



INTERSECTIONAL APOCALYPSE

*an experiment in
radical publishing*

ISSUE 1 // FALL 2018
DIGITAL DIALOGUES:
NAVIGATING ONLINE SPACES



Digital Dialogues: Navigating Online Spaces

Kayla Uren, Naiya Tsang, and Navi Rai

We acknowledge and bring emphasis to how this journal is created on unceded Coast Salish Territory; the traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Kwikwetlem Nations. We recognize that as creators of an intersectional feminist journal, this production is not complete without Indigenous perspectives and voices, and as such, we also acknowledge that we have not challenged settler colonialism throughout this journal in the ways we had initially intended. While there is no simple or easy way to do this, we have still attempted to add our voices to the larger conversation that works to challenge the ongoing colonialist practices in our societies.

In the corners of the internet, there is a revolution growing.

An intersectional apocalypse is about to happen.

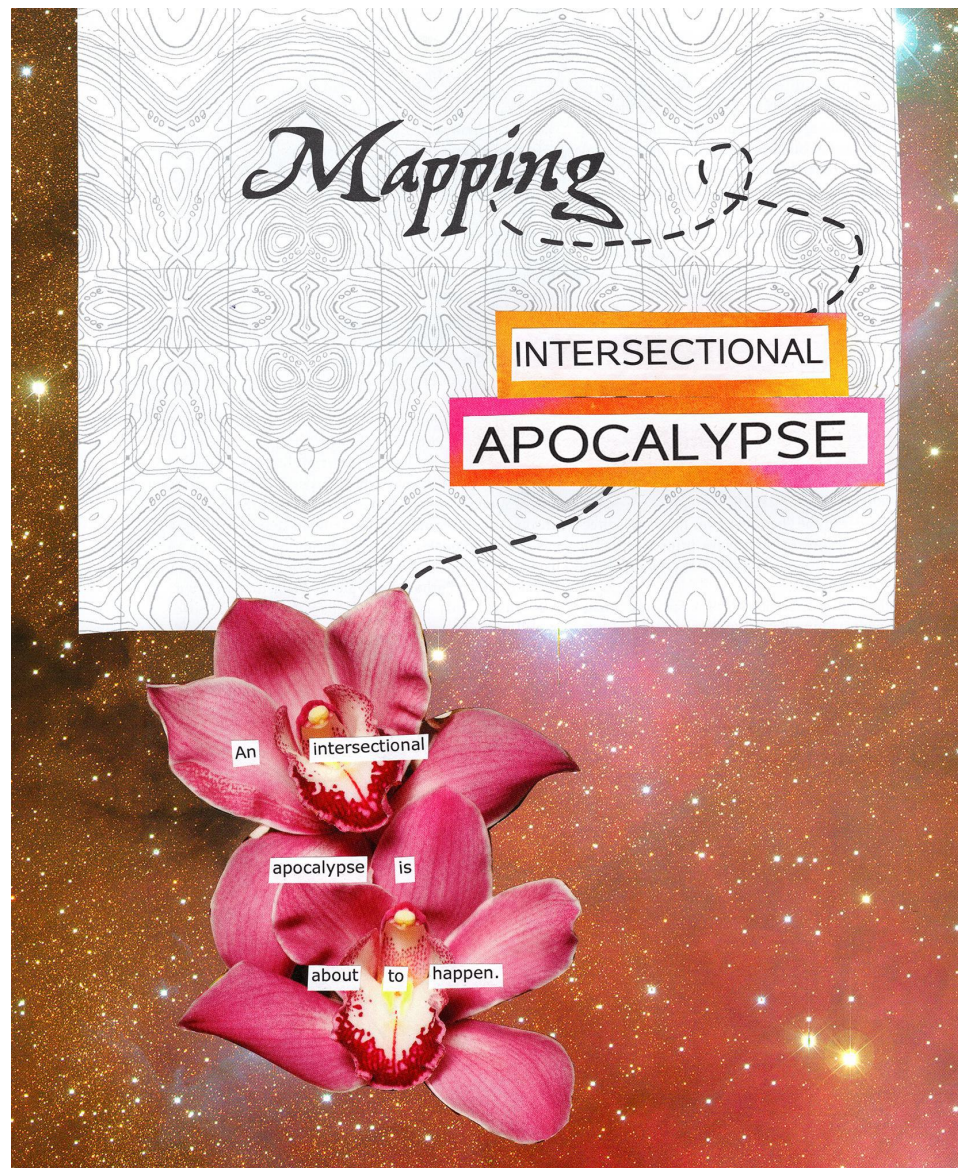
The invisible will become visible, travelling a million megabits per second.

Feel the wires buzzing, vibrating, signalling?

Yeah. That is us. And we are coming.

“Digital Dialogues: Navigating Online Spaces” is the inaugural issue of *Intersectional Apocalypse*, a student-produced open access journal that aims to discuss the numerous intersecting experiences one can have in a world that is far from utopian. Through digital dialogues, this issue aims to open up a conversation about the ways in which marginalized individuals navigate the online world, the impacts this virtual space can have on their bodies, and the limitless possibilities these intertwining worlds create.

In creating this journal, we aspired to highlight particular voices and amplify perspectives that are often unheard and unseen, in particular, those of queer, disabled, and/or racialized individuals. We felt that by bringing attention to these marginalized experiences, we could work to disturb the often dismissive assumptions of dominant white settler society. Additionally, looking at the complex and specific ways in which power operates allows us to gain insight into the impacts of the online world as parsed through an intersectional lens.



This image is a zine that was created collaboratively to map our journey of producing the Intersectional Apocalypse journal. The word “Mapping” is written on an unmarked map, with a dotted line connecting it to the words “Intersectional Apocalypse.” Below are two orchids with the words “An intersectional apocalypse is about to happen” laid overtop. The entire piece is set on a pink and gold nebula background.

Intersectionality, a term coined by African American scholar and civil rights advocate Kimberlé Crenshaw, marks an attentiveness to the ways in which privilege and oppression operate in a matrix: complex, overlapping, and ever-changing (Crenshaw, 1989).

Intersectionality is a lens which illustrates how multiple forms of discrimination and oppression can shape each person's reality in different ways, and can call attention to the ways in which single-issue politics can often fall short of meaningful change (Dzodan, 2011). For example, an individual's age, ethnicity, gender, ability, sexual identity, religion, geographical location, and socioeconomic status all play a role in what reality they live in (to learn more, see Crenshaw's [TED Talk](#)). Understanding the ways in which the internet – a seemingly virtual and “unreal” space – impacts our lives, our bodies, and the physical environment we live in, is imperative in also coming to terms with our own positions in the networked world that has been built.



This watercolour painting, “Transcendental,” is part of the Mindfulness Expressions collection by Queenie Wong. It is composed of colours of soft rose, red, purplish, and numerous hues of blues, ranging from deep royal to baby blue. Additionally, yellow, coral, tangerine, peach, orange, lavender, and cyan come together and overlap, creating shades of colour in-between. The captivating imagery can be interpreted to show how one can view the world through an intersectional lens.



Unpacking the nature of our “digital dialogues” reminds us that the internet is a symbol of compact complexity. It is the small face of infinite, invisible branching wires of inequality, privilege, censorship, freedom, stagnation, change, exploitation, exploration, and at its core, is always about tucking away the truth of its messiness. This issue, with its small aims and its few resources, cannot come close to truly unpacking these complexities, problematics, and questions, but instead explores the possibilities that those at the edges of power make with the opportunities that they have available to them.

Let us have a digital dialogue

Because no one else wants to hear from me.

I am everything the world did not want me to be.

Through the online world, I exist as I am.

This issue, “Digital Dialogues,” explores the complexities of marginalized experiences online; produced by passionate, diverse and creative writers and artists. As the producers of this journal, we have observed that our contributors share experiences in the personal ways their bodies have been politicized and shaped by the internet. Each author and collaborator reflects on and shares their unique voice and experiences through expressive, artistic, and written materials. You will find academic pieces, a short film, personal engagements with artworks and collages, zine pieces, poetry, a website, and personal writing entries.

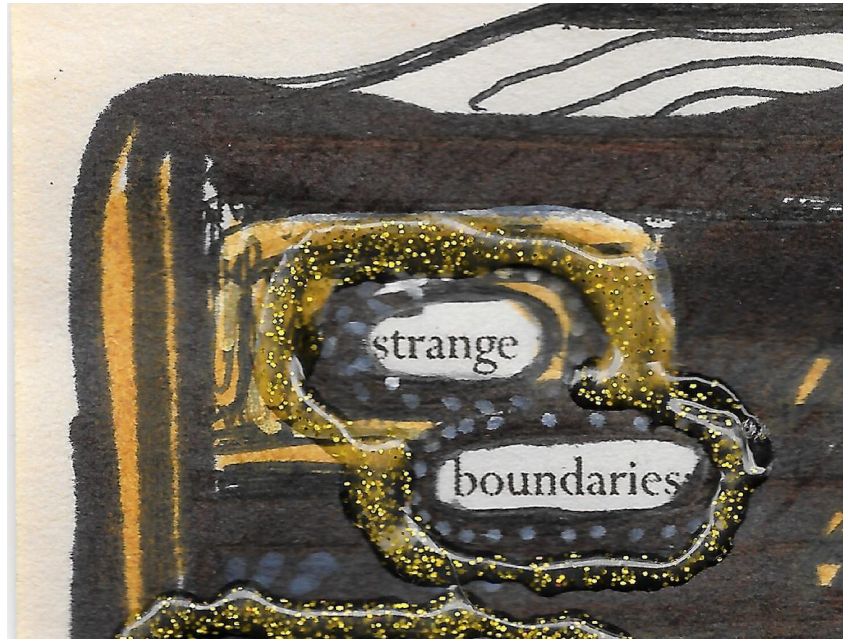
The first piece is our issue, “The Good Indian Daughter,” is a zine created by a queer Indian immigrant artist who would like to remain anonymous (2018). This art piece is about the good Indian daughter researching information regarding abortions through the internet. Along the way, she comes across Pro-Life and Pro-Choice discussions, reproductive justice discussions, and finally, the Elizabeth Bagshaw Women’s Clinic. The internet can be a helpful tool in assisting women in finding information about abortions and where to find abortion clinics. In addition, it can be a dark and lonely place for women looking for abortion information, and so in this way, the internet shaped the landscape of the good Indian daughter's abortion experience.



The art above is connected to the zine, “The Good Indian Daughter” created by an anonymous contributor to this issue. The portion of this zine features an image of a queer Indian woman with the words “The Good Indian Daughter” covering her eyes, while part of an illustrated laptop appears in the corner.

In a personal poem, “Young Girl” (2018), Melissa Wong tells the story of a young girl living in a westernized society who feels pressured by the beauty standards she is constantly faced with through social media and traditional media. The poet expresses the psychological and physical impacts this can have on a young girl’s mind and body from the way societal norms on the internet have shaped her relationship with her body.

Next, the visual poem “the first man for me” was designed and submitted by queer writer and multimedia visual artist Heather Prost (2018). Her piece makes use of erasure poetry, a form of creation which removes portions of a pre-existing text to reveal a new story. The art piece captures the resiliency of the #MeToo movement taking place around the world today.



