

*the premier issue of*  
**Perspectives**  
May 2023 *by the MCC*



MCC

## *pers·pec·tives*

*[noun]*

2. *Particular attitudes towards or ways of regarding something; Points of view.*

Three years ago, at a time of heightened cultural division and tension, at a time where topics surrounding ethnicity and our dark histories were at the forefront of our news and conversation, a group of students here at Beths founded the MCC with the aim of increasing cultural cohesion within the school community. Many committee meetings, trending podcasts and viral “TikToks” later, the MCC still continues in its mission.

The Beths Multicultural Committee was created to highlight and celebrate the many unique ethnicities and cultures of the students and staff here at Beths; whilst providing a platform to discuss and educate each other on our own cultures and the cultures of others, especially those that are often underrepresented. This is done through our popular MCC podcast and social media accounts along with our upcoming school events in which we encourage everyone to participate. In the words of the legendary Dr. Maya Angelou “in diversity there is beauty and there is strength” which is why we encourage more students to get involved to contribute not only diversity of culture or colour but diversity of thoughts and ideas so that we might strengthen the future of the MCC and improve the lives of our students here at Beths.

This year with the launch of our very own newsletter, “Perspectives”, created, led and run by students of the MCC, we seek to share stories, stories about our lives, our histories and about our hopes and dreams; each from our specific points of view and through the subjective frames of our individual principles; so that combined, we might form a clearer image of the world and a fuller understanding of the people within it.

*Setsofia K. Dzah,  
Head Boy and Former President of the MCC*



Greetings, fellow people of Beths Grammar School.

As we work to promote diversity and inclusivity in our school community, it is my pleasure to introduce our latest initiative: the school cultural newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to celebrate the many cultures and traditions that make up our school community, to showcase the richness and diversity of our school, and to create a space where all voices are heard and appreciated. Whether you are a student, a teacher, or a member of the administrative staff, we hope that you find something of interest and value in each issue.

Of course, we can't do this alone. We need your help and support to make this a newsletter a success. We encourage you to submit your own articles, stories, and photos that reflect your own cultural diversity of our school community. We also welcome your feedback and suggestions for how we can improve the newsletter and make it more inclusive and engaging.

As the President of the Multicultural Committee, I am committed to making our school a more welcoming and inclusive place for everyone and I believe that this newsletter is one of the many ways that we can achieve that goal. So please, join us in the effort, and let's work together to celebrate our diverse and vibrant school community.





Thank you.

*Martin King Martins,  
President of the MCC*



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# contents

 An Insight to Natural Hair Krisalyn Ini	6
 What Do Festivals Mean in Islam? Amro Elrasheed	8
 The Observance of Easter in Eastern Europe Vladimir Filip	10
 Unravelling the Roots of Créole Niven Cooppen	12

# *An Insight to Natural Hair*

Krisalyn Ini

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**M**y name is Krisalyn Ini. I have recently joined Beths and was delighted to be given the opportunity to take part in World Afro Day. Today I am going to give you a little insight on my natural hair journey. Ever since I was young, I had always relaxed or straightened. Little did I know of the damage I was doing to my hair, then I would constantly wonder why my hair never grew past my shoulder length. Later on, between the start of Year 8 and onwards I started to envy girls with type 3 and 4 hair as popularity in natural hair and edges started to rise up. This now made me realise I wanted to just be like them and see what my hair would look like curly. Fast forward I did the big chop during lock down and my hair was so short I was insecure. I literally hated my hair just because I wasn't educated enough or knew how to maintain type 4 hair, and this made me never feel confident and whenever I went out, I would always wear a bonnet. This made me always have braids in until my hair was long enough to grow into a puff. As time went by, I started to get compliments on how beautiful my curl pattern was, and I started to take pride in my natural hair and watched loads of helpful YouTube videos on products. Two years down the line here I am today and best believing the night before I was so anxious to wear my afro out on the first day of school. I was so scared people would judge me for not doing the stereotypical slick back puff but yet I still persevered to be brave and different, and I was shocked to see how many compliments I got as it made my heart so warm. As you see me right now with unevenly dyed ginger hair with one puff on my right and the other on my left, I wouldn't change anything in my hair for the world.

