-events/annual-garden-party>).

FOUR TIMES THE SEATS FOR FEWER VOTES: FPTP is Bad, Enough When it Helps the Party You Like

Scott Ripley

In terms of government, the 2018 and 2022 Ontario general elections were rather unremarkable. Doug Ford's Progressive Conservatives won majorities in both with roughly 40% of the vote, which while still a problem, is unfortunately standard fare in First-past-the-post voting. What stood out for me on election night was that the Ontario Liberals won only a quarter of the number of seats that the ONDP won, despite the former having *slightly* more votes than the latter. The Ontario Liberals received about a half of a percent more votes overall than the ONDP, yet the ONDP has 387.5% more seats.

A quick glance at the ridings in Toronto and Mississauga might offer part of the explanation. In the 12 ridings that the PCs won in Toronto, the Liberals averaged 32.5% of the share of the vote whereas the ONDP averaged 16.0%. In the 6 Mississauga ridings that all went to the PCs, the averages were 35.6% and 12.2% respectively. A wider analysis is warranted, but I imagine this is emblematic of the overall issue. In a winner-take-all riding system, second place really does not count for anything, so the Liberals received many more "wasted votes" than the ONDP.

I have made it a point to reaffirm my belief that First-past-the-post is a bad system *before* the votes are counted in a given election so that my motives are seen as partisan. In the wake of the 2016 US Presidential election, many who openly called for the end of the Electoral College were dismissed as just being mad that Trump won. In the case of the 2022 Ontario Election, I want to be very clear; the unfair electoral system benefited the party that I support, and I still believe it to be an unfair electoral system. It is not about the parties; it is about the process.

Ultimately, we are left with two questions in the wake of these results: Can we continue to use FPTP knowing the scale of voter misrepresentation possible? And if not FPTP, what would we use instead?

IS JOHNNY DEPP V AMBER HEARD THE OJ SIMPSON TRIAL OF OUR TIME?

Michael Gillis

Derived from [News Media Films](#).

Comparing the Trials

Let's be clear. The recent *Johnny Depp v Amber Heard* case and the OJ Simpson case of 1995 are starkly different.

One involves a double homicide, a car chase, and a televised criminal trial that culminated in a landslide of racial tensions and dubious judicial ethics. It found what some have called an indefensible man innocent of murder in a national criminal court and then guilty in a civil court two years later.

The other – a ground-swelling of celebrity domestic violence claims turned “must-see TV” in a Virginia courtroom, resulting in an online free-for-all between YouTubers, TikTokers, legal analysts, and everyone in between. This case has the internet flying into a hurricane about who abused who, who deserved justice, and who was fundamentally [believable or unbelievable](#).

The first case, for the record, was the infamous [slow-speed highway chase](#) and trial of OJ (Orenthal James) Simpson – former world famous American football player accused of murdering his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ron Goldman.

The second scenario is, of course, the recently climaxed media explosion of the *Johnny Depp v Amber Heard* court case which has been raging since February 2019 when the eccentric film star [sued his ex-wife for defamation](#).

The two cases are different enough when isolated, but ultimately contain a handful of similarities. Several commentators have even gone as far as to suggest that *Johnny Depp v Amber Heard* is “[the OJ Simpson case on steroids](#).”

Notably, both situations are marked by a throbbing sensationalism fed by cameras placed around the courtrooms. Layered on top of that is the outpouring of defense for simultaneously revered yet controversial celebrities, and a resolute jury at times subject to intense scrutiny. Both cases also share footholds in domestic violence.

While domestic violence isn't a double homicide and the *Depp v. Heard* case certainly doesn't contain the racial tensions of the "Juice's" controversial criminal trial, a careful comparison of the two cases illuminates a couple things. First, it shows how glazing over domestic violence can lead to the most violent media storm of the decade. And second, it equally illustrates just how dangerously powerful a tsunami of popular opinion can be.

Opening the Floodgates

"What kind of car is he in?"

"He's in a white Bronco, but first of all he broke the back door down to get in."

"Wait a minute, we're sending police. What is he doing? Is he threatening you?"

"He's [expletive] going nuts."

Nicole Brown Simpson's calls to 911 – [like this one](#) from October 25, 1993, just less than a year before her murder – are often the first pieces of evidence forgotten among the sensationalism of the OJ case. Many of the 59 instances of domestic violence inflicted upon Nicole Brown Simpson brought forward by prosecutors were dismissed as hearsay (a word that [sharply resounds in Depp v. Heard](#)).

Domestic violence in the OJ case is often seen as the precipitating factor to murder – a factor that fell on deaf ears. In the Depp-Heard trial, domestic violence itself is what boiled over into a public arena.

That "boiling over" is key.

In 1995, cameras in the Los Angeles County Superior Court internationally broadcasted [the moment OJ Simpson tried on](#) the infamous blood-stained gloves. In 2022, all floodgates were wrenched open and what began as "boiling over" became a media tsunami.

The *Johnny Depp v Amber Heard* trial was consumed like the Superbowl, broadcast live across global news sites and social media platforms alike. From YouTube to TikTok, hundreds – probably thousands – of content creators seized the trial as a way to grow their channels and gain their own publicity.

Many have taken up the cause of advocating for men silently suffering under the effects and stigma of spousal abuse. Others have wrathfully turned to degrading Amber Heard, who many allege fabricated evidence of Depp's abuse – [an allegation the jury has largely agreed with](#). For better or worse, most Depp supporters draw at least a little from both pools, perhaps without realizing how scalding the water can be.