This image is a portion of the erasure poetry piece, "the first man for me" by Heather Prost. Two words "strange" and "boundaries" are placed in the corner and surrounded by black and gold pen, blacking out the other words on the page underneath.

Following this, the article "Mitigating the Legal Grey Area of Amateur Naked Picture Distribution in Canada" by Taylor M. Wagner (2018), addresses the issues of ownership and property rights regarding the creation and distribution of pornographic images through online and visual technologies. The author provides a thorough analysis of the issue of ownership and distribution and pro-poses policy actions and reinforcements to improve the structure of relevant organizations. Wagner's analysis communicates the implications of their research and directs their arguments to policymakers.

In "Teachers Integrating Technology: Sometimes, They Don't" (2018), teacher-in-training Juliana Q offers a scathing, tongue-in-cheek critique of the education field. While its initial focus is to snarkily scold educators for their reluctance to utilize online communities, the article also explores the impacts of a teaching force devoid of diversity and uncovers the true personality of the educational structure.



This art piece created by Naiya Tsang is composed of purplish-pinkish branching lines with purple circular shapes at their ends, drawn on a gray surface.

The next piece, *The Concussion Collective*, is a website created by Naiya Tsang (2018) which incorporates a mix of personal narrative and disability theory to illustrate the social and physical impacts concussions can have on diverse individuals. The written engagement in this issue explores the praxis behind the creation of the website, including Tsang’s own experience with concussions, the theory she draws on, and her aims for the project in the future.

Following this, Ian Liu-jia Tian’s “Diasporic Blaming, or the (Im) Possibility of Speaking” (2018) begins with a recounting of an incident in which two lesbians were caned in Malaysia, and unsettles the acts of online blaming that were carried out by members of the queer diasporic community living in the “West.” Tian questions the effectiveness and unintended consequences of these posts, arguing that without unpacking the residual/ongoing colonialism and material precarities engendered by processes of global capitalism, the act of “diasporic blaming” may render members of queer “third-world” populations silent. Furthermore, Tian argues that such blaming can reinforce settler/orientalist homonationalist projects in the U.S. and Canada, in which white sexualities are branded as modern and exceptional and “third-world”/Indigenous sexualities are branded as backwards and waiting to be enlightened.



This image is captured from the video “Un Sueño Hecho Realidad,” and features Ale Gonzalez applying makeup at her makeup table, awash in bright pink light.

Finally, “Un Sueño Hecho Realidad” is a video by Ale Gonzalez (2018) who is a queer, nonbinary trans womxn of Honduran (Mestiza and Asian) descent whose work explores themes of sexuality, gender, diaspora and Honduran & Central American identity. This piece visually illustrates the complexities of growing up as an individual who was assigned male at birth and of her experiences of feeling a disconnect from her family and culture. The feeling of disconnect was further reinforced as Gonzalez was not allowed to participate and experience specific cultural traditions, such as a Quinceañera because of her assigned gender. In spite of this, this piece focuses on the normalization of trans-Honduran womxnhood as something to be loved, protected, cherished and celebrated.

Thinking About Process

*I have been invisible for so long, in a world that was not created for me.
I am a warrior in the Intersectional Apocalypse.*



This painting, “Sunny Day” is part of the Mindfulness Expressions collection by Queenie Wong. The splatter of watercolour paint is ascending from the bottom left of the picture to the top right, coming together to create what may be seen as an abstract flower. The deep red, royal blue, purple and orange colours of this painting are concentrated in the centre and fan into colours of yellow, green, light blue, faint orange, and a bit of red.

As producers of this journal, we wanted to highlight the process behind its creation, as we believe that the specific decisions made to create the final product matter. Our process was highly collaborative and strived to be considerate of contributors and readers, stressing how important it was to us for our collaborators to feel safe while voicing their opinions in an open space. We drew on the notion of consent as a collaborative concept, as highlighted by Moya Bailey, to ensure participants of journals and research are given the opportunity to say “no” during a collaboration (Bailey, 2015). As a non-hierarchical journal, all contributors were aware of their participation options and were given the opportunities to

disagree, ask questions, and say “no” at any given time. As a collective effort to create something new, it was vital to build trust and support each other throughout the process.



This painting, “Sunrise,” is from Queenie Wong’s Mindfulness Collection. The splatters of paint in this image take on shapes including teardrops, lines, ovals, circles and other abstract shapes. The colours throughout this piece are red, midnight blue, cadet blue, light blue, yellow, and purple.

In our call for papers, we aimed to challenge the domination of English in academia by gathering the languages in our classroom and explicitly stating that we would accept submissions in English, French, Polish, Hindi, Punjabi, and Spanish - though we received pieces primarily in English. We also mentioned that we would be happy to email contributors the work of the theorists we had cited, as we recognized that access to academic work can come with a steep price tag (Larivière et al., 2015). We decided our



peer review process would be open and collaborative and primarily completed by the contributors of the journal, hoping to spark conversations and connections between contributors, as opposed to the traditional “double-blind” peer review process (to learn more, see [Risam, 2014](#), [Pontille and Torny, 2014](#), and [Jackson, 2014](#)).

The audio version of the introduction and all the submitted pieces is an integral aspect of the journal, meant to further expand its accessibility in the sensory realm. The captions of all our images have been written into the introduction to bring attention to the numerous ways in which information can be created and accessed, and the ways in which perspectives can shift when knowledge is translated from one form to another (Kleege, 2016).

Additionally, in writing this introduction, we wanted to include non-traditional forms of knowledge creation such as paintings, poetry, photographs, and zines, along with a recognition of the theorists and pieces that have informed our practice throughout the production of this journal. In particular, we wanted to highlight the work of Queenie Wong, an artist, Youtuber, and clinical researcher in Psychiatry who creates paintings inspired by “philosophies from mindfulness and art therapy for personal healing” ([Wong, N.d](#)). We felt that these paintings enhance the experience of the introduction by providing abstract and therapeutic explosions of colour and creativity.

Ideas of access are at the core of this intersectional feminist journal, this digital-focused issue, and the materiality of the content we have produced. In a world and a time in which knowledge itself is constantly growing and transforming, attending to the nuances and implications of differential access is paramount. Being open access as a journal, meaning that one does not need to attend a university or pay large amounts of money in order to access its content, is central to the praxis behind the production of this journal ([Larivière et al., 2015](#)). For example, our Non-Commercial Creative Commons copyright status maintains ownership for the authors while ensuring that their work is not appropriated for commercial use without their approval, inspired by conversations about open access by theorists and activists such as [Aaron Swartz’s “Guerilla Open Access Manifesto”](#) and [Meredith Kahn’s “Open Access as Feminist Praxis”](#) infographic, among many others (see references for more information). Yet this does not tell the entire story, such as how ideologies of knowledge as “open” have facilitated the theft of knowledge from Indigenous communities and nations both in the past and present. We have thus also included a Traditional Knowledge Commons option for authors who would like to limit their work to

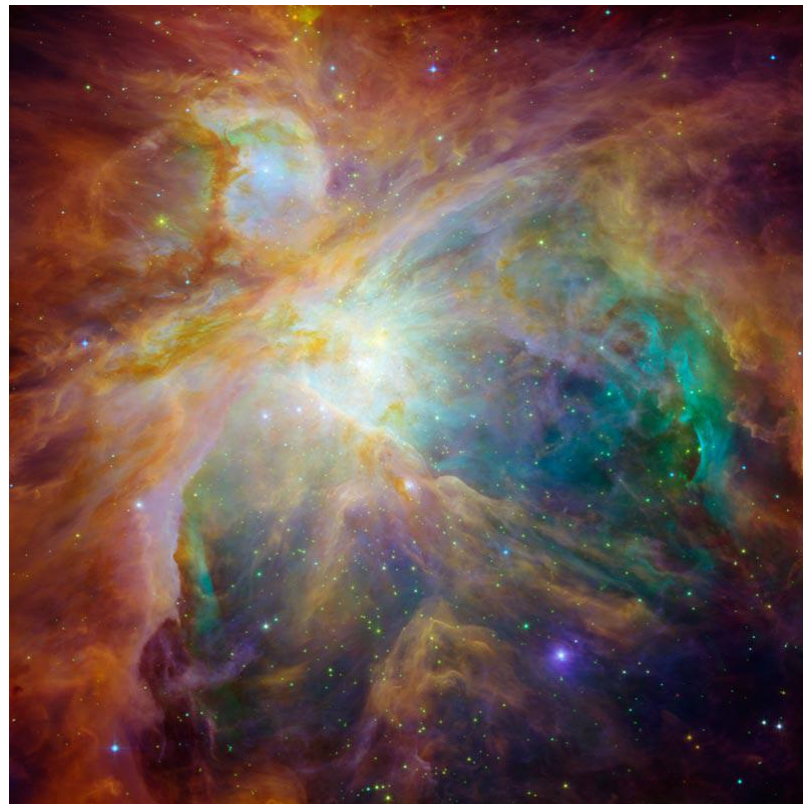
certain communities or individuals and to provide room for Indigenous knowledge management systems (see [Christen, 2012](#) and [Nagel, 2013](#) for more information).



“Calypso,” from the Mindfulness Collection by Queenie Wong, is a watercolour painting which displays an abstract mix of warm reds and oranges on the left, and colder blues and aquas on the right branching out in feathery strokes in opposite directions.

Beyond this, however, it is important to acknowledge that accessibility is an ongoing and never-complete process of contending for physical, intellectual, cultural, linguistic, and multiple other forms of access (Elcessor, 2015). Integral to this is the lack of access for many individuals that has been created through colonialism and imperialism ([Christen, 2012, p. 2881](#)). While we did not want to simply include Indigenous voices in a tokenistic

manner, nor did we want to demand uncompensated labour in order to primarily fulfill our own ends and desires, there are still myriad ways in which this issue could have better challenged the dominant narratives of colonialism and nationalism. In the future, we hope to meaningfully challenge the ways in which settler colonialism still operates on Turtle Island and worldwide. We want to bring attention to the histories and current configurations of power imbalances on these lands and truly challenge the assumptions, injustices, and exploitative practices that continue to disadvantage Indigenous peoples at the expense of settler colonialists. This is not just a metaphor or a box we want to check off. This is a reflection of the truth of how far we have not come.





Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our contributors: without their work, this journal would not have been possible. It takes immense energy and time to produce work to share with others. We acknowledge the emotional and mental labour that is required and involved in being a creator.

We would also like to thank the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Department at Simon Fraser University and independent donors Donna Lee and The Village Bloomery, who contributed financially to *Intersectional Apocalypse*. This funding was used to provide our contributors with honorariums, which we felt was an important part of acknowledging the labour that goes into creating, challenging the way in which academic journals often do not compensate their contributors.

Many thanks to the Public Knowledge Project and Open Journal Systems Software, and specifically to Associate Director with the Public Knowledge Project Kevin Stranack.

