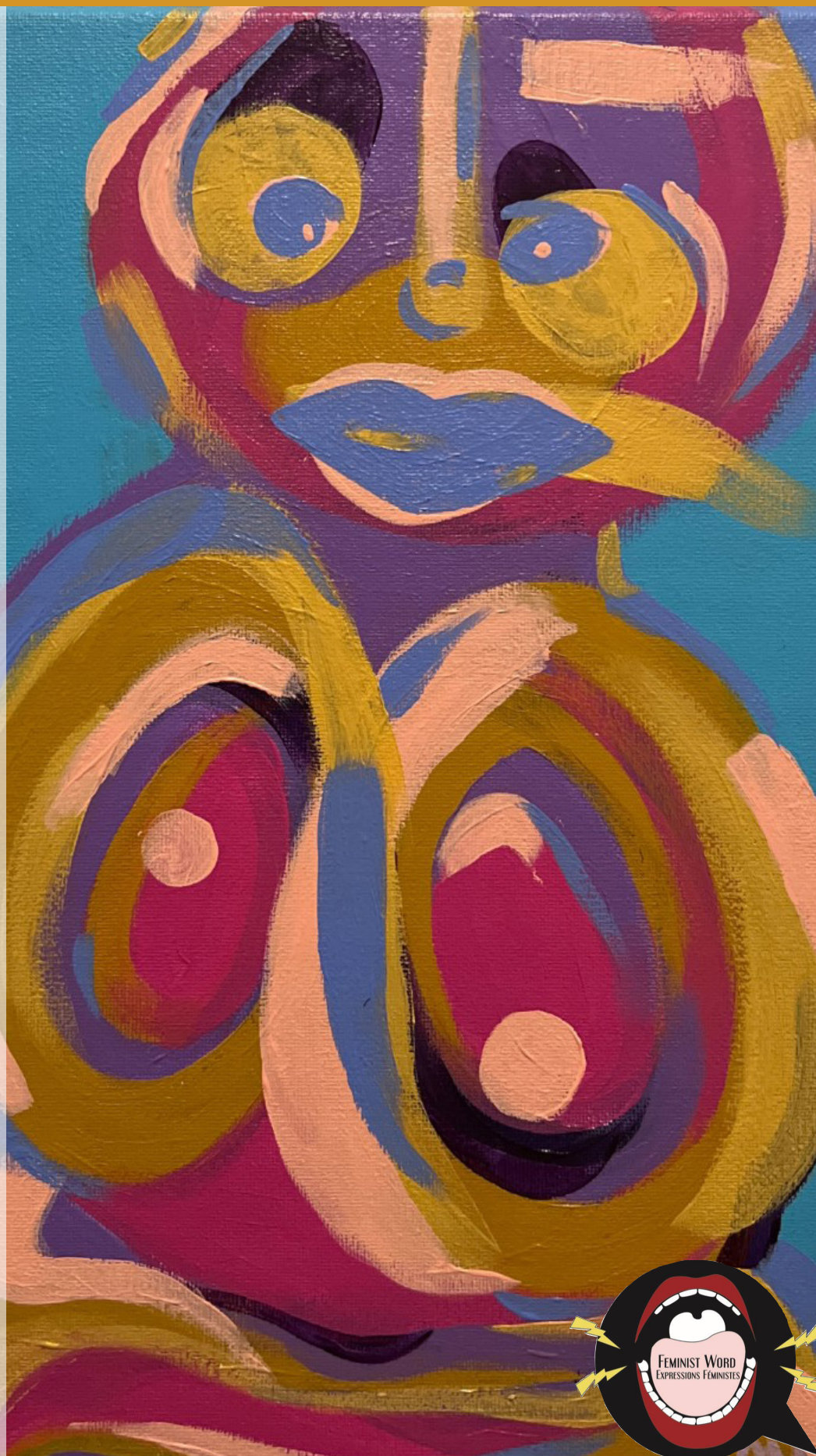


the **FEMINIST WORD**



ISSN 2562-4873

*Issue 11*



**Véronique Bureau Mortimer** is a young artist who focuses her work on fat liberation, body positivity, feminism, mental health and queerness. She founded Studio Véro to share her art and message with the world. She is an artist by night and a law student by day. Véronique combines her occupations to work towards social justice.

