

= Little egret =

The little egret (*Egretta garzetta*) is a species of small heron in the family Ardeidae . The genus name comes from the Provençal French Aigrette , " egret " , a diminutive of Aigron , " heron " . The species epithet garzetta is from the Italian name for this bird , garzetta or sgarzetta .

It is a white bird with a slender black beak , long black legs and , in the western race , yellow feet . As an aquatic bird , it feeds in shallow water and on land , consuming a variety of small creatures . It breeds colonially , often with other species of water birds , making a platform nest of sticks in a tree , bush or reed bed . A clutch of bluish @-@ green eggs is laid and incubated by both parents . The young fledge at about six weeks of age .

Its breeding distribution is in wetlands in warm temperate to tropical parts of Europe , Africa , Asia , and Australia . In warmer locations , most birds are permanent residents ; northern populations , including many European birds , migrate to Africa and southern Asia to over @-@ winter there . The birds may also wander north in late summer after the breeding season , and their tendency to disperse may have assisted in the recent expansion of the bird 's range . At one time common in Western Europe , it was hunted extensively in the 19th century to provide plumes for the decoration of hats and became locally extinct in northwestern Europe and scarce in the south . Around 1950 , conservation laws were introduced in southern Europe to protect the species and their numbers began to increase . By the beginning of the 21st century the bird was breeding again in France , the Netherlands , Ireland and Britain . It has also begun to colonise the New World ; it was first seen in Barbados in 1954 and first bred there in 1994 . The International Union for Conservation of Nature has assessed the bird 's global conservation status as being of " least concern " .

= = Subspecies = =

Depending on authority , two or three subspecies of little egret are currently accepted :

E. g. garzetta ? (Linnaeus , 1766) : nominate , found in Europe , Africa , and most of Asia except the south @-@ east

E. g. nigripes ? (Temminck , 1840) : found in Indonesia east to New Guinea

E. g. immaculata ? Australia and (non @-@ breeding) New Zealand , often considered synonymous with E. g. nigripes

Three other egret taxa have at times been classified as subspecies of the little egret in the past but are now regarded as two separate species . These are the western reef heron *Egretta gularis* which occurs on the coastline of West Africa (*Egretta gularis gularis*) and from the Red Sea to India (*Egretta gularis schistacea*) , and the dimorphic egret *Egretta dimorpha* , found in East Africa , Madagascar , the Comoros and the Aldabra Islands .

= = Description = =

The adult little egret is 55 ? 65 cm (22 ? 26 in) long with an 88 ? 106 cm (35 ? 42 in) wingspan , and weighs 350 ? 550 g (12 ? 19 oz) . Its plumage is normally entirely white , although there are dark forms with largely bluish @-@ grey plumage . In the breeding season , the adult has two long plumes on the nape that form a crest . These plumes are about 150 mm (6 in) and are pointed and very narrow . There are similar feathers on the breast , but the barbs are more widely spread . There are also several elongated scapular feathers that have long loose barbs and may be 200 mm (8 in) long . During the winter the plumage is similar but the scapulars are shorter and more normal in appearance . The bill is long and slender and it and the lores are black . There is an area of greenish @-@ grey bare skin at the base of the lower mandible and around the eye which has a yellow iris . The legs are black and the feet yellow . Juveniles are similar to non @-@ breeding adults but have greenish @-@ black legs and duller yellow feet , and may have a certain proportion of greyish or brownish feathers . The subspecies nigripes differs in having yellow skin between the bill and eye , and blackish feet . During the height of courtship , the lores turn red and the feet of the yellow @-@ footed races turn red .

Little egrets are mostly silent but make various croaking and bubbling calls at their breeding colonies and produce a harsh alarm call when disturbed . To the human ear , the sounds are indistinguishable from the black @-@ crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) and the cattle egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) with which it sometimes associates .

= = Distribution and habitat = =

The breeding range of the western race (*E. g. garzetta*) includes southern Europe , the Middle East , much of Africa and southern Asia . Northern European populations are migratory , mostly travelling to Africa although some remain in southern Europe , while some Asian populations migrate to the Philippines . The eastern race , (*E. g. nigripes*) , is resident in Indonesia and New Guinea , while *E. g. immaculata* inhabits Australia and New Zealand , but does not breed in the latter . During the late twentieth century , the range of the little egret expanded northwards in Europe and into the New World , where a breeding population was established on Barbados in 1994 . The birds have since spread elsewhere in the Caribbean region and on the Atlantic coast of the United States .