We would also like to thank our wonderful guest speakers: artist and activist Xavier Aguirre Palacios, storyteller and writer Ivan Coyote, Digital Scholarship Librarian Kate Shuttleworth, GSWS PhD candidate and Research Assistant Shahar Shapira, University Copyright Officer and Research Repository Coordinator Donald Taylor, Professor of Archaeology and Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage Director George Nicholas, the Vancouver Public Library Staff Jessi, and Zine Workshop Coordinator Heather Prost for enriching our learning process and expanding our understandings of the publishing and knowledge production worlds.

We are extremely grateful for the beautiful and breathtaking work by Queenie Wong (also known as Coco Bee on Instagram and Facebook at cocobeeart, and at www.cocobeeart.com), NASA for the Orion Nebula image, Navi Rai for creating the zine at the beginning of the introduction, and the many theorists and activists who inspired the work in this issue and introduction.

Finally, we would like to recognize the bonds and alliances we formed while working on this journal, as we believe there is great importance in building friendship and trust when



performing feminist collaboration. Additionally, we are very thankful for the individuals in our personal lives who provided emotional and other support for each of us, including our partners, cats and other organisms, parents, and friends.

Intersectional Apocalypse: Digital Dialogues was produced by Maki Cairns, Kaiya Jacob, Sarah McCarthy, Ela Przybylo, Navi Rai, Sam Robinson, Isaac Torres, Naiya Tsang, and Kayla Uren.

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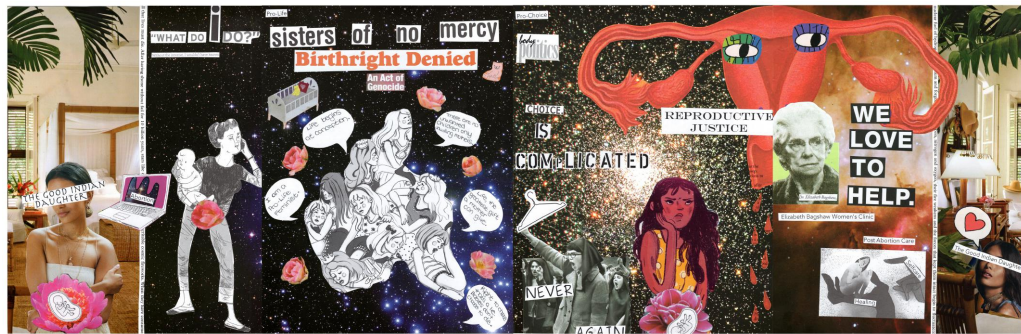
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The Good Indian Daughter and Abortion: Punjabi and Pregnant

Anonymous

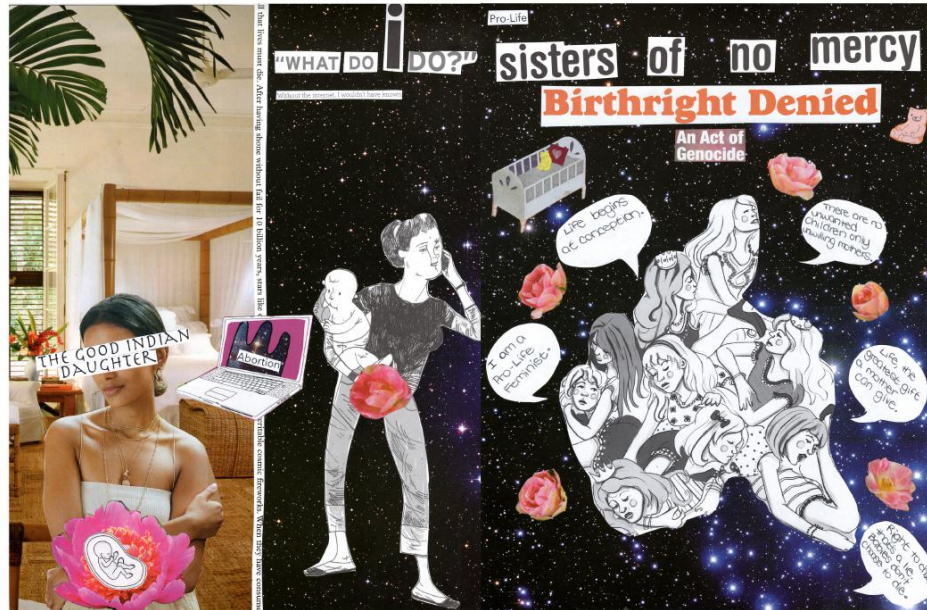
Content warning: this piece is about abortion



Abortion is a difficult topic, but I composed a piece of artwork about it. I am not in a place in my life right now where I can share all the little details about the process. For myself, that is a private part of the story. The emotional part of this story belongs to my partner and I. What I would like to share is how the internet played a massive role in assisting me in finding abortion information and where and how I could receive one.

It was a few days before our anniversary in February 2015. We were sitting on his bed and we were a bit panicked. Deep down in my gut, I knew I was pregnant, but we needed to be sure. The night before, I had stayed up searching pregnancy symptoms on Google. Last month, my period was unusually light and this month it did not come at all. Later, I realized that it was actually pregnancy spotting and that I actually did miss my period. Google told me that I could have tender swollen breasts, nausea, headaches, mood swings, fatigue, and much more - Yup, I had all of it.

My anxiety was through the roof, thinking to myself how a baby is just not what I wanted right now. I wanted to focus on school, travelling the world, and I wasn't interested in having a baby when I still was one. I was freaking out in my mind, but I remained calm for my boyfriend. I knew he was also freaking out inside but was remaining calm on the surface for me.



My boyfriend is the type of man you read and see about in fairy tales and romantic comedy movies. Yes, he is real, and he is mine. He was also a student at this time and we both lived with our parents. I knew having a baby was not in his plan right then, but I know he would have done whatever I wanted. He was just always so supportive as he has always been.

We googled where to buy a pregnancy test and after reading so many blogs online, many mentioned you need at least 4 to fully make sure you are pregnant. I don't know if this is true. He bought four pregnancy tests and I used all of them - all came back positive. This is the emotional stuff that I am going to leave out of the story. The emotions belong to my partner and I. Maybe one day, we will share but right now we will not.

I am a Punjabi woman that comes from a traditional conservative background. I knew my parents would be disappointed and I would have made their worst nightmare come to life. No Punjabi parent wants their daughter to get pregnant before marriage as it is looked down upon in our community. Within the Punjabi community, there is still a strong stigma about premarital sex and becoming pregnant out of wedlock. I did not feel comfortable going to my family doctor because his entire staff, and himself, are Indian. I was worried they would judge me. Although patient confidentiality exists, I was terrified someone in the Indian community would somehow find out and tell my parents. What I actually ended up doing was searching online for clinics in Vancouver, and the first link that popped up was the Elizabeth Bagshaw Women's Clinic. I felt some relief that there was actually information

out there. I felt so much more relief when I was able to book my ultrasound and abortion procedure all online through email. It was discrete and all digital; I didn't need to go to my family doctor.

When I was pregnant, I searched the shit out of everything on Google.

What does a fetus look like at nine weeks? Can it feel pain? What will happen during the abortion? Why didn't Plan-B work? How effective are condoms? Are abortions painful? How depressed will I feel afterwards? Reproductive justice? Will I regret this? Can I get pregnant again? I have to see a counsellor before the procedure? WHY DID PEOPLE USE COAT HANGERS!!! Use black cohosh to help induce a miscarriage. Is this covered under MSP? What the fuck... no contraceptive is 100% effective? There are people out there who say I'm going to hell? Who's Elizabeth Bagshaw?

Yeah... I came across a lot of negative, positive and absolute bullshit on the internet when it came to abortion information. This piece showcases my journey starting from my room, to pro-life discussions online, then pro-choice and reproductive justice information. It then leads into actually finding out about the Elizabeth Bagshaw clinic, having the abortion and ending back in my room.





Young Girl

Melissa Wong

young girl
she turns around to see
a reflection that doesn't match
the girls in the magazines
they look different from her
lighter skin
smaller waist
tall as supermodels always are
as beautiful as they come

she puts their photos on the wall
they gaze back at her intently
seeming to scan her up and down
there as a reminder to be ingrained
when she dresses each morning
'this is how a beautiful body looks'

she believes that goal is possible
attainable
achievable
if she just deprives herself a little more
and eats a little less
it's so close, almost there
just suck in harder
'don't eat something you'll regret'

young girl
school's out for the summer
but she's not dreaming about the sun
she's idealizing, glorifying
having a body that fits in a bikini
the way the girls on TV fit in a bikini
wanting nothing more than to be loved like them
to feel like she is wanted

every day is a mental battle
to drown out her feelings of shame
to overthrow the words of men
that play like a mantra in her ears
'your stomach should always be flat'
'your stomach should always be flat'



on days when the scale
refuses to be on her side
no matter how many times she steps off and on
guilt knocks her down
like a crashing wave
it feels impossibly hopeless to resurface
it's all over if her body gets bigger
she goes to sleep those nights without dinner

she fears that the only thing
attractive about her
is her body
'do the other girls struggle this hard?'

through online platforms, she connects
with others who have felt the same guilt
models, brands, and artists alike
by sharing their stories, they help her to build
a resiliency
to body shame

same girl
she sees the world through different eyes
as a young girl
she wishes she had realized
to honour her body
to celebrate this body
that she knows is deserving of love

standing taller and stronger
she has found a sense of solidarity
her online atmosphere is now filled with pictures
of women that are honest and real
diversity in colour, shape, size
that make her feel
okay in her own skin
they inspire her to change her definition
of what it means to achieve perfection



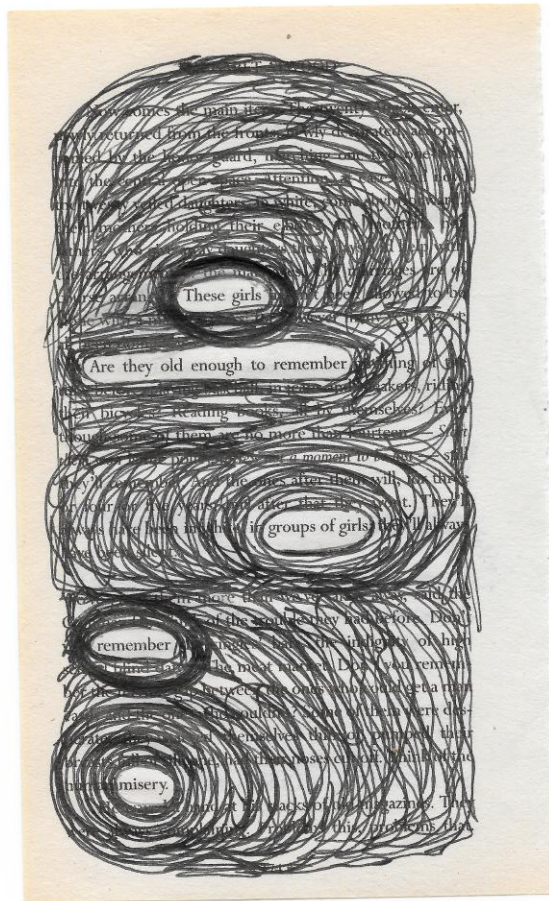
the first man for me

Heather Prost

These erasure/found poems explore the theme of #MeToo, which is a platform for survivors of sexual harassment and sexual violence to give voice to their experience(s). When I practice erasure poetry (the strategic emphasis and removal of words from an existing text), the creative act centres the control that was taken from me. The phrase “Me Too” was started over a decade ago by Tarana Burke, a black grassroots activist and change maker, and presently, in the digital era, survivors have used the hashtag #MeToo to find one another. What has come uncovered is that our stories of survivorship do not fit the “perfect survivor” narrative, because there is no such thing. In #MeToo, trans, non-binary, and queer survivors, have space to share their voice, on their terms, in their online communities.

