

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE PRESENTS

w e e k 8 , s e m e s t e r 1 , 2 0 2 0

WOMEN'S H O N I



Reconciling religion,
feminism and the left / p. 6

Abolish the Kafala
System / p. 12

Black Flight / p. 18

CRISES AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Lia Perkins discusses parallel crises.

Since indications of a pandemic lockdown began, mainstream media have reported on the increased risk of domestic violence, running headlines such as “Triple threat: coronavirus, family violence and child sex abuse”, “The coronavirus lockdown has Australia’s domestic violence shelters fearing for migrant women”, and “Coronavirus lockdown results in 75 per cent increase in domestic violence Google searches”.

On March 26th, the World Health Organisation (WHO) released a statement warning governments and the public about an exacerbated risk of violence in the time of COVID-19. Already, one in three women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence by a partner. WHO and the media have identified many factors about why it may be worse: those suffering from domestic violence are stuck inside their homes with their abuser with less freedom and ability to seek help; their support networks have been cut off, there are fewer people present in the community who could bear witness, and people who are financially dependent on their abuser have no ability to leave if they’ve lost their jobs.

This is part of a broader, historical pattern that has seen rates of abuse increase during times of hardship. While statistics are hard to come by, oral histories from the Great Depression in Australia documented by Wendy Lowenstein describe these difficulties. Interviewee Miriam Tonkin describes her home life as, “my father was not only mean, he was violent. We lived in terror of him. Sometimes we were locked out

CARDINAL PELL FACING NEW ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD SEX ABUSE

CW: MENTIONS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Vivienne Guo reports.

Barely a week after being released from prison, new child sexual abuse allegations against Cardinal George Pell have come to light.

Pell was released from prison on April 8, after the High Court of Australia acquitted him of five historic child sex abuse charges, which he had been convicted of in 2018. Pell has always denied any claims of sexual abuse.

The new allegations date back to the 1970s, when Pell was a priest in the Ballarat, Victoria. Pell’s history in this area has previously been under scrutiny; notably, he sat on a committee of priests who made decisions to move notorious pedophile priest Gerald Ridsdale from parish to parish. It is known that the Catholic Church has a long and sullied history of child sex abuse.

A new criminal investigation may hinder the release of redacted sections from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Sections of the report, published in 2017, that pertained to Pell were blanked out due to the criminal proceedings against the cardinal at the time. The unreleased sections also detail the actions of Catholic church authorities in Ballarat, including at the time of Pell’s involvement in the area.

Victoria Police are reportedly yet to approach Cardinal Pell or his legal representatives about the fresh allegation. Pell may also face a number of civil cases in the wake of his appeal.

If you become distressed upon reading this article, or you or someone you know has been a victim of sexual abuse, please reach out for support. NSW Rape Crisis is a 24/7 telephone and online crisis counselling service for anyone in NSW, available at 1800 424 017. Bravehearts Counselling and support for survivors of child sexual abuse can also be reached at 1800 272 831.

CW: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

because of his violence and we slept in the Park.” This is just one of many stories documented by Lowenstein, and countless other stories that have never been shared. Research into the 2007 recession in the United States also reveals a slight increase in domestic violence. By understanding the current crisis within this historical context, the repercussions of the COVID-19 lockdowns are frightening.

Given the incredible risk that people in already vulnerable situations are facing, governments, NGOs and community groups are attempting to help in new and innovative ways. Women’s shelters have been actively sharing and promoting their services, while calling for extra funding and donations. Hotel chain Accor has offered to shelter people fleeing domestic violence. The Victorian Government announced a \$40 million package ‘for additional crisis accommodation and specialist family violence services’ during COVID-19. This is a necessary step, but it is unclear whether other states will follow suit.

On a personal level, maintaining connections is vital so that our physical distancing does not result in social distancing and isolation. Some individuals have posted Facebook statuses similar to the following: “If you’re isolating in a dangerous environment, message me about makeup and ask if I’m still selling it, I’ll know to keep checking up on you. Ask me specifically about my eyeliner and I will call the police for you.”

While the economic and social impacts of COVID-19

WHERE ECOFASCISM AND REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE MEET

Lucy Taylor doesn't think humans are the virus.

The rise of the all-encompassing COVID-19 pandemic has handed us the opportunity to collectively examine and understand ecofascist rhetoric. Suggestions that “humans are the virus” and “the earth is fighting back” feed into myths about overpopulation, rather than placing the onus of responsibility on the unsustainable structures and systems we rely on under late-stage capitalism.

To summarise, ecofascism centres Malthusian theoretical ideals, which contend that exponential population growth is unsustainable and will eventually outstrip Earth’s resources if left unchecked. At its core, this notion of overpopulation suggests that population control measures need to be implemented in order to conserve the environment. The overpopulation myth often posits that countries in the Global South with high birth rates are to blame for unsustainable population growth, failing to recognise that carbon emissions from the Global South are a mere fraction of those produced by the Global North. The idea that humans are collectively bringing about our planet’s demise also ignores the complex and sustainable land management systems developed by Indigenous people around the world. In reality, the wealthiest 10% of the global population are responsible for 50% of global carbon emissions, while the poorest 50% are responsible for 10% of emissions. This cements for us that the overpopulation rhetoric is predicated on racism, colonialism and classism.

Population growth is not unsustainable: the West’s way of life is unsustainable. Unless we realise this, it’s easy to conflate sustainability with the choice not to have children in aim of reducing overpopulation. Here is where the burden falls disproportionately on people with a uterus: we each have to individually consider whether bringing children into the world is the right thing to do amidst the existential threat that is global warming. Ecofascist, anti-natalist rhetoric weaves its way into our consciousness here, causing people to decide that choosing not to have children is the best thing they can do to help fight climate change.

Internalising ecofascist narratives about reproduction is particularly insidious because it speaks to people on the left in a way that other ecofascist arguments fail to. The

have heightened the concerns and risks of domestic violence, it is crucial to remember that domestic violence is a persistent issue. Even prior to the crisis, our prevailing systems failed to eradicate abuse within the home. In 2015, the Australian Federal Government called domestic violence a ‘national emergency’, yet there have not been any substantial results. Therefore, it is important that the current increased media attention on domestic violence is maintained.

Around the world, responses to coronavirus have been successful when they are rapid and focused on education and mutual aid. Crucially, this is also the best way to approach domestic violence. Over the past month, there has been a spike in the googling of community-minded terms such as ‘mutual aid’. COVID-19 has provided us an opportunity to envisage a new world that could radically improve community support and resources for domestic violence survivors.

Given that there is no end in sight for current social distancing measures, it is imperative to continue the conversation about assistance for domestic violence survivors. We must look beyond creating awareness, and shift attention towards complete non-acceptance of any domestic violence and strengthening society’s belief and support of survivors.

If this article has raised concerns for you or someone you know, contact the National Domestic Violence hotline on 1800 Respect (1800 737 732), use their free 24 hour online chat service (<https://www.1800respect.org.au/>) or call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

left is historically the most concerned with mitigating anthropogenic climate change. Thus, choosing not to bear children might help people with uteruses feel like they are doing their bit, as if they were choosing to lower their meat consumption or take public transport. It is so easy to sell the idea of a childless future to ourselves under the guise of progressiveness - without realising that in doing so we are reinforcing sexist norms which regulate bodies that can become pregnant.

Reproductive justice champions the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy: to have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities. When people feel as if the best thing they can do for the planet’s wellbeing is abstain from having children, it exhibits yet another mechanism through which people’s choice on how, when and if they choose to reproduce is limited by the patriarchal structures they reside under.

In the instance that we were to decide that population control measures were necessary, the solution to this would still not lie with antinatalism. The key to lowering birth rates is in the education and empowerment of women on a global scale. When women are given the resources and autonomy to control their own reproductive choices, not only do birth rates lower, but death rates lower too. Access to contraception, sexual health education and safe and legal abortions are necessary steps not only in achieving sustainable population growth, but in providing women, non-binary people and trans men with equal rights, opportunities and independence.

To individually perform population control on our own wombs is to invite ecofascism into our lives. We must remain wary of how perpetuating overpopulation myths by limiting our own reproductive choices might exert normative pressure on others to do the same, and consider how a society that has internalised antinatalist ideals might strip resources for parents and families from its public health policies and campaigns. Thus, our continued pro-choice fight for reproductive justice must also strive for a world in which the choice and ability to have children is not constrained by ecofascist rhetoric.

CW: MENTIONS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT, INDIGENOUS DEATHS IN CUSTODY, DEATH IN OFFSHORE DETENTION

It seems to be every other day that we log onto social media and find ourselves drowning in despair. April 7, 2020 proved to be a devastating day for survivors. Cardinal George Pell, the highest-ranking Catholic official in Australia, walked free after the High Court of Australia (HCA) ruled that the evidence did not establish Pell’s guilt beyond reasonable doubt. The prisons that released the cardinal are the same ones from which we see high numbers of Indigenous deaths in custody. On April 10, refugees in detention across Australia protested their indefinite detentions, a cruel and inhumane policy. Though it is a known fact that COVID-19 spreads like wildfire within tightly packed groups, no concessions have been made for refugees or the incarcerated. The justice system - with its courts, law enforcement and prisons - is cruelest to those that need it most, and it is time that we start questioning the ‘justice’ that it does out.

Cardinal George Pell’s appeal has prompted significant scrutiny and public outrage. This historic case invites us to scrutinise the criminal justice system’s handling of sexual assault cases, and whether it can be considered a legitimate form of justice for survivors.

In 2015, allegations that accused Cardinal George Pell of the sexual abuse of two choirboys surfaced. Years after the alleged abuse, one of the choirboys died of an overdose that has been linked to depression and trauma. The survivor who launched the case has said: “I am a man who came forward for my friend, who, sadly is no longer with us.” From 2015 until now, Pell’s case has moved through the County Court of Victoria, the Court of Appeal of the Supreme Court of Victoria, before finally reaching the High Court of Australia. The five-year-long legal saga has culminated in his acquittal, meaning that Pell will not have a criminal record, nor be registered as a sex offender. Pell’s defence counsel made an appeal to the High Court on the grounds that the Director of Public Prosecutions left witness testimony unchallenged. It is prudent that we acknowledge that in sexual assault cases, witness testimony is often affected by trauma which can warp memory, leaving sexual assault survivors with fragmented recollections of traumatic events. This prompts the question: how can we reasonably expect survivors to provide unblemished accounts of some of the darkest moments of their lives, in the name of ‘justice’?

Pell’s acquittal also calls for consideration of innocent people languishing in our prison systems. Unfortunately, unlike Pell, these are people who do not have the full power and wealth of the Vatican behind them. Pell’s defence counsel fought against his convictions at every level, eventually reaching the highest court in Australia. Realistically, few people have this ability. While the right of appeal is a procedural right, it is not one which is accessible to many, due to the sky-high cost of legal representation and the exhausting process of the legal system.

When discussing classism in the justice system, we must acknowledge that classism and racism are not separate forms of oppression, but ones that sustain each other under the settler-colonial regime that flourishes in ‘quiet’ violence. This fact is glaringly obvious when we situate our system of law and order within Australia’s colonial history; prisons built on stolen land, laws that continue to sanction Stolen Generations even years after Kevin Rudd’s ‘sorry’. It would be a mistake to believe that the racist zeitgeist that declared terra nullius and founded this ‘great nation’ does not persist to this day.

If the justice system served as it has promised us, we would not see the racial profiling of black, Indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC), nor police brutality and intimidation, nor the senseless cycle of Indigenous deaths in custody. Tanya Day was a proud Aboriginal woman who was sleeping on a train when she was shaken awake by police after being assumed to be a drunken, unruly passenger. She died in custody 17 days later, the result of a brain hemorrhage that went unchecked, suffering that was dismissed. Eric Whittaker, who was a proud Gamilaroi man, suffered similarly; after suffering a brain hemorrhage, his repeated calls for help were dismissed by correctional officers. He died shackled to a bed in Westmead Hospital. When such horrific stories exist, we must question our belief in the justice system and see it for what it really is: an instrument of the ongoing ravages of colonial injustice.

It is no coincidence that Indigenous people experience higher rates of poverty and are also disproportionately incarcerated for minor offences. There is also a stark under-representation of BIPOC in law-making bodies. Historically, the justice system was not built to protect BIPOC, but rather to excuse and justify violence and the building of oppressive white-supremacist structures. Such colonial white-supremacist structures exist today, extending beyond the justice system and into all forms of government policy. The tale of Rakib Khan, a 24-year-old refugee who died in offshore detention, is a particularly harrowing one. In May 2016, Khan, a gay man fleeing homophobic persecution in Bangladesh, died on Nauru, two days after he went to the island’s hospital complaining about chest pain. The circumstances around his death are mysterious; the government has blocked access to internal reports that hold information about his death. Information from a whistleblower in the hospital claims that Khan’s condition was not taken seriously, and he was turned away without examination and told to take painkillers. Khan’s mother mourns his death four years later, with unanswered questions about the loss of her youngest son. Increasingly, we are forced to the realisation: this is not justice.

It is hard to hear these stories and not feel despair. The despair can be useful; it means that we find this violence unacceptable. How do we move forward?

The first step is to acknowledge that the justice

system is broken, by which we mean it is working exactly as was intended: to bring everyone but the rich and powerful down. Survivors in sexual assault cases are frequently and thoroughly relegated to collateral damage by the callous processes of the courts. Only one in ten sexual assault cases ever result in a conviction. In questioning our justice system, we must believe survivors.

We must acknowledge that the justice system, and the entire system of law and order, is a part of the overarching colonial project which began with invasion and continues today. Indigenous deaths in custody are a crisis, but it is one that is oft overlooked because it does not directly affect us all. The illegal occupation of this land hypocritically asserts itself in its government-sanctioned abuse of refugees.

Now, the idea of prison abolition now becomes increasingly pertinent, when the system of law and order is, quite frankly, fucked. Thousands of potentially innocent people, many of them BIPOC, languish in prisons with no hope for appeal against a racist and classist justice system. Right now, in the midst of COVID-19, prisons and camps become grounds for the coronavirus to spread like wildfire, with prisoners and refugees as kindling.

Interestingly, feminist prison abolitionists are often met with the question: “What about the rapists?” The answer is simple: they already walk amongst us. Rapists not only live freely amongst us, but often occupy high perches of power, puppeteering justice while everyone else suffers. The justice system only presents the facade of protection, all the while hiding the quiet violence that rages beneath the surface. Peter O’Brien, a criminal lawyer who represented survivors in the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse, wrote for The Guardian: “As a society, we have to ask whether there are other alternatives or a better use of our resources than the present criminal court process. Resources aimed at prevention, assistance in coming forward and healing of victims is a must.” This is exactly the argument made by prison abolitionists. Prisons and justice systems are another form of state-sanctioned violence and thus it is crucial that we, as a society, shift our priorities to assist the healing of survivors first and foremost.

Ultimately, we are a world divided if we do not acknowledge the intersectionality of lived experiences. Being an intersectional feminist means that you are necessarily anti-colonial, anti-capitalist and feminist. Justice cannot be found in courts or prisons. We must look for justice elsewhere, through community care and collective action.

