
C
cultivate

Our Mission Statement

Cultivate is an inclusive feminist journal led by the postgraduate community within the Centre for Women's Studies at the University of York. The journal champions feminist voices and aims to build and share knowledge by forging dialogues between the academic, activist, creative, verbal, and visual. Cultivate is politically and socially engaged to challenge institutions, transform power-dynamics, promote justice, and strengthen feminist movements.

Eras of Feminism

Cultivate

The Feminist Journal of the Centre for Women's Studies

Issue 6: September 2024

Contents

We have used this symbol to indicate when an article has been peer reviewed.

Editorial

"No one likes a mad woman
You made her like that" - Mad Woman by Taylor Swift (2020)

Taking a retrospective approach in light of the Centre for Women's Studies (University of York) 40th Anniversary, we encouraged this year's submissions to consider feminism through a temporal lens. Since its conception, Cultivate has championed inclusive feminist voices, nurturing the postgraduate community at York. Over the years, Cultivate has successfully forged dialogues between the academic, activist, creative, verbal, and visual. To honour the cyclical nature of feminisms that we have been uncovering in this issue, we have invited Cultivate's inaugural editors to speak to the roots of the journal. The first issue's theme of protest emphasises how eras might change but feminist struggles wage on.

Disrupting and complicating the idea of feminist waves was the initial concept behind this year's theme of 'Eras of Feminism'. We wanted to acknowledge that progress isn't linear and that feminism returns to us in new forms, contexts and discourses time and time again. This recycling of thoughts and ideas can be seen across much of popular culture and led us to nod to the highest grossing concert tour of all time (which ran concurrent to the issue's production) when considering our namesake. Taylor Swift's Eras Tour looks back on each of the eleven albums that led to where she is now. Our Call for Contributions intended to lean into the idea of 'eras' rather than 'waves' as our theme this year. We hoped to subvert the idea of cohesive feminist movements and instead focus on moments in time from the ever-changing landscape of feminism. We acknowledge that even 'eras' bear a sense of temporal limitations, however, as with eras of fashion, music and pop-culture, we are interested in the conversations between these periods in time and how they repeat and renew.

The articles and creative pieces within this issue speak to many Eras of Feminism. From historical perspectives to lived experiences to the reclamation of agency, this year's issue champions intersectional feminist voices and blurs the lines between academia and the arts. This collection of work questions, re-examines and resituates feminist debates within different contexts, time and spaces.

Writing this editorial amid ongoing political failures to acknowledge the rights of Palestinian people, trans people and other global minorities, has left us feeling particularly fearful. In response, we turn to our feminist histories of solidarity, support and triumph.

"What do you hear when you hear the word feminism? It is a word that fills me with hope, with energy" (Ahmed 2017).

With this in mind, we want to thank the wonderful feminist community that has made Cultivate possible. Our team of volunteers, our advisory board, peer reviewers, and the helping hands that have generously offered their guidance and support. We'd like to thank Xiaoyu Zhang for creating an incredibly powerful cover that reflects our kaleidoscopic distortion of the feminist wave metaphor, and a special thanks to Rachel Alsop for her continued, ongoing support and mentoring.

As we once again face the resurgence of right-wing politics, we encourage you to flood the global stage with your feminist thoughts, voices and solidarity. May our next era be our most powerful yet!

In solidarity,

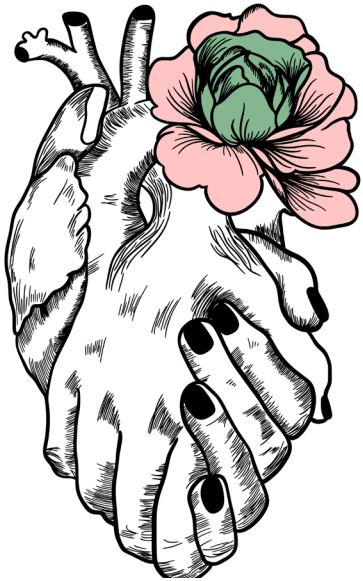
Lizzie Merrill, Daisy McManaman & Madalaine French

concatenation

by Andrea Isabel Aguilar Ferro

there are thousands of them,
gathering in spirals:
long lines of ancestors,
of women (and not only women)
who have built bridges,
sown horizons
and planted seeds
that sprouted in our hearts.

some stand still
behind our backs,
others hold tenderly
our frozen hands
and others rejoice with us
when we fiercely conjure
incendiary futures,
interwoven revolutions,
dignity,
and life
for all
for all
for all.



How to tell time: Using the temporal logic of spiritual feminists in the 1970s and 1980s to offer a new perspective on the 'wave' debate

by Charlotte Anne Oakes 

When reading feminist history, it is not unusual to come across some kind of reference to 'waves'. The metaphor is most commonly featured to describe three, supposedly, distinct eras in the history of feminist activism. In recent years, the 'wave' paradigm has been subject to growing criticism. As Nancy Hewitt argues, the compartmentalisation of feminist history into 'discrete and separate waves' is inaccurate.[1] By following a teleological 'standard narrative', 'waves' omit the reality that feminist 'movements overlapped and intertwined'.[2]

At the heart of the 'wave' debate are questions that Julia Kristeva began to ponder in 1981: what is "Women's Time" and how does it affect our understanding of the past, present and future?[3] Kristeva juxtaposes 'linear time', a masculine form of temporal logic, with 'cyclical and monumental time', temporalities connected to 'female subjectivity'.[4] Her distinction between masculine and feminine concepts of time resonates with the temporal logic developed by a more spiritualistic branch of the feminist movement throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

This paper closely analyses "Women's Time", as it was developed by spiritualist feminists in the late twentieth century, for the perspective it offers to the ongoing 'wave' debate. The paper begins by investigating the inspiration behind spiritualist feminists' new temporal logic. It will introduce the matriarchal myth and how it led feminists to think of time as an entity shaped by a multidirectional dialogue between past, present and future. Secondly, the paper examines why temporality became a political issue in the 1970s and 1980s and how it figured in feminist 'reclamation politics'.[5] In its final section, the paper focuses on the implications of "Women's Time" on feminist history. It will demonstrate that the temporal logic developed by spiritualist feminists did not only affect how women's history was written in the 1970s and 1980s. By connecting it to the ongoing 'wave' debate, the paper suggests that "Women's Time" is beneficial to critics of the paradigm, offering an alternate temporal framework for feminist history writing.

[1] Nancy Hewitt, 'Introduction', in No Permanent waves: recasting histories of U.S. feminism, ed. Nancy Hewitt (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2020), 5.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Julia Kristeva, "Women's Time", trans. By Alice Jardine and Harry Blake, Signs 7, no. 1 (1981): 13–35.

[4] Ibid, 16-17.

[5] Ruth Lindley, 'The Personal Is Political Is Spiritual: Feminism and Religion in Modern Britain', (PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2019), 61.

What inspired the development of "Women's Time"?

Spiritualist feminists' main source of inspiration for their temporal logic came from the *matriarchal myth*. The myth subverted the mainstream historical narratives which depicted history as a story of male dominance and patriarchy as always having 'been the human norm'.[6] In contrast, the matriarchal myth suggests that women-centred societies predated patriarchy.[7] Proponents of the myth believed that women living in Paleo- and Neolithic times had enjoyed either 'equal or superior' status to men.[8] For feminists, the idea of a matriarchal prehistory offered an alternative to the androcentric accounts which treated the female experience as a 'fragmented, compartmentalised, belittled' component of 'patriarchal history'.[9]

In the 1970s and 1980s, spiritualist feminists began accusing male scholars of orchestrating a 'huge cover-up of matriarchy'.[10] Equipped with the matriarchal myth, they developed an alternate historical narrative in which patriarchy was a temporary circumstance soon to be replaced with the restoration of matriarchal society. [11]

What made temporality a feminist issue?

"Women's Time" became the tool of choice by spiritualist feminists involved in, what Ruth Lindley describes as, 'reclamation politics'.[12] It had become clear to feminists that mainstream historical narratives were based on the androcentric symbol systems perpetuated by the three main Western religions: Christianity, Judaism and Islam.[13] Writing in 1978, Carol Christ urged feminists to take religious symbolism out of 'the hands of the fathers'. Women need, she argued, new symbols which acknowledge 'the *legitimacy of female power*'.[14]

According to Cynthia Eller, spiritualist feminists believed that together

[6] Riane Eisler, The chalice and the blade: our history, our future (San Francisco, HarperCollins, 1988), 51.

[7] Cynthia Eller, The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory : Why an Invented Past Will Not Give Women a Future (Boston, Beacon Press, 2001), 2-3.

[8] M.F. Zawadzki, 'Listen to the words of the great mother: The goddess art of Mary Beth Edelson', The Journal of American Culture, 39, no. 3 (2016), 337; Eller, The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory, 13.

[9] Mary Daly, Gyn/Ecology. The Metaethics of Radical Feminism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), 315, 16.

[10] Eller, The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory, 13.

[11] Ibid, 197.

[12] Lindley, The Personal is Political is Spiritual, 64.

[13] Zawadzki, 'Listen to the words of the great mother', 334.

[14] Carol P. Christ, "Why Women Need the Goddess", Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Arts & Politics 2, no. 1 (1978), 8.

[15] Ibid, 9.

Western history and theology were 'the linchpin of patriarchal authority'.[16] Their solution, as demonstrated in the respective work of feminist theologian Mary Daly and self-proclaimed witch Starhawk, was to 'reclaim' the primordial Goddess culture mentioned in the *matriarchal myth*.[17] Paleo- and Neolithic images of female deities depicted women's "innate goodness" and their "natural majesty" thus deliberately juxtaposing the Bible's division of women into two categories: sinful Eves or acquiescent Marys.[18]

Taking heed of Carol Christ's warning and endeavouring to replace the androcentric symbol system, spiritualist feminists believed it was additionally necessary to reject the linear chronological framework characteristic of 'patriarchal history'.[19] They believed that "Women's Time" would effectively 'counter the "wisdom of Father Time with his time-killing time-clocks'.[20] Unlike the teleological approach of the androcentric master narratives, the feminist temporal logic was nonlinear, cyclical and moved 'backward, sideward, forward, upward, downward, outward, inward'.[21]

What is the impact of "Women's Time" on feminist history?

The new temporal logic developed by spiritualist feminists was intended to move fluidly across chronological boundaries. In 1978, Mary Daly described feminism as being 'based on some knowledge of the past, upon present experience, and upon hopes for the future. These three sources are inseparable, intertwined'.[22]

When spiritualist feminists learnt of witch hunts in the Early Modern period, for example, they refused to treat it as an isolated event, confined to the past. As Anne Kwaschik explains, they believed that they shared a 'persecuted female identity' with the women accused of witchcraft.[23] The persecution of the 'witches' by the Church was regarded as a mirror image of the political subordination experienced by women in the twentieth century.[24]

Cynthia Eller suggests that new archaeological research, published respectively by Marija Gimbutas and Merlin Stone in the 1970s, also inspired feminists to look to the future.[25] Gimbutas and Stone provided historical

[16] Cynthia Eller, "The feminist appropriation of matriarchal myth in the 19th and 20th centuries." History Compass 3, no. 1 (2005), 6. [17] Daly, Gyn/Ecology, 16; Starhawk, The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess (San Francisco: HarperCollin, 2011), 50.

[18] Eller, The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory, 15; Christ, 'Why Women Need the Goddess', 11.

[19] Christ, "Why Women Need the Goddess", 8; Daly, Gyn/ Ecology, 16.

[20] Daly, Gyn/ Ecology, 315, 390.

[21] Kristeva, "Women's Time", 8; Daly, Gyn/ Ecology, 16,390.

[22] Daly, Gyn/ Ecology, 1.

[23] A. Kwaschik, '"We Witches." Knowledge Wars, Experience and Spirituality in the Women's Movement During the 1970s', NTM, 31, no, 2 (2023), 172.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Eller, The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory, 37-8.

artefacts, in corroboration with the matriarchal myth, confirming the existence of Paleo- and Neolithic women-centred cultures.[26] Clues of primordial matriarchal societies became the basis of feminist utopian visions of the collapse of patriarchy and the restoration of a gynocentric 'natural order'.[27] "Women's time", with its fluid, nonlinear chronological order, is ill-matched with the 'wave' metaphor. If feminists of the 1970s and 1980s believed that linear chronologies were a prop for patriarchal society, should we, as feminist historians, avoid them and instead narrate history according to "Women's Time"?

Surveying the 'wave' debate, it appears that one of the main criticisms is that the paradigm follows 'standard narratives' thus overlooking 'important dimensions of feminist activism'.[28] Nancy Hewitt disparages the 'waves' as a linear chronological framework which isolates events, campaigns and actors in feminist history.[29] She argues that dividing feminist history into 'discrete and separate waves' neglects to consider how movements 'overlapped and intertwined'.[30] The statement resonates with Mary Daly's belief in the inseparability of the past, present and future.[31]

The reasons for creating "Women's Time" appear strikingly similar to modern concerns about the 'wave' paradigm. An additional example is Kathleen Laughlin's admonishment that 'waves' follow a temporality defined by 'beginnings and ends'.[32] The issue is, as Laughlin suggests, that feminist history cannot be divided into such 'neat package[s]'.[33] The feminist witch Starhawk wrote contemporaneously about the 'revival', 'renewal' and 'reawakening' of Goddess culture.[34] Such vocabulary demonstrates that, in contradiction to the 'wave' metaphor, successive generations of feminists did not start afresh but drew inspiration from their political ancestors. The history of feminist mobilisation is non-linear and, as encompassed within the concept of "Women's Time", moves along an unpredictable timeline between the past, present and future.

Conclusion

When Julia Kristeva wrote about "Women's Time" in 1981, it was unlikely she considered the possibility that 21st-century feminist scholars would still be

[26] Ibid.

[27] Campbell, 'A Global History', 197. [28] Hewitt, 'Introduction', 5.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Daly, Gyn/ Ecology, 1.

[32] Kathleen A. Laughlin, Julie Gallagher, Dorothy Sue Cobble, Eileen Boris, Premilla Nadasen, Stephanie Gilmore, Leandra Zarnow, "Is It Time to Jump Ship? Historians Rethink the Waves Metaphor." Feminist Formations, 22, no. 1 (2010), 79-9.

[33] Ibid, 81.

[34] Starhawk, The Spiral Dance, 50-1.

grappling with issues of temporality, chronology and time.[35] This paper has attempted to demonstrate why it is useful to connect the ongoing 'wave' debate to the temporal logic conceptualised by spiritualist feminists in the 1970s and 1980s. The paper began by introducing the *matriarchal myth* and how it challenged the mainstream, androcentric narratives of the past. It then moved on to consider why temporality became a feminist issue and suggested it played a significant role in feminist 'reclamation politics'. Finally, the paper discussed the implications of "Women's Time" on feminist history.

Critics of the 'wave' paradigm are primarily concerned about the impracticality of placing feminist history into fixed, periodically isolated categories.[36] "Women's Time" enables a more nuanced understanding of feminist history as an ongoing dialogue between feminists in the present, past and future. It should be noted, however, that aspects of spiritualist feminists' temporal logic sparked controversy. Some contemporaries disregarded it as apolitical and a distraction from more 'serious' political issues.[37] Others were concerned by its close association with Mary Daly's Western-centric, essentialist conception of Goddess culture.[38] Briefly acknowledging some of the debates regarding feminist temporality raises questions for the future about whether scholars will ever agree on the type of chronology best suited to feminist history.

"Women's Time" may not be an unequivocal solution but it nevertheless offers new perspectives on the 'wave' debate. 'Waves' are identifiable by their 'beginnings and ends', their unrelenting movement onwards, never turning back or overlapping. "Women's Time", in contrast, spins and swirls, travelling far into the past before catapulting into the future. As such, it appears that those feminist historians set on repudiating the linear temporality of the 'wave' paradigm would benefit from looking more closely at the temporal logic developed by spiritualist feminists in the 1970s and 1980s.

[35] Kristeva, "Women's Time"', 13–35. [36] Hewitt, 'Introduction', 5; Laughlin, 78-9.

[37] Kwashwik, "We Witches", 187.

[38] For further insight into the controversies of Mary Daly's spiritualist feminism see: Sarah Lucia Hoagland and Marilyn Fyre, ed., Feminist interpretations of Mary Daly (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000).

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Generation, genealogy and exception. Thoughts on how to make a feminist history of art

by Irene Palencia Mora

‘Waves’, ‘generations’, ‘foremothers’... Many terms have been coined to describe our feminist history. However, theorising history is no easy matter, since it involves organising and narrating a reality that does not naturally admit such clear outlines. There is an unavoidable simplification in the concepts of feminist historiography. Even if words can be useful, they entail a risk of misinterpreting, misjudging or creating undesirable hierarchies within the frame of feminism.

However, language is not static. The meaning of a word can change over time and come to include new connotations and realities. Nancy Hewitt (2010) provides an example of this process in her discussion of feminist waves, illustrating them as "radio waves" (p. 8) to encompass a more nuanced idea of feminism. Griselda Pollock (2016) also expanded the meaning of the quasi-Oedipal generations of feminism underlining the "continuity and inheritance, love and difference" (p. 38) within them. Catherine Grant (2011) refers to feminists as "fans of feminism" (p. 267) when describing mother-daughter feminist relationships. Alternative images challenge the traditional connotations of words and impact their narrative, thereby transforming the language we use.

This essay re-examines the concept of ‘generation’, focusing on its use in feminist art history, where it has had a particular narrative that is relevant to understanding the word in other feminist contexts. I will first examine the etymology of ‘generation’, and connect it to ‘genealogy’ (Foucault, 1977), as they both could share a similar sense. Later, I will explore ideas of the feminist history of painting and music, two disciplines where a narrative of exceptionalism and geniality has particularly influenced representation and the notion of ‘generation’. By highlighting several contradictions in this approach to history, I aim to shed light on the potential expansion of the term ‘generation’. Through this redefinition anddeviation of meaning, I hope to contribute to the language transformation needed for reimagining our history.