Content Warning: Sexual Violence





Artist Statement

Gendered violence, specifically sexualized violence and rape culture, continues to manifest and target the most marginalized communities (women, gender non-binary and trans people, as well as people of colour). Despite this, sexual assault continues to be largely underreported while survivors adopt their own methods for healing, rather than face victim-blaming hierarchical power structures. As a survivor, I found some comfort in reclaiming control that was lost by practicing erasure poetry. When I practice erasure poetry (the strategic emphasis and removal of words from an existing text), the creative act centres the control that was taken from me. Further, I give myself agency over which words are left legible and are covered. This poetic exploration allows me to create a safe space for myself to explore and dissect trauma; where I begin to repair aspects of my identity that have been affected by sexualized violence and abuse.



Heather Prost is a queer multimedia artist, ceramicist, facilitator, writer, curator, healer, and Community Support Worker based in the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. Her artwork and writing explores trauma and mental health advocacy through various mediums and textures. With a BA in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies and Dialogue in Communications from Simon Fraser University, she is now pursuing Expressive Arts Therapy at Langara College. Heather enjoys thrift shopping, strong coffee, and spending time at home with her partner DF and their three fur babies: Burt, Etta, and Pearl.



Mitigating the Legal Grey Area of Amateur Naked Picture Distribution in Canada

Taylor Wagner

Executive Summary

The act of selling pornographic images is nothing new. Men and women all over the world have profited from reproductions of their naughty bits since the inception of visual technologies such as cameras; and with its seemingly boundless demand, this industry appears to be indestructible. However, with the abundance of professionally produced pornography, the industry of ‘amateur’ porn has emerged, where people with no professional experience in pornography sell their images and videos to others, mainly online (Paasonen, 2010). With an estimated 30.1 million people in Canada owning a mobile phone with a camera (Statista, 2015), it has become extremely simple to take and upload intimate pictures and videos of oneself online, whether that be over actual pornographic sites, forums like Reddit’s notorious r/gonewild, or even through social media platforms like SnapChat and Instagram. Unfortunately, with this facility of creation and distribution comes the ease of unauthorized redistribution and ‘revenge porn’, where someone maliciously submits previously consensual intimate images of their ex-partners online without their knowledge. Whether commercial or not, the ownership of these images is a gaping grey area in Canadian law, where it can be exceedingly difficult to reclaim images and get them removed from unauthorized websites. Ownership and property rights in this regard need better structure and reinforcement.

The policy actions that this brief will propose to remedy this issue are to:

- (1) Alter current Canadian copyright law to give any identifiable subject some rights to any intimate picture of themselves, unless stated otherwise in an agreement and/or contract.
- (2) Add and/or edit a section in Canadian criminal law to better encompass crimes of redistribution of this nature.



Context or Scope of Problem

In a recent survey, nearly 53.3% of heterosexual respondents and 74.8% of LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer and Other) respondents said that they had shared a nude photo of themselves to another person. In another study, nearly 44% of teenage males claimed to have seen a nude picture of one of their female classmates. The National Campaign to Help Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, in their survey, found that 33% of young adults between the ages of 20-26 have sent nude or semi-nude images of videos of themselves to another (Bambauer, 2014). A survey conducted to 133 Simon Fraser University students found that 45% of male and 76% of female respondents had sent a nude image of themselves to another person (Wagner, 2017). Young adults are no strangers to sending and receiving images of their naked bodies, yet very few understand how vulnerable they are to social repercussions.

Not explicitly defining the ownership rights of a woman who chooses to send someone a naked photo of herself leaves her vulnerable to whether or not that party chooses to redistribute the image. There are plenty of websites that thrive on anonymous submissions of these types of images, and in many cases women are unable to remove images of themselves. Along this vein, if a woman chooses to sell her image to another, it is difficult to stop the recipient from redistributing it themselves, taking away profits from the original subject. In order to protect the rights and privacy of someone who chooses to send explicit images of themselves to others, there should be better definitions on who owns the rights to their own naked images.

Because of the sensitive nature of these images and current social stigma, distributing without the senders permission can cause them undue humiliation and social segregation (Hasinoff, 2012). They could also face consequences in their employment, since content posted online that negatively represent current or potentially employees has been shown to sometimes insight dismissal (Bambauer, 2014). Family, friends, and coworkers could all be able to see these images, and it is unfair to place blame on the sender when such a phenomenon is so common, as shown by the statistics stated earlier. Even women who choose to sell their images should be privy to the same privacy; just because she agrees that one person can see the images does not mean that her images should be exposed to the world, especially with such social stigma attached to it.



Currently in Canadian law, under the Copyright Modernization Act of 2012, it is the photographer that owns the default rights to any image they have taken. This means that any selfie or image that a person takes of themselves is considered legally enforceable in court and one could sue for removal from any unauthorized mediums (CAPIC, 2016). For amateur pornographers this is good news and protects them, in theory. In practice, however, once an image is sent, it can be saved and copied thousands of times by the recipient without the owner's knowledge. Once that image is posted online it can be nearly impossible to delete every instance of its reproduction (Hasinoff, 2012). This has been exemplified in popular culture several times, where naked photos and videos of celebrities, like Jennifer Lawrence and Kim Kardashian, have been distributed so extensively that regardless of publicist or lawyer intervention, they are still quite easy to find with a quick Google search.

Also by this logic, if the photographer is a spouse or ex-partner, and the image was originally taken consensually, they would own the rights to the image, and therefore could reproduce and sell it as they see fit (CAPIC, 2016). This places numerous women in relationships in a place of vulnerability to their ex-partners, who may have such images and/or videos saved from the relationship. 'Revenge porn', then, is legal under this clause.

To remedy this, Canadian criminal law, which defines an intimate image as "a picture or video created in private circumstances that shows a person: who is naked or semi-naked; or who is engaged in sexual activity", amended a section of the criminal code in 2015 to protect women under 'voyeurism'. Voyeurism, however, is defined by law as "the practice of gaining sexual pleasure from watching others when they are naked or engaged in sexual activity". In order to fight this sort of situation in a criminal court, the defendant must prove "that the victim actually fear for their safety or the safety of someone known to them". However, "the result of this type of conduct is usually embarrassment or humiliation caused by the breach of privacy, but not necessarily a fear for one's safety" (Department of Justice, 2017).

For private use, where someone has privately paid for the images directly from the photographer, the customer cannot sell the image for commercial gain, but they are legally entitled to distribute as many copies of the image as they wish for free, including on the internet (CAPIC, 2016). This means that a woman who chooses to sell nude images of herself is technically protected if the customer chooses to resell them, if she is able to detect and prove this in court. However, again, she is not protected if they choose to redistribute them. She would also lose the potential profits that this image would generate had the



recipients of redistribution paid her for the images. In addition, since she is selling the images and cannot reasonably prove she fears for her safety or has been humiliated in court, she would not be protected under the criminal code as it is currently written. Even if she could, it is very hard to prove without any doubt to a jury that permission for redistribution was not given.

Therefore, regardless of the sensitive nature of nude images, current Canadian copyright and criminal laws do not properly protect women who fall victim to both ‘revenge porn’ and unauthorized redistribution of commercially sold images of herself.

Policy Recommendations

Reiterating the policy recommendations suggested earlier, they are:

(1) Alter current Canadian copyright law to give any identifiable subject some rights to any intimate picture of themselves, unless stated otherwise in an agreement and/or contract.

(2) Add and/or edit a section in Canadian criminal law to better encompass crimes of redistribution of this nature.

(1) The first change that would be beneficial to address is the legal definition of ‘sexting’. Hasinoff suggests in her paper on teenage sexting that instead of considering it a different entity altogether, that it would be more socially beneficial to simply refer to it as “media production”. She states that “expanding the definition of media production to include sexting highlights the importance of privacy and consent for all authors of ephemeral social media content”. Since much of the stigma facing women, especially young girls, revolves around victim blaming, Hasinoff offers that by placing under the umbrella of “media production” would deal with concerns of anonymity, communication, and self-expression online by empowering girls to produce what they see fit, thus allowing for further sexual education, safety, and open conversation about consent. She states that by considering sexting as “media production” it can even address instances of its abuse by bringing “to light the typically obscured distinction between consensual and nonconsensual sexting”. She even offers that “thinking about consensual sexting as an act of media authorship asserts that people who create ephemeral



social media artifacts need not surrender all their privacy rights when they share this content selectively” (Hasinoff, 2012).

While Hasinoff’s argument that nude photos should be included under the umbrella of “media production” is valid, it would also be beneficial to acknowledge the sensitive nature of the images, since there still is stigma that may cause the victim damage. The current copyright law should have a section that addresses the nature of the image, and if it can be deemed to be of sexual nature, give the ownership to the subject. Allowing a change to this by a contract or legal agreement would still give pornographic producers and professional photographers the right to their own images. But, this extra step could serve to protect women who are easily identifiable in an image, as well as protect the distribution rights they possess, even if they are paid by a private party for the content.

(2) Currently, courts try to remove the images from offending websites, but due to the ease of redistribution, this does not fully remedy the issue. I recommend that federal criminal code should allow for the suing of perpetrators, allowing victims to gain financial damages. In this way offenders would be discouraged even further to not engage this behaviour, and women who are selling the images can regain the revenue they may have lost by having their property redistributed without their consent. This would also aid the women who are victims of revenge porn, just as if any other criminal offense had occurred.

Policy Alternatives

The government in Newfoundland and Labrador is taking a different approach to address sexting abuse and distribution discrepancies. Andrew Parsons, the Justice Minister there, is working on a bill that would require perpetrators who have been shown in court to have shared non-consensual images of a sexual nature to pay monetary damages to the victims. He believes that while it is nearly impossible to remove the images online, as is customary in current Canadian courts, threatening perpetrators with being sued for financial damages may shift the ‘power dynamic’ between the subject of the image and the distributor. This is on top of the 5 years of jail time and \$5,000 fine that is current punishment (Bartlett, 2018).



As another alternative, women could explicitly state their intentions for the images before sending them, in order to secure their consent defense in court. There are currently two requirements for a case of this sort to be defensible:

“Firstly the accused must intentionally or knowingly distribute the images (i.e., not inadvertently). Secondly, the accused should have knowledge that the depicted person did not consent to the distribution of the image, or be reckless as to whether or not the person did not consent. In recommending the mental element of recklessness, the Working Group is relying on Supreme Court of Canada jurisprudence holding that recklessness is found where a person is subjectively aware that there is danger that his conduct could bring about the result prohibited by the criminal law, and nevertheless persists, despite the risk.” (Department of Justice, 2017)

In this way, perhaps women could include a disclaimer when sending the images or explicitly tell whoever they are sending them to that they are not meant for redistribution. This could serve to protect them in Canadian court, or at least serve to prove without a doubt that consent was not given for redistribution.

