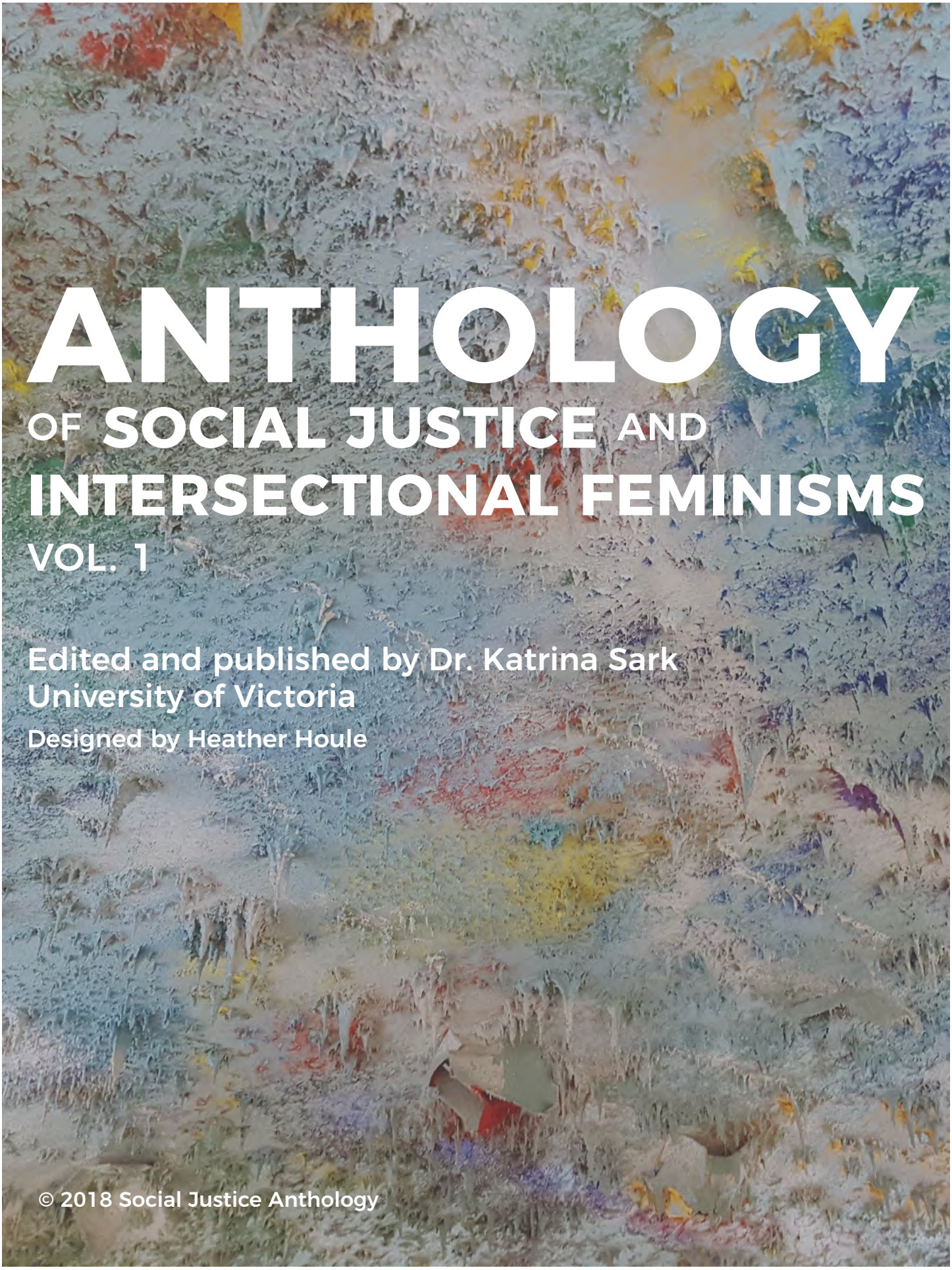
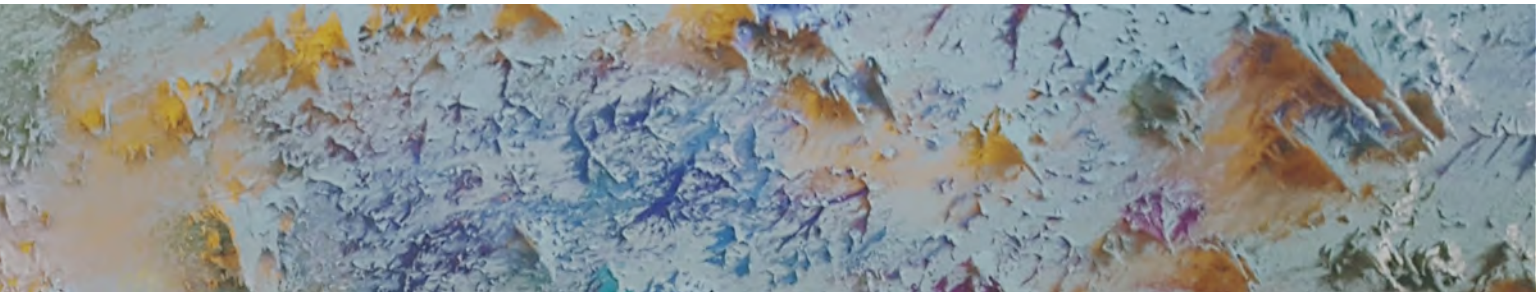


ANTHOLOGY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND INTERSECTIONAL FEMINISMS

VOL. 1

Edited and published by Dr. Katrina Sark
University of Victoria
Designed by Heather Houle

Contents



KAT SARK

Editor's Introduction

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

This collection of essays, stories, poetry, art, and inspirational words is meant to bring together the voices and imaginations of a diverse range of intersectional feminists. Together, they are activists, scholars, writers, poets, artists, students and organizers. They are changemakers, who believe in solidarity and solution-based actions that bring about social change and social justice. They are, ultimately, working to give voice and to stand together in the hopes of creating a more egalitarian society. They prove that it is not the future that is female, but the present as well.

At the heart of this anthology is a commitment to intersectionality. I believe that intersectional feminist activism can be practiced by individuals and communities, united by the common goal of furthering justice, respect for human rights, equity, and well-being. In my roles as an activist, educator, writer, and organizer, I encourage my students, colleagues, and the greater community to stand up to injustices and discriminations, and to foster a community of transnational and transcultural feminists.

My hope for this anthology is that it allows us to see how connected we all really are. We all face different intersections of injustices, discriminations, exploitations, and violence. As media campaigns such as #blacklivesmatter and #metoo, and the Women's Marches all around the world have shown us, when we all share our experiences and our stories, we can see the broader systems of inequality, and recognize that all oppression is interconnected. When we stand together, we begin to understand how structural violence and ingrained exploitation are used to divide and marginalize so many of us, and when we begin to work together, we can break down these interconnected systems of oppression.

My goal for this anthology is to create and maintain a platform for voices that often fall through the cracks – the young, the marginalized, the "othered" voices, who do not usually get invited to be part of public social justice conversations. I wanted to showcase a diversity of voices, across Canada and the world, across various media and genres of narratives. I am grateful to everyone who was brave enough to submit their work for the first volume, before any of us knew what it would become.

My guiding principles for this anthology are:

1. Acknowledge other people's struggles and our own privileges, along with the ways in which we can use these privileges in solidarity with others for social justice and social change
2. Understand that we all have different struggles, but that they are also linked, and that we need to work together and to help each other
3. Know that the most vulnerable people are still often excluded from social justice conversations
4. Raise awareness, empower, and inspire
5. Develop an international feminist network
6. Help us all to learn from each other and get beyond restrictions, limitations, and injustices
7. Document the history, cultural critique, and cultural analysis of the critical times we live in
8. Inspire creative solidarity

This anthology is for everybody. For women, who want more solidarity and support. For men, who often suffer under patriarchal structures just as much as women but have fewer support networks to address these issues. For gender non-conforming persons who know gender is merely a performance we are all conditioned to carry out. For all the gender-fluid souls who find the limitations of only one gender too restrictive. For future feminists, who are still on the verge of finding and claiming their voices and their truths, as well as the right medium of expression, platform, genres, and the right audience. You are all welcome here.

This anthology was inspired by a series of discussion panels on social justice and intersectional feminism that I was invited to develop and organize for the Greater Victoria Public Library in 2017 and 2018. But it all really started when my wonderful and oh-so inspiring

boss, Helga Thorson, the Chair of the Germanic and Slavic Studies Department at the University of Victoria (UVic) and the co-creator of the Eye-Witness Field School and the Holocaust Studies Graduate Program, gave me the go-ahead to design an upper-level course on "Gender and Media" in 2016. Since returning to the West Coast, I started teaching at UVic in the fall of 2015, and have had the pleasure of watching my colleagues develop important, consciousness-raising courses, organize summer field schools and community outreach events, as well as supervise several cohorts of engaged students and scholars at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Helga leads and inspires by example. She helps others develop their expertise and fosters a collaborative environment. Going to work every day for the past three years has been a joy precisely because of the work ethic that she and our other colleagues have built. I will always be grateful for that. This is what a feminist department and work place look and feel like!

When I started developing this new course, I realized I also had to build a web platform for teaching "Feminist German Studies" because there were no available resources in this field. I reached out to the Berlin-based feminist activist Anne Wizorek for suggestions on the latest readings, organizations, and media. She was very forthcoming and helpful, and we continued to correspond throughout that year, and met in the summer of 2016, when I was doing research in Berlin, Geneva, and St. Petersburg. Simultaneously, I continued to raise funds to invite her to speak at UVic, because her activist work, her use of digital media, and her book (unfortunately only available in German so far) were essential to contemporary activism and organizing.

Anne Wizorek came to Victoria in March 2017 and gave a guest lecture in my class and a public lecture on campus, followed by a panel discussion with fellow feminist colleagues at UVic. It was at this panel that Maureen Sawa, the CEO of the Greater Victoria Public Library, asked me to organize similar discussion panels for the Victoria community.

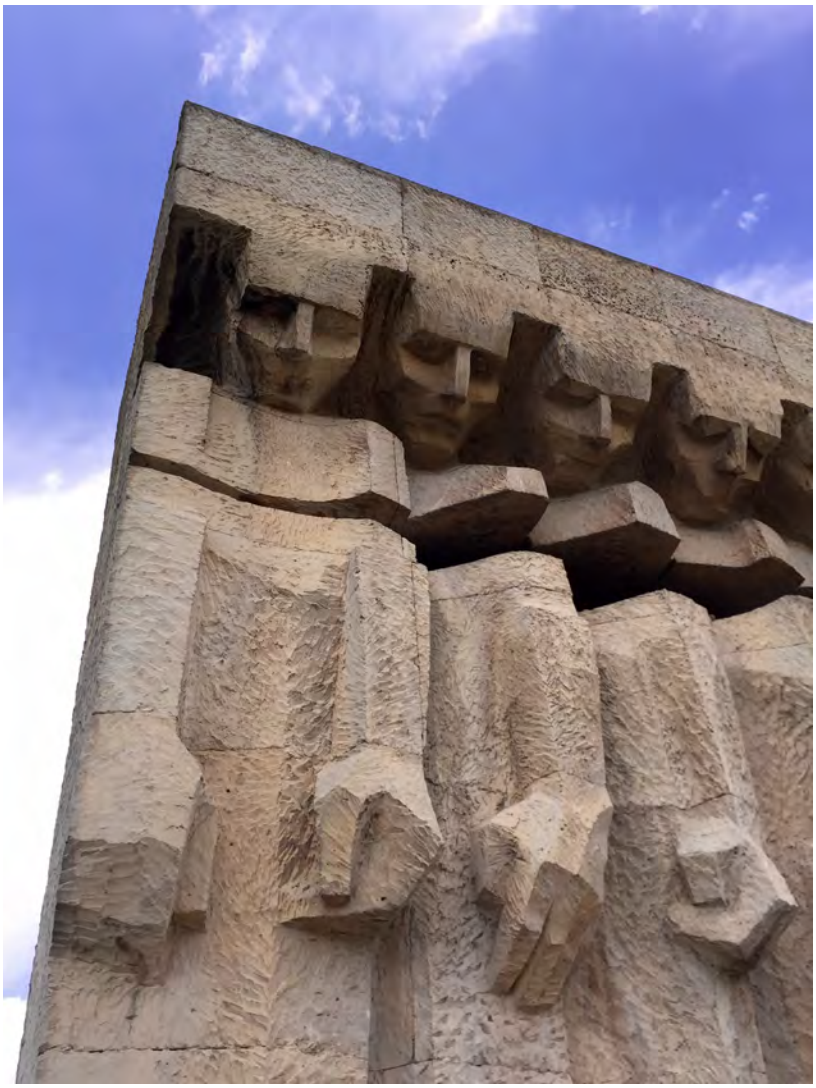
In June 2017, I began teaching a new course, entitled "History through Autobiographies, Testimonies, and Eye-Witness Accounts," that I developed for the History Department. I have always been interested in life-writing and autobiographical genres and documentaries, and I have always been drawn to anti-hegemonic narratives of freedom and social justice. I wanted to approach comparative world history through the voices of the people who transformed history and the world. Often, they were marginalized voices, that were excluded from mainstream historical narratives, or delegated to the niches of gender or minorities studies. By foregrounding these narratives and experiences, I wanted to examine our own relationship to historical writing and ideologies, to uncover patterns and common threads that run through history, but are not usually studied or taught together, or lost in various categorizations. I wanted to map out alternative narratives and alternative histories.

In October 2017, I organized the first discussion panel at the Greater Victoria Public Library on social justice and intersectional feminism. I wanted to have an intersectional panel, and invited eight panelists of different abilities, races, genders, and class backgrounds (many of whom have contributed to this anthology), whose expertise ranged from the arts, politics, education, and social work to activism. I asked them describe how they define social justice, how they define intersectional feminism, and how they manifest in their work – all in under ten minutes. This was no easy task, but the outcome was incredibly inspirational. It showed us all – the panelists, organizers, and audience members – how interconnected our stories of social justice really are; how inter-dependent we all are, and how much we can accomplish when we work together. I wanted to capture the spirit of that discussion, and began conceptualizing this anthology, and reaching out to other potential contributors.

The following month, in November 2017, I organized a conference panel on "Digital and Transnational Feminisms" at the annual Pacific Modern Language Association (PAMLA). We had a great discussion with six panelists who presented their transnational social justice work. In preparation for this panel, I developed and conducted a study (based on a questionnaire I sent out to my students, colleagues, activists, etc.) on how people defined social justice, intersectional feminism, and how it manifested in their work. I incorporated many of the responses into the website I built for this anthology. This panel also inspired the next, upcoming PAMLA conference on Social Justice Pedagogies, and my next book project.

In January 2018, Cayla Naumann and I co-organized the Women's March in Victoria, and continued our work as Chapter Leaders in assisting other local organizers with other social justice work and events, including the International Women's Day Festival on March 8, 2018. It was also the day when the second panel discussion on social justice and intersectional feminism was scheduled at the Greater Victoria Public Library. I decided to combine this discussion with the launch of this anthology and give the platform to some of the youngest contributors, who are already doing such important activist work.

Many of these contributors are just entering their twenties. With so much knowledge and wisdom, open-heartedly, with a courage and selflessness that took me at least an extra decade to develop. I am in awe of their commitment to social justice, their nuanced understanding of the language and politics of intersectionality, their willingness to learn and grow, and make a difference not just for themselves, but for everyone. I am inspired by their work, their writing, their activism, and I would like to dedicate this first volume of the anthology to them. Keep writing, keep fighting, and know that together, we can create a world that recognizes and respect the voices and power of those from all across the intersections.



RILEY VAN DER LINDEN

Never Forget

PŁASZÓW | 2016

KAT SARK

UN Geneva Human Rights Hall Ceiling Sculpture

2016

Essays

KAITLYN ADDERLEY

How Advertising Affects Body Image

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

Introduction

In the past sixty years advertisements geared towards women have created a negative impact on body image. The industry is selling healthy, beautiful women products that should help them to look more similar to those they see in advertisements. This is causing them to have negative views of themselves because they do not look like the images of the thin beautiful women in mass media. The images portrayed in the media are highly photoshopped (IdealBite.com 2012). Some advertising executives are generating an image of a woman who does not exist in the hopes the consumers will purchase products to help them achieve those unattainable results. Those women are then placed on a pedestal for every woman to try to aspire to and for every man to expect to see. In this article, I will analyze different ad campaigns geared toward body image perceptions from the 1960s to the present, and provide a personal reflection on the damaging effects these mass media images generate.

While there has been an increase in the use of "plus size" women in the industry to show diversity, the "average" woman is considered to be "plus size." In America, the average woman is a size sixteen (Kabis 2016). Society as a whole is beginning to push back on the unattainable perception of women portrayed in advertisements, yet there has been very little improvement. Ashley Graham, for example, (http://www.lifeandstylemag.com/posts/ashley-graham-lingerie-nyfw-113603/photos/ashley-graham-5-172550) is a very famous plus size supermodel. She embraces body positivity, as she is not a thin model, and has presented a TED TALK on body positivity and has published a book about it in 2017. Yet, the images we see of her used in advertisements are highly photoshopped (https://www.bizjournals.com/bizwomen/news/out-of-the-office/2015/02/plus-size-model-ad-in-sports-illustrated-swimsuit.html). As a consumer, one does not have the opportunity to see that the model has imperfections, as that is not considered beautiful or profitable in consumer-driven society. The company has the image photoshopped so that the consumer does not see the cellulite she has on her body, even though every woman has cellulite (although while promoting her book, she posted several photos of the cellulite on her thighs on her Instagram feed to promote body positivity). But the creators of the advertisements photoshopping women do whatever they can to hide those imperfections and change them (http://gaia.adage.com/images/bin/image/x-large/doveprint050713.jpg). In this image the advertisement features a beautiful older woman, the image has not been sexualized, and she is promoting a positive body image, yet the advertisement is selling cellulite cream. This shows that the body positive movement is not as effective as we may think it is.

In "The Impact of Advertisements Featuring Ultra Thin or Average-size Models on Women with a History of Eating Disorders "they discuss women's reactions to standard "plus size models" in comparison to the "ultra thin" models, the findings suggest that in order to prevent women from developing body issues that lead to further problems, using average or "plus size" models in advertising could have a greater impact on those developments (Halliwell, Dittmar, and Howe 2005). The study also found that "average-size models could actually lead to a relief effect;" some of the women in the study felt "less body-focused anxiety" prior to viewing the models of the average size in comparison to viewing no image of a model (Halliwell, Dittmar, and Howe 2005).

The models that companies choose to use in advertisements are "ultra thin," surgically modified, the image is electronically retouched, and they often have eating disorders. France recently banned "super-skinny models from catwalks and advertising worldwide" (Samuel 2017). The "French fashion giants ban super-Skinny models from catwalks and adverts" analyzes how the fashion industry is "promoting unattainable beauty ideals" and how those beauty ideals are damaging to both the models working for the company and those women who attempt to mimic them. Samuel states that models are now forced to show a certificate of health provided by a reputable

doctor in order to participate in the advertisement campaign (Samuel 2017). The misleading advertisements causing both the models and consumers to strive for the unattainable beauty standard is a social issue that is happening worldwide.

Selection/Justification

In the rest of this article, I analyze two advertisements geared towards women from each decade beginning in the 1960s. As advertisements are created to sell products, they can also be considered a form of mass media. Mass media can be defined as "devices designed to communicate messages to a mass audience" (Ravelli & Webber 2016). I chose this medium because it affects everyone. Magazines, commercials, billboards, posters, and so many more methods of advertisement are displayed everywhere. Starting from a very young age, young children are exposed to these ideals and grow up hating their bodies.

I, for instance, have never been happy with myself. I was a competitive swimmer, exercised six days a week for two and half hours each day with my swim team. I would then come home, go for a forty-five-minute run, and do two hundred sit ups because I had a bit of stomach fat that I thought shouldn't be there. I would look at the other girls my age in the advertisements and think to myself "why don't I look like her, what am I doing wrong?" I started restricting my eating and counting my calories at age eleven. From thirteen years on, I wore makeup every day to school because I wanted to be pretty like the girls in the advertisements I would see everywhere. I began dieting at a very young age because of the social influences of mass media presented to me in my everyday life. I chose this topic because these advertisements don't only affect me; they affect everyone, from young to old, at every moment of their life, no matter where they are in the world.

Social media is over-saturated with personalized ads. Standing at a bus stop, there is an advertisement, watch a YouTube video, and there is an advertisement at the beginning, Facebook and Instagram inbed ads into the customizable newsfeeds. The creators of these ads pick at women's insecurities in hopes that they will buy the product that will help to fix the insecurity they are referring to (https://www.bostonglobe.com/business/2016/06/14/london-mayor-bans-tube-ads-that-promote-unhealthy-body-image/wQ8pIZsBOfyLlKzgszxodL/story.html). This 2016 advertisement has an image of a very petite woman with large breasts and a large bum portraying society's "ideal women." The creators are insinuating that if the consumer does not have the body in the image, they should buy this product. (http://www.cnn.com/2015/07/22/living/seventies-sexist-ads/index.html) In this image from 1970's it portrays a seductive image of a slim women with the words "cigarettes are like women. The best are thin and rich." The advertisement is stating that the best women are thin and wealthy. Therefore, the average woman feels inadequate and tries to change her appearance to better conform to these beauty ideals.

Methodology and Research Question

To explore the portrayal of women in the media I analyzed twelve advertisements with two from each decade beginning in the 1960s. I then found common themes and constants within the images. I proceeded to create a list which included women being sexualized, the promotion of a specific thin body image, use of visual makeup within the advertisement, products geared towards selling objects that change appearance, and women wearing very little clothes. I then counted how many of those advertisements fit into each of the categories and created a table to display it.

I found many of the advertisements on news sites and articles that often discussed the sexists or body-shaming attributes of the advertisements. While scrolling through a list of women's advertisements from the sixties, I came across an advertisement for a product called wate-on (https://brandnewretro.ie/2011/09/18/old-adverts-14-wate-on/), it is an image supporting weight gain, it says "they will never call you skinny again!" This reminded me of all the advertisements for diet products on the market, promoting weight loss to meet artificial standards. This advertisement shows the shift in the "ideal body image."

In order to analyze the different advertisements, I used the method of content analysis. Content analysis can be defined as "a research method involving the analysis of texts" (Ravelli & Webber 2016). The texts can be anything from magazines and newspapers to movies and blogs. They can also be "either quantitative, qualitative, or a combination of both" (Ravelli & Webber 2016). This method of analysis is appropriate to study the social issue of women's advertisements because it allows the comparison of many images. I chose to use both the qualitative and quantitative approach

within my analysis. I selected all twelve images at random while keeping in mind that I was looking for advertisements geared towards women.

Presentation of Results

Out of the twelve advertisements, I found that eight have women represented as sexualized. Nine are promoting a specific thin body image. Six have the model wearing visible makeup. Eight are selling products that help to change the consumers' appearance. Nine of the ads have the women wearing very little amounts of clothing. Many advertising executives do not want women who are full-figured or have imperfections, or at least they believe that consumers will not buy products advertised by women who do not meet these artificial standards. As a result, these advertisements do not promote a healthy body image or positivity.

Women Sexualized	8
Promoting specific thin body image	9
Visible Makeup in advertisement	6
Selling products to change appearance	8
Wearing very little clothes	9

Despite the feminist movement, mainstream media and advertising practices over the past sixty years have not changed to aid in the empowerment of women. The mad men era was a time when women were displayed as sex objects for men to enjoy and exploit. That idea has continued to carry throughout advertisements to this day. Women must make themselves beautiful and change their appearance to appease and derive value from their likability. Advertisers do not take into consideration the effect these media messages have, and continue to generate revenue from mis-representations of women's bodies, with only a few examples of any corporate-social responsibility strategies, or body positivity campaigns (such as the Dove or Kelloggs commercials). And we, as consumers, continue to buy the products they sell us. The burden of critical media literacy and consumer literacy is thus placed on the individual consumer. While there have been many social media campaigns to draw awareness to unethical consumerism (such as #notbuyingit) or media manipulation, they do not yet have the same reach as mass media advertising.

Conclusion

Throughout the past sixty years, advertisements continue to harm women's self-image. This is a social issue that has an impact on everyone. Although the portrayal of women has changed over the past sixty years, women are continuously being highly objectified and over-sexualized in mass media. The ideal body is relatively the same, but overall getting smaller as time progresses. Women are still told to change the way they look to achieve any value through likability. With the information overload we now experience from mainstream media and social media, escaping the negative messages and feelings associated with our bodies is increasingly more difficult.

We need to better understand the artificial and unattainable beauty standards, the damage they generate world-wide, and address corporate social responsibility practices collectively, rather than leave it up to the corporate media or advertisers to manipulate the media and its messages. Critical media literacy plays a key role in consumer practices and in body positivity. But we need to shift the focus from the individual consumer to mass media executives and hold them accountable for media manipulation.

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CHORONG KIM

Field School

RAVENSBRÜCK MEMORIAL SITE, GERMANY | 2017

ALEXANDRA AGES

She Was Asking For It: How Canadian Media Supports Rape Culture

VICTORIA, BC | DECEMBER 2017

"She was a bit flattered. Maybe it was the first time he showed interest in her," said Judge Jean-Paul Braun, following up on his prior comment of, "She's a young girl, 17. Maybe she's a little overweight but she has a pretty face, no?" (Kassam). These comments were made during a sexual assault case relating to a seventeen-year-old girl and a forty-nine-year-old cab driver. These comments were made in Canada, in May of 2017.

These comments, widely decried by various members of the public, are not an anomaly; they are simply yet another element of a society with a highly pervasive rape culture. Canada, though often perceived to be far more liberal and tolerant than its southern neighbor, suffers from a similar, largely silent, epidemic of sexual assault and violence against women. Only in recent years has Canadian rape culture garnered any significant degree of media attention, and in general, media portrayals still tend to reflect prevailing cultural attitudes that blame the victim of sexual assault, not the perpetrator.

One element of Canadian rape culture that is particularly notable is how highly racialized it is; Indigenous women in particular face a far greater likelihood of experiencing sexual violence in their lifetimes than non-indigenous women (Du Mont et al). Despite this highly concerning trend, which further perpetuates racial power imbalances between settlers and Indigenous peoples, the plight of Canada's Indigenous women has similarly only recently begun to make headlines. However, as a global pushback against rape culture grows stronger, supported by trends such as #MeToo, Canadian media in particular now faces a stark choice: to support the survivors of sexual assault now raising their voices, or to continue to be complicit in allowing rape culture and violence against women to be perpetuated.

Out of every ten assaults reported to police, only one will result in a conviction (Rotenberg 3). Canadian media typically approaches court cases on sexual assault with an attitude that benefits the perpetrator; innocent until proven guilty, as stated by the law, is a principle similarly reflected by our media. While this approach to reporting is fundamentally good, as it ensures that falsely accused individuals don't suffer from media harassment for a crime they didn't commit, it has an immensely negative impact in regards to sexual assault. Rape, and other forms of assault, are fundamentally different from other forms of criminal behaviour. It is not simply property, but the very sense of security in one's body that is stolen by sexual assault (Moor).

In reporting on assault cases with the same standards as say, robbing a convenience store, the media creates a power imbalance in which the onus to prove guilt lies not just on the criminal justice system, but on the victims themselves. The media further perpetuates this power imbalance by insisting on sharing the stories of those charged with assault, and by going above and beyond in attempts to humanize the perpetrators of assault.

One of the most well-known cases of the media's tendency to humanize perpetrators is that of Brock Turner, who was frequently described not as a rapist, but as a Stanford swimmer, who just happened to assault an unconscious woman. Even the terminology employed in the case was debated by the media; Will Gore, a British journalist, went out of his way to clarify that Brock Turner was guilty of assault, not rape, and seemingly argued that Turner's actions were of a lesser form of evil (Gore).

In a Canadian context, the case of Jian Ghomeshi serves as a prime example of the media's frequent compliancy in sympathizing with perpetrators while simultaneously perpetuating the mythology that assault survivors could potentially be to blame for what they endured (Hayes). In a CBC article that summarized the aftermath of the trial, highlighted headings included "Completely Inconsistent" and "Playing chicken with the justice system" in regards to Ghomeshi's victims; on Ghomeshi himself, the article simply noted that "... Ghomeshi hugged his mother, sister and other supporters who sat behind him in the courtroom," upon hearing the verdict (Gollum).

This particular trial, and the often misguided media coverage of it, has likely had a direct impact on both rape culture as a whole and on the likelihood of Canadian assault survivors coming forward with their stories. Lenore Lukasik-Foss, head of the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres and director of the Sexual Assault Centre of Hamilton and Area, is quoted by CBC as stating:

> The things we're hearing so far are, "Wow, I'm so glad I didn't report,"
> "I don't know that I could ever report because of this. I don't want to be treated like this,"
> … Because the kinds of questioning that defence use when the perpetrator is known to the person have to be about your credibility, and it's personal details … some survivors say it's re-traumatizing (Charles).