The offspring of time

The term ‘generation’ refers to all the people born in the same period in a specific area. This is closely related to its remote etymology: ‘generation’ comes from the Greek word “γενεά” (gheneá), which means "offspring, descendants" (Liddell and Scott, 1996, p. 139). From a literal standpoint, we could say that a generation is the offspring of a certain time, where all individuals who share a spatiotemporal dimension should be included.

Generations in art history are not that inclusive though. First, a generation of artists selects certain individuals to represent a discipline; therefore, not

everyone is admitted. Any selection implies a simplification, as mentioned earlier, and artistic generations have typically been made of middle-class, white, Western men. As Pollock (2003) signalled, "[t]he ideological project of the discourse of art history is to render masculinity and creativity naturally synonymous" (p. 16). This project also creates paradoxes with the word 'generation'. Normally, generations in art are not only characterised by a common time and space but also by some specific style or aesthetic pattern. For example, the composers of the first Romanticism are grouped by their similar use of harmony and form, and the Impressionist painting generation by their brush strokes and themes. The narrowness of canonical representation implies that artists of the same generation should produce similar works, suggesting a degree of determinism. Nevertheless, the etymological sense of 'generation' does not mean sameness, but only a common origin. The offspring of a certain time is not expected to be uniform, as it assembles every person who shares a specific space and time. The deterministic implications of the word 'generation' in art make it almost impossible to convey the necessary subjectivity that would permit other perspectives to enter the canon.

From the same Greek etymon comes the word 'genealogy', a concept discussed at length by Michel Foucault (1977). He considered genealogy to be an alternative idea to official history: "[g]enealogy is grey, meticulous, and patiently documentary" (p. 139), he assessed; "[i]t is disparity" (p. 142). That disparity is at odds with the similarity presumed in artistic generations. Genealogy is made of the silenced events that are the counterparts of linear history. In that sense, this term is situated closer to its etymological root, as it gives space to difference.

While history and a historical generation seek internal consistency or sameness, genealogy and a genealogical generation –as redundant as it may sound– look for "the accidents, the minute deviations–or conversely, the complete reversals–the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations" (p. 146). A genealogical generation would seek to uncover the heterogeneity behind the official history. These ideas hint at the potential redefinition of the word 'generation' within feminist art history.

Creating a history through exceptions

In artistic disciplines, the creation of women's genealogies was one of the first steps of feminism. Judith Roof (1997) pointed out that "the irruptions of feminist consciousness seem to require a history" (p. 84), but critiqued the idea of establishing a "family history" (p. 70) with a linear narrative that cannot truly exist. However, the genealogies of women artists were embedded in a complex paradigm related to that of a family but with specific art features. To begin, the situation was not the same in all artistic disciplines; the absence of women was more pronounced in certain fields. In painting or music, the invisibility of women

was particularly striking; they were – and in some spheres, they still are– nearly non-existent. The reasons for this are various. In painting, Linda Nochlin (2018) pointed out the limitations to accessing nude lessons and how this affected the development of technical skills. In music, Susan McClary (1994) discussed the challenges of attending composition lessons, and Julie A. Sadie (1994) addressed the impossibility of presenting orchestral works to a wide audience. These institutional restrictions made it extremely difficult for women to attain the accepted level of expertise in their fields, and therefore they were not included in the canon.

However, the logic is not so simple. Those closed circles and institutions contributed to creating some myths about artists: those who achieved success were identified with the category of "Genius" (Nochlin, 2018, p. 153). These men were believed to be extraordinary, the leaders of their generation, demigods who overcame their human nature to distinguish themselves and make a difference in art. Those are the protagonists of the books of history, with their names repeated over and over endless times. The narrative of the Genius strongly influenced how the genealogies of women artists were made. In the case of music, feminist musicologists first rediscovered European women composers like Hildegard von Bingen, Francesca Caccini, Fanny Hensel or Clara Wieck. Elizabeth Wood (1980) described them as "women exceptional for even writing music let alone for the high quality they sustained, and women who share a common fate of rapidly disappearing from history" (p. 287; my emphasis). She highlighted their exceptionality and insisted on their unfair disappearance from the canon, implying that these women were Geniuses, ignored because of their gender.

The myth of the Genius also has its gendered counterpart in the "exceptional woman" (Sheriff, 1996). Women artists were usually considered exceptional in their time, beyond the rest of their gender, because they were surprisingly able to do a traditionally masculine job. This was part of a broader patriarchal narrative, especially during the Enlightenment, in which the "exceptional woman" was "a traditional figure of masculinist discourse, tolerated, even admired in her originality" (p. 2). She was complementary to the real Genius, a man. Amelia Valcárcel (2002) theorised this idea in the "dynamic of the exceptions" (p. 19), as the system that permitted some women to receive more education than others. The underlying principle of this dynamic is the belief that talented women are just exceptions, and therefore, the rest of women are unexceptional and unable to pursue serious professional positions. Now, I question myself: should feminist work try to turn the exceptional woman into a Genius?

I don't think so. Pollock (2003) already pointed out that the aim of 'feminist interventions' in art history should be to "rewrite all cultural history" (p. 24). When we talk about geniality and exceptionalism, we are relying on existing patriarchal categories that cannot adequately represent a feminist history.

A generation solely comprised of exceptional geniuses will systematically exclude any reality that does not fit into that box. If we were to make a real genealogical work that keeps the etymological sense of 'generation', there should be no occasion for such erasures. However, we have often been trapped in a system of monographic studies that bear an "inherently gendered exaltation of individual, individuality and individualism" (Kokoli, 2008, p. 4). The first feminist genealogies, in some ways, reinforced the individualistic notion of the exception. Even Nochlin (2018) remarks that "[g]iven that women were deprived of encouragements, educational facilities and rewards, it is almost incredible that a certain percentage did persevere" (p. 163; my emphasis). That "certain percentage" emphasises the idea that women who achieved artistic mastery were not the norm, implying that art was only for those who were extraordinary, exceptional, outside of the norm. This relates to the image of the Genius, portraying it as a unique entity with a strong will to succeed, disregarding the privileges that those women composers who "did persevere" might have had. When efforts to deconstruct the canon focus only on including certain individuals and elevating them to the status of "Genius," are we truly achieving a fair representation?

It is undoubtedly important to shift the focus of study from Robert Schumann to Clara Wieck and include her pieces in concerts; however, "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (Lorde, 2019, p. 53). If we rely on masculinist methods of representation, future generations may still be contradictory, perpetuating a paradoxical canon that just belongs to privileged positions. If our search is based on a few chosen ones who represent the generational paradigm, we may not be able to see the complete offspring of that time. The mythology of geniuses shaping the course of art is no objective matter, and similarly, in feminism, a generation headed by just a couple of names can never capture the real fluency and diversity of political movements.

Conclusions

The narrative of exceptional talent and the glorification of the Genius have largely determined our gaze on the arts. Even today, history tends to create linear narratives of "exceptional" artists and intellectuals who are logically continued by others. Feminist work is not free from this tradition; we have chosen who enters the canon of women artists and who does not, tacitly reinforcing the "dynamic of the exceptions" (Valcárcel, 2002, p. 19). Nevertheless, the work of genealogy could establish differences in history and assess a more complete vision of it. This complete vision should be made of the plural subjectivities that belong to the offspring of the times. Examining that plurality, we will be able to transform the meaning of generations.

The use of images and words that contain schematic visions of history is still productive. It can serve as a tool to disseminate feminist knowledge and achieve

specific political objectives. However, it is crucial for feminism to continuously reassess these concepts. It is not the first time that the word 'generation' has been re-evaluated, but this essay aims to be part of a bigger journey of "feminist interventions" (Pollock, 2003) that develop new meanings which enter the political arena. I explored etymology as a method to expand the meaning of a word and potentially resignify it; 'generation' was the chosen term because it is specially marked with patriarchal features in the history of arts. With the accumulation of alternative uses of the word, there is a chance to deconstruct its current meaning. There will come a day when the concept of generation reflects our desired ideals, and at that moment, we will witness how the wor(l)d has evolved and changed due to ongoing protest and reclamation. Knowing this, we can be reassured that language belongs to us, is inherently political and transformative, and reflects our deepest struggles.

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Conservative Americana and Taylor Swift's Construction of Femininity

by Canan Avent

Construction of Femininity

Taylor Swift's image embodies traditional notions of femininity as the "all-American girl," emphasizing traits such as innocence, manners, and a demure appearance. Her image reflects social expectations for women to conform to restrictive gender roles. In this case, it seems to align with feminist critiques of imposed gender norms and the perpetuation of restrictive ideals of femininity.

Swift's "all-American girl" image is prominently showcased in her early music videos such as "You Belong With Me", where she portrays a high school girl next door with traits of innocence and demureness. This visual presentation reinforces the perpetuation of societal expectations of restrictive gender roles. Moreover, Swift's emphasis on traditional values can be seen in her song "Love Story," which draws on themes of monogamy and propriety, historically tied to whiteness and normative femininity. Such traditional narratives often exclude diverse experiences and promote a singular view of femininity and romance.

> *Romeo, take me somewhere we can be alone*
> *I'll be waiting, all there's left to do is run*
> *You'll be the prince and I'll be the princess*
> *It's a love story, baby, just say, "Yes" - "Love Story" by Taylor Swift (2008)*

Swift's music implicitly and explicitly insists that race and gender no longer matter. Yet, it privileges "traditional values" such as monogamy, propriety, and abstinence—values historically tied to whiteness (Brown, 2012, cited from Coontz, 2000), heterosexuality, and normative femininity. Additionally, her image produces the normative expectation of a universal experience of (female adolescent love and romance) or (girlhood, love and romance). It reinforces the idealization of an American girlhood invested in whiteness, heterosexual monogamy and romance as well as middle-class propriety and consumption.

> *My friends used to play a game where*
> *We would pick a decade*
> *We wished we could live in instead of this*
> *I'd say the 1830s but without all the racists – "I Hate It Here" by Taylor Swift (2024)*

It is important to consider how Swift's adherence to these values has shaped public perception and contributed to her success. By aligning her image with conservative American ideals, she navigates a cultural landscape that rewards conformity to traditional norms. When she deviates from these norms it therefore provokes significant scrutiny and backlash. This dynamic reveals the tensionbetween upholding and challenging traditional gender roles within the

context of American celebrity culture.

Cultural Appropriation

Taylor Swift, like many popular white artists, has been accused of cultural appropriation. For example, Swift's "Shake It Off" music video was criticized for cultural appropriation as the scenes featuring her attempts at hip-hop dance moves were perceived by many as trivializing aspects of black culture. This incident highlights the tension between Swift's portrayal of a demure, all-American girl and the appropriation of elements from ther cultures. It thus raises questions about white feminism and systemic inequalities. On social media platforms like Instagram and Twitter, Swift showcases her commitment to feminist ideals by advocating for women's empowerment and solidarity. Critics argue, however, that her feminism lacks intersectionality by often failing to address issues that affect women of color and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

I'm so sick of running as fast as I can
Wondering if I'd get there quicker if I was a man
And I'm so sick of them coming at me again
'Cause if I was a man
Then I'd be the man – "The Man" by Taylor Swift (2019)

Heteronormativity

Fans' expectations of Swift's romantic life and the heteronormative ideals placed on female celebrities relate to feminist debates about the impact of heteronormativity on women's identity and public image. Although Swift's admirers hold her in high regard, many aspiring to be like her, their admiration is ingrained in the societal assessment of white femininity. Because of fans' unspoken and explicit commitment to "the Swiftian Way," they uphold an ideal of 'appropriate' girlhood at all times (Brown, 2012). Further studies could be conducted on whether this narrow representation of female sexuality limits the range of experiences and identities represented.

And then you're on your very first date
And he's got a car
And you're feeling like flying
And your mama's waiting up
And you're thinking he's the one
And you're dancing 'round your room when the night ends
When the night ends
'Cause when you're fifteen
And somebody tells you they love you
You're gonna believe them – "Fifteen" by Taylor Swift (2008)

The concept of "the Swiftian Way" is evident in how fans idolize her romantic life. The expectation that it aligns with heteronormative ideals can be seen in the public's fascination with her relationships, such as her highly publicized

romance with actor Joe Alwyn. This idealization reinforces the societal assessment of white femininity and a belief that female celebrities should embody an idealized form of girlhood and womanhood. Only a limited range of experiences and identities is therefore depicted in popular culture thus contributing to ongoing feminist debates about the impact of heteronormativity on women's identities.

Sexuality, propriety and Femininity

In contrast to artists such as Lady Gaga and Nicki Minaj, who explicitly foreground sexuality both vocally and lyrically, Taylor Swift seems to represent a nostalgic longing for a piece of Americana in which women's sexual desires are kept under wraps (Brown 2012). A comparison between Swift and Miley Cyrus demonstrates the intertwined nature of propriety and femininity. The juxtaposition between Swift and Cyrus, in which the latter is depicted as straying from the "good girl" path, suggests that women who deviate from traditional norms face harsher scrutiny.

Comparing Swift to other white female celebrities like Cyrus and Britney Spears, whose personas were initially rooted in conservative American ideals of purity and traditional femininity, provides a deeper understanding of the challenges these women face. Both Cyrus and Spears started their careers in contexts that emphasized wholesome, innocent images—Cyrus through her role in Disney's "Hannah Montana" and Spears with her early pop career. Their early public personas were tied to ideals of purity and traditional femininity similar to Swift's association with country music and the "all-American girl" image.

> *He said the way my blue eyes shined*
> *Put those Georgia stars to shame that night*
> *I said, "That's a lie"*
> *Just a boy in a Chevy truck*
> *That had a tendency of gettin' stuck*
> *On backroads at night – "Tim McGraw" by Taylor Swift (2006)*

As these celebrities began to deviate from traditional norms, to explore more mature themes and expressions of sexuality, they encountered harsher scrutiny and criticism. The harsh treatment of those who initially conformed to and later diverged from conservative ideals highlights the societal double standards applied to female celebrities, particularly. Swift's careful navigation of her public image, balancing her wholesome persona whilst evolving as an artist, reflects the pressures and expectations placed on white female celebrities within the framework of traditional American values.

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Ink Knows I am Being

by Yang Wu

Y. Wu

"This is a series of photos I took for my friends: two Chinese migrants who are based in Australia and Canada. This photo essay explores how having a tattoo is both an ongoing embodied experience and a way of reclaiming cultural symbols. Designing a tattoo, choosing where to have it on your body, collaborating with tattoo artists and staying with this inked body... this set of experiences continues reshaping our relations with our surroundings, our homelands and our memories." - Yang Wu


REE

I stand outside the circle

by Joana Maria Pereira

Six o'clock, fourteenth of July, 2021. Among a dozen emails, an invitation for a job interview at one of the most prestigious art colleges in London. It was my first interview after my PhD. I was truly excited. Therefore, that same afternoon, I quickly wrote some notes on my interdisciplinary background, my main research interests, and my experience as art educator. Just before closing the document, I add something about the importance of acknowledging the place from where one speaks. “The place from where one speaks” was highlighted. Was I digressing? Should I be telling the panel this? I ask myself.

Instead, I told them I was interested in the effect of class and economic difference on art-making; explaining how and why my research involves a reflection on my own personal heritage and the history of my country, Portugal, that has been marked by poverty (following 48 years of fascist dictatorship under the Estado Novo regime of António de Oliveira Salazar and his successor, Marcelo Caetano). I then built my argument around the fact that I had taught across ages, levels and disciplines in the field of contemporary art. Finally, I emphasised the vantage point of having worked with small groups of students, and how this has facilitated a relationship with teaching and learning characterised by empathy, proximity and a non-hierarchical working environment.

At the end of my 15 minute-talk came a short reply: “Lady, but we are big!”

I hardly remember what happened next. Was I to pretend this had not been said? I couldn’t speak any more. It’s true. I could not say anything. Words have this power to take me in this or that direction. And, at that moment, I couldn’t help but become silent. No, I was not intimidated. I just veered away completely. I was elsewhere. That is, all of a sudden, I was trapped in a place where only three words counted: “lady”; “we”; “big”.

In a flash, a constellation of voices of women filled my whole mind.
Virginia Woolf tells me that “ladies are only admitted to the library if accompanied by a Fellow of the College or furnished with a letter of introduction” (2017, p.7). But those days were long ago. “Lady”, that ś how the man defines me. Yes, the one giving voice to the “we” is a he, who happens to be the Head of the Art Department, a white middle-aged man, speaking comfortably from the top of his “big” position. “Lady”, therefore, should come as no great surprise. But “lady” is not consistent with the image I have of myself, or of any other woman I know. My illiterate peasant grandmother was not a lady; my mother is not a lady; my sister is not a lady. “Lady” implies some kind of limitation; at least, I experience it as an unpleasant sense of reduction.

Trinh T. Minh-ha says: “A woman’s room, despite its new seductive panelling, can become a prison as soon as it takes on the appearance of a lady’s room (masculine notion of femininity)” (1989, p.29). Lady, a woman, she, myself. As a woman, it would have been impossible to imagine other women saying these words to me.

As for “we” and “big”, I cannot discern the difference between the two here. “Big” yields itself as truth, and “we” as “big”, or at least that is what it claims to be. I have to accept that when entangled they form a thick wall whose arrogance seems difficult to surmount.

I am compelled to ask: what counts as “big” here? How often do we see that “big” is equated with “better”, “good” or “more”? And is this “we” the one that in general determines who and what is “big”? In this sense, is “we” teaching its students to think and live big, too? Is it instilling in them the fear of becoming small? It seems to me that this “we” is trapped in a fantasy that presents a conception of the world based on abundance, wealth and conquest. A society structured and divided between the haves and the have-nots.
The “we” of the losers versus the “we” of the winners.

“We” – who was this we?

What I can understand is that, when the man says “we”, he draws a circle around himself, a space in which I am not included. He, on the other hand, is speaking from the inside. The proper place (of masculinity). This “we” stands as the norm; it configures a hierarchical world where ‘ladies’ are welcome as long as they are positioned a few levels below. Audre Lorde calls it “a mythical norm, which each one of us within our heart knows: That is not me” (2017, p.96).

This means that there is also the “we” of the ladies (that is imposed), even though the man was not using it in its plural form. This great undifferentiated mass. For “domination always ‘translates’ difference into otherness and otherness into sameness” (Lugones, 2003, p.201).