Consulted and Recommended Sources

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Appendix

The Criminal Code of Canada serves to codify what the government considers to be a criminal act, as well as what it can do when it occurs. It guides all governmental action in regard to criminal activity, and is the main indicator of procedure and guidelines that criminal courts in Canada follow. Amendments are made yearly to ensure that it stays current with technological, social, and economic changes.

Current Canadian Criminal Law:

Voyeurism

- **162 (1)** Every one commits an offence who, surreptitiously, observes — including by mechanical or electronic means — or makes a visual recording of a person who is in circumstances that give rise to a reasonable expectation of privacy, if
 - **(a)** the person is in a place in which a person can reasonably be expected to be nude, to expose his or her genital organs or anal region or her breasts, or to be engaged in explicit sexual activity;
 - **(b)** the person is nude, is exposing his or her genital organs or anal region or her breasts, or is engaged in explicit sexual activity, and the observation or recording is done for the purpose of observing or recording a person in such a state or engaged in such an activity; or
 - **(c)** the observation or recording is done for a sexual purpose.
 - **Definition of visual recording**
- (2)** In this section, **visual recording** includes a photographic, film or video recording made by any means.
- **Exemption**
- (3)** Paragraphs (1)(a) and (b) do not apply to a peace officer who, under the authority of a warrant issued under section 487.01, is carrying out any activity referred to in those paragraphs.
- **Printing, publication, etc., of voyeuristic recordings**
- (4)** Every one commits an offence who, knowing that a recording was obtained by the commission of an offence under subsection (1), prints, copies, publishes, distributes, circulates, sells, advertises or makes available the recording, or has the recording in his or her possession for the purpose of printing, copying, publishing, distributing, circulating, selling or advertising it or making it available.
- **Punishment**
- (5)** Every one who commits an offence under subsection (1) or (4)



- **(a)** is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years; or
- **(b)** is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.
- **Defence**
- (6)** No person shall be convicted of an offence under this section if the acts that are alleged to constitute the offence serve the public good and do not extend beyond what serves the public good.
- **Question of law, motives**
- (7)** For the purposes of subsection (6),
 - **(a)** it is a question of law whether an act serves the public good and whether there is evidence that the act alleged goes beyond what serves the public good, but it is a question of fact whether the act does or does not extend beyond what serves the public good; and
 - **(b)** the motives of an accused are irrelevant.
- R.S., 1985, c. C-46, s. 162; R.S., 1985, c. 19 (3rd Supp.), s. 4; 2005, c. 32, s. 6.

Copyright law in Canada serves to protect the intellectual rights an individual has to their creative work, whether that is a written work, photograph, painting, etc. It provides the guidelines on how this media can be copied, distributed, and sold and is enforceable legally in court. It essentially determines what is 'yours' and what that means you can or cannot do.



Teachers Integrating Technology: Sometimes, They Don't

Juliana Q

Content warning: discussions of cultural assimilation, mention of abuse

Nowadays, most educators are required to take classes on technology. Working teachers are regularly sent on retreats to learn about the new stuff, while teachers-in-training like me get special tech courses. Just last year I was enrolled in “Integrating Technology in Education” (or something like that), a class with a special focus on using technology to meet the needs of diverse students.

Fun fact: looking at a crowd of education majors is like peering into a weird cloning experiment. We kind of look like carbon copies of each other. I can only speak from my experience, but I attend one of the top 10 largest universities in the United States (with a teaching program that draws students from all over the world), so I feel like my sample size is decently large; and that sample size is primarily white brunette women who are able bodied, neurotypical, cishet, and from the suburbs (and by suburbs I mean, like, the nice suburbs, the ones where families go to church every Sunday and Disneyland every Spring break). Sometimes, if you're lucky, a few of us are blonde. Or men. For maybe 80% of us, that's about as exciting as we get.

So when I was in that technology course I was quick to mention an idea I was excited about: why not use the Internet to connect students to role models in their community? Especially for students who come from backgrounds with a lot of stigma, seeing people like you succeed can make it easier to envision and chase after your own success. Being engaged in social issues surrounding your community can also increase self-worth, passion, and motivation. For students who might feel more isolated or unable to be themselves, online communities can foster a sense of belonging and acceptance that home or school may not provide. There's plenty of evidence pointing to the advantages of online communities for marginalized groups...



So it seemed pretty strange that I was the only one advocating for them. In fact, most of the times I mentioned online communities I was met with nervousness. In the case of my classmates, the idea wasn't engaged with at all; there would be a beat of silence before a shift in the conversation, the whole room figuratively and literally turning their heads away.

And I have a few guesses as to why that may be.

1. Educators don't realize some communities exist (online or otherwise).

Like the education majors I generalized before, I'm a white person who grew up surrounded by other white people. My school was more diverse than other schools in my area, by which I mean our student body had more than five people of colour. (Because of this, other districts thought our school had rampant knife fights and gang violence. I'm not making this up.)

Everything around me was homogenous, but I still knew of marginalized communities...out of necessity. I was one of few out queer students in my district; but at least with 'out-ness' there was some aspect of visibility. Other parts of me remained hidden, like the abuse at home and the growing number of mental disabilities I didn't have language for. It was reaching out to the Internet—for answers, for kinship, for the promise that I was not irreparably broken—that I survived high school and felt capable of navigating the future ahead. Growing up without examples or explanations or people like me, those online communities were absolutely vital.

Other communities took me longer to find. But as I recognized myself as someone who would most likely be serving groups I wasn't a part of, I found it important to make an effort to surround myself with their voices and educate myself on some of the issues that were important to them. Unfortunately, most of the educators I've run into haven't made that effort.

According to the Public Religion Research Institute's 2013 American Values Survey, 75% of white Americans have a completely POC-free social network feed. I haven't found statistics for the presence of other minority groups, but you could say I have a good guess at what the results might look like. In the years that I've been pursuing special education I've met countless teachers, researchers, and specialists in the field, and each and every time I always ask one question: Do you ever talk to disabled people outside of work?



The answer, 100% of the time, has been an awkward, shuffling, gaze-avoiding no.

I could easily fill an entire article with all of the angry disabled feelings I have about this, but instead I'll say this: I don't think educators fail to engage with the communities they serve purely because they don't think they need to. The problem is that most spaces that the average person with privilege grows up frequenting are also filled with other privileged people, so they're never really exposed to anyone different from themselves. This doesn't always change while getting their teaching degree.

I'm aware that there are communities built around oppression because I'm a part of some of them. While I'm obviously not a participant in every social sphere, I can assume other identities have their own spheres because, well, that just makes sense. But if people in your circles are mainly united by fishing or car appreciation—if the facets of your identity are so built into the popular culture that they are regarded as 'default'—then this might actually be hard to comprehend.

In a class where my fellow education majors and I read Beverly Tatum's article "Why Are All the Black Kids *Still* Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" the title itself was news to my colleagues. It completely boggled their minds. In their world, the cafeteria looks like it did on TV: with everyone of every race sitting at each table. Or, it probably did; their schools most likely didn't have enough diversity to spread across a table. But if they had, surely everyone would be intermixed; *after all, we're all color blind, right?*

Of course, these teachers do see the groups. On the street, at the mall, while volunteering at more diverse schools than they grew up in. When these groupings are seen, it's subconsciously filed away as 'trouble'.

2. Educators don't want some communities to exist.

So maybe you're a teacher and you're somehow aware that of the concept that people who share common experiences tend to group together. You might also be aware that your disabled students lack the access, independence, and/or mobility to find spaces with other disabled people, or that the students under the LGBTQIA+ umbrella think something is wrong with them. You might be aware that there are students from racial minorities who might be struggling with internalized oppression, students with cultural or spiritual beliefs they never get to talk about or see reflected around them, and students coming from home



lives that make them think they have no chances of escaping to anywhere better. You might see all this and think about the role models they could be connected to, and then think of the wonderful powers of the internet, and then think, “nah.”

You'd never say that, of course. Because that would sound bad! And as we all know, teachers are never, ever bad.

It's with no ill will that the existence of certain communities is seen as undesirable. It's just that, you know, students being involved in minority communities could mean strengthened group belonging. And strengthened group belonging could lead to a higher involvement in social movements. And that could lead to radicalization.

According to many of the leading theories behind education, radicalization is bad. It is simply not good. Functionalism, a founding theory for many systems of education, believes the school system is a structure meant to prepare students to properly contribute to society. Many other theories and educational philosophies have different ideas of what that means or what the true purpose of education is, but they tend to lean in similar directions. But how will students go on to support society if they're mad at it for oppressing them? No, that is simply bad news. And for the majority of teachers who come from Privileged People Land, it is also vaguely threatening.

So introducing students to online communities is not an exciting idea. The idea of the communities existing at all, at least when you're a teacher who believes in the fundamental pillars of education, is also not great. Education wants students to feel like they belong—to their classroom, to their school, to their society—but not to any particular group.

3. Educators value assimilation.

The history of education has often been synonymous with the history of assimilation. In many countries, the first schools were created largely to instill a common code of conduct and values; if service to society is a pillar of education, than assimilation is another pillar that is just as big. (Actually, it might be the exactly same pillar.) Schools were often a tool of cultural assimilation and played no small part in the subjugation of peoples and their ways of life, 'Indian boarding schools' being a prime example.



No modern teacher wants to believe they're continuing that history, but they are. It shows in various ways, from the reluctance to connect students with their communities to the very way educational systems are structured.

For many special education teachers, the thought of being *proud* to be disabled is to ultimately dismantle our field. The special education system not only exists to help disabled students fill knowledge gaps and learn life skills—it teaches how to fit in and be 'normal'.

But a student connected to disability advocacy might start believing all sorts of zany ideas. They might want to stim—to flap their hands and rock and sway—in public! They might want to sign instead of undergo the rigorous speech therapy necessary to make life easier for everyone else! They might want to not use all of their time and energy blending in with the rest of the world—might think that there's *nothing wrong* with their disabled traits! Entire treatments and curriculum are based on the need for disabled people to hide everything about them that's different; disability pride destroys all of that. The very idea is counterintuitive to the system, which is exactly why you can still find some schools where special education students aren't aware they are disabled at all and simply assume they are bad at being normal.

This applies to other groups as well. Go to prom with the proper person, wear the proper uniform, speak the proper way, act the proper way: schools want students to learn the rules. To listen to the authority figure. They want students to find certain mannerisms more professional than others, and to recite certain versions of history. These biases are not based in 'common sense', and they certainly aren't random. They enforce certain ideas, values, and ways of existing. They are tools for assimilation.

But we have other tools at our disposal.

I am queer and disabled, but outwardly I look like any other education major. I mock them partially because I find it funny, but also because I blend in almost *perfectly* and that scares me. I'm just another white feminine brunette in the big Education Major machine (and I even grew up in the suburbs, though my family never took me to Disneyland).