## COVER ART

### Art Description

This piece was inspired by the art of fatness and created by drawing out curvy lines and adding depth to the curves. Art is a powerful tool for fighting struggles with body image. I see curves as art, fat as possibility and bigness as an inspiration. Fat women face immense barriers in a thin-centered society. Embracing the curves is in itself an act of power and leadership. I hope this piece helps you find your own sense of self-love, creativity, and inspiration to achieve great things.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*The Feminist Word* is supported by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW), a not-for-profit charity founded in 1976. CRIAW encourages and produces feminist research for the advancement of women and we are very thankful for their support. The ideas expressed in *The Feminist Word* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of CRIAW.

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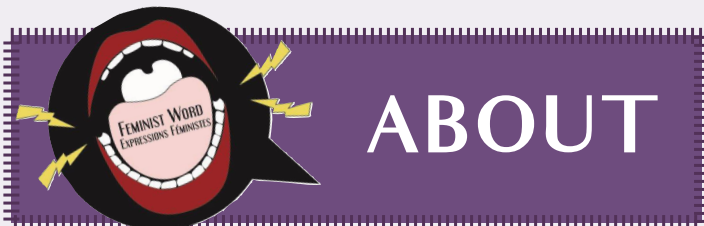


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The Feminist Word (a.k.a. The F-Word) was created by and for young feminists in Canada. We aim to elevate the collective voices of young feminists through a platform that allows us to creatively express our thoughts and priorities regarding women's equality in Canada. Our goal is to provide a meaningful space in which women aged 15 to 35 from across Canada can contribute to the women's movement.

We welcome new submissions in English and French all year long, including articles, poetry, artwork, photography, reviews (of literature, film, music), and stories. So send us your submission today and it may be featured in an upcoming edition!

The Feminist Word was originally conceived by the following women: Sarah Baker, Stacy Corneau, Rachelle DeSorcy, Caroline Flocari, Tess Kim, Susan Manning, Jessica McCuaig, Caitlin Menczel, Caroline Paquette, Jacqueline Neapole, Elizabeth Seibel, Jessica Touhey, and Miriam Illman-White.



# Editor's Note

Before publishing our call for submissions last year, we had to reflect for a moment on whether we wanted to have another themed edition. It was obvious that the ambiguous times we have been navigating for the past 3 years as a collective felt fitting to continue conversations and inspire further reflections on the kind of world we all aspire to live in or wish to build together for the future. With the COVID-19 pandemic still looming, we have been witnessing the emergence of other domestic and worldwide issues alerting us to the current state of the world.

Always motivated by the desire to hear from young feminists who continue to inspire us into action through their personal stories and work, we invited them to share with us how the words feminist leadership, solidarity, revolution, and/or creativity moved them. We are delighted by the response we got to this edition's theme and before we let you dive in, please let us give you a glimpse into what to expect in this issue.

This newest edition of the F-Word includes incredible artwork, intriguing poetry, and extremely thorough analyses of numerous topics. You will be transported through reflections on how different aspects of capitalism, power dynamics, and repressive social control affect women in all their diversity, as well as how solidarity, advocacy, feminist activism, and community can empower us all to push back against these oppressive components of society. You will also find a multitude of personal perspectives and experiences of womanhood and personhood in a variety of areas in life. We hope that the diverse themes of the following contributions evoke as much reflection and interest for you as it did for us.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition and please don't hesitate to reach out to us at [fword.efem@criaw-icref.ca](mailto:fword.efem@criaw-icref.ca) if you have any feedback. We are always eager to hear from you!

**Olivia Atsin** is an African storyteller and an intuitive writer. She is also a dreamer and a dancer. She is an intense person who carries a lot of fire inside her. That makes her extremely passionate about what she cares about and her desire to be of service. The need to expand, know more, dig deep and learn new things always give her soul an injection of excitement.