Here I am now, more than two years later, lost in thoughts about a man’s words; a man whose name I can no longer recall. I remember the arrogance, though: I have felt it many times, before and after that early Tuesday morning, the twentieth of July. Too often, I stand outside the circle.

And yet to tell the truth, what troubles me most is not so much that he addresses me as “lady” – that just made me angry; nor that he presents the “we” (them) as “big”, and much less what this peculiar discourse might say about this man in particular; what frightens me is the possibility that this “we” might be enormous. I see it all around me; and this is exactly what makes this interview impossible to forget. So I think that I must, and do, ask: how have we arrived in such an era,

in which the culture that prevails still seems to be “the culture of greed” (hooks, 2018, p.119)? Do “small” things not matter, then?

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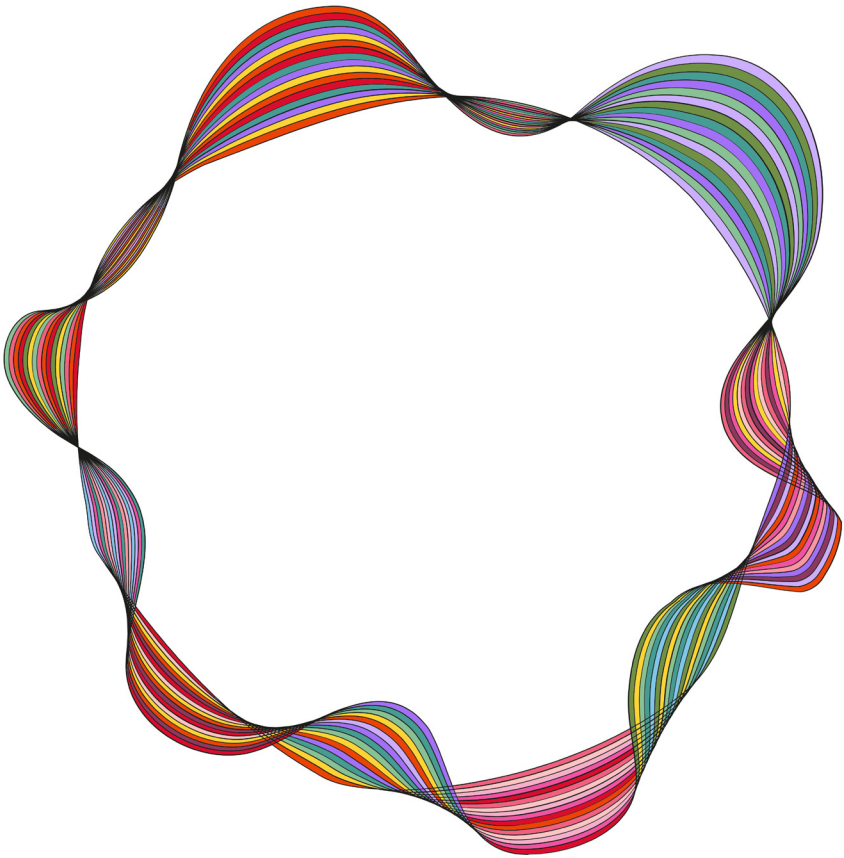

“It is our mother, too”: A Diasporic Analysis of Indo-Fijian Women’s Longing and Belonging and Migration, 1970-2014

by Claire Taylor

Introduction

Since gaining independence from the British Crown in 1970, Fiji saw half of its Indo-Fijian population leave the country by 2001 (Voigt-Graf, 2004, p. 197). Scholars have argued that this migration burst was directly linked to anxieties that the Fijian coups of 1987 and 2000 caused within Indo-Fijian communities (Pangerl, 2007, p. 252). The May 1987 Coup occurred on the 108th anniversary of the first Indian migrants arriving to work in Fiji, and in 2008, Indo-Fijian historian Usha Sundar Harris wrote that “chiefs and coup leaders in Fiji may tell the world Indians don’t belong in Fiji, but we know that Fiji belongs to us” (Harris, 2008, p. 59). The divisions resulting from conflicting notions of belonging as pictured in this quotation are what drive this article to ask: How did migrating Indo-Fijians facilitate their belonging while holding onto Indo-Fijian traditions? How did migrant Indo-Fijian women experience longing and belonging in Australia and New Zealand?

As a category of analysis, gender allows this study to interrogate how work and transnational movement transform identities. To understand how colonial history informed post-independence Indo-Fijian experiences, we must first establish definitions of longing and belonging. This article embraces how experiences of ‘home’ and ‘belonging’ are non-linear. According to anthropologist Peter Van der Veer:

The theme of belonging opposes rootedness and uprootedness, establishment to marginality. The theme of longing harps on the desire for change and movement, but relates this to the enigma of arrival, which brings a similar desire to return to what one has left (Veer, 1995, p. 4).

Therefore, descendants of migrant groups, such as Indo-Fijians, are constructed as “simultaneously marginal and threatening” because they are not viewed as “sons of the soil” (Veer, 1995, p. 5,7). The historically damaging dynamic in which Indo-Fijians did not gain respect from Fijian governing bodies despite personal and familial connection to Fijian land is examined here by interrogating the routes Indo-Fijian women have taken to acquire a feeling of belonging. Emphasising individual migrants’ connections to Fiji, this article first provides contextual legislative histories of Fiji, Australia, and New Zealand–three countries home to distinct indigenous, migrant, and European populations as a result of colonisation under the British Empire. Then, it outlines historical and anthropological works on Indo-Fijian experiences to emphasise the usefulness of a four-dimensional diaspora model (Willems and Pałacz, 2022, p. 5) to analyse migration experiences.

This is followed by an analysis of Indo-Fijian women’s accounts, largely from Australia and New Zealand. Historically, women have experienced labour and

family structures uniquely because of their socially imposed reproductive care roles as mothers, wives and daughters (Kota, 1996, p. 1).

After the coups undermined hopes of Indo-Fijians' political power, Indo-Fijian belonging became increasingly tied to the work of their indentured ancestors on Fijian soil. By setting up public spaces to worship in the same way as their ancestors, owning, rather than leasing land, and overcoming prejudice within their migrant communities, Indo-Fijians tied their belonging in new societies to being a hard-working non-indigenous group. In this process of migration, women broke out of traditions in Fiji by studying and working independently. In turn, these women exhibited habits of a stereotypically European lifestyle. By drawing attention to colonial racial hierarchies within each host society and comparing diasporic experiences, this paper demonstrates how Indo-Fijian longing and belonging were multidimensionally connected to a historic desire to escape oppression and alienation in Fiji. Thus, longing and belonging were expressed by unapologetically and visibly taking up space, land, and labour in both Australia and New Zealand.

Between 1879 and 1916, over 60,000 indentured labourers from the Indian subcontinent arrived in Fiji to work on sugar cane plantations. These labourers formed a common language known as Fiji Bhaat, and most Indo-Fijian people today are descendants of these labourers (Cocom, 2023). Since constitutional definitions of 'Fijian' and 'Indian' are based on patriarchal genealogy (Fiji Independence Order, 1970; Constitution of Fiji), this article favours testimonies in which the migrant conceptualises their own heritage.

In the 1970s, the Australian and New Zealand governments began implementing policies of "multiculturalism" (Kota, 1996). In New Zealand, the Maori Renaissance movement, or Tino Rangatiratanga, also emerged to challenge the historical oppression of indigenous cultures. In 1999, when leases of land from the 1966 Land Ordinance in Fiji were beginning to expire, one older man exclaimed, "'You should have seen this land when our family got it. It was a jungle. We've made it beautiful, made it pay. It is our mother too'" (Ghosh, 2004, p. 123). This quotation reinforces the 'us-versus-them' dynamic in Fiji fostered under colonial rule. In this sugar farmer's eyes, the preservation of Fiji is centred around indentured labourers with whom he has a distinct connection: "when our family got it." However, the feminisation of Fijian land highlights a multidimensionally gendered system of care. Fijian land nurtured this sugar farmer's ancestors, yet generations born in Fiji have helped the 'jungle' achieve feminine 'beauty.' This article is concerned with anecdotes of leaving Fijian land, who for some is remembered as a 'mother,' behind.

A Four-Dimensional Diasporic Model and Historiography of Indo-Fijian Experiences

The term 'twice and thrice migrant' has been used most prominently to refer to

East African Asians who migrated to Great Britain in the late twentieth century.[1] Studying the impact of migration on gender in Australia, Lakshmi Kota has evaluated working Indian mothers' experiences in Sydney. Women who could take part in her study had to be 'ethnic Indians' rather than 'twice migrants': "Twice migrants are less disadvantaged than direct immigrants, because they have undergone a previous process of adaptation to a similar host society" (Kota, p. 93). This definition of 'ethnic Indian' dismisses Indo-Fijians' expressions of Indian-ness and simultaneously reinforces the alienation Indo-Fijians experienced while living in Fiji. Encouraging one-dimensional definitions of ethnicity, identity, and migration isolates the experiences of 'twice migrants' as incomparable to other migrants' experiences, and thus limits a thorough analysis of longing and belonging.

To combat this confined view of migration, this article utilizes a four-dimensional conceptual model of diaspora. This model allows for an additional category of migration analysis in addition to 'host society', 'homeland,' and 'diaspora':

The proposed conceptual model of diaspora can be used by transnational historians as an analytical tool that offers the possibility of looking at the formation of migrant communities as a phenomenon in itself, and not only in relation to the national histories of the respective countries of origin and settlement, as implied by the traditional paradigm of linear assimilation (Willems and Pałacz, 2022).

By comparing the experiences of Indo-Fijians to various legacies of colonialism informing indigenous and migrant populations' experiences, we can investigate the transformation of longing and belonging as related to otherness and transnational movement. After migrating, Indo-Fijians in New Zealand and Australia were no longer the group being targeted in political action as the 'other.' Nevertheless, as non-white migrants, they joined other groups experiencing racism and discrimination in their new location.

After 2000, scholars of various academic backgrounds studied Indo-Fijians as a migrant group because of the political crises in Fiji. In *I Can Make Chutney Out of Anything*, Devleena Ghosh (2003), a historian known for qualitative analysis emphasising variety in migration processes, concluded that for young Indo-Fijians living in Sydney:

> The first event [1987 coup], a half-remembered story from their childhood, became one more point of trauma in a fractured history. The second [2000 coup] acted, for many of them, as a kind of closure to the 'naming' of Fiji as home (Ghosh, 2003, p. 66).

[1] See Parminder Bhachu, Twice Migrants: East African Sikh Settlers in Britain (London, 1985).

Other interviews with Indo-Fijian migrants living in New Zealand have emphasised an additional meaning of home: "the colonial country as cultural home" (Hundt,

2014, p. 137). These works demonstrate how perceptions of history, the present, home, and identity are contextual, fluid, and transformative.

In 2023, the histories of indenture and its legacies continue to be written. By employing critical mixed race studies and five different categories of identity analysis, a sociological study evaluates how university students in Fiji make sense of being born to an Indigenous Fijian and Indo-Fijian couple (Cocom, 2023). This work exemplifies how scholarship on South Asian diasporas continues to spotlight voices yet to be heard in academia and continue to adopt more flexible parameters of South Asian or part-South Asian identities.

Women's Experiences in Fiji, Australia, and New Zealand

In the late 1980s, some Indo-Fijian women in Fiji expressed longing to escape restrictions placed on them by their families. An article from 1987 Indo-Fijian Women–Past and Present (Lateef, 1987) highlights Indo-Fijian women's experiences of oppression from indenture until 1987. Published in Manushi[2], the author focuses especially on young, unmarried women during the time that women were beginning to enter the world of paid work as Fiji's economy grew in the late 1980s. She observes how Indo-Fijian families grappled with "the need to keep females physically and socially invisible as well as reaping the benefits of their participation in the labour market" (Lateef, 1987, p. 8). An example of this phenomenon is provided with a description of a meeting with seventeen-year-old Rounaq. Rounaq was arranged to marry a man in Canada six months after this conversation:

> She complained she wasn't allowed to wear "modern" clothes, go out with her friends to town, to the movies or to visit friends. She was extremely critical of her parents' intention to send her brothers overseas for further education but not her. Her parents intended sending her to secretarial college and had already informed her she could only work if she got a job as a secretary in a bank, otherwise they would prefer her to just stay at home… The desire to migrate overseas is so great that families are willing to pawn their daughters for this opportunity (Lateef, 1987, pp. 8-9).

For the reader of Manushi, Rounaq appears as a victim of intense patriarchal practices in Fiji: unequal to her brothers, unable to decide her profession, or act upon any desires. She is only permitted to migrate because by becoming a wife, Rounaq's social position changes from being a liability to an asset. The objectification of a young Indo-Fijian woman from which her family can 'pawn' and 'reap' benefits of her marriage to a foreign man portrays Indo-Fijian women's victimhood as connected to class mobility. Such a portrayal of early adulthood for

[2] While Manushi is a self-proclaimed 'feminist' publication, the journal's contemporary Hindutva ideology complicates its legacy as a feminist publication. For further discussion, see Grover (2018).

Indo-Fijian women in Fiji is useful for contrasting Indo-Fijian women's experiences of belonging and individuality after skill-based migration.

The video *From Fiji to the World of Academia* (2014) made by the Australian Department of Home Affairs tells the migration story of Alka Singh-Nand. The total video time is one minute and thirty-six seconds, and the YouTube description reads:

When Australia's Melbourne University offered Alka Singh-Nand a PhD scholarship in 2009, it was a ticket to international academic adventure for the Fijian. She is now an early career academic fellow at the university, living and working in Victoria on a Skilled-Nominated (subclass 190) visa. Fast track your life in Australia as a skilled migrant (Australian Department of Home Affairs, 2014).

In the video, Alka appears teaching a subject called 'Managing Innovation and Entrepreneurship' while speaking in a voiceover: "I think being in Australia you never have a boring day. Your weekends are full. You could go out and do shopping… I think everyday is new and I think that's just absolutely fantastic" (Australian Department of Home Affairs, 2014). The experiences Alka is fond of in 2014 are exactly what Rounaq lacked and longed for in 1987: daily freedom of expression, recreational movement, and excitement. As a skilled migrant, Alka is privileged to migrate without relying on anyone else and only expresses longing for her Australian life to continue. Teaching a subject that requires creativity and business skills, Alka publicly expresses herself. Therefore, in this job, she safely works in Australia without abiding by the traditional values of Indo-Fijian womanhood. Thus, Alka does not experience being othered in Australia in the way that Rounaq experienced otherness as a result of her Indo-Fijian heritage in Fiji. Alka's Indo-Fijian heritage is not memorialized in this video, but her ability to contribute to Australia's capitalist economy with the stereotypical "feminine" hobby of shopping is. Therefore, with this career path, Alka neatly embodies a different stereotype of femininity: the non-Western woman assimilated into a European lifestyle. Since this video is a state-sponsored source made to promote skilled migration, it cannot be guaranteed that Alka expressed her actual views. Rather, this source provides insight into how the Australian government visualised women's longing in Fiji to live without being othered even if this entailed leaving Fiji and Indo-Fijian traditions for the European, capitalist lifestyle of Australia.

In Wellington, New Zealand, for first-generation Indo-Fijian migrant women, feelings of belonging were intertwined with individual freedom to work. A study in 2008 included interviews in which one woman in her forties explained: "I came here as a student to study… I've never worked in Fiji. So the childhood and schooling aspect is Fiji after that New Zealand is home to me" (Hundt, 2014, p. 135). With indifference toward her experiences of childhood, this woman's view of Fiji is less warm than those of a first-generation migrant in Sydney who "spoke nostalgically of her idyllic childhood and mentioned the many roti and dal curries shared with her indigenous Fijian neighbours" (Ghosh, 2003, p. 69). Instead, this migrant woman's definition of home, and in this, the place where she feels she belongs, appears similar to how Alka expresses her "fantastic" and exciting Australian

life: a connection to work. Since Indo-Fijian women's ability to work in Fiji was historically not guaranteed or encouraged, this woman's expression of home in Wellington is related to how her life in New Zealand is fundamentally different from how it was in Fiji. The historical differences in gender roles between Fiji and both Australia and New Zealand led this woman and Alka to refrain from longing to return to Fiji, and instead feel like they belong in their new locations. Despite acquiring an Australian lifestyle, the question of what it means to belong outside of Fiji, yet still in a patriarchal and colonial society, remains.

Conclusion

In Australia and New Zealand, Indo-Fijian women expressed a sense of belonging outside of Fiji by identifying their new location as 'home.' They also broke from historical gender roles by visibly working and enjoying recreational time in their new locations. Still, racism and prejudice from other populations existed after migration, and their sense of belonging appears to have been tied to contributing to the economy of their new locations. This study of longing and belonging utilised a transnationally comparative methodology that included analysing material in both institutional archives in Fiji, New Zealand, and Australia as well as personal testimonies recorded by scholars in their evaluations of transnational Indo-Fijian experiences.

On the fortieth anniversary of Fiji's independence, Brij Lal wrote about the emotionally uprooted nature of Indo-Fijians. He expressed how Indo-Fijian history is destined to be remembered as a story of "From Immigration to Emigration." Drawing attention to frequent travel between Fiji and their new location, Lal explained that Indo-Fijians "might more accurately be described as 'trans-migrant' communities whose links with their former homelands are never severed but nurtured in a variety of novel ways" (Lal, 2011, p. 422). The proposition of 'trans-migrant' brings into question how the longing of a historically migrant population can be understood as it evolves. In this, the reader also questions if one can ever stop longing, if not for themselves, for their ancestors to have been allowed to belong to the place that they feel is "our mother, too."

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I AM THE BLACK GIRL...

by Brenda Bih Chi

I am the daughter of the caretaker who works for you in precarious conditions to take care of your children.

I am the niece of the black man who is a beggar in front of Mercadona (Supermarket).

I am the friend of the Muslim woman who was denied a job for wearing a veil.

I am the girl who was not given the chance to read a bible passage in church because I have a non-Spanish accent.

I am the girl who can't find suitable products for my hair in big supermarkets.

I am the image of the enslaved black woman whose picture was never placed in the Andalusian memory museum because the Spanish educational system is too whitewashed and Eurocentric.

I am the girl who they put on a debate table to say that they are anti-racist.