Overall, the current media framework that exists when reporting on sexual assault cases serves to further perpetuate rape culture, as both Canadian and international media often report on assault cases in a way that both supports power imbalances and utilizes victim-blaming language. An element worth noting in the way the media, not just in Canada but internationally, seemingly humanizes those charged with assault is the racial and class elements that are often intertwined with coverage. While white, middle-class perpetrators receive favourable, or at least neutral, media coverage, the opposite is frequently true if the perpetrator is lower class or a person of colour.

In a study done by sociologists Joanne Ardovini-Brooker and Susan Caringella-Macdonald, in which they coded 123 media reports of ten high profile rape-cases based on victim blaming versus perpetrator blaming language, the results showcased a far heavier tendency to use perpetrator blaming language when the victim was white and the perpetrator was of a minority; a result that also existed in cases where there was a pronounced class difference. These particular findings are contrasted with the overall results of the study, which showed that 45% of statements sympathized with the victim while 55% blamed the victim (Kosse 255).

While this study was conducted in an American context, it is highly likely that similar results would be found if this study was to be conducted on Canadian media. Both race and class play a direct role in the methodology used by the media when reporting on sexual assault, and in a Canadian context, this aspect plays a particularly damaging role in regards to First Nations women. Just as perpetrators of colour or of a lower class background receive far more unfavourable press coverage than their counterparts, so too do victims of colour or of lower class backgrounds receive more distinctly negative reporting from the media.

The specific issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women is deeply reflective of this problem, as the media not only perpetuates incorrect mythology around Indigenous women as a whole, but also frequently misreports or altogether ignores the specific issue of violence against women in cases where the victim is First Nations. As Kristen Gilchrist notes in her case study on the media's reporting on Indigenous women, in which she compared news reports on three missing white women to three missing Indigenous women:

When the number of articles mentioning the White and Aboriginal women in any capacity were counted, it was found that the White women were mentioned in the local press a total of 511 times compared with only eighty-two times for the Aboriginal women; more than six times as often. When this analysis was broken down to include only articles discussing the missing/murdered women's cases specifically, disparities remained. The Aboriginal women garnered just fifty-three articles compared with 187 articles for the White women; representing three and a half times less coverage overall for the Aboriginal women (Gilchrist 379).

The estimated 1022 to 4000 (Tasker) Canadian Indigenous women who remain unaccounted for are, to some degree, a reflection of the dangerous media tendency to act from a racially biased position when reporting. In regards to sexual assault in particular, this intersectional element of the media's reporting tendencies must be noted, as it serves to both support pre-existing notions that people of colour and working class people as uniquely violent by villainizing perpetrators, while also simultaneously disenfranchising people of colour or working class individuals who are victims of sexual assault by minimizing their experiences. In Canada, rape culture is both racialized and impacted by class divisions, with the media often playing a supporting role in perpetuating this intersectional array of power imbalances.

In 2014, Canadian Judge Robin Camp repeatedly asked the victim of a sexual assault "Why couldn't you just keep your knees together?" (Kassam). In March of 2017, he resigned, due to widespread outcry over his comments. Judge Jean Paul Brown, previously mentioned in this article for his inappropriate comments to an assault survivor, is now facing a complaint by Justice Minister Stephanie Vallee, and both Brock Turner and Jian Ghomeshi have experienced considerable damage to their public reputations. The federal inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women in Canada, though often deemed to be too slow in acting, nonetheless exists and has received considerable media attention. In all instances, some form of shift is apparent in regards to how the public perceives cases of sexual assault and violence against women.

The media still frequently plays a role in perpetuating rape culture, but now more and more individual journalists have taken it upon themselves to note this tendency, and to demand that reporting is done better. Rape culture in Canada is now receiving acknowledgement as existing (Walton), and as being a widespread and rampant issue that must be addressed (Star Editorial Board). As social media in particular becomes a more pertinent force, assault survivors are accessing new platforms to have their voices heard, meaning that traditional media tendencies to blame victims can be subverted.

While Canadian rape culture remains a lingering epidemic, a shift in the public perception of sexual assault cases and of the overall issue of violence against women is already becoming apparent, forcing the media to change how it reports on rape culture. Change is coming, and in time, there is a great likelihood that Canadian rape culture can be and will be dismantled, with survivors of sexual assault leading the way by bravely speaking out about their experiences.

Notes

This essay relies strongly on case studies focusing on the experiences of cis-gendered women; however, it must be noted that sexual violence can be found across the gender spectrum, and in particular often profoundly impacts transgender women.

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CHORONG KIM

The Red Dresses

CANADIAN MUSEUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WINNIPEG | 2017

DEVON BIDAL

#MeToo: Empowerment in a Desensitized Society

VICTORIA, BC | DECEMBER 2017

INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment and assault have become daily occurrences around the world – ranging from an inappropriate comment in the office or a catcall from across the street, to groping at a nightclub or abusive assault by fiends such as Hollywood producer, Harvey Weinstein. Over the past couple of weeks, people have been posting on social media using #metoo. The hashtag was created on October 15, 2017, when Alyssa Milano tweeted asking people who have been sexually harassed or assaulted to comment "me too" because her friend had suggested that this might help indicate the magnitude of the problem. The actress also replied to her own tweet saying, "me too". According to an article in the New York Times, "tens of thousands of people replied," (Cordea-Rado 2017). This #metoo movement highlights how widespread and common rape and sexual misconduct are today.

On Monday, October 16, 2017, Eleanor Cummings reported Milano's tweet having "over 18,000 retweets, more than 37,000 likes, and a whopping 51,000 replies. The hashtag [had] been used 500,000 times on Twitter and more than 6 million people [were] discussing 'me too' on Facebook," (Cordea-Rado 2017). The #metoo movement is about raising consciousness in our society that has been desensitized to sexual assault and harassment, and survivors taking back power in a way that works for them.1 It is significant in the fight for women's rights because the hashtag is already making strides and has started a discussion about sexual misconduct.

I. FROM PASSIVE TO ACTIVE

The #metoo movement came on the heels of many sexual assault allegations against Harvey Weinstein (Cordea-Rado 2017). As of Saturday, October 28, 2017, the number of allegations made against Weinstein was over 82 (Scott 2017). Most of the media coverage has been focused on supporting the victims, and a lot of the rhetoric surrounding the Weinstein allegations and #metoo has been positive. However, some have missed the point of the movement – arguing that women are desperate for victimhood and that the movement is "frustratingly familiar" (Cummins 2017). Many men are posting on social media using #notallmen because they feel that the movement is attacking men, saying about #metoo: "'you're a potential rapist, prove us wrong' seems like a strange tack for women to take if they're looking for men to be their allies." (Karol Markowicz 2017) This highlights the damaging rhetoric that makes something that has nothing to do with the average man, all about the average man. #Metoo is about empowering the survivors and changing the way we talk about rape, not about the not the men who have been inconvenienced by other men being inappropriate or who feel attacked by the movement.

In 2013, Jackson Katz, a prominent male feminist and retired football player made a powerful statement in a TED Talk about the language we use when talking about sexual assault and harassment. "We talk about how many women were raped last year, not about how many men raped women." (Katz 2013) He goes on to state that this passive language is political:

[It] shifts the focus off men and boys and onto girls and women. Even the term 'violence against women is problematic. It's a passive construction; there's no active agent in the sentence. It's a bad thing that happens to women, but when you look at that term 'violence against women,' … Men aren't even a part of it!

The language we use in everyday conversations turns women into victims. #Metoo movement is not about attaining victim status or sympathy, it is about taking control of one's lived experience and making the personal political.

II. SITUATED KNOWLEDGE

Donna Haraway says that "feminists have to insist on a better account of the world," and that's what this movement is doing. #Metoo makes use of social media which provides a platform for all opinions to be voiced. It gives everyone who wants to be heard the opportunity

to "illustrate the ways in which entitled, violent, and unchallenged masculinism — the patriarchy — pervaded their lives," (Lennard 2017). Joanna Williams - a white, British female professor and writer who is employed as the Education Editor of Spiked Online (Lukianoff 2016) – is among those who disagree. Williams feels that movements like #metoo "create a false impression that all men are sexually abusive and simply waiting for an opportunity to assault innocent and defenseless women," (Williams 2017). In her opinion, we "live in a fame-obsessed culture" and she calls the #metoo movement "an unedifying clamor to be included in celebrity suffering," (Williams 2017). These opinions ignore the conscious efforts of #metoo. #Metoo has avoided the stereotypes that are typically associated with discussions involving sexual assault (Lennard 2017) and has given survivors the opportunity "to frame their experiences and relate to each other, and assign blame to attackers and complicit systems," (Lennard 2017).

The movement has also focused on this unfortunately large community coming together to call out rape culture and share personal stories. Donna Haraway describes accounts such as these as situated knowledge - knowledge placed in context that gives agency to the knowledge producer. Arguments that say the women tweeting #metoo are simply desperate for victimhood show how desensitized our culture has become and how much it disregards the accounts of survivors. This is why #metoo is important. In a 2017 interview with Nadia Khomami of The Guardian, Caroline Criado-Perez said "I don't think we [should] underestimate how much of an impact is being made by the way in which women can just speak out about their experiences, because we're just not represented in the news media, and films and literature. Until the internet came along, we just weren't having these conversations about what it's like to be a woman, what it's like to walk down the street and be harassed and cat-called. We didn't know about the idea of everyday sexism," (Khomami 2017). Through #metoo, survivors are able to use their voices to tell their stories, and that is powerful because women and sexual assault victims are so often silenced.

Those who are making the conversation about victimhood are only focusing on one side of the argument, which is like denying that the victims are out there and deciding that all women are safe and unoppressed. According to the Statistics Canada website, only about 10% of sexual assaults get reported (Johnson 2017). This is often due to the fact that survivors' accounts are not taken as seriously as textual or hard evidence because courts "privilege the written text over oral testimonies," (Smith 1999). Western culture makes an assumption that science is objective and that powerful men know the truth (Haraway 1988). Survivors often choose not to speak out because the system makes them feel powerless - it is their word against the rapist's and the word of the victim is not always taken seriously. Additionally, the punishment for those who are convicted is not substantial enough. For example, Brock Turner, a Stanford University student, was released from jail early "after serving three months for sexually assaulting an unconscious woman near a fraternity party, a sentence that has ignited fierce debate over the way California defines and punishes rape," (Reuters 2016). It's all about who has the power to determine what is 'real', and unfortunately, the power that men inherently have makes minorities feel powerless, and the lack of action taken against rapists makes survivors feel like they will be blamed rather than avenged (Smith 1999). The #metoo movement has become a way for women to feel heard, show their numbers, and to find a supportive community.

III. THE REPROCUSSIONS

Furthermore, the hashtag has started to take the desired effect as there has been extensive media coverage and sexual misconduct is now being more openly discussed. Every day more survivors are stepping forward, and the attackers are being scrutinized by the world. Many men have also begun to post using #Ididthat, #howIwillchange, and #IdidandIamsorry; they are acknowledging that many of their actions are not as harmless as they once thought (Khomami 2017). "The #MeToo movement "crossed the lines of cultural identity drawn in the 2016 election," (Maclean 2017). Many have found reading through the #metoo posts a harrowing but important experience (Khomami 2017). The survivors who are speaking out are paving the way for the next generation and making sure that they never feel like they have to hide their experiences (Khomami 2017). #Metoo existed before 2017, but this age of technology has provided people with a platform to express themselves on a global scale (Khomami 2017). #Metoo is not the only movement that is changing the way we fight sexual harassment, but the attention it received is an essential part of making change. Kevin Spacey has been fired and so have Matt Lauer and Charlie Rose, Harvey Weinstein has been removed from his company, and Louis C.K.'s Netflix show was cancelled (Rate, 2017). These

are just a few of the famous and powerful men being punished for their actions. The movement has been a success because the whole point was to draw attention to gendered violence and the prominence of sexual assault, and something is now being done to punish the attackers.

CONCLUSION

The #metoo movement has been influential because it marks a shift in direction for the women's rights movement; through the hashtag, survivors are sharing their stories, showing their numbers and reclaiming their lives, bodies, and experiences using social media. Survivors are finding strength in numbers, refusing to be quiet for any longer, and taking back their power in a new way. This is not about victim status or sympathy, it is about power. Alyssa Milano set out to help survivors demonstrate how widespread rape and harassment are to a Western society that has been desensitized to it. Our culture does not punish rapists or support rape survivors in a sufficient manner and, as a result, sexual assault and harassment have become commonplace. Through social media, survivors are working to change how the world views, deals with, and reacts to sexual assault. Now, thanks to the influence of #metoo, the world is watching those in power and finally punishing the ones who are guilty of sexual misconduct.

Notes

1. I must note that my opinions and knowledge of the movement are situated in my positionality. My feminism is intersectional – meaning I include all minorities in this fight for equality – and I believe that all women have a right to equality and autonomy over their bodies and lives. I speak as a white, heterosexual, Canadian woman from a middle-class family. I have experienced many privileges and this does affect how I see the world. However, I acknowledge this and make all efforts to be "critically reflexive" and to "elaborate my embeddedness," so that my work can be contextualized. (Moss and Matwychuk 2000)

2. Victims of sexual assault and harassment are often blamed and many excuses are made to rid the attacker of blame. I only realized the effect that this had on me when I saw my friends posting using #metoo. I was hesitant to post the hashtag myself because I wasn't sure my experiences were bad enough to count. I made excuses and invalidated my own experiences. They were being friendly, they didn't know I was only 15. He was a friend, he didn't mean anything by it, he only kissed me, I wasn't that scared.

3. I was shocked that I was doing this because I am an advocate for survivors speaking up and/or getting help, and for the punishment of those who commit sexual assault. I too have been desensitized by this culture in which sexual harassment and rape are common, and I have let my power be taken away. I should have the power to decide what I consider sexual assault, and so should everyone. He wouldn't leave my dorm, he pushed me against a wall and kissed me even though I said no.

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KAT SARK

Skeleton Sphinx

ST. PETERSBURG | 2016

LAUREN CASTLE

Unpack Your Own Backpack of Privilege and/or Lack of Privilege

VICTORIA, BC | DECEMBER 2017

One's identity is constituted by an amalgamation of race, gender, sexuality, nationality, ability, age, class, mental health, and religious beliefs, to name a few. These facets of identity have various intersections in which one may experience both privilege and oppression simultaneously, depending on certain social, geographical and political contexts. Although I am aware that there are many internal and external aspects of my identity that I could discuss in-depth, and that an intersectional perspective is inextricably more valuable than that of singular identity politics, for the purposes of this essay I intend to interrogate the degree of my privilege in terms of race, gender, and sexuality. In turn, I will investigate the ways in which these identifiers relate to social discourse and constructions of hegemonic power.

Race is often illustrated through an essentialist perspective, created and recreated as something intrinsic, inherent, and definitive of the individual. As Ian Lopez explains in "The Social Construction of Race," "one's race is not determined by a single gene or gene cluster;" rather, race is manifested by an "amalgamation of competing societal forces" (28). The conception and permeation of racialization upholds the existence of stereotypes, and intertwines with other common identifiers such as class, even though, "there is no natural congruence between class and racial interests" (Lopez, 27). As I will explore in this section of my essay, there are certain sets of standards, expectations, and values that exist within society that are dependent upon racial segregation. For example, Peggy McIntosh states in her collection of "white privileges:" "Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin colour not to work against the appearance of financial reliability, [and] I can swear, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race" (279).

In turn, with the social construction of race comes a wave of inaccuracies, negative assumptions, and oppressive actions regarding racialized "others." As a white, British, middle-class student, there are multiple aspects of McIntosh's writing that resonate with me. For example, I have my race widely represented in every mainstream media outlet, I can succeed in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race, and I can be almost completely sure that my neighbours will be neutral or pleasant to me, all of which exist amongst many other privileges that I could take for granted (279). In total, McIntosh lists 26 ways in which her race is a source of advantage in a vast number of situations such as real-estate, employment opportunities, accessibility to health services, and assurance of safety in public. Along with these overarching narratives that create and sustain my position as white and privileged, daily aspects of life also serve to convenience me. For example, "I can choose blemish cover or bandages in 'flesh' colour and have them more or less match my skin" (280). Similarly, I am able to purchase nylon tights, lingerie, lipsticks, and other cosmetics named "flesh colour" and know that this applies to me. In this sense, "flesh" is appropriated to mean "white;" this is similarly exercised with the word "nude," and suggests that whiteness is the assumed norm within my society. In turn, the realms of "white privilege" are very much connected to issues of consumerism, capitalism, and racism. I think it is important to notice, highlight, and critique these typologies of privilege because they work in conjunction with the racialization of non-white groups.

In my childhood and early adolescence, I had not been explicitly encouraged or given the tools that one may need to notice or act against their own privilege; similarly, McIntosh notes that, "I realized I had been taught about racism as something that puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage" (278). Thus the "white superior" is not simply defined by who is included in this group, but by who is excluded from it. Perhaps the social construction of race, and its resulting white privilege is not being drawn attention to because it is not practical for those in positions of power to alter a system that benefits them. Furthermore, with relation to apparatuses such as the law, legislation, and the court: "abandoning the attempt to determine who was included in the term "white," the court set about specifying who was excluded" (Lopez, 30). As McIntosh discusses, men often express an

unwillingness to grant that they are privileged, even if they are able to grant that women are systematically unprivileged. Thus, a man may support feminism without admitting that his privilege must be lessened as a result. Arguably, this is similar in the context of racism: it is taught as the disadvantage of the "other," rather than the advantage of the self. Even I am willing to admit that due to the repetition and saturation of these hegemonic ideas, I would be anxious to physically dismantle the system of privilege that has allowed me the recurring opportunity to travel, learn, live comfortably, and express myself freely. Perhaps this is because, "I enjoy unearned skin privilege and have been conditioned into oblivion about its existence" (McIntosh, 278). However, this makes me a "participant in a damaged culture" (McIntosh, 279); therefore, by means of higher education, self-education, and personal experience, I have gained a greater awareness of my own privilege, encouraging me to initiate conversations and interventions in positive change. Although I am unable to discuss every aspect of my identity and privilege, I think it is important to utilize an intersectional lens and elevate the fact that "we need similarly to examine the daily experience of having age advantage, or ethnic advantage, or physical ability, or advantage related to nationality, religion, or sexual orientation." As well as being white, I am advantaged by being born in England, as well as being able-bodied, and heterosexual.

Another significant identity in my "backpack of privilege" is my sexuality. I am a white, heterosexual woman, in a relationship with a white, heterosexual man. Essentially, this places me within the "idealized" and "normalized" framework of "heteronormativity." This is a term coined by Michael Warner, referring to the hegemonic view that heterosexuality is the presumed sexual orientation, internalized by society as being "normal," "natural" and "ideal." Hegemonic power refers to the dominant group that has the ability and influence to make certain state values, beliefs, and ideas seem to reflect the collective. As a heterosexual woman, positive projections of my sexuality are often portrayed by the media, by pop culture, by the law, and any other apparatus that can repeat and saturate social norms. Having said this, female sexuality is not always portrayed in a positive way, which contributes to the fact we are still living in an age of rape culture.

My privileged sexual identity also relates to Gayle Rubin's hierarchical diagram titled the "charmed circle," demonstrating how sexual relationships such as mine are deemed "good," "normal," "natural" and "blessed." Per Rubin, this applies to individuals who are married, and in monogamous, procreative, and private relationships (152). Of course, the gravity and pressures surrounding this framework vary geographically and interculturally. Thus, my experiences of both privilege and oppression do not speak for any "collective" or "definitive" heterosexual woman. Although it is not prominent at this stage of my life, there are multiple welfare and tax benefits for heterosexual people, married couples, and couples that are family-planning that portray this idea of heteronormative privilege. In a similar way to that of my race, another important aspect of my privileged sexuality is that my sexual orientation is not weighted by a devastating past and ongoing struggle that other sexual identities are. For example, in the nineteenth century homosexuality was illegal and medicalized as a mental illness. In the context of Rubin's "charmed circle," within its outer limits stand individuals that are homosexual, unmarried, having non-reproductive sex, and having public or casual sex. All of which are illustrated in Rubin's diagram as socially considered "bad, abnormal, unnatural, and damned" (152). Sexual identities that do not adhere to systemized ideas of "normalcy" are marginalised by hegemonic power. Contrastingly, as a heterosexual my sexuality is almost never considered, defined, or asked to be justified.

Perhaps the idea of Christmas is another way of epitomizing the intricate ways in which heterosexual couples and the accompanying construction of the "nuclear family" are fundamentally privileged in our society. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick is an interesting theorist who discusses Christmas in her work "Tendencies." She states, "the pairing Christmas/families has become increasingly tautological" (5). I find it true that the word "Family" is signified to mean a heterosexual couple, preferably married, that assume their assigned gender roles and have children. This image is privileged, normalized, and presented in westernized society as something to aspire to. In turn, there is very little representation of LGBTQ+ communities. One popularized depiction of my own sexuality may be observed in the "John Lewis" annual Christmas advertisement, promoting a British department store. The 2014 episode streams a montage of heterosexual couples, with no representation of LGBTQ+ communities. Even the extras holding hands in the snow, kissing on park benches, decorating the tree, project heteronormative images; all the while, the accompanying Tom Odell soundtrack repeats "it's real love." I am the targeted consumer here; I am the

one made to feel included and represented. As a result, any socially regarded "non-normative" or "unreal" consumers are marginalized. As Sedgwick discusses, this makes Christmas an exclusive and privileged concept, thus putting my own privilege into a focused context.

In each facet of my identity, "privilege and oppression are woven into the fabric of everyday life" (Johnson, 31). As I have discussed, race and sexuality are prominent examples of the way in which social systems have privileged me. However, I am simultaneously oppressed through being a woman. I am marginalized by my gender, and subject to sexism, patriarchy, sexualized violence, and many other ramifications of male power. It is important to note that this universal, monolithic definition of "woman" is no longer a viable way of categorizing this gender. This is further depicted in Sojourner Truth's famous speech "Ain't I a Woman?" delivered at the Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio, on May 29, 1851. She explains how the experience of oppression for a white woman (such as me), is not directly applicable to that of a black woman's. In turn, it is imperative that feminism is intersectional because intersectionality was a lived experience before it became a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in the 1990s. For the purposes of this essay, my discussion of womanhood is shaped by a somewhat isolated personal perspective, and further supplemented by various texts.

Allan Johnson argues that "patriarchy is to breathe in misogynist images of women as objectified sexual property valued primarily for their usefulness to men" (36); by taking part in this system one is maintaining it. Yet, this normalized system of female oppression is problematically illustrated as unavoidable, unchangeable, and something intrinsic about the individual. This process of "socialization" is, "merely a process, a mechanism for training people to participate in social systems" (33); thus, gender inequality is a controlled and continuous concept. As a woman, I am subject to unequal pay; women in Canada earn 70 cents to the male dollar, and across Europe the pay gap averages at 17%. Similarly, Johnson highlights how the historical dichotomy of male versus female, the public sphere versus the private sphere, is a construction that has been sustained historically and still permeates in our society: "to embrace patriarchy still is to believe that mothers should stay home and that fathers should work outside the home" (35). There is a relentless pressure that a woman's place is in the home, or if she is employed, that she is engaged with dirty work, emotional work, or body work. When considering this system from a personal perspective, I remember being told by a teacher that "you don't have to know straight away what career path you want to take. It is more important for your brother to start getting serious because at the end of the day, he will have to earn a living and provide for a family someday."

As a woman, I am also at risk of sexual violence. I experience catcalling, I am expected to adhere to impossible beauty standards (as seen in the documentary Killing Us Softly), I am judged by the clothes I wear and judged by the clothes I don't wear, and I am sexually objectified whilst expected to remain pure, innocent, weak and passive. I also feel oppressed by the fact that I must medicalize my body with contraception, and accept that the autonomy I have over my body is legalized and controlled. All of these factors accumulate to uphold the idea that although my intellect and abilities are valued, the most valuable aspect of my womanhood still remains procreation.

Throughout this essay, I have focused on interrogating my own privilege in terms of race and sexuality, whilst also considering my lack of privilege as a woman. Although I have divided my identity into these definable facets, it is notable that identity is a fluid and unfixed phenomenon. In years to come, I will also have to consider age, and be faced by people commenting on whether I should be having children because I am "running out of time" to have them biologically – as if that is the only way to have them. The process of unpacking this "invisible backpack of privilege," elucidates the ways in which privilege itself is intended to exist invisibly, remaining an unquestioned result of the social construction of race, sexuality and gender. Everything that I have discussed is perhaps relevant to Johnson's exploration of systems of internalization. Essentially, hegemonic ideas become normalized and naturalized through repetition and saturation, causing a systematic overpowering of marginalized groups within society. Through my education, I am able to recognise and dismantle my own privileged position within society. However, the very fact I have access to this education is a privilege in itself.

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ANNA CHADWICK

Fire, in Motion

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

"Fire, in Motion"
Photo by Anna Chadwick
2017

This mask, with the wing of a ptarmigan and nested in moose hide, was created by a young woman to represent the culture and strength of women in her Nation. For her, fire represents her strength to "stand our grounds and put our foot down when anything is not ok."

This mask was created by a participant in an arts-based research study, Sisters Rising. Sisters Rising participants are Indigenous girls, young women, and youth of all genders from Indigenous communities in British Columbia, Canada. This project focuses on challenging the victim-blaming climate of racialized gender violence by recentering Indigenous values and teachings and linking body sovereignty to questions of decolonization and land sovereignty. In the arts-based workshops and interviews I utilized emergent and respectful visual methods to incorporate, restory, and recenter dignity, land, cultural values, and connection to land and body sovereignty. With narratives, art, and materials from the land, girls and youth expressed compassionate visions for their community. I asked questions such as:

- Where do you find strength?
- What do girls need to be leaders?
- What do girls need to talk about sexualized violence?
- What materials from your territory (rocks, hide, bark, etc.) symbolize your strengths?

In this research study participants are warriors in their struggles. In their art and words they/we express power, resistance, and will, mobilizing sovereignty through wellness circles, traditional justice systems, and connections to the land. Connections to land and body sovereignty are required unsettle intersections of hegemonic "repetition of norms" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 12) that appropriate narratives of Indigenous girls as damaged and "at risk."

The photograph incorporates art and a "felt sense" of the resistance girls convey through their images, words, and art. A "felt sense" is an "embodied knowing that

conveys dimensions of experiential meaning, not accessible through words alone or others' authority" (Rappaport, 2013, p. 201). Gloria Anzaldúa describes embodied knowing as a "voice, at the edge of things" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 50). Images, creativity, and connection to land hold possibilities to move beyond the ordinary and transform intersections of colonialism imposed on Indigenous communities.

Feminist Indigenous scholars and activists Natalie Clark (2016) and Audre Simpson (2013) provide foundational theories that challenge margins and intersections of colonialism. In "Red Intersectionality," Clark (2016) unsettles damage-centered narratives that depict Indigenous girls as at-risk victims, focusing instead on the vitality of local traditional knowledge and the strengths of a collective community that hold the potential to blanket youth in compassion and "relational and intimate spaces of witnessing" (p. 56). Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson supports the holistic perspectives of Indigenous intersectionality and argues that "we have to understand people within the multiplicity of frames that shape their lives – everyday frames of experience that they choose, that they inherit, that are imposed on them and that may be transformed, disintegrated, forgotten or ritualized" (Simpson, 2003, p. 41).

In my mother's culture fire is ceremonial – it carries offerings from human beings to the gods. This fire is a wish for girls to be heard and witnessed with dignity and honor in their communities:
"The art of setting a fire…with intent, vision and motion, emergence, the mobilization of the spiritual world and committed action, one sets a fire…To build a fire we need vision, intent, collectivization and action. To promote life, we need the fire within to propel us through the hoops and challenges of resurgence." (Simpson, 2011, p. 147)

Fire, always in motion, is not confined to rigid boundaries. Lighting this fire in this image was intentional-activism and motion is vital to the resurgence of young women in their communities who continue, as they always have, to shape their lives with vision and possibilities of transformation. What possibilities emerge when girls create, connecting to land and culture? What is possible when girls and women create together in community with self-determination and dignity?

I am a graduate student and principal investigator completing my thesis under the supervision of Dr. Sandrina de Finney, School of Child and Youth Care, at the University of Victoria. This study is in partnership with the Siem Smun'eem Indigenous Child Wellbeing Research Network and the Northwest Inter-nation Family and Community Services Society (NIFCS). Funding for this research is provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). This study is part of an international project called Networks for Change and Wellbeing that is being conducted in other Indigenous communities in Canada and South Africa.

I would like to express my deep gratitude and appreciation to Dr. Sandrina de Finney for her ongoing, inspiring encouragement and support for this project. I also express my gratitude to the dynamic Sister Rising team, Angela Scott, Chantal Adams, Nicole Land, Shantelle Moreno, Shezell-Rae Sam, for their creativity and sisterhood. I would also like to acknowledge the national and international Networks4Change team for their support and contributions to this research.

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TOBIAS DIETRICH

Social Justice, Blood Donation, and Gay Rights

BREMEN, GERMANY | JANUARY 2018

One of the richest forms of contentment is helping others to experience happiness. Social justice, in this context, means opening up possibilities for people to do and give their best because everyone should be able to live a fulfilling life, not limited by institutional restraints or social exclusion, no matter where they come from, whom they love, or which values influenced them.