The little egret 's habitat varies widely , and includes the shores of lakes , rivers , canals , ponds , lagoons , marshes and flooded land , the bird preferring open locations to dense cover . On the coast it inhabits mangrove areas , swamps , mudflats , sandy beaches and reefs . Rice fields are an important habitat in Italy , and coastal and mangrove areas are important in Africa . The bird often moves about among cattle or other hoofed mammals .

= = Behaviour = =

Little egrets are sociable birds and are often seen in small flocks . Nevertheless , individual birds do not tolerate others coming too close to their chosen feeding site , though this depends on the abundance of prey . They use a variety of methods to procure their food ; they stalk their prey in shallow water , often running with raised wings or shuffling their feet to disturb small fish , or may stand still and wait to ambush prey . They make use of opportunities provided by cormorants disturbing fish or humans attracting fish by throwing bread into water . On land they walk or run while chasing their prey , feed on creatures disturbed by grazing livestock and ticks on the livestock , and even scavenge . Their diet is mainly fish , but amphibians , small reptiles , mammals and birds are also eaten , as well as crustaceans , molluscs , insects , spiders and worms .

Little egrets nest in colonies , often with other wading birds . On the coasts of western India these colonies may be in urban areas , and associated birds include cattle egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*) , black @-@ crowned night herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) and black @-@ headed ibises (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*) . In Europe , associated species may be squacco herons (*Ardeola ralloides*) , cattle egrets , black @-@ crowned night herons and glossy ibises (*Plegadis falcinellus*) . The nests are usually platforms of sticks built in trees or shrubs , or in reed beds or bamboo groves . In some locations such as the Cape Verde Islands , the birds nest on cliffs . Pairs defend a small breeding territory , usually extending around 3 to 4 m (10 to 13 ft) from the nest . The three to five eggs are incubated by both adults for 21 to 25 days before hatching . They are oval in shape and have a pale , non @-@ glossy , blue @-@ green shell colour . The young birds are covered in white down feathers , are cared for by both parents and fledge after 40 to 45 days .

= = Conservation = =

Globally , the little egret is not listed as a threatened species and has in fact expanded its range over the last few decades . The International Union for Conservation of Nature states that their wide distribution and large total population means that they are a species that cause them " least concern " .

= = = Status in northwestern Europe = = =

Historical research has shown that the little egret was once present , and probably common , in Ireland and Great Britain , but became extinct there through a combination of over @-@ hunting in the late mediaeval period and climate change at the start of the Little Ice Age . The inclusion of 1 @,@ 000 egrets (among numerous other birds) in the banquet to celebrate the enthronement of George Neville as Archbishop of York at Cawood Castle in 1465 indicates the presence of a sizable population in northern England at the time , and they are also listed in the coronation feast of King Henry VI in 1429 . They had become scarce by the mid @-@ 16th century , when William Gowreley , " yeoman purveyor to the Kinges mowthe " , " had to send further south " for egrets . In 1804 Thomas Bewick commented that if it were the same bird as listed in Neville 's bill of fare " No wonder this species has become nearly extinct in this country ! "

Further declines occurred throughout Europe as the plumes of the little egret and other egrets were in demand for decorating hats . They had been used for this purpose since at least the 17th century but in the 19th century it became a major craze and the number of egret skins passing through dealers reached into the millions . Complete statistics do not exist , but in the first three months of 1885 , 750 @,@ 000 egret skins were sold in London , while in 1887 one London dealer sold 2 million egret skins . Egret farms were set up where the birds could be plucked without being killed but most of the supply of so @-@ called " Osprey plumes " was obtained by hunting , which reduced the population of the species to dangerously low levels and stimulated the establishment of Britain 's Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in 1889 .

By the 1950s , the little egret had become restricted to southern Europe , and conservation laws protecting the species were introduced . This allowed the population to rebound strongly ; over the next few decades it became increasingly common in western France and later on the north coast . It bred in the Netherlands in 1979 with further breeding from the 1990s onward . About 22 @,@ 700 pairs are thought to breed in Europe , with populations stable or increasing in Spain , France and Italy but decreasing in Greece .