If you become distressed upon reading this article, please don't suffer in silence. Lifeline is a 24 hour hotline for crisis support and suicide prevention and can be reached at 13 11 14. NSW Rape Crisis is a 24/7 hotline and online crisis counselling service for anyone in NSW, available at 1800 424 017.

Vivienne Guo and Ellie Zheng believe the justice system is fucked.

ON A BROKEN JUSTICE SYSTEM

Ellie Stephenson reflects on her experiences reconciling Catholicism and being left wing.

RELIGION, FEMINISM AND THE LEFT

Ernesto Cardenal, my favourite poet and a Nicaraguan revolutionary priest, writes in "Mystical Vision of the Letters FSLN":

*"For a year now from many Managua streets
instead of those letters on the hill we see others:*

*and I many times also recall the child's words with joy.
It was a Sunday at noon with an overcast sky.
And there are days when one asks for a sign.*

*Very intimate solitudes. Like
when Theresa of Lisieux upon her deathbed
would feel doubts about whether God existed.
Then from the car I looked at the large letters on the hill
and from within God spoke to me:*

*"Behold what I did for you,
for your people that is.*

*Behold those letters, and never doubt me, have faith
man of so little faith
You jerk."*

FSLN

The poem refers to the Sandinista revolutionaries' placement of the letters FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front) on a Managua hillside after unseating dictator Anastasio Somoza. Cardenal, whose poetry frequently blends his faith and his revolutionary politics, frames the Sandinista victory as a spiritual experience; he sees the revolution as a revelation of God's love. Cardenal accepts and admits to doubt in God. He does not present the divine as oppressive or predetermined, so much as a force on the side of the people. The 'mystical vision' of the letters on the hill connects both political and spiritual yearnings for liberation.

On March 2nd, I stood on Platform 25 at Central Station, holding back tears. Cardenal had died, aged 95. Why was I so sad about the death of this man, who was old before I was born, who lived in a different hemisphere and lived through times I can hardly imagine?

Cardenal helped me navigate a contradiction that many young, left-wing religious people face: How can religious faith coexist with the strong desire to radically change the world, including the corrupt hierarchies and the conservative teachings of many religions. At some point, when you get feminist enough, when you realise you're queer, when you become an avid science student, the two beliefs become hard to reconcile. I vividly remember sitting in Mass in 2017, fury rising as the priest turned his Fathers' Day homily into a lecture about the ills of equal marriage.

You might ask, then, why don't you just *stop believing*? A fair question; it seems so simple. Why would anyone believe in something they view as so deeply problematic?

This question misses the point. Religion is not just a matter of belief: it's intricately connected with your culture, your family, your sense of self and your worldview. Escaping religion -- while possible and very fair, of course -- isn't necessarily just rejecting deities or religious stories. It can also feel like rejecting rituals that you've grown up with, the beliefs of your grandparents, the religious stories that you have always loved. Beyond that, secular progressivism can feel spiritually devoid. Religion is an escape from a frenzied, consumerist world. The calm you feel in a quiet religious space, the meditative experience of saying prayers (I still say the rosary when I can't sleep), the sense of community provided by shared meals -- these are important experiences and ones that are hard to leave behind. It's unreasonable to demand people abandon these beliefs and traditions; there must be a way for our politics and our faith to not just coexist, but be symbiotic.

For me, my Grandpa has always demonstrated this balancing act. He is a devout Catholic and a devout unionist. He is consummately dedicated to his community, and always has been: a defender of workers' rights; a citizen member of the Wollongong Hospital Board; a routine visitor of the elderly; a staunch protector of local heritage and the environment. This ethos is entirely consistent with his religious belief, the embodiment of Jesus' commandment that "you must love one another" (John 13:34). Care for one's comrades and one's community is a powerful expression of this love; this is also the argument made by Cardenal.

Importantly, left-wing religious movements rarely receive much attention. They are often actively suppressed by religious hierarchies whose power and politics they threaten. Because they are often motivated by state oppression, they are usually marginalised within their own societies, too. Radical expressions of religion are a threat to both conservative religious organisations and conservative societies.

Looking to the Catholic tradition of liberation theology gives me hope and reassurance. Liberation theologians emerged in Latin America, where imperialist American forces, sadistic right-wing dictators and rampant poverty could not help but radicalise priests and other religious thinkers. They were met, too, with resistance from the Church, often being excommunicated or disrobed for their association with Communism. Nonetheless, they compellingly connected socialism and Christianity, thereby fuelling revolutionary politics and activism. They argued that throughout the Bible, there exists a preferential option for the poor, where God, Jesus and various prophets routinely stand against greed, against poverty and with the most vulnerable members of society.

Liberation theology transcends insipid calls for peace (i.e. social order), calling for the radical application of religious teaching against capitalist accumulation and the oppressive state. The revolutionary Colombian priest Camilo Torres Restrepo wrote about *amor eficaz* (effective love), the idea that Christian love for one's neighbour should not be a matter of empty words nor insufficient charity, but rather meaningfully emancipatory. He wrote: "Revolution not only is permitted, but is obligatory for Christians who see in it the only way to achieve the broad outcome: love for all."

Dorothy Day is another figure who encapsulates the blending of left-wing and religious thought. Having rejected and then re-embraced religion, she illustrates the complex relationships many of us have with doubt and faith. She was a suffragette, faced incarceration, and survived an illegal abortion. She founded the Catholic Worker Movement during the Great Depression, organising 'hospitality houses' which distributed free essentials to households according to their needs. The organisation passionately campaigned against war and in support of unions. Day wrote beautifully and prolifically about left-wing causes and ideas.

The fact remains, sadly, that these kinds of movements are the exception, not the rule. The Church is overwhelmingly a conservative institution containing a myriad of abuses and crimes lurking in its history. Many people are undeniably excluded within Catholicism and it has frequently been a reactionary global force, from working with fascists to opposing the provision of contraception. It is also impossible to ignore the role of the Church in justifying and enacting colonialism. Similar criticisms can be made of other religious traditions.

But this is why fighting to change these religions is so important: excluding religious people from left-wing politics is an unviable prospect. Religion can, however, be adapted and moulded in progressive ways; we can reframe religious teachings to be radical.

I recently saw in the excellent Geez magazine a suggestion that the Lord's Prayer could be rephrased, from "forgive us our trespasses" to "forgive us our debts" to represent a shifted approach to property rights and economic wealth. Given that Jesus is a figure who vehemently opposed profiteering, boldly stood in solidarity with sex workers and lepers, subversively mocked Roman military parades on Palm Sunday, and who told rich people they wouldn't get into heaven, I'd argue this is what he would expect.

My favourite podcast, *The Magnificast*, said on a recent episode: "If Christianity does anything, it definitely teaches you how to imagine things that aren't visible. Hoping for things that you can't see... If we want this world to be different, then we're going to have to organise for it". Doing so is now more important than ever.

Blessed is the fruit of thy womb



Art by Ellie Stephenson

women's health in palestine

Kowther Qashou explores the devastating effects of Israel's occupation on the health of Palestinian women.

In the occupied Palestinian Territories, a myriad of crises have unfolded over time as five million Palestinians have been living under Israeli military occupation since 1967. It is a known fact that Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza do not have access to adequate healthcare services and facilities. This, combined with the history of intergenerational violence, as well as socio-economic issues, has impacted their overall health. Unsurprisingly, women are disproportionately affected by this.

Health in conflict zones is often talked about within the context of war, but there is rarely any focus on the structural issues that may underpin them. Living standards in the West Bank and Gaza have been gradually deteriorating since it was first occupied and even more so now. This, coupled with ongoing violence and military occupation with seemingly no end in sight has produced a dire humanitarian crisis which is amplified through Israel's control over electricity, affecting the provision of essential health services, especially in Gaza where two million Palestinians live under siege, 40% of them refugees.

Violence by Israeli forces on Palestinian civilians is placing pressure on Gaza's health system and according to the World Health Organisation, there is "a chronic shortage of medicines and medical equipment" in Gaza. Furthermore, limited self-determination afforded to Palestinians has effectively made it difficult for the Palestinian Authority to provide and fund proper services and infrastructure to Palestinians, often relying on aid from UN organisations such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Two crises inevitably have collided to exacerbate each other in unfortunately preventable ways.

Gender is rarely addressed in discussions about health unless it specifically concerns maternal health, despite the fact that health challenges present themselves differently in men and women. Poor health conditions combined with a lack of access to adequate health services often means that Palestinian women face a number of barriers to optimal health. These barriers include inadequate health education and training, insufficient health infrastructure, combined with fragile political and socio-economic circumstances. The inadequacy of healthcare services and facilities that are available to women leads their overall health to be impacted as a result, and they are more prone to illnesses and diseases.

Within the Palestinian territories, there is an inadequacy in education around health. Whilst many educated women may be knowledgeable about general healthcare, there are often misconceptions surrounding certain women's health issues, such as contraception, due to their stigmatisation and absence of accessible information. A 2019 study conducted by the Palestinian Medical Relief Society found that there was a lack of educational materials for adolescents on sexual and reproductive health. The lack of materials available inevitably means that young women do not have proper access to information regarding sexual and reproductive health which further impacts their physical and general well-being.

When it comes to reproductive health, Palestinian women face complex and intertwined barriers. Living in a society that is ruled by tradition, patriarchy, and conservative norms, it is difficult to advocate for not only funding, but for general access to the many aspects of reproductive health. The issue of accessibility, partnered alongside fragile economic and political circumstances, have rendered reproductive health a lower priority amongst wider Palestinian society.

Access to abortion is quite limited as Palestinian law only permits a woman

to get an abortion if the mother's life is in danger, and even then it must be approved by two physicians, as well as the woman herself and her husband or a guardian. Many women are forced to look to other avenues, such as expensive private Palestinian clinics, Israeli hospitals, or self-induced termination. While Palestinian women in Jerusalem can access Israeli hospitals, and those in the West Bank can access clinics, women in Gaza have virtually no access to abortion services. This is made further difficult, as women who may be seeking an abortion in Gaza would require undergoing a lengthy bureaucratic process in order to obtain an exit permit, which Israel routinely denies.

Israeli-enforced restrictions on mobility have made it difficult for civilians in need of medical care and hospital staff to move freely. Freedom of movement for Palestinian civilians is restricted due to the many military checkpoints throughout the West Bank as well as the blockade placed on Gaza with Palestinians often requiring permits that allow them to leave. This has resulted in decreasing access to postpartum and gynecological care, leading to an increase in women giving birth at home and at military checkpoints.

The exposure to toxins and radioactive materials as a result of weapons, has presented a hazardous environment for the millions of Palestinian who live in Gaza. According to a report by Conscience Organisation for Human Rights published in 2014, babies born with birth defects have risen greatly. This report attributes exposure to these chemicals as a cause of these defects.

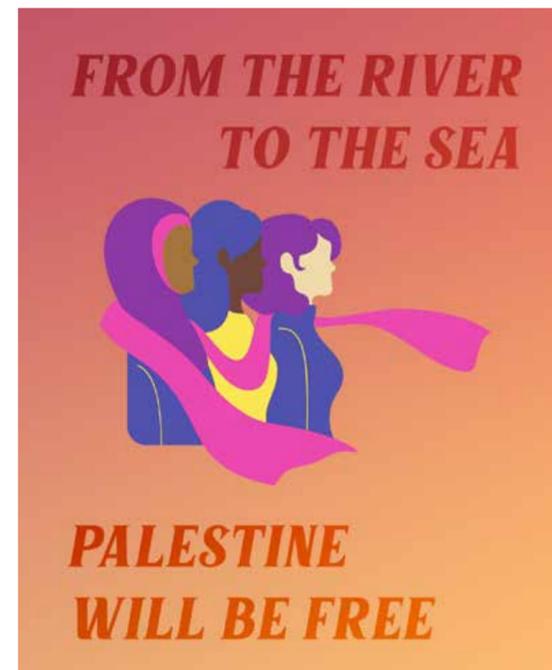
The lack of exit permits provided by Israel means that Palestinian patients cannot seek general treatment in Israeli hospitals. This is similar to the way in which patients from Gaza cannot seek treatment in the West Bank or Jerusalem. Since 2013, there have been increasing restrictions on medical permits justified under the pretext of 'security'. This has resulted in only 54% of applications having been approved in 2017, compared to 92% in 2012.

Aside from regularly calling for an end to both the occupation and the siege, the World Health Organisation, alongside NGOs, Palestinian organisations and the United Nations, have devised strategies and implemented programs in an attempt to solve some of these

crises which have arisen. The Palestinian Medical Relief Society has made several recommendations in order to promote and improve women's health in the Palestinian territories. They recognise that improvement must come from clinics that are decentralised and made easily accessible. Furthermore, there must be an increase in medical supplies, and an increase in women's health education that not only includes training to medical and health professions, but to broader Palestinian society. In understanding issues relating to women's health and what must be done to solve them, it is imperative to contextualise them as solutions cannot be made without taking into account the factors that play a role in exacerbating said problems.

In her book *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?*, Lila Abu-Lughod acknowledges that Western feminists often love to propagate the myth of black and brown women who need to be "saved" from their "own culture," whilst failing to acknowledge some of the structural causes behind the oppression of women, such as war, colonialism and imperialism.

There is no argument that the liberation of Palestinian women is connected to the struggles of women everywhere else. It is, thus, imperative to recognise the circumstances that undermine health in the Palestinian territories, and to advocate for better health infrastructure in order to provide greater access to present and future generations of women. This is why standing in solidarity with Palestine, and calling for an end to Israel's occupation, is integral in the fight for women's rights.



Art by Vivienne Guo



Art by Ellie Stephenson

Yang Wu examines the history of intersectional feminism.

BACK TO THE BEGINNING: REVISITING THE CONCEPT OF INTERSECTIONALITY

I came to Sydney three years ago as an international student and first learnt about the concept of 'intersectionality' in a sociology class. After writing a paper on the topic, I was sure that I had swallowed the whole concept. It was after my friends sent me different links and memes around intersectionality that I knew I was quite wrong. What I learned in that class began to seem 'outdated'; intersectionality as it currently exists and is broadly understood isn't so much an academic concept as it is an element of pop culture.

I was dazed by the numerous representations of intersectionality online. Organisations and individuals use it as a slogan or motto to flag their progressiveness; others take it as a source of 'reverse discrimination', believing it to be an unfair catch-all for lifting up marginalised people. People are divided by being either for or against intersectionality, each side evolving into their own echo chamber. From opinion pieces to activist organisations, many treat intersectionality as being either orthodoxy or heresy, without mentioning one point: what exactly is the 'intersectionality' which is being talked about? I believe that there has never been a better time than now for us to step back and revise the trajectory of intersectionality as a concept; where did it start, and what does it look like today?

'Intersectionality' as a concept was first introduced to the canon by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 as an explanatory framework to examine the nuances of the oppression that African American women face. This concept then became a useful analytical tool for examining power dynamics and oppression in everyday life. Cutting to the present tense, the notion of intersectionality is, in short, that subjectivity, which can be defined as the sum of an individual's identities, motives, and social relations, is constituted of the intersected power implementations of different vectors, including race, class, gender and sexuality. As Crenshaw wrote, '(it) is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects.'