Providing pragmatic and targeted solutions for any group in distress, social justice is the necessary result of what equality means, something that tends to lose its meaning the more it gets proclaimed, but also needs to be remembered and re-established to inspire engagement and change. Social justice helps to develop a strong character able to contribute community, protected by encouragement and support.

A very instructive example of a successful human rights campaign, from which other battles for human rights can learn insightful and enriching perspectives, is feminism. Through its long-lasting and evolving course, we learn that there is no right or wrong, and that we can draw constructive lessons from the historical outline of feminist movements.

Intersectional feminism helps to bring feminist debates to a point beyond the accusations of conflicting opinions, focusing instead on the many versions of discrimination in their complex interactions. Against this background, I am interested in the question of excluding men who have sex with men and homosexuals from blood donation. This is legitimized by a regulation that has been passed on the basis of obsolete and disputable findings in epidemiologic statistics of HIV infections, and that needs to be discussed anew in the context of human rights with regard to new diagnostic technology and improved life circumstances facilitating more secure and epidemic-preventing public spaces, acknowledgement, and same-sex marriage. As a film scholar with a background in public health, I am attempting to shed light on latent social issues as injustice reflected in audiovisual media. I am particularly interested in the questions, what and who is visible in our society and through which channels. In a broader sense, my work in the humanities is aiming at broadening the minds, supporting personal growth, and providing assistance to confront oneself with particular issues in order to form informed opinions, and to be able to take a stance. I see this as necessary to confront a counterfactual society – the issues of our time, and the way we want to live and engage with others.

For instance, one can have a look at the complex debates on homosexual blood donation in Germany, which oscillate from sexual health prevention to the infringements on the rights to give back to society against the background of social justice. Donating blood goes beyond the claim of helping people in ultimate need. This is something that the German Red Cross is advertising, giving people the possibility to help others. And blood most possibly is the ultimate gift, a metaphor for what makes someone unique. This is especially of high importance with regards of rare blood types as Zero Negative, which are 6% of the German and Austrian population and 7% of the Canadian population have (cf. Austrian Red Cross, "Das ABO-System," accessed January 19, 2018, https://www.roteskreuz.at/blutspende/blut-im-detail/wissenswertes-ueber-blut/blutgruppen/; Canadian Blood Services – Société canadienne du sang, "Types & Rh System," accessed January 19, 2018, https://web.archive.org/web/20141104161542/http://www.bloodservices.ca/centreapps/internet/uw_v502_mainengine.nsf/page/Blood%20Types%20and%20Rh%20System?OpenDocument). Blood types such as A Negative, B Negative, and AB Negative are even more rare, but the specificity about Zero is that it is incompatible to A, B and AB. Someone of this blood type cannot receive any type but Zero, otherwise the body has a life-threatening immunologic reaction to the foreign blood. Persons with Zero Negative blood type are often asked to donate blood, and even get particular invitation cards, because this rare blood type is urgently needed. However, persons are still rejected if they happen to have had homosexual intercourse.

On April 29, 2015 the Luxembourg based Court of Justice of the European Union reassessed the subject and came to entrusting the single national courts with the accountability of setting up regulations. In France from where the suit was initially filed, HIV has been prevailing at the most in the group constituted by men having had sexual relation with men and, according to statistics (that not only seem obsolete and need to be re-assessed almost ten years later, but that also cover only the all too short time span from 2003 through 2008), this group would have a rate of infection 200 times greater than the heterosexuals' one. That is why the French regulation banned men having had sexual relation with other men from blood donation at the first, and other countries followed (cf. Court of Justice of the European Union, Press Release No 46/15. Judgment in Case C-528/13. April 29, 2015, accessed January 19, 2018, https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2015-04/cp150046en.pdf).
Men who had sexual relation with other men (MSM) are legally excluded from blood donation because they are considered a risk group. In the German context, this is regulated by the German Federal Medical Association and the Paul-Ehrlich-Institute, who set the rules in the context of the emergence of HI-infections back in the 1980s (in Germany, it is the Law on Regulation of Transfusion Management, paragraph 6). This law applies equally to promiscuous heterosexuals.

Through a new resolution of the Federal Medical Association on August 7, 2017, men who had sexual relations with men became eligible for blood donation as long as they could verify that they have not had homosexual intercourse for one year. Heterosexual men can donate blood as long as they are in a relationship for at least twelve months—a barely verifiable condition which, in order to be applicable, depends on the donor's sincerity. By contrast, the Italian, Bulgarian, Polish, Portuguese and Latvian blood donation questionnaire asks for the individual risk behavior instead of the sexual orientation.

In Canada, the same legislation went into effect in August 2016, and legal action has already been taken by a Humber College student and LGBTQ+ activist Christopher Karas. If there is going to be a one year ban, according to Karas, "it should apply across the board." (Sara Florez, "Humber activist protests LGBTQ+ blood ban," Humber Et Cetera, accessed January 19, 2018, http://humberetc.com/lgbtq-blood-ban-controversy/).

In Germany, the Lesben- und Schwulenverband Deutschland (LSVD)—a national LGBTQ+ organization—is pushing for a legal correction and generates political pressure on the Federal Ministry of Health (see Lesben- und Schwulenverband in Deutschland e.V., "Ausschluss homosexueller Männer von der Blutspende," accessed January 19, 2018, https://www.lsvd.de/recht/ratgeber/blutspende.html#c12333).

From a sexual health prevention point of view, it is reasonable not to infect someone with a lethal blood transfusion. Yet this thinking contains one decisive weak point: we talk about homosexuals who are more and more secure about their identity and recently have more legal space to live a monogamous life. The differentiation between hetero- and supposedly homosexual promiscuity ignores the fact that heterosexual persons have unprotected sex. Female sex workers' clients, for example, pay more for unprotected intercourse leaving no choice to the sex worker, who are very often working below poverty level and rely on their clients' payment. The difference is, the group of homosexual men is tangible, whereas the anonymous group of sex workers' clients is not. When asked by a clinician about promiscuous sexual relations, who would admit to it? Hence, prevention health policy is grounded on an "irrebuttable presumption" that gay men are more promiscuous than heterosexual men (Court of Justice of the European Union, Press Release No 111/14. Advocate General's Opinion in Case C-528/13. July 17, 2014, accessed January 19, 2018, https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2014-07/cp140111en.pdf).

Moreover, setting up a general risk group implies a wide-spread promiscuity among MSM ignoring the fact that many homosexuals are living an ordinary, monogamous life with one partner, and test themselves before having unprotected intercourse. If ever there has been a wide-spread promiscuity amongst homosexual people, it may have been because they were forced to live out their identity in a system of repression, the fear of getting caught, and the absence of any legal facility to live a monogamous life. This has changed, but it has not yet been reflected in other laws. Instead of banning homosexuals from blood donations, should we not forge ahead with the public and legal acknowledgement of homosexual rights, aiming to reduce the effect of increasing HIV infections due to insufficient sexual health education, as it is happening in Russia since the 2013 LGBTQ+ propaganda bill and

the eradication of gay rights, where the spread of HIV virus has recently increased due to the lack of sexual education? (Cf. "Health Minister Warns Russia's HIV Epidemic Could Spiral Out of Control," The Moscow Times. October 25, 2015, accessed January 19, 2018, https://themoscowtimes.com/news/health-minister-warns-russias-hiv-epidemic-could-spiral-out-of-control-50448.).

The debate becomes even more grotesque with regards to the German Blood Donation Service's (DRK Blutspendedienst) latest promo video, which supports stereotypical depiction of masculinity with its slogan, "Real guys do not only give applause" (Echte Kerle spenden nicht nur Applaus). The film is made by Marius Grein under the academic supervision of Professor Holger Schmidhuber from the Mainz University of Applied Sciences. The video presents an allegedly tough motorcycle gang somewhere in the wilderness, where the alpha male leader picks out the only short, slightly chubby man, who is supposed to look ridiculous on his tiny, less "virile" bike to be "the first one." In this depiction, initiation rite meets patterns of virginity. Two members haul their crying, resisting captive to a trailer where he ends up receiving a pink (!) Cinderella-themed patch on his arm (the fairytale about a teenage girl transforming to a grown-up princess here combined with the topic of the first drop of blood). He triumphantly leaves the DRK trailer passing by the other lined-up donators. He donated blood. All old-fashioned stereotypes about being hard, strong, brave and virile combined in less than one minute. Thus, violent and (self-)destructive patriarchal constructions of masculinity are not only reinforced in mainstream culture, but in our legal and medical frameworks as well.

The Swiss Blood Donation Service has condemned the decision to enforce the one-year period regulation on their website, reacting to its country's resolution from July 1, 2017 (see Blutspende SRK Schweiz, "Sind MSM von der Blutspende ausgeschlossen?," accessed January 19, 2018, https://www.blutspende.ch/de/blutspende/spenderinformationen/blutspende_die_wichtigsten_fragen). Whereas the German equivalent, which followed just two weeks later (and two weeks before the Federal Medical Association's new resolution was announced), published a stereotype reproducing video on the World Blood Donor Day festivity in Berlin, claiming that blood donation is for "real guys," and completely ignoring the politics of visualization they perpetuate.

Exclusion from blood donation on the grounds of sexual orientation is not only institutionally discriminatory, but also a tolerated form of non-acceptance in society, legitimized through important public health concerns. It forced people to out themselves, to justify their love and lifestyle – something nobody should be forced to do. And there even is now necessity, considering that the new highly evolved serologic testing of blood samples has been improved to detect the HI-virus within a successively narrowed-down diagnostic window.

How can homosexuality get accepted as part of everyday life when it still is considered to be disease-spreading, or less "manly," and thus less "normal"? Exclusion from blood donation is an injustice for healthy people, and so the inconsistency of the most recent blood donation regulation fosters taking institutional discouragement and social rejection to their absurd limits.

ANNA HECKADON

Protest Sign

REYKJAVÍK OPEN AIR MUSEUM | 2017

RILEY VAN DER LINDEN

The Birth of Gender History and the Issue of Individual Experience

VICTORIA, BC | MARCH 2018

By the late 1970s, women's history had a serious problem for those practicing in the field. Feminist historians, such as Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott, were beginning to question who exactly these "women" of "women's history" were. What were their names? What were their stories? Women's history had failed to answer these questions. It also failed to illustrate that not all women are alike, and that other aspects of personhood (such as class, race, religion, and sexuality) heavily impact a woman's historical and personal experience.

These women were mostly white, middle-class women; when you open most university history textbooks to a section on women, very rarely does it discuss women of colour or women in poverty. These women would be discussed in sections of "working class" or "people of colour," but never as both simultaneously. These issues gave rise to the study of gender history. The discipline of women's history began to fall apart and split into two streams, both known as gender history. The first trend studies the relationship between men and women, and analyzes the ways in which gender roles are conditioned in a social, political, cultural, economic, and racial settings. The second approach, however, leads to a more theoretical historical trend heavily influenced by postmodernism and post-structuralism. It is here, in this second form, that many gender historians, such as Butler and Scott, do their historical work. I outline and analyze their works, and how they are tearing apart the existing notions and ideological frameworks surrounding personhood and individuality in history. Along with understanding the theory, it is crucial to analyze how gender history has been influenced by postmodernism, and what that meant for the study of gender history, and how it differs from the previous expression of women's history.

Judith Butler, in her article "Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of 'Postmodernism,'" is not negating the reliability of the movement, but is rather saying that many of the ideas that came from this study of history are at odds with one another. She uses the example of Derrida and Lyotard, two intellectuals who were crucial in building the foundation for postmodernism and poststructuralism, but whose ideas vastly differed from each other (Butler 1992:5). The fact that postmodernism can group together so many different ideas regarding history and texts, but still be known under one unified name of postmodernism, is paradoxical to Butler. She uses this ideological framework to discuss feminism and gender, and how previously, there had been a tendency in women's history as a discipline "to speak as and for women" [sic]. This needs to be reconciled with the notion that women in women's history are all different, and therefore all have different individual experiences. By imposing normative ideological structures on the female experience, individual experiences that have to do with aspects of womanhood that do not explicitly deal with the idea of gender are erased. She argues that any effort to give universal or specific content to the category of women will make identity and experience a point of departure for the study of women's historians, even though this can never hold as the solidifying ground of a feminist historical movement (Butler 1992:15).

Her argument illustrates a significant shift away from the traditional way of studying women's history because it calls into question the categories of historical analysis that historians work within today. These categories, according to Butler, need to be reshaped and reconfigured, if not destroyed entirely. She asks questions about the experiences of women and how they are presented in history. As in history textbooks and other media of historical work, the experiences of women are portrayed as not differing much from each other, when in fact the experiences of women are largely different from person to person, and should not be normalized to one linear story in history.

Joan W. Scott takes up the issue of individual experience in more detail in her article "Experience," in which she provides an analysis of the differences between the experiences of various people throughout history, and how the current analysis of these differences fit comfortably into the disciplinary framework of history as a study. Scott argues against the

traditional rhetorical treatment of evidence, and how the historians who use it end up making false existing interpretations (Scott 24). Their arguments on the referential notion of evidence, a notion of evidence which denies that it is anything but a reflection of what is real, and not the real itself. When the evidence presented is in fact evidence of an individual's experience, Scott claims that it weakens the critical thrust of histories of difference because these individual experiences remain within the epistemological frame of traditional history, and lose the potential to examine assumptions and practices that exclude considerations of difference (Scott 25).

For example, as stated earlier, women being treated solely by their gender in history textbooks takes away the agency of these women, and normalizes the experience of these women to be the same among them all. In reality, these women all come from different backgrounds, are of different races, practice different religions. These historians take the agency of the individual and make it appear as an inherent attribute of the person, instead of acknowledging the power systems that exist in our society and the lack of agency an individual might have in a given experience. Any and all questions about the constructed nature of the experience are left aside, and the evidence of the experience become evidence only for the fact of difference. Scott argues that the evidence of the experience is not used to analyze how this difference came to be, nor is it being used to figure out what needs to be done about this said difference. The evidence of experience is often used to reproduce rather than contest the given ideological systems that are prevalent in our modern society.

In terms of the histories of gender, the evidence of experience that reproduces ideological systems are those which rest on notions of a natural or established opposition between sexual practices and social conventions, as well as between homosexuality and heterosexuality. For example, some histories are written to document the "hidden" world of homosexuality show the impact of silence and repression on the experience of an individual. Making this experience visible in history often comes before any sort of critical examination of the workings of the ideological system that this experience is a part of. This includes its categories of representation (such as race, gender, and class), its premises about what these categories of representation mean and how they operate in the system, and its notions regarding subjects, origin, and cause. Making visible these experiences normalizes the individual experiences of homosexuals because it works within the already established system. The experience of the homosexual continues to work within a "gay/straight" and "man/woman" binary, when often, the experience of this individual does not fit on this established spectrum. The ideology surrounding the established system is not brought into question. This merely illustrates that this individual and their experiences exist, but not how they came to exist. In this way, it can be seen that the individuals do not have experiences, but that they are subjects who are constituted through their experiences. This gives agency to the experience, but takes away agency from the individual.

Historians reify these constructed categories of identity. Judith Butler discusses this idea in her article "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." Her article argues that gender identity is nothing but a performance rather than something innate (Butler 1995:1097). This performance is then fit into the existing categories of gender identity that exist in society, illustrating that they are nothing but a social construction, of how someone performs their gender identity can change from day to day.

The fact that gender is a performance comes from the idea that it is constituted by a series of performative acts. These "acts" constitute social reality through language, gesture, and all manner of symbolic social sign, as established by their repetitive use by an individual. Butler derived the idea from Simone de Beauvoir, who famously said that "one is not born, but, rather, becomes [sic] a woman." De Beauvoir appropriated and reinterpreted the idea of constituting acts from the tradition of gender coming from direct experience. Thus, gender is not a stable form of identity, but rather an identity "tenuously constituted in time," instituted through a stylized repetition of acts. The individual performing their gender does so in a specific way so many times that it becomes normalized, and their gender can be regarded in a certain way. These performative "acts" include gestures, bodily movements, dress, and speech, all of which have been deemed to be of a specific gender. When performed together, these acts create an image that society perceives to be a gender.

Butler claims that the human body is a "historical idea" rather than a natural species (Butler 1098), heavily gendered by the structures and ideological frameworks that govern our experience. The body is under the influence of a large number of societal norms and ideas that go far beyond what the body actually is: a body. Gender is a social construct: when we see "gender," this is something that we are imposing on the body, not something that the body was born into. We feel the need to categorize people into boxes to make them easier for us to understand. This also makes it easier for historians to work with, and makes it easy for them to draw larger conclusions about these gendered groups. The material and natural dimensions of the human body are not denied, per se, but are instead seen as being distinct from the process by which the body comes to bear cultural meanings (Butler 1098).

Butler asserts that the body is a set of possibilities to be continually realized. The body only gains meaning through a concrete and historically mediated expression of the world. The meaning given to a woman's body, for example, is given the meaning of "woman" because throughout history, that is what it has repeatedly been seen as, and this is then a reflection of the type of world we live in. How we perform ourselves, and by extension our gender, is perceived to be one gender or another based on the historically accepted conceptions of how gender is interpreted and rehearsed in our society.

For example, one gender performance could be seen as "woman" in many Western cultures. But this same gender performance, if performed in some Indigenous cultures, could be seen as a different gender, such as "two-spirit," the notion that some people are simultaneously both genders at once. One performs one's body differently from one's contemporaries and from one's embodied predecessors and successors. To be a woman, according to Butler, is to have become a woman, to compel the body to conform to a historical idea of "woman," and to induce the body to become a cultural sign. Yet if these bodily conceptions of gender are changed or erased, or if people are not expected to conform to a certain gender, then the entire notion of "woman" is gone, and we can begin to analyze the individual, unique experiences of every person, instead of grouping people into categories that make sense based on our currently ideological framework of gender binaries.

It is for this reason that people who fail to perform their gender "correctly" are regularly punished by their peers. They are punished through constant reiteration and reinforcement of the gender they are expected to conform to. The historically repeated performative acts that have created this man/woman gender binary throughout Western history and modern Western society has become accepted as the societal norm." As a result, anyone who chooses to stray from this and perform their gender differently will be ostracized. This binary which gender performance has created, as well as this conception of gender performance being a historical act, is a precedent for how history is written. When discussing categories of experience in history, men and women are grouped in their individual categories; no room is made available for those individuals who do not fall on this heteronormative gender spectrum. This can also be extended to other historical categories of analysis. For example, the "working class" is analyzed solely as that single category; all other aspects of personhood are normalized to one identical standard, so that there is little represented variation within this category.

Butler proposes a "politics of performative gender acts," that both describes existing gender identities, and offers a prescriptive view about the kind of gender reality that there needs to be (Butler 1105). The description of existing gender identities needs to expose the reifications which implicitly serve as substantial gender cores of identities, and needs to elucidate both the act and the strategy of disapproval which at once constitutes and conceals gender as we live it. Butler urges her reader that they need to think of a world in which "acts, gestures, the visual body, the clothed body, [and] the various physical attributes usually associated with gender," express nothing (1105). While she is not asking for a prescription of gender that is utopian in nature, she wants the complexity of gender to be acknowledged, and society to understand that gender is fluid, based on how one performs it at a given time. This can be extended to how history is practiced: Butler's argument calls for an acknowledgement that within the categories in which history is written, there is a point where the historian will bring into question these complexities of gender and experience, and say that this was not the case for all people within the category they are writing.

This brings into question how we can historically write about experience without playing into the

system that the experience is inherently a part of, which is one of the main issues of gender history when Scott and Butler were writing in the late 1970s and into the 1980s. Joan W. Scott in her argument suggests that there needs to be a shift in how we write our histories of the experiences of individuals, and a shift in how we focus on the philosophy of our history. What she demands is that there be a move from naturalizing experience through belief in relationships between words, things, ideas, and existing documented experiences, to one that takes all categories of analysis as "contextual, contested, and contingent" (Scott 36). She offers an intersectional approach that acknowledges all experiences as inherently different based on when they happen, and to whom they happen. These experiences then need to be interpreted, and call into question the existing imposing structures that surround this interpretation.

This is where the tension between gender history and history as a discipline appears. How can historians take the incredibly important and insightful knowledge of gender history and incorporate it into the historical canon? The problems that these ideas bring up show that history does need to change. However, history as a study is so set on grouping people together to illustrate what life was like for the majority of people at the time the history is discussing. If historians limit themselves to individual cases, it will result in nothing but a series of case studies and micro-histories.

Perhaps what the discipline needs, then, is a combination of the two. Historians can continue to make their larger, more encompassing claims about the categories they decide upon that work better for their writings. In addition, historians need to provide examples of where this is not the case. They need to acknowledge that some of their categories are contested and socially constructed, and iterate to their reader why this is. Why are women separated from men in history? Why are homosexual men separated from heterosexual men? What are the implications of drawing these dividing lines?

Scott and Butler's writings provide important examples as to how the study of history has developed into a binary-based discipline. While there have been some improvements since the postmodern era in which they were writing, as historians are beginning to write more histories about minority and more encompassing categories, such as "lower class women" and "upper class male homosexuals" to give a more specific analysis of groups of people, the fact that these categories are still in place to structure our discussion of people remains a problem for gender historians. In the end, perhaps we can work to incorporate the work of gender historians in with the works of all historians, and find a happy middle ground. Needless to say, both Scott and Butler raise important questions that gender historians will likely continue to address in the years to come.

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RILEY VAN DER LINDEN

Stolpersteine

BERLIN | 2016

Poetry

MIKHAIL BUSCH

Dear Sister

VICTORIA, BC | JANUARY 2018

Here I stand
Sword abandoned to the sand
Loosen your quiver
Dare your breath to shiver
Warriors of a twin moon
These idealizations are our ruin
Unarmed, bear your woes
Let the waves of understanding wash our toes
Love and Hate
Different shades of the same passion
Yet our souls crave more than a truthful spiritual ration
It is never enough to be stoically tough
Muscular and handsomely rough
It is never enough to be free of domestic restraint
Emotionally complicated underneath beautiful facial painThe
pressure crushes all
Yet they place us on a pedestal so tall
Gender, Identity, Sexuality and Politics
Nothing more than deceitful shallow tricks
They can never fully define you
For there is always more when it comes to being true
Even when we are broken and bloodied
We are merely literary and theoretical motifs to be studied
The individual path
So consumed in a lonely wrath
The promise of the horizon that there shall be a tomorrow
Some wise ones would say we need only yield
Forsake the shield
Surrender to light
Give up on this “Us and Them” fight
Your heart need not fill with doubt
For the thunder shall always shout
Behold our blunder
Ourselves asunder
Sacred Alchemy yearning to Unity
With purity to meet at the sunrise
Wherein our mutual distrust dies
Open arms with willingness to forgive
Knowing all are worthy to live
Let our hands touch
It is a deep burden, all too much
To be full of heart
For the sake of understanding is always a promising start

DAVID ESO

The Defense

VICTORIA, BC | DECEMBER 2018

The defense will struggle
to show the deceased dented her heart
daily for seventeen years
before it crumbled,
then with quickness
recoiled from bullets
while her husband slept
in their queen-sized bed.

I object! Her heart,
while breaking into pieces,
had not crumbled--
not all the way down.

Exhibit A: she extended
one underserved mercy,
not waking the deceased before she fired
and fired again.

David Eso studies Canadian literature of the long-1970s at the University of Victoria, where he helps select poems for The Malahat Review. He co-edited with Jeanette Lynes the anthology Where the Nights are Twice as Long (Goose Lane Editions, 2015).

KARINE HACK

Love Letter to my Grandma

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

Willow-waist, yellow hair, wed at twenty,
You were a mother before you knew much of
Love—vows made so young—were you happy?
No one taught you the words for places of
Pleasure or play. Did he find your body
In veil of night, touch you till you were taut—
Or were babies your kingdom, bedrooms empty
Of lips, fingers, [tits]: your silhouette unsought.
Grandma, was that when you first began to pray?
I hope you still knew pleasure, the way
You lose your outline in its embrace, the way
You dissolve like honey spilling from a
Spoon, bloom of jasmine and hot water—
Your body (so bright! soft!)—more than a mother.

KAT SARK

Rosenstrasse

BERLIN | 2016

SONIA HILL

A Place to Begin Again

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

How would you reconcile with the Moon?
Would you kneel at her mercy and beg for forgiveness?
Beg Her not to drown you in Her oceans.
How would you reconcile with the water?
Would you kiss her where she caresses the shore,
begging Her to continue to provide like she always has.
How would you reconcile with the Earth, our Mother,
the land you walk on, the land you claim to own but have never
taken the time to know?
Would you bathe Her in your tears praying she doesn't shake, break
open and swallow you whole?
How would you reconcile with the Woman you break open, extract
from, empty?
How would you reconcile with Her mother who can do nothing
but watch?
I ask you as a treaty Woman, how will you reconcile with all of
my relations,
for I can no longer accept half empty offerings.
I ask you while my sisters are continually stolen from their homes,
families, communities, lives.
While my brothers are murdered and the blame is never on the
white man's hands but our blood sure is.
Reconciliation is not a two-way road, it is a two-row river where my
people are not disposable, where my relations are not commodities,
where my stories are recognized truths, not romanticized myth.
I ask you as a treaty woman to recognize reconciliation as another
attempt at assimilation
as you pack it back into the colonial ship it came from.
We cannot heal our nation to nation wounds without starting
where we began.
So I ask you as a Kanienien'kehá:ka woman, kin to this land,
how will you reconcile with the Moon?

Sonia Jakji is a Kanien'kehá:ka woman from Six Nations of the Grand River territory. She was born and raised in Hamilton, Ontario where she attended McMaster University completing an Honours Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Studies and Sociology. While attending McMaster University Sonia contributed to the Indigenous community through the co-creation of the Indigenous Students and Studies Welcome Week team, while also coordinating a mentorship program for Indigenous students. Sonia is currently completing a Master of Arts degree in Sociology at the University of Victoria under the supervision of Dr. Martha McMahon. Her research explores the need to decolonize reconciliation starting with healing relations with the nonhuman world in moving towards more positive relationship between Indigenous nations and the settler state of Canada.

ELAINE J. LABERGE

Oh, White Man!

VICTORIA, BC | JANUARY 2018

I'm going to conduct a method experiment.
Curious bodies lean
You're the participants.
Hesitant bodies rise

It'll be a collaborative project.

Tense bodies retract

I've got ethics approval.
Sh...
Stressed silence strains against hissing industrial lights
Computer chairs squeak as bodies squirm
Fear embodied

You're going to keep a journal on your thoughts and experiences with academic voice.
An experiment
collaborative auto-ethnography
sans-trust
Set aside wonders
epistemology ontology methodology
The Philosophical
The Theoretical

Oh, White Man!

You'll share your journal with me.
Write. Write. Write.
Don't think.
Write about your experiences with academic voice.
Past experiences why
Your journal entries will become part of the 'data set.'
Sanitize anonymize safeguard male power
I'll review your journal.
I'll correct your lived experiences and knowledge.
You'll perform faux-objectivity on my subjectivity

Oh, White Man!

Sitting on your gilded throne
Command that I offer up my inner thoughts
My lived experiences
My positionality
Bow to you in subservience
Subjugate my knowledge
Serve up...

Expose my personal journal
King of the privileged pillars
Oh, relationality, you are invisible!
Oh, reflexivity, jump off the page!

If you don't participate, you have to do something else.
Neither you nor the university ethics board considered "dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen" (Milner IV, 392)

I cannot challenge the colonial, patriarchal power you wield
I cannot topple
your power to foist upon me your prescriptive knowledge
you "power to prescribe and proscribe the limits" of knowledge (Coleman, 1)
pry
the stranglehold you have on what constitutes knowledge
I am rigid under your strict guidance
You wield the grading stick
You are the public ridiculing club commander
What does research mean in this moment?
I have no ability to revolt within these privileged pillars
Oh, White Man!

Longings shredding my soul
Walking in the research field
Sharing wonders
Coming alongside
Being in relational ways

In this virtual world
In the flicker of an tenuous image
Can you see me being hit with the patriarchy brick?
Can you feel the privileged boot heel crushing me?
Can you feel the intellectual violence being committed?
Can you sense the socioeconomic-blind approach to this experiment?
Oh, White Man!

You want to use my female poverty-classed body
My lived experiences
For your method experiment?
To jack up your CV?
Use my life for your professorship trajectory?
You, swathed in Ivy-league protection
You ask me to lay bare the belly of my underclass?
You ask me to be complicit
in "neo-colonial research [that] preserves the social order while obscuring the relations of domination and subordination"? (Fine, 71)
You ask me to "participate in constructing Others"? (Fine, 71)

To use my red worn hands

To participate in the further Othering of myself?
You ask me to allow you to use—violate—my knowledge and lived experiences from the margins?
You ask me to join in your oppressive research?
I draw close to Lorde (2007)
I need her courage to make visible these words
"even at the risk of having" my lived experiences and wonders
"bruised or misunderstood" (Lorde, 41)
Oh, White Man!