In Britain it was a rare vagrant from its 16th @-@ century disappearance until the late 20th century , and did not breed . It has however recently become a regular breeding species and is commonly present , often in large numbers , at favoured coastal sites . The first recent breeding record in England was on Brownsea Island in Dorset in 1996 , and the species bred in Wales for the first time in 2002 . The population increase has been rapid subsequently , with over 750 pairs breeding in nearly 70 colonies in 2008 , and a post @-@ breeding total of 4 @,@ 540 birds in September 2008 . Little egrets are especially common around the River Thames , and in summer can be noticed in large numbers at Port Meadow , Oxford . In Ireland , the species bred for the first time in 1997 at a site in County Cork and the population has also expanded rapidly since , breeding in most Irish counties by 2010 . Severe winter weather in 2010 ? 2012 proved to be only a temporary setback , and the species continues to spread .

= = = Status in Australia = = =

In Australia , its status varies from state to state . It is listed as " Threatened " on the Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 . Under this act , an Action Statement for the recovery and future management of this species has been prepared . On the 2007 advisory list of threatened vertebrate fauna in Victoria , the little egret is listed as endangered .

= = = Colonisation of the New World = = =

The little egret has now started to colonise the New World . The first record there was on Barbados in April 1954 . The bird began breeding on the island in 1994 and now also breeds in the Bahamas . Ringed birds from Spain provide a clue to the birds ' origin . The birds are very similar in appearance to the snowy egret and share colonial nesting sites with these birds in Barbados , where they are both recent arrivals . The little egrets are larger , have more varied foraging strategies and exert dominance over feeding sites .

Little egrets are seen with increasing regularity over a wider area and have been observed from Suriname and Brazil in the south to Newfoundland , Quebec and Ontario in the north . Birds on the east coast of North America are thought to have moved north with snowy egrets from the Caribbean . In June 2011 , a little egret was spotted in Maine , in the Scarborough Marsh , near the Audubon Center .

= École Polytechnique massacre =

The École Polytechnique Massacre , also known as the Montreal Massacre , occurred on December 6 , 1989 , at the École Polytechnique in Montreal , Quebec , Canada . Twenty @-@ five @-@ year @-@ old Marc Lépine , armed with a Mini @-@ 14 rifle and a hunting knife , shot 28 people , killing 14 women , before committing suicide . He began his attack by entering a classroom at the university , where he separated the male and female students . After claiming that he was " fighting feminism " and calling the women " a bunch of feminists , " he shot all nine women in the room , killing six . He then moved through corridors , the cafeteria , and another classroom , specifically targeting women to shoot . Overall , he killed fourteen women and injured ten other women and four men in just under 20 minutes before turning the gun on himself . His suicide note claimed political motives and blamed feminists for ruining his life . The note included a list of 19 Quebec women whom Lépine considered to be feminists and apparently wished to kill .

Since the attack , Canadians have debated various interpretations of the events , their significance , and Lépine 's motives . Many feminist groups and public officials have characterized the massacre as an anti @-@ feminist attack that is representative of wider societal violence against women . Consequently , the anniversary of the massacre has since been commemorated as the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women . Other interpretations emphasize Lépine 's abuse as a child or suggest that the massacre was simply the isolated act of a madman , unrelated to larger social issues . Still other commentators have blamed violence in the media and increasing poverty , isolation , and alienation in society , particularly in immigrant communities .

The incident led to more stringent gun control laws in Canada . It also introduced changes in the tactical response of police to shootings , changes which were later credited with minimizing casualties at the Dawson College shootings .

= = Massacre = =

Sometime after 4 p.m. on December 6 , 1989 , Marc Lépine arrived at the building housing the École Polytechnique , an engineering school affiliated with the Université de Montréal , armed with a semi @-@ automatic rifle and a hunting knife . He had purchased the Sturm , Ruger brand rifle , Mini @-@ 14 model , on November 21 , 1989 , in a Checkmate Sports store in Montreal , telling the clerk that he was going to use it to hunt small game . Lépine was familiar with the layout of the building since he had been in and around the École Polytechnique at least seven times in the weeks leading up to the event .