I am the girl who walks on the street with her beautiful traditional costume with many people watching me, giving me anxiety.

I am the fantasy of some Spanish men who see me as hypersexualized.

I am the girl at the club who you called a whore for being black.

I am the girl who looks primitive and uneducated because I come from the African continent.

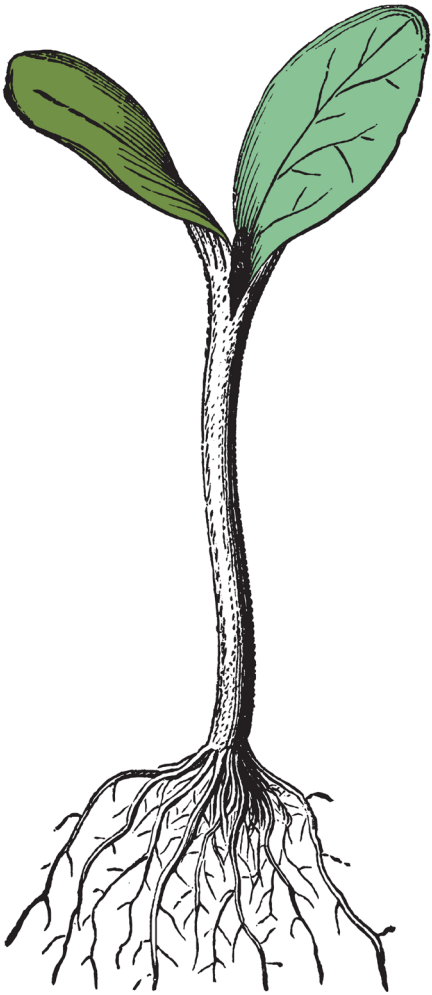
I am the enemy of the police, security guard, and civil guard for not having all my papers.

I am the girl who questions her gender because I do not fit in Eurocentric beauty standards of a female body.

In addition to all the above, I am Brenda, a young woman with dreams, talents, and goals like any woman my age. I hope that I will be seen as Brenda and not as a black, migrant woman.

See the poem read in Spanish

"I wrote this poem in Granda, Spain, after living there for a year and witnessing structural, institutional, and everyday racism. To me, writing this poem was a way of healing by discarding feelings of hurt caused by xenophobia and white privilege. I also wrote this poem to raise awareness about what the life of a black migrant woman like me looks like when there are few laws and policies to protect immigrants, especially women. The toughest part of the poem (and my experience) is when I get to question my gender because each time women are represented, my body features, hair, and skin colour do not fit the universal image of women. Finally, I end the poem by calling on my audience to view people as human beings with potential regardless of their gender, origin and immigration status." - Brenda Bih Chi



The exclusion of women from airline and aviation history: A feminist historical analysis

by Dr Donna Bridges, Dr Jane Neal-Smith & Professor Albert Mills

This article critically examines how the representation, the 'placing' of women in historical representations of air travel, has obscured and omitted women's roles and agency throughout the history of the industry. Drawn from a larger piece of work (see Mills et al., 2023), we revisit literary texts which claim to be complete historical accounts of air travel in the UK, Australia and Canada. In terms of history, we adopt a feminist approach that focuses on how history is discursively produced through texts that exclude the agentic role of women (Scott, 1987).

As such, this study is one of 'historiography', focusing on how history is written and of the writing of historical texts. We have selected three internationally known airline companies, all who have been the subject of written histories. Our choice of airlines to study was relatively straightforward; we chose airlines that had been the subject of historical studies. The texts are "Qantas at War" (1968) by Hudson Fysh, It Seems Like Only Yesterday. "Air Canada: The First 50 Years" (1986) by Philip Smith and "British Airways – An Illustrated History" (2014) by Paul Jarvis.

We have analysed each text in relation to how the authors represent and portray women in aviation. We have interrogated the texts to show if, when and/or how the authors acknowledge the role of women, when they acknowledge this, and in what way. We have also considered how they treat women in relation to the feminist wave, or era, in which they were written (Australia 1968, Canada 1986, UK 2014). We show whether the authors have acknowledged, responded to or been influenced by feminism, or by feminist critique of the historical record and the omission and/or misrepresentation of women in historical texts. In our analysis we adopt a focus on gender and the gendering of occupations and the gendering of historical accounts.

Feminist critique of the historical record

Feminists began critiquing the historical record because of bias in how women were represented in historical texts and because of the omission of women. Simone de Beauvoir (1949, 26) contended that women's exclusion from the public record left her vulnerable to definition by man. She said "[h]umanity is male, and man defines woman, not in herself, but in relation to himself". This insight was important to the emerging second wave women's movement in understanding women's subjugated positionality within a patriarchal system. Mary Kelly saw the women's movement as pivotal to 'forcing new insights upon us, raising queries about what we thought we knew so well, and disturbing us with a sense of ignorance and inadequacy about our own past' (2014 [1976], p. 1). Scott (1988, 9) drew attention to sexual bias in historical texts operating 'as a particular kind of cultural institution endorsing and announcing constructions of gender'.

Deconstructing the historical record and placing women as rightful participants with agency led to women regaining their status as actors in history. It provided a new visibility and gave silenced voices a new platform on which to be heard. The next part of this piece examines each text in turn, a process Dale Spender (1988) famously said, was a political act.

A feminist historical analysis

> 'If women knew their past, they would be so much better prepared for their future. And knowledge of that past includes not just the things that women have done, but the how and the why those great achievements have been left out of history' (Spender, 1994: ix).

Qantas

Despite writing and publishing "Qantas at War" in 1968 when the women's movement was highly active, Hudson Fysh (1895–1974), author, aviation pioneer, and one of the founders of Qantas Airlines, constructs a text that is highly sexist. The book excludes women and contributes to a national mythology that constructs the character of the Australian nation as unashamedly white, masculine, colonising, and militaristic. He does not recognise or respond to feminist gains or feminist critiques of the historical record. "Qantas at War" is the story of white men; Fysh describes founding members, early investors, and Qantas staff as adventurers, pioneers, and record-breaking leaders, 'chaps who took the planes up' (p.8), and Air Force men.

It is also noteworthy that at the time of writing "Qantas at War " the Aboriginal Rights Movement was well underway, with the 1967 Constitutional Referendum to recognise Aboriginal women and men as citizens receiving a 90% affirmative vote. Yet Fysh mentions First Nations women only to say that in Darwin and Broome during the Japanese air raids in 1942 'no women were visible, either black or white' (p.167).

The year 1968 was pivotal for women's writings - Kate Millett wrote "Sexual Politics", Mary Daley "The Church and the Second Sex", and Gloria Steinem "Women and Power". Yet on the topic of women Fysh says almost nothing. He includes stories about men (pilots, businessmen, engineers, politicians, royalty, dignitaries) but notable women in the Australian industry, such as Millicent Bryant (the first Australian female to receive a pilot's licence); Nancy Bird Walton (one of the most famous pioneers of women in aviation) or Mary Bell (founding leader of the Women's Air Training Corps and later the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force) are ignored.

Fysh briefly mentions women fifteen times, he twice provides the full name of titled women; Lady Louis Mountbatten of Britain and Lady Rutherford of New Zealand (p. 190) and names an accommodation owner, Mrs Ray (p. 33), and a woman who lost her life during the raids on Darwin in 1942, Daisy Martin (p. 134).

Mostly he refers to women as wives. He even fails to name Mary Kingsford-Smith who ran Australian National Airways after her husband Charles Kingsford-Smith was killed in 1935. Contrarily, he names and titles Kingsford-Smith's business manager and company chairman

"Qantas at War " omits women in the aviation industry from the text, invisibilises women living and working in Australia and who were active in World War Two and omits First Nations women from the narrative altogether. These omissions not only demonstrate a masculinist, racist bias that existed very early on in the industry, but also one that exists in the publishing of historical aviation texts.

Air Canada

The 1980s represented a global era where the women's movement continued to identify inequalities and fight to achieve gains, however, the phenomena of the 'backlash' and the idea that equality had been achieved threatened this momentum. In Canada the backlash was in full swing, the women's movement was typically 'disparaged in political debate and in the popular media' (Brodie, 2008, 155) and women's services encountered severe cutbacks. Such was the climate when Philip Smith was writing and publishing "It Seems Like Only Yesterday. Air Canada: The First 50 years" (1986).

Smith was deemed 'a respected popular historian who has made business and corporate history his specialty', an assertion that hides the obvious link between history as produced and the role of the historian in constructing a particular history. This text presents specific skills and abilities that conjure up images of men and the roles they have played in airlines. It is a story about men, 'bush pilots and aviation visionaries' politicians, who, through manly pursuits, 'secure the landing rights, aircraft purchases and corporate autonomy … growth and profitability' (Smith, 1986, front inside cover).

The idea that these skills are innate or natural to men is reinforced through text and the images provided to capture the essence of a masculine airline. The book (p. 7) refers to the 'enthusiastic young men and women who joined [the airline] in its formative years'. Yet there are very few references to women throughout the remaining 350 pages of the history. In approximately 600 references, women are only referenced on seven occasions and the visual symbolism provides a way of depicting aspects of an airline's history and, perhaps, add an element of authenticity to a historical account. Smith includes a substantial sixty-four photographs of men. The use of images is a central device that contributes to the naturalization of the male-centred character of the airline. The various photographic tropes reinforce the notion of male leadership, authority and position; they position women as inferior by excluding them and demonstrating male superiority through their representation in most of the photographs. Indeed, 70 percent of the photographs are of men and 30 percent of women. Another well-used device is the photograph of a senior manager standing over a seated female employee and appearing to examine what she is doing.

During the third wave of feminism in Canada, the movement was highly active in securing rights and equality for women. They did this in a climate of backlash and derision (Brodie, 2008) yet they ran multiple, highly visible campaigns for 'employment equity and daycare, to anti-racism and ending poverty and violence against women' and against neoliberal funding cuts (Strong-Boag, 2016). Yet, in this text, Smith chooses to largely omit women, to ignore the fight for equality within the industry, and to emphasise hegemonic masculinity and the subordination of women as normalised within the industry.

British Airways

"British Airways – An Illustrated History" is written by Paul Jarvis, the curator of the British Airways heritage collection. Drawing on his knowledge of the archive collection, the book celebrates the 40 year anniversary of the creation of British Airways (BA) and is illustrated with photographs, adverts, and diagrams telling the quintessential story of the so called 'richest history in world aviation' (p.4). Published in 2014, the book is presented as the history of British Airways but the past is retold with a gendered historical exclusion. The front and back covers claim to "guide the reader through the story of the company from its earliest origins to the present' (back cover), focusing on the stories of heroic men who created one of the world's most influential airlines. Jarvis's romantic narrative describes the activities of almost wholly white men chronicling their success building a new airline 'being almost all things to all men' (p.6).

This book was published in 2014, the year claimed by Time Magazine as the world's best year for women 'since the dawn of time' (Alter, 2014). The Guardian's editorial in January 2015 proclaimed 2014 a 'watershed' for women's rights. These claims were somewhat based on the strength of women's voices, the representation of women in world affairs, and their inclusion and growing power in social institutions. Yet, Jarvis chooses to present women in decorative poses and the (male) pilots and flight engineer (p.108) in a more active (working) capacity, mid-flight. The language used reinforces this divide by utilising 'manpower' (p.13), citing a 'Boy's Own' tale (p.19) and writing 'girl' rather than 'woman'. Of the 229 images in the book only 42 feature women. There are no pictures of women pilots and while men did feature as pursers[1], all the cabin crew are female. Women are portrayed as either passengers, cabin crew or used in marketing for new routes.

Although women were eventually employed by BA as pilots and engineers (Neal-Smith, 2007, Neal-Smith & Cockburn, 2009); they are missing from this historical account of the airline. The book is described as 'a corporate and national collection of importance' (p.5) but the first women to be employed as an engineer in 1947 and pilot in 1987 are completely omitted from the text despite their newsworthiness at the time (Dixon, 1992).

Given the book is published in 2014, situating it in arguably the fourth feminist wave, the omission of the first woman pilot, the first woman engineer,

[1] A purser is a male steward responsible for all the cabin crew and the service on board

and the first woman to fly Concorde in 1993 speaks volumes about the gendering of an organisation created by men for men. The omission of these events in the book is a tacit endorsement of women's exclusion from not only the historical record but also the industry in general (Scott, 1988).

Conclusion

Feminist scholars have long argued that history is written as though it is the 'History of Western Man' resulting in women not knowing 'who we are' and less about 'what we might become' (Boulding, 1992, 4). This paper functions as a case study that illuminates and reflects women's wider exclusion from historical accounts and texts. Sadly, this exclusion seems to be happening across time periods regardless of the 'era' in which the text was written and the wider backdrop of feminism present at the time.

Despite concerns that excluding and misrepresenting women is problematic for women and for the historical record itself, all three texts analysed here were found to represent an exclusivist tradition in the writing of history. Each text contributes to the creation of a culturally normative historical record that endorses women's exclusion (Scott, 1988) and misrepresents women's experience and agency.

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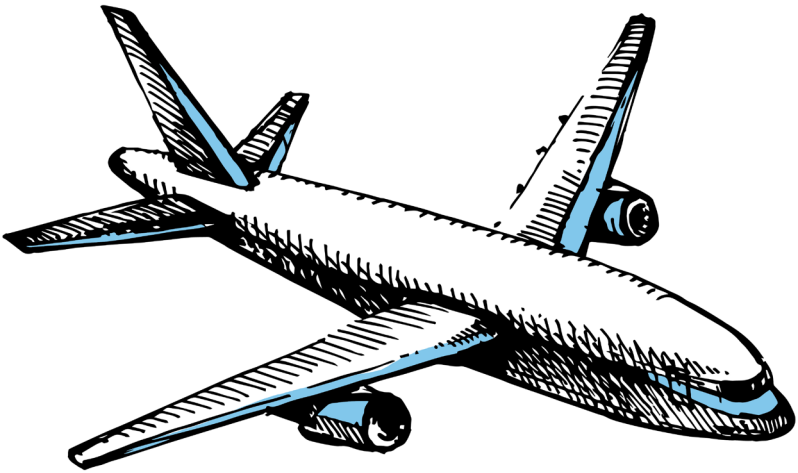

Nights and Walls

by Asli Ceren Aslan

This story, excerpted from the second part of the story 'Nights and Walls', appears in Aslı Ceren Aslan's first book, published in Swedish as 'Bara vi själva kan rädda varandra' by Trolltrumma Publishing House and in Turkish as 'Birbirimizin Çaresiyiz' by SRC Publishing House in November 2023.

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With the onset of darkness, the sound of the lock opening comes from behind the door that connects the ventilation to the prison corridor. The weather has just started to warm up, we are enjoying the coolness of the evening with our friends in the ward. People taking short walks, smoking cigarettes, chatting over tea. "Come on, the ventilation is closing, pack up," two guards say from the front of the door they opened. Gradually everyone crowded into the ward. Since I haven't finished my cigarette, I stay last and the ward door closes behind me.

The lock of the door needs to be greased and the guards have a hard time turning the lock. After struggling for five or ten minutes, they finally succeed and exit through the door that connects the ventilation to the prison corridor. They do the same process there.

Since the day I was arrested, I realize that I haven't spent the pitch black part of the day in the air conditioning. I miss being outside at night... How free I used to feel when I didn't have to return home at a certain time. I hadn't lived with my family since I was seventeen. When I went to university outside the city where my family lived, I spent my first year in a student dormitory. It was forbidden to enter the dormitory at midnight. You either had to find an alternative place to stay or risk staying out all night. If you did not come to the dormitory, your family was notified. Many families in Turkey are quite traditional in this regard. Being at home at a certain time, which should be coordinated with the darkening of the night, is one of the rules that the family cannot give up. When I stayed in a student dormitory, even if I left the family home, where I spent the night was an action I could not perform without their knowledge. The dormitory management informed my family when I was absent. The phone number of the parents was also taken during the registration process.

The following year, with great arguments, I convinced my parents to move to my own house. Actually, they had to be convinced. They wanted me to continue staying in the dormitory. First of all, they said that they could not financially afford for me to move out. They were trying to use economic binding. When I undermined this by starting to work a part-time job and found someone to share the costs of the house with, they lost the financial basis they had created for themselves. My father did not speak to me for a few months and my mother was just as cold. After a few months, when they got used to the situation, our relationship normalized. However, the fact that what I did day and night was out of control was a matter of

concern for them.

I cannot describe the freedom of having a house of my own, leaving home at any time I want and returning at any time I want, without being accountable to anyone. And the happiness I felt from this freedom. The moments when I could walk around under the dark sky without feeling nervous about the time of my return home were a great happiness for me.

When I returned to my family during the holidays, this freedom was, of course, absent again. When it was past nine o'clock, my phone would start ringing, at ten o'clock I would be signalled that a big argument was waiting for me at home, and when I got home I would be accused of being disrespectful and inconsiderate. I think of the tension I experienced during a friend meeting where I risked these arguments... I wanted to return immediately to the city where I studied at university. When I graduated from university, I returned to Istanbul, started working as a journalist, did not pursue a field related to my undergraduate degree, and started living with my friends. This time, there were many issues other than the fact that living in the same city but in a different house was a subject of discussion. I had not chosen to become a civil servant as they wanted, I had started journalism. Again, arguments, tensions... When I chose to continue despite everything, the situation had normalized again. This time I was in Istanbul and the nights were mine.

Wasn't I afraid of being out late at night? Of course I was afraid sometimes. I had determined safe and unsafe areas for myself. Whichever street was deserted was not my first choice, but the crowded street was my first choice at the expense of prolonging my journey. If I felt danger, my hand was always on my phone. If I was not in a place suitable for the clothes I was wearing, if I was in a more conservative place, I preferred to return home early. In other words, I was free, but I was not free at the same time. I was trying to live the night by having to constantly check behind me, in front of me, what I was wearing, what I was not wearing. I was also struggling not to live in such a world. I was not alone in this struggle. The strength I received from many women like me enabled me not to give up the nights and the streets.