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ENESA MAHMIĆ

Sunday Lunch in Exile

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

We didn't talk about our suffering
We taught our children patience
Mastering the silent endurance
Our masters said:
Unnecessary sorrows hijack the glory of God
So, we ate the crumbs from their table
Without any complaint.
We comforted ourself: I'm fine. It's ok.

Tomorow will be the same,
The concept of discrimination repeats itself.
Gentlman from social institution will remind me again
That I'm just a number in the system.
I will be thinking again
How I should leave everything.
Maybe move to another city, another country.
I comforted myself with the illusion of love,
Understanding and forgetfulness
But I coudn't escape from my black skin.
There is no country for immigrants.

ENESA MAHMIĆ

The Sisters

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

This is a poem for an Ethiopian woman
Who sells fake Prada in the Italian streets
On the cardboard
Her 2-year-old son is asleep beside her legs
Otherness / Othering / Andersartigkeit

She has a large furrow on her cheek
Sharp blade, jealous partner
Immigration.
I saw fear in her eyes
She is afraid of the police, afraid of the inspection
Her eyes slip like otter
Right. Left. Right. Left
Right. Right. Right

This is the poem for a teenage girl who is wearing a T-shirt:
Feminism is a radical notion that women are people.
Girl, I see your insecurity
I understand your anger

This is a poem for an Pakistani woman
Who has been raped just because
She's wore a short skirt
For a woman who has been punished for disobedience.

This is a poem for women's daily struggles.

Enesa Mahmić (1989) is a travel poetess, a member of PEN Center. She published four poetry collections. Her poems have been translated into German, Italian, Turkish, Slovenian, Albanian and Hungarian- included in several anthologies. She won international awards for literature: Gold medal Neigbour of your shore 2017 as best immigrant poetry, Ratković's Evenings of Poetry 2016 and Aladin Lukač Award 2016 for best debut book.

ANNIE MILLER

My Father

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

My father never cries
The strongest man I know
And yet, tears he denies
He never reveals what he feels below

Years of silence tucked away
Locked in a box with no key
From the norm he does not stray
But what he could never foresee

Was his own son slowly closing up
Flickering was the spark of open and boundless emotion
Believing he had to sell his soul to grow up
A masculine notion

My father is a man's man
Owns guns and drinks beer
Never shown a speck of weakness in my lifespan
I wonder if he too, made his softness disappear

Our family is traditional
My grandfather was the hardworking, conventional type
His love and approval were always conditional
Feeding my father every masculine stereotype

Within my father I see the men before him
A mosaic of masculinity
Does that mean that for my brother the future is grim?
Generations of men losing tenderness like virginity

My father is not alone
As I see hardened walls within other men
This pattern is worn and well known
I see it time and time again

My father is gentle
With a tender, loving soft side
His characteristics are nothing but paternal
But these features, society does not pride

He has shown me bravery and strength
Taught me dedication and hard work
Giving me freedom at great length
Showing up for every game and event like clockwork

Sometimes I wonder
If as a child, he was as wide-eyed as I
Before society pulled him under
And released a clone clad in a button down and tie

We praise men who are hardened and tough
Ridicule those who reveal their true soul
And sure enough
These demands take their toll

I see it as I grow older
As the boys around me become men
Wide eyes dim and careless smiles grow colder
It's not a matter of if but when

Behind the unbreakable mask and shield
Lies a desperate boy
Silently and hopelessly asking to be healed
But has society left anything to destroy?

KAT SARK

Vienna Holocaust Memorial

2016

ANNIE MILLER

A Feminine Brain

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

My femininity lies in my brain
Tangled between nerves and pathways
My femininity is in my ideas and my thoughts
Because my worth isn't rooted in my exterior
But instead within me
Femininity is strength and intelligence
And not reserved to just some

Always smile and look pretty girls
That's what we were told
To keep our mouths shut and our dresses clean
Taught that to be women we had to please
Encouraged to keep our reputations spotless
Most importantly to not trouble our little heads
With ideas reserved for men

My skin is soft and fragile
Easily scarred and bruised
And therefore perceived as weak
And yet it protects my most valuable possession
My mind
Who I am as a person, a woman
Lies nestled between my ears

My mother taught me what it means to be a woman
Every day she demonstrates love and grace
Not through cooking and cleaning
But in how she treats those around her
Kindness, compassion, and honesty
Crowned with a sharp, remarkable brain
And in her footsteps, I walk

Femininity isn't pink lipstick
Baking, sewing, or playing dress up
It can't be seen on the surface
My sense of being a woman
Doesn't lie between my legs
Or in my ability to bear children
But in a feminine brain

CAROLINA PEREIRA MIRANDA

I am a Woman

CAMBRIDGE, ON | FEBRUARY 2018

I am a woman.

In full fledge,
In full force,
In full motion,
In full love.

If the swinging of my hips
That you can see
Through the dancing of my skirt,
Reminds you of the freedom in my heart
– And it intimidates you;

If the red on my lips
That you can see
Through the shimmer of my lipstick,
Reminds you of the hues in my womb
– And it disgusts you;

If the power of my mind
That you can see
Through the beauty of my poetry,
Reminds you of what I can create in art or in life
– And it threatens you;

Then you need to look carefully
Into your own mirror,
And let it take you back
Into your own history.

Because denying the inevitability
Of my being,
Is to deny yourself the understanding
Of your own existence.

I am a woman.

In full fledge (with my flesh)
In full force (with nature)
In full motion (with the universe)
In full love (with creation).

KAT SARK

Social Justice Work

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

At the last family dinner
My family asked why I spend so much time
Working for free, and not for profit.

How do I tell them that I see time
Differently than most people,
And always have, since early childhood.

How do I tell them that I see justice
As a real, tangible, unconditional, and
Non-negotiable human right.

How do I explain to them that
I was born with a shameless,
Brazen – as in made of brass –
Belief in change, and in myself,
And the undying power of a dream team.

But perhaps these are mere, empty words
Or abstract concepts and flowery ideas.
A folly, and a privilege of a spoiled child
Of immigrant families and generations
Of unsettled lives and households.

Forced to measure
All value, and meaning, and relationships
According to their utility, as assets,
Which in time of need
Could be re-appraised, liquified, traded in, or sold for profit.

But somehow,
In the process of constant survival
Within one generation,
These games of constantly trading stuff
Have become an end, not a means,
And now dictate the meaning of life.

ANGELA SCOTT

Unmasking Spirit

CAMBRIDGE, ON | FEBRUARY 2018

Unmasking my spirit
Red River, Red River descent
The red bloodline runs thin in the land where the treaties end
No land, no body, no community, no god

Call to the ancestors, black eyes, red spirit
Red River, Red River redress
Missing, murdered Indigenous Women
Red Dress

Unmasking her spirit
Ancestors calling for redress
Colonial violence, silence her pain
Generations of trauma
Unseen, unheard are the screams

Call to the settlers, white eyes, white spirit
Surrender your colonial bonds
Redress the violence against our land, our bodies
Resistance is coming, resurgence is near

Unmasking our spirit
Red River, red blood
Creator is here, strong spirit
Resilient Indigenous Women
Resurgence from the pain

ANGELA SCOTT

Mask

2017

CHARLOTTE STEWART

The Banshee

CAMBRIDGE, ON | FEBRUARY 2018

the first person i saw when the phone line went dead was the boy i loved.

i wasn't nearly alright. are you okay? he said.

where is my brother? i asked. we were camping.

the field, the boy said.

i walked there from the trees, feet numb, face numb. i stumbled. the boy followed at a distance, did not touch my shaking hand.

i found my brother sitting alone. the stars did not smile back at him.

i have something to tell you, i said. it's bad.

okay, he spoke slowly.

it's bad. he braced. it's really bad.

okay.

Ava just called me. she was raped. last weekend.

what? the word took an entire lungful of his air.

i slumped down beside him. the boy, i'd forgotten he was there, sat beside me.

a house party. a bottle of vodka. a friend of a friend who she didn't know. a car. the not wanting. the persistence. the him being on top of her. the clothes covered in vomit, in blood.

is she okay? he asked. not nearly.

the uncertainty, the guilt, the feeling of dirtiness. her words tumbled from my ear to mouth.

no, it wasn't violent. i mean, he didn't beat her. (like plucking a flower. still, something had died).

no, no one else knows. i was the first person she told. (unwanted honour. still, something had died).

no, she took the morning after pill. (oh, such resilience. still, something had died).

we sat together in shock. the boy, he put his arm around my waist, and i trembled on the edge between gratitude and disgust.

how is she going to tell them? my brother asked.

i'll drive back tomorrow, i said. so i can be there for her.

they are going to be furious, he said.

at her? i asked.

at him. at her too though. she was supposed to be at her friend's.

it's not her fault.

no, it's not. it's definitely not. but they'll be upset she lied. and was drinking.

it shouldn't matter.

no, but they'll care. the night was silent and cold.

my body vibrated. the boy squeezed me tighter and i wanted to shriek. i whispered, instead, it's just fucking unfair.

yes.

i could hurt him. i've never said that and meant it before. this shouldn't have happened.

she's so little, the boy said.

i shouldn't even be surprised, i choke. how common. how pedestrian. this happens all the time. i shouldn't even be surprised.

a pause.

and this was her first time with a person, with sex, i said. it changes everything.

you're right, my brother said. but she has to tell them.

you're right. but they can't– they can't be angry at her. i have to be there. (my body, the shield).

she needs to see doctors, the police. (my body, the ark).

you're right. but oh god. poor Ava. Ava of all fucking people. i could kill him. (my body, the banshee).

Ava, Ava, Ava. a pause. oh, little sister.

CHORONG KIM

We Believe in Human Rights

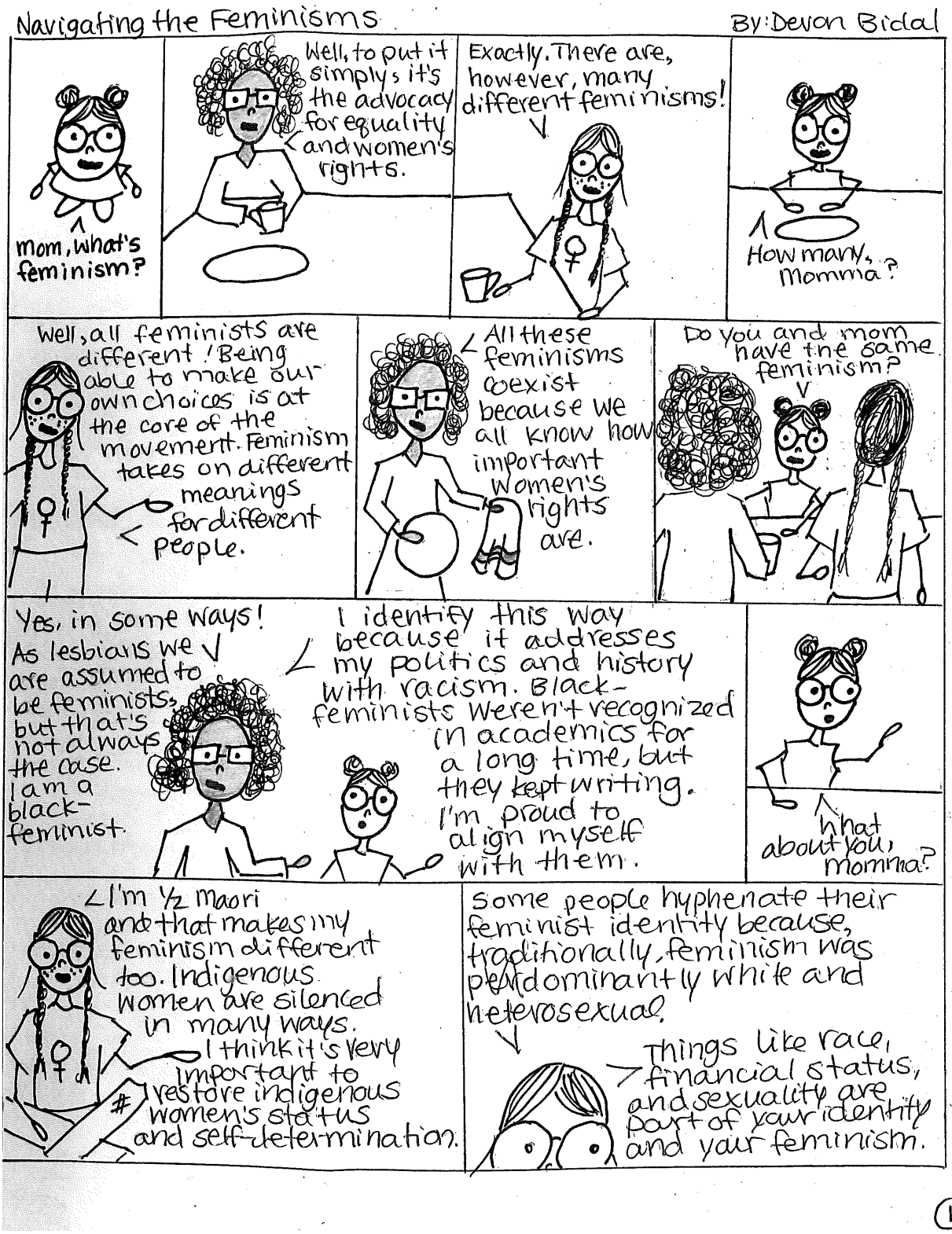
RAVENSBRÜCK MEMORIAL SITE, GERMANY | 2017

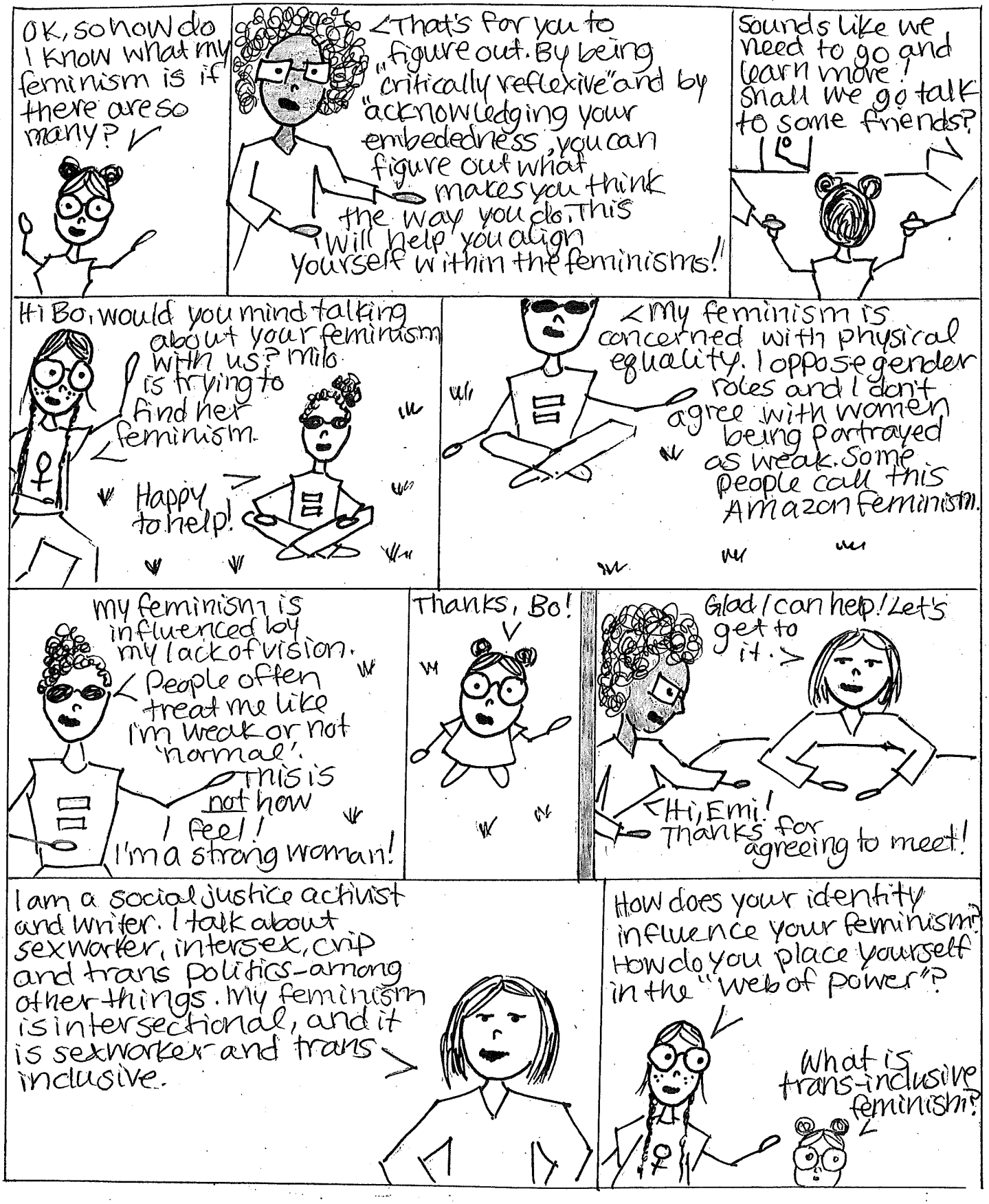
Graphic Essays

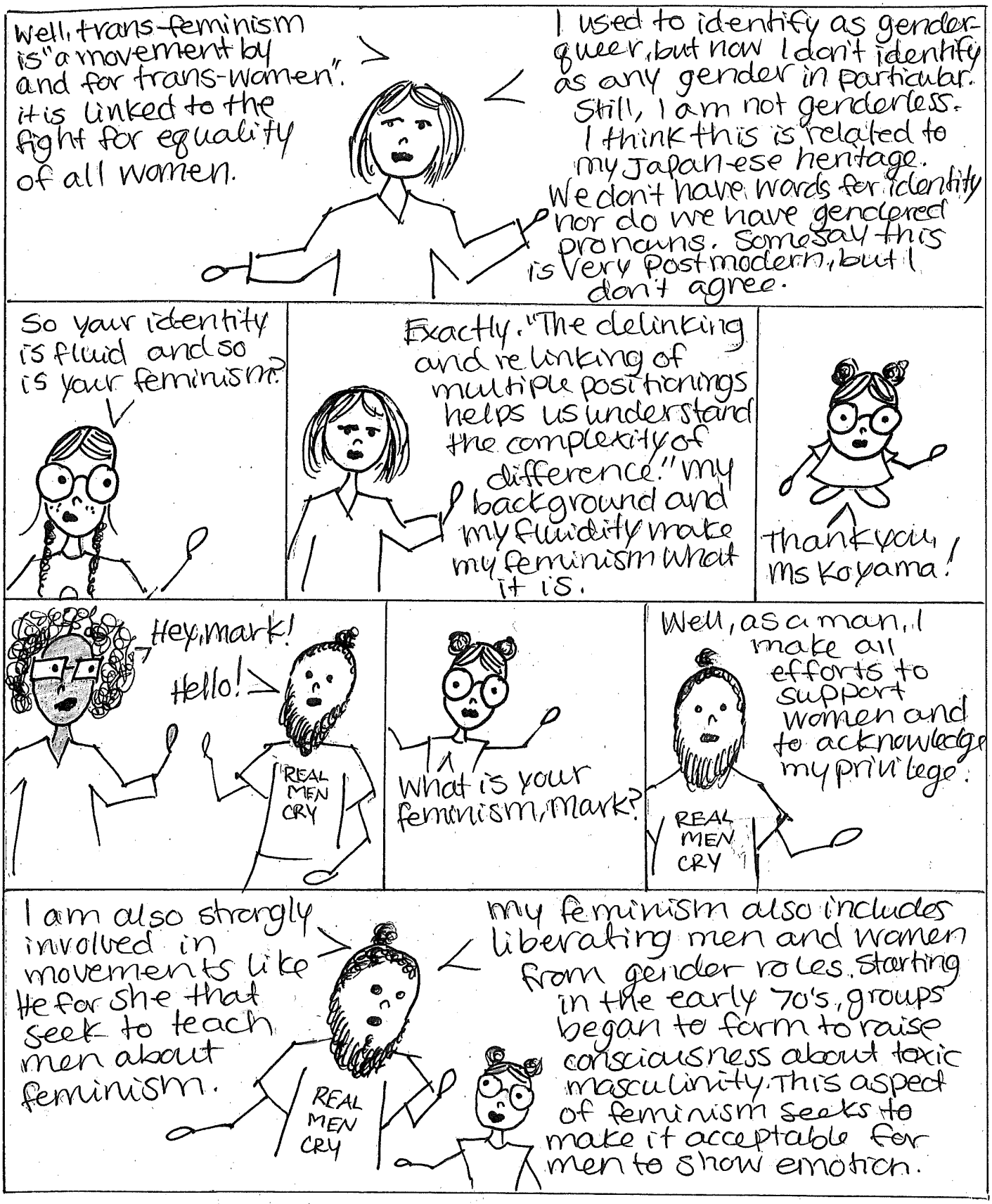
DEVON BIDAL

Navigating the Feminisms

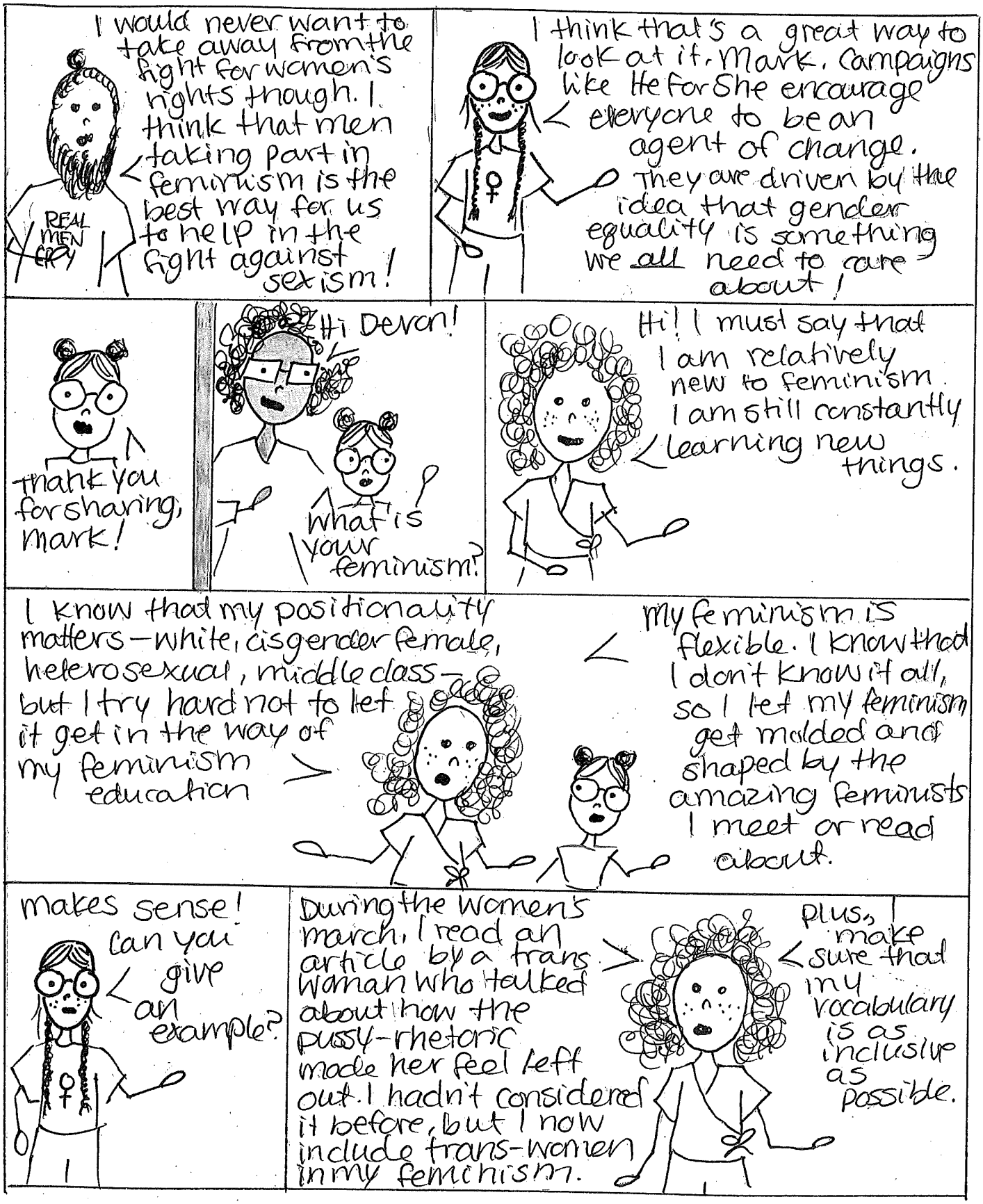
2017



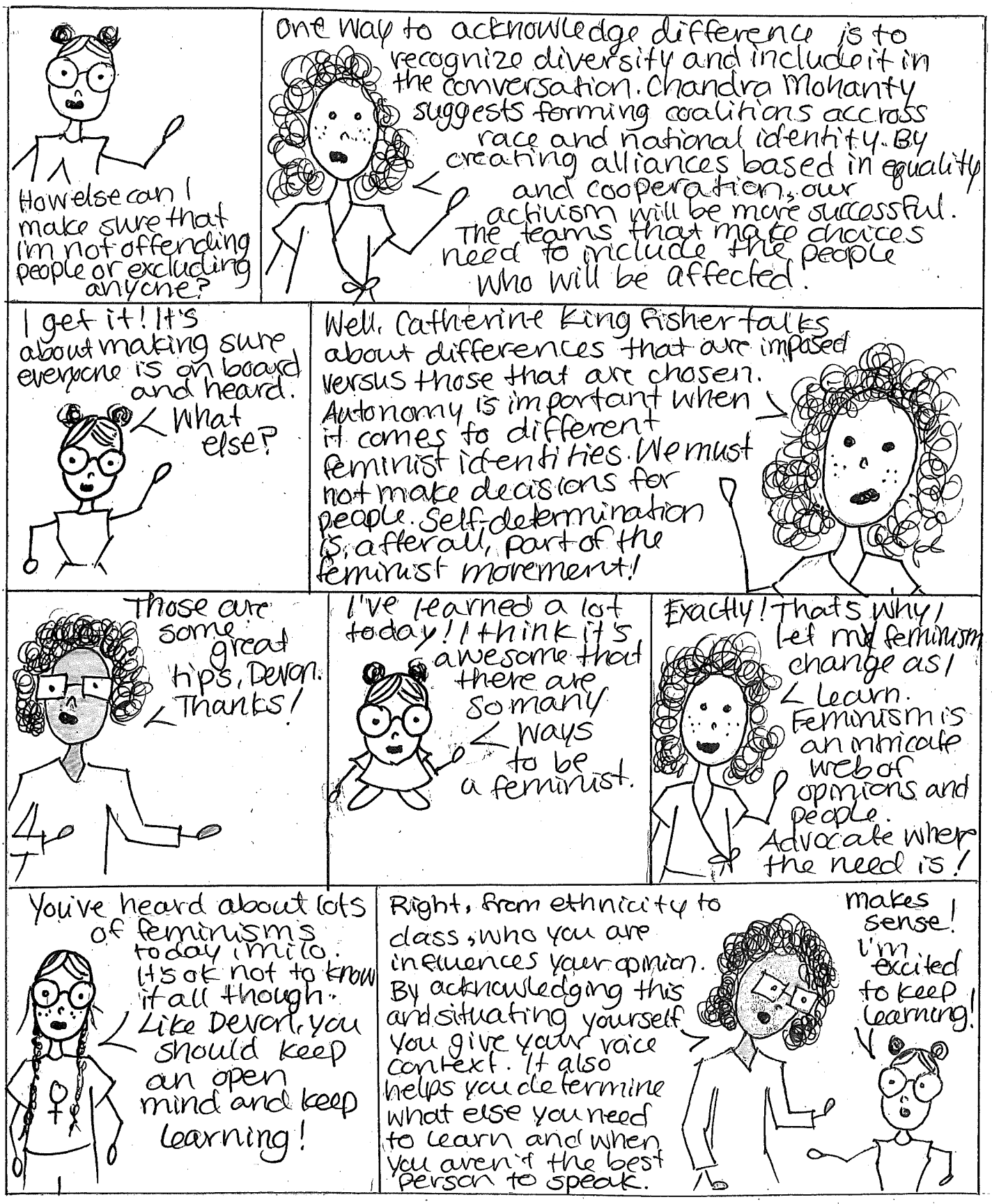

OK, so how do I know what my feminism is if there are so many?
That's for you to figure out. By being "critically reflexive" and by "acknowledging your embeddedness," you can figure out what makes you think the way you do. This will help you align yourself within the feminisms!
Sounds like we need to go and learn more! Shall we go talk to some friends?
Hi Bo, would you mind talking about your feminism with us? Milo is trying to find her feminism.
Happy to help!
My feminism is concerned with physical equality. I oppose gender roles and I don't agree with women being portrayed as weak. Some people call this Amazon feminism.
My feminism is influenced by my lack of vision. People often treat me like I'm weak or not 'normal'. This is not how I feel! I'm a strong woman!
Thanks, Bo!
Glad I can help! Let's get to it.
Hi, Emi! Thanks for agreeing to meet!
I am a social justice activist and writer. I talk about sexworker, intersex, crip and trans politics - among other things. My feminism is intersectional, and it is sexworker and trans inclusive.
How does your identity influence your feminism? How do you place yourself in the "Web of Power"?
What is trans-inclusive feminism?