It is no wonder that today intersectionality is so attractive to ordinary people and mass media. It provides a framework of political discourse which simultaneously centres individuals and connects them to the bigger picture. It is a project of inclusion that seems to consider everyone, suitable for any situation's circumstances. I would argue however, that viewing intersectionality in this light misappropriates the core of what Crenshaw was initially proposing. It would be ahistorical to invoke intersectionality without knowing how it has gotten to be where it is today.

Intersectionality finds its roots in the second-wave feminist movement of the 60s and 70s. With these movements seeking to recognise women's experiences in public and academic discussions, the notions of subjectivity and genuine lived experiences gradually became credible sources of knowledge. This was an epistemological revolution as well as signalling a fundamental change in the meaning attributed to women's everyday lives. Women's lives became a site for the cultivation of knowledge – which, under a Foucauldian reading, represents a manifestation of power. As the status of subjectivity became validated as a genuine part of

knowledge production, how it then interacted with other more conventional sources of 'knowledge' (i.e. social reality or social facts) became the new question. Intersectionality was brought up within this context.

Resonating with its activist origins, intersectionality claims the unsettling tension between the self and its social context and emphasis on actions. One's own worldview, standpoint and action patterns are by no means a complete system. They are constantly being changed, both passively, through our interactions with the world around us, and consciously. 'Action' here becomes day-to-day activism, which manifests in the establishing and bonding together of local communities. In this way, these communities construct collective voices and memories, which then go on to strengthen and shape individuals. In the 1990s, feminist epistemology shifted its focus from individual knowers to the perspectives of groups and communities, and their interactions with the various institutions of power.

However, as theories of intersectionality developed, a question emerged: when we talk about ideas like 'the experience of marginalised peoples' and 'African American women's thoughts', who is representing these groups, and who is being denied a voice? Chela Sandoval talks about the 'self-conscious mobility' of Women of Colour. In different settings, we move between and among our different identities, using elements like our varied relationships to race, gender, class and kinship, to make sense of the world we live in, culminating in a unique experience based on the multiple overlapping identities we inhabit.

This pioneering viewpoint widened individuals' agency in the intersectional terrain and also allowed feminists to engage in activism more fluidly and freely. The concept of self-conscious mobility can also be applied to other forms of feminism, like third world feminism and migrant feminism, as the foundation of unifying different marginalised groups. The acceptance and utilising of this concept shows the recognition of each individual's nuanced identities. One has multiple identities, which are the result of simultaneous social relations. Both those identities and relations are also changing in perpetuity.

Reflecting on the history of intersectionality, it is clear that this concept is not only a project of inclusion, but also a new mindset of reflecting differences, categories and everyday life. Surely it does not mean that we have to give up differences in order to unify. Still, it also rejects that we recognise differences as inborn and static, and it denies that we cannot understand and resonate with people unless we share the same skin colour, sexuality or class status. However, this latter interpretation is rarely explored or manifested in practice. Intersectionality, like feminism itself, is a contested field, and also a highly controversial topic. Heated public discussions shroud the concept with a mist of ambivalence. Now is the time for us to take a step back and scrutinise the concept itself, as there are still enormous potentials that we need to explore before 'intersectionality' is worn out as a hashtag.

“Reflecting on the history of intersectionality, it is clear that this concept is not only a project of inclusion, but also a new mindset of reflecting differences, categories and everyday life.”

Art by Ellie Wilson



Madeline Ward explores gender, God and sex in 1990s Heavy Metal

‘CHRISTIAN WOMAN’: THE ALLURE OF THE UNHOLY IN HEAVY METAL

Decades of middle class pearl-clutching would have you believe that heavy metal and feminism are more foe than friend. In reality, they’re entirely compatible — and share a common enemy in, amongst other things, the Church. Their relationship is especially visible in the 1990s, the decade that brought Third Wave Feminism and a new generation of metal artists.

Bracketed by two historical instances of high profile sexual misconduct — the Anita Hill Trial in 1991, and the Clinton-Lewinsky “sex scandal” of 1998, the 1990s were a pivotal moment for feminism. But this extended far beyond the world of American electoral politics.

More women were engaging with heavy metal than ever before. Arch Enemy, Lacuna Coil and Nightwish lead a charge of female-fronted acts that continue to influence the genre today. In the punk scene, Riot Grrls aggressively fought their way to the front of shows, onto line-ups and into history. Women were angry, growing into adulthood through the Reagan era and into an age where things seemed to be getting better but in reality very much weren’t.

Religious violence was by no means a new concern for metal. Reviled by the Church, metal’s flirtations with Satanism and criticisms of organised religion are as fundamental to the history of the genre as Tony Iommi’s sliced off fingertips. Feminists too have toyed with reclamations and perversions of christian history and scripture, from the mythology of Mary Magdalene to the Salem Witch Trials.

Sacrilege and seduction are familiar bedfellows. As the Church exerts its considerable power in controlling our social, sexual, and reproductive freedoms, who can blame us for taking pleasure in blasphemy and desecration?

Though there are certainly metal bands more sacrilegious than Type O Negative, there are none more seductive. It would be incorrect to reduce their back catalogue and legacy to the indisputable fact of their mass sex appeal, but it remains a large part of their allure.

Type O Negative are Mills & Boon for metalheads, Peter Steele the leading man of their gothic romance novel. Tall, menacing and supernaturally handsome, the late frontman commanded the hearts (and loins) of Type O’s enormous female fan base. The band were aware of this, and marketed accordingly: Steele had his teeth filed to points, posed naked for Playgirl, and appeared as a special guest on a Jerry Springer episode about groupies.

Though Steele’s vampiric good looks are fundamental to the mythology of Type O Negative, his lyrical treatment of women is far more interesting.

The dominant sound of 1980s metal was Thrash. The Big Four — Anthrax, Slayer, Metallica and Megadeth, emerged in the mid 80s in direct opposition to Reagan era politics. Metal in this period was still the male-dominated space that it had been since the early ’70s. Though metal is inherently political and frequently left-wing, it is by no means immune to the plague of the patriarchy. Lyrical depictions of sex and sexuality ranged from garden variety misogyny and objectification to violent depictions of rape and sexual violence.

Which is to say that though women had been engaging with Metal as fans and musicians since its origins, it hadn’t welcomed them with open arms.

It’s important to note that Type O Negative is not a feminist band. I would go so far as to say that Type O Negative is an anti-feminist band. Despite this, they continue to garner the affections and loyalty of an enormous female fan base, this writer included. Why?

Though they can’t be called feminist, Type O appear to cater to the female gaze. 1993’s *Bloody Kisses* and 1996’s *October Rust*, the most well known and critically favoured of their back catalogue, are laced with themes of devotion and adoration. Much of their work elevates women as sexual beings to holy, almost biblical figures. For women whose sexual, social, and reproductive freedoms were still limited by the influence of the Catholic Church, such imaginings of their sexuality were incredibly enticing. Besides, Goth was experiencing a cultural renaissance, and Type O Negative were the Goth Metal band.

Type O can also be considered in contrast to the work of their peers. Cannibal Corpse’s 1992 release “I Cum Blood” vividly illustrates an act of Necrophilia. Though Type O’s first album, and the trajectory of Steele’s own career, carried similarly violent themes, they are mostly remembered for their work after *Slow, Deep and Hard*, their first and most overtly misogynistic release.

“Forgive her...for she knows not what she does” are the words breathily uttered by Steele as the introduction to ‘Christian Woman.’ Archetypically Type O, the song is one of the band’s greatest hits. Like everything written by Peter Steele, it’s incredibly horny. Its influences can be traced to the Danzig songs ‘Mother’ and ‘She Rides’, both about sex and Satan and women experiencing sexuality despite Christian morals. Glenn Danzig’s compelling stare and muscled physique paved the way for the aesthetic success of Peter Steele, and both men toed an uneasy line between object and objectifier, sex symbols as much as they were musicians.

In an album laden with camp eroticism, ‘Christian Woman’ is not remarkable for its r-rated content, but for how it reflects a particular intersection of third-wave sexual politics and ’90s pop culture. The Goth renaissance of the 1990s infected all aspects of media, from music to film. Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, the highly erotic Francis Ford Coppola release of 1992, is as much a product of the 1990s concern with female sexuality as ‘Christian Woman’. Though its material power was ever-present, the cultural shadow of the Church seemed to be waning. Vampires were very much in vogue, and the sex positivity that would later be fully realised in shows such as *Sex and The City* was on the rise. What better time to explore women’s sexual expression and repression, and what better medium than Goth?

Bloody Kisses is Type O Negative’s first album to achieve critical acclaim, but *October Rust* was its breakthrough. By the point that *October Rust* had been released, Steele had achieved a potent ménage à trois of 90s pop culture: an appearance on Jerry Springer, a centrefold in *Playgirl*, and the endorsement of Beavis and Butthead. In *October Rust*, the band’s lasting legacy as the sensual lords of Gothic Metal had been realised.

October Rust is the album that defined Peter Steele as the ‘Ultimate Fantasy Goth Boyfriend.’ “Be My Druidess”, the 4th track off the album, is as unabashedly carnal as the greatest of Mills & Boon romance. “I’ll do anything to make you come” intones Steele, in between verses that are little more than romance fantasy sex scenes. This is where Steele’s use of a perversion of the female gaze comes into play — he seemed acutely aware of the fantasies of his female fans and was more than willing to accommodate them.

In the same sense that he was literate in the stylings of Mills & Boon, Steele was unafraid of offense and taboo. He relished in it. The particular taboo that Steele explored in *October Rust*? Menstruation, which he referred to as “unholy water” and a “sanguine addiction”.

‘Wolf Moon’, the song from which these lyrics are taken, encapsulates the ultimate appeal of Type O. It contains the tenderness of ‘Love you to Death’ and the eroticism of ‘Be My Druidess’ in a seven minute ode to period cunnilingus. It also explains the band’s long-standing allure: period shame is an issue that afflicts women to this day. It’s no wonder that women are drawn to this heavy metal Fabio.

However, understanding the appeal of Type O Negative, specifically the way that they appeal to women, does not absolve them of the misogyny that plagues their peers. Type O Negative are as misogynistic as *Cannibal Corpse*. From their first album, which was born of Steele’s desire to kill his girlfriend and then himself, to their name, which is based on the fact that the type O-blood type is untraceable in semen tested as a part of a rape kit, Type O are mired in the same structures of patriarchy that dominate all heavy metal.

I would be surprised to see an academic attempt at conceiving of Type O as feminist or feminist-adjacent, though metal journalism and culture writing on the band often skates on such thin ice. Really, Type O as an individual band is not important: though their influence and relevance can not be overstated, they’re an example of the way that media can co-opt feminist messaging for its own gain. Which is not to say that Type-O did such a thing consciously — for all of their many political flaws, they were honest about being “four dicks from Brooklyn”, a band as firmly rooted in its working class origins as it was in goth and doom metal.

Type O Negative, and others like them, are merely products of the third-wave liberal feminism that arose in the 1990s, that has been used from Type O to *Twilight* to obscure the thrum of misogyny that underscores all media. This doesn’t mean that such things can’t be enjoyed, but that as feminists we should be constantly critical of the media that we consume.

Their feminist ideology may leave much to be desired, but their function as a guilty pleasure? Very satisfying, indeed.

When I think of Gothic literature, I think of Edgar Allen Poe’s words, “The boundaries which divide Life from Death are at best shadowy and vague. Who shall say where the one ends and where the other begins?”

There is something about vividly unsettling images that has always tickled my analytical bone, and Carmilla (1872) by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, a vampire novella written decades before Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, did just that. The lesbian vampire narrative not only appealed to the interests of my 2014 Tumblr-user self, but it also made me question the perception of female sexuality and desire in Gothic literature.

Intimacy is often depicted as fearful and terrifying in Gothic narratives due to the grotesque and supernatural storylines. However, the desirable relationship between vampire Carmilla and mortal Laura in this novella doesn’t just contain bouts of pain and intoxication but also points towards other, gentler directions in the depiction of lesbian intimacy. The text hints towards a broader question of whether the characters’ desire is an alternative in the absence of heterosexual romantic satisfaction.

The novella focuses on Laura’s lack of social connections, as she lives a life of modest comfort in a ‘lonely and primitive’ place. Laura’s identity is restricted to the first few pages where she talks about her family, but not her individuality, which demonstrates how women are expected to see themselves as dependent on others. The limited insight into Laura’s character not only points towards social alienation, but her lack of opportunities for heterosexual intimacy which would typically determine a woman’s life. Laura’s social depravity lies in the Victorian social structure, where a man was seen as the benefactor of a woman. Elements of romantic exploration and identity building through socialising are missing in her rural upbringing. Before Carmilla enters her life, we see her downtrodden, solemn outlook:

I was not frightened, for I was one of those happy children who are studiously kept in ignorance of ghost stories, of fairy tales, and of all such lore as makes us cover up our heads when the door cracks suddenly, or the flicker of an expiring candle makes the shadow of a bedpost dance upon the wall, nearer to our faces. I was vexed and insulted at finding myself, as I conceived, neglected, and I began to whimper. (6)

However, the entry of Carmilla soothes her and she looks at her with “a kind of pleased wonder” (6). The novella artistically frames lesbian romance as a much needed alternative; an escape from Laura’s adolescent wait for a heterosexual connection. Even the pains of physicality with the vampire are shown to be emotionally satisfying rather than obnoxious.

Another factor which shows that their desire is not fearful and terrifying, is the normalcy that Laura shows towards Carmilla in their interactions, despite her being a supernatural creature. Tales of vampirism revolve around a narrative of the contaminating vampire and its innocent victim. However, in this novella, the perceived predator is normalized and romanticized by the victim as a viable alternative to the drudgeries of a heterosexual life path. Laura associates pleasant things like languidness and beauty with the vampire, she says, “There was nothing in her appearance to indicate an invalid” (33). The use

of words like ‘invalid’ shows a further blurring of the boundaries, where although Carmilla is an outsider, her movements are completely acceptable to Laura. Their connection organically blooms and is an exciting intervention in Laura’s traditional life. The novella also depicts the clashes of interest that are also seen in mainstream heterosexual romances, like Carmilla’s disbelief in God. Her contrast to Laura’s religiousness is startling, but not a frightening, horrendous opinion that disturbs Laura enough to change her feelings. We see a sense of comfort and mingling of the opposing lovers both physically and emotionally, where neither one of them harmfully overpower the other. The lack of dominance of one lover in this relationship despite Carmilla being a vampire is presented as an alternative to heterosexual connections in this novella, charting a growth of affection into passion.

Carmilla and Laura’s relationship is a tale of equal interest fuelled by ardour and affinity. The diminishing of vampiric and human boundaries arises when we see how Carmilla’s desire for Laura is equally or even further reciprocated. There is no contaminating one-sided chasing in this romance unlike in a typical heterosexual love story where the man courts the woman, which would make the vampire story grotesque and fearful. Laura admits that she feels there is a “love growing into adoration” (37) and that her curiosity towards Carmilla is a “restless and unscrupulous passion” (34). The story invigorates a building tale of equal desire, a perceived comfort from Laura’s end too as they hold hands, kiss, and Laura calls Carmilla romantic. Their desire is idiosyncratically that of equal interest, which is quite different to heterosexual love practices, demonstrating how women are capable of strong feelings of desire too, which challenges traditional patriarchal ideas. There is an absence of any romantic endeavours from a man towards Laura, but she does suspect that Carmilla is a male interference.