Lépine sat for a time in the office of the registrar on the second floor . He was seen rummaging through a plastic bag and did not speak to anyone , even when a staff member asked if she could help him . He left the office and was subsequently seen in other parts of the building before entering a second floor mechanical engineering class of about sixty students at about 5 : 10 p.m. After approaching the student giving a presentation , he asked everyone to stop everything and ordered the women and men to opposite sides of the classroom . No one moved at first , believing it to be a joke until he fired a shot into the ceiling .

Lépine then separated the nine women from the approximately fifty men and ordered the men to leave . Speaking in French , he asked the remaining women whether they knew why they were there , and when one student replied " no , " he answered : " I am fighting feminism " . One of the students , Nathalie Provost , said , " Look , we are just women studying engineering , not necessarily feminists ready to march on the streets to shout we are against men , just students intent on leading

a normal life . " Lépine responded that " You 're women , you 're going to be engineers . You 're all a bunch of feminists . I hate feminists . " He then opened fire on the students from left to right , killing six , and wounding three others , including Provost . Before leaving the room , he wrote the word shit twice on a student project .

Lépine continued into the second @-@ floor corridor and wounded three students before entering another room where he twice attempted to shoot a female student . His weapon failed to fire so he entered the emergency staircase where he was seen reloading his gun . He returned to the room he had just left , but the students had locked the door ; Lépine failed to unlock it with three shots fired into the door . Moving along the corridor he shot at others , wounding one , before moving towards the financial services office where he shot and killed a woman through the window of the door she had just locked .

He next went down to the first @-@ floor cafeteria , in which about a hundred people were gathered . The crowd scattered after he shot a woman standing near the kitchens and wounded another student . Entering an unlocked storage area at the end of the cafeteria , Lépine shot and killed two more women hiding there . He told a male and female student to come out from under a table ; they complied and were not shot .

Lépine then walked up an escalator to the third floor where he shot and wounded one female and two male students in the corridor . He entered another classroom and told the three students giving a presentation to " get out , " shooting and wounding Maryse Leclair , who was standing on the low platform at the front of the classroom . He fired on students in the front row and then killed two women who were trying to escape the room , while other students dove under their desks . Lépine moved towards some of the female students , wounding three of them and killing another . He changed the magazine in his weapon and moved to the front of the class , shooting in all directions . At this point , the wounded Leclair asked for help and , after unsheathing his hunting knife , Lépine stabbed her three times , killing her . He took off his cap , wrapped his coat around his rifle , exclaimed , " Ah shit , " and then committed suicide by shooting himself in the head , twenty minutes after having begun his attack . About sixty unfired cartridges remained in the boxes he carried with him . He had killed fourteen women in total (twelve engineering students , one nursing student and one employee of the university) and injured fourteen other people , including four men .

After briefing reporters outside , Montreal Police director of public relations Pierre Leclair entered the building and found his daughter Maryse 's stabbed body .

The Quebec and Montreal governments declared three days of mourning . A joint funeral for nine of the women was held at Notre @-@ Dame Basilica on December 11 , 1989 , and was attended by Governor General Jeanne Sauvé , Prime Minister Brian Mulroney , Quebec premier Robert Bourassa , and Montreal mayor Jean Doré , along with thousands of other mourners .

= = = Suicide letter = = =

Marc Lépine 's inside jacket pocket contained a suicide letter and two letters to friends , all dated the day of the massacre . Some details from the suicide letter were revealed by the police two days after the event , but the full text was not disclosed . The media brought an unsuccessful access to information case to compel the police to release the suicide letter . A year after the attacks , Lépine 's three @-@ page statement was leaked to journalist and feminist Francine Pelletier . It contained a list of nineteen Quebec women whom Lépine apparently wished to kill because he considered them feminists . The list included Pelletier herself , as well as a union leader , a politician , a TV personality , and six police officers who had come to Lépine 's attention as they were on a volleyball team together . The letter (without the list of women) was subsequently published in the newspaper La Presse , where Pelletier was a columnist at the time . Lépine wrote that he considered himself rational and that he blamed feminists for ruining his life . He outlined his reasons for the attack including his anger towards feminists for seeking social changes that " retain the advantages of being women [...] while trying to grab those of the men . " He also mentioned Denis Lortie , a Canadian Forces corporal who killed three government employees and wounded thirteen others in an armed attack on the National Assembly of Quebec on May 7 , 1984 . The text of the original letter

in French is available , as well as an English translation .