Well, trans-feminism is "a movement by and for trans-women". it is linked to the fight for equality of all women.
I used to identify as gender-queer, but now I don't identify as any gender in particular. Still, I am not genderless. I think this is related to my Japan-ese heritage. We don't have words for identity nor do we have gendered pronouns. Some say this is very Postmodern, but I don't agree.
So your identity is fluid and so is your feminism?
Exactly. "The delinking and relinking of multiple positionings helps us understand the complexity of difference." my background and my fluidity make my feminism what it is.
thank you, Ms Koyama!
Hey, Mark!
Hello!
REAL MEN CRY
What is your feminism, Mark?
Well, as a man, I make all efforts to support women and to acknowledge my privilege.
REAL MEN CRY
I am also strongly involved in movements like He for She that seek to teach men about feminism.
my feminism also includes liberating men and women from gender roles. Starting in the early 70's, groups began to form to raise consciousness about toxic masculinity. This aspect of feminism seeks to make it acceptable for men to show emotion.
REAL MEN CRY

3


I would never want to take away from the fight for women's rights though. I think that men taking part in feminism is the best way for us to help in the fight against sexism!
REAL MEN CRY
I think that's a great way to look at it, Mark. Campaigns like HeForShe encourage everyone to be an agent of change. They are driven by the idea that gender equality is something we all need to care about!
thank you for sharing, Mark!
Hi Devon!
what is your feminism?
Hi! I must say that I am relatively new to feminism. I am still constantly learning new things.
I know that my positionality matters - white, cisgender female, heterosexual, middle class - but I try hard not to let it get in the way of my feminism education
My feminism is flexible. I know that I don't know it all, so I let my feminism get molded and shaped by the amazing feminists I meet or read about.
makes sense! Can you give an example?
During the Women's March, I read an article by a trans woman who talked about how the pussy-rhetoric made her feel left out. I hadn't considered it before, but I now include trans-women in my feminism.
plus, I make sure that my vocabulary is as inclusive as possible.

4


How else can I make sure that I'm not offending people or excluding anyone?
One way to acknowledge difference is to recognize diversity and include it in the conversation. Chandra Mohanty suggests forming coalitions across race and national identity. By creating alliances based in equality and cooperation, our activism will be more successful. The teams that make choices need to include the people who will be affected.
I get it! It's about making sure everyone is on board and heard. What else?
Well, Catherine King Fisher talks about differences that are imposed versus those that are chosen. Autonomy is important when it comes to different feminist identities. We must not make decisions for people. Self-determination is, afterall, part of the feminist movement!
Those are some great tips, Devon. Thanks!
I've learned a lot today! I think it's awesome that there are so many ways to be a feminist.
Exactly! That's why I let my feminism change as I learn. Feminism is an intricate web of opinions and people. Advocate when the need is!
You've heard about lots of feminisms today, Milo. It's ok not to know it all though. Like Devon, you should keep an open mind and keep learning!
Right, from ethnicity to class, who you are influences your opinion. By acknowledging this and situating yourself you give your voice context. It also helps you determine what else you need to learn and when you aren't the best person to speak.
makes sense! I'm excited to keep learning!

5

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- Irma McClaurin: Black Feminist Anthropology: Theory, Politics, Praxis, and Poetics

- Chandra Talpade Mohanty: Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse

- Catherine Kingfisher: Studying Gender and Neoliberalism Transnationally

- Pamela Moss and Margo Matwychuk: Beyond Speaking as an "As A" and Stating the "Etc"...

- Emi Koyama's website: eminism.org

- HeforShe website: heforshe.org/en

- www.faqs.org/faq/feminism/terms/

Graphic Novel-Style Presentation Inspired by Gina Athena Ulysse

HEATHER HOULE

Selections On Bodies, Self Love, and Activism

2017 - 2018

On Popularized "Feminist" Imagery:

Light-skinned, able-bodied, young, hetero-cis women are still at the centre of the "girl gang" trend. It claims to empower and celebrate individuality – but only depicts images that can still be considered fashionable. Your chubby tummy is cute – as long as you don't have too much cellulite. Armpit hair is cool and edgy – but leg hair has to go if it's anything more than a delicate fuzz. Mobility assistive devices are fine as long as the body using them doesn't appear to be deformed or damaged.

For the last several weeks, I have been searching for art that depicts my experience as a woman who grows hair past my mid-thighs. There is still so much misogyny embedded into our subconscious that even within a "feminist" context it is a struggle to escape it. Even as I was adding little arm hairs on this drawing, I thought, "This is looking kinda not cute." We must unlearn everything we have been told about how our bodies should look and replace those thoughts with revolutionary self-love and respect for our earthly dwellings. Our bodies, our temples, our homes.

"Body | Temple | Home"
Illustration and photo by Heather Houle
2017

On Bums:

big bums: cute
small bums: cute
flat bums: cute
round bums: cute
chubby bums: cute
jiggly bums: cute
firm bums: cute
bums with cellulite: cute
bums with stretch marks: cute
bums with scars: cute
bums with pimples: cute
saggy bums: cute
hairy bums: cute

You and your booty are cute as HECK and deserve to be loved and celebrated!

"Cute"
Illustration and photo by Heather Houle
2018

On Body Hair

Showing off my body has never been easy for me. From puberty, I dealt with remarks from classmates, friends, even my own father, about my excessive body hair. In highschool, I was diagnosed with a hormonal imbalance, and after months of testing I was informed that I "probably" have Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome, symptoms of which include irregular menstrual cycles, acne, and excessive hair growth.

In our culture, it is socially unacceptable for women to have hair on their bodies or faces exceeding transparent fuzz on upper lips or thighs. It is "unfeminine," it is "unsanitary," it is "unattractive." I have spent countless hours and thousands of dollars trying to become the hairless wonder that I am told I am supposed to be, endlessly waxing and shaving and plucking away something that is completely natural and absolutely harmless. I am paranoid when people are close enough to see how furry I am; I often avoid bright lighting that makes my stubble visible; I grimace in the mirror when I spot hairs I have missed.
I am learning, slowly, to accept the things about myself that I am told to hide. Maybe my hair will completely grow back, maybe (hopefully) not. Regardless, I am no less beautiful. I am no less sexy. I am no less womanly. And I will choose to love my fuzzy peach self every day.

It's important to note that in this thin, white, cis, able-bodied vessel, I have the privilege of affording to not adhere to this one particular beauty standard without risking my relationships (for the most part) or my safety. Not everyone has that.
To my fellow fuzzy femmes and all other activists – please take care of yourselves out there. You deserve to be safe and cared for.

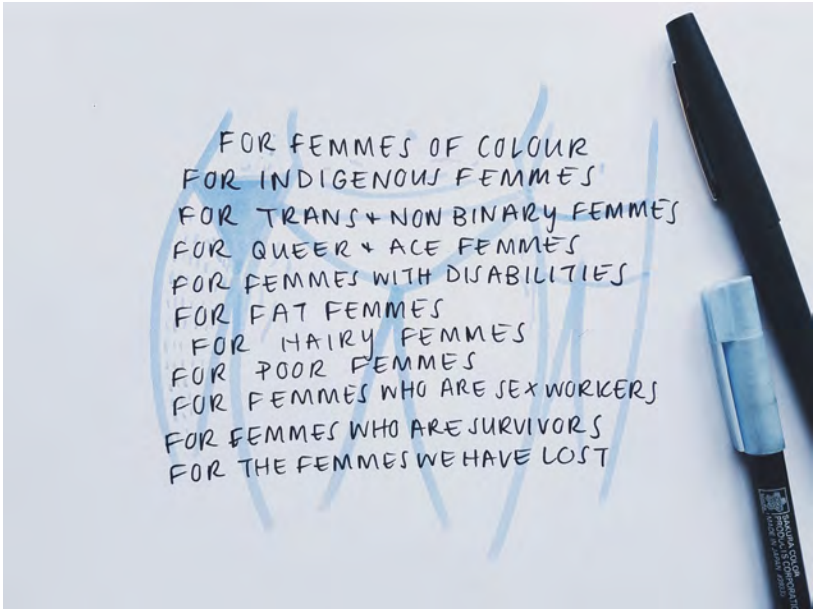
Heather on a beach in Nanaimo
Photos by Andrew Ly
2018

"A Quick Self-Portrait"
Illustration and Photo by
Heather Houle
2018

On the "Bell Let's Talk" Campaign

One day of spreading awareness and sounding empathetic about mental health issues before we go back to calling the neurodivergent people in our lives "a little bit psycho, lol." At least the largest telecom corporation in the country is getting some positive PR by diverting a fraction of its multimillion dollar revenue towards mental health initiatives.

"Please Don't"
Illustration and Photo by
Heather Houle
2018



"For Femmes"
Illustration and Photo by
Heather Houle
2018

On the Women's March

Yes – reproductive rights for white cis-gender middle-class women are important. But what about the rights of trans folx? What about IPOC? What about sex workers? What about disabled/ chronically ill femmes? What about poor femmes? Systematically disadvantaged femmes? What about the femmes you actively ignore, appropriate from, and exploit in your daily life?

But also – it doesn't matter who or what you march for if you don't do anything other than march.

We need more than a self-congratulatory, white-washed, cis-centred rally if any real change will happen.

Talk to your local political reps about things that upset you. Vote with your dollar. Speak up when you witness injustices. Listen actively to people who are more disadvantaged than you, believe their stories, follow their lead, and pay them for their labour.

I went to the march too. I've been complacent too. Let's challenge ourselves to actually DO things that make the world a better place for non-men of all intersections, so that next year we can celebrate our progress instead of complain about how things never get better.

RILEY VAN DER LINDEN

***Anne*, Hackescher Markt**

BERLIN | 2016

Reflections

ANNA

Be Yourself

KIEL, GERMANY | JANUARY 2018

This is the story of a baby, who was born in Germany, grew older, and eventually became a woman. The baby was born female, but when she was a little girl, she didn't want to be a "girl," and didn't play with dolls, but rather spent her time outside with the "boys" from the neighbourhood. They built tree houses, played soccer, hide and seek, and spent most of their time outside. The girl's grandpa and her parents were not really fond of that, as they thought the whole town they lived in, was speaking badly about the girl who enjoyed spending time with the boys, unlike other girls her age.

Live Your Life.

She grew older and still had mostly male friends in school. She even started dressing like a "boy": in baggy pants, hoodies, boy shirts, sometimes even boxer shorts. She started playing the guitar and listening to Heavy Metal and Punk Rock. Just before the long summer holidays, her ethics teacher asked her for a brief talk. The teacher was afraid the girl would lose track and turn into a Goth. In the teacher's eyes, it was a sin to listen to all this "bad" music and especially to not wear dresses and long braided hair like a girl. Winter holidays were just around the corner, and so was the exact same teacher. The teacher now feared the girl would shave off her hair and turn into a boy. But the teacher was too late. Even though the girl did not cut off her hair, she already turned into a tomboy, not even noticing it herself. She just felt absolutely comfortable with what she was doing, wearing and thinking. There was no make-up or binge shopping in her life but a lot of music, skateboarding and getting dirty while playing outside.

Take the Time to Find Yourself.

She had to change schools and was surprised that no one made a big deal out of her appearance at the new school unlike her old school. She found a lot of new friends and even got to know her first boyfriend who accepted her the way she was: still a tomboy. After a year, he broke up with her for a girly girl. That was reason enough for the tomboy to keep on doing what she was doing and even do it better than before.

Stay Strong.

After school she started studying in a small city and carried on with her life. She was happy and absolutely satisfied with what she was doing. She met amazing people who taught her a lot about life, culture, literature and how to manifest your personal opinion and your personality. Again, most of her friends were males and they liked her for who she was: a short-haired, open, sassy female. They would have protected her, they would have fought for her but they would never have started a relationship with her. But she did not care because she was happy.

Travel to Far-Away Places.

This girl, well, a lady by now, just couldn't stop travelling and seeing the world, so she moved to live in a country far away for half a year. She didn't know anything about that particular country, she didn't speak the language, she didn't know a thing about the culture or history but was shocked when she got there. It was beautiful! The people were nice, the food was good. She wanted to explore the city and decided on a nice long walk from where she lived to the old town. On her way she came across four girls who all looked the same: long brown hair, make-up covering their faces, handbags hanging over their right forearm, high-heeled boots. They stopped, did not make space for the girl to pass them, scanning her from toe to the top of her head, mumbling and then passing by. Discrimination? Racism? All of a sudden the girl felt insecure and did everything from that moment on to try to fit into the picture of women living in that country. She kept silent when she was asked for her opinion. She didn't look men she didn't know

in the eyes anymore. She started adjusting her clothing style and bought dresses, make up and even handbags. She didn't want to attract attention in this country, which was so beautiful to her at first sight but became uglier with every day. It was when she came back to Germany, her friends asked what happened. They told her, she changed a lot and became someone else. Well, the girl herself knew something was wrong and did not feel comfortable in her own skin.

Time went by and she learned to love herself again, became more confident and enjoyed her life. She visited friends in other countries and had a great time. During one of those visits, the girl and her friends decided to go out. Sure enough, they would get to know new people. But who would have thought that the first human they would meet would be a male, pointing towards the girl, shouting "You are a fucking lesbian." Another night, another party. Someone started talking to her. It was a nice chat until the person told her to get another hair cut because "only lesbians have hair like that."

After that at a different party, there was a guy, a friend of the girl's flatmate. He was totally interested in getting to know her, but couldn't use words. So, he thought it would be a fun way of getting to know her by just tackling her, as if they were playing rugby. It was fun the first time. After the second time she said "STOP!" He didn't listen, did it a third time, so she just threw her fist in his face, right on his nose. The people standing around, watching the scene, were shocked. How could a female have the courage of beating a male who is stronger than her?

Defend Yourself.

While studying the girl worked to earn her living. Of course, she only had male bosses. Everyone was always happy to see her because she worked hard, never stopped having fun while working and always had a joke handy. It was just a matter of time until the bosses "accidentally" touched her or told her something, they would regret. The girl had already learned to defend herself and to not let anyone play games with her.

Start Acting.

The girl went to work in Canada. She didn't know what to expect when she was on the plane to Vancouver. Working at the university, she soon realized that specific things are absolutely different not only in university, but in every-day life. She caught herself over and over again thinking about whether the person crossing her was is a woman or a man. As if that mattered. It does not. As long as the human being is happy. She wanted to stop having prejudice. But it wasn't that easy in a world where you are constantly told what to think, do, eat and read.

Life in Canada opened up a new perspective for her. For the first time in her life she did not only get in touch with the zero-waste movement but was also confronted with feminism, with trans people, with the meaning of racism and discrimination, with the importance of revolting against certain people and politics.
Ten months in one of the most beautiful places in the world, spent together with impressive, smart and inspiring colleges, changes the horizon of the girl completely. She had to go back to Germany, but she came back with a new thinking mind, with a new attitude, convinced to try to change something in Germany, even if she can just take one baby step at a time.

Conclusion.

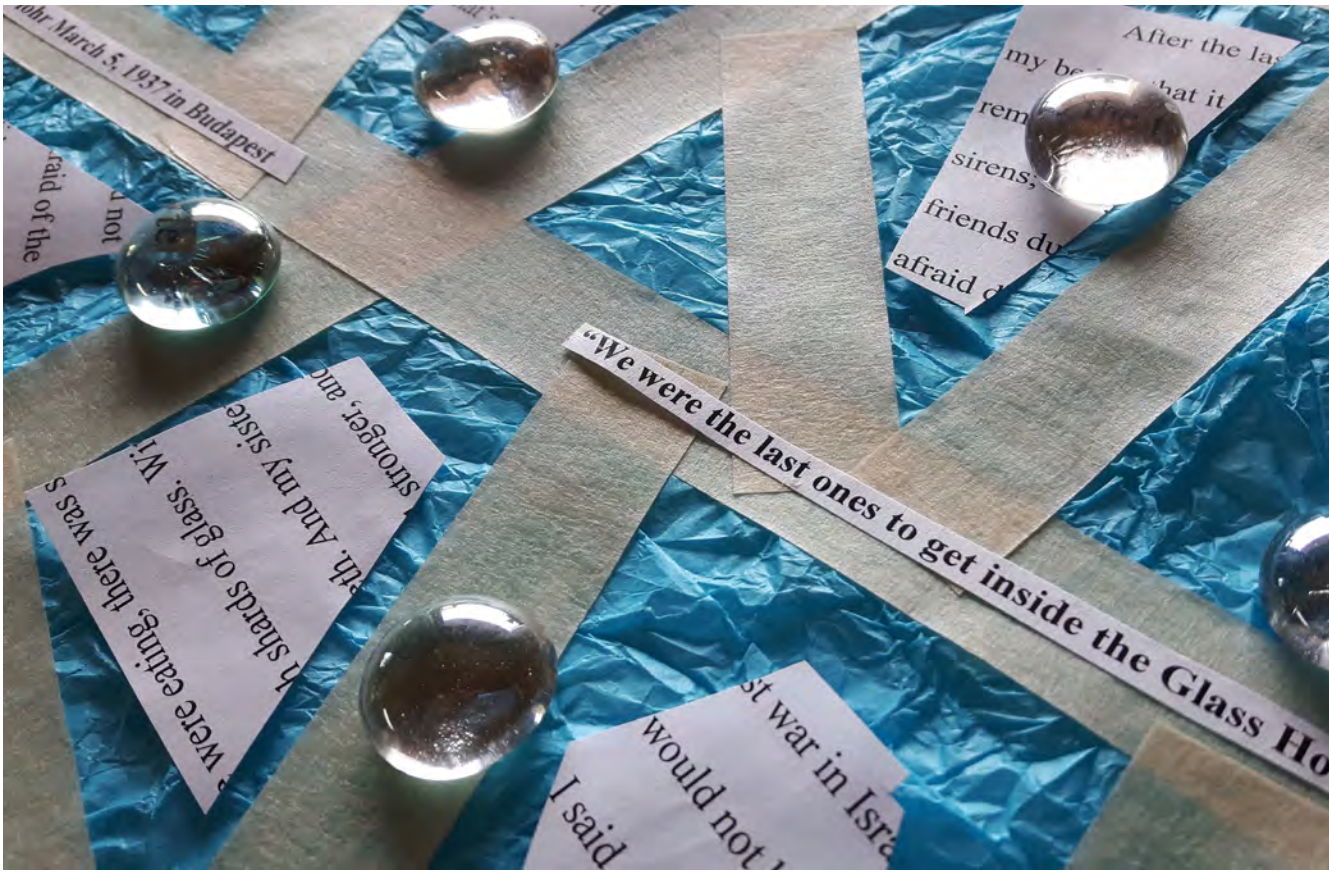
Please, world, make this stop. Please let everybody just live their lives. No matter the gender, the colour of their skin, eyes, hair or clothes. No matter the thoughts they are thinking or things they are doing. Please, for once, focus on your OWN life and try to not give a damn about other people.

Yes, I am a white, middle class, able-bodied female. Yes, I can consider myself lucky. But yes, I know that something is going the wrong way. I am sick and tired of all the little "coincidences" happening every single day. Of course, everyone is just joking. I am the pussy that has absolutely no humour at all. No, I am not a pussy, I got one and I am absolutely proud of it. And yes, I got short hair, I love wearing baggy pants, hoodies, boxer short, sneakers. I am not wearing make-up because I don't need to hide who I am. I am thankful for all the powerful and strong

women who did a great job for emancipation. I am thankful for working in academia and being more or less respected. I am proud to be born as a female, as part of the still called “weaker” sex. But there are a lot of things that need to be changed. We still have a long way to go. But we’ll get there, despite those tremendously stupid white politicians trying to divide us.

Me too.

This story of a baby born female, is a true story. None of this is made up. I bet can include themselves in the #metoo campaign. Speak up, people! Tell someone else about what you have experienced. Don’t ever let someone do something you do not like or that scares you. You are not alone in this.



NOGA YARMAR

Fragments

2018

TIA BLOSMANIS-LUND

A Woman's Idea of How the World Works

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

Social justice can be interpreted as the reaction of the public to defend a victim of a perceived crime or injustice when the existing justice system fails to deliver protection and justice to said victim. This is a very simplistic definition, but it should remain that way. In the existing social climate, there is a tendency to dwell on clarifying definitions, turning them into long encyclopedic entries. This over-clarification on definitions becomes a filibuster to distract from the real issues that need to be addressed. For example: The #blacklivesmatter (#BLM) online movement. Most of the general (white) public focuses on the perceived lack of central purpose to this social justice movement, and then fixate on defining this central purpose, all the while ignoring the larger issue trying to be highlighted – discrimination.

Intersectional Feminism is the term used to address the inadequacies that minority women face, which white women do not. In our society, there is a pyramid of power. Like any pyramid, it is built with blocks that are placed in a specific order, not simply pancaked or divided into two – male and female. Instead, many different pieces build this structure, composed of race, sex, gender, sexuality, religion etc. Intersectionality is the recognition that, although a white woman faces discrimination, she will face very different and often smaller obstacles in her life than a woman in a minority group.

In my studies of discrimination of minority groups, it is impossible for me to approach any study without considering intersectionality. I am a white, Canadian, agnostic, Anglo, heterosexual female, whose sex conveniently aligns with her gender identity. As a result, my experiences come from a place of extreme privilege. This privilege colours my perception of issues. Because I recognize this privilege, I need to be open to asking uncomfortable questions of people who I know are open to discussing uncomfortable issues. Most importantly, I need to be open and accepting of their answers, even if they challenge my identity or my perceptions on issues.

When I was growing up, I was taught to wallflower about my opinions on real issues. If my opinion differed from the opinion of the group, stay quiet. I didn't have to agree with everything said, or even laugh at the jokes. Yet, if I disagreed, I wasn't to vocalize it. If I made the mistake of doing so, I was just being a pretentious, stupid young girl with a holier-than-thou complex and no idea of how the world worked. I wasn't unique in this respect. I had watched my aunt, who we shall call Maureen, be the lightning rod of all types of colourful adjectives because she had the audacity to disagree with the crowd. This was particularly true if that crowd was male dominated. Even when Maureen wasn't around, her name would come up, but always in the same context. She was a pretentious, stupid woman with a superiority complex that had no idea how the world worked because she had the gall to have a differing opinion. This attitude of no idea how the world worked wasn't limited to the most vocal either. I'd heard my mom, step-mom, my friend's mom, and other women in my life take opposition to some ignorant things said and almost always, they were dismissed as being no more than women with, of course, no idea how the world worked. Most often this was said after they left the room. Should a man speak up in opposition, he was then being like a woman. He was young and naïve, but when he grew up he would understand, you know, how the world worked. For now, just ignore him. He'll learn. And almost always he did. He would learn, the same way I did, that being feminine was the worst, because being like a woman meant you were too dumb to ever understand how the world worked. If this she-man didn't learn, he moved. With all that said, one of my oldest and dearest friends taught me to change that. She taught me that sometimes it was okay to stand up for your opinions, particularly when they were supported by your morals. We'll call her Sally. (Should she read this, she will just love that I went with that name).

Sally grew up in the same northern town surrounded by similar people. She went to the same schools and was taught the same lessons - that being like a woman was a horrible thing. Women, with their pink makeup, high-heeled shoes and Britney Spears, were all bimbos and, naturally, had no idea how the world worked. We were different. We were goth, listened to metal and had predominantly male friends because, you know, chicks are all bimbos and, say it with me, had no idea how the world worked. But our black clothing, Slipknot and skate shoes made us wise. Well, it was her persona to be honest. I was just her little copycat. She had a confidence about her that nobody in school had. She wasn't confrontational, but she always seemed to know who she was and wouldn't adapt herself to fit the status quo. I think that is what drew me to her, and today I am grateful for it, because of the lesson she taught me one afternoon at my house that changed my life forever.

My mom was dating this guy, we'll call Steve, who made comments from time to time. He wasn't outwardly racist and, I firmly believe, would defend anyone victimized by racism if he witnessed it. That said, he was part of the "diet racists." He never cited his living in Vancouver, or some minority friend, as evidence of lack of racism, but he did laugh at the racist jokes and sometimes engaged in negative stereotyping. Whenever I heard these things, as mentioned, I would wallflower. I mean, after all, I didn't want to be reminded of my vagina and why it hindered my ability to understand how the world worked. After all, a girl in black clothing listening to "Wait and Bleed" was still just a girl, and who wants to be reminded of that.

One day, Steve had invited his friend, Jack, over while I was hanging out with Sally. We thought Jack was just hilarious, so we went to the dining room to chat. At some point, Steve decided to tell a joke. "What's blue and sits on my front porch?" (The punchline of the joke uses the word "nigger" and makes the teller a slave owner.) The three of us waited for the punch-line and as soon as it was delivered, the reaction divided the room. Jack roared in laughter. My smile faded to discomfort, and that's where I assumed it would end, since it always had before. I'd change the topic, or eventually leave the room. Wrong! Sally immediately made it clear that jokes like that would NOT be tolerated in her presence. Steve told her repeatedly, "Oh come on, it's just a joke! You know I would never call someone that! I'm not racist but, come on! It's funny." She didn't accept this. "It doesn't matter. It's not just about the word. It's the premise of the joke. It's a racist joke, and I'm not okay with you saying that in front of me!" Until that moment, I'd never seen a friend of mine, let alone a female teen, firmly challenge the adult male in the crowd. But where things became interesting for me: it worked. He didn't insult her, call her a woman and tell her she didn't understand how the world worked. He showed her enough respect that, although he laughed it off and went on to talk about other things, he never told racist jokes around either of us again.

Her taking a stand for her beliefs, and his reaction to her, changed my life. I learned, even though I am "just" a woman, I'm allowed to have an opinion. In certain crowds, I will be reminded that my vagina makes me an "idiot" with no idea how the world works. That may never change. But I can change me. I can change my own perception of being a woman. I can change the crowd I surround myself with. I can even change who I take opinions and values from. Do I want to learn "lessons" from a group of middle-aged white men with multiple divorces, who feel powerful when they filibuster and insult those who are different? Or from someone who may stay quiet in general conversations, but has the gumption to stand up for their morals and convictions? I chose the latter and, since then, I have changed. I moved, grew up, changed crowds, dropped some bad behaviours and toxic relationships, while also adopting positive ones.

I've also learned about projection and insecurity. That is the biggest nugget I have taken away from having no idea how he world works. Now, when someone tries to remind me that I'm "just a woman," I know it means "I am afraid that this woman may know more about the subject than I do."

This transcends multiple social issues as well. For instance, I now also know defiantly shouting "It's just a joke!" means "I just got called out on my assholery!" and "I'm not racist but…" means "I am! I just don't use the N word in public." This ability to translate subtexts has shaped who I have become, taught me how the world really works, directed my career path and made me a happier person. Yet, it all started because some goth girl from Taylor, BC stood up for her principles and demanded the smallest change.

RILEY VAN DER LINDEN

Missing Shoes Danube Memorial

BUDAPEST | 2016

ETHAN CALOF

Pain and Perspective

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

When my sister Ophira first started struggling physically, right in the middle of her second year at UBC, the expectation was that she'd go to the doctor and get a diagnosis. It had seemed like a pretty basic process up until that point in my life. There was no doubt about whether or not I had H1N1 in the summer of 2010, or whether I'd broken my femur in 2001, or whether I'd had sinusitis all through high school. Sure, Ophira's symptoms were a bit more complicated, but the system worked. Why would it not work for her?

It took years for Ophira's most definitive diagnosis—Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, an absolute monster of a genetic disorder—to come down the pipe and introduce her to the surgeries that have helped her deal with her EDS. Yet along the way, she'd been given many other diagnoses. She'd been diagnosed as being stressed. She'd been diagnosed as a hypochondriac. She'd been diagnosed as not really needing her wheelchair that she relied on. She'd been diagnosed as having it "all in her head," a statement which came partially true after her surgeon plunged a knife in her skull. These diagnoses were made not only by friends and family but more gallingly, by medical professionals. And through it all, Ophira was faced with a simple question.

What would it take to believe a woman in pain?

For me, intersectionality is the best way to unpack these issues that lurk below the surface. I come from a privileged background; my family never had to worry about our next meal, and has always been able to fund my sister's and my dreams, never had a shortage of doctors in the family, as well as my parents' social group to reach out to. My sister is an exceptionally smart and quick-witted person who excels at connecting with people. And yet, in spite of all of these advantages, it still took years of stops and starts to access her necessary medical treatment.

How long would it be for a woman growing up in poverty? What about a woman of colour, or a transwoman? What about a woman with limited English ability, or a woman living outside of our cozy Western bubble? What is it about our society that trains us to assume women in medical distress are suffering from anything other than medical distress? And, more importantly, when will we, as a society, stop doing that?

By asking myself these tough questions, and by having my sister ask me even tougher ones, I've helped unpack my own behaviour and examine how growing up in a patriarchal society has informed my actions and motivations. I know I'm just as guilty of buying into these societal preconceptions that have affected Ophira, and I know that cultural and social perceptions of masculinity have prevented me from reaching out for help with my own health issues. I know I'm not even close to discovering and dealing with all of them, and I'd never claim to be.