What if a boyish lover had found his way into the house and sought to pursue his paramour in masquerade with the assistance of a clever old adventuress? (38)

She rejects this by saying that she cannot boast of any “masculine attentions” (38). There is a conscious lack of male attention and a pointed removal of male intervention through their relationship. Their romance is not fearful, but a way of fulfilling desire in Laura’s rural and social terrain. The presence of the supernatural in the narrative is used to transgress the patriarchal boundaries of our reality to portray female sexual and emotional passions in new and powerful ways.

Le Fanu’s novella was one of the first to talk about lesbianism in way that was complex and passionate, and can be considered revolutionary if we think about the appropriateness of literature to its time. When I read this text, I wondered whether or not it should be deemed as feminist literature, or just a text with some forward-thinking undertones in its depiction of female desire under the guise of the supernatural. Such a presentation of lesbianism made me speculate whether we can placidly take in unconventional love stories of other texts at face value. Carmilla unravelled a new dimension of Gothic literature for me because includes softness and comfort even in an unsettling storyline; its blurring of boundaries is indeed a small act of radical revelation.



defanging the lesbian vampire tale

Misbah Ansari on Le Fanu’s Carmilla, vampires and supernatural lesbian romance.



ABOLISH THE KAFALA SYSTEM

Words by Layla Mkhayber

In memory of Faustina Tay

CORONA IS NOT THE VIRUS, THE KAFALA SYSTEM IS

This year on the 8th of March, International Women's Day, I watched on social media as people in Lebanon took to the streets of Beirut to demand equality. I listened to women cry out that *حق المرأة بالجنسية* and that *حق المرأة بالحضانة*. Citizenship and custody rights have been the target of feminist protests in Lebanon for years, but more recently there has been a trend towards focusing on workers rights. It is a known truth that equal pay for women, in regards to that of their male counterparts, is a ubiquitous liberal feminist demand. In Lebanon, workers rights are a feminist issue for reasons that surpass equal hourly rates. This is because, at the heart of the exploitation of workers in Lebanon (and more broadly, the Arab world), are issues of race and poverty that manifest in the deeply hidden and exploitative Kafala system.

WHAT IS THE KAFALA SYSTEM?

Within the Arab world, Kafala looks like a worker sponsorship system. Migrant domestic workers are hired as temporary 'guest' workers, and are dependent on local sponsors for their housing and work permits. Typically, the sponsor serves as the worker's legal guarantor and sole employer, as such, the worker cannot change employers without the sponsor's consent. This also means that the sponsor has the power to send the worker back to their country of origin at any given point in time. Within the administrative framework of the sponsorship system, workers are effectively bound to their employers for the terms of their service. As a whole, it appears that the system, which has been described as a modern day form of slavery, oppresses in insidious ways. This is because the oversight of migrant worker rights has been extricated from labor ministries and diverted into the unregulated hands of private citizens.

On discussing labour migration, attention is often focused on people from the Global South moving to the Global North for work. Much of the literature on said labour migration does not reflect the fact that considerably more people move within so-called 'less developed' areas. Within the Global South, the Middle East ranks as one of the top destinations for labour migrants, and in 2005 the UN estimated that one in every ten international migrants in the world was in the Arab region. Amnesty International also notes that a large majority of migrant workers under the Kafala system are women.

Supporters of the Kafala System have claimed that sponsorship exists in order to monitor migrant workers. This is despite a reality which indicates that the majority of workers are placed in high intensity blue-collar labour jobs in the construction and domestic fields.

WHERE DOES THE WORD 'KAFALA' ORIGINATE?

ETYMOLOGY

The term Kafala has a wide semantic scope in Arabic. Within the Arabic language, most words are derived from three or four letter root words, which can assist in defining more complex words. In the context of Kafala, a definition has actually been imperative to understanding the way the system operates. Arabic words have different forms depending on context, and the root for Kafala, *kāf - fā - lām* (كفل), means to feed, support, vouch for or warrant. Thus the literal definition of Kafala can refer to bail, guaranty, security or sponsorship (Wehr, 1994).

RELIGION

The Islamic definition of Kafala is of vital importance to understanding the ways in which religious governance is used by governments to mask and protect the system. In her thesis "Exporting Subservience: Sri Lankan Women's Migration for Domestic Work in Jordan", Elizabeth Frantz says that in the Islamic tradition, Kafala has social, moral and business dimensions. Within Sharia relating to the Muslim family, Kafala refers to the formal agreement of providing temporary support for orphaned children until they become adults. This support has been compared to adoption, but has sparked interest within adoption discourse as the support until adulthood does not allow for inheritance rights. Islamic scholars understand it to be a form of legal guardianship rather than adoption (Frantz, 2011).

Similarly, in "The Islamic Principle of Kafala as Applied to Migrant Workers: Traditional Continuity and Reform", authors Ray Jureidini and Said Fares Hassan have tried to analyse and make sense of the relationship between religion and the modern Kafala system. Jureidini and Hassan discuss the way Muslim scholars have, in more recent times, extended the meaning of Kafala to a business contract where someone formally guarantees somebody else in terms of delivering goods or carrying financial responsibilities. This leads into the more general discussion that Kafala was intended to provide a framework of social solidarity based on trust and cooperation among people in various realms of their interactions.

The most highly critiqued issues of the contemporary Kafala have indeed centered around the power, control and exploitation of the sponsor over foreign employees as well as business establishments. The criticisms have primarily been based on international human and labour rights law and conventions. It is in this sense that the new Kafala may seem to violate a key traditional Islamic condition and may be seen more as a business-oriented system rather than one of trust and protection. Yet despite this, the Kafala system lives on, thriving in countries that use the word of God as the law.



GEOPOLITICS: WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE AND TO WHAT EXTENT?

In the rare news reporting that has occurred on the Kafala system, it is evident that wealth is central to the survival of the system. Though this does not mean a lot in and of itself — considering that most migrant workers would anyway be impoverished and desperately taking part in sponsorship in a hope to give themselves or their families a better life— it is evident that even within the Global South there are disparities. According to Migrant Rights, a Gulf Cooperation Council based advocacy organization that aims to advance the rights of migrant workers, the Kafala system governs labor migration in all GCC countries, such as Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, as well as for most workers in Lebanon and Jordan.

Research and personal stories clearly reveal that Kafala is a system of control. There are not many ways that Kafala is regulated, despite the system being overseen by each country's Ministry of Interior. The ministry in each partaking country not only oversees it, but enforces it as the system that regulates labour migration. Furthermore,



in the Arab world, a workers' immigration status is treated primarily as a security issue rather than a labor issue. On account of this, it is evident that there is no real reason for governments to oversee justice and be accountable for the exploitation of migrants.

RACIAL DIMENSIONS

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has reported that a majority of the migrants that travel for sponsorship work in the Arab world hail from South/Southeast Asia or Africa. This information alone is indicative of the complex racial dynamics behind the exploitative sponsorship system. In Lebanon, it is commonplace for maids, regardless of their ethnicity to be nicknamed, *سرلنكيين*, "Sri Lankayeen". The word, literally translates to "Sri Lankans", and this, partnered along with colourism and stereotyping, is a prime example of the way the Kafala system has a long history that not only exploits migrant workers, but targets specific communities.

SAY HER NAME: FAUSTINA TAY

On the 14th of March 2020, six days after International Women's Day, 23-year-old Ghanain domestic worker, Faustina Tay died in the southern suburbs of Beirut. I remember scrolling through social media, seeing This Is Lebanon demanding an inquiry into Faustina's sudden death. This is Lebanon (TIL), is a project and advocacy group run by a coalition of former domestic workers and activists demanding the protection of migrant domestic workers, and an end to labour exploitation and abuse, with the aim to effectively end government-sanctioned, modern-day slavery in Lebanon.

Faustina Tay had worked for Mona Nasrallah and Hussein Dia for 10 months before her death. Police reports initially concluded that Tay's death was a suicide, with no serious investigation involved. TIL was in contact with Tay between the 6th and 13th March trying to protect her from abuse, and assist her in obtaining her promised salary which had been withheld from her during her time at the Dia household. Over 40 minutes of chilling messages were accumulated by TIL and Tay's brother in Ghana, along with several text messages that recounted the continual abuse she faced at the hands of her sponsors.

In the days following her death, Al Jazeera shared her story, which then began to rapidly circulate. Her story has been seen far and wide, including, quite notably by supermodel Naomi Campbell on Instagram. People said her name enough times that a new high-level investigation is being carried out.

Faustina Tay's story is unfortunately not unlike many other stories. Her shaken voice

has been engraved into my mind, and as I write this, I close my eyes and can hear her say "...he said he sees me as an animal. He can do anything to me. No one will hold him responsible."

The exploitation of migrant workers escalates when that worker is a woman. All of a sudden, she is not only a disposable worker, but another target for sexual harassment and assault. Testimonial evidence from Faustina Tay to TIL exposes how her sponsor Hussein Dia, and his 23 year old son, Ali Dia, were both sexual predators.

Following her death, Hussein Dia told Al Jazeera that he "...never laid a hand on her," and also told the police that his family were God-fearing people and never harmed Faustina. They claimed to be completely unaware as to why their domestic worker would commit suicide. Furthermore, the report from the coroner declared that there were no marks of physical aggression or violence on her body and the only visible injury was a bruised scalp "caused by falling from a high place."

This is all despite the aforementioned text and voice messages to her brother and TIL where Faustina herself complained of pains and aches all over her body from brutal beatings she had received earlier, on the 12th of March. With photos of her bruising and wounds fresh two days before her death, it is evident that there are discrepancies with the facts, as well as the released police report and coroner's examination.

Faustina Tay desperately tried to flee her situation. She had, time and time again, requested her pay, and even requested to be sent back to Ghana with no pay, but the Dia family refused and instead asked her to pay \$2000 if she wanted her passport.

In some, but by no means rare cases, migrant workers turn to suicide to escape the severeness of their reality. However in this instance, TIL and Faustina's family have rejected the notion that her death was a suicide and call on the Lebanese government to bring the perpetrators to justice.

According to Amnesty International, within the five million population of Lebanon there are currently 250,000 registered migrant workers. Amongst these workers, a large majority of them are women, who are often deprived of pay, basic rights and freedom. They are often emotionally, physically, financially and sexually abused by their sponsors, and do not have the resources to leave. These women, already at great risk, are now at even greater risk of being abused while Lebanon is under lockdown to control the infection rate of COVID-19.

A month and a half on from International Women's Day, and a month from Faustina Tay's death, it is critical that the voices of migrant workers are elevated and made central in the feminist cause. No more Kafala. Not another Faustina. Say her name.

Ranuka Tandan explores the difficulty in reconciling the necessity of liberation movements with the violence that often characterises them.

WOMEN IN THE NEPALESE MAOIST MOVEMENT

My father's Hajurabubā (grandfather) was born in Gulmi District, in the mountains of Nepal. When my Hajurabubā was about eight years old, his father moved their young family down to Koilapani, which lies in the terai of Nepal near the Indian border. My family have lived there ever since. At that time, nobody else would live there, because the area was troubled by malaria and cholera, and the thick jungle which covered it was filled with dangerous wildlife like tigers and rhinos. The area of land that my father's Hajurabubā owned at that time was so large that now, over 8 000 families live on it.

My Hajurabubā eventually married and had four children, my father being the eldest and only boy. My Hajurabubā spent about 14 years in the Gurkha Army in India, returning home only every one-two years. When his father died, the land was divided between all the brothers and sisters. Workers came from other rural areas to help farm the land, and he leased it to them.

Very much concordant with communist ideology, Maoist thought strongly supports that whoever farms the land owns it. In 2002, a group of Maoist insurgents came to my Hajurabubā's house to force him to sign over the land that had been his family's for more than 60 years. 15 men entered with guns and knives. They locked my Hajura'amā and aunties in other rooms in the house, and they hammered Hajurabubā's toes and shins, tortured him, and before leaving, cut off his left arm. He spent two months in hospital in Kathmandu and nearly lost his life. My Hajurabubā died four years ago now, but following the attack by the Maoists, he always suffered much pain in his arm, and he never felt safe in his home again.

Many families had been living on our family's land for generations. When my Hajurabubā died, my father distributed it among them, giving them the paper to confirm that the land was finally, theirs. Now, our family owns a few small areas of land that they use to grow rice and live on.

This story strikes something deep within me; it's painful to think about. The suffering that occurred is unjust, and it can be argued, for what? But I understand this movement. This ideology, their demands. I understand why huge numbers of people, especially women and Janjati (Indigenous) peoples, joined. Why wouldn't you strike against the higher castes? The landowners, the tax collectors. Of course you would.

By 2006, 70% of the Nepalese countryside was under Maoist control and 13 000 people had been killed in connection with the uprising and state efforts to suppress it. Thousands became internal refugees, with people fleeing to the city in order to escape the brutality that had become far too common.

This war became known as 'the people's war' and it flung the country into complete tumult for 10 years. The main objective was to abolish the feudal monarchy and to establish a new democratic republic, but the Maoists also had a strong agenda of emancipation for lower caste, rural and oppressed peoples across Nepal, including women. In Nepal, a woman's position is contingent on her male family members—her father, her husband, her brothers. The past decade has seen significant shifts in the legal system, and the conceptualisation of what a woman's role should be has slowly evolved; however, the inheritance system, patriarchal descent and marital tradition still play an enormous part in informing attitudes and restricting opportunities. It's not surprising then, that when Maoist demands included "patriarchal exploitation and discrimination against women should be stopped, girls should be allowed to access paternal property as their brothers," that this ideology spoke to women, who joined the movement in the thousands. When Maoists came to rural villages asking for one child from each family to join the resistance, parents would often choose to send a daughter, rather than a son. Daughters were seen as more expendable, and often weren't being educated as their brothers were anyway.

However, this war emancipated the women who served in it in a number of ways. Women made up a third of all foot soldiers in Maoist strongholds. They were not only able to perform similar tasks to men, but also occupied positions of leadership, actively participated in village defence groups and many were educated to a higher level than they would have been otherwise.

In a country like Nepal, this was totally revolutionary. The importance of women's emancipation, and especially that of rural women, is hard to overstate. There has been much research concerning the high rates of women joining revolutionary movements across the world, but Nepal is a particularly interesting case, because the intersections between development, education and politicisation are not clear cut when you dig into it. There are two main theories for why rural women in Nepal supported and played an active role in the Maoist insurrection, but neither one of them are without faults and inconsistencies.

One argument—the 'failed development' hypothesis—asserts that women's

willingness to join the Maoist movement came from a discontent with the government, and specifically, a discontent with their failure to successfully provide essential services in rural areas; adequate education and aid being the central, most important ones. What this model fails to take into account is the fact that many of the women who took up arms actually did so because of successful development programs in their areas which empowered them through education, and raised their gender and class consciousnesses.