= = = Victims = = =

Geneviève Bergeron (born 1968) , civil engineering student
Hélène Colgan (born 1966) , mechanical engineering student
Nathalie Croteau (born 1966) , mechanical engineering student
Barbara Daigneault (born 1967) , mechanical engineering student
Anne @-@ Marie Edward (born 1968) , chemical engineering student
Maud Haviernick (born 1960) , materials engineering student
Maryse Laganière (born 1964) , budget clerk in the École Polytechnique 's finance department
Maryse Leclair (born 1966) , materials engineering student
Anne @-@ Marie Lemay (born 1967) , mechanical engineering student
Sonia Pelletier (born 1961) , mechanical engineering student
Michèle Richard (born 1968) , materials engineering student
Annie St @-@ Arneault (born 1966) , mechanical engineering student
Annie Turcotte (born 1969) , materials engineering student
Barbara Klucznik @-@ Widajewicz (born 1958) , nursing student
A number of students committed suicide .

= = Perpetrator = =

The shooter , Marc Lépine , was born to a French @-@ Canadian mother and an Algerian father , and at birth , Lepine 's name was Gamil Gharbi . His father , a mutual funds salesman , was contemptuous of women . He was physically and verbally abusive to his wife and son , discouraging tenderness between mother and child . When Gamil was seven , his parents separated ; his father ceased contact with his children soon after . His mother returned to nursing to support the family , and because of her schedule , the children lived with other families during the week . At 14 , Gamil changed his name to " Marc Lépine " , citing his hatred of his father as the reason for taking his mother 's surname . Lépine attempted to join the Canadian Army during the winter of 1980 ? 1981 , but according to his suicide letter was rejected because he was " anti @-@ social . " The brief biography of Marc Lépine that police released the day after the killings described him as intelligent but troubled . He disliked feminists , career women and women in traditionally male occupations , such as the police force . He began a pre @-@ university CEGEP (college) program in pure sciences in 1982 but switched to a three @-@ year vocational program in electronics technology after his first year . He abandoned this program in his final semester without explanation . Lépine applied to the École Polytechnique in 1986 and in 1989 but lacked two CEGEP courses required for admission . He completed one of them in the winter of 1989 .

= = Search for a rationale = =

The massacre profoundly shocked Canadians . Government and criminal justice officials feared that extensive public discussion about the massacre would cause pain to the families and lead to antifeminist violence . As a result , a public inquiry was not held , and Marc Lépine 's suicide letter was not officially released . In addition , though an extensive police investigation into Marc Lépine and the killings took place , the resulting report was not made public , though a copy was used by the coroner as a source in her investigation . The media , academics , women 's organizations , and family members of the victims protested the lack of a public inquiry and paucity of information released .

The sex of Marc Lépine 's victims as well as his oral statements during the massacre and suicide note quickly led to the event being seen as an antifeminist attack and as an example of the wider issue of violence against women . Feminist scholars consider Lépine 's actions to spring from a widespread societal misogyny , including toleration of violence against women . Scholars have

categorized it as a "pseudo @-@ community" type of "pseudo @-@ commando" murder @-@ suicide, in which the perpetrator targets a specific group, often in a public place, and intends to die in "a blaze of glory". Criminologists regard the massacre as an example of a hate or bias crime against women, as the victims were selected solely because of their membership of the category of women, and those targeted were interchangeable with others from the same group. Lépine's mother later wondered if the attack was not directed at her, as some would have considered her a feminist since she was a single, working mother. Others, including television journalist Barbara Frum, pleaded that the massacre not be seen as an antifeminist attack or violence against women, and questioned why people insisted on "diminishing" the tragedy by "suggesting that it was an act against just one group?"