But this is what social justice is all about to me: it's not only about attacking the big picture issues, but examining, understanding, and addressing the ingrained behaviours and cultural myth-making that the big picture issues reside on. If we reorient these perspectives, maybe the next woman in the next doctor's office will actually be believed when she says she's unwell.

OPHIRA CALOF

The Medicalized Body

TORONTO, ON | FEBRUARY 2018

When I was eight years old, I started getting headaches. I would be playing in the sand at my grandparents' cottage when the sun started to become painful, and I would need to go inside to lie down. After several months, my parents took me to the doctor, where I was told that they were tension headaches, caused by stress. I was given a set of exercises, and told to lighten up and relax.

When I was ten years old, I started experiencing pain in my joints. I was told, by physicians, that they were growing pains, and was called a drama queen.

When I was thirteen years old, I experienced abdominal pain so severe it brought me to the hospital emergency room. After a five-hour wait, I was told that all girls get cramps, and to stop being hysterical.

I knew that something bigger was happening within my body. I knew that my peers didn't experience the same difficulty with basic physical functions. But I didn't want to be the girl who cried wolf. I was well enough to push through, so I spent my time and energy marshalling my resources to sculpt myself into an undeniable entity. I earned the best grades in school, squashed any desire to rebel or push boundaries, and built myself a track record of steadfast reliability.

When I was eighteen years old, I experienced a headache that didn't go away. It morphed into an all-encompassing weakness and fatigue that prevented my muscles from holding me up, my eyes from seeing, and my tongue from articulating words. The day had come where I could no longer function. Something was terribly, horrifically wrong.

I went to see a physician at my university's health services centre and was referred to a massage therapist for stress, where I was asked about relationship troubles, difficulty making friends, and body image issues.

As time went on, my symptoms worsened and I found myself in front of an assembly line of disbelieving doctors. Everything that I had worked for seemed to melt away. Struggling to form words, alone at a hospital, I was unable to show them that I was educated or from a financially privileged background. I couldn't convince them of my worth. All that they knew was that I was a young, fat, female, and their first instinct was to doubt my word.

Truthfully, their reaction didn't surprise me. I had grown up learning that I needed to prove myself in order to receive respect from strangers. I was shocked, however, by how easily my family and friends seemed to shift their opinion of me. I had never been known to lie before, but with the slightest introduction of doubt, my word immediately lost its power, even with those who knew me best.

To me, intersectional feminism is a matter of life and death. Medicine has a long history of prioritizing white male experiences as the markers for diagnosis and treatment, but conditions often manifest differently in women and people of colour. The ability to access healthcare in the first place is still impacted by financial resources and ability. We need to urgently examine the social structures that shape our perceptions and experiences so that when somebody is unable to advocate for themselves, our instinct is to unreservedly value them.

It took four and a half years of my own research to finally learn that due to a connective tissue disorder my cervical spine was so unstable that my skull was shifting with every movement, slowly pushing my brain down into my spinal canal. It took hundreds of thousands of dollars to afford the surgeries and medical equipment that gave me back my life. This essay is sponsored by my privilege.

EMILY

Intersectionality: Understanding the System of Oppression as a Whole

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

As a trans woman with a mental illness and physical disabilities, and living on disability assistance, my life is inherently intersectional.

My gender identity impacts the health care I receive, and my disabilities impact how I transition. Both are affected by poverty. Having mental illness and a heart condition, for example, created barriers to access transition-related care such as hormones. Poverty keeps me from accessing electrolysis, a treatment necessary to remove facial hair.

However, being trans also created a barrier to mental health care. Long before I was diagnosed with mental illness, I sought help for my symptoms, which were first blamed on my gender identity. One psychiatrist said my symptoms were caused by my transition, despite making it clear to them that my symptoms started long before my transition.

These are issues that many trans people with disabilities face. None can be addressed in isolation; they were all created by the specific combination of minority status.

However, we cannot look at intersectionality caused by the confluence of two or three different issues. Systems of oppression do not discriminate only between gender identity, physical and mental health, or poverty.

There is only one system of oppression, and it targets all minorities—gender, race, class, ability, size, and sexuality, just to name a few. To combat this system of oppression, which we call patriarchy or kyriarchy, we must look at it as a whole.

A white trans woman such as myself cannot successfully address the issues which affect me while ignoring the issues faced by Indigenous peoples, or overlooking the fatphobia my own spouse experiences on a daily basis.

Intersectionality is seeing the forest for the trees, and for anyone who is directly impacted by patriarchy, intersectionality is solidarity and security.

MATT POLLARD

Rubble Woman, Walter Reinhold

DRESDEN | 2016

EMMANUELLE

ENOUGH

VICTORIA, BC | MARCH 2018

I have always been boasting to my friends abroad about this university that I am so immensely proud to belong to, both a staff and a student. Ever since I started working and studying at UVic, this place and its values have always felt great. I never thought this campus would feel unsafe one day.

Twice this year, women from all ages and backgrounds have had to fall upon thousands of flags representing fetuses that were aborted, planted on campus by a campus club called "Youth Protecting Youth" (YPY) whose actions have been finally deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

I believe in freedom of speech. No matter what your stand on abortion is, you have the right to express your views and engage in discussions, and we were told that this group was merely expressing their freedom of speech.

However, what happened on campus was not designed to create a debate, but to trigger emotional reactions in viewers. It is not speech, it is live clickbait. And just as dumb, misleading and uninformed. It has no academic value on campus. It does not promote a debate, as it puts the women targeted in a deeply emotional state, which is not conducive to a fruitful exchange of opinions.

Abortion is not an issue you tackle with pink and blue flags. At least, not if you care about each woman behind those pink and blue flags. Abortion is not a good solution. It is, in many cases, the only solution. It is never a light-hearted decision. Each abortion has a different story, but all these stories share one point: a woman who has to come to terms with the fact she is not able, for financial, religious, economic, health, or other personal reasons to keep her child. It is one of the most difficult decisions a woman can make, and it often does not come without a psychological toll.

By all means set up a debate. Allow people to discuss, exchange, see things from their opponent's perspective. Unfortunately, YPY is not interested in any intellectual engagement with this issue.

Now if you are one of the millions of women worldwide who have had an abortion, working or studying at UVic, you have to be confronted and reminded twice yearly that the lawful right you have exercised over your own body makes you a target.

The resulting flash of painful memories and guilt you experience anyway is not only magnified by this aggressive action of misinformed pro-lifers, but also condoned by the university administration and by some in the university community.

This is by no means a safe learning environment. My heart goes out to the students who encountered this assault on their way to class or an exam, who had to keep walking, their hearts pounding and their brains overwhelmed with emotions and memories.

The university throws around words and concepts like equity, diversity, inclusion, territorial acknowledgements, and safe spaces, but when it comes to the psychological and emotional safety of its women, there is still so much work to do. This is why we all need feminism and organizations like the Women's March.

ANNA HECKADON

Reflections on "Slacktivism"

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

I can't say that I've participated much in activism, although I've always wanted to. I, like many people, participate in a form of activism called "slacktivism." "Slacktivism" is the slacker form of activism where you only actively participate on social media by sharing posts, liking a cause's Facebook page, signing a petition, etc. I'll admit, it's an easy, quick, feel-good method of activism. It's so easy to hit the like or share button on something you agree with. It makes you feel like you're doing something by spreading your opinion to your followers. Maybe sometimes you are doing something, inciting conversation, sparking debate, but it doesn't really do much in the long run, I don't think.

Since the school shooting in Florida, I've been aggressively sharing things on Facebook, getting my opinion out there. I continue to do this, continue to hide behind my screen in sharing my opinions. However, I'm incredibly proud of the students actually going out and doing something about mass shootings. I can't believe people haven't done anything to this extent previously. I feel like people have been mostly "slacktivists" about this topic before. But now, maybe because there have been more marches as of late (with Trump as President), people are realizing that they can do something! They can march! They can fight back!

All this activism is helping me to realize that I too should be getting out there and doing something. I too should stop my "slacktivist" ways, and stand with the people, and march. It's time to fight back in a more productive manner!

So, how should I and others like me go about this? How do we transition from "slacktivism" to activism? I think that the first step is to actually pick something you want to fight for, as I don't think that you can actively fight for everything. That would take a lot of time, money, and effort; more than a lot of people are willing and able to put in. Start small, pick a local charity that needs help, and help! Donate! Raise awareness! Take part in a fundraiser! Anything the charity is doing, go out and help! Be active. Don't make excuses. Don't tell yourself you're too busy. I don't want to assume, but you're probably not too busy to help with something that you really believe in! You don't have to be in charge of putting on the fundraiser itself, you don't even have to volunteer all of your free time, just get out there and support that charity. Start small, and eventually you'll find your activism getting bigger. Eventually you'll find that you're doing more than you ever imagined.

One quote I stumbled upon recently, uncertain who it's by, that I think really rings true with regard to making change happen is: "When people think about travelling to the past, they worry about accidentally changing the present, but no one in the present really thinks they can radically change the future."

Since we think it's so easy to accidentally change the present, let's reframe our thinking about changing the future. Let's step out, be active, march, donate, fundraise, organize, or do whatever we can. It's time for me to abandon my "slacktivist" ways and it's time for you too. Let's change the future!

EDWIN HODGE

Against Apathy

VICTORIA, BC | JANUARY 2018

In my early twenties, I flirted with the Men's Rights movement, a loosely organized collection of men (and not a few women) whose chief complaint is that women – and feminists – have overtaken men as the dominant social force, leading to a society in which men are systemically marginalized.

I was drawn to the movement for several reasons. At first, I was enticed by their application of the "pendulum theory" of social relations between men and women; swing one way, and men dominate society, swing too far the other, and women take control. It was a nice, neat distillation of the sort of binary thinking that came easily to me then. As a straight, white, able-bodied man, the world could be understood completely, with just a little application of logic. Men were men (and marginalized), women were women, and equilibrium – homeostasis – needed to be maintained between the two sexes for maximal social stability.

Reductionist philosophy aside, the movement had a secondary draw, which remains popular to this day: for social equilibrium to be (re)established, men need do nothing. Statistically, men control virtually every lever of social power, at nearly every level of society; to "win" against feminist activism, men simply needed to stay there. In other words, to oppose feminist activism, all it took was for me to change the channel or close my window.

In reactionary movements that seek to uphold the status quo, apathy is a weapon that can be turned against progressive activism. When pro-corporation, pro-capitalist political parties wish to retain power in the face of public outrage, they don't change their position, or even soften it; they simply depress the votes of their opposition. When patriarchal groups or institutions wish to blunt the charges of their progressive opponents, they paint them as dangerous threats to the comfortable lives of citizens – do nothing, they say, and these radicals will wither away.
By leaning into this defense of the status quo, I could rail against my perceived oppressors, while continuing to reap the rewards afforded to me by my social privilege. It is a potent mixture, and one that seems tailor made for the increasingly online social world in which we find ourselves embedded. While millions of women and their allies march in cities around the world to protest social manifestations of misogyny and inequality, the reactionary needs only to open their web browser and with a few simply keystrokes, dismiss the marches as 'useless' or "meaningless" or even "unnecessary." They actually say things like, please provide me with empirical evidence that women in today's society lack legal rights. Or, but what about men's issues? What about men's rights? What about the men?

Men – white men in particular – sit at the intersection of some very potent vectors of social privilege. Men and masculinity are the default, the standard against which all others are judged. Men are "doctors," "actors," or "athletes;" women are "female-doctors," "actresses," "female-athletes." "Woman" is often synonymous with "Other."
When reactionary groups like the men's rights movement ask, "but what about the men?" they are demanding that the focus of discourse remain centered on the default. When examining the lives of women or nonbinary folk, or people of colour, any focus on the marginal first demands the re-centering of the debate away from the default, but even despite this, the default remains salient; women-as Other than men; nonbinary-as Other than the heteronormative, masculine default; people of colour-as Other than white.

Progressive activism often invokes the double-consciousness of social life; recognizing marginalized groups as autonomous members of their society, and yet also attached to – and deviant from – the presumed straight, white, masculine center. It is a minor dislocation, to see society through the eyes of the Other (but not to be in society as the Other), and yet even this minor perturbation in the social web is enough to set the men at its center to dancing in alarm.

Society is a web, of belief, of interactions, of symbols and their meanings and we are all ensnared. Yet some of us are more content with our imprisonment than others, because while we all might share in the state of being captured, we are not all equally at risk of being consumed

by the spinners. As a young man, I did not meet the hegemonic ideals of masculinity, and yet I shared in the patriarchal dividends of those men who performed their masculinity in more socially acceptable ways. Even if I never reached those masculine ideals, I would always be closer than anyone who identified as a woman, and that alone was enough to secure a place in the social hierarchies of privilege.

Over time, my affiliation with the men's rights movement grew strained, and I eventually disavowed it entirely. I noticed the undercurrent of bitterness, anger, and even outright misogyny that threaded its way through so much of the movement's literature, and it frustrated me. I could plainly see the hurt and alienation so many of the authors were feeling, but rather than do something about it, they seemed to be more interested in finding fault in others, instead of honestly, critically reflecting on their own lives and their own choices. The final straw came when I happened upon a blog in which the author called for December 6th, the anniversary of the École Polytechnique massacre in Montreal to be remembered instead as "Saint Marc's Day." Marc Lépine, the anti-feminist mass murderer was, in the author's view, a martyr in the gender war, a soldier struck down while fighting against the rising tide of feminist domination. The author's writings were extremist without question, but they forced me to critically reassess the rest of the movement and my place in it. I had been wrong; the movement was not for me, and never had been. I wanted to make the world better than I found it, not spend my time sunk in anger and resentment, and so I left.
Through my undergraduate career, I was introduced to Kimberlé Crenshaw, Patricia Hill-Collins, bell hooks, and Raewyn Connell, and as my worldview became more complicated, it also became more grounded in the lived experiences of people living in the margins. I began to see the ways that social forces had pushed women, gender and sexual minorities, and people of colour into liminal spaces at the edges of social discourse, and I began to see my own complicity in the pushing.

This is the greatest challenge faced by men – particularly straight, able-bodied, white men – who wish to engage with feminist thought and feminist activism. Coming to grips with patriarchy means coming to grips with our own lived experience as members of an oppressor class, which in turn means having to acknowledge our responsibility for perpetuating sexism in our own lives and the lives of those around us. And it is precisely here that so many of us fail.

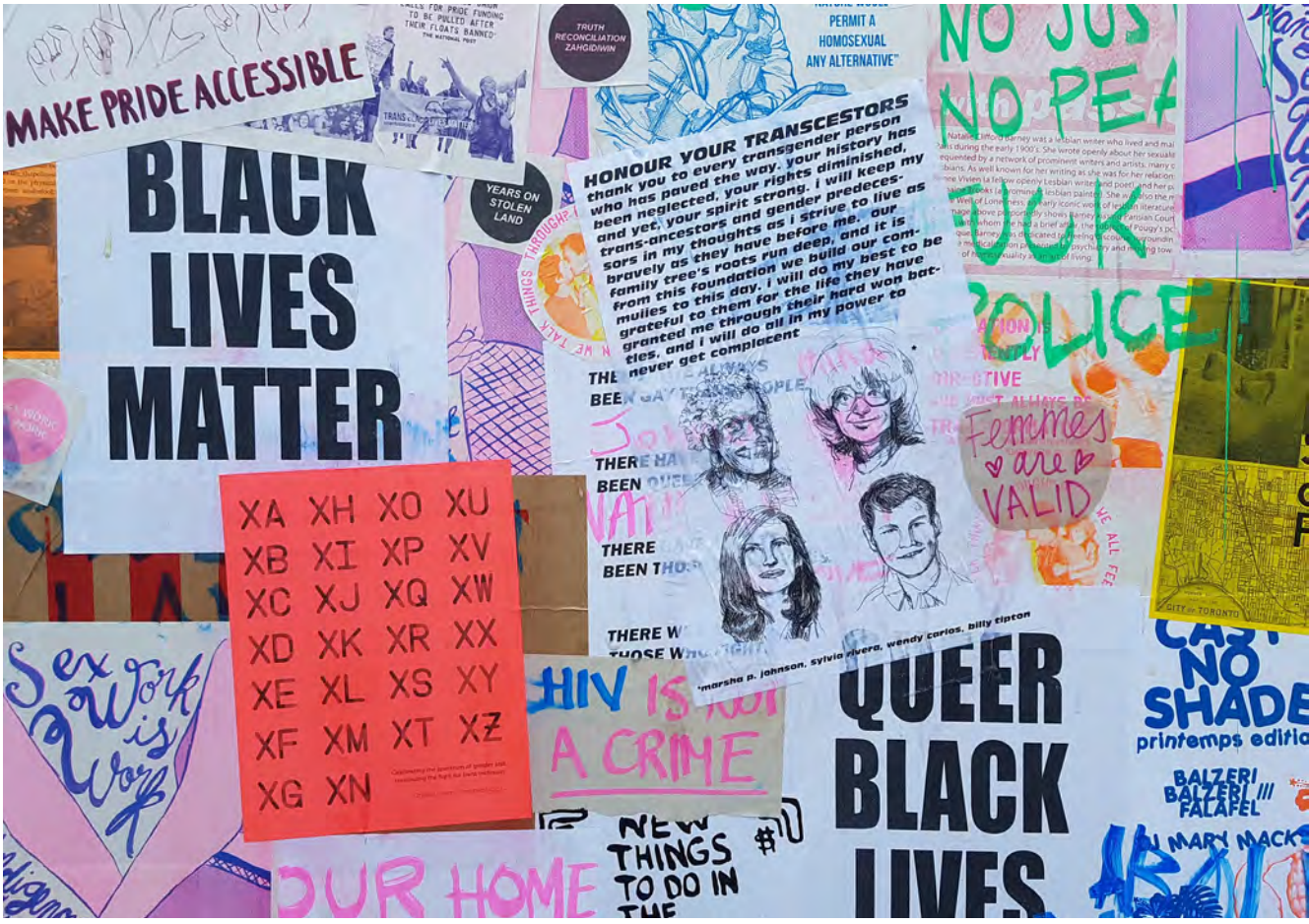
In recent years, there has been a growing call among some feminist groups to be suspicious of "feminist men," and they are right to; more than a few high-profile, self-proclaimed feminist men have shown themselves to be anything but. From respected university instructors confessing to grooming students for sexual relationships, to high-profile celebrity men mouthing feminism in public, while preying on women in private, men in feminist circles have shown that they remain vectors of risk. In response, cries of #notallmen reverberate through social media networks, but the problem isn't "all men," just "enough" of them.

Suspicion can be a heavy cloud to work under. If given the choice (and members of an oppressor class always have a choice) to labour beneath this cloud, or to return to the warm and familiar embrace of apathy, it is all too easy to choose doing nothing. I'd love to call myself a feminist, but you make it so hard for me to do so. This does not mean, however, that men who choose to work for activist causes ought to be given special consideration, for agreeing to shoulder the burden of responsibility and suspicion. Rather, men who commit to the work need to understand and accept that suspicion is simply a part of the choice of they have made; marginalized voices have struggled under similar yokes their entire lives. For men – especially straight, white, able-bodied men – feminist activism demands that we de-center ourselves. It demands that we use empathy to see through the eyes of the Other, and to recognize that the goal of feminist and other progressive activism is a good in itself, rather than an instrumental good that will grant us benefits at some point down the road. To treat feminist activism in that way is to re-center ourselves and our self-interest at the heart of our activism. It is to submit to the colonization of our thoughts by capitalist logics that tell us the only good is the fulfillment of our own self-interest. If the only reason that we as men seek the emancipation of women, people of colour, or other marginalized groups is because doing so will enrich us somehow, then perhaps we really should consider how the label of "bad feminist" applies to us.

I left the men's rights movement a long time ago. I left because I came to realize that my apathy had been weaponized by men's rights ideology against those who fought for progressive causes.

I left because I realized that doing even a small amount of good in the world is better than doing nothing at all. Most importantly, I left because I came to realize that the struggle for equality for others was good in itself, and that I should not hesitate or withhold my energies until I could be convinced that action would benefit me.

Today, I still hesitate to call myself a feminist, not because I disagree with the term, but rather because I am unsure if such a label can be self-professed. Anyone can call themselves a "feminist" but adopting a label and embodying its meaning are two different things. I work to be constantly aware of the privileges I benefit from, just as I work in my professional life to hold space for marginal voices to speak. I do what I can to be an ally in the struggle for social justice, knowing that I will make mistakes, knowing that while I can never be a "perfect" feminist ally, I can certainly try to be a better one. For me, "feminist" as a label is aspirational; it is a goal to work towards, and it is a label that I cannot claim for myself; if feminist voices have taught me anything, it is that it is not always about me.



HEATHER HOULE

DIY Love: An Interractive Art Installation at Pride Toronto

TORONTO, ON | 2017

VERONIKA KRIŠANDOVÁ

Feminism is for Everyone

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

In my first year of university, I took a Canadian Politics class. In a chapter entitled "Gender," we learned about the feminist waves and how they impacted the role of women in society. When we talked about the (current) wave of feminism, my professor pointed out that feminism has become more inclusive, and not associated with just white, middle-class women. I was surprised when I heard that – I did not think about it that way before.

Coming from a very white European country, it took me a while to understand the challenges people of colour might face when engaging in a political life. I never stopped to think that maybe it wasn't always for everyone. I didn't realize how incredibly hard it could be for a homosexual woman of colour to get a decent place in society. Reflecting on all the stories I've heard over the past few years, and seeing the Women's March in Victoria this year, it makes me proud to see how feminism has grown. It has evolved to be a powerful movement of and for people of all genders, of all colours, abilities, and religious beliefs.

Even though I belong in the more privileged group of women, I still experience sexism and discrimination. Sometimes it's obvious, sometimes it's subtle. But it's there. Whether it's getting treated slightly differently than the guy in the same position, or being expected to give your attention to a man who thinks he deserves it. Every woman should know that it's not her obligation to deal with that.

Despite the difficulties and obstacles it sometimes brings, I love being a woman. I wouldn't have it any other way. I have many wonderful women around me in my life, such as my roommates, my sister, teachers, and friends. They are all intelligent, beautiful, and awake. They empower me every day just by being themselves, doing whatever in the world they want, fighting for what they deserve, and taking no crap from anyone.

It's not just women who empower me. My English teacher in high school was one of the greatest feminists I've ever known. He made sure to let everyone know how ridiculous social constructs are, and that we should break them every chance we have. He is an example of the fact that feminism is for everyone. In fact, everyone should be a feminist. Shamelessly.

ELAINE J. LABERGE

Returning to the Barnyard

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

How different my story could have been told if I had not entered the world into poverty; I was raised in a community that storied me by my family's poverty; I was storied by my mother's supposed failings and weaknesses because we lived in abject poverty. The mysterious disappearance of my father was not questioned. I came to learn the cover story that was foisted upon us: he had no choice other than to leave because...?

This experience also shapes my higher education experiences. As I wonder about feelings of aloneness and isolation on the higher educational landscape, I go back in time and realize that the rejection of people on rural community and education landscapes, and how they storied me, has far reaching implications. The public ritualization of giving money in church was very different from the ritual of these same community members dumping bags of castoff clothes, jammed into large black garbage bags, onto our decrepit doorstep—when, no one was watching. Castoffs for outcasts.

Being Othered shapes my experiences on education landscapes; I understood this from a very young age. This sits in tension with a soothing experience on the familial landscape:

I am drawn back to a summer day when the heat of the sun blistered my skin and cracked open the parched ground. Flies buzzing around manure piles broke the silence in the barnyard. Eventually, the sound turned into a comforting background din. It reminded me there was life on this hot barren day. The occasional bellow of a cow, in some mysterious far off pasture, was jarring. As their cries faded on the still air, motionlessness returned. I was alone that day in the barnyard. The barn cats must have wisely been lounging in the shade. My great aunty sat in the house ravenously devouring her romance novels; I was ravenously devouring the stillness. Only the two of us were on the farm this day. I do not know where anyone else was. It was peaceful; it felt safe.

My great aunty had two pigs. They had a large enclosure and a house to rest in at night. Their area was normally a wonderful smelly mess of mud and poo. I would watch the pigs blissfully frolic in the muck like I wished I could. Today, however, after days of relentless heat beating down on the ground, large dangerous grooves and cracks had formed. The ground seemed to be frozen in one last sigh. I felt sorry for the pigs. Their pink skin, with only cat like whiskers for protection, was exposed to the sun's punishing rays.

Their hooves sounded like high heel shoes on jagged cement. They dangerously wobbled on tiptoes as they tried to navigate this scared, unfamiliar landscape. Today, they were not equipped for this terrain. But, they had to lug their heavy bodies to access food and water. Their tummies sat so low to the ground, I feared they might scrape their underbellies against the unkind rock-hard surface. Their snorts sounded laborious as their glistening noises pointlessly pushed at the grey ground looking for bits of discarded food.

To my child's mind, they were unhappy. I fetched two metal milk buckets from the shed. For the next several hours, from the barnyard water trough, I filled and hauled half-filled buckets of water to the pigs' pen. Salty sweat obscured my vision as I climbed the greying, splintering, wooden fence to pour the water over the pigs. The water was ice cold; the pigs squealed in delight. I created the most amazing mud pit for them. My raw-boned arms trembled; my shoulders burned. My great aunty did not share our joy; she had just cleaned the pigs' house. Yet, she was only mildly frustrated. She sighed in exasperation; the pigs sighed in rapture. I made the pigs happy and that made me happy. I long for this day, the warming sensations of an aloneness that was not lonely. In this moment, I felt a deep sense of belonging in my aloneness. I felt no shame in this aloneness. I, too, was as happy as a pig in mud.

Will I ever have this type of soothing experience on the university landscape?

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ANDREW LY

From the Wing Luke Museum of The Asian Pacific American Experience

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

Growing up in a predominantly Caucasian society, I was conditioned to believe I was an outsider. I didn't realize this, but the person I am today was shaped by my subconscious need to assimilate and convince others, as well as myself, that I'm not a stereotype.

Visiting the Wing Luke Museum in Seattle helped me connect with my roots and realize that although times are different now, there has always been a struggle to find acceptance in North American culture, and that I'm not alone in this.

There wasn't a particular exhibit that sparked my realization, but an underlying theme. From the tours of the historic buildings in Chinatown, to the exhibits chronicling the stories of immigrants from a variety of Asian countries and the sudden Chinese Exclusion Acts, my eyes were opened to the way western culture has perpetually portrayed Asians as outsiders or threats to the American workforce.

I took this photograph while sitting in a hallway between two historic buildings, listening to recordings of letters and exchanges between immigrants and their families back home. These letters were beautifully hung from wires that spanned the alley, and almost seemed to float and create a serene and peaceful atmosphere. Having lost my ability to speak Vietnamese, I felt a sense of connection listening to the words of a perfect stranger. It's not often I hear people speaking Vietnamese, even less now that I've moved away from my family to Victoria, so for myself, there's a nostalgic feeling hearing my native tongue and making me feel as though I'm among my family.

Photo by Andrew Ly
Seattle | 2018

CAROLINA PEREIRA MIRANDA

Relational Genealogy – Honouring Family Ties and My Place

CAMBRIDGE, ON | FEBRUARY 2018

In 2014, when I got divorced, I found myself very lost here in Canada. I was an immigrant and had just become a single mother without a single family member around me. I felt the need to look for answers and figure out who I was more than I had ever felt before. I think in a way, my divorce was truly a gift in disguise because it forced me to go on a journey of self-discovery that led me to understand my heritage. Not having those archetypal references around (grandmothers, especially) is something that I realized is present in every immigrant woman's life.

One of the many things I have realized while going on that journey of self-discovery, is that for years, I had lived and achieved under the disguise of a very straight story. I had taken a straight path – until I immigrated when my entire universe (and my whole paradigm) shifted.

Despite assumptions people make when I tell them that I am from Brazil, they are often surprised to hear that I come from a very privileged family. I always went to private schools, I went to the best university in South America, I have never had school debts, and I am considered (and saw myself as) a white woman in Brazil. I am embarrassed to say today that when I look back, I was also a very arrogant human being without much patience for other people who were not achieving, or understanding efficiency at the same rate of thinking that I was. I couldn't see the whole picture then since I had my privilege as blinders, and they allowed me to move further and faster through knowledge, time, and space, than most people in my country.

Then I immigrated to Canada in 2003. I married a white Canadian man, and I tried, as hard as I could, to fit into a social construct and a narrative that would allow me to pass for Canadian, to be accepted and seen seamlessly as one of "them." While I was an actress, I took a lot of voice coaching sessions to diminish my accent as much as I could. Having less of an accent certainly increased the chances for better parts in the acting world (and it still does). When I became a teacher, I completely ignored much of my uniqueness and tried as hard as I could to blend in and to be seen as part of the norm. And I did a superb job at it – until 2014.

2014 is when I got divorced, and I found my entire life as I had known it here in Canada falling apart. The life I had built thus far felt like a weak story that had been told and built on lies. Trying to ignore or hide who I was, had only caused me much pain. And so, I knew I had to stop spinning, I knew I had to figure out who I was as a woman, all this to be able to offer my children some truth about who they truly are and where they come from. That's when I decided there was only one way of doing this: I needed to take a very careful look at my story, looking back to understand who I was, and where I had begun.