To contrast it then, a 'conscientisation' model acknowledges that girls were politicised through school, and asserts that this method of radicalisation was one of the primary reasons that revolutionary politics gained ground at this period of history, rather than a decade prior, when education, especially for women, was not widespread. Interviews done with female ex-combatants after the peace process was finalised showed the sense of empowerment that these Maoist women felt in being able to escape from the traditional gendered roles which they had come to expect from their lives. "Mahila sasahktikaran" (women's empowerment), "awash uthaunne" (where they could raise their voices), "mahilako awaj ko pratinidithyo" (women's voices were represented) and "mahila ko dukka bhujinne" (understanding women's grief) were phrases which continually came up in conversations with the interviewees.

Many of us are torn between wanting a revolution that evens the playing field—between worker and landowner, men and women—and being opposed to the violence that must inevitably come with it. The Maoist insurgency in Nepal is just one example of how these kinds of wars often take on a ruthless nature. Much like the violence that my Hajurabubā suffered, gendered forms of violence, like sexual assault, were common in the revolution – perpetrated both by government forces, and by the Maoists. Nobody is without responsibility, or accountability in these wars, including the women who fight in them.

Rama S. Lohani-Chase writes, "the question arises about the limits of empowerment in the transnational biopolitics of human labour and capital and whether women's embodiment of traditional militarism or militancy will change the larger patriarchal military-industrial complex or keep women hostage to it." Although women are still hostage to it in many ways, the benefits which came from joining the insurgency cannot be disregarded. The benefits that these women received—more visible and immediate perhaps, than system changing—may well have overpowered the knowledge that they were helping to replace one failed, patriarchal system with another. This does not mean however, that it wasn't powerful, that there were no wins, or that when peace finally came, that all women simply returned to playing the roles they were before. The sense of pride I feel when I think about rural Nepalese women standing up in arms against the feudal patriarchy doesn't take away the pain I feel when I think about what happened to my Hajurabubā – but it gives me a glimmer of courage that things can be better.



Art by
Claire Ollivain

(words by anonymous)

< 1 2

CW: DISCUSSION OF PEDOPHILIA, SEXUAL ASSAULT

I was eight years old when my uncle said to me, "Come here, sit on my lap." We were alone in my bedroom, white curtains drawn so that I could see the empty night sky from my window. I thought it was weird, briefly, because my mother told me I was too old to do things like sit on her lap and be carried around. But I didn't question it much, and I was sick of all my teachers telling me that third grade was the 'donkey's bridge' where everything starts getting serious, so I sat on his lap.

It was then that I felt something hard press against me. I wish I hadn't asked what it was. Maybe if I hadn't, I wouldn't have had to look at it and touch it. Again. And again. And again.

Afterwards, everything made me flinch. It didn't matter where I was, or who I was with. I visited my father overseas and jerked every time he tried to hug me. My volleyball coach tried to show me how to execute an upper-hand serve and I snatched my hand away and dropped the ball. My left-handed fifth grade deskmate accidentally touched me and I instinctively elbowed him. I don't know when I realised that the assault affected my everyday life in such a way, but I remember repressing it. I could go weeks or months without thinking about it sometimes. But it always came back.

A little while after it stopped, something horrific occurred to me: I had gotten too old to be a target. But this did not bring any kind of relief, only a new kind of terror. Who was next? I had younger female cousins, but none of them had any contact with him. He was married to my auntie and they had two sons, but what if they ever had a daughter? He had another niece who was four years younger than me. Would he turn to her? What could I do?

Nothing. I could do nothing but write about it in my diary. I would leave it open on my desk hoping someone would read it. And then my grandmother did. She went to my aunt, instead of my mother, and my aunt called me and asked me if it was her husband. She didn't talk to me for months after I told her that it was. It has been eight years, and she has never mentioned it. She had another child with him, a daughter.

In the years since, I've come to realise that I feel a twisted need for male validation despite the horrors of years past. I used to think that if I kissed boys and did other sexual things, I could reclaim my body and finally let go. Move on. I thought that choosing it gave me agency, but all I ever felt afterward was earthworms crawling all over me and dirt in my lungs. Maybe if I try again, I told myself, it will be different. So I got drunk and let the alcohol take over my body and make me do things, hoping that the liquor would take away the memories and make me 'whole' again, like working out an injured muscle. But the memories came back every time.

I met my first—and only—boyfriend when I was sixteen. I was so excited, even though I knew I was using him to rewrite an unchangeable history. But I didn't care as long as it worked. The first time he kissed me, I didn't want to throw up, and for a while, everything was fine. And then one day he came up behind me and put his arms around my waist, and something hard pressed against me. Suddenly, I was eight and nine and ten and eleven years old again; I was in my bedroom, baby pink walls closing around me, I was in a bathroom, pushed up against cold tiles and trying not to cry. I was every moment I had repressed, every moment I had felt powerless in my life.

I went to my best friend's house after school that day. "It's ridiculous they made you go to school on a Saturday," she said through a mouthful of mango ice cream. "I want to break up with my boyfriend," I replied.

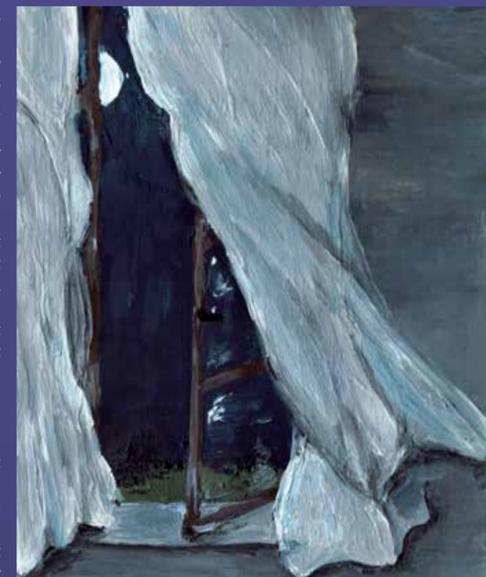
When I was seventeen, I entered into a self-imposed dry spell that has lasted to this day. I realised that choosing a situation did not give me power over it, and didn't necessarily make me safer. The only thing I felt when a man touched me was nausea, like I was choking. So I stayed away from men, from any sort of physical intimacy, stayed in my head where the only people who touched me were respectful, asked for consent, and bore the faces of my favourite fictional men. I've begun to wonder if I am asexual, because the idea of sexual activity repulses me so thoroughly. Yet, I still yearn for love.

I have had a hard time separating my self-worth from my sexuality and physical appearance. If body-hugging red jumpsuits and low-cut pink sweaters were all that anyone ever saw, how could

I be liked for anything else? When I gained weight, when I stopped wearing revealing clothing, when I stopped trying to call attention to myself, the compliments stopped. It was a difficult thing to navigate; because I did not want to be looked at or touched, but I did not want to be ignored either.

I have spent what feels like many lifetimes just struggling. I have taught myself over and over again that I am worth more and deserve more. I am worth more than this sickening experience. I deserve more than people who can't see past what my bra size is. I deserve more than the fear I am forced to endure at the prospect of physical intimacy. I deserve more than feeling uncomfortable in my own body. And sometimes, I am okay; I go on dates, and hug my father, and rest my head on a male friend's shoulder.

But I am still hiding. Hiding from him, hiding from my memories, hiding from everything horrible that has stemmed from it and irrevocably changed the way I live my life. I hate that I think I will never trust anyone enough to let them be physically intimate with me. I hate that I will never want to bring a child into this world with so much pain. But most of all, I hate that there are some things that are forever tainted.



Art by Nicole Dallis

giving birth under covid-19

Becky Barlow believes that forcing women to give birth alone during lockdown is dangerous and regressive.

While the world anxiously watches on, news of COVID-19 saturates television networks and media outlets. We are told to stay isolated at home to avoid the risk of infection. But one forgotten group of society, whose members cannot simply stay at home, face an increased risk of physical and mental illness: pregnant people.

Australia has a history of poor and misinformed treatment of pregnant people. Up until the 1970s, Australian hospitals would isolate and sedate people because it was thought that they couldn't cope with the emotional and physical burden of childbirth. In the late 20th century, pregnancy was even categorised as a medical illness.

As the normative experience of childbirth shifted from being a reproductive activity located in the home to a medical activity located in a hospital, those pregnant were increasingly thought of as 'guests' and were expected to cooperate with the 'house rules' of the hospital. The period between 1920 and 1970 was known as the 'golden age' of the medical dominance of pregnant people in Anglo-American societies, during which the medical profession enjoyed full state support largely at the expense of women's autonomy and wellbeing.

Since then, Australia's modernised health-care services have been increasingly concerned with delivering a positive childbirth experience in line with the World Health Organization's (WHO's) guidelines. The WHO has emphasized the importance of improving patient-centered outcomes, acknowledging that the process of childbirth requires continued care and support of the birthing person. There are typically two or three non-medical support people present during labour and delivery. However, the current risk of parents, babies or medical staff contracting COVID-19 has made access to this level of support unattainable for birthing patients.

Since the outbreak of pandemic-induced panic, the childbirth norm of hospital delivery has been reversed. The Australian College of Midwives has reported a spike in the number of calls regarding home births; it is clear that Australian's don't feel safe at hospital, and that this will add further stress and uncertainty to their pregnancies.

For those with low-risk pregnancies it may be possible to avoid hospital birth altogether, however many people require medical attention during labour and some births can only occur by caesarian section. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, almost 30% of those giving birth for the first time had a caesarian section in 2017. Undergoing in-hospital procedures such as these during the time of Covid-19 further compounds stress during what is already an intense and often traumatic ordeal.

While exposure to C-19 poses a threat to the physical safety of pregnant people, there is also a threat to their mental health that has been largely ignored by the media. This threat to mental health is the complete ban on support people from hospital delivery rooms in certain countries.

The Midlands Regional hospital in Ireland has barred support persons from being present in the room during labour due to concerns about COVID-19. Other hospitals in Ireland are considering following suit. Implementing a zero-support-person policy directly contradicts WHO guidelines, which confirm the importance of having a support person

present in order to achieve positive birth outcomes.

In March, New York City Presbyterian hospitals introduced one of the most restrictive visitor policies for maternity wards: barring spouses, partners, family and friends from the delivery room. In an attempt to protect the physical health of parents and babies, these hospitals inadvertently caused widespread anguish and despair.

A New York City doula, Jesse Pournaras, started a petition to review the restrictive visitors policy which has since received over 600,000 signatures. In response to public backlash, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo issued an executive order allowing pregnant patients at least one support person in the delivery room with them. He tweeted, "in no hospital in New York will a woman be forced to be alone when she gives birth. Not now, not ever."

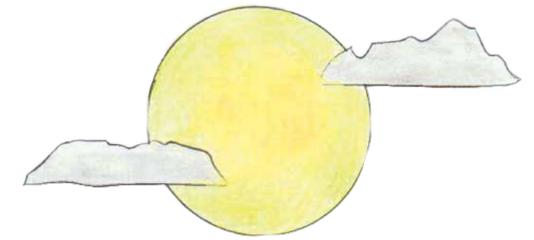
The Cochrane Review found that people who received continuous labour support were less likely to require a caesarian section, less likely to use pain medication, had shorter labours, and were more likely to be satisfied with their birth experience. The review also found evidence that parents who are satisfied with their birth experience have a lower risk of postpartum depression and anxiety. Having support persons present can also bridge the communication gap between laboring people and hospital staff in order to provide increased comfort to laboring people.

In response to Covid-19, Australian and New Zealand hospitals have limited the time of antenatal visits, replaced in-person visits with telehealth consultations, limited visitors while in hospital, and considered the early discharge of mothers and babies from hospital. These measures are in line with a directive issued by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG).

I interviewed Professor Kirsten Black, Joint Head of the Discipline of Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Neonatology at the University of Sydney, to talk further about the way maternity care has changed since the outbreak of Coronavirus. In her opinion, the focus is now on delivering quality care in a different way so that "less women are exposed to less risk". What pregnant women need right now, she says, is reassurance that in-hospital care won't be compromised because of COVID-19. Professor Black also went on to note that the definition of positive maternal care is "continual care" - care for women before, during and after childbirth. Thus, it is imperative that we recognise how Covid-19 may not only isolate pregnant people during their labour experience, but could also strip them of their support networks both prior to and following childbirth.

Australian hospitals will still allow one support person to accompany pregnant people through labour and delivery during Covid-19: a move that strikes the right balance between provision of safety and provision of care. We can't yet know the long-term repercussions of restrictions on support services during childbirth for parents and families until we see them surface in the future. Allowing continuous support in a time of crisis recognises that pregnant people are entitled to a dignified birth experience, wherein both their mental and physical needs are met by hospitals.

chang'e speaks to the moon



& it sounds like a birdsong once remembered,
like the last flicker of a siren after the music fades,
when the ambulance sings, not here, not here.

Perhaps history is what lives in the bones,
what names a body unfamiliar. Skin, as a reminder
of our own capacity for loneliness. To find language
lifted out of centuries & swallow the grief
of a given-name, to soften the ache
of this feeling shaped by air I want

to be endless. O elixir I desired

not for fullness, but for the absence
of hunger. & what is hunger
if not love. What is the soul if not a lighthouse
in the pale sea of my chest, where I am only
a wave folding inwards to reach the shore / Alone,

I dream of motherland. I give birth to myself.

- donnalyn xu



generation

*Niña, duerme.
Niña, despierta.
¡Un nuevo mundo te espera!
My daughter, are you awake?
Tell me, did you make it?*

*Madre, duerme.
Madre despierta.
Mother, sleep.
Mother, awaken.*

*You always told me:
¡Mija sigue adelante!
Daughter, grow where you are sown.
In the sun's shadow I wither inside my own.*

*Abuelita, duerme.
Abuela, despierta.
¿Cuál fue el mundo que viviste?
Grandmother, are you awake?
Tell me, how did you make it?*

*Which sun,
Which water mouth,
What Mother love
blessed your spring?*

*Granddaughter, Mija
Yesterday, we laughed.
Yesterday, we prayed.
While our daughters laughed,
we asked Pacha Mama —
Can this last forever?*

*Yesterday, we told the truth.
We disowned the lies.
Defying destiny, we were.
Creating our own, we were.*

*Amiga, duerme.
Amiga, despierta.
My sister, are you awake?
Tell me, do you remember me?*

Recuerda que aún sigo aquí.