What Lies Under the Surface

Depp v. Heard does an excellent job of communicating that abuse against men is just as real, horrible, and inexcusable as abuse against women. The case, propelled to international media by die-hard Depp supporters, has made that much clear.

But there are elements to the case that aren't clear – that is, pieces operating quietly in the background of the sensationalism that are receiving worryingly little attention. Here's one such shifty backroom transaction: The Daily Wire, a conservative news outlet founded by Ben Shapiro, has apparently [spent tens of thousands of dollars](#) on promoting “anti-Heard” news articles on Facebook and Instagram.

A quick glance at The Daily Wire's Facebook timeline reveals a concerning attitude towards women and LGBTQ+ people. The media watchdog group Media Matters for America [doesn't pull any punches when](#) describing the news site.

The question that remains is: If The Daily Wire really is no friend to women, let alone women suffering spousal abuse and other domestic abuse survivors, why are they promoting these one-sided articles, which might be interpreted as “pro-Johnny”?

Importantly, they aren't pro-Johnny articles. They're strictly “anti-Heard” articles that seek to destroy her believability and, when taken with the rest of the news site's archaic views, the believability of women in general. Even if they do end up reinforcing Depp's claims, many are positioned to discredit Heard first and foremost. “Justice for Johnny Depp” is likely not on the outlet's mind.

Indeed, one of the most prominent faces of the news outlet, Michael Knowles, asks why Johnny Depp didn't – as the “man of the house” – “take control of his household,” and laments, “Whatever happened to strong men?” In doing so, he concisely betrays the outlet's goal of sensationalizing the case rather than standing up for domestic violence survivors of any gender.

The Verdict: What Do They Have in Common?

So, what do the OJ Simpson and Depp-Heard cases have in common?

They each provide a backdrop of sensationalism – white noise that allows detail and nuance to slip through the cracks and get lost among the churning, turbulent waters. It's what gets lost in this confusion that's most important.

For the OJ case, it was Nicole Brown Simpson's frequent 911 calls that reported continual domestic abuse. Perhaps it was also Nicole and Ron's stories more generally.

In the Depp-Heard case, the domestic abuse was recognized and reported. And then it was sensationalized to the point of gross extremity.

Was recognizing it – even *loudly* recognizing it – important to combating stigma surrounding the abuse of men? Certainly. Like [Newsmedia Films'](#) Sophia Godsoe writes in her own [article](#) interrogating the sensationalism of OJ Simpson, the news is important. To show that a man could be abused – regardless of whether he could also be called an abuser or not, as has been raised in the case of Depp – has doubtlessly been important for other male survivors.

But the torrential noise of individuals capitalizing on the spotlight of a celebrity couple's abusive relationship also hides the damage the outcome could have on future domestic violence survivors. The damage could be significant, especially if the survivor isn't rich or famous enough to hire a legal team as skilled as Depp's.

And that damage could be even worse if the survivor is a woman whose arguments have already been discredited by clickbait news sites attempting to instill into our collective consciousness the idea that women are somehow fundamentally unbelievable.

Sure, the case may make it past 911 calls and into the court, which is further progress than Nicole Brown Simpson's cries for help made in 1993. But can making it to court really be called progress if a survivor divulging their most vulnerable moments is met with an inflamed opposition that claims they are “not believable enough”?

Link to Michael's other articles: <https://newsmediafilms.com/author/michaelgeoidentity-com/>.



Introducing a MSVU Alumni

Mr. Will Brewer

MountAbility Program

My preferred name is William (not my birth name) MacPherson as it is my middle name as I'm true to my heritage to The 42nd Royal Highland Regiment of Foot.

My philanthropy comes first as being born with Down syndrome as I give charity work to the Down syndrome Society as I sit on the board as advocate and being chair of the advocates committee as well volunteer to other charities such to the disability community I even helped with food insecurity among other advocates at MSVU having it being my platform in the 2020 MSVUSU elections ran for president and won for that platform which is now an ongoing charity of the student union which is now coordinated by the amazing team of student council, executive members and volunteers. Before I became a mount student I was already involved with Best Buddies Canada in 2011 then I heard from a friend that there was a chapter at MSVU which jumpstarted my philanthropy at the school.

My other charity work was being a photographer to the St Marys university business Students in Free Enterprise ENACTUS team and for a time we had a team here at the mount with me being a member.

In 2018 up to now I am the town crier for Old Town Halifax where I give my charity work to the Down syndrome Society however I do other work for the city on behalf of the mayor (I could go on however I'm not going to list all my work for charities).

My interest in politics was the 2005 New Brunswick elections as my mom Allison Brewer ran for the NDP however it wasn't just her which brought me to know the late Alexa McDonough of the NSNDP.

I have volunteered, worked for and knew people within politics for example the late Jack Layton of the NBNDP as well the dearly departed Andy Scott of the Liberal Party of Fredericton where I was employed by him as well I helped David Coon of the NB Green Party elected where my aunt worked for him as Chief Officer.

In a nutshell I kind of know people personally who is connected to a party or even through my mom as she knew Margaret Trudeau which for me it was her son Justin Trudeau. Maybe one day I will follow in my mom's footsteps as a political leader myself however I'm just questioning if I'm ready as many actors in life also became politicians where I might actually do that first.

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Political, Economic, and
Philosophical Society