My experiences won't equip me to connect with every student I teach. But as long as I'm being encouraged to integrate technology into my teaching, I want to help my students find communities to be a part of. The internet helped me know that I wouldn't always be the



token queer, that others like me existed somewhere outside my small neighborhood; and when media told me I was crazy and weak and destined to be locked away, the internet showed me people with my same diagnoses and backgrounds who went on to live fulfilling lives.

I want every student to know all of the possible futures ahead of them. I want them to know the long past behind them. I want them to know the scholars and advocates and professionals that are creating language for their experiences, and I want them to know the experiences they might find alienating might be someone else's normal, might be normal for hundreds of other people who exist and live and survive.

I want my classmates to want that too. I want the teachers and professionals I talk with to want it. And whatever reasons make them hesitate aren't nearly as important.

Still treading the line between self-advocacy and candid overexposure, Juliana Q is a queer and disabled writer, performer, artist, and activist. While their work normally focuses on mental illness, survivorship, and identity, they occasionally put on a happy face and dip into the realms of comedy and education. They have been published in *The Tower*, Plain China Press, and Z Publishing House, and have had their poetry shared by Button Poetry.



The Concussion Collective

Naiya Tsang

The Concussion Collective website was created in the spring of 2018, as part of a project for the Critical Disability Studies course I was taking at the time. My aim for the website was that it would become a space for people who have experienced concussions to share their stories and perhaps make sense of the confusing and frustrating experience of having an acquired brain injury within a world that does not yet understand the full implications of this condition. Unfortunately, one of those consequences has been my own follow-through with the site – as of October 2018 as I write this update, there has only been one submission: my own. In the future I hope for that to change, but for now, my limited resources and capacity have made it what you will see in these snapshots; perhaps in the future they will be just the beginning of an expanding story.

To view the website, visit <https://theconcussioncollective.weebly.com> (perhaps www.theconcussioncollective.com if I ever buy the domain name).

“The Concussion Collective” website was inspired by my experience with concussions and post-concussion syndrome, and incorporates concepts centered around neurodiversity, comics, and mental health, including Johanna Hedva’s “[Sick Woman Theory](#)” (2016), Dana Walrath’s [Aliceheimers: Alzheimer’s Through the Looking Glass](#) (2016), and Allie Brosh’s “[Adventures in Depression](#)” (2013).

mask



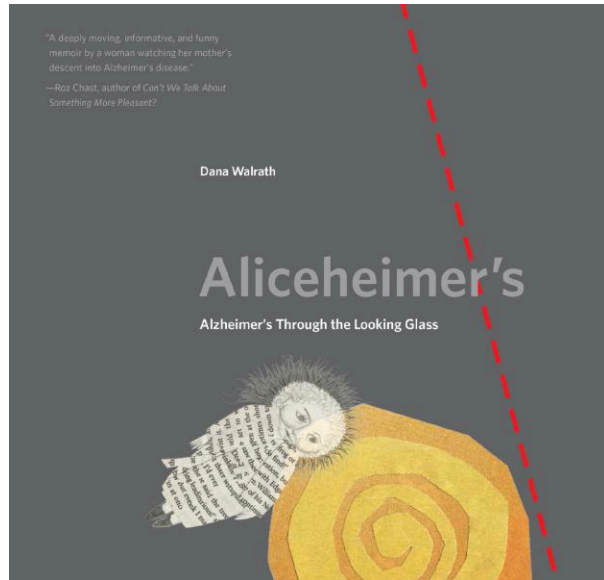
All photos by *Pamila Payne*; Styling, hair and makeup: *Myrthia Rodriguez*; Art Direction: *Johanna Hedva*

options

A screenshot of Johanna Hedva’s article “Sick Woman Theory,” shows Hedva wearing a red dress and dark lipstick, lying on a white mattress with a pile of pill bottles and medication next to her.

sick woman theory

johanna hedva lives with chronic illness and their sick woman theory is for those who were never meant to survive but did.



The cover of Dana Walrath’s *Aliceheimer’s: Alzheimer’s Through the Looking Glass* displays a paper cutout version of Alice, composed of newsprint paper, staring into a swirling yellow and orange sun. A dotted red line cuts across the page, and the entire scene is placed on a dark grey background.

Adventures in Depression

Some people have a legitimate reason to feel depressed, but not me. I just woke up one day feeling sad and helpless for absolutely no reason.



It’s disappointing to feel sad for no reason. Sadness can be almost pleasantly indulgent when you have a way to justify it - you can listen to sad music and imagine yourself as the protagonist in a dramatic movie. You can gaze out the window while you’re crying and think “This is so sad. I can’t even believe how sad this whole situation is. I bet even a reenactment of my sadness could bring an entire theater audience to tears.”

A screenshot of Allie Brosh’s “Adventures in Depression” shows a sad cartoon version of Brosh lying in bed staring outside at a widely smiling sun. The word “no...” rolls across the green hills outside, followed by four unhappy faces.



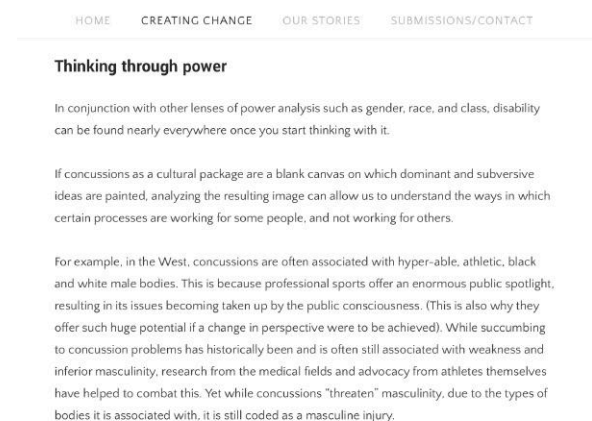
The aim of the project is to build a diverse array of intimate stories about concussion experiences within the context of larger structures of power and domination, offer a platform for people to share their experiences, and call-in individuals who may not be familiar with the structural roots of oppression into this conversation.

As Johanna Hedva writes, “Sick Woman Theory maintains that the body and mind are sensitive and reactive to regimes of oppression – particularly our current regime of neoliberal, white-supremacist, imperial-capitalist, cis-hetero-patriarchy” (2016). The conversations around concussions in North American society tend not to challenge the regimes of oppression that certain institutions, such as the professional sports industry and the medical industrial complex uphold. Both these institutions reproduce expectations of gender norms, violence, racism, and ableism; operate within neoliberal, capitalist frameworks; and do very little to challenge them.

By utilizing the current visibility of concussions in the public eye — due to its very alignment with these institutions — I felt I could construct a platform where an extremely individualized and non-politicized condition could make visible the larger power structures it rests within. I attempted to do this by writing explicitly about these connections on the “Home” and “Creating Change” pages of the website, where I analyzed how concussions can intersect with various power structures, and provided some quotes by disability studies theorists Eli Clare, A.J. Withers, and Don Kulick and Jens Rydström in order to introduce the audience to this mode of thinking.



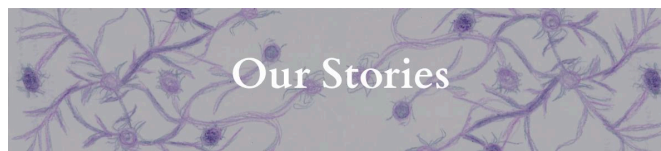
A screenshot of The Concussion Collective “Home” page shows the website’s mission statement, as well as the purple abstract neuronal illustration that is the website’s header.



This screenshot shows text from the “Creating Change” page, which works through how one can think through power in relation to concussions and disability.

However, people who have been raised thinking and breathing the hegemonic ideals reinforced by oppressive regimes of power can have a difficult time understanding these issues if they are presented from a solely theoretical viewpoint. Furthermore, the language that is often used to describe these ideas can be inaccessible to some people as it can seem like academic jargon, which can require extensive education to understand and can therefore be classed. Solely providing an analysis from within the institution of academia was not enough; finding an additional way to trouble some of the hidden assumptions and norms that are embedded within these regimes of power was a vital part of this project.

The blog portion of this website, “Our Stories,” and the first post I submitted aim to do that. While this one post does not cover many of the issues that I hope the website as a whole will eventually encompass — such as an in-depth detailing of experiences within the medical and health care systems, how individuals are treated based on gender and race, acknowledgement of the differences of care afforded to people of different class backgrounds, nationalities, and perhaps citizenship statuses, as well as many other issues — it acts as a starting point. Additionally, the first post intermittently uses comics to open up this conversation in a more accessible manner by utilizing a medium that is not solely based on written-language.



Mind matters by Naiya Tsang

4/15/2018 0 Comments

When I turned 22, I looked back on the last 12 months of my life and felt like this:



[My year of nothing. Stick person holding a balloon that says "22!"]

Read our stories

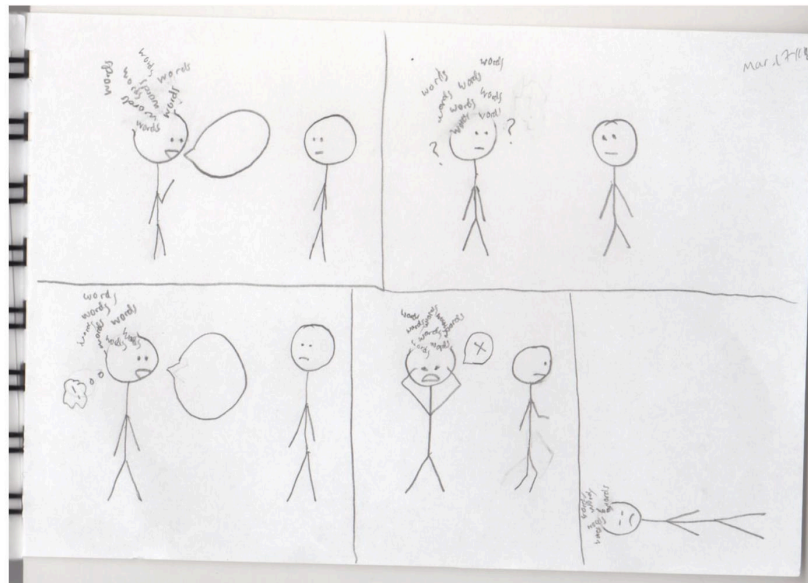
Personal accounts of concussion experiences expressed through art, writing, photos, videos, audio or other media types by people who have had concussions.

 RSS Feed

Archives

April 2018

This screenshot shows the “Our Stories” page, as well as the beginning of the first entry “Mind Matters by Naiya Tsang.” The first illustration shows a stick figure wearing a party hat and holding a balloon labeled “22,” with the words “My year of nothing” floating overhead.



Words

This comic is included in the “Mind Matters” post. Panel 1 shows a stick figure attempting to talk to another stick figure, though only an empty speech bubble exits their mouth. From the backside of their head, multiple repeats of the word “words” begin floating out. Panel 2: the first stick figure is puzzled, and continues to attempt speech. Panel 3: The first stick figure becomes frustrated, raising their hands to their head, while the second walks away. Panel 4: The first stick figure lies on the floor, words still spilling out of their head.