- elizabeth mora



Art by Amelia Mertha

flight path

by Kiki Amberber

(after & with Toni¹ / Julie² / Alexis Pauline³ / my unnamed griots)

because maybe flight is a body suspended over still water
where salt puckers glassy skin like too many thirsty tongues:

bloated bodies / of water float upon heaving bodies / of water, when
all that too-much water sighs and spreads like a blood stain, could it

carve a path to sun or gun-smoke sky? bullets are just heavy rain:
what is flight other than liquid so thin it forgets the word 'gravity',

forges a new current to hurtle down, drown- / gasp into? maybe
flight forms in sediment of sweaty palms or tiny angry flowers,

crushed & wrung out, dripping / scent, forgetting / the body violently, isn't
flight a synonym for empire -- sheds trauma like old skin, grows

wings that grow / teeth that smile while they choke / air (read: flight or fight)
out of brown-skin bodies? hungry rash blossoms out of pause before

speech: softened shoulders before / fists up, feeds + multiplies on the gap
between home & all the cold rooms (full of spores. hot with them:

isn't a prison a / field a / detention centre a / factory a / metallic whispered
'i can't breathe.' packaged in white / thickly, sent across wailing seas?)

that hunger obstructs flight in arbitrary logical incisions:
call it 'geography', breaking up land like clumps of wet-fisted sand.

cool rage rests on / cooler palms / sea salt wind on wet skin like imprint of a dream:
yesterday or was it tomorrow? leapt off cliff on wings that were compasses:

broke through metal that was water / stream of dark bodies going home
to the count of a music note emerging from river soil. leaving only faint smells

behind: sticky ginger, finger-lick of brine, olive oil, skin. which simply means
that bodies in water become bodies on water are bodies in air, and

the music carried 'home' backwards into tomorrow. which means: maybe
flight is always buried in the soil, beneath the surface another kind

of air, or in the hairline cracks in bright & blood-coloured time / waiting
/ already arrived on edge of knife-point margin and warmth between

glistening bodies dancing on their own time. to the sound of:
"take me where you go." & "you just can't fly on off and leave a body."

& "I remember / & I recall." flight paths are creases on hands always-reaching
into soil / for a glimpse of home: which really means: "and / she / was / loved."

(do you believe? do you believe in your skin?)
hear the words tremble, tiny un/doings, gentlest of openings

1. Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon* (1977).
2. Julie Dash, dir., *Daughters of the Dust* (1991).
3. Alexis Pauline Gumbs, *M Archive: After the End of the World* (2018).

ATTENTION IS THE BEGINNING OF DEVOTION: READING QUEER ECOFEMINISM IN MARY OLIVER'S POETRY

Claire Ollivain thinks we can learn a few things from Mary Oliver.

"I thought the earth remembered me,
she took me back so tenderly,
arranging her dark skirts, her pockets
full of lichens and seeds"
— Mary Oliver, 'Sleeping in the Forest'

At a time where the plurality of life is at dire risk of extinction and whole worlds of knowledge are being lost to the capitalist-colonial apparatus, destroying everything in its path for profit, how can poetry teach us to pay close attention? To walk through the world with our senses attuned to nature and take us back to *her* tenderly?

Ecofeminism traces the oppression of nature to the Western construction of the white male as the dominant identity with the property of reason. Men are presumed to be closer to the spiritual, more capable of reasoned discourse which their Other supposedly lacks. Nature and all that is associated with it – including women, the carnal, reproduction, and the body – are devised as passive objects.

Queer ecofeminism shows us how the devaluation of the erotic and the queer -- particularly by Christian colonial rhetoric -- mutually reinforces the devaluation of women, people of colour and nature. By describing systems of oppression as divinely ordained, Christianity has been used to authorise colonial practices of genocide, rape and the persecution of third-gender identities and same-sex desire in Indigenous cultures. The gender binary and heteronormativity have been violently enforced through colonial structures: they are not the 'natural' tendency of humans. This is why, in contemporary discourse, it is ahistorical to cite progress in achieving rights for queer people as an example of supposed Western advancement.

In Greta Gaard's *Toward a Queer Ecofeminism*, she combines the insights of queer and ecofeminist theories to form deeper coalitions. The democratic, ecological society based on the shared liberation that we dream for will be a society that values sexual diversity and the erotic. Nature will no longer be understood as a subservient woman, a mother whom we subordinate and continually deny our dependence on. Nature is meshwork: a fleeting inter-connected space that we have always been part of.

In Mary Oliver's poetry, she models a kind of subjectivity that is not dependent on the idea that humans are more perfect than the non-human or that reason is more spiritual than the erotic. She encourages us to imaginatively inhabit the subjectivities of turtles, geese, birds, insects, and become one with forests and oceans. The speaker of her poems continually loses subjecthood — itself a tool of dominant ideology — amongst a communion of vibrating, borderless ecosystems that shimmer in reciprocal connections.

In *The Turtle*, she admires a turtle who is not faced with societal pressures to reproduce but does so out of a sense of care; "she can't see/herself apart from the rest of the world/ or the world from what she must do/every spring." By comparison to the turtle's self-assuredness of her place, the cerebral quality typically celebrated in humans is realised as a flaw that displaces us from our bodily existence. The virtues of connectedness belong to creatures who are mothers in Oliver's poetry, linked by their offspring's dependence on them the same way we are dependent on the earth.

Oliver's attention to the lives of animals leads us to question such distinctions between humans and 'nature' which delude us into forgetting our place within it as animals. The turtle's way of being is held up as an example for humans to follow; "she knows/she is a part of the pond she lives in/the tall trees are her children/the birds that swim above her/are tied to her by an unbreakable string." This type of worldview, where dualities of the self and the Other cease to exist, exercises queer ecofeminist sensibilities. Oliver gestures to the potential of re-imagining our 'string' with the non-human world as one of love as opposed to violence.

As a child, Oliver would walk through the woods, reading and writing poetry as a salvation from home life with a sexually abusive father and neglectful mother. She was sceptical about organised religion but still held beliefs. In *The Summer Day*, she recognises the divinity in all nature, "I don't know exactly what a prayer is/I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down/into the grass, how to kneel in the grass." This image is echoed in *Straight Talk from Fox* where she criticises someone "talking about God/as if he were an idea instead of the grass." Rejecting the hierarchy of mind over matter that devalues both women and nature, Oliver pays attention to living things such as grass as a form of spiritual experience.

Queer ecofeminists argue that a genuine liberation of the erotic is crucial to dismantling systems of violence. I am reminded of Audre Lorde's insight in 'Uses of the Erotic' that "as women, we have come to distrust that power which rises from our deepest and nonrational knowledge," due to the misnaming of the erotic by Western society. It is creative power, joy, empowerment, the satisfaction of deep cravings, "to let the soft animal of your body love what it loves" as Oliver phrases it in 'Wild Geese'. Queer ecofeminism's vision of liberation involves dismantling Western society's conception of the erotic as fundamentally opposed to reason, culture, masculinity and spirituality.

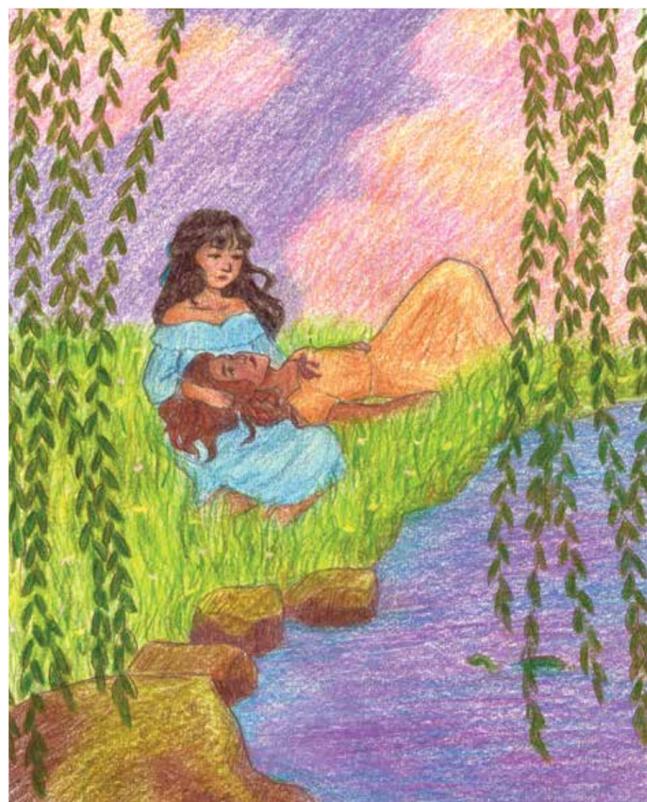
In Oliver's poem of sapphic desire, *The Gardens*, her lover's body is described as "a deep forest of trees," and "the dark country/I keep dreaming of." Unlike most of the writing by men in which nature is a metaphor for women, Oliver does not portray it as an object to be dominated or tamed. Embracing the nonrational knowledge of the erotic, she gains awareness that humans are animals which dominant ideology suppresses, "finding you/the heart within you/and the animal/and the voice/I ask/over and over/for your whereabouts." She emphasises the necessity of consent to the erotic; it is a communion that affirms the agency of both actors. Sensual bodily experience is blasphemously described as the passage to God as she plunges "toward the interior/the unseen, the unknowable/centre." In her attention both to nature and her lover, Oliver challenges dominant ideology through a spiritual act of love that breaks down oppressive structures.

As women, we have been led to fear and suppress the yes within ourselves, the assent to life that refuses to accept a state of powerlessness. In *Shimmer: When all you love is being trashed*, Deborah Bird Rose calls us to "consider the lush, extravagant beauty, flamboyance, and dazzling seductiveness with which Eucalypts say yes." This sense of bursting open is power, the expression of desire for a world that isn't built on the violent suppression of the nonrational, which is constructed in opposition to the white male.

In *Pink Moon – The Pond*, Oliver writes:

"So you relax, you don't fight it anymore,
the darkness coming down
called water,
called spring,
called the green leaf, called
a woman's body
as it turns into mud and leaves,
as it beats in its cage of water,
as it turns like a lonely spindle
in the moonlight, as it says
yes."

Oliver teaches us what happens when we begin to pay close attention to nature rather than seeing it as an undifferentiated abstraction, when we recognise how we are carnal creatures within it rather than denying that knowledge or projecting it onto the Other. When we do so, we become devoted to the liberation and affirmation of our fullest, most loving selves.



Art by Sonya Thai

WORDS AND ART BY AMELIA MERTHA

BURNING

"In death we belong to everyone
who can pass our names through their warm mouths,
who can smell the rotten air without flinching,
who can tilt their noses up into the sky and think family."
— from 'Reunion' by Hieu Minh Nguyen

The Balinese cremation ceremony is called *ngaben*. The whole event is days long, preparation and prayer continuous. There's a revolving door of kin and the kin-of-kin; mostly a blur of kind faces for someone like me who is not from the village.

The last *ngaben* I attended, my grandmother's, was almost five years ago. Her body was encased in a sarcophagus shaped like a fish, itself bound in a luminous ceremonial tower. The whole construction was set ablaze along with offerings of flowers, meat and fruit.

It is hard to look away from fire — how it licks at everything like a dog trying to tend to the wounds of loved ones. The human body is a vessel of water, earth, air and memory until it is no longer. Hieu Minh Nguyen writes, "You can't uncremate your grandmother," like I can't excavate mine with those other bodies that are not like hers or mine, or yours, maybe. She burnt through like tropical fever.

We waited for dust. We sat next to the clearing of the temple, watching the embers and ash rise and fall spinning bright, black and white around us like a new measure of time. Afterwards, we picked through the ashes for the remaining pieces of bone that lay like bleached driftwood in the smoke and decay. Niang's titanium hip joint, completely intact, was passed around.

Over the past months, I've felt a kind of haunting. During the worst of the bushfire season, when the smoke devoured the city too, I retreated inside with loved ones to save our breath. In front of doorways and car windows, I squinted at the off-coloured sun. *A devil's nipple*, I called it in an Instagram post. And it felt wrong to look at the sun but it could have felt revelatory too. In its Ancient Greek origins, the word 'apocalypse' means — not the end of the world — but a discovery, a revelation. Suddenly, we were all looking at something the naked human eye should usually not risk looking at, that which civilisations once assigned to gods and goddesses. It was settler colonisation, greed and environmental mismanagement, not Prometheus, that brought the bushfires.

And it all reminded me of *ngaben*. It wasn't just the atmosphere of smoke but it was the thick summer heat too. The kind that cuffs the back of your neck and the back of your arms; stretches across your collarbones, makes breathing hard. It smelt like Bali. Like humidity and the street-side satays

cooking out in the open that we pass on the first drive back to the village. Trash heaps on fire. Incense sticks. Cremation.

Ash was falling around me again. Bits of burnt leaf, sometimes. Civilisations of old believed in cyclical time, that regrowth, decay and compost is as inevitable as the return of something you thought you had forgotten — a smell, for example. Some still believe in reincarnation. (Between you and me, I agree that time goes in circles and I'm quite sure it fashions other fabulous shapes as well.)

I don't know how long it will take for the forests to regrow, for families to recover, after Black Summer swept through and took almost everything. I don't know how long until the eucalypts can stretch their limbs to each other again and carry life like they once did. And we can't say when politicians, governing this deluded settler-colonial project, will ever commit to environmental and climate justice. However, the seeds have been planted. Call that reincarnation, call that regeneration,

call that revolution.

In her autobiography *Speaking in Tongues*, Fetwa Malti-Douglas explains a childhood captivated, in part, by the question of death. At her all-girls boarding school, another student taught her a technique that would "generate the smell of death", a clandestine experiment of sorts. It involved a student curling her right hand into a fist for five minutes, sometimes ten (for better results, apparently). She does not explain what happens next but I suppose the blood rushes to the head. "[W]e young girls were so enamoured by the smell of death when we should have been searching for the smell of life," writes Malti-Douglas.

But what if the smell of death and the smell of life are the same thing?

I have my grandmother's hands. And maybe her cheekbones too. So, at her cremation ceremony, witness to her naked body washed clean by members of our family and village, rigor mortis rinsed, I thought I was seeing the future. I am holding out hope that by the time my body rests in my own sarcophagus, preventable bushfire seasons are no more. I want this for our future. I want to swim in the ashes of a violent colonial legacy and come back as a flower.



"You're trying to say that as a POC you feel genuinely threatened and anxious when you see a policeman in Australia? That is simply BS! Are you just milking the minority card to have something to argue about?" This is an excerpt from a long message that I woke up to one morning, from a white woman (who was one of many others in my inbox). It was a response to some anti-cop rhetoric posted to my Instagram story after witnessing the water police at my favourite ocean spot. Reading them transported me back to my feelings of violation as I stood aghast by the water that day. I blocked the sender and shared a post about white people needing to recognise their privilege and lack of ability to define what constitutes experiences of racism. I had a few condescending replies from white men, yet none victimised themselves like the numerous white women did, calling me "dismissive" and "attacking", insistent that I was "spreading hate".

I've quickly learned that white guilt is so deep-rooted that white women will dig in their heels and end long-standing friendships to avoid being 'labelled' a racist. They'll scramble to boast about their study of Indigenous issues (ignoring that the unit is run by a colonial institution which profits off stolen lands) as a feeble attempt at alleviating it. They'd sooner make your anti-racism work about their feelings rather than acknowledging that they constitute the problem. In fact, they'll claim that you're the real racist for making generalisations about white people. That they're the victim here, so your posts about white complacency must be targeting them specifically. They'll tell you off for being too judgemental or angry in your approach, allocating you the responsibility of educating them gently. They'll be offended when you share the 'milking the minority card' messages, insisting that you consider the feelings of these senders who don't want their opinions broadcasted — because then they'll be obligated to condemn them. But God forbid they betray the sisterhood and speak out against another white woman; isn't feminism all about #girlpower and female solidarity?

Their tears fall strategically, the flow of a stream that serves the sole purpose of drowning you (and their

guilt) out. In their watery eyes, they are excused from the reality that despite being subject to patriarchal injustice, they too are adherents and inflictors of oppression. Their tears pool together, cold and saline, as if to form an ocean on which to carry the police boats they seem to love so much. They adopt their role of policing our behaviour — a violent and punishing tactic built on the comfortable complacency enabled by the system of white supremacy they refuse to unlearn.