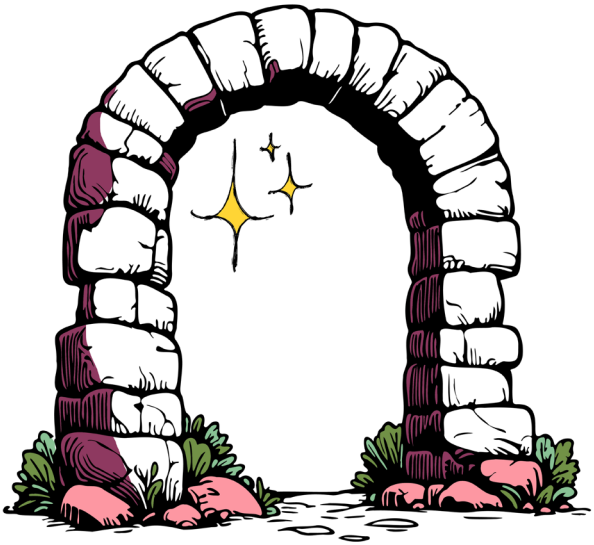
Now, nights and streets were forbidden to me again. I am surprised that I have just realized this situation in the prison where I have been staying for months. I feel depressed. It takes a lot of imagination to create areas of freedom for yourself in a place like a prison. That night, after everyone is asleep, I go downstairs and open the window. I hear crickets outside. I close my eyes and go back to what this sound reminds me of: the holidays we took as children, the balcony of the house where I lived alone during my university years... I feel out of place for a long time. I feel better when I go upstairs to sleep. From time to time, when I feel trapped by the place where I am, I continue this kind of method, dreaming not only about the past but also about the future... It's like walking in the air conditioning, imagining that I'm walking on an endless road. Sometimes I

multiply this by sharing it with someone walking next to me.

"Imagine we are now on a forest path. There are trees around us and it has just rained. Can you feel the smell of the forest and the soil?" The person walking next to me continues where I left off. The conversation continues about the beauty of the grapes in his village and the smell of the flowers blooming in spring. If the subject has moved from there to Urfa's vegetarian food, you know that we are hungry.

I realize how much being together with many women makes me stronger again. We can produce more arguments to strengthen each other. This is possible even if we come from different cultures and experiences. To be honest, there are also quite a lot of difficulties. In the end, creating a women's space does not mean getting rid of patriarchy. This is a familiar fact from the women's spaces we are trying to create outside. However, we are now in a more compressed reality. We have nowhere to escape, we have to be behind the same walls. The tensions, resentments and even resentments we experience have to be resolved in order to live together. There is no option to escape to an alternative place to forget, not to care.

The result of this is to learn not to run away from problems. To be able to produce solutions, to develop the ability to communicate, not to run away from the problems we face within ourselves if we are to create women's spaces and create a zone of empowerment against patriarchy. When we try to do this with more or less groping, we are not aware of the contribution we make to our personal development. However, in this place where we are forcibly imprisoned, we have created a space for preparation for the world we want to create. We can succeed in solidarity with each other, giving strength to each other, even if we do it by beating each other up from time to time.



The Feminist Struggle in Ciudad Juarez: Diverse Voices and External Pressures

by Asma Mehan & Natalia Dominguez 

In Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, the border city across from El Paso, TX, the intersection of "Machismo" (EntreMundos 2019), micro-machismo (EntreMundos 2019), the manufacturing industry—maquilas—and the Narco War has brought immense suffering to women. The Feminist Movement, born from gender violence intensified by the Narco War and entrenched cultural norms, is a response to these issues. Borderland women have raised their voices through protests on Women's International Day, advocating for legal reforms like nationwide abortion legalization and using social media to spotlight these tragic realities. Despite facing violence and adversity, Juarense women persist in their unwavering pursuit of societal change. This article explores the driving forces behind this uprising and the resilient efforts of Juarez women to instigate meaningful societal shifts in their region.

In the Borderland, the enduring plight of women is deeply rooted in the historical development of "Machismo" stemming from the Mexican Revolution in the early 1900s. Zayda Rodriguez Morales (EntreMundos 2019), in her research, explores how the term "Macho" emerged during this revolutionary period (EntreMundos 2019), initially categorizing members of the revolutionary movement. This concept traces its roots to the colonial period, where notions of colonization contributed significantly to the later evolution of machismo (Alizadeh et al., 2024). In addition, this approach highlights the differences formed during colonization, associating whites and mestizos with purity, goodness, order, and the city contrasted against conflict, violence, and the countryside, which represent the indigenous people already found in Mexico.

This idea then evolved through the years as a concept for excessive masculinity or “Machismo” in our contemporary era. This idea of being super masculine or "Machismo" has caused problems for women for a long time. It leads to men behaving aggressively and dominating women. Sometimes it's as simple as men belittling women for their feelings, and other times it's much worse, even leading to the killing of women just because they are women, also known as the crime of Femicide (CNN 2021).

Making things worse, there are smaller acts called "micro-machismos" (EntreMundos 2019) that add up to hurt women. These acts come in different categories: the way women are seen as only useful for household chores, conducted by men making them invisible when decisions are made, unfairly blaming them in relationships, and using power to control them (EntreMundos 2019). Words and phrases that put women down, like saying someone fights "like a girl" or assuming a woman got a promotion by doing something unfair, make these problems worse. These ideas are deeply rooted in society, not just in Juarez but in all of Mexico and

even in other parts of Latin America. Women in this area face these problems every day (Mehan 2024a; 2024b). It's not just a problem in Mexico; it's a big issue across Latin America. Changing these beliefs and behaviors is crucial to making life better for women in this part of the world.

To provide a broader range of viewpoints within the feminist movements in Ciudad Juarez, it is important to highlight the internal debates and differing strategies that these groups employ. For instance, the Luxembourg Pink Women Collective focuses on improving labor conditions for women in maquiladoras by advocating for policy changes and supporting unionization efforts. Meanwhile, other grassroots organizations may emphasize direct action, such as organizing protests and community outreach programs to raise awareness about gender-based violence. This diversity of approaches reflects the dynamism within the movement and underscores the complexity of addressing gender inequality in a multifaceted social landscape.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, women across Latin America mobilized for various social issues like labor laws, education, and political rights (Oup 2020). This movement embraced diverse backgrounds and encompassed different political ideologies, involving women from various social classes (Mehan 2024c). Women expressed discontent through academic writings, magazines, and protests, highlighting concerns about education and civil status (Oup 2020). Simultaneously, labor movements emerged advocating for fair wages and better conditions. Despite these efforts, women's suffrage was only universally addressed in Latin American countries by 1961. Today, despite ongoing fights for rights and safety, Juarense women still grapple with labor controversies and safety concerns.

Ciudad Juarez relies heavily on its factories, called maquiladoras, which are crucial for the city's economy. These factories employ lots of people, with many being women. This industry is in the entirety of the country, providing more than 300,000 jobs and employing a significant portion of the city’s workforce (American Industries 2020). Because of this, a constant mobilization of people from all over the Mexican country seek job opportunities in the borderscape in Juarez. But there are big problems. These factories are far from where people live, making the trip to work unsafe, especially for women. Some have disappeared or even been killed on their way to or from work. Just like the case of Anabel Montañez Lopez, who was found dead days after seeing her last getting out of the location of the Maquiladora where she worked (debate 2019). Despite this, the big companies that own these factories don't take responsibility.

Furthermore, the intersection of external pressures with local feminist efforts is crucial to understanding the broader context in which these movements operate. The economic reliance on maquiladoras creates a precarious situation for women, who often face exploitation and unsafe working conditions. This economic backdrop is compounded by the Narco War, which exacerbates violence and instability in the region. The militarization of Ciudad Juarez under President Felipe Calderon's administration, intended to combat drug cartels, inadvertently heightened civilian casualties and further marginalized women. These

intersecting pressures illustrate the compounded challenges that feminist movements must navigate in their pursuit of justice and equality.

Juarense women play a crucial role in Ciudad Juarez's economy, occupying 4 out of 10 jobs (El Diario 2022), but they still face workplace inequalities compared to men. Despite making up nearly half the workforce, women encounter various issues. The Luxembourg Pink Women Collective (JASS 2023) works to address these concerns, focusing on improving labor conditions for women. While progress is happening thanks to women and organizations, workplace inequalities continue to affect women's overall health and safety (JASS 2023). There's hope for a better future, but these challenges remain significant for women in Ciudad Juarez's workplaces.

In the borderland, the workplace can be challenging, especially for mothers and young women. An interview with a former maquiladora worker revealed disparities in treatment based on gender (Dominguez, 2023). Women faced pressure to not miss work for personal reasons, unlike their male peers who had an easier time getting time-off. This unequal treatment risked their job security (8). Most women in these jobs are family providers and face unfair treatment. The interviewee highlighted the vast difference in roles and expectations between men and women. She, as the only female supervisor among 12, faced longer hours and higher demands, impacting her mental and physical well-being. "All those reasons to miss part of their shifts would make us less reliable in the company's eyes, which also means that that made us good candidates to lose the job. Most of my female peers did not take that risk" (Dominguez, 2023), the interviewee said. Balancing work and family responsibilities proved overwhelming, leading to personal struggles and even divorce for many women in similar positions. "It was super tough for me and my family. I was not able to attend various family events such as school meetings, school presentations, doctor's appointments and even spending time with my kids... I had to juggle all the pressure at work while still being a provider for my family and a full-time mom" (Dominguez, 2023), she stated. This unfair treatment due to gender norms and expectations deeply affects women's lives. Juarense feminists, many from the maquiladora industry, demand fair pay, better conditions, and equal opportunities. However, gender inequality remains a significant battle. These challenges faced by women in Ciudad Juarez are part of a broader fight against injustice in Mexico, urging for fair treatment and opportunities for women in all kinds of environments.

In the early 1990's, a communal grave appeared in the Juarense landscape, suggesting a serial killer or satanic cult (Guillen, 2022). Sadly, this reality persists for borderland women, drawing global attention. Juarez ranked highest for femicides among 100 municipalities in the northern Mexican state of Chihuahua (Gallegos, 2020), a chilling statistic. Humanizing victims like Tania and Nohemi, dismembered and left on a highway (Gallegos, 2020), reminds us of their humanity and dignity. Countless women suffer similar fates, their names and lives often forgotten, lost in abandoned fields or roadsides, a tragic reality that must not be

taken with a grain of salt. Because of this, women's groups, radical feminists, and activists rally for change in Ciudad Juarez, condemning the macho culture ingrained in the system. Marisela Escobedo Ortiz became a pivotal figure after her daughter Rubi Frayre's brutal murder by her former boyfriend Rafael Barraza Bocanegra (Osorio, 2020). Escobedo relentlessly fought for justice, dissatisfied with the authorities' dismissive response, and took on the investigation herself. Her unwavering determination from Rubi's disappearance until her tragic death gained immense support from the feminist community. She symbolizes the struggle against femicides, inspiring future activists. "The Three Deaths of Marisela Escobedo" documentary portrays her year-long fight. The "deaths" signify Rubi's murder, the court's impunity for her perpetrator, and Marisela's own murder during a peaceful protest (Osorio, 2020). The documentary captures her grief, anger, and resilience, engaging audiences deeply in her emotional journey. Unfortunately, Rubi is not the only case in which the perpetrator has been left unpunished.

Additionally, the political landscape plays a significant role in shaping the experiences of Juarense women. The persistent machismo culture within political institutions often results in inadequate responses to gender-based violence and a lack of support for women's rights initiatives (Mehan 2024d). Activists like Marisela Escobedo Ortiz, who took on investigative and advocacy roles following the murder of her daughter, highlight the personal stakes and relentless dedication required to push for systemic change. These stories of resilience and determination not only humanize the struggle but also inspire broader support and solidarity, both locally and internationally. By exploring these external pressures and diverse strategies, the article aims to provide a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the ongoing feminist struggle in Ciudad Juarez.

The early 2000s saw chaos in Mexico's drug trade as Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman's escape triggered a power struggle (Reuters, 2010). Law enforcement captured the Tijuana cartel's leaders, weakening their influence but sparking violent battles between armed forces and cartels (Reuters, 2010). President Felipe Calderon's 2006 initiative aimed to end the drug war by militarizing Juarez, targeting cartel operations (Reuters, 2010). This intensified violence affected civilians, especially women, left vulnerable without the protection they needed. Calderon's term overlooked the plea of women, failing to address their suffering amidst a flawed justice system. Laura Carson's study highlighted the system's inefficiency, with only 2% of crimes leading to convictions (openDemocracy, 2010), dissolving trust in the system. Women, often mothers, endured the aftermath of cartel clashes, searching for missing loved ones in a war they didn't choose (openDemocracy, 2010). Throughout these decades, Juarense women experienced immense suffering that has not been addressed by the authorities.

Fourteen years ago, Esmeralda Castillo vanished in downtown Juarez, raising her parents' relentless search. Luis Castillo, her father, stands out in feminist marches (Infobae 2022), his image bearing Esmeralda's face gaining national attention.

Amidst predominantly female protests, Luis leads, demanding answers from authorities about his daughter's whereabouts (Infobae 2022). His unparalleled dedication made him a legend in Ciudad Juarez's feminist movement. Despite approaching various government levels, bribery attempts to silence him failed (Infobae 2022). Authorities fear his growing influence, worried about Esmeralda's case gaining widespread attention. Tragically, her case isn't unique, as records show ten women are killed daily in Mexico (Infobae 2022), with Juarez bearing a significant share. Activists like Marisela Escobedo, Luis Castillo, and the rest of Esmeralda's family offer hope in the battle for women's safety, inspiring change not just in Juarez but worldwide.

In Ciudad Juarez, women face constant fear and distress for their safety. But there's some hope ahead. New laws like "Ley Olimpia" (Yucatan Times, 2021) came from determined work by feminists. This law, named after Olimpia, who had her private content shared without permission, is now in effect in 19 out of 32 Mexican states (Gallegos, 2022). While the fight for women's safety continues, these laws bring hope for a better and safer future in the city.

Women in Ciudad Juarez and across Mexico have long struggled for reproductive rights, facing government indifference. Many have had to travel far for safe abortion procedures or rely on clandestine methods due to the lack of official support (Gallegos, 2021). An anonymous interviewee, CC, assists women in Juarez by providing Misoprostol, a medication often used for ulcers but also utilized for early-stage, clandestine abortions (Gallegos, 2021). This help is shared through social media, highlighting the community's support when official aid is not there. Other defense organizations and online resources work to provide access to necessary medications (Gallegos, 2021). Despite the challenges, the sense of solidarity among Juarense women is growing.

In 2023, strides have been made. Reproductive rights, a long-standing demand of Latin American women, gained attention and legal recognition as a human right by the national government. This movement began in Argentina in the early 2000s, with feminists advocating for abortion legalization and reproductive rights (La Nueva Mañana, 2020). Their persistent efforts led to the legalization of safe and healthy interrupted pregnancies, now a national law in Mexico as of September 6th this year (DEPOR, 2023). It marks a victory for Juarense and Mexican women, demonstrating that ongoing mobilization, perseverance, and hope shows results in their struggle.

The feminist movement in Ciudad Juarez is crucial in challenging social injustices faced by women. Despite the city's troubled history with the Narco War, immigration, and gender-based constructs like Machismo, feminists strive for change. Their activism, through protests and suggestions for laws, demonstrates unparalleled unity and determination. Figures like Marisela Escobedo Ortiz and Luis Castillo, a grieving father, offer hope and inspire future generations. These

social issues mustn't be ignored; they highlight the potential for a better future for our loved ones. It's time to understand and address these challenges for the well-being of women in Juarez.

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Deer Woman Child

(Fiction Film | 60mins duration | Colour | Stereo)
by Gabrielle Russel

This Folklore Trilogy takes inspiration from female characters in native folklore.

My investigation involves some of the earliest stories ever recorded in the British Isles about women of great power - leaders, warriors, queens - who seem to have narrative roots in even earlier stories that were never written down, but passed down through the ages and learned by heart. Formidable females, with supernatural powers to shapeshift, make prophesy, who are immortal - traits that correspond with what is known about certain pagan goddesses. But these powerful women are often humiliated, denigrated and punished. I'm interested in why our stories have for so long represented powerful female characters negatively.

Taking three of these characters, I've taken it upon myself to reimagine them with their powers restored, existing as real women in the present day. Perhaps the restoration might reinstate something of their awesomeness. Perhaps even illuminate some of that forgotten female potency that has been repressed so harshly for so long. I'm writing these stories to find out what happens when these archetypes are invited to inhabit characters living in the present day. I sometimes wonder what would happen if these archetypes somehow got inside women in real life. . .

A screenwriter and film director whose films have screened internationally at festivals and on broadcast television, Gabrielle Russel is currently a WRoCAH scholar at University of York completing her PhD by Creative Practice, creating a trilogy based on female characters from Welsh and Irish folklore. Her debut feature Deer Woman Child screened at film festivals internationally and was awarded Best Feature at the Women's International Film Festival 2023. Her second feature The Reckoning of Erin Morrigan starring Olwen Fouéré will be completed summer 2024. Gabrielle is a Senior Lecturer teaching Film Directing at the Northern Film School in Leeds. She has an MA in Fiction Directing from the National Film and Television School. She was a participant in Film London's Micro-School and the BFI's Think, Shoot, Distribute programmes and a finalist in Screen Yorkshire's 'Triangle' Feature Development Scheme.