Certain artists and storytellers have used comics to convey difficult or complex emotions, including Allie Brosh, who wrote *Adventures in Depression* on her website “Hyperbole and a Half,” and Dana Walrath, who wrote *Aliceheimers*, a book which utilized comics to portray her experience with her mother who had Alzheimer’s disease. I started drawing stick-figure comics because I was having trouble portraying my experience with words, often too tired to draw anything requiring effort, but still wanting to convey my emotions in some way; frustration, impatience, joy, and the resignation that comes with waiting and waiting for a recovery that doesn’t come. The comics collapsed and expanded time, took whatever form I gave them, and allowed me to step off both linear tracks of thought and circular ruminations into a different space. I included a few of them in the first blog post, and they became an attempt at transforming the theory that undergirds the premise of the website into something less impersonal, and will hopefully be one part of a larger construction of our stories of concussions.



Ultimately, this project hopes to align with a larger movement of disability justice. By using art and creative forms of expression mixed with theory and activism it aims to tell a larger story about the many ways in which our bodies and minds act and exist in spite of the structures which aim to stamp out difference. It aims to add more voices to the many who are already working to disrupt the structures that insist that some bodies should be visible and some invisible, valuable and invaluable, along different lines of race, gender, nationality, class, and many more forms of oppression. Finally, it aims to work collectively towards insisting that, as Johanna Hedva writes, we “take seriously each other’s vulnerability and fragility and precarity, and [...] support it, honor it, empower it” (2016).

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Diasporic Blaming, or the (Im)Possibility of Speaking

Ian Liuja Tian

I focus on online posts and hashtags circulated after the news that two lesbians were caned in Malaysia. I unpack some perhaps unintended consequences of speaking from the diaspora in relation to settler/orientalist homonationalism and imperialism. I ask what are the assumptions behind 'diasporic blaming'; in what ways does such blaming exceed or conform to the discursive limits of the transnational white settler nationalism; how do people like me who are from these 'backward' places think through and criticize such blaming and how can we critically engage with the imagined 'non-West' from the location of a settler colonial and anti-immigrant (especially queer refugees) nation-state known as Canada.

Content warning: the q word will be used as an act of reclaiming

This reflective essay unsettles the acts of blaming by members of the queer diaspora (Patton & Sánchez-Eppler, 2000); most specifically, the East/Southeast Asian queer diaspora, defined as those who have grown up in a Western country. I focus on online posts and hashtags circulated after the news that two lesbians were caned in Malaysia. I am particularly interested in the narrative of emotional posts by some queer Malaysian-descendants. I unpack some perhaps unintended consequences of speaking from the diaspora in relation to settler/orientalist homonationalism and imperialism (Kinsman, 2001; Puar, 2007; Morgensen, 2010a, p. 106; Gentil & Kinsman, 2015). I ask what are the assumptions behind 'diasporic blaming'; in what ways does such blaming exceed or conform to the discursive limits of the transnational white settler nationalism (Day, 2007, p. 81); how do people like me who are from these 'backward' places think through and criticize such blaming and how can we critically engage with the imagined 'non-West' from the location of a settler colonial and anti-immigrant (especially queer refugees) nation-state known as Canada.

Caned, Circulated, Criticized

Earlier this September, multiple people across major social media sites started to post and voice their oppositions to the court decision to can a lesbian couple in a Northern province in Malaysia (Lamb, 2018). This homophobic and oppressive act angered many who live in



the queer Southeast Asian diaspora. On social media, I traced many who hashtagged and posted phrases such as 'Malaysia Disgrace'. Many high-profile accounts such as UN Watch, Amnesty International and the New York Times all circulated this piece of news, followed by a sheer volume of comments that shamed the court and the government. However, what I found particularly interesting in these posts is the lack of context. In fact, since as early as August, the Malaysian government has been tightening its control on LGBTQ venues and cultures (Ellis-Peterson, 2018). Not only did many of these posts failed to mention the continuation of oppressive policies, but also they excluded detailed analysis of the broader national political change in May this year, the battle between the new and the previous government and the complexities of religions.

My essay does not delve into these complicated dynamics, what I would like to map out is the online and indeed offline discursive construction of Malaysia as 'a disgrace' or a 'homophobic' space. If *homonationalism is a project initiated on the part of settler Whites to defend Western nations in the name of promoting queer rights*, then the practice of blaming is a project facilitated by the diasporic queers who feel obliged to speak out on behalf of the Native. I call this a '*diasporic blaming project*' that serves to regulate the *sedimented population (queer, non-white settlers) who are previously unfolded into the settler nationalist project*. In the following pages, I investigate the rationale behind the diaspora's ability and desire to criticize and the ways in which these practices may foreclose more radical and transformational shifts in Canada and beyond.

The Political Unconsciousness of *Diasporic Speaking*

For Marxist philosopher Fredric Jameson, one of the important reasons to study culture textually is to reveal its political unconscious narrative that reflects the absolute horizon of all readings and interpretations (Jameson, 1983, pp. 1-2). These online posts not only render those who are immigrants uncomfortable and unable to speak on their own terms but also reveal the political unconsciousness of the authors of these comments and reposts. Indeed, in a collection of essays, the cultural critic Rey Chow has warned us that the Native is rendered occasional when speaking from the diaspora (Chow, 1993, pp.27-54). Those of us who reside outside of many LGBTQ-repressive places tend to assume that because of certain intimacies around race and ethnicity, we can speak on behalf of those who are actually being affected by the brutality as if we secure our rights and agencies to speak by taking away those of the Native. Such a 'presumption' unearths the modality of internalized colonial, racial and gendered social relations.



The first layer of these social relations is the continuations of the colonial binary that remains influential to our ways of knowing and means of rationality. Blaming Malaysia, for example, entails the dialectic construction of *the Other* of Malaysia; that is, a 'better' and queer positive place. While insofar as this construction is completed within post-colonial social relations, it inevitably grabs holds of coloniality (Lowe, 2015, p. 137) that advances global racialized and gendered organization of people that critical race theorist de Silva termed 'globality' (de Silva, 2007, p. 29). Put in another way, the discursive blaming does not sufficiently challenge the very Malaysian institution that criminalizes queer desires, it does more to serve as a kind of 'political branding' (Clough & Willse, 2011, p. 57) for Western liberalism and colonial ideologies. That is, it confirms the conventional imaginaries of East/Southeast Asia as places of unfreedom and North America as the spaces of liberation. In this process, the liberal notion of liberty, developed by Anglo-Saxon political theorists, is rendered as the referent, as the sole possible interpretation of human emancipation (Chakrabarty, 2000, p. 28). Places like Malaysia, Indonesia, China or South Korea are oftentimes labelled as teleologically lacking sexual enlightenment in the European sense of the word. Queer Asian diasporas thus become subjects that embody sexual enlightenment, liberal freedom and progression, making colonialism, capitalism and exploitation in Asia invisible.

Diasporic blaming furthermore conceals the structured social relations of global capitalism that has been co-opting queer identity as a strategy to advance its agenda (Rushbrook, 2002; Jackson, 2009; Floyd, 2009). This strategy, termed 'the global homocapitalist project' (Rao, 2015), has been quite successful. For peripheral countries such as Malaysia, the impact of the global capitalist regime has disadvantaged the majority of the population while enriching the few. The material precarity experienced by ordinary Third-World population has been implicated by the wider structural relations that directly or indirectly complicate 'moral panic'. Here, I suspect that the increasing need for money making greatly limits individual's actualization to live up to their moral standard, be that of religious or secular. This imbrication of money and morality has been in fact observed in many places (Rao, 2015, p. 46), which has indoctrinated an emphasis on the 'traditions' as an instrument to counter the utilitarian and monetary rationality engendered by the globalization of capital. The rise of New-Confucius in China, the growing of Hindu nationalism in India, the branding of 'Asian values' by many Southeast Asian countries and 'African Values' in (post)colonial Africa can be understood as mobilizing cultural-mediated power to quell dissatisfactions felt by the poor (Bannerji, Mojab, & Whitehead, 2010). In this sense,



homosexuality, manipulated by major financial institutions such as the International Money Fund or the World Bank, comes to signify the ill of capitalism (monetary desires) and the threat brought by Western companies, white people as well as Western human rights organizations. For instance, SOGI (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) has become a prominent development concerns for the IMF and WB in terms of funding and lobbying governments in the Global South (Gosine, 2010).

Such blaming also can potentially displace the Native's resistance. This is especially evident in the case of caning because the majority of the posts leave no trace of organizations that are fighting against oppression in Malaysia whereby alternative queer practices are rendered unthinkable and invisible (Luibhéid, 2008, p. 182). As a matter of fact, the critique is directed mainly towards the government and the Sharia Law; while the tension is converted to that of Islam vis-à-vis non-Islam. The transcontinental circuit of information helps to regulate what types of news are circulatable, profitable and perhaps 'sentimental' enough. For the diaspora to talk for the Native is not only the 'translation of movements' but also the reinforcement of the colonial and imperialistic expropriations of race, gender and sexuality. Hence, diasporic blaming may as well be understood as the white homosexuals, assisted by the diasporic queers, saving brown, black and yellow homosexuals from the heterosexuals (Puar, 2017, p. 99).

Settler Homonationalism, Homo-imperialism and Bill-C31

In this section, I attempt to engage with what can be called the formation of American/Canadian studies with International Area Studies, venturing through queer positionality (Grewal & Kaplan, 2001, p. 669). By problematizing the logic of online responses in the previous part, I can now begin thinking through how the structural relations of capitalism, settler/franchised colonialism and imperialism in North America generally and Canada more specifically is interlocked with the global making of 'cosmopolitan queer subjects' that many of us diasporic queers inhabit.

To elaborate, the very ability to leave one's homeland exemplifies a set of relations that Malaysian anthropologist Ong termed 'graduated citizenship', which refers to the differentiated management of population that aims to maximize the productivity of those, under a neoliberal context, are deemed to be more profitable (Ong, 2006, pp. 78-9). Valuable to the global/national production of capital, diaspora population is folded into the settler colonialist project. Speaking from Asian migrant experiences, cultural critics such as



Ikyo Day, Grace Hong, Jodi Kim, Mimi Thi Nguyen and ChandanReddy have demonstrated that the post-racial discourse of multiculturalism relegates the contemporary exploitation of Asian technocratic labour and historical railway constructors intangible (Kim, 2010; Reddy, 2011; Nguyen, 2012; Hong, 2015; Day, 2016). Yet, I argue that diasporic queers seem to be excluded by this white heteropatriarchal settler nationalist project. The effort to 'include' the queer diaspora, then, is channelled through the settler homonationalist construction of 'proper/respective middle-class queers' and the homo-imperialist rendering of 'good/bad' queer migrants/refugees. The 'bad' ones fail to demonstrate their multicultural value and thus are not rescuable. Contrary to the branding of 'universalized human rights', countries like Canada, in reality, only select queer refugees with certain narratives and values while leaving other queers unattended to. For us already 'freed' queers to question post-colonial governments such as that of Malaysia, we embrace the homo-imperialist and settler homonationalist reinforcements of the Canadian nation-state.