In honour of World Afro Day, I'm going to address a few problems in the natural hair community. One key term is texturism. It is the favouring or praising of black hair with looser, finer curl patterns, creating the idea that

certain types of natural hair patterns are more desirable than others. Black women come with curls in different lengths, shapes, and textures. From 2b to 4c, every woman's curls are unique, and no curl pattern is better than the other. We see texturism in everyday media. For example, slicked edges shouldn't be the only acceptable visual for natural hair, women with natural hair, especially 4c should be able to see their carefree hair without manipulation in the media. Furthermore, the hair pattern that dominates TV and YouTube tutorials in general is described as the "perfect" loose curls. This notion in itself is not very helpful to many black women and young black girls with 4c hair. Well, you may be wondering why is texturism a problem. When we tell little black girls with 4c hair that they cannot let their hair flow as it naturally does, we are giving white supremacy a pass. If you have "naturally undesirable hair" you are often pressured to spend more time and money to chemically and mechanically process it. Now let us celebrate 4c hair in all its stages, not just the ideal or perfect moulds that make us comfortable for the white gaze.

Another issue is the unhealthy obsession with length, often our reluctance to have fun with our natural hair is rooted with the obsession with length. There seems to be a specific association between hair length and beauty for black women. It is reinforced by fallacies that "black hair can't grow" and the disappointment in the older generation when we "tamper" with the hair we "worked" so hard to grow. The TikTok sound "bleach the hair" has been used by hundreds of black women as they experiment with hair colour. She encourages black women to "bleach the hair", damage the curls, because at the end of the day what will you do? You will cut it. There is freedom in being able to choose whatever hairstyle you want without others reminding you of the consequences or suggesting you will be less feminine when you cut it. This is false, but even if you do end up hating it, guess what it literally grows back. So just do it everyone's hair grows at different rates, but an average hair grows between 0.2 to 0.7 inches each month. So, whether you dye it ten times, get heat damage and do a big chop each time, it can always return to the state you want it to be. You don't want to look back and regret not having fun with your hair.

# *What Do Festivals Mean in Islam?*

Amro Elrasheed

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## *What does Ramadan mean to you?*

**M**any misconceptions exist, even within the religion of Islam, that Ramadan is a time to solely abstain from eating food and drinking water, and that the following Eid is to feast as a reward for having fasted for an entire month. In reality, while fasting, Muslims also abstain from other things, e.g., sexual relations and smoking, making Ramadan a month of purity. Upon having much free time that would normally be spent doing these acts, Muslims are expected to reflect upon their deen (religion), read the Quran, interact with loved ones, give charity, and even engage in voluntary prayer! When asked to describe Ramadan in one word, some of the Muslims in Beths used words such as 'cleansing', 'self-reflection, and 'unity' (courtesy of Mo from the MCC), which I think sums up the holy month perfectly as a month where Muslims reflect on their relationship with God and with others. The Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) stated that Ramadan is the month of his ummah (the whole community of Muslims), and so I believe that we should take it upon ourselves to end any arguments, squash any beef, and help each other to better ourselves—this applies to both Muslims and non-Muslims! To end this section, I'd like everyone to ask themselves these questions: "What can I do to help myself and others?"; "Was that argument really necessary?" and "Is it possible that I said something that I shouldn't have?". After all, Ramadan is the month of forgiveness!





## What does Eid mean to you?

**E**id is a time of celebration and festivity, and it holds a special place in the hearts of Muslims for several reasons. Firstly, it marks the end of a month of fasting, which is considered one of the most significant acts of worship in Islam. Fasting during Ramadan is seen as a way to purify the soul, practice self-discipline, and develop empathy towards those less fortunate. Eid is a time when Muslims feel a sense of accomplishment and fulfilment for completing this act of worship, and it brings immense joy and satisfaction. In addition to this, Eid holds a special significance for families, especially children. It is a time when parents buy new clothes for their children, decorate their homes, and prepare special dishes to celebrate the occasion. Children eagerly look forward to Eid as a time of joy, excitement, and festivities. It is also a time for children to learn about the importance of their faith and cultural traditions, as elders pass on their knowledge and wisdom through storytelling and discussions during Eid gatherings. Eid is not just a religious festival; it is also a time for Muslims to reflect on their spiritual journey, renew their faith, and strive for self-improvement. It is a time to seek forgiveness from others and reconcile with those whom one may have had differences. Muslims use Eid as an opportunity to reflect on their actions during Ramadan and make a commitment to uphold their spiritual and moral growth beyond the month of fasting. Eid serves as a reminder of the importance of empathy and caring for those in need. Muslims are encouraged to be mindful of the less fortunate and extend a helping hand during this auspicious time. The act of charity during Eid not only provides material assistance to those in need but also promotes a sense of social responsibility and compassion among Muslims, instilling a spirit of generosity and kindness within the community. To summarise, what can you do during Eid to uphold your faith?