**Elizabeth Nguyen** is a proud feminist and a queer student currently finishing their Bachelor of Social Work with a Minor in Psychology at the University of Ottawa. Learning about the feminist movement in their teenage years inspired a passion for social justice and pushed them to pursue social work. They also love music and hope to make time to read for pleasure and learn new piano pieces again.



# Ecstatic Embodiments and Utopia

Rebecca Deutsch

Gayle Rubin, a feminist activist in the 1980s, began her work as a gesture of deep hope. Over time, this transformed into a pragmatic desire to fight off the evils right at the door.<sup>1</sup> The shift she described in affective orientation seems unavoidable at times. Imagining a new way of being in the world falls to the wayside as survival becomes enough. As newspaper articles about the expansion of alt-right extremism fill my computer screen, hope seems foolish. This paper will stand in direct opposition to this pull towards simply surviving. An orientation towards the future as a strategy for reimagining and upsetting power relations is deeply contingent and contested yet I argue that ecstatic embodiment is the crucial ingredient to make utopias thinkable and actionable. This embodiment figured through relationality and disruptions of self allows for the unthinkable to become practice. We are full beings and our activism needs our entirety: our relationality, grief, joy, and hope.

Lee Edelman argued that plaintive cries exhorting listeners to “think about the children” are often employed as a way of maintaining oppression.<sup>2</sup> Smith complicates this by exploring how the genocidal logics of settler colonialism have endeavored to produce a world in which Indigenous children and futurities no longer exist either through violent assimilative techniques or other more direct acts of violence (such as warfare or sexual violence).<sup>3</sup> Based on this reality, Smith argued that “(t)he child can be the phantasm that ensures the status quo, or the child can be the nit that undoes it, or the child can be both.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, the “Indigenous child” is in critical relation to the norms.

The solution is to not be incorporated into the norm. As Cathy Cohen quoted Queers United Against Straight Acting Homosexuals (QUASH) as so viscerally writing, “(a)ssimilation is killing us”<sup>5</sup> Resisting is not simple because bodies are always constituted in relation to norms.<sup>6</sup> April Callis saw a potential for upsetting this relationship in bisexuality. Since homosexuality has been discursively produced within Western society as “cross-gendered” (gay men as feminine, lesbian women as

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1 Gayle S. Rubin, “Sexual Traffic: Interview with Gayle Rubin by Judith Butler”, *A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, (1994): 66.

2 Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

3 Andrea Smith, “QUEER THEORY AND NATIVE STUDIES: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism,” *A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16, no. 1-2 (2010): 41–68. doi:10.1215/10642684-2009-012

4 Ibid, 50.

5 Cathy J. Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?” In *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology*, edited by E. Patrick Johnson & Mae G. Henderson. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005): 445.

6 Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender*. (New York: Routledge, 2004); Ladelle McWhorter, “Practicing Practicing” In *Feminism and the Final Foucault*, edited by Dianna Taylor & Karen Vintges: 143-162. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004); Smith, QUEER THEORY AND NATIVE STUDIES.



masculine) and bisexuality was not articulated as a distinct sexuality, it cannot be easily matched to a gender and thus is unintelligible.<sup>7</sup> These locations of destabilization hold rich potential for social justice, which signals that embodiment itself could be a place from which to fantasize and theorize into existence a better world.

But what exactly is ecstatic embodiment – especially if figured through relationality? The experience of being “ecstatic” is not essentially affectively positive or negative as it means to “be outside oneself.”<sup>8</sup> Butler used grief and desire as accessible examples to encapsulate this notion of being outside of oneself because it is hard to picture truly being outside of oneself. They wrote “(m)any people think that grief is privatizing, that it returns us to a solitary situation, but I think it exposes the constitutive sociality of the self.”<sup>9</sup> It is essential to recognize that grief has not invariably been treated in the way it is in modern Western society. We treat grief as pathological should it not conform to a specific timeline or be expressed privately (outside of explicit moments, such as the funeral). Yet grief is a quintessential part of what it means to be alive and to love when existence is so fragile.