See the full film
Password: Thistle

Kyle MacLachlan

by Rhuan Carlos dos Santos Barcellos

//the date//

Paradise-in-bloom
Pastel colours poems
With a delicious taste of pastiche
Tokyo hardcore punk band
Melting soft ice cream
Laughs, clocks and dreams

His hand is in my back pocket
Late 90's Kyle MacLachlan
We met his parents yesterday
Dinner table filled with red drinks
Mother told us she loves me
But prefers cheese, chips and beans

My sister texted him last Sunday
He told her I'm fine – but
"obsessing over Desmazières again"
He carries the truth on his shoulders
Inside a small black backpack
Where my purple-pink journal hides

The Ferris wheel goes round and round
I see the clouds over the town
We share a goodbye kiss,
I swear I felt the taste of it
A guard waves and says "Farewell!"
The car is heading into a hotel
No minute here is a waste
I love imaginary places

*

//the trip//

Yellow leaves enlighten the contour of his face
Eyes lost in the glass reflection of his polo color beige

Our feelings glint under the mere heat of the chandelier
My man is a dreamscape, I see, I see, I see

I have babies sleeping on their aunt's water couch
And a sharp pen to keep my loveless habits out
Earlier I dreamt of being a writer, today I only dream of him
My muse is a one-note melody, I admit, I admit, I admit

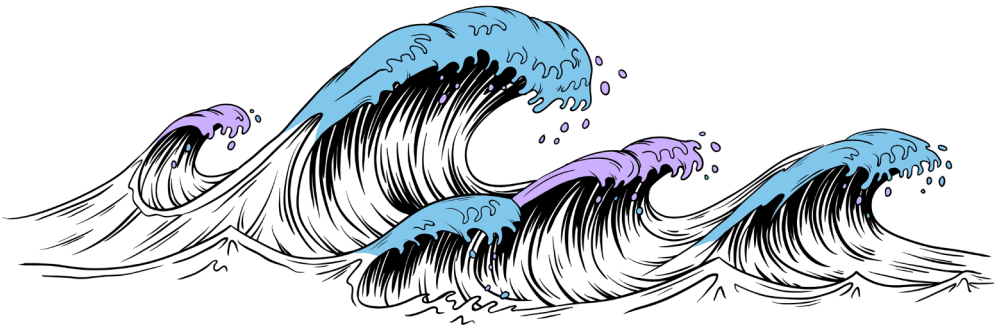
*

//the sea//

I used to dream I would drown to death
But now I dive into wide ocean tides
I obey the swings of nature
I let myself float in its designs

I pray for Osiris, Hapi and Brizo
To dissipate my body into white foam
And to our sensitivity become one
– so he would never ever be gone –

Death is a clock that despairs time
No ticking, no numbers, no lines
The end is a dreamscape
No minute here is a waste



Japanese hashtag feminism and collective knowledge production: How has #KuToo created collective knowledge and what are the challenges for feminists' knowledge production?

by Momoko Kagesawa

Introduction

In Japan, although #MeToo failed to gain much support, hashtag feminism on Twitter has become popular today (Atsuta et al., 2022; Tanaka, 2020). In particular, #KuToo was one of the most widespread movements in Japan, which was started by Yumi Ishikawa, a woman who worked at a funeral parlour, describing her foot pain caused by high heels and questioning the inequality that women need to wear high heels in the workplace whilst men do not. #KuToo, echoing #MeToo and playing with the words Kutsu (shoes) and Kutsuu (pain), captured a lot of support, and eventually negotiated with the government seeking a law amendment. Considering that it called attention to societal issues around people rarely joining social movements (Otaki, 2020) and that traditional gender norm still exists, it is worth exploring #KuToo, as an example of widespread online feminism in Japan. This paper aims to analyse the assemblage of collective knowledge via hashtags, focusing on #KuToo and its potential for feminist activism in the Japanese context. I will demonstrate 1) how hashtag feminism has created collective knowledge in Japan and 2) what the challenges are for collective knowledge production in hashtag feminism, using the case of #KuToo. This article presents and adds a perspective of collectiveness and how/to what extent it develops feminist movements and knowledge production, calling on and adding to existing discussions on #KuToo in Japan.

Women, high heels and femininity in Japan

In Japan, wearing high heels in the workplace has been regarded as normal for most women since they began to engage in paid-work (Sasanuma, 2021; Tajima, 1992). Despite such a situation, Yoko Tajima, one of the pioneering Japanese feminist scholars, conceptualised women's behaviour in wearing high heels as sexual discrimination in 1992. Tajima theorised high heels as a symbol of femininity and "modern foot-binding"[1], a custom which harmed women's bodies and asserted

[1] Foot binding is a practice for women in ancient China, which might have started from the 10th century and prospected from the 14th century to the early 20th century. It had several symbolic meanings reflecting Confucian beliefs, which is male dominance over women, such as virginity, relegation to the domestic sphere, and even sex objects satisfying men's erotic desires (Wei, 2021).

male dominance over women; moreover, she argued that most women would not stop wearing high heels as it already became their identity as women (Tajima, 1992). Her inspirational discussion, however, did not highly impact women's awareness or behaviours and the high-heel rules for women in the workplace had rarely been challenged until #KuToo broke the long-lasting silence in Japan.

The emergence and development of #Kutoo

#KuToo began when Yumi Ishikawa, a Japanese actress, freelance writer, and part-time funeral parlour worker, shared her tweets in 2019. She felt that it is unfair that women have to wear high heels in the workplace and that it is a deep-rooted cultural problem in Japan (Rachelle, 2019). On 24 January 2019, she posted on Twitter:

> *"One day I want to abolish the practice that women must wear pumps or high heels at the workplace. When I was in a college, I worked at a hotel as a part-time worker staying over for a month, but my feet were too painful to endure because of the pumps. And I quit my school too. Why do we have to work with injured feet due to the pumps whilst men wear flat shoes?". (Ishikawa, 2019)*
>
> *"I love my current part-time job, but wearing pumps is really tough. Without high heels, how much easier I can move, and I do not worry about making my foot sounds, and I can avoid my foot pain. I will abolish this culture someday. Of course, please wear it if you want to." (Ishikawa, 2019)*

After posting those, thousands of people shared her post, expressing solidarity with her[2], and some suggested the creation of the hashtag #KuToo to establish the movement. As it drew more and more support, Ishikawa decided to start a petition campaign requesting the government prohibit companies from forcing women to wear high heels. The petition gathered more than 18,000 signatures and Ishikawa and her supporters submitted it to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare on 3 June 2019 (Tomita, 2019).

Nevertheless, the government rejected political reform on this issue. Japan's former health minister stated that high heels are "necessary and appropriate" in the workplace, reflecting gendered social pressure in Japan (Fukuda and Bedford, 2019). Thus, #KuToo's ultimate goal, making law reform to prohibit the coercion of women to wear high heels in the workplace, was unsuccessful.

How #KuToo became collective knowledge: hashtags and storytellings

As some argued, #KuToo was a meaningful protest in Japan that demonstrated the requirement for women to wear high heels as gender discrimination (Sananuma, 2021; Leng, 2021). The way #KuToo has been developed is worth examining to understand feminist knowledge production within online activism in Japan. The notion of collective knowledge is generally conceptualised as knowledge shared by

[2] This post has gained about 26,600 retweets, 2,200 quoted retweets, and 59,400 likes so far. [Accessed on 17 April 2022]

a group of people, thus developed by the intersection of individual knowledge sets (Hecker, 2012). Regarding collective knowledge in feminist theory, Freire (2014) argued that knowledge is socially built rather than individually. Furthermore, many feminist scholars have discussed power relationships within knowledge production/knowledge producers for decades, with questions such as who produces knowledge for whom, or who does the knowledge production empower. The achievements of recent hashtag movements, represented as #MeToo, highlighted these questions again and presented the high potential for feminist collective knowledge (Skewes et al., 2022).

In #KuToo, Ishikawa's tweet functioned as a departure point for the issue; some showed solidarity with her sharing their experiences, and some extended discussion into other gendered customs. Moreover, hashtag feminism has other strengths; the participants can create their feminist theories through their engagements (Chen, Pain and Barner, 2018; Dixon, 2014). During #KuToo, Ishikawa and her followers established women's collective narratives and a mass supporter community; in so doing, their stories became their original feminist theories. These collective storytellings also embodied the feminist assertion that the "personal is political", advocated by Hanisch (1970), in that women's pain was considered as a social issue. Given that people hardly questioned the rationality of women's high heels rules before in public spaces at least, the development of #KuToo undoubtedly exhibited enormous potential for feminists' collective knowledge production with hashtags. Otaki (2020) argued that expressive activism necessitates an environment where people can willingly share their experiences and society accepts that and responds with political reform. Otaki theorised that the failure of #MeToo in Japan - which started when female journalist Shiori Ito revealed her rape case - could be mainly attributed to the lack of such climate. Nevertheless, after 2 years of #MeToo in Japan, people responded to #KuToo in different ways, they effectively used hashtags to raise and spread the issue, and the movement even extended out of the online platform, which caused further impacts.

In digital activisms, spreading hashtags itself would not be enough to achieve mass impact; using hashtags is only a tool to visualise the issues, and to make hashtag movements successful, it is essential that they must be combined with other strategies including offline activities(Chw=en, Pain and Barner, 2018; Atsuta et al., 2022). #KuToo excellently advanced its strategies from the hashtag to further actions; it enabled Ishikawa to connect with the staff of change.org, leading to the petition campaign (Leng,2021), and expanded its influence on the government. It significantly illustrated the power of hashtag feminism, that the network and visibility obtained through Twitter can broaden the scale and platforms of activism, which demonstrates the potential of collective knowledge production.

Challenges for feminists' collective knowledge production

Whilst #KuToo greatly impacted society through multiple actions, it also revealed some challenges for collective knowledge production through hashtag feminism.

Firstly, the backlash against feminists was quite severe. As #KuToo expanded, the intense backlash against Ishikawa emerged. Hundreds of people criticised her and the movement, regarding them as an attempt to deprive women of the right to wear high heels and complained that Ishikawa is not a good representation of a women's rights activist because she used to work as a bikini model, which they considered contradictory with a feminist campaign (Denyer and Kashiwagi, 2020). When Shiori Ito spoke up about her rape case in 2017, she also faced serious backlash. Whilst #KuToo's influence and outcome outweighed #MeToo in Japan, the backlash against Ishikawa showed that the surroundings for feminists has not changed much. Online harassment toward feminists is a common issue worldwide, however, it is not appropriate for activists to shoulder such a horrible burden (Otaki, 2020). Besides, hashtag feminism can also allow anti-feminists to use the same hashtags and post hateful comments as a counter (Chen, Pain and Barner, 2018). Through #KuToo, many anti-trolls used this hashtag to fill timelines with statements against it. This would give people negative impressions of the activism or discourage them from speaking up. It should be discussed how activists will cope with these online attacks to make feminists' online activism safe and sustainable.

Secondly, there might be a limitation of topics and people's voices that hashtag feminism can capture. To make hashtag feminism widespread, many supporters are essential to visualise the issue. Regarding the contrast between #MeToo and #KuToo, as mentioned above, there are some conditions for movements to be accepted by society, and #MeToo lacked them (Otaki, 2020). Besides, Leng (2021) discussed that the experience of #MeToo influenced those involved in the following activisms, including #KuToo. Following these arguments, the progress #KuToo highlighted is a remarkable accomplishment for Japanese feminism; however, is it possible for women motivated by these movements to make following hashtag feminisms as widespread as #KuToo? Aside from the discussions above, some research found that hashtag feminism often lacks diversity or inclusivity, which mainly highlights the majority's voices and fails to catch marginalised people's voices (Pain, 2020; Mcduffie and Ames, 2021). Furthermore, in regards to #MeToo in Japan, Otaki (2020) theorised that talking about sexual assault requires courage for women and is at times not valued in society as sometimes it is invalidated. These may lead to a supposition that hashtag feminism can be more advantageous for the majority; also, its pervasiveness might depend on how easily people feel to discuss the issues. Under such situations, it would be difficult to advance hashtag feminism into diverse and inclusive discussion spaces valuing marginalised voices in Japan. Feminists must try to overcome these limitations to develop feminist activism in Japan.

Finally, the biggest challenge #KuToo illustrated was that it could not upset the persistent patriarchy in Japan. As explained, #KuToo became a significant case, which negotiated with the government; however, in developing the campaign, it encountered appropriations of its focus into more general contexts, which means the message Ishikawa truly wanted to emphasise, resistance against sexism, had diminished. She mentioned that Japanese media tended to describe #KuToo as a health problem, not a gender-related issue (Foster, 2019). Additionally, even some

politicians supporting #KuToo represented it as a “labour movement” (Leng, 2021). These interpretations might have driven people to focus on women’s physical issues caused by high heels, more than the deep-rooted sexism in Japan. This case emphasised the necessity to reconsider how to maintain feminists’ collective knowledge consistent within women’s contexts, without evolving to men’s contexts. In addition to this appropriation, #KuToo could not create the new notion that women should decide what they wear and what matters to their bodies. Though Ishikawa and her supporters enthusiastically advocated #KuToo toward the government and companies, most of which are male-dominated institutions, the government refused law reform and only few companies implemented systematic amendments (Niekawa, 2020). In other words, the way they negotiated could not break the solid patriarchy in Japan in which men can regulate women’s dress code in the workplace. Thus, despite its huge influence, #KuToo’s attempt to make a law reform did not come true, blocked by the strong patriarchy in Japan.

Discussion

In this article, I have explored the #KuToo movement, focusing on how it has created collective knowledge and what the challenges are for collective knowledge production through hashtag feminism. As argued, #KuToo successfully gained support from thousands of people and developed into negotiations with the government, though the law reform did not happen. Fully utilising the advantages of hashtag activism, #KuToo embodied the notion of “personal is political”, it challenged deep-rooted sexism in Japanese society, and established the concept that forcing women to wear high heels is gender-based discrimination. These achievements could be significant benchmarks for feminists in Japan. Although the outcome might be limited, it can be concluded that #KuToo created a new collective knowledge in Japan, which would be the first example of Japanese online feminism.

However, it also presented challenges. Severe backlash against feminists must be resolved to develop feminists’ collective knowledge production more safely and sustainably. Also, the advantages of hashtag activism and its prevalence may be restricted to the issues of the majority, not the marginalised. To make full use of hashtag feminism’s powers, it should be open to those with various backgrounds and expanded to diverse and inclusive spaces. Moreover, the deep-rooted patriarchy in Japan disturbed the campaign’s prevalence, highlighting the hefty barriers to circulating feminists’ collective knowledge throughout society. As mentioned, some research discussed the necessity of adapting offline methods with hashtag activism to make movements effective (Chen et al., 2018: Atsuta et al., 2022). #KuToo’s strategies correspond to this however, they were not enough to resist deep-rooted patriarchy in Japan, as feminist narratives were interpreted into male contexts and the negotiation processes allowed men to take initiatives on ruling women’s issues.

Although #KuToo encountered such difficulties, it is evident that it significantly provided feminists with inspiring signposts in developing feminist’s collective

knowledge production today. After #KuToo, multiple online feminist movements have started in Japan, one after another and captured more and more participants, such as the “flower-demo”; a series of protests against the repeated judgments of acquittal of sexual violence cases. These activisms’ prevalence are influenced by #KuToo, as it made Twitter a space where people actively discuss gender-related issues. Moreover, with these more recent cases people have paid less attention to who launched them, unlike the #KuToo case; this is advantageous for feminists’ knowledge production as it emphasises collectivity. Looking forward, there are plenty of possibilities for feminists to develop better ways of cultivating their collective knowledge with upcoming hashtag feminism.

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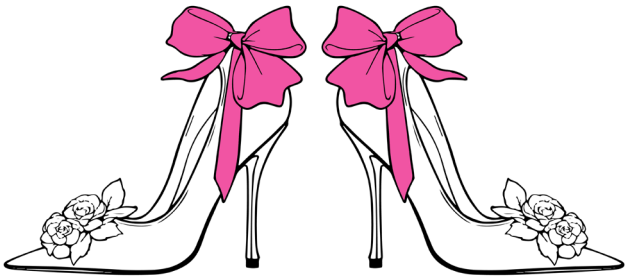

Koru (or no longer chasing the fern flower)

by Deanna Grant-Smith

No more the sterile hydroponic set
of furrowed rows of workers
bathed in the phosphorescence of artificial light
and panoptic presence
thinning seedlings and self-pinching growing tips
in the pursuit of ideal academic status

The Janus pressure and pleasure
to write as me, but not for me
to capture thoughts unfurling slow
delitescent crozier with heliotropic intent
exploding forth with potent force
in the space between
the chaos of the indefinite and quietude of comprehension

To revel once more in the scroll of iteration
and tendril annotation
as dehisced ideas come to rest
palimpsest indistinct from final prose
at once sporangium, frond and spore
illusive fern flower forgotten

This poem juxtaposes the managerialist focus on publishing as a measure of productivity and prestige with the writer's desire for meaning and personal growth which can only be achieved outside the oppressive panopticon of open plan offices and metrification of academic work. Under the pervasive publish or perish logic, publications are a commodity (Page, 2020) and the ideal academic is physically present and a prolific publisher in a narrowly prescribed list of 'top journals' (Lund, 2012). This focus on competition for space and recognition undermines and devalues feminist pursuits (Shipley, 2018). Recognising academic systems do not support women to thrive and flourish, feminist academics are increasingly rejecting publishing success metrics, instead adopting 'insubmissive practices' connected to creativity and academic freedom (de Lima, Casa Nova and de Oliveira Vendramin, 2023). This poem is a feminist recalibration of what matters in academic life and reclamation of academic authorship and control. The title, Koru, references the Māori word describing the spiral shape of an unfurling fern frond. Symbolising new life, growth and

strength the koru conveys perpetual movement and returning to the point of origin. In folklore, prosperity, power, and wisdom are said to be bestowed on anyone finding a fern flower. Because ferns do not bloom, chasing a fern flower is an allegory for chasing the unattainable and constantly changing metrics of the neoliberal university.

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A little manifesto on "Menstruating feminisms" cyclic approaches to situating our resistances

by Andrea Isabel Aguilar Ferro

This text is an excerpt and adaptation from part of the introduction of the book "(Contra) Narrativas Menstruales desde Abya Yala", a book that Andrea Isabel Aguilar Ferro compilated and edited which aims to be a collective weaving made out of the voices of menstrual activists and educators situated in America (mostly in Latin America), published in Spanish, in Guatemala City by July 2022.

This text sprouts from diverse voices from menstrual educators and activists in Abya Yala (American continent) that dialogue and are inserted in a context where our activisms, our bets and our dreams are not alone and isolated, but rather are part of a broad horizon, of a collective fabric, with diverse practices, many times clearly and definitively stated from feminist positions. I dare to wonder if, perhaps, we find ourselves co-creating what we could call "menstruating feminisms". Yes, in a plural sense, with that active last name “menstruating”, because they are alive, they are diverse, they move and flow.