During this journey, I revived an old dream of mine from when I was 19 years old, and I created Feminine Harbor (https://femininеharbor.com/), an organization that uses the arts, and education as a medium to bring women of very diverse social and cultural backgrounds together. We hope to foster empathy, understanding and above all, we want to add sustainability to the woman's movement through guidance, intermingling generations. I realized that so many women who are immigrants lack that voice of wisdom; they lack their mother's and grandmother's guidance.

Through this experience of understanding my place in time and space, I have realized how important it is to know your personal narrative through your family ties (serendipitously, also the title of one of the first books my father ever gave me, and one of my favorite books). I began to realize how our family history impacts our lives in our most intimate relationships, influencing how we design realities. If we wish to create more empathetic realities, we need to understand empathy, starting with our own families. I realized that I had been a product of many privileges and what that meant is that until I had come to Canada, I was able to ignore my entire ethnic background.

I realized for instance, that my maternal grandmother came from Portugal, on a ship, on a journey that would hopefully lead her to a better

life. She was an immigrant herself. I became conscious of the fact that my grandfather was an alcoholic due to so much cultural severing, and ethnic genocide committed against his people. He too had tried the hardest he could to fit in, and as much as he could, he tried to erase his pain and the colour of his skin. I finally understood that my great-grandmother was referred casually as Indian (his mother), and that's because she was an Indigenous woman and that in just four generations we had cut the number of pregnancies within the women in my family from 22 to 2, which meant a huge – exponential – creative power lay ahead.

I faced the fact that my dad was very much a product of farmers who thrived on slavery. His family had banana plantations and up until his grandparents' generation, our family had clearly benefited from slavery. I began to see that my paternal grandparents had adopted a black child (who became my aunt) with the best of intentions, but I have great reasons to believe that what they were truly doing was to try to relieve themselves of some of the guilt and pain that they still carried from their horrible heritage.

I realized that my brother has experienced an entirely different life than mine, due to the colour of his skin. By being darker, and having curlier hair, he was aware of racial privilege much earlier than I was, and this has significantly impacted his understanding of self in relationship to time and space. I realized that I needed to move to another country, where I am seen as the other, to be humbled by all of this.

I became open and brutally honest about my rhinoplasty (a plastic surgery on my nose) and what that meant after reflecting on it for over 15 years. I see now that at the very core of my surgery was an attempt to erase cultural and ethnic traces by trying to fit physically into a more aristocratic and colonial model of beauty. It has taken me years to heal from this psychologically, but I do now talk about it openly because we tend to normalize these procedures here in the Western world (Roman, 2003).

Once I was able to look within with as much honesty as I could, it became evident that I had built so much of my identity on an incomplete, sometimes even false narrative. I realized that I had sanitized and bleached as much of my past as I possibly could, so I could go further faster – achieving at no cost. Without my marriage to hide behind, I had to figure out who I was, and embracing truth in order to move forward was key to living with more integrity, and owning my voice. This alignment became crucial in my understanding of intersectionality, privilege, and the importance of admitting that so much of feminism is indeed a construct that often ignores race, socio-economic status, and historical accounts of oppression and colonialism. It also ignores that we are not are part of history, we are not a part of time. We are history in the making, we are the agents of time itself.

This new knowing allowed me to stop imposing false expectations that I'd had of myself onto my children. A narrative that thus far had been so incomplete and untrue that would have led me to perpetuate an arrogant view of myself onto them, wanting them to achieve more, to be more, to do more without rooting our knowing in a more complete experience. I was done with the false pretenses that had allowed me to survive in this broken world. And I wanted to thrive. But if I was going to thrive, I wanted it to be rooted in truth. I want my children to be aware and proud of their incredibly mixed cultural heritage, I want them to be kind, understanding and empathetic women, and I want them to gain a global perspective of their family story.

This knowledge is particularly important as we become increasingly physically displaced, mixed, and yet virtually connected. Research areas such as relational genealogy, and narrative inquiry can lead us into our authentic past, and our family origins through reflection. These new areas of research serve as a vehicle to compare all of what we have been told by history books, contextualizing ourselves into time and space, forming a richer historical and cultural narrative. It was crucial to my understanding of self to know that I am only here in this exact place at this exact time, because someone (for better or worse) has helped me move forward. Knowing who these people were and under what circumstances our lives have come to pass, is key in understanding what choices I want to make when building my future.

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CAYLA NAUMANN

What Made Me a Feminist?

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

Was it my mom saying "Look at the ants?" Was it growing up being called a "tom boy" because I liked playing with Legos and wearing coveralls? Was it playing with G.I. Joes and Barbies? Was it being raised by a retired father, while my mom worked and finished school? Was it being exposed to science and technology at a young age? Was it being told the boy in middle school must like me because he picked on me? Was it talking with friends in middle school about dieting and how to look thin and pretty? Was it seeing a girl bullied because she was curvy and being glad that it was not me being picked apart based on looks? Was it crying the first time I was told I needed to wear a bra, or feeling more beautiful the first time I wore makeup? Was it being pressured to shave my arms, my legs, my underarms?

Was it being cornered and intimidated by men, relying on my younger brother for safety and comfort? Was it hearing stories of harassment, sexual assault and ridicule over and over again from those closest to me? Was it remembering, years after the fact, being kicked out of a strange man's bed, putting on my clothes, stumbling out the door, too drunk to know exactly what happened, blaming myself for drinking too much? Was it feeling safe to walk and run as I pleased, because I have a big, strong dog by my side? Was it being taught self-defence? Was it my safety being questioned on a solo bike trip down the coast? Was it being given mace by a stranger because he worried about my safety? Was it learning my friend was raped at a party I was at, that I should have done more to prevent it, to support her after the fact? Was it thinking of all the times I had been pressured into physical acts, physically pleasing a man because I didn't want to make him mad or disappoint him? Was it being told to smile? Was it the comments from men as I walked down the street, the whistles, the catcalls, the stares? Was it the moving my hand, my body, after I resisted, said no, tried to move away, look away, run away?

Was it having my judgment questioned because of my age and gender? Was it seeing bosses and supervisors rely on me to do their jobs, and being paid less to do so? Was it hearing the term "mansplaining" and instantly having dozens of examples of it in my memory, and seeing more examples play out in front of me? Was it wondering how I could balance a career and family? Was it wondering if getting pregnant would cost me my job, my career, my future? Was it wondering if I would still be loved if pregnancy made me "fat" or gave me stretch marks? Was it wondering if I would die in childbirth, or be killed by a domestic partner? Was it all the times doctors brushed off my symptoms and pain?

Was it seeing the media portray women as the victim – blame the victim – over and over again? Was it the skimpy outfits on all the women in movies and video games? Was it seeing men guilty of rape walk away with a slap on the wrist because the judge didn't want to "impact his future"? Was it being called "slut," "bitch," "whore" and "cunt"? Was it seeing another headline describing another survivor?

Was it hearing the songs, the poems, the voices of other women say "Me Too"?

What made me wake up to rape culture and misogyny and realize that patriarchy is real and surrounds me every day? What made me realize "enough is enough" and "time's up" and "this is why I march" were too important to put off for another day, another minute, another second? I had the privilege of a slow awakening, but I will not stop resisting, marching, and speaking up until no one has to wonder "why am I feminist." They just are.

SIERRA COYLE-FURDYK

Blind Portrait, directed by Karin Saari

2017


SIERRA
C.F
PHOTOGRAPHY

KARIN SAARI

Social Justice and Intersectional Feminism in Theatre: Art Must Imitate Life

VICTORIA, BC | MARCH 2018

For many people theatre feels like an impenetrable, inaccessible and archaic art form. It evokes images of women in corsets and men in stockings delivering elaborate speeches full of flowery language. While I acknowledge that that kind of theatre exists, it is not what I do. The theatre that I love and invest in is not simply frivolous entertainment (that is what Netflix is for). I love the kind of theatre that attempts to change people and have a lasting impact; theatre that resonates with an audience on multiple levels and engenders empathy and compassion and understanding; theatre that resonates in a way that cannot always be articulated and defined.

In order to do this, I begin by asking myself, "Why this play now? Why is this relevant? Why is it important? Will this story help or harm?"

If I can satisfy those questions and the answers align with social justice and feminist values, I begin to build my team. When putting together a cast and crew, representation is of the utmost importance. Racial, gender, sexual and body diversity must be always represented in my work, on stage and off.

As a white, cis gender woman, I can never rely on only my opinions, knowledge and creative vision to tell a story because my lived experience is not enough. I pride myself on my ability to collaborate and run a safe, loving and supportive rehearsal room because I have found that that is the only way to make honest and impactful, affecting theatre that represents the world around us and shines a light on the things we might not be exposed to, or often choose not to see.

I love telling complicated stories full of complicated characters that challenge and encourage audiences to have difficult conversations and confront their own biases and opinions, whether that is stripping a Shakespearean classic of its comedy/tragedy/history classification and highlighting the issues that make the play problematic (such as xenophobia, sexism, abuse and violence), or taking a contemporary work that addresses the issues of addiction, mental health, sexual assault and racism.

Some of the plays I love can be presented in a linear, literal way, and some require abstraction in terms of staging and design. My process is and must always be flexible, and I am constantly learning new ways to approach a play. What will never change is my deep commitment to make art with a message and to, above all, not cause harm with my work.

ANGELA SCOTT

Sisters Rising

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

As an urban, dis-placed, mixed descent Indigenous woman (Ojibwe|Métis|Danish|English) who works at the intersection of several colonial, unjust, and oppressive systems (child welfare, legal, and mental health), I often find myself feeling silenced, moving through structures and interactions, unheard and unseen. My red blood, hidden beneath a mask of light skin, dark hair, black eyes; my spirit remains hidden deep in my heart. The indigenous children, youth, and families with whom I work are similarly urban, distant from homeland, of many descents, and most often tell me "I am native, but I don't practice my culture." Lost to the urban community of a colonized nation, where there is no indigenous sovereignty of the body, of the land, of culture.

In my professional practice, sexualized violence against Indigenous girls and young women often takes the form of repeated, cyclical acts of sexualized violence, colonial violence. As young girls, they are often abused (sexually, physically, emotionally) by extended family, as young women, by acquaintances or peers. The cycle repeats, what changes as they age is a shift in power dynamics and relations between themselves, the abusers, and the colonial system. As young children, they are abused by those they trust, those with ultimate relational power, those with control over their developing bodies. As young adults, the power shifts to those they barely know, those who take advantage of the marginalized. This further impacts the development of Indigenous identity, and of their spirit. Identity emerges and develops within, and in relation to, modalities of power and social relationships (Gehl & Ross, 2013). This inner expropriation of cultural identity by powerful others deforms the growth and flourishing of spiritual identity (Gehl & Ross, 2013). And I see this in my practice, young indigenous girls and women, seeking to find safety, connection, and understanding of the colonial violence that impacts their lived experiences.

I grapple with trying to articulate how this affects the urban community; I feel that Indigenous girls and women, like myself, are ghosts, not seen or heard, and their pain is silenced, it is forgotten and ignored. There are no increases in services or programs that provide cultural intervention or spirit-nourishing guidance. Rather, in my experience there are many Indigenous programs still under the jurisdiction, policies, and procedures of settler ontologies (see for example de Leeuw, 2014). Further, I am witness to these Western/settler/colonial ontologies of what is good, right, and just, creating lateral violence in Indigenous communities by imparting practices that are not indigenous ways of knowing, of doing, or of being. Thereby continuing to infect and dismantle the traditional knowledge and histories of Indigenous peoples with colonizing practices that turn them against each other.

So how do we, how do I, want to support the well-being, sexual health, decolonization, dignity, and respect of Indigenous girls' bodies and spirits? I want to support responses to violence in various forms (physical, spiritual, emotional) that serve to increase a person's sense of dignity in demeaning, and degrading circumstances (Richardson & Wade, 2010). These responses may take a myriad of forms and shapes: such as creating art, writing our stories, voicing our pain, calling out settler colonialism, speaking traditional language, practicing our cultural traditions in public and private spaces, respecting our elders, and teaching our children Indigenous ways of being.

Although resistance may not stop the on-going violence and colonization against the sovereignty of Indigenous bodies and land, it is an important element in restoring respect and dignity for the self and the community of which our spirits are intricately connected.

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WAASEYAA'SIN CHRISTINE SY

Social Justice and Intersectional Feminism Are Important But, They're Not Enough

VICTORIA, BC, LEKWUNGEN AND WSÁNEĆ TERRITORIES | FEBRUARY 2018

When I think of social justice, I think of my lived experiences as a volunteer in women-centered sexual assault care centers; decolonial anti-racist community coalitions; and, violence prevention against Indigenous women organizations. Experiences had during my 20s and 30s in various places in Northern and Southern Ontario during the 1990s and early 2000s, I learned so much about social justice through each of them. I learned about power and relationships in community. And, through joys and frustrations, I learned the importance of knowing one's own agenda, needs, boundaries, and limitations in being engaged in social justice endeavors. As someone who believes whole-heartedly in community, organizing, activism, and social justice, I hold my learning close; it is incredibly rich and born of the visions and spirit of folx who want a better world. While much of my vocational experiences could fall under the umbrella of social justice to some degree, what I offer here, in this space of social justice and intersectional feminisms, are some reflections on my volunteer experiences as Indigenous woman. But first, an introduction.

I am Bear Clan of the Ojibway Nation. My mother, Mary Chisel-baa, is Ojibway from Lac Seul First Nation, Treaty 3 (Northwestern Ontario) and my dad, James Hammond, is white Canadian from Bell Island, Newfoundland—land of the Beothuk and Mi'kmaw. My name is part and parcel from many—Waaseyaa'sin, from my culture; Christine, from my parents; and, Sy, from my marriage to a man who is Pulaar and Walof from West Mauritania. I have a step-mother, Debbie Hammond, who is Canadian from Ontario; and, a family who adopted me when I was a teen whose identity as individuals fluctuates in and around being white Canadian, French, Cree, and Métis. I have one daughter, one cat, and two plants (and they each lament not getting the same amount of attention).

I presently live in Lewkungwen peoples lands and work in lands that are the traditional and enduring home to both Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ peoples. While I am an academic, and a poet, my responsibilities as Anishinaabe, Bear Clan, and womxn, in part, rest with, and arise from, the sugar bush (the place where maple sap is harvested and produced into sugar). I interpret the world through an ever-evolving lens that centers indigeneity within Indigenous-settler contexts and focuses on gender, with a particular interest in womxn and girls. Of course, this involves supporting Indigenous cis-gendered, heterosexual men to understand how they benefit from settler colonial patriarchy which marginalizes Indigenous women and erases Indigenous non-binary, gender-queer, and gender non-conforming folx. I'm interested in Indigenous womxn being able to provide well for themselves and their dependents (and if they choose, their communities and nations) according to their own Indigenous values, laws, methods, and needs in a global and settler capitalist economy that continually encroaches upon her ability to do so.

I am able-bodied, middle-aged, cis-gendered and non-practicing heterosexual (I have other priorities other than sex and men these days) and accept the pronouns she and they. I utilize 'x' in womxn when identifying myself because I see my behavior being considered queer from within Anishinaabe communities because I don't agree with or reinforce what I consider gender discrimination in Anishinaabe ceremonies; because I do my best to transgress or stymy the reproduction of settler colonial power dynamics and hierarchies amongst us and refuse being taken up in their reproduction without my consent; and, because I've been told—implicitly and explicitly—that my behavior is unintelligible or against social norms within some networks of Anishinaabe relationalities that are organized around rigid gender binaries; heterosexual, monogamous nuclear family models; and, class.

Also, while the literature on, by, and for Indigenous peoples is marginal in western knowledge production, within it is the dominant construction and reproduction of settler gender binaries, heterosexuality, femininities, and masculinities. I utilize 'x' in womxn when referring to Indigenous womxn to one, include trans-gendered, two-spirit, gender queer, and gender-non-conforming folx and two, in order to disrupt the problematic, limited, and rigid constructions that exist about Indigenous womxn's (e.g. sq*aw, drudge, gatherer, sexually promiscuous, dead, missing, pow-wow dancer,

beader, mother nature love, child birther, continual nurturer etc.) gendered ways of being.

As a cis-het Ojibway womxn, I realize that by utilizing the x, I'm appropriating the work that trans-gendered, gender queer, two-spirited, and/or gender non-conforming folx have done, and are doing, to build language and worlds that reflect their realities, representations, and presence. I utilize it to signal that I am a part of a group of people who are diverse, have been burdened by erasures, misrepresentations, and constructions that have been mobilized for agenda's identified by those outside of this group. And, while I am a part of this diverse group, and have been marked by some in negative ways due to how my performance of gender challenges internal and external power that impinges on, and is mobilized through, this group, that being a cis-het womxn allows me to live in the world with a measure of safety while accruing benefits while trans-gendered, two-spirit, gender queer, and gender non-conforming folx have a greater risk of being penalized and/or harmed for being who they are. I hope my words, logic, meaning, and intention in appropriating the 'x' resonate in positive ways with this community as individuals and/or as a collective. Who I am, as indicated here, is not exactly who I was during each of my volunteer experiences, however who I am today does shape how I understand, re-interpret, and articulate my experiences of the past.

When I think of my time as a volunteer in women-centered sexual assault care, I think of spaces that were dominated representationally through white, settler womxn. Here, there was tendency to assume that because I was Indigenous (and visibly so), I knew "Indigenous healing things" and was expected to perform as such.

When I think of my time in anti-racist community coalitions, I think of spaces that were diverse in terms of gender, sexuality, body-type, age, Indigenous-settler-newcomer/immigrant "status," religion, race and/or ethnicity. I think of spaces that mobilize the discourse of diversity and inclusion. I think of spaces that mobilize the discourse of decolonization. And, I think of spaces that, despite the diverse representation and the critical rhetoric, were ultimately governed by, and reproduced through, the entrenched white, settler supremacist structures, attitudes, entitlements, and privileges of certain white womxn and those who refused to question them or hold them to account.

Here, I experienced silences from would-be allies—queer feminist Black folx and straight people of colour—when challenging governance that was being reproduced according to white peoples' rules (e.g. Robert's Rules of Order) and white peoples' whims. Here, I wondered what post-colonial, Black feminist thought, and intersectional theory had to say about growing out of, and flourishing in, lands that are home to Indigenous peoples; homes that many Indigenous peoples were removed from, are contained within, killed upon, and/or now are occupied and settled by non-Indigenous folx. I wondered what non-Indigenous folx thought about being a part of settler colonial process in Indigenous lands while Indigenous desire to rejuvenate and recreate lives anew in our stolen lands was, and is, vocalized. Here, I experienced push back on decolonial practice. Here, I experienced being the token Indigenous leader. Here, I experienced a kind-of-coup when asserting an Indigenous approach to leadership.

When I think of my time in violence prevention against Indigenous womxn, I think, is this publication on social justice and intersectional feminism a safe space to talk about these experiences?

And then I think about Kim Anderson and her words about reader response-ability when reading the knowledges, the experiences, thoughts, theories, and experiences of Indigenous womxn (Anderson 28-30). I think, in terms of accountable spaces between Indigenous womxn and non-Indigenous womxn, the latter must know not to use the written word against Indigenous womxn to undermine or divide, or as a crutch that prevents the uncomfortable—often painful—work of decolonial praxis.

When I think of my time in violence prevention against Indigenous womxn, I think of how it is dominantly anti-violence against Indigenous women (i.e. cis-het women). I think of how this space only saw heterosexual relationships and thus, domestic or intimate partner abuse of men against women. I think of space that importantly embraces critical praxis around colonization of Indigenous peoples and the particular impact on Indigenous women. I think of the life-giving strategies for prevention that include rejuvenating and regenerating Indigenous thought, values, and practices in healing. I think of the on-going emotional labours, intellectual labours, and social labours that are continually extended in relationships with non-Indigenous collaterals who

were 99% white settlers and white settle state government officials—our colonizers—who hold the purse strings to Indigenous goals of eliminating violence against Indigenous women. Invisible and invisibilized labour; necessary labour, given the settler dominance of the system that this work takes place in. I think, Indigenous peoples will never be able to do anti-violence against Indigenous womxn in accordance with Indigenous ways as long as this work is bound to the settler colonial state, society, and collaterals. I think of the unique and difficult problem anti-violence against Indigenous womxn has to figure out, and tries to figure out: If we as Indigenous peoples have all been colonized, how do we not include men in our healing when men have been harmed by colonial processes as well?

If Indigenous philosophies and practices are inclusive and have priorities other than gender, how do we engage in this inclusivity without harming womxn who have been victimized by mxn? I think of how this space refused to engage in critical theory about gender (i.e. Indigenous feminist theories) and how, in that refusal—paired with the empathy for colonized Indigenous men—it risked reproducing violence against Indigenous women and /or womxn, and did. And did in the name of keeping men shielded from being held to account for their abusive, dominating behavior. I think of internalized colonization and lateral violence. I think of how settler colonial hierarchies were reproduced here and how power and privilege were advanced, mobilized, or reproduced to meet the needs of some but not all. I think Indigenous desire to live well and Indigenous work that goes into making the world less violent to Indigenous womxn—non-violent to Indigenous womxn—come true requires being unhinged from the political-economic power of settler colonial government and the social power of settler society. I think the rejuvenation and regeneration of Indigenous life-ways requires constant critical engagement with settler colonial everything because as Indigenous peoples we are saturated in it and not immune to its edicts and ways of being. To not be critically engaged in it, we risk reproducing it in the work we do for our people and our future.
Here, in my experiences as an Ojibway womxn who has volunteered in varied social justice causes, when I think of social justice and intersectional feminism, I think it is not enough.

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KELSEY WEISS

Lessons from a Modern Working Woman

VICTORIA, BC | MARCH 2018

1. **Understand that you are less proficient than your male counterparts.**

   Time and time again, you will have tasks deemed "important" taken away from you and given to men who can make sure the work is done correctly. You'll be given more menial tasks instead, things that can be done with little chance of a mistake occurring.

2. **Do not speak up when you are spoken down to.**

   If something is being explained to you in an overly-simplistic or condescending nature, just smile and take the information with grace. No one likes a know-it-all-woman. If you are being spoken to with emotion, do not respond with emotion, as you will be deemed overly-emotional and irrational. Alberta Premier, Rachel Notley, called out her male colleagues this winter for "mansplaining" (Bennett, 2017). After being supported by Justice Minister, Kathleen Ganley, that her use of the word "mansplain" was applied correctly to the situation, Notley was met with defensive responses, insisting they weren't meant to be sexist comments. The most powerful women in our country are met with resistance when they stand their ground to their equals. How are we supposed to stand up to our leaders in the work place, when our leading females are still being put down by their male colleagues?

3. **Take requests with a smile.**

   "Hey, can you make some labels for me? Remember the date and my initials."
   Sure, I'll happily do this task to save you time, I've got lots of time to finish my own work later.

   This is a common problem for women across all industries. We are often asked to show new people around, train new people, help others, organize extra events and take on tasks outside of our assigned workload, and to do it all graciously. If you have to stay late, to finish your own work, it must be because you weren't going fast enough throughout the day, and don't expect to be paid for that extra time.

4. **Accept comments about your body as part of fun team-building.**

   This past summer, during one heat wave, I was wearing an outfit which showed more leg than I normally would wear to work. Instead of being able to make it through a sweaty day without being objectified, my male boss thought the following to be an appropriate comment: "Your vagina must be nicely aired out today in those shorts!" How do you respond to sexual harassment from your boss? I'm ashamed to say, I laughed along like it was a joke, and that I'm now too uncomfortable to wear those shorts back to work. What used to be a favourite item of clothing, now reminds me of the comment my boss felt entitled to make about the state of my genitals, not to mention the gross feeling I now get from my boss, who made uncomfortable comments from the beginning. One of his first comments, which reared his sexism's ugly head was when he wondered aloud how a pretty girl like me could be single, because clearly aesthetics are the most important part of a relationship.

5. **You'll rarely be complimented on your work ethic.**

   Compliments on work ethic are for the hardworking men only. They won't take out any of the trash, or do any of the heavy lifting, or do any of the cleaning, but they're clearly working harder than you. In fact, they are so skilled at their jobs, they can have conversations completely unrelated to the work at hand. When having such conversations, it is best not to remind them that others around them are still actively working; they will be deeply unimpressed by

your inability to pay zero attention to your work. Ladies, just keep your resting-bitch-face at bay, and the compliments will start rolling in about how pretty you are, and what a nice outfit you're wearing.

6. **You'll be paid less to do more work, consistently.**

   Yes, even in 2018, we are still paid significantly less than our male counterparts. They will have higher starting salaries, and they will get bigger raises more frequently. You can work harder, get better at your job than they are, and somehow still never reach the level of respect or pay they are given. There is a 31% wage gap currently in Canada, according to a recent MacLeans publication (Dhopade, 2018). Our current government has a six-step plan to help reduce this gap. Having this plan in place is great progress that I'm excited for, but I won't be holding my breath.

7. **Even the men you consider your friends will not stand up for you, because they benefit from the patriarchy.**

   I was recently advised (by a male friend) that the best way to create change in the world is to start by cleaning your own room. I pray for and envision a world where women no longer have to interact with men who aren't fighting for our cause, and can be surrounded by men who at least try to understand the issues that systemically plague women. If I were to end my relationships with all people who I think have some learning and growing to do in terms of being feminists, I would have no male friends left, and not very many female friends either (more on that in the next point). Even the best men I've known still have streaks of misogyny that show their head from time to time. It might appear as a committed, loving boyfriend dismissing his girlfriend's directional knowledge, or as an agreement made to placate a woman's concerns, while the man has no intention of following through on his end of the agreement. The goal here isn't always sex, but simply a desire to feel in control of the situation. My most trusted male confidantes have often shrugged off my observations of the clearly unbalanced situations we encounter everyday. They aren't willing to say things about the lopsided distribution of work versus pay, because they are on the winning side of that scale. What women stand to gain, men must be willing to lose in terms of socio-economic and political power (not in terms of things like the pay gap – we should all be paid more). I have yet to meet a man who would put down his privilege for women to have an equal opportunity, but I have faith that at least a handful of them must exist.

8. **Your female leaders might not be your allies.**

   In response to having it shoved in our faces all day, everyday, most women will have internalized sexism and misogyny in some capacity. Unfortunately, some of these women will see your complaints as emotional, irrational, overreactive, difficult, etc. often attributed to females. Some of these women will gain the approval of their male colleagues, which only discourages them from being a feminist ally. They believe that by working hard and honing your skills, you can overcome any of the challenges presented by a male-dominated workplace. We have many inspiring stories of women who do this, but we forget all the women who toil and work endlessly to improve their situation, while never receiving the recognition or respect their male counterparts seem to receive almost automatically. Many of the women in positions to help other women see these struggles and imbalances as rites of passage to becoming a successful woman, and do nothing to ease the obstacles for others. We must all look for our own harmful, internalized ideas about women and work to change them. I'm still finding ones of my own I hadn't noticed, and I apologize if any of them come across in this piece.

9. **Take small successes where you can, like knowing you handle yourself better than any of your male colleagues could in your situation.**

   One of my favourite lyrics of the moment says, "men and women are equal, but we're not the same" (Jurvanen, 2018). There will be things that different individuals, male or female, are better at than others. That's just life. What you can do is take note of things you and the women around you are skilled at, and celebrate those. Celebrate your own small successes, and share them when you can. If you're feeling particularly crumby, and can

complete the following without openly being a jerk, it can also be a good boost to take note when those around you make mistakes. No one is perfect, but we often focus too much on our own mistakes, forgetting to take comfort in knowing we all screw up sometimes.

10. **Asking for what you know you deserve can stir the pot, and threaten your employability.**

I really, truly wish I could tell you that I have shaped a situation for myself, where I feel adequately compensated and appreciated for the work I do. Unfortunately, the industry I am in is small, and word can travel quickly if someone causes what is deemed an unnecessary headache for my superiors. I still have to pay my rent and bills; someone who constantly complains about the work environment they are in can be quickly replaced. So, like many of my sisters, I am waiting for better days. I am waiting for equal pay, equal respect, equal opportunities, equal responsibility, equality for all.

Let's build that together!

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MATT POLLARD

***Mother and Son*, Käthe Kollwitz**

NEUE WACHE, BERLIN | 2016

Activism Reports

ALEXANDRA AGES

Women's March Victoria

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

Women's March Organizers: Alexandra, Cayla, and Linaya
Photo by Gaynor Hughes
Victoria, BC | 2018

When looking back at my time helping to organize the Women's March here in Victoria, a number of different things come to mind, but one core message stands out. Above all, the importance of intersectionality is the most striking takeaway; the importance of not just including marginalized voices, but working actively to amplify them, remains as crucial to activism as ever.

"White Feminism," the term applied to the form of corporate-allied, cis-gendered, white, middle class, and overall privileged and elitist activism, is one of the most detrimental aspects of the contemporary feminist movement. This is the brand of feminism that preaches sisterhood and unity, while simultaneously erasing the voices of transwomen, women of colour, sex workers, disabled women, lower-income women, and others who are most needed within the context of the movement.