It's quite simple really – refrain from haram (forbidden) acts, engage in religious activities with your loved ones and donate to those who do not have enough to celebrate Eid in the same way that your family does.

Ramadan Kareem, and Eid Mubarak!



# *The Observance of Easter in Eastern Europe*

Vladimir Filip

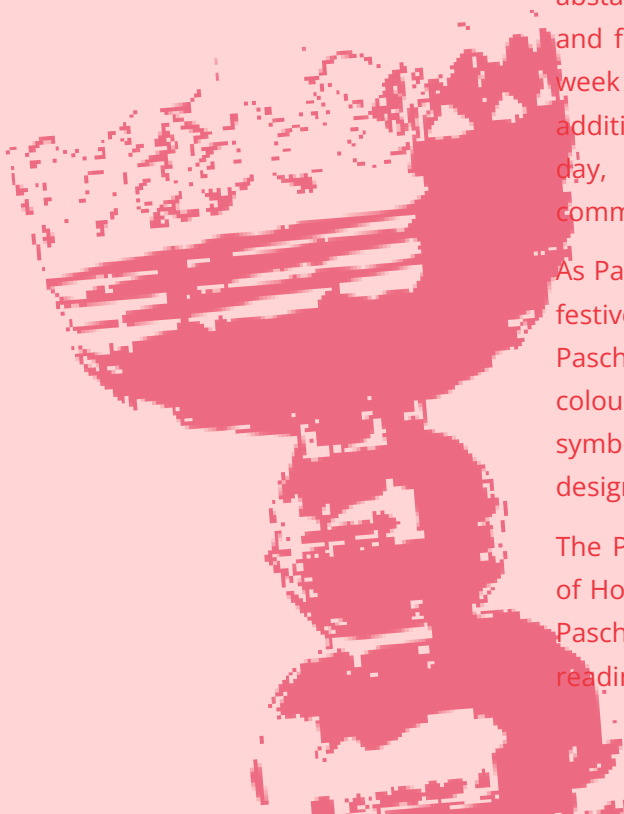
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**P**ascha, also known as Easter, is one of the most important religious holidays in Eastern Europe. Celebrated by Christians of various denominations, it commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and for the Eastern Orthodox (the majority religion in Eastern Europe) it is the event that cements our hope to be resurrected into the life of the world to come and receive eternal salvation. Being such a significant event for most of the subcontinent, it is marked by a variety of customs and traditions that vary from country to country. This year Pascha is celebrated on April 16<sup>th</sup>, different from the Western date of April 9<sup>th</sup> due to the use of the Julian rather than the Gregorian calendar.

In several Eastern European countries, Pascha is celebrated with great solemnity and joy. The preparation for Pascha begins several weeks before the holiday itself, with the observance of Great Lent, a period of fasting and spiritual introspection that lasts for 40 days. During this time, believers abstain from meat, dairy products, oil and other indulgences, and focus on prayer, repentance, and acts of charity. In the week preceding Pascha, also known as Holy Week, there is an additional period of fasting along with church services every day, one in the morning and one in the evening, commemorating the Passion and Crucifixion of Christ.

As Pascha approaches, the atmosphere becomes increasingly festive. Houses are cleaned and decorated, and special Pascha bread, called kulich, is baked, and decorated with colourful icing and sprinkles. Eggs are also an important symbol of Pascha and are dyed in various colours and designs.

The Pascha celebration itself typically begins on the evening of Holy Saturday, with a solemn church service known as the Paschal Vigil. The service is filled with prayers, hymns, and readings from the Bible, and culminates with the



proclamation of Christ's Resurrection and the lighting of candles at midnight. The congregation then processes outside the church, where they greet each other with the traditional Paschal greeting, "Christ is risen!" and respond with, "Truly He is risen!" Finally, the Divine Liturgy is held, as every other Sunday, with hymns proclaiming Christ's Resurrection and believers having the opportunity to take Holy Communion at the most important time in the Christian calendar year.

After the service, families gather to share a festive meal, which typically includes kulich, eggs, cheese, lamb, *cozonac* (a popular Romanian sweetbread containing pockets of walnuts and cocoa powder) and other traditional dishes, made with ingredients that were previously prohibited in the fast. In some regions, there is also a custom of going door-to-door, singing Paschal hymns and exchanging eggs and other gifts with neighbours and friends.

The Pascha celebration continues for several days, with church services, family gatherings, and other festivities. An especially popular custom is the egg-breaking tradition, where two people each take a painted hard-boiled egg, hold it in their hand, one says, 'Christ is risen', the other replies with 'Truly he is risen' and they tap eggs, with the winner being the one whose egg isn't cracked, and who will have good luck for the whole year. It is also common for people to greet each other by saying "Christ is risen" until Christ's Ascension 40 days after Pascha.