White people: you don't need to pretend you are free of racism (no one is) to be an active anti-racist. The anti-racist work of others should not trigger your guilt in the way it so clearly does. It's not enough to hide behind strong activists, or your friends of colour, and use an association with their efforts to absolve your guilt. Your indignance with racism must be more than your fear of being called a racist. It is your responsibility to be less fragile, less defensive, and less passive — your silence is still an act of white supremacy, and your tears won't drown your guilt.

And to everyone else: you don't need permission from white people to speak about racism. You don't need to soften your outrage or hand hold to conciliate their needs and feelings. You have the right to expect your white friends to actively listen, support you, and take your side; that they won't ice you out of activist or friendship spaces in an attempt to mitigate conflict and appease others. You do not have to stick around for white people who punish you for demanding a safer space, calling out racism, or sharing your experiences. Why must you protect them from the pull of the moon, the waves and the tides, when they should learn to swim?

"I cannot hide my anger to spare you guilt, nor hurt feelings, [...] Guilt is not a response to anger; it is a response to one's own actions or lack of action. [...] We welcome all women who can meet us, face to face, beyond objectification and beyond guilt."
—Audre Lorde, 1981

dear white women: your tears won't drown out your guilt

Penmed by Shami Patel



Art by Amelia Mertha

ONE DIRECTION IS PROBLEMATIC

Keira Fairley discusses boybands and casual misogyny.

One Direction was problematic.

This occurred to me after the backlash former band member Liam Payne received for his song 'Both Ways'. The song talks of a woman who likes it "both ways" and "like(s) the way it all taste(s)" which Payne believes entitles him to a threesome. This song is not an exception; Payne's solo music has explored themes that are misogynistic, fetishise bisexuality, support rape culture, and condone male entitlement.

In February, I revisited One Direction's discography, looking for a pattern. This endeavour into the music of my formative years led me to discover that Payne's underwhelming solo ventures are not an outlier in sexist undertones. One Direction made their feelings of entitlement toward women clear from their first album, seen in 'Save You Tonight' with "He'll only break you, leave you torn apart/ I want to save you tonight," implying that the cure to relationship woes is another relationship, removing the ability of a woman to be content on her own accord without a man.

At the peak of One Direction's success, the band operated in a context where misogyny was accepted enough for them to sing about it and not face repercussions. It was a time where songs like Robin Thicke's 'Blurred Lines', whose lyrics recount the events that led up to an assault, topped the charts. One Direction's 'Why Don't We Go There' was

released in the same year and had some obvious parallels, specifically Harry singing about "all the places they could go" if the girl just "gave in," and Liam pleading with her to "say the word but don't say no." There is a clear manipulation of consent for sexual gain, objectification and fetishisation of virginity, and a sprinkle of coercion. But the parallels don't stop there. 'Little White Lies' literally quotes lyrics "you're a good girl" and "I know you want it" from 'Blurred Lines' with Harry singing "you say you're a good girl/ but I know you would, girl." One Direction escaped the criticism Robin Thicke received because of their marketed demographic and their carefully curated image of clean, child-friendly heartthrobs, which granted them a certain impunity within popular culture. So, Directioners were led to idealise this version of romance portrayed within their lyrics, many of them young girls who did not know to question the objectification.

"The music industry still has a long way to go in eradicating themes of rape culture and sexism from seemingly innocuous lyrics hidden beneath catchy melodies."

But these songs were released almost a decade ago. Former Directioners are now adults who are more socially aware and critical of celebrities. Harry Styles' successful solo career has shown immense support for queer and feminist movements, whereas Liam Payne's failed one continues to play into outdated ideas of gender roles. Music produced by the new generation of boy bands incorporate more feminist perspectives. 'Trust Fund Baby' by popular group Why Don't We, includes lyrics that advocate for "independence" and portrays women in stereotypically masculine positions such as in STEM and sports in the accompanying music video. The declining themes of gender codes in media targeted at adolescents makes me hopeful.

The music industry still has a long way to go in eradicating themes of rape culture and sexism from seemingly innocuous lyrics hidden beneath catchy melodies. Such casual misogyny aimed at pre-teen and teenage girls going un-criticized for so long is dangerous. The ages of twelve to eighteen are a period of identity development in which a child looks to influences outside of their family to find their role within society. Artists directed at this age group are provided with a significantly influential platform for shaping understandings of love and relationships. It is thus vital that we see a shift in focus from the economic benefits of marketed heartthrobs to the true social impact of these coded messages.

Art by Jade Jiang



ode to my eyebrow lady

Maya Eswaran misses her eyebrow lady.

"Don't lie to me!" she yelled as she threateningly craned over my head, sharp tweezers poised in hand. The fluorescent strip light above me made my eyes water. I felt like I was on an operating table as my blurry vision focused on the indignant face in front of me covered with a medical mask, green eyes burning. "You saw someone else, didn't you...?" she jabbed. I squirmed. But eventually, I had to admit I'd committed a fatal sin.

I had, in fact, seen another eyebrow lady.

I know what you're thinking. It's wrong, and I'm ashamed. But when I couldn't get an appointment for several weeks, I gave into the natural temptation of going somewhere convenient and cheap. I would pay for my misdemeanour as my body was waxed, zapped, tweezed, and prodded in the painful process of hair removal.

Her anger was reasonable; expected, even. You cannot cheat on your eyebrow lady. She, who has sculpted your hairs from their prepubescent monobrow days into their present alpha form. I've been seeing my eyebrow lady exclusively for years; and I'm not the only one. But, upon reflection, it's clear that this loyalty we have may seem a bit ridiculous for someone on the outside. You see, Mariam's salon is 25km from where I now live; yet not even such a great distance can part us.

But our particular bond is not unique. It is a primordial bond that has been reproduced across time and space. From the women of Ancient Egypt who had elaborate beauty routines, the Maori women who get moko kauae (face tattooing), to more familial practices like my grandma putting coconut or sesame oil in my hair as I'd sit cross-legged between her legs every week. These sacred rituals have endured.

Much has been written about the politicisation of women's body hair: patriarchal pressure to remove

it, growing it in defiance, its appropriation and assimilation. These beauty rituals fit into a story of navigating the decolonisation of oneself. But within this, I want to give credence to these special relationships and spaces which are formed and often overlooked for their normalcy, or for being almost too odd and taboo to memorialise in writing.

There's a solidarity formed between black and brown women across the world existing in white societies. We often need special treatment for different hair types and textures. Through this process, the racial differences between migrant groups are usually flattened, and unlikely bonds are forged. Because despite the vast differences in our ethnicities and cultures, to whiteness we are the same: darker and different.

While lying on her salon bed, Mariam has taught me about Islam and Palestine to Zionism and world politics. In exchange, we share moments of unlikely parallels between our traditions, history, and culture — mine Indian and Hindu, hers Lebanese and Muslim. Cultures where traditional paths are often pushed on strong women who overcome them.

She has become more than just my eyebrow lady. She's my second mum, a person who has seen me cry over insolent boys and the pressure of exams, and eventually grow up. She has compared me to an Amazonian woman in my hairier days and then transformed me into someone who can find a "jahsh" (donkey in Arabic) as she likes to call men. There is a certain pride and ownership over her work. This simple, banal act becomes something greater through rhetoricisation. These beauty rituals forge autonomous, liminal spaces, free from shame or inhibition, where women of colour come together, away from the world, and emerge anew. So here's to the interracial solidarity of hairy women — of wogs and curry munchers — together in resistance, becoming hot bitches.

WOGO DISCO
AN OFFICIAL PLAYLIST

- Seventeen - Sharon Van Etten
- Kyoto - Phoebe Bridgers
- Dancing Queen - ABBA
- home with you - FKA twigs
- Strawberry Blonde - Mitski
- girls - girl in red
- Untouched - The Veronicas
- Vroom Vroom - Charli XCX
- My Skin - Lizzo
- Toxic - Britney Spears
- Homecoming Queen - Thelma Plum

AND MORE! SCAN THE CODE FOR BOPS

President

Liam Donohoe

The past two weeks have been incredibly busy for myself and the SRC more broadly, though the mid-semester and Easter breaks offered some brief moments for recovery and reinvigoration. With COVID-19 and associated lockdowns / economic malaise continuing to cause tenancy, income, migration, it's little wonder that the Casework and Legal services have been working tirelessly. Indeed, demand has been so high that we're close to hiring a paralegal to both reduce the administrative burden on our solicitors and free our Principal, An Li, so she can assist students with visa applications / extensions (saving them thousands!)

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the SRC staff for their tireless work in this period. The Administration team, always the glue that holds the entire organisation together, have adapted to new and challenging conditions impressively, with our administration processes as smooth as ever. Similarly, the Publications team are as efficient and comprehensive as ever, adapting to the increased need for a substantial social media presence while continuing to manage and deliver Honi Soit as normal. And Mynsan, our cleaner, deserves special recognition, bravely coming to the SRC every now and then to keep the space tidy and safe for the various Office Bearers, staff members, and executives who occasionally work within.

Some staff have also been going above and beyond their ordinary duties. Secretary to Council, Julia Robins, has been spearheading the SRC's mutual aid initiatives alongside OBs and other students. I am really pleased to announce that their diligence has paid off — we now have over 500 packs of Barilla pasta, hundreds of cereal boxes, over 1,000 medical masks, and—most importantly—an emerging partnership

Education Officers

Jazzlyn Breen and Jack Mansell

It's been a frantic period for university students and staff. With Universities Australia coming out threatening over 21,000 job losses, and figures claiming that the collapse in the sector's revenue could leave a \$60 billion hole in the economy, cuts to higher education are well and truly on the agenda.

In spite of a spectacular capitulation by the national leadership of the NTEU, union activists

Women's Officers

Vivienne Guo and Ellie Wilson

The USyd Women's Collective has postponed or moved most of our events online for the foreseeable future to prioritise the safety of all students. Our weekly meetings will now be on Zoom.

This year, the march for International Day of the Unborn Child at St Mary's Cathedral - which is frequented by vocal anti-choice advocates, neo-Nazis and jury-convicted pedophiles - was cancelled. WoCo normally counterprotests this every year; we have always been staunchly pro-choice and pro-bodily sovereignty in the fight for

Interfaith Officers

Susie Wang and Wilson Huang

Hey everyone! My name is Wilson, and I am one of the interfaith officers in 2020. I understand that many of us are going through tough times due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If you would like some basic support, please visit <https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au/> or email the SRC caseworkers at help@src.usyd.edu.au.

Reflections on the religious freedom bill:

I previously wrote a submission on the second draft of the religious freedom bill which is available on the government's public submission page. My main concerns were that the bill would

Refugee Rights

Alex McLeay and Cooper Forsyth did not submit a report this week.

Global Solidarity

Kelly Chen, Holly Hayne, Enrong (Annie) Zhao and Shailene Wei did not submit a report this week.

Note: These pages belong to the Office Bearers of the SRC. They are not altered, edited or changed in any way by the editors of Honi Soit.



with the Exodus Foundation, who we are hoping will supply any remaining goods. We are hoping to (hygienically!) arrange these goods into "essentials packs", which we'll then distribute to students over the coming weeks. We have already begun circulating a form for students interested in volunteering — if you would like to complete this form yourself, feel free to ask me for one at president@src.usyd.edu.au. We will soon be circulated a similar form for students in need — keep your eyes peeled!

Staff diligence also explains why last Wednesday's Council meeting was a surprising success. No doubt the first ever SRC meeting to take place entirely online, at one stage over 60 different undergraduates were on the Zoom call, with quorum comfortably achieved. While there were some minor technical issues and awkward moments throughout, many aspects of the meeting were indistinguishable from an ordinary one, and debates were not only well-managed, but also as interesting and compelling as ever. All in all, I'm quite chuffed to have chaired the first ever online Council meeting, and think its success raises questions about the use of Zoom for meetings in the post-COVID-19 world.

The SRC has not only been managing its internal affairs well, but also been thoroughly engaged in the abundant struggles on- and off-campus. I am proud to report that at the start of Week 7 the University announced that it would be embracing many of the academic support measures we'd been publicly and privately demanding over the past few weeks. These measures include multiple mark-adjustment procedures (Within-assessment mark adjustment, Post-assessment mark adjustment, and computation of a COVID-adjusted end of degree WAM), the application of DC, UC, and RI grades to minimise instances of student

failure), and, most promisingly, a comprehensive reform of special considerations that reduces the evidentiary and administrative burden on students and commits to greater compassion throughout this period. We've also been fighting tirelessly against the ProctorU online invigilation system, and while the Uni seems intent on persisting with it, we have achieved some relief for students. For one, after much insistence the Uni has said it has granted special considerations to students with legitimate discomfort / objections to the system. For another, we have helped students draft emails demanding their Unit of Study coordinators abandon the system, a strategy which has seen countless Units and even entire faculties move away from the system. We have also supported honours and Higher-Degree-by-research students, with the University committing to grant extensions for theses and devising arrangements so students can access non-digitised research.

But our advocacy has not been limited to classroom concerns, with our platform, resources, and organising efforts directed towards countless community and student struggles. Last Friday we participated in a day of online action in support of refugees and their allied activists, as I filmed and uploaded a message of support to our main Facebook page. We will continue to look for opportunities to centre groups at disproportionate risk in this period, including refugees and Original peoples.

As part of our broader housing justice efforts we have been supporting the Sydney Housing Defence Coalition in a number of ways, including by printing their posters and helping display them around the Inner West. We are also extensively supporting tenants in USyd accommodation as they fight for housing justice, with our efforts helping realise the University's moratorium on evictions, circumstantial rent reductions, and

broader sympathy / support for tenants. We have also been assisting the National Union of Students' various welfare campaigns, joining them in demanding that non-citizens / non-residents be included in the JobKeeper and JobSeeker programs, that the age of independence be reduced from 22 to 18, and that all part-time or deferred students be eligible for Youth Allowance.

But perhaps the biggest campaign we are supporting is the one being spearheaded by radical rank and file within the National Tertiary Education Union. Dismayed by the soft bargaining position taken by the National Executive, branches across the country have followed the lead of the USyd branch in censuring the Executive and developing their own grassroots campaign. The SRC supports this rank and file campaign, and will be participating in the National Day of Action on April the 24th as well as the May 1 car convoy. This participation is not only motivated by a general sense of solidarity with USyd workers, but also by the belief that this campaign will be a relevant entry point into the broader fight for tertiary education, one which also offers the underlying infrastructure for a successful fight. And with this struggle and NTEU members likely to feature prominently in the broader May 1 activities, it's entirely possible this campaign will play a large role in determining the fate and living standards of all workers throughout this period and beyond.

Clearly the past few weeks have been busy, and while they've brought about many achievements, they've also made clear that even more things need to be achieved. If you would like further information on our recent efforts (or my contributions to them) check out the latest (third) report I delivered to Council, or alternately hit me up at president@src.usyd.edu.au if you have any questions!

nationally, spearheaded by the militant Sydney Uni branch, have pledged to fight the cuts and instead demand that the bosses pay for the economic crisis. The EAG stands in solidarity with the staff campaign against cuts, and sees the campaign as intimately linked to defending our education. After all, staff working conditions are student learning conditions.