As predicted by Marc Lépine in his suicide letter, some saw the event as the isolated act of a madman. A psychiatrist interviewed Lépine's family and friends and examined his writings as part of the police investigation. He noted that Marc Lépine defined suicide as his primary motivation, and that he chose a specific suicide method, namely killing oneself after killing others (multiple homicide / suicide strategy), which is considered a sign of a serious personality disorder. Other psychiatrists emphasized the traumatic events of his childhood, suggesting that the blows he had received may have caused brain damage, or that Lépine was psychotic, having lost touch with reality as he tried to erase the memories of a brutal (yet largely absent) father while unconsciously identifying with a violent masculinity that dominated women. A different theory was that Lépine's childhood experiences of abuse led him to feel victimized as he faced losses and rejections in his later life. His mother wondered if Lépine might have suffered from attachment disorder, due to the abuse and sense of abandonment he had experienced in his childhood.

Others expressed a broader analysis, framing Lépine's actions as the result of societal changes that had led to increased poverty, powerlessness, individual isolation, and polarization between men and women. Noting Lépine's interest in violent action films, some suggested that violence in the media and in society may have influenced his actions. Following a shooting at Dawson College on September 13, 2006, Globe and Mail columnist Jan Wong controversially suggested that Marc Lépine may have felt alienated from Quebec society as he was the child of an immigrant.

= = Effects = =

The injured and witnesses among university staff and students suffered a variety of physical, social, existential, financial, and psychological consequences, including post @-@ traumatic stress disorder. A number of students committed suicide. In the suicide letters of at least two of them, the anguish they suffered following the massacre was cited as the reason for killing themselves. Nine years after the event, survivors reported still being affected by their experiences, though with time some of the effects had lessened.

= = = Police response = = =

Police response to the shootings was heavily criticized for the amount of time it gave Lépine to carry out the massacre. The first police officers to arrive at the scene established a perimeter around the building and waited before entering the building. During this period, several women were killed. Subsequent changes to emergency response protocols led to praise of emergency responders' handling of the Dawson College shooting in 2006 in which one woman was killed by a shooter. In that incident, coordination amongst emergency response agencies and prompt intervention were credited with minimizing the loss of life.

= = = Gun control = = =

The massacre was a major spur for the Canadian gun control movement. Heidi Rathjen, a student who was in one of the classrooms Lépine did not enter during the shooting, organized the Coalition for Gun Control with Wendy Cukier. Suzanne Laplante @-@ Edward and Jim Edward, the parents

of one of the victims , were also deeply involved . Their activities , along with others , led to the passage of Bill C @-@ 68 , or the Firearms Act , in 1995 , ushering in stricter gun control regulations . These new regulations included requirements on the training of gun owners , screening of firearm applicants , rules concerning gun and ammunition storage and the registration of all firearms . Between 2009 and 2012 , survivors of the massacre and their families publicly opposed legislative actions by Stephen Harper 's Conservative government aimed at ending the long @-@ gun registry ; A bill was narrowly defeated in September 2010 , but following their 2011 majority election win , the long @-@ gun registry was abolished by the Harper government in April 2012 . The Quebec government subsequently won a temporary injunction , preventing the destruction of the province 's gun registry data , and ordering the continued registration of long guns in Quebec . In March 2015 , The Supreme Court of Canada ruled against Quebec , clearing the way for the destruction of all registry data .

= = = Violence against women = = =

The Canadian women 's movement sees the massacre as a symbol of violence against women . " The death of those young women would not be in vain , we promised " , Canadian feminist Judy Rebick recalled . " We would turn our mourning into organizing to put an end to male violence against women . "

In response to the killings , a House of Commons Sub @-@ Committee on the Status of Women was created . It released a report " The War against Women " in June 1991 , which was not endorsed by the full standing committee . However , following its recommendations , the federal government established the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women in August 1991 . The panel issued a final report , " Changing the Landscape : Ending Violence ? Achieving Equality " , in June 1993 . The panel proposed a two @-@ pronged " National Action Plan " consisting of an " Equality Action Plan " and a " Zero Tolerance Policy " designed to increase women 's equality and reduce violence against women through government policy . Critics of the panel said that the plan failed to provide a workable timeline and strategy for implementation and that with over four hundred recommendations , the final report failed to make an impact .