Much literature has been written on sexuality, Indigeneity and settler homonationalism (Smith, 2005; Rifkin, 2006; Morgensen, 2010a, p. 106; Morgensen; 2010b). Both feminist and queer scholarships have analyzed the subordination of indigenous people through sexuality. Most notably, in literature academic Schneider's work, Indigenous people were branded as practicing sodomy and thus queer hating and Indian hating became parallel acts of violence (Schneider, 2007). A settler homonationalist project, therefore, works to disremember and disarticulate indigenous dispossessions. Yet settler homonationalism has also been closely connected with homoimperialist practices, which are my main problematization in the consecutive pages.

Homoimperialism is perceived as the expanding of economic and political power and domination from the Global North to the South through the rhetoric of queer liberation. It advances homonationalist agenda by conceptualizing the North as the height of liberal humanity, freedom and rights whereby the consequences of colonialism, militarism and capitalism are occluded. Meanwhile, homoimperialism frames capital's need for labour as 'escaping' to sites of freedom. However, only certain kinds of queers are accepted.

Perhaps the most recent imperialist policy by the Canadian government is the Bill C-31. Put into place in 2012, this bill is decidedly anti-immigrant and is intended to create barriers for people from the Global South to migrant into settler Canada. Under Bill-C31, persons who arrive 'irregularly' are classified as designed foreign nationals(DFNs); many of them cannot claim refugee status and stay in Canada. The increased use of detention and denial of



refugee claimants deter those who come to Canada ‘illegally’ while encouraging those who come ‘legally’ (Envisioning, 2014, pp. 13-15). For queer refugees, a new invention is particularly imperialistic: designated country of origin (DCO). Countries on this list are said to have ‘safe’ environment and fewer possibilities of persecutions. Yet in some of these countries, such as Mexico, anti-queer violence still persists and amplifies. Claimants from DCOs have fewer chances to become refugees as well as fewer times to have their documents reviewed (Kinsman, 2018, p. 119), meaning that ‘rescuable’ queers need to adhere to the dichotomy of oppression/freedom and backward/progressive.

It is in this sense that the imperialist authority has the ‘right’ to organize world populations and spaces, to manipulate queerness as a marker of white supremacy and to decide which racialized queer subjects enter/exit the Canadian settler state. Therefore, without concurrently interrogating homophobic border imperialism, questioning anti-queer policies elsewhere from the localities of the queer diaspora runs the risk of projecting the white state as the culturally imperialist authority of ‘queerness’ on the postcolonial map whereas those violent conditions against queers in supposedly ‘positive’ spaces are occluded. In this process, the settler state is able to concretize its colonial sovereignty constantly through the production of differentiated identities and to continue its economic advantages via the importing of multicultural, educated and valuable migrants instead of queers under repressions.

Everyone’s Protest Post

I have consistently argued that a large number of online posts after the caning of lesbians are potentially beneficial for the settler homonationalist and homo-imperialist project because the constitutive logic of colonialism, capitalism and imperialism remains pivotal to our ways of knowing and our own epistemological boundaries. However, I am not disputing the will to criticize; in fact, I think the queer diasporas have to question. To return to the complication I highlight at the outset of this essay, the possibility of speaking becomes the question of how do we challenge post-colonial governments with a critical consciousness of the structural. I thus offer a few suggestions as to where do we begin shifting our narratives.

Most importantly, we need to call for free borders. We cannot pretend that Canadian settler state is progressive. Its protection of queers is accommodational insofar as the heterosexual conceptions of the family is insufficiently challenged (Duggan, 2003). Its branding of LGBTQ rights around the world is utilitarian not only because it has never been truly



‘friendly’ to queer refugees as Bill C-31 suggests but also because queerness becomes a speculative value to be extracted (Hong, 2018, p. 110). If we are true queerly internationalists, then we would have to ensure that all queers can live lives that are consistent to their most intimate realities.

Second, we need to disrupt the ‘leaving as liberating’ narrative in many queer migration stories by critically reflecting on our own conceptualizations of queerness in the neoliberal, homonormative and homonationalist framework. Simultaneously, we have to go beyond the analytic of the discursive to delineate the capitalist social relations that condition the global understanding of queerness whereby to ‘leave’ is to experience restructured inequality and opportunities as a result of the global circulation of value and capital (Manalansan, 2003).

Equally important is that we need an alternative framework that escapes the discourse of value and worth in neoliberalism. That is, we need to build grounded rationalities. We need to think about ‘here and now’ because the kind of solidarity and relations we establish would have an impact on the structural systems that influence us all. I think there is a need to further works by indigenous scholars Glen Coulthard, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Taiaiake Alfred and Jodi A. Byrd to literally *ground* queer politics on the indigenous land we reside. Coevally we as diasporic queers ought to redirect our activist energy from an incident-based and reactionary organizing to a structurally-informed and long-term oriented mobilization. For instance, instead of criticizing the government for caning online, it might also be helpful to connect with local queer organizations and offer assistance of any kind.

In *Everyone’s Protest Novel*, James Baldwin argues that classic protest novels only incite sentimental reforms that do not question the institutional conditions of racism. I suspect online posts have become the modern-day protest novels that enable white supremacy to venture through a formally anti-racist, queer-positive and rational apparatus (Melamed, 2011). This white supremacy has established a global racial project that designates white-majority spaces as the climax of rationality and freedom while relegates racialized geolocalities as the ‘lagging’ of Enlightened humanity. Existing as the minority in the presumably ‘rational’ locales, we diasporic queers perhaps need to examine our complicities and vulnerabilities in the global structure of racialized imperialism and (settler)colonialism. Moreover, we have to remember that to stigmatize one form of humanity (racialized Third-World, poor) is to advance another’s health and development (Global North, including us as valuable subjects to racial capitalism) (Singh, 2003, p. 223). We thus have to remember



those deaths on the continent where our ancestors have left their histories; but most crucially, we need to think about those whose modes of existences we have been required to disinherit so that we can live on.

Ian Liujia Tian's activism and scholarship explore the political economy of transnational sexuality, social movement and community building through the lens of queer Marxism in the context of East Asia and settler colonial Canada. He is an anti-capitalist, anti-colonial, queer, labour and feminist activist in urbanized China; he is also an advocate for various social justice issues on the First Nations territory in Turtle Island on which he is blessed to be able to work, research, read and write. He can be reached by email: liujia.tian@mail.utoronto.ca

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Un Sueño Hecho Realidad

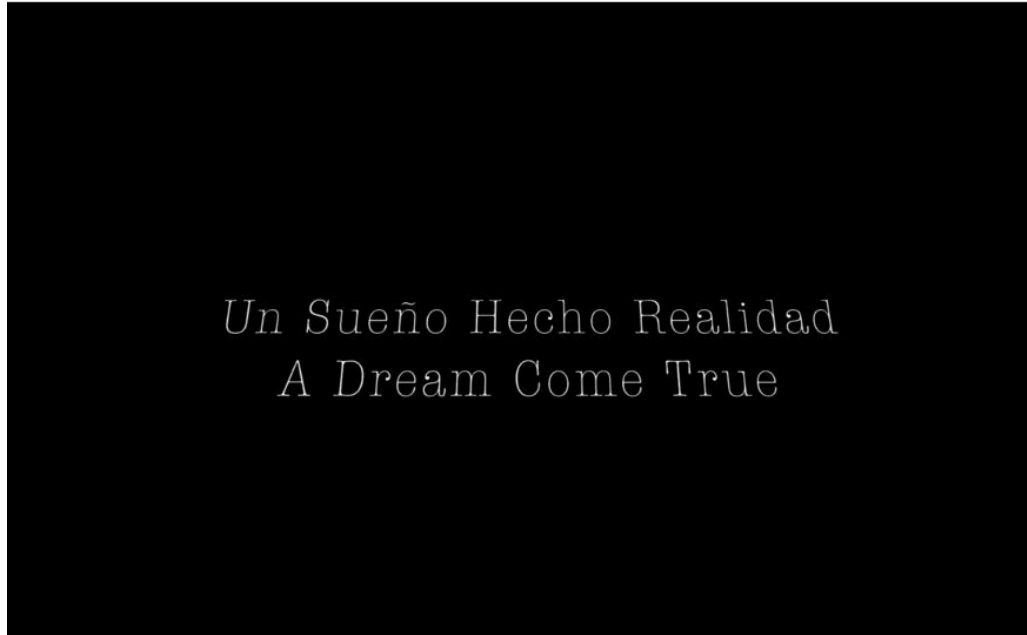
Ale Gonzalez

This piece illustrates the complexities of growing up as an individual who was assigned male at birth and feeling a disconnect from their family and culture because they are unable to experience specific cultural traditions because of their assigned gender at birth. In spite of this, this piece focuses on the normalization of trans Honduran womanhood as something to be loved, protected, cherished and celebrated. In latinx communities, quinceañeras are a cultural tradition and celebration where teenage women are celebrated for transitioning from being a teenager to then becoming a womxn. This event is known to be extravagant with family, friends and community members involved.

To access the video, visit: <https://vimeo.com/295031927>

Password: ias









Transcript

You know what I just don't understand? Just because I was assigned male at birth, does not mean I shouldn't have a quinceañera. Like, I've always dreamed of having a quinceañera.



Just you know wearing a huge dress with all my friends and family at a big party celebrating me becoming a woman. I just want that. It's always been a dream of mine.

Tonight, was so successful. My quinceañera finally happened. My dream came true. I got my first kiss and I made my parents proud. Gracias a todos por venir (Thanks to those who attended).

I just had the craziest dream.

Navigating Online Spaces

Discovering my queer and trans identity with no emotional support was extremely difficult and isolating. I sought comfort, guidance and community from other queer and trans people on online platforms like YouTube, Tumblr, Instagram and Twitter. As a queer and trans Honduran, I searched for a sense of community on online spaces where I could meet other queer and trans black, indigenous, people of color. On Twitter, I've made connections with a black, queer, South African, become friends with a bisexual Garifuna-Honduran womxn (which turned into an IRL friendship) and have made community with other queer and trans Central Americans through the hashtags #QueerCentralAmericanTwitter and #TransCentralAmericanTwitter. The greater Central American community can feel extremely unwelcoming to queer and trans individuals as our community is rampant with machismo, homophobia and transphobia as a result of colonization. Therefore, creating community with other queer and trans Central Americans on Twitter and Instagram is subverting the heteronormativity embedded in Central American identity. Queer and trans Central Americans have existed for centuries and there is anthropological evidence of ancient civilizations in Central America displaying gender variant individuals and same-sex relations like the late classic Maya cave painting found in Naj Tunich, Guatemala. Despite colonization, murder and constant erasure, queer and trans Central Americans continue to exist, thrive and create family online and IRL.

Ale Gonzalez is a DJ, stylist, photographer and student working towards a Bachelor's degree in Latin American Studies in Vancouver, B.C. She is a queer, non-binary trans womxn of Honduran (Mestiza and Asian) descent who's work explores themes of sexuality, gender, diaspora and Honduran & Central American identity. When she is not creating, she is most likely perreando to old school reggaeton, comiendo baleadas o platanos verdes/maduros y dandole besitos a sus sobrinx, Luna y Lucas. Follow Ale on Instagram @angelitacatracha and Twitter @angelitacatrach