On the student front, where the realities of staff

cuts, hamfisted online transitions, and the burden of economic crisis on young people have hit hard already, we are also refusing to accept any cut to the standard of our education, or any attempt to increase fees. Instead, the government must fully fund the deficit in education, and abolish fees for all students. Our extended thoughts are summarised in Jack's recent article in this paper: 'We must oppose university cuts'.

If you want to get involved with the campaign, join the 'No Uni Cuts' national day of online action we are organising alongside Students Organising Resistance, and get in touch with the Education Officers Jack 0424 377 109 or Jazz 0488 714 301.

Aboriginal children. 'My Body, My Choice' can be found on our Facebook page.

On 7 April, Cardinal George Pell, the highest ranking Catholic official in Australia and a jury-convicted pedophile, walked free after being acquitted of his crimes in the High Court. Seven High Court judges ruled to overturn a unanimous jury decision made in 2019 which convicted him of child sexual abuse. Words cannot express how devastating this has been for survivors. The justice system is not only broken, it is crumbling to the ground. It will bring everyone but the rich and

powerful down with it.

Remember that the legal truth is not always the truth. This ruling does not mean he is innocent, but rather that the corrupt courts have found that there is reasonable doubt not to convict him. Cardinal George Pell is a pedophile, sexual predator and an abuser.

To survivors: We hear you, we believe you, and we are so sorry. You are not alone, and we will not abandon you in the continuing fight for justice.

Victoria, Jesuit Social Services, Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand and McAuley Community Services for Women. equalityaustralia.org.au/faihorstatement/

Abortion is an essential health service:

Numerous US states have attempted to use the COVID-19 pandemic to restrict abortion rights. This is a dangerous thing to do especially in the middle of a pandemic. While I understand that abortion can elicit very personal responses, it does not change the realities of people who need them. Abortion is a safe medical procedure which may

be necessary in cases including, but not limited to, sexual assault, severe fetal abnormalities and ectopic pregnancies. Restricting abortion rights is likely to lead us to a situation where unsafe abortions become the norm. We need to trust people to make decisions regarding their reproductive health in good faith.

If you would like to get in contact with me about anything, please email interfaith.officers@src.usyd.edu.au.

STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL, UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

SRC CASEWORKER APPOINTMENTS ARE NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

Do you need to discontinue or withdraw a subject?

If you apply to discontinue a subject before the Friday of Week 8 you will get a Discontinue Not Fail (DC).

Additional information is available on the SRC website: srcusyd.net.au/src-help/academic-issues/withdrawing-discontinuing/

If you need assistance or advice or wish to apply for a fee refund

Ask the SRC!

Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney
Level 1, Wentworth Building (G01), University of Sydney NSW 2006, PO Box 794 Broadway NSW 2007
p: 02 9660 5222 e: help@src.usyd.edu.au w: srcusyd.net.au
facebook.com/usydsrc @src_usyd

Do you have a legal problem? We can help you for FREE!*

Police, Courts
Traffic offences
Immigration & Visa
Fines
Employment law
Consumer rights
...and more

SRC LEGAL SERVICE APPOINTMENTS ARE NOW AVAILABLE BY PHONE OR ONLINE

Appointments:
Call us to make a booking. p: 02 9660 5222

We have a solicitor who speaks Mandarin
法律諮詢 法律アドバイス

SRC Legal Service
Level 1, Wentworth Building (G01), University of Sydney NSW 2006, PO Box 794 Broadway NSW 2007
p: 02 9660 5222 w: srcusyd.net.au ACN: 146 653 143
Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation.

Discontinue Not Fail (DC) - It's not a Fail.
DEADLINE IS FRIDAY OF WEEK 8

There is no denying that a DC grade is better than a fail. Now is a good time to consider if you are going to pass all of the subjects you are enrolled in. Lots of students have found the change to online classes challenging, so please do not feel bad if you have fallen behind. Due to these extraordinary times, this semester, this also applies to international students.

If you want to withdraw from a class before the Friday of week 8, you can go to Sydney Student and vary your enrolment, giving you a DC (discontinue not to count as fail) grade for any subject you nominate. You will still need to pay for the subject (HECs or fees), but will not have any academic penalty. International students may also need to talk to Faculty Services to be given permission.

If it is after the DC deadline, you can apply for a late DC if you experienced illness or misadventure that stopped you from successfully completing that subject. You will need to show that you were able to pass when you enrolled, you attended all classes, and attempted all assessments, up until the time that your illness or misadventure occurred. You will need to provide documentation, such as a Professional Practitioner's Certificate, or a student declaration, to support your application. Different faculties have different procedures on how

to apply so check the uni website for details: sydney.edu.au/students/discontinue-unit-of-study/dc.html.

If you want to withdraw from a class before the Friday of week 8, you can go to Sydney Student and vary your enrolment, giving you a DC (discontinue not to count as fail) grade for any subject you nominate.

If you are successful in getting a DC grade you might want to apply for a refund or crediting of your HECs/fees. Use the same documentation for this application. For details go to: sydney.edu.au/students/refunds.html. The deadline for applying for refunds is 12 months.

An SRC caseworker is happy to read over your application before you submit it, if you would like suggestions on any changes that might help.

Ask Abe

SRC caseworker help Q&A



Ask Abe about Online Harrassment

Dear Abe,

I feel quite distressed about some of the comments that one of the people in my class says as a private comment, while we in an online class. He says that because it is a private comment, that nobody else can see, that it doesn't matter what he says. I don't want anyone to get into any trouble, but I do not want him to message me anymore. What should I do.

Online Hassle

Dear Online Hassle,

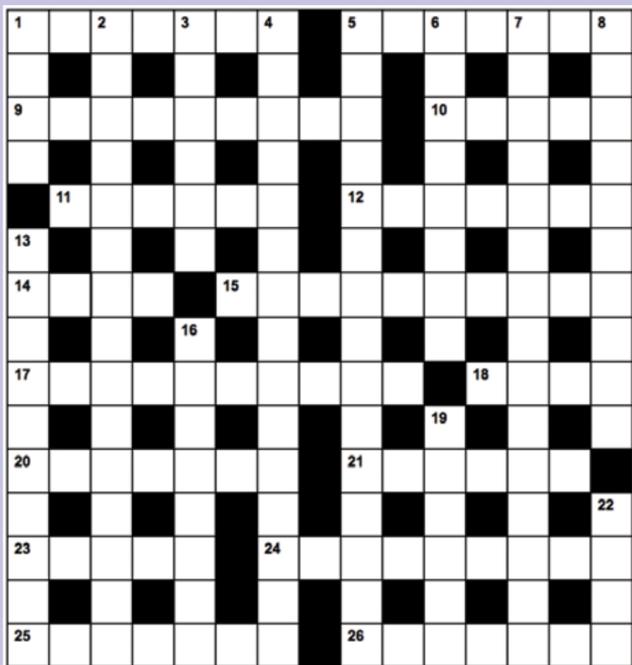
I'm sorry to hear that is happening to you. It is certainly not ok, to treat someone like that. What he is doing is wrong. All students at the uni are obliged

to treat each other with respect, and cannot engage in bullying, harassing, or discriminatory behavior, regardless of whether it is in person or online. I would suggest taking screen shots of what has been sent to you, and make notes about what happened and when. Email these notes to yourself, so that you don't lose them. Meet with one of the Uni's Student Liaison Officers, who will be able to explain what your options are, and make sure that you are safe. You can email them at safer-communities.officer@sydney.edu.au or call 8627 6808. Alternatively, you can lodge a complaint by going to: sydney.edu.au/students/complaints.html. Most of all, look after yourself, and don't be worried about him — he doesn't seem to be worried about you.

Abe.

Contact an SRC Caseworker on 02 9660 5222 or email help@src.usyd.edu.au

Cryptic



Across

- Herb found in a US state, messed up (7)
- Ride around van, confusingly, to become a person who conquers (7)
- Topsy turvy, ajar, Hamas supports Indian king (9)
- Short form of Ignacio is Mexican food without first serve (5)
- American serial killer has 12 astrological signs (6)
- Backwards European Union, surrounded by ostentatious jewellery, becomes blue (7)
- Where you would be if in Arizona, Utah or Michigan - in sinus (2,2)
- An aside: digger session misses examples (10)
- A method and a type of socialism (10)
- The baths lack hydrogen, thereby becoming virus-carriers (4)
- Luxury brand starts ask me anything about common primary school project (7)
- Tom enters CIA, which is turned on its head, to develop a type of bomb (6)
- I, Mona, am confused about iconic supermodel (5)
- The highest form of flattery is bizarre in ATO - I'm it! (9)
- Type of legume confuses boy, Sean (7)
- Weirdly nag at 12pm about polygon (7)

Down

- Oh, Mississippi has units of electrical resistance (4)
- Muted song and science of animal behaviour bizarrely results in a musical study (15)
- A French right is clever (6)
- Thing, if I caution without you, is a form of sexism common in mass media (15)
- Refusal to cooperate with sneaky naval consecration of priests (15)
- Disappear around queen to defeat her (8)
- Strange criminal inside first gaol thinks up good policy towards sex work (15)
- Restructure orangeries (9)
- Dissents about freudian instinctual desire, agreeing with those who oppose the state (10)
- ScMo's least favourite suburb is comprised of marketing material and engine (8)
- Field that goes along with range? (6)
- Italian year disturbed, going incognito (4)

Target

L	B	O
A	T	I
I	N	O

excellent - 35; very good - 25, good - 15

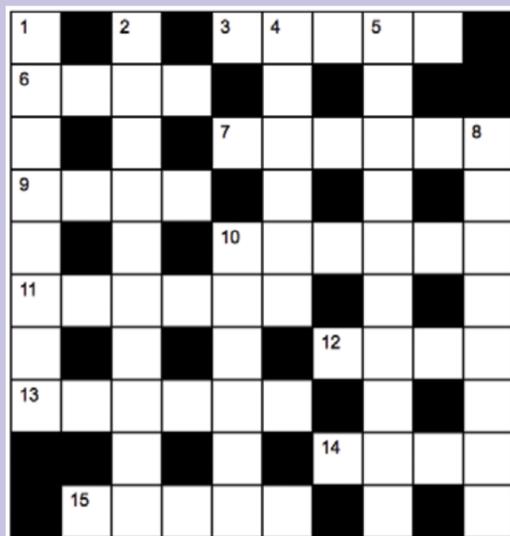
Across

- Viral hemorrhaging fever
- Masterwork; magnum _____
- Having an irrational fear
- Dull soreness
- Strongly disliking something
- Resistant to infection
- What happens if you don't pee after sex
- The ordinary people
- Subject of famous portrait
- An analytic piece of writing

Down

- Term coined by Alice Walker to describe a pro-woman movement which is inclusive of Black women
- Word used to replace a taboo topic
- To act or conduct oneself
- What feminism should fight for
- Lawyer who developed the theory of intersectionality
- Writer of 'Are Prisons Obsolete?'

Quick



Sudoku

7	1		8	3				
5		4		1	7	8	6	
		8	4				1	
			2		6	3		
6	1				5	8		
3	9		8					
	5			6	9			
	6	7	8	9		2		4
		2	7			5	6	

Missing Links

Find a word which comes after the first word and before the second one. E.g. the answer to *thin parrot* would be "king", producing "thinking" and "king parrot".

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. bat child | 7. metal berry |
| 2. step hood | 8. love brain |
| 3. stone limit | 9. lap dog |
| 4. galaxy child | 10. nut law |
| 5. native deed | 11. big book |
| 6. animal fingers | 12. cross glass |

Train Game

Using common maths operations, make 10 using the following numbers.

3642

KenKen

+10	-3			+5
		+9		
x12			x80	
x300			+6	

Puzzles by Twelfth

The Male Gazette

STRONG, RATIONAL, HARD-HITTING NEWS SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL

BREAKING NEWS

Shania O'Brien Reports: A Sneak Peak into the drafts of Dean Dr Rev. [REDACTED]

Send to: [parents with a registered address from: the Eastern Suburbs; the North Shore; the Northern Beaches]

Ignore responses from: [suburbs west of Chatswood]

Dear parents, Applications to live in the University's residential colleges have been declining never been higher! I am writing to you with a list of reasons you should consider our catered on-campus housing for your Joshes and Josephines children.

At our colleges, your ward, too, can join the great long-standing literary tradition of sulking and breaking flirting with the law in gothic castles!

	USyd Residential colleges	American Bildungsroman literature
Right of passage events	✓	✓
Gothic architecture	✓	✓
Rich country boys	✓	✓
Suspiciously Artfully named rooms	✓	✓
Emphasis on formative years	✓	✓
Sacrificing undesirables to please Him	✓	✓
[whatever kids call cocaine these days]	✓	✓
Hazing character-building experiences	✓	✓

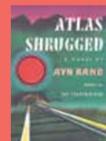
PERSPECTIVE



MY MASCULINITY IS NON-TOXIC BUT FEMINISTS STILL DON'T LIKE ME

LES ANDERS on how women on the internet criticised his poetry even though he was trying to show emotion.

THE THINKING MAN: WHAT TO READ THIS MONTH



ATLAS SHRUGGED - AYN RAND
Turns out some women can write!



THE PRINCE - NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI
Frankly, inspirational!



12 RULES FOR LIFE - JORDAN B. PETERSON
Taught me to make my bed!



MEDITATIONS - MARCUS AURELIUS
I prefer meditating when it's WESTERN

FINANCE

THE MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS

GOING UP
Whatever you say after 15 beers
Shockjocks
Golf commentary
Getting a pass to say slurs
Lying to your girlfriend
Pretending to understand economics

GOING DOWN
High voices
Apologising for your actions
Mild criticism
Any desire to change the status quo

INVESTIGATIVE

ARE WOMEN FUNNY? WE FIND OUT by Stan Dupp p. 6

WHERE ARE ALL THE GAMER GIRLS? by Connor Des Ender p. 13

CAN GIRLS, SPECIFICALLY MY GIRLFRIEND, ORGASM? by S. Elvish p. 20

THE EDIT

What is ethical nonmonogamy and how do I use it? p. 20

Opinion: Women don't like nice guys, so don't be nice! p. 3

Quiz: Which sports star are you? p. 14

Top 10 hottest female politicians p. 2

Where to find a linen suit p. 32

Advertisement



UTOPIA: WOMEN IN STEM
Sandy Stone

Many people don't understand that education is key... especially when it comes with empowering brunch!



#girlbossoftheweek:
Meghan Markle

Meghan shows us how to be a true feminist role model and gives us a figure EVERY girl can relate to! She took England by storm and looked FAB while doing it!



TRIUMPH! AUSTRALIA'S FIRST FEMALE MILITARY DRONE!
Martina Lockheed

One small drone, one great leap forward for the sisterhood! The drone, named Skye, shows that women can do everything!

The Lean Independent

DISRUPTION

Honi Soit Writing Competition

Entries open 11th May
Close 6th July

Categories:

Fiction

Non-fiction

Prize pool of \$3600

Judges:

Rick Morton

Tilly Lawless