"I'm with her!" the White Feminists (not to be mixed up with feminists who happen to be white) cry out; no such solidarity, however, is extended to the marginalized women who most need support.

When looking back at this year's women's march, I am proud that grassroots activists, largely reflecting the needs of marginalized groups, were given their rightful and well-deserved place at the forefront of the movement. To see speakers representing Muslim women, sex workers, transwomen, recent immigrants, Indigenous women, and more, and to see the incredible activism of these organizations and individuals being praised, was honestly just beautiful.

Feminism as a whole needs to step back and reflect on its internal problems, particularly the focus on feminism that solely supports the wealthy, the able-bodied, the white, the cis-gendered women who seek only to help themselves.
However, feminism also needs to reflect on all the beauty and the goodness that is so evident at events like Victoria's Women's March; the power and the strength of grassroots organizers should not be ignored, and it is going to be that power that continues to breathe new life into modern feminism.

Intersectionality is at the heart of what we do and why we do it; I am grateful to have been a part of a march that served to highlight that, and remain hopeful that the many incredible speakers, activists, and community members who shared their voices will continue to fight against inequalities.

LINAYA BERTSCHI

Women's March Victoria

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

Linaya as the Lead Marshal at Women's March
Photo by K. Sark
Victoria, BC | January 2018,

It started with a simple invitation from my professor and friend, Kat Sark. She asked me if I wanted to go with her to meet with other women who were going to try to pull off the intimidating task of recreating the Women's March for a second year; in the even more intimidating timespan of two weeks.

It wasn't going to be easy. The first March had been a revolutionary and reactionary response to the election of Donald Trump in the United States, but this year, Women's March Canada wanted to draw attention to the societal inequalities that are present in everyday life for people all across Canada. With the tagline of #LookBackMarchForward, the March declared that it wanted to improve its intersectionality, where it was critiqued the previous year. The people who were on the Organizing Committee threw themselves into this with a fervour.

I'd like to end it there. To do a cinematic montage set to "Eye of the Tiger" and say that after a fortnight of late night meetings, unending e-mail chains, phone calls, bake-sales and poster making parties, we were able to sit back and enjoy the fruits of our labour. But changing the world has never been that simple. Sure, those things did all happen, but intertwining all of it was fear, doubt, frustration, and in some cases, anger.

This was the first time that I had experienced the tricky balancing act that is personal politics. While trying to create a cohesive set of speakers who represented what we each believed intersectionality to be, we also had to figure out who valued what, and who was offended by what. It was messy. I'm not sure if we had more time it would have been any better, maybe some feelings could have not been hurt, some concerns more fully addressed. All I know is that the tension, and the ways we dealt with the tension, is something I will remember and be more prepared for, and it was a powerful learning experience.

On the day of the actual March I was the Lead Marshal for the event, and as such, I had the unique position of being able to lead the March for a short while as we started, and also walk up and down the length of the March as we moved through the city. It was such an amazing moment. I can still see the long snake of coloured posters and pink winding towards the Parliament building. I could hear the chanting and drumming. I could feel the energy and force of all the people who walked with me that day. So many women and feminists gathered together and willing to brave the cold to make sure that the world would look back, and move forward. One step, one day, one march at a time.

LAUREN CASTLE

Women's March Victoria

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

I am new to Canada, new to Victoria, new to UVic, and new to the community, yet the Women's March made me feel so at home. Something magical happens when people come together from all walks of life, to share their stories, experiences, and strategies for positive change. It didn't matter that I was from England, or that I didn't know the streets of Victoria all that well (I at least knew what side of the road we were marching on), I was a part of something important.

I volunteered to help with Women's March Victoria, not knowing what role I would be given. I was so pleased to be a marshal because I was able to see so many smiling faces and banners (and of course I rocked the red high-vis jacket). Before and after the incredibly inspiring speeches, my friend Eleni and I walked through the crowds of people. As I said, I'm new to Victoria, so it was truly inspiring to listen to the speeches and learn about Victoria's local issues, local organisations and local activism. I also got to connect with my classmates and teachers, sharing with them a day that we will all remember.

"Rocking the Red High-Vis Vest"
Photo by Eleni Tsonis
Victoria, BC | 2018

As a marshal, it was my job to ensure everyone marched safely, staying together and on the right side of the road. Everyone looked out for each other, and when a gap formed, and people needed to speed up, I shouted "close the gap! And the wage gap!" (I got a few laughs at least). The police officer was great, and he explained to us how to keep everybody safe, and sensibly handle any counter protesting. I like to think that the fact there weren't any, and that the march was a safe, peaceful, and positive experience, is an indicator of progress (or maybe it was just too cold for them to handle)!

However, when the police officer was talking to us, I noticed that he said there's very little we can do if they do turn up, because they are entitled to "freedom of speech." I smiled to myself because I remember being told in class that Canada actually has "freedom of expression," and that often people do not realise that the two are very different. We all still have so much learning to do, myself included. I learned so much about the local community and being a volunteer at the Women's March made me feel included and welcome. Another great moment for me was when some guys came and asked us what intersectionality was, as they had seen the word on our posters. I was so happy to see these men asking questions and showing their eagerness to learn about this vital word and what it means. It was a truly successful, inspiring and fulfilling event, and I am so grateful to have been a part of it.

My friend Eleni and I volunteered together, so having her with me was a lot of fun (and the hot chocolate kept us warm). I asked her to also reflect on her involvement in the Women's March and she said: "I found being a marshal to be a really positive and inspiring role. I enjoyed getting to connect with the community and listen to the voices of oppressed people in our society. I was able to interact with people in an open, safe and friendly space, and talk to people of all ages and from all walks of life."

CAROLINA PEREIRA MIRANDA

Looking Back, Marching Forward - Women's March 2018

CAMBRIDGE, ON | MARCH 2018

The first time I marched for women's rights was actually in my country, Brazil. Eight women, all from the same family, were murdered in Campinas, on New Year's Eve in 2015 because of a dispute over custody, and domestic violence allegations, where the man, enraged with his ex-wife, decided to kill the "whore" (as the newspapers quoted him) and all of the women related to her. This femicide was an attempt to end the bloodline.

During that march, what really stuck to me however, beyond the more than 25 names that were read that evening of the other women who had been killed (and whose murders had been reported) due to domestic violence in the first five days of the new year in Brazil, were the comments of a young woman. She said in an amused tone: "Oh, cute! Even the grandmas showed up." I very politely but promptly replied: "Well, if my math is at all accurate, I actually think they've been around longer than you've been alive." And I left. When I got home, I was greeted by my grandmother who had stayed back to watch my daughters while I marched, and I thought to myself... "The grandmas? The grandmas have been there all along, honey. Loving, nurturing, caring."

Just a few days later, on January 21, 2017, I was on my way to Washington D.C. for the "herstorical" Women's March. Heading down from Toronto to D.C. I got to know Marjorie Knight, a middle-aged, black woman with a disability. My ride to D.C. was filled with her explanation about her black pussy hat, and stories of strong women from her home country, Jamaica. One of these women was Marjorie's mother, Gloria Dolores Knight, who had been one of the founding members of the UN-Habitat. Echoes of my experience in the Brazilian march came to my mind, and I thought: "Why don't we learn more about women like her at school? The mothers? The mothers have been there all along, I thought... Fighting, resisting, building, as much as they were capable."

How delighted was I then that the next year, in 2018, one of the biggest pushes of the Women's March Global was the motto "Looking Back, Marching Forward." This year, I also couldn't go to any of the big centres where many marches were being held. I am a single mother of two little girls, and on the weekends, we are together, I do what I can manage on my own – going to Toronto to march was not something I felt I could handle. So, I did what seemed obvious to me: if I couldn't go to a march, then I'd bring one to my current home town, and that is the Waterloo Region in Canada. It seemed obvious to me that my daughters should be exposed to this movement, but I wanted to surround them with familiar faces, and show them that we didn't need to go far to find strong women leading and paving the way. I realized how important it was to show my daughters, and other girls that our Region is full of potential – it just needed to be organized.

So, I became one of the organizers of the Women's March for the Waterloo Region Chapter, which is one of the most diverse cities in Canada, and also one of the most technologically developed centres. I honoured the march's motto and looked back and marched forward with the choices of speakers I made, bringing to our stage very intersectional speakers who could motivate and ignite the crowd: Indigenous women elders, and young, queer women, female politicians of opposing parties, artists, and immigrants. All it took were two weeks of planning, a few phone calls, and tapping into my wide network, which I have built through authentic relationships with my community, by nurturing and believing in the women who are the true makers of our city. We broke a record of the number of people who gathered in the Carl Zehr Square, at Kitchener City Hall, by having 500 people marching with us (their greatest crowd had been around 200 so far).

Prior to going on stage with my opening speech, I was asked if I thought marching really changed anything. So, what I decided to say to the audience was this: marching is a metaphor, an analogy for taking space. When women march together, they show the world that we belong in the streets and structures that we have created in the modern world, that they deserve to navigate it independently and with safety, that they deserve to move forward as women, and that they know how to come together and organize. These are the

skills women need in order to continue to march (metaphorically) in any establishment, structure, or institution, such as politics, academia, health care (I can't wait for a world in which women decide to fully invest in research and knowledge in understanding the complexities of our own female sexuality).

I concluded this year's march with an interview for our local television channel, CTV, where I was asked again why I thought the Women's March was important. And the segment they chose to highlight was the one where I explain that research shows that girls stop believing in their own brilliance at around the age of 6 or 7, and begin to see brilliance as a male trait. I told them that as a mother of two girls, and an educator who avidly loves to learn, I refuse to accept this statistic as status quo. Later on, as I reflected on the day and looked back with pride on our event that was so filled with love, peace, creativity, and intelligence, I realized that all this brilliance is right here at our fingertips, we just need to remember it, so we can tap into it. We need it to continue, to come together, marching and organizing, so that we can reinvent the power grid.

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CAYLA NAUMANN AND KAT SARK

Organizing the Women's March in Victoria in 2018

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

CAYLA:

I feel I need to start from the beginning of my involvement with the Women's March. As a dual American-Canadian citizen, for me it began with watching Clinton battle Trump for the U.S. presidency. The shock and horror at how he began to climb to popularity. The media obsession with Trump and "the emails." The feeling of terror, sickness and helplessness as Clinton lost the election. I was watching the results from a pub in Victoria, B.C., having left the university campus pub because it was too crowded. You could cut the tension in the room with a knife. It was somber, like watching a funeral procession. The realization that women – little girls – across the U.S., and around the world watched Clinton lose to a monster: homophobic, sexual predator, white supremacist. Instead of popping champagne and celebrating a first for the nation, we were crying – dying inside. Instead of standing in shards of the broken "glass ceiling," we were picking up pieces of ourselves, trying to hold it together. A small candle light vigil was held at the Parliament buildings in Victoria after the results were finalized and several of my friends and I attended and shed many tears and shared many hugs - knowing we would have to find a way to get through this together. Our "Badass Ladies Bookclub (all genders welcome)" was a great support, reading Something Fierce: Memoirs of a Revolutionary Daughter and many other feminist books over the next months gave us hope and inspiration.

As soon as I heard about the Women's March on Washington – in Seattle, I was in. I have family ties in Washington, so it would be easy for me to go down for the event. I invited other friends with ties to America, or that I knew supported the cause. We filled the car with our signs, our support ("Solidarity Across Borders"), our demands for change. It was an experience like no other: marching with so many others we could barely get downtown, barely keep track of one another during the event. A sea of women, pink, slogans, chants, songs, and energy. There was hope. There was enthusiasm.

I followed the Women's March throughout the year, keeping tabs on Trump – each action or comment more ridiculous than the last. I knew there would be another march on the anniversary, but I wasn't sure where I would be at the time, if it made sense to go to Seattle again, or support the march at home. I kept tabs on the Women's March Canada site – checking every so often to see when Victoria would be added to the list. Over the Christmas holiday I was visiting family in Washington State when I heard the news – two little girls, ages 4 and 6, were murdered in their home, by their father. While this is not an exceptional case when you look at statistics of domestic violence, it hit close to home. Was there no age women could escape violence?
I decided if no one else would organize a march in Victoria, I would try and pull people together. I did not want it to be just my voice, or the voice of white women, but a march for every woman. The U.S. is not an exceptional country – every country has a long way to go in ensuring gender equality. Every country has progress to make when it comes to ensuring the health, economic security, representation, and safety of all women. I signed up on Women's March Canada, and offered to organize the march, although I desperately hoped others would come out of the woodwork to help. I quickly started receiving emails from Sara Bingham, welcoming me to the team. I missed the first teleconferencing call because it happened so quickly. I had no idea where to start, but with the support of Sara, and a handful of other organizers across Canada, I knew I would pull something off. Even if it were 50 people marching, I would be satisfied.

Sara quickly put me in touch with Kat. "Oh good," I thought "she'll know what to do." I quickly learned Kat was as new to this as I was. I contacted the City of Victoria - I had looked up permit requirements online and they gave me Barbara Pollock's contact information, who was one of the organizers of the first rally in Victoria in 2017. I talked to Barbara, and she said they had a meeting January 8th, and had been planning the event for a year. "Excellent! The pressure is off me! I can relax!" I thought, but things didn't line up. Why did the city not know about the event?

Why did Sara not know about the event? I called Barbara again a few days later and clarified. She HAD organized the event last year, and she WAS planning an International Women's Day event in MARCH, but she was not planning a Women's March for January 21st, 2018. I was back on the hook, with Kat, and we would meet and discuss the plan on January 8th.

The January 8th meeting was a success. I was so grateful to Barbara for letting the Women's March planning dominate the meeting. Women were interested, volunteering, and helping. This year, we wanted to have speakers be from community organizations who were supporting women's health, safety, economic security or representation in the Victoria area. Kat stressed that the speeches be short and solution-based. Together we designed the speaker's application forms that we sent to all intersectional grassroots organizations in Victoria.

Kat gathered up more volunteers from her UVic networks; people stepped up. It became a team effort. We reached out to the community as much and as quickly as we could. Many late nights putting together Google Documents of requests for participation, requests for speakers, phone scripts, and invitations to attend. A few things fell through the cracks; some emails went to dead email addresses, so some important people were contacted even more last minute than we wanted. Some of the second-wave feminists found some terminology choices upsetting because we didn't have the luxury of time to run everything by everyone and wait for a consensus.

But we pulled it off. Things were changing down to the day of the event, but we had a great turn-out. We had First Nations, Women of Colour, Women with Disabilities, Trans Women, Sex Workers, Muslim Women and Immigrant Women and many more represented and speaking at the event. We had Women in Politics as our emcees, pumping up the crowd, and inspiring us to become better public speakers. We had enough volunteer marshals (many of Kat's Gender Studies students and other friends) to direct the march towards the Parliament Building and have a peaceful and inspiring gathering.

KAT:

I had ordered "I'm with her" T-Shirts online for me and my mom in anticipation of celebrating the first female president in the U.S. history in 2016, but instead, I spent the next few days not wanting to leave my bed. As a Canadian, I would not feel the sting of this loss as acutely or directly as others, but it did affect me as a woman, as a feminist, as an educator, scholar, organizer, activist and as a human being invested in fighting for human rights, social justice, and intersectional feminism. As a young academic, I also stopped applying for tenure-track positions in the U.S., which was not an easy decision to make considering how few academic jobs become available in Canada.

I saw the media footage of all the girls and women crying after the election results were announced, and I felt their pain, the injustice and corruption of an outdated electoral system and a broken neoliberal economy based on exploitation of the disadvantaged and the middle classes.

I wanted to understand what was happening. I wanted to understand why so many people were positioning themselves against human rights and values based on justice. I wanted to know what would make anyone position themselves on the wrong side of history and give power to someone incapable of governing, communicating, or leading, rather than give it to a woman.

I read Elizabeth Warren's book on bankruptcy laws and how the U.S. economy has been exploiting and eliminating the middle class. I taught a course at UVic on "History Through Autobiographies," where we looked at the Civil Rights writings of Sojourner Truth, Martin Luther King Jr., Angela Davis, Audre Lorde, James Baldwin and Ta-Nehisi Coates. We read LGBTQ+ life narratives about the injustices of the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s and the discriminations of trans-people to this day. We examined the multimedia testimonies of Holocaust survivors. We read Bev Sellers' books on the Residential Schools and the systematic eradication of Indigenous people, histories, and cultures in Canada, and compared the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission to that of South Africa after Apartheid. We looked at feminist memoirs from around the globe to understand the long struggle of gender equality, the intersectionality of gender, race, class, ability, etc. and how interconnected all these struggles for justice really are.

Social justice became more than a buzz phrase for me and my students, but we also understood our position of privilege as mostly white, educated, able-bodied young people with time

on our hands to read and think and ask critical questions.

When my colleagues at UVic signed up on social media to attend the Support Rally in Solidarity with the Women's March on Washington in January 2017, I joined them at City Hall. I heard female leaders like Elizabeth May, the Leader of Canada's Green Party, and our Mayor Lisa Helps give very inspiring speeches, and I saw the mixed crowd of women, men, girls, boys and pets covered in uplifting solidarity slogans and posters, and I felt like I found my people - that is like-minded people who cared about other people and took the responsibility to stand up and to stand - in the cold - on the right side of justice.

Inspired by what I saw, I got in touch with the organizers of Women's March Canada that was just founded following the original march, and invited Michelle Brewer, one of its founders, to come to one of my classes to talk about grassroots activism. Very soon, Sara Bingham, the other co-founder of Women's March Canada, and I began corresponding on a regular basis to plan the National Convention, similar to that in Detroit. Before we all knew it, a year had passed, and Sara connected me with Cayla to organize the Victoria Women's March in January 2018.

We met on January 8, and began planning the Women's March in Victoria scheduled for January 20, 2018. I have to mention here how well Cayla and I work together and understand each other. Considering we have never met before, don't really know each other, and that we come from different backgrounds and academic fields, our collaborative chemistry is quite remarkable. Somehow, we understood each other without having to explain or justify anything, or spend any unnecessary time learning to speak each other's language or convince each other of anything. We were on the same page, spoke the same language of intersectionality and inclusivity and justice, and both respected and valued the goals and values set up by Sara as guidelines for Women's March Canada. We both came prepared to get this done, and didn't want to waste any time or energy along the way. Instead, we could use that time and energy to start organizing, build an infrastructure of organizational tools, network, reach out to communities, build a volunteer base, and to never hesitate to pick up where the other left off, to help each other, and fully trust each other to respect the common goal.

That was a true partnership and collaborative effort. Trust – unconditional and situational – grew out of our dedication and support of each other's efforts. We had each other's back, and helped each other carry the burden of this organizational load, with all the challenges of leadership and the project management. We identified what needed to be done, and set priorities for the order of how to get things done. We checked in with each other regularly on a daily basis. We built the whole organizational infrastructure from scratch, using Google Docs and Google Drive that Cayla and I both had access to. Then we reached out to others for help with community outreach and fundraising.

I organized volunteers for bake sales, book sales, and art and craft sales to help raise the money for the march - to pay for the sound equipment, the sign-language interpreter, honorariums for the Indigenous people who acknowledge the territories we all settled on for us, a donation to St. John's Ambulance volunteers who were on standby throughout the event and had a bike squad for the march, and all the printing costs for posters and banners. Some of my former and current students also helped with community outreach, inviting speakers and attendees. Some even joined the organizational team and became key organizers.

Our program came together the night before the march, and was finalized on stage. As the stage manager and time-keeper, it was my job to have all the speakers on stage, lined up, and ready to speak. I introduced the speakers to the politicians who were introducing them while the first speakers were already on stage. I stood behind them and cheered them on while they spoke. I took photos from behind the scenes. I kept texting with the Victoria police unit to make sure everything ran on schedule and on track. Cayla dealt with the media. Linaya and Alex helped me locate all our speakers. I reminded Barbara to remember to introduce the organizational team and to mention the Stolen Sisters March that was coming up in February. When we came to end of the program, I asked the crowd to follow Linaya, our Lead Marshal, and the First Nations women and elders as they led the march, and to please be respectful as we marched.

I marched with my friends who came to support me, but soon had to run to the front to help Linaya with marshalling and navigating the crowds once they arrived at the Parliament. We

had to think on our feet and guide the crowd up to the steps without really having a clear plan for this part of the event, other than we knew there was a choir waiting for us somewhere. We managed to direct the crowds onto the Parliament steps safely and the police escort re-opened the roads. We did it, we pulled it off. No one got hurt, no police interference was necessary, we were on time, and on schedule, and we managed to be as inclusive as possible on such short notice.

After the march, we took a few days off before I started talking to Sara about making Women's March Victoria into a non-profit organization that would help other local social justice causes throughout the year that aligned with the Women's March Canada mandate and values. Cayla and I continued our work as Chapter Leaders, and I began to consolidate the organizational team. Sara used our collaborative efforts as examples to inspire other chapter leaders to organize across Canada. We managed to raise enough money to cover all the costs of the march thanks to the UVic community. We are currently helping Barbara plan the International Women's Day Festival, and we continue working together as the Women's March Victoria organizational team.

People often ask why "women are still marching." My family's version of this question is why I continue to do so much unpaid volunteer work while I am still under-employed and need to get my career on track. Both Cayla and I are in precarious contract-work positions, underpaid and overworked, and forced to constantly look for employment, and often rely on our families for support and housing. We both have graduate degrees from best Canadian universities. Cayla is a Registered Professional Biologist; I am a published scholar and educator, teaching in multiple departments at the University of Victoria. The fact that we both have no financial or economic security, cannot afford to have or raise children on our own, and have to constantly worry about our health, safety, and representation are the precise reasons why we need intersectional feminism and solution-based organizations like the Women's March.

We are both committed to using our positionality and our white-cis-hetero privilege to continue to create platforms and opportunities for others who are continuously marginalized and excluded from speaking their truth and shedding light on the diversity of experiences with injustice. And we want to build an organizational infrastructure that will make it easier for others to organize and accomplish their goals.

I have seen way too many women climb up the career ladder and not change a single thing about the exploitative, abusive, and unjust practices of many workplaces. But I have also seen female colleagues and bosses revolutionize the workplace and create a thriving environment of collaborative team work. I have been inspired by those women. Even in small ways, like organizing the Women's March and editing this Anthology. I hope it can be inspiring for you as well.

ZAINAB BINT YOUNUS

Women's March Victoria

VICTORIA, BC | FEBRUARY 2018

Zainab Bint Younus,
Women's March
Photo by Chad Hipolito,
The Canadian Press
Victoria, BC | 2018

On January 21, 2018, I joined the Women's March in Victoria and took the podium to represent a group of women who are rarely given their own platform – who are often spoken for, and spoken over, but rarely spoken to or given the opportunity to speak for themselves.

I spoke for Muslim women.

I am a Canadian Muslim woman, an intersectional feminist, someone whose daily life is not removed from politics or the news or the hatred and racism of passing strangers, or the sexism that exists in every society and community.

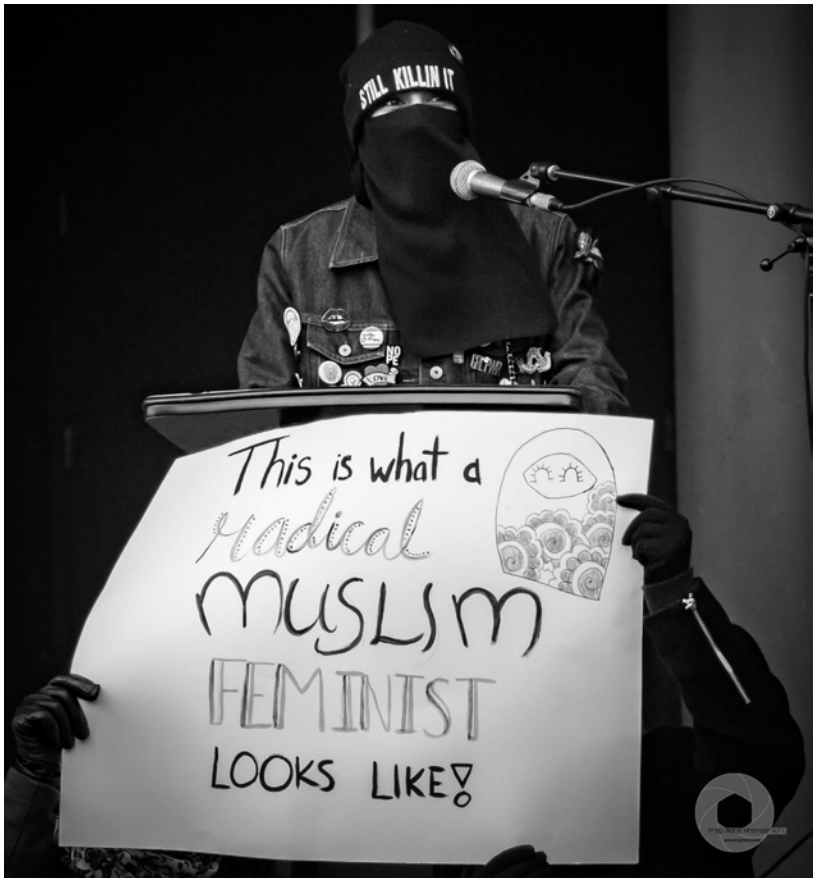
The Women's March is not an event just for middle class white women; it is not just for abortion rights or an opportunity to wear pink pussy hats; it is not only about raging against the sexual abusers and assaulters who fill some of the highest political positions in North America. The Women's March is not just about women being angry at The Patriarchy, but about recognizing the many intersecting ways in which we contribute to the systematic and daily inequalities and injustices perpetuated against various groups of minorities and vulnerable populations.

For me, the Women's March was a chance to speak to others directly: to fellow women and to allies, to those who may consider themselves "woke" and educated and aware, but are oblivious to their own ignorance when it comes to the reality I face as a Muslim woman living in Canada.

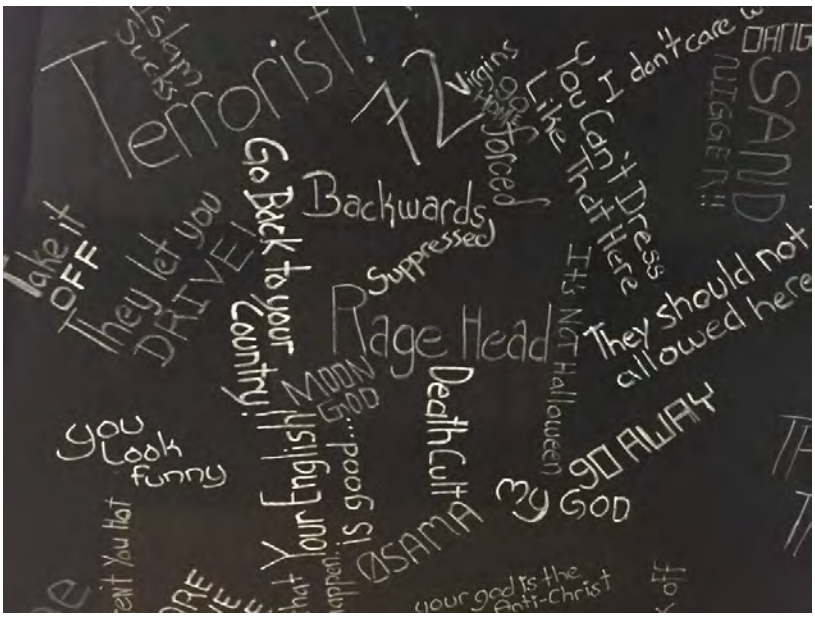
The intersection of sexism and Islamophobia is one that I and thousands of other Muslim women face every day. Visibly Muslim women are primary targets of both Islamophobia and sexism, sometimes in the same breath. Muslim women are viewed simultaneously as threats and as easy targets; as symbols of a politically created, media-fuelled bogeyman while also passive, posing no fear of retribution or even self-defence.

Discussions about Muslim women are restricted to trying to police what we wear; passing laws against our headscarves and face veils, claiming that it is to "liberate" us while ignoring our protests. Even well-meaning feminists and allies jump on the bandwagon of talking down to us about our faith and our cultures, making assumptions about our "oppression." It is rare to see a Muslim woman being given the space and platform to speak for herself. When Zunera Ishaq contested the removal of her niqab for the Oath of Citizenship ceremony in 2013, the media focused less on her than on giving others the opportunity to pontificate about their (completely irrelevant) opinions on the niqab.

The Women's March represented an opportunity to change this one-dimensional narrative. By speaking up and speaking out, I was able to represent myself and other Muslim women like me – women who are frustrated with the exhausting, interminable struggle of dealing with Islamophobic vitriol and offensive, stereotype-laden "defences." Like every other woman facing down inequality and oppression every day, in its myriad of forms, Muslim women also desire to speak authentically as to our own lived experiences and truths. We, too, deserve to be heard. We, too, deserve safety, security, and strength. We, too, march forward!



Zainab Bint Younus, Women's March
Photo by Troy Moore
Victoria, BC | 2018



LINDSAY BUDGE

Privilege: Or, Shit People Say to Muslim Women

2016

RAY ILLSLEY

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CHORONG KIM

The Streets of Illusions

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