Menstruating feminisms have plural seeds, they germinate with the first drops of menstrual blood of little girls and teens; and flourish in streets, neighborhoods, villages, communities, schools, stories, conferences, cities, bodies and experiences. They are feminisms with roots in communitary and territorial feminisms also because they are born from our bodies as territories. They are embodied feminisms, lived from experience: they have been conjured from our diverse bodies with a uterus-system, situated territorially, from the wisdom of our grandmothers and ancestors, from the rebellion of our questions, from the joy that comes from weaving together, they summon dreams and autonomy.

Menstruating feminisms are not linear or static, they are cyclical and change with us. Menstruating feminisms embrace diversity, they start from the intersectionality that we embody, they start from the necessary recognition of diverse systems of oppression that, as Ochy Curiel would say, “imbricate.” These systems of oppression produce menstrual experiences that cannot be homogeneous because they are anchored to our skin color, our class, our gender, our opportunities (whether privileges or denials), our colonial and heteropatriarchal wounds, which are also sustained by the capitalist-capacitant-extractivist system in which non-linear bodies, beings and territories are constructed as defective.

Menstruating feminisms have the possibility of healing us as a political action but also of preventing unfair menstrual experiences, when we work with menstruating girls and childhoods, when we knit alongside them. The power of

menstruating feminisms walks alive through Abya Yala, motley, in diverse bodies that bleed, that historicize, politicize, collectivize and question in a search to bring changes, to eradicate the menstrual taboo and remove fear and shame from the body. In menstruating feminisms, the menstrual-blood-moon, as matter and material crystallization of our cyclicity that transcends binaries, also becomes an agent, it is the maker and trigger of emancipatory searches, of (counter) narratives: it can feel the injustice, it is historical, and it cries out, from different fronts, practices and actions, collectively and with howls of infinite shades of red, for justice, dignity, health and menstrual rights for everyone!

“Taylor Swift Is Not a Good Role Model”: A Childless Woman’s Reflections on Non-Motherhood and the Feminist Pursuit for Reproductive Choice.

by Madelaine French 

From the beginning, feminists set out to break two taboos: the taboo on describing the complex and mixed experiences of actual mothers and the taboo on the celebration of a child-free life. But for reasons both inside and beyond the women's movement, feminists were better able in the long run to attend to mothers' voices than they were able to imagine a full and deeply meaningful life without motherhood, without children.

Anne Snitow, in Encyclopedia of Childbearing: Critical Perspectives, ed. Barbara Katz Rothman, 1993

Introduction

In July 2024, John Mac Ghlionn published an opinion piece for Newsweek (2024) challenging Taylor Swift’s status as a role model for young women. He drew on her ‘lack’ of husband and children, at age 34, as evidence, asking his audience if Swift was ‘worthy of imitation’ and suggesting we look to more ‘wholesome’ role models for ‘our sisters and daughters’.

The backlash he faced was swift and we saw both media outlets and the public rally against his views as ‘dangerous, offensive and outdated’ (Cohen, 2024) and as born from ‘1950’s misogyny’ (Lefroy, 2024). Yet, as a childless woman in my 30s, I am regularly exposed to a similar message – that my worth as a woman is bound to my reproductive status. As the maelstrom following Ghlionn’s statements draws to a close, I find myself questioning just how outdated these opinions really are.

If women are now free to choose[1], then why are so many women who walk the path of non-motherhood so frequently told they have made the wrong choice?

Womanhood ≠ Motherhood

For many, motherhood is a defining aspect of a woman’s identity and a rite of passage into adulthood (O'Reilly, 2021), with womanhood often being synonymous with motherhood (bell, 2019). Feminism has long paid close attention to women’s health and embodied choices; second-wave feminists prioritised reproductive issues and sought to improve abortion rights, ensure access to birth control and

[1] I acknowledge that at the time of writing, women are still fighting for control over their bodies.

promote 'mother-friendly' birthing plans (Annandale and Clark, 1996). Whilst calls for improved access to abortion and birth control centred notions of 'choice' and sought to give women control over their bodies and reproduction, some radical feminists called for women to regain control in a different sense. This perspective implored women to discover their true femaleness, reject patriarchal norms and reclaim their authentic (natural) selves (Daly, 1984) by exalting motherhood (Weedon, 1987) and their body's capacity to create and nurture new life (Gatens, 1999). This is a thread that continues to run through both feminism and public discourse today.[2]

As we often see with feminism, it takes form not as one common positionality, but as a negotiation between many (Annandale and Clark, 1996). As such, in opposition to the celebration of the reproductive body, we also saw second-wave feminists facilitate an awakening of consciousness for many women, encouraging them to consider their identity outside of the historical constraints of marriage and motherhood. They called into question the biological determinism that binds women to their reproductive capacities, seeking to challenge assumptions that womanhood equals motherhood. Many positioned the idolisation of motherhood as a form of oppression, highlighting the negative impacts it can have on a woman's identity and personal aspirations and arguing for greater body autonomy and a woman's right to choose (Rich, 1976; Beauvoir, 2015; Friedan, 2021). They paved the way for women to make alternative choices, such as the choice not to have children.

In a post-feminist context, the narrative of women's choice continues to endure. However, the focus has shifted to a woman's ability to 'control' fertility and reproduction, often through the use of new reproductive technologies, allowing women to pursue education and careers as productive neoliberal citizens before engaging with fertility when the 'time is right' (Earle and Letherby, 2007). We can see this evolution playing out through the mainstreaming of new reproductive technologies, and the increasing popularity of egg freezing (Myers and Martin, 2021; HEFA, 2021).

Non-Motherhood

However, in the fifty years since reproductive choices were brought to the forefront of feminist attention, feminism is still struggling to address and validate the lives of non-mothers (Letherby and Williams, 1999). In the last few years, we have seen an increasing number of women choosing to opt out of motherhood completely (Office for National Statistics, 2022) and studies show that either by choice or by circumstance, one in five women remain childless by the age of forty-five (Kreyenfeld and Konietzka, 2017). The backlash to Ghlionn's

[2] Despite exalting motherhood as the ideal, we still have a long way to go in providing mothers with the adequate care and support they need, as demonstrated in the recent reports on poor maternity care and rising childcare costs.

commentary on Swift's reproductive choices suggests that choosing to remain child-free has become socially acceptable, with many claiming his views are outdated. Yet despite studies demonstrating they experience greater levels of life satisfaction (Stahnke, Cooley and Blackstone, 2023), those without children still face stigmatisation.

As a (childless) woman, I am often asked about my reproductive status. Nowhere is safe from this seemingly harmless enquiry; the hairdressers, a work event or a friend's BBQ. Yet how I choose to answer can have varying consequences. If I declare myself as '*childfree*'[3] I risk being labelled as selfish or career-focused. I must prepare to be advised on how I am missing out, and that I will never know true love until I have a child of my own, a viewpoint shared by Pope Francis (2022), who warned that those 'selfishly' choosing a childfree life were causing 'cultural degradation' and a reduction in 'humanity'. Alongside being labelled as 'selfish' (Stahnke, Blackstone and Howard, 2020) the childfree can also find themselves branded as 'child-hating' (Daum, 2015). Ekelund and Ask (2021) found that parents and those planning to become parents perceived the childfree as "morally inferior and less likeable" (pg. 275). In addition, my child-free peers continue to face problematic medical interactions, with requests for sterilisation frequently denied by medical professionals with the assertion that they will regret their decision not to become parents (Hintz and Brown, 2020; Lindeman, 2023). Despite widespread support for women to pursue fulfilling lives outside of motherhood, Szekeres, Halperin and Saguy (2023) report finding that motherhood persists as the dominant role for women, with a failure to achieve this role carrying social penalties.

If I am feeling brave - or perhaps foolish – and admit that my *childless*[4] status is due to infertility, I can expect to hear stories of 'miracle babies', unsolicited 'solutions' to my medical condition and urges to never give up trying for a baby. For those childless not by choice, research demonstrates the persistent and prevailing characterisation of the non-motherhood identity as undesirable (Payne, Seenan and van den Akker, 2021; Archetti, 2020). Letherby's (1999; 2002) research highlights that, even if those experiencing infertility and childlessness do not perceive their non-parental status as negative, others labelled them as less than whole, unfulfilled, pitiable, and desperate. In addition, if Ghlionn's views are outdated, why are those of us without children so often portrayed in film and TV as the desperate and bitter infertile women who will steal your baby, the evil child-hating villain who will harm your children or the selfish, cold-hearted career women?[5] It is important to recognise that although the childfree by choice and the involuntarily childless differ in terms of their reproductive choices, these identities are complex and often intertwine with one another (Letherby and Williams, 1999; Connidis and McMullin, 1996). Regardless of one's journey or pathway to non-motherhood, it appears that if the normative identity of parenthood is not achieved, you risk being in possession of an undesirable and

[3] Typically, someone that has made the choice not to have children.
[4] Typically, someone who wishes to have children but cannot.
[5] The Hand That Rocks the Cradle, The Grand High Witch, Cruella de Vil.

deviant identity (Greil, 1991).

Symbolic Annihilation

It is within this context that John Mac Ghlionn[6] can call Swift's reproductive choices into question. Pregnancy rumours have followed Swift for years, seeing her body scrutinised in a seemingly never-ending 'is she/isn't she' debate. In her song "But Daddy I Love Him" Swift calls out this scrutiny, highlighting her listener's speculation with the line 'I'm havin' his baby, No, I'm not, but you should see your faces'. Yet, Swift is not the first celebrity to face public scrutiny around her reproductive status. For years, we watched the public speculation surrounding Jennifer Anniston's reproductive status until, in December 2022, Anniston spoke out about her experience of infertility in an interview with Allure;
'Adding to the personal pain of what she went through was the "narrative that I was just selfish," she says. "I just cared about my career. And God forbid a woman is successful and doesn't have a child."'

In response, childless women stepped forward highlighting how they felt unable to disclose the realities of their childless identities in the face of the stigma and dominant 'miracle baby' narrative that is so commonly repeated (Holmes, 2022). We see reproduction narratives play out time and time again in the public eye, with Lady Gaga recently being forced to deny online speculation that she was pregnant: "Not pregnant - just down bad cryin at the gym" (ladygaga, 2024)[7]. It was Swift who came to Gaga's defence replying to the post: "Can we all agree that it's invasive and irresponsible to comment on a woman's body. Gaga doesn't owe anyone an explanation and neither does any woman" – clearly Ghlionn didn't get the memo.

Jody Day (2023), expanding on the work of 1970s feminist Gaye Tuchman (2000), notes how the media continues to portray negative stereotypes of women without children as a way to symbolically annihilate childless/free women. I would argue that the tabloid's scrutiny of women's reproductive status only serves to contribute to this. If talented, successful women such as Taylor Swift, Lady Gaga and Jennifer Annison are reduced to their reproductive status, what message does this send to women like me?

Reflections

Women's agency has been at the heart of feminism from its inception, but feminism has been guilty of focusing on certain types of women at the exclusion of others (hooks, 2000) and I often question where my experiences as an infertile, childless woman belong in feminist discourses.

[6] And many others, including Harrison Bukter's now infamous commencement speech implying that a woman's life truly starts when she becomes a mother.
[7] 'Gaga quoting 'down bad cryin at the gym' from Taylor Swift's song "Down Bad" from her eleventh album, The Tortured Poets Department (2024).

How much has changed since second-wave feminists campaigned for women's right to choose a path other than motherhood? In the last few years, we have seen the overturning of Roe v. Wade, allowing individual US states to determine their abortion laws and causing a fear that women's reproductive rights are moving backwards, not forwards. In 2022 the UK government implemented the Women's Health Strategy to address issues such as fertility, pregnancy loss, gynaecological conditions, and general health inequalities. Yet we have seen the average wait time for accessing gynaecology services increase, negatively impacting patients' quality of life (RCOG, 2024). To be in a reproductive body in 2024 can feel like a battleground.

I am reminded of Sara Ahmed's words, 'We are moved to become feminists. Perhaps we are moved by something: a sense of injustice' (pg. 3, 2017). My experiences of social stigmatisation during my infertility, IVF and as I begin to live a childfree life have awoken in me a sense of injustice that peaks at times like this, when public discourse proclaims that to live a childless/free life is widely accepted, a narrative that differs starkly to my own lived experiences. However, I no longer feel alone. I am part of a once hidden, but growing more vocal by the day, movement of 'non-mum' feminists pushing back against the enduring and outdated stereotypes around womanhood and motherhood. We are moved to act and react because our lived realities expose that we still have a long way to go in the move towards true acceptance of non-motherhood.

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Menstrual Feminism: Normalizing Menstruation and Education

by Madalyn Mann

"I grew up in a small, predominantly white town in central Illinois with a mediocre health education that has led to an internal struggle with my identity as a person who menstruates. From the moment I got my first period, I have been taught to be ashamed of this natural life cycle. I was told to hide my period products, never mention them in front of men and ignore the excruciating pain. During the COVID pandemic, I came across the company August, owned and co-founded by Asian-American feminist Nadya Okamoto. She started this organization to identify gaps in period care, normalize menstruation and provide access to education and it inspired me to not only educate myself on menstrual health but also to normalize conversations surrounding menstrual health." - Madalyn Mann

-

Thirteen, and flat-chested. Everyone noticed.

But before boobs I had everything.

I beat every boy in every sport.

So I stuffed my bra and begged for boobs...

hoping he would finally see me.

Or at least my boobs.

Everyone else already had theirs.

Wanting to be seen I pretended to bleed, hoping I could just have this too.

I held my stomach tightly, faking my cramps.

I laughed with the others, carrying their pink bags and bragging.

But when I did bleed...

I was finally seen.

He called me gross.

He told me I was dramatic.

He told me not to say “tampon” or “pad” or god forbid “cramps”.

He told me to hide my little pink bag.

He told me I was emotional, irrational, hysterical.

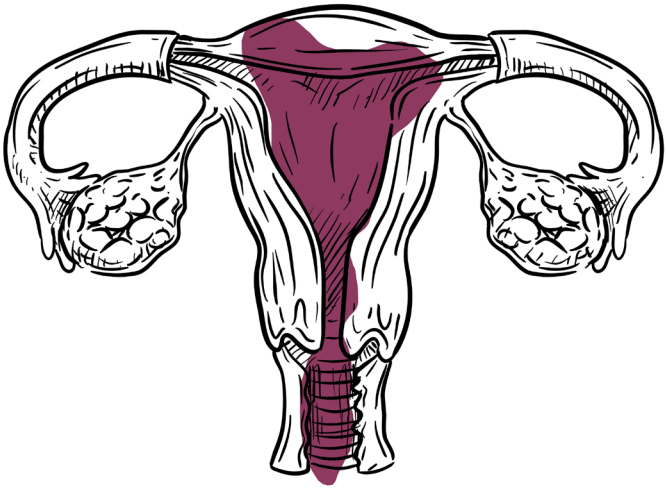
You see, I was thirteen, I had no boobs, and had no idea how to use a tampon.

No one ever told me.

No one ever warned me.

No one ever saw me.

Until boobs.



Breast cancer, photography and the subversion of feminine aesthetics: A study of Jo Spence

by Lizzie Merrill 

Jennifer Nelson wrote that "in the 1960s and early 1970s, feminists generated a women's health movement that shifted the struggle to revolutionize health care to a focus on ending the sex discrimination and gender stereotypes perpetuated in mainstream medical contexts" (2015, 2). As a cause, the women's health movement demanded greater knowledge and freedom over women's bodies, particularly around sexual and reproductive health. From this push towards greater autonomy over health matters, breast cancer activism began to develop as a serious cause for feminist concern. From the invasive methods of treatment for the disease, to the ways that the scarred body was othered and ostracised, health activists, feminist artists and people with experience of breast cancer rallied to change public opinion (King 2006, Pool 2011). One of the primary ways that this was achieved was through photography. From the 1970s to the present day, photography has emerged as a medium for exploring issues of feminist embodiment and this was no different with breast cancer.[1]

One of the pioneering artists in this field was Jo Spence, a feminist, Marxist, documentary photographer who, following a breast cancer diagnosis in 1982, embarked on several projects exploring her health struggle. Her photography from this period is well recognised for its approaches to breast cancer, however I will assert, as with Spence's greater body of work, that her parodying approach to femininity was equally powerful at this time. In Gender Trouble (1990), Judith Butler asserts that "practices of [gender] parody" can reveal the "derived, phantasmatic, and mimetic" nature of gender (200). It is this realisation of the manufactured nature of femininity and female sexuality that I will explore in relation to Spence's work, seeking to express how the artist's subversion of feminine aesthetics allowed her to wrest back power over her condition.

In a simplistic sense, we can see how breast cancer activists may challenge notions of femininity from the Western understanding of hair and breasts as feminine identifiers. Julia Skelly argues that "the objectification of the breast that occurs in Western lived and visual culture causes breasts to function as masks". Further to this she proposes that "hair" is too "accepted as [a] constituent part [sic] of a woman's normative femininity", suggesting that the masks of both hair and breasts can act to erase "identity and individuality". Addressing the major pitfall of this assumption, Skelly writes that "identifying women with or by their hair and breasts is problematic, of course, for those individuals whose bodies do not fit the ideal", however the question remains:

[1] See the work of Jo Spence, Hannah Wilke, Dorothea Lynch, amongst others.

"what happens when [these masks] are lost? How is femininity acted out then?" (Skelly 2007, 3). Skelly goes on to answer this in relation to artist Hannah Wilke's Intra-Venus (1992)[2], suggesting that Wilke's series "highlight[s] the performativity of gender by representing the artist without her 'mask' of hair, engaging in performative acts of exaggerated femininity" (Skelly 2007, 10). The same can appear true in relation to Spence and several of her photographs from the series A Picture of Health (1982), namely an image where Spence adorns a large bike helmet (Figure 1) and presents her lumpectomy scar. Rather than being confronted by the sexualised nature of the nude breast, we are instead confronted by the realities of surgical breast cancer treatment. The breasts as a source of sexual pleasure are now a source of danger and possible death. Butler suggests that it is the impossibility of achieving the perfecting standards of binary gender that reveals the unnaturalness of these rigid categories (1990). Where both Spence and Wilke enact for their cameras typically feminine postures and performances while highlighting markers of their cancers in place of masks of gender, like hair-loss or surgical scars, they reveal the "illusion" of femininity and begin to destabilise it.