Overall, Pascha is a time to reflect on the miracle of Christ's resurrection and to renew one's faith and commitment to the teachings of the Christian faith, which along with the rich cultural traditions that come with it, make it easily one of the happiest and most memorable yearly events of the life of an Eastern Orthodox as well as for any believer around the world.



# Unravelling the Roots of Créole

Niven Cooppen

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"A *person of mixed European and black descent*" - That is the definition of a Créole person. Although this is true, in my eyes, there is much more to it than that. The term "Créole" originally referred to the Europeans who were born in colonies, such as those in Africa or the West Indies, rather than their own home countries. But this has since changed and expanded to represent people of African, Indigenous, and other heritages who share a common culture. To include people whose history was shaped by their colonial history.

Créole is not considered an ethnicity. This is because Créole people descended from a wide variety of different places and spread across the whole globe in the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Europe. While also fusing many different cultures, languages, and skin colours, it is hard to distinguish them as an ethnicity. But people still identify as Créoles because it's something to be proud of. Each of the different Créole people has their own unique languages, cuisine, music, and other cultural practices. All of which reflect the diverse and rich origins that blended to form them.

As a result of being a mix of many countries and cultures, the Créole languages are made of the fusion of multiple languages. This often can lead to a confusion, where other people may hear some words they understand, but others they don't. They can get confused on what language it is. In simple terms, it's a whole new language, and although it might be easier to understand for people of the parent tongue. It's going to be extremely different. Often in such languages, spellings and grammar will be very different. When the slaves and people were displaced from their homes, they had to communicate with others, but how can you understand another language with no knowledge? The grammar was lost in mixing between multiple languages, and since it was mostly dialect, spelling would be a lot different. If you want to learn the languages, go to their home, and live there, it is the only way you will be fluent.

Arguably, one of the most popular and



most known créole is Haitian Créole. Created in Haiti, Haitian Créole is a fusion between various African languages, indigenous (previous Haitian) languages. Dating back to the late 17th century, this créole was a result of the French colonisation of Haiti, including the displacement of African slaves. As of today, Haitian créole is one of the only créoles recognised as an official language. Being one of two official languages of Haiti, the other being French. An astonishing 11 million people speak Haitian créole: so, it's only fair it's an official language.

I am from Mauritius, an East African island just off the coast of Madagascar. Home to an amazing and unique culture, amazing cuisine and beaches, it is a place I highly recommend for a holiday. Much of the population speak Mauritian créole, which is a fusion between French, English, various African languages and Indian. Being mostly based on French, it is easily mistaken, but the language has its own unique grammar and vocabulary. While Mauritian créole is spoken by the populations. French is generally used for education and the media, and English for the government. So, this means the majority of the population is trilingual! Our diverse and vibrant community has bloomed over time to create a culture which is full of life. One of the biggest selling points of Mauritian culture is the music, Sega music. Originally, Sega was created as improvised music from the displaced slaves. Over time, the music cultivated into lively, party-like songs with upbeat tunes. One of the most influential singers in Mauritian history was called Kaya, a Mauritian Rastafarian. Seggae, a mix of reggae and Sega, a whole genre was basically created by him. The people of Mauritius dance to Sega, both traditionally and in parties, making the liveliest parties I've ever seen.

Many of you will know of a language called Patois, since it gained a lot of recognition in recent years via pop music and culture. What you may not know is that patois is Jamaican créole, which is a mix of English, African languages, and a few others. Like the others, this language, patois, was made amid the displacement of the slaves from British colonies in Africa. Being heavily based on English, many people can understand it, but still with some difficulty. Learning how to speak in Patois will be of great difficulty, with the accent, the language, and the mindset you need.

Créole is a term to describe a group of people who are the descendants of slaves. However, Créole people, and the language are often misunderstood. The fusion of many cultures and language and the rich history makes everything and everyone unique, but also the same. Following a common lifestyle, but with different religions and tongues. It is in my opinion that if we educate ourselves and celebrate the créole languages and culture, we can achieve a greater understanding of diversity and acceptance.



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# E d i t o r s

*Daiyan Bhuiyan (Chief)*

*Micaiah Dontoh*

# M C C

*Martin King Martins*

*Setsofia K. Dzah*

# credits

# A u t h o r s

*Krisalyn Ini*

*Amro Elrasheed*

*Vladimir Filip*

*Niven Cooppen*