= = = Controversy = = =

Male survivors of the massacre have been subjected to criticism for not intervening to stop Lépine . In an interview immediately after the event , a reporter asked one of the men why they " abandoned " the women when it was clear that Lépine 's targets were women . René Jalbert , the sergeant @-@ at @-@ arms who persuaded Denis Lortie to surrender during his 1984 attack , said that someone should have intervened at least to distract Lépine , but acknowledged that " ordinary citizens cannot be expected to react heroically in the midst of terror . " Newspaper columnist Mark Steyn suggested that male inaction during the massacre illustrated a " culture of passivity " prevalent among men in Canada , which enabled Lépine 's shooting spree : " Yet the defining image of contemporary Canadian maleness is not M Lepine / Gharbi but the professors and the men in that classroom , who , ordered to leave by the lone gunman , meekly did so , and abandoned their female classmates to their fate ? an act of abdication that would have been unthinkable in almost any other culture throughout human history . "

Male students and staff expressed feelings of remorse for not having attempted to prevent the shootings , but Nathalie Provost , one of the survivors , said that she felt that nothing could have been done to prevent the tragedy , and that her fellow students should not feel guilty .

The feminist movement is periodically criticized for appropriating the massacre as a symbol of male violence against women . For example , Charles Rackoff , a University of Toronto computer science professor , compared the Ku Klux Klan with those organizing vigils marking the event , writing that " [t] he point is to use the death of these people as an excuse to promote the feminist / extreme left @-@ wing agenda , " and adding that it is " no more justified " than the KKK using the " murder of a white person by a black person as an excuse to promote their agenda . " Other critics say that

Lépine was a " lone gunman " who does not represent men , and that violence against women is neither condoned nor encouraged officially or unofficially in western culture . In this perspective , feminist memorializing is considered socially divisive on the basis of gender and therefore harmful by bestowing guilt on all men , irrespective of individual propensity to violence against women . Some masculinist and anti @-@ feminist commentators state that feminism has provoked violence against women , and without condoning the shootings , view the massacre as an extreme expression of men 's frustrations . A few say that Lépine was a hero of masculism , glorifying his actions .

= = Memorials = =

Since 1991 , the anniversary of the massacre has been designated the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women , intended as a call to action against discrimination against women . A White Ribbon Campaign was launched in 1991 by a group of men in London , Ontario , in the wake of the massacre , for the purpose of raising awareness about the prevalence of male violence against women , with the ribbon symbolizing " the idea of men giving up their arms . " Commemorative demonstrations are held across the country each year on December 6 in memory of the slain women and numerous memorials have been built . In memoriam of the event , December 6 is a day off every year at Polytechnique .

The Place du 6 @-@ Décembre @-@ 1989 in the Côte @-@ des @-@ Neiges / Notre @-@ Dame @-@ de @-@ Grâce borough of Montreal was created as a memorial to the victims of the massacre . Located at the corner of Decelles Avenue and Queen Mary Road , a short distance from the university , it includes the art installation Nef pour quatorze reines (Nave for Fourteen Queens) by Rose @-@ Marie Goulet . It is the site of annual commemorations on December 6 .

A memorial erected in Vancouver sparked controversy because it was dedicated to " all women murdered by men " , which critics say implies all men are potential murderers . As a result , women involved in the project received death threats and the Vancouver Park Board subsequently banned any future memorials that might " antagonize " other groups .

The event has also been commemorated through references in television , theatre , and popular music . A play about the shootings by Adam Kelly called The Anorak was named as one of the best plays of 2004 by the Montreal Gazette . A movie entitled Polytechnique , directed by Denis Villeneuve was released in 2009 , and sparked controversy over the desirability of reliving the tragedy in a commercial film .

Additionally , several songs have been written about the events in different musical genres , including " Give Us Back The Night " by folk @-@ rock duo Open Mind , " Montreal Massacre " by the death metal band Macabre , " This Memory " by the folk duo the Wyrld Sisters , and " 14 (for December 6) " by spoken @-@ word artist Evalyn Parry .

In 2008 , Marc Lépine 's mother Monique published Aftermath , a memoir of her own journey through the grief and pain of the incident . She had stayed silent until 2006 , when she decided to speak out for the first time in the wake of that year 's Dawson College shooting .

For the commemorative ceremony on the 25th anniversary of the massacre in 2014 , the city of Montreal entrusted the technical aspect of the ceremony to the multimedia production company Moment Factory , who installed fourteen searchlights representing the 14 victims of the massacre on the esplanade of Mount Royal . The light beams turned skyward first appeared shortly after four o 'clock , the hour when the attack had started 25 years earlier .