Figure 1 (overleaf) was taken the same year that Spence was diagnosed with breast cancer. She had fought to have a lumpectomy (the effects of which are pictured) despite her surgeons' insistence on performing the radical mastectomy. Spence's choice was based on the ineffectiveness of the radical mastectomy in treating her own mother's breast cancer several years prior, as well as her desire to keep her breast (Spence 1995, 131). It is for these reasons that Spence chose to represent her body, post-lumpectomy, and perhaps also why this representation became increasingly confrontational in her photographs. In Figure 1, the artist stands side on, pictured from the waist up, nude except for a biker's helmet. Her arm is raised above her head exposing her lumpectomy scar, in a stance that can be seen as sexually suggestive. However, contradicting any notion of coy suggestion, Spence stares at her viewer, her scar presenting itself directly by the raised position of her arm, alongside her body hair. Spence's bodily positioning is reminiscent of Pablo Picasso's paintings of sex workers, who have been discussed for the subversiveness of their half-hearted engagement with feminine positioning.[3]

> their arms crooked over their heads in an age-old formula for seductive femininity... the woodenness of the women's stances and their faces' masklike stolidity suggest that they know they are party to a tiresome artifice. Like virtually all women, I have engaged in such half-hearted acts of simulation... they seem to me at once to demonstrate and to withdraw from patriarchal stereotypes of femininity, as if in an act of noncooperative cooperation. (Duncan 1989)

[2] Intra-Venus explored Wilke's experiences of lymphoma and the effects of chemotherapy on her body.

[3] See 'Les Demoiselles d'Avignon', 1907.

Figure 1. Jo Spence, A Picture of Health, 1982, @ Jo Spence Memorial Archive, The Image Centre.

This notion of "noncooperative cooperation" is one that we can see clearly from Spence's photograph. Where the nude woman with her arms raised above her head might sound understandably pornographic, it is the "woodenness" and the "stolidity" of the image as well as the way that the biker helmet hides Spence's hair, which makes its feminine and sexually suggestive elements appear a "simulation".

Through this simulation a kind of parodying of the performance of femininity can be seen to take place. In Gender Trouble (2006), Judith Butler suggests that "Practices of parody can serve to reengage and reconsolidate the very distinction between a privileged and naturalised gender configuration and one that appears as derived, phantasmic and mimetic" (200). It is therefore possible to understand Spence's parody of "suggestive femininity" (Duncan 1989) as one that seeks to reveal the derived nature of these kinds of performances, as well as how bodies like Spence's, that are scarred from breast cancer treatments, have been excluded from narratives of normative femininity.

Spence further alters notions of normative femininity through her relation to classical artistic representations of the female body. It is through the use of props, both beads and frames, that Spence's work 'I framed my breast for posterity' (1982) appears to nod to classical depictions of the female nude. Beads are a recognisable symbol of wealth used in renaissance painting, which alongside the very deliberate framing of Spence's nude breast, tie the photograph to classical images. However, with the positioning of the frame over the bandaged breast, the artist addressed representations of her body following her diagnosis. Of this period, Spence said: "As an artist, I had used my own body to make statements about the history of the nude. But that was totally different – the body I had put up on the wall then was not diseased and scarred" (Spence 1995, 213). The introduction and indeed focus on Spence's diseased breast, thus, subverts any sense of classical feminine nudity. We are confronted with a symbol for femininity that has now for Spence become a symbol of her disease. The breast as a source of "nourishment…comfort…[and] desirab[ility]" (Spence 1995, 124-5) is refashioned as a source of danger and possible death.

A further way that 'I framed my breast for posterity' subverts the classical nude is by capturing the reality beyond the frame of the image. Viewing this work, alongside Spence's photograph 'Mammogram' (taken during the procedure) can reveal how Spence challenged and reframed medical control over the female body. When looking at Spence's photograph taken while having a mammogram, her breast is being squeezed between two glass plates while being imaged. This process enacts a similar framing of the breast to 'I framed my breast for posterity', likening the mammographic surgical device to the artists' frame and vice versa. Considering how both photographs allude to the harsh scrutiny of Spence's breast, it can appear that Spence resituates and re-enacts this scrutiny on her own terms. Where in 'Mammogram' Spence extends the frame of the medical image to capture the person that the scan belongs to, in 'I framed my breast for posterity' Spence extends the frame once more. Rather than the focus being solely on where

Figure 2. Jo Spence, I Framed My Breast For Posterity, 1982, @ Jo Spence Memorial Archive, The Image Centre.

the frame or the scanner is placed, Spence makes visible the patient and the person to whom the framed body belongs. This restates that in these two framings of Spence's breast, her body parts are not anonymous or fragmented from herself.

The need to assert identity and individuality can be understood when looking back on the historical objectification of women across both art and medicine. Lynda Nead in Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality (1992) discusses the intense scrutiny that the female body is subjected to as well as how this has been enabled historically:

> Examining the female body internally and externally, medicine and art, anatomy and the life class, offered a thorough surveillance of femininity, regulating the female body through the definition of norms of health and beauty. (Nead 1992, 48)

Nead continues, discussing how historically art students would receive lectures on anatomy similarly to medical students, and how women would not be present as learning participants in either, only as models and subjects. Nead appears to suggest, therefore, that through their absence as active investigators and relegation to the position of object of investigation, art and medicine have failed to engage with women as conscious individuals. Instead, they have been repeatedly imagined as objectified and fragmented bodies.

Figure 3. Jo Spence, Mammogram, 1982-86, @ Jo Spence Memorial Archive, The Image Centre.

However, by framing her breast, Spence enacts her own kind of medical scanning, subverting her position as scrutinised woman. By recreating medicine's focus on her diseased breast before her viewer in 'I framed my breast for posterity', Spence can be understood to create her own kind of mammogram. As the one who holds the frame, Spence is identified as both the body being pictured and the one who controls the image. In doing this, Spence becomes artist, medical scanner, subject and patient all at once. Nead addresses how "feminist art has tried to wrest back power, claiming the right to self-representation" (Nead 1992, 61). For Spence, it appears not just to be self-representation but total control of the medical and artistic encounters that has afforded her return to power. Spence has once again engaged with parody to divorce power from the institutions that impose it.

It therefore appears that parody is Spence's key tool for engaging with political debates around the construction of femininity as well as representation and autonomy. By alluding to aspects of the classical nude in her work, alongside markers of her cancer, Spence has been able to assert the impossibility of hyperbolic femininity, as well as how this kind of femininity is immediately unavailable when one of your breasts is diseased and scarred. Further to this, by refocussing her own images and playing around with framing in her photographs, Spence has challenged how various institutions have fragmented her body, including aspects of her identity. A sense of Spence's empowerment through these methods is clearly identified by Lynda Nead who outlines the importance of feminist art for returning autonomy to visual representations of women (Nead 1992, 61).

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Finding myself in my leukaemia

by Lizzie Merrill

"I am very interested in Jo Spence's method of 'photofantasy', whereby the artist collaged images from her archive to create new scenes. Photofantasy is the name of Spence's primary artistic method from 1991-2. It was entirely different to her usual mode of art-making, which consisted of documentary photography and phototherapy. This method was developed when, following a leukaemia diagnosis, Spence became too unwell to continue engaging in her primary practices. Photofantasy is instead uniquely attuned to the experience of critical illness, for it can be made in conditions of fatigue, lacking mobility and direct from the sick bed. My PhD has focussed on exploring this...

...method with people who have been diagnosed with cancer, in one-to-one workshops, to uncover new expressions of illness experience. The works that I have shared in this issue are ones that I produced within these workshops.

Focussing on my own diagnosis of Acute Myeloid Leukaemia in 2005, the sessions brought up a lot of old memories. I concentrated on trying to express the feelings I have had since being diagnosed in visual terms. Primarily, I tried to explore the distinction between myself and my leukaemia." - Lizzie Merrill


We're
Worried


RESULT!
Jackpot!!
The Ritz-Carlton Doha
the patient's right to choose

Unearthing the Roots: A Foundational Reflection on Cultivate

by Gemma Gibson, Ellie Terry and O'Dessa Monnier

In Spring 2024, Gemma was contacted by the current editors of Cultivate who asked whether she would be interested in writing a piece for this issue commemorating forty years of the Centre for Women's Studies at the University of York. Gemma founded Cultivate along with Ellie Terry and O'Dessa Monnier in 2017 and when she was contacted she knew she could not write a reflection alone. Cultivate was an effort born out of feminist collaboration which would not have been possible without a politically engaged team of associate editors[1] willing to give their time, skills and resources to a new feminist project.

Being postgraduate students at the Centre for Women's Studies in the mid-late 2010s was a specific moment. In real time we were witnessing the emergence of the right-wing populism that makes up the majority of our contemporary government in Spring 2024. Before 2016, the idea that Donald Trump would be president of the United States or that the UK would leave the European Union was unfathomable to us. In the aftershock of both becoming a reality we, as a feminist community, felt a pull and pressure to do something. In our first editorial, we wrote, '[t]he last year has seen a rise in populist politics that threatens our social, cultural and political freedoms'. Being students of feminist studies in a Department where feminist values were prioritised meant that it sometimes felt like we were in a bubble, both protected and sometimes naive to what was happening on the global stage beyond our incubator. What this established community of feminist academics gave us was the knowledge that people were primed and eager to resist living in a society that normalised institutional violence against diverse genders and identities.

Spurred on by our anger and fear, our ambition was to continue with an ethos that prioritised social justice and platformed a wide range of feminist voices within and beyond the academy. We wanted to create a space which invited our contributors to express their thoughts and ideas using a broader range of mediums and formats than is typically found in an academic journal. We were also determined to ensure that those voices were as accessible as possible so we decided not to keep the journal behind a paywall. Therefore, our original mission statement included the phrasing.

> We set out from very specific aims and values: The CWS journal is a student-led, open-access publication interested in the practices, nuances and articulations of feminism. We are based in Europe but open to global

[1] Anaïs Duong-Pedica, Nicole Froio, Imogen Knowelden, Tallulah Lines, Rachele Salvatelli, Katie Smith, Aruna Theraja, Imogen White

> submissions of all kinds of studies related to or about feminism. We accept academic essays as well as cultural commentary and creative work. Both academics and non-academics are encouraged to submit material, in all mediums of art and critical thought, including but not limited to essays, photo essays, poetry, videos, podcasts.

At varying points through our PhDs, we were becoming more aware of how difficult the university landscape can be for early career researchers in the UK. Many people completing MAs and PhDs in the Centre for Women's Studies were producing great feminist work that often was not shared beyond the usual depositories. Publishing in any field can be difficult but in academia, it comes with the often intimidating and mysterious process of peer review. For that reason, we knew we wanted to create a space that would encourage the growth of feminist ideas – even very early on in their careers and journeys. At first, we were having difficulty naming this approach and as a result, naming the journal. In Gemma's office one day, O'Dessa came to her and said 'have we thought about Cultivate?' When shared with the rest of the editorial team, there was an immediate consensus and recognition that this was what our mission should be. On reflection, we now cannot even remember one of the other names we considered and Cultivate stuck. In our original call for submissions, we wrote,

> By definition to cultivate is to acquire or develop a quality or skill, therefore we proudly claim that our contributors are all at different stages of their feminist and activist journeys. With our inaugural edition of Cultivate and our future issues we hope to keep cultivating this feminist space and encourage others to do the same.

For us, Cultivate was the perfect title because it spoke to our desire to develop ourselves as researchers, academics and feminists and the ideas that we were grappling with, particularly against the backdrop of the renewed rise of populism. It also reflected our ambition to create a place where feminist scholars and activists could find a supportive place to share their work and ready it for publication. We prioritised building meaningful relationships with our contributors to foster an environment where constructive and careful feedback was central to our publication process.

Although a project designed around a shared feminist ethos and resistance towards an ever-hostile political environment sounds idyllic, there were, of course, hurdles for us as individuals and as a team. We struggled under the pressure of the neoliberal academy that expects competition in non-competitive endeavours and difficulties that often make organising so complex including competing visions and enthusiasms. We were all new to publishing and working on outputs in this way and each of us made mistakes as we navigated the pressures of the project itself and our own personal and academic lives. Ultimately though, we all agreed that Cultivate was a priority and our commitment to its success and those original aims of collaboration, accessibility and nurturing were never in doubt.

When we were asked to write this piece, we had a look back at the first issue of Cultivate and even now it is clear that our respect for each other and our work was a binding force that made this issue something that we, even six years later, remain incredibly proud of. In an era where employability is seen as the sole raison d'etre for academic study, our desire to resist, create and organise material change meant that Cultivate, for us, was always understood as an extension of our activism.

As we began to consider gathering contributions for our first issue, our activism and our resistance were at the forefront. Coupled with a growing resistance to an increasingly conservative public discourse in the West that sought to 'grab 'em by the pussy' we believed it important to focus our first issue on what felt like a renewed urgency for feminist protest. Although even at the time, we were sceptical that pink pussy hats[2] and cries of 'nevertheless, she persisted'[3] would enable feminist liberation, we recognised the ubiquitousness and mobilising influence of this iconography. Our first issue intended to highlight the potential for different modes of feminist protest. For Issue One, our invitation for submission included the wording,

> Now we ask how we can harness the current political momentum to re-energise existing forms of political activism and cultivate new and radical approaches to old threats re-imagined. How can we unite across borders to tear down walls – physical, political, cultural, and social – faster than they can build them?

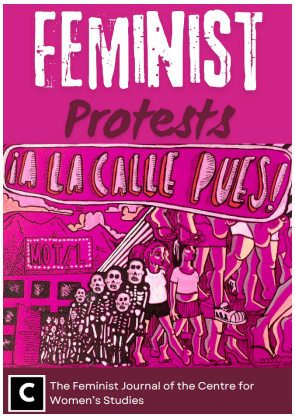
We were then extremely pleased to receive so many thoughtful and creative submissions that spurred us on through the challenges of our first excursion in publishing. We were somewhat unsure what to expect but were so humbled to read pieces that we found so moving and made our tentative peer review and editing process a pleasure.

We are writing this reflection in an era where the issues that brought us together on this project remain prevalent and we each have gone on to continue our resistance in myriad ways. We are so pleased to have been given this opportunity to reflect on the work we started at Cultivate and to revisit the activating submissions of our contributors in issues one and two – despite the sadness we feel at the significant resonance they still hold today. However, we are delighted to see that our intentions for the journal are still alive in many ways and to read about the exciting ways these have been built upon and added to. As the Centre for Women's Studies celebrates its historic 40th anniversary amidst the devaluation of both feminist and academic discourse, we are appreciative that the journal continues to offer a place for subversion and feminist storytelling.

[2] Hand-knitted and primarily worn as a symbol of the 2017 Women's Marches.
[3] A phrase used by now Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell when discussing the silencing and interruption of Senator Elizabeth Warren during a Senate debate on the confirmation of Senator Jeff Sessions as Attorney General.

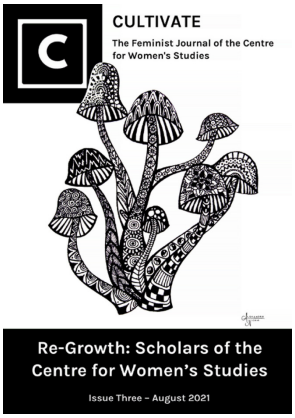
See our past issues

Available at: www.cultivatefeministjournal.com

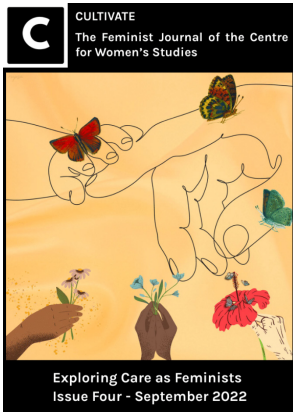


Issue 1: Feminist Protests

Issue 2: Bodies



Issue 3: Re-growth



Issue 4: Care

Issue 5: The Creative Issue

Meet the team behind this issue

Daisy McManaman can trace her childhood introduction to feminism to The Simpsons episode Lisa Vs. Malibu Stacy. It perhaps is no surprise that as an adult she has become a Barbie collector...although not quite on the level of Mr Smithers.

Maddy French is entering her Hedge Witch era. When she's not working on her PhD she can be found tending to her pumpkins and feeding her neighbourhood murder.

Lizzie Merrill can most often be found shrouded in a blanket playing the Sims 4, wondering how many others fell victim to this digital queer awakening.

Charlotte Oakes is a wannabe triathlete who, although identifies as one of those annoying people that actually enjoys running, only relearned how to swim 6 months ago and is slightly (read: definitely) petrified of her bike. She will doing her first triathlon in York in August 2024.

Irene Palencia loves dancing to reggaeton, despite then overthinking the gender stereotypes in every lyric she sings her heart out to.

Esther Baker is a devoted Harry Styles fan, who loves to explore new places, but will always find time for a nap.

Despite spending many years at York, **Emma Colins**' happy place is the countryside - can't beat the peace and quiet!

Madalyn Mann was the 2006 Jr Miss USA Rodeo Queen for her efforts in lassoing sheep.

Since the age of 6, **Xiaoyu Zhang** has been dreaming of living in a world of comics.

Minal Sukumar aspires to be a full-blown cat lady in the near future.

Rhuan Barcellos spends most of his time listening to sad pop songs, rewatching movies, and sending photos of his dog to friends.

Alankrita Anand is usually found writing on her laptop, and then scrolling Instagram to take breaks from the screen.

Alice Myers is happiest laid on a beach getting through her TBR, probably listening to Taylor Swift.

As a big fan of Harry Potter, **Jinni Ren** is lucky that the pronunciation of her Chinese name is the same as the heroine's in English.

Anxos Pérez would say her guilty pleasure is that she watches Twilight every year but doesn't feel guilty at all.

When **Faith Arneaud** remembers she has hobbies outside of her MA degree, she enjoys drawing and painting portraits.

Grace Arber has lived in five different countries but her favourite place in the world is still wherever her dog is.

Yang Wu is a huge introvert who loves having hours-long conversations with friends; she quotes Audre Lorde and Sara Ahmed when writing love letters.

A screenshot from our final meeting on the 2024 Issue

Check out our
Eras of Feminism Playlist
on Spotify


C
cultivate