Shifting grief to the private sphere is explicitly violent as the “ecstatic” shapes our existence as human.<sup>10</sup> Forfeiting a piece of that into silence and discursive unrecognizability has consequences impacting our emotional and embodied lives. In an earlier piece Butler<sup>11</sup> considered the way the potential for grief becomes foreclosed upon when certain relationships are not recognized. Even if you do not account for the lives lost to violence, suicide, and assimilation – queer people have lost a disproportionate number of our community to AIDS. Grief is an experience that impacts everyone but perhaps it is also one that queer people have been forced to experience in a different way – with greater frequency and more disenfranchisement.

The paradox of having a body lies in the way that our bodies are so discursively undervalued (particularly in the mind/body dualism that dominates Western thought) and the unique vulnerability that comes with embodiment without any ability to exist otherwise. This paradox can also be a beautiful site of vitality. Linda Phillips said, “since the day we met we really have only had eyes for one another and now in the declining years of our lives we find an even greater love for one another”<sup>12</sup> and Butler wrote “(o)ne does not always stay intact. It may be that one wants to, or does, but it may also be that despite one’s best efforts, one is undone, in the face of the other.”<sup>13</sup> Both of these quotes illuminate the spaces of desire and relationality. We can be placed outside of ourselves by loss and the excruciating pain that is grief. We can also be placed outside of ourselves by the pleasure found in our desire shared with one another. Love and grief are not

7 April S. Callis, “Playing with Butler and Foucault: Bisexuality and Queer Theory”, *Journal of Bisexuality*, no. 9 (2009): 213-233. doi:10.1080/15299710903316513

8 Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 20.

9 Ibid, 19.

10 Ibid.

11 Judith Butler, “Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?”, *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 13, no. 1 (2002): 14-44. [muse.jhu.edu/article/9630](http://muse.jhu.edu/article/9630)

12 Leslie Feinberg, *Trans Liberation: Beyond Pink or Blue* / Leslie Feinberg. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998): 39.

13 Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 19.



opposite ends of a spectrum but deeply interrelated. The capacity for losing ourselves in another or in several others brings us fully into our interrelated nature and fully into our embodiments.

All of this illustrates that resisting cynicism is not a matter of maintaining a positive attitude. It is a matter of bringing our desire, passion, grief, love, and all the depths of our ecstatic existence to our theorizing and social justice. It is a matter of not being afraid to be a “snuffaluffagus” (some unknowable entity) be that of sexuality like bisexuality is<sup>14</sup> or gender as non-normalized genders can be.<sup>15</sup> McWhorter asked “(w)hat would women have become if we had simply dismantled 1960s style femininity and female sex roles and embraced the unknown?”<sup>16</sup> She could not answer the question, and neither could I. It is exactly in that unanswerability that the potential lies.

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14 Callis, “Playing with Butler and Foucault: Bisexuality and Queer Theory”, 228.

15 Butler, *Undoing Gender*

16 Ladelle McWhorter, “Practicing Practicing”, 148.

Image by: Kristel Hayes on Unsplash



**Rebecca Deutsch** is a queer, neurodivergent, Master of Arts student in the Gender and Social Justice program at the University of Alberta. Rebecca is deeply interested in and committed to affect, embodiment, and the potential of new ways of being in relation to one another and the world that constitutes us.





# Face of clay

Madeleine Parkhill

You hold my face of clay and body of mud  
through sopping wet hands of water and suds  
I pray every day that you lay your hands  
On my soft lips and shape them  
Bigger and smaller

Every word you say alters my reflections  
In your palms the deflections  
Of water

You have not asked for this power over me  
Yet, I doubt you even know you hold it  
You carve and soften and  
you could stab and jab  
At the version of me you perceive  
Because then, I would crumble  
And fumble, to find a version of myself I believe to  
be me,

But who could that be ?

When all I feel I am is a reflection of your  
perception

An adoption of your mannerisms and actions

When I feel the nose I love has your fingerprint  
smoothed along the bridge

And if you did carve too much,

Wouldn't it be right because it is what you desire?

And if you did stab, shouldn't I be happy that you  
continue to sculpt?

And thus I stay in your hands,  
my face of clay and body of mud

At your disposal and whim,

To be handled into whatever makes my sculptor  
happiest

Image by: Victoria Strukovskaya on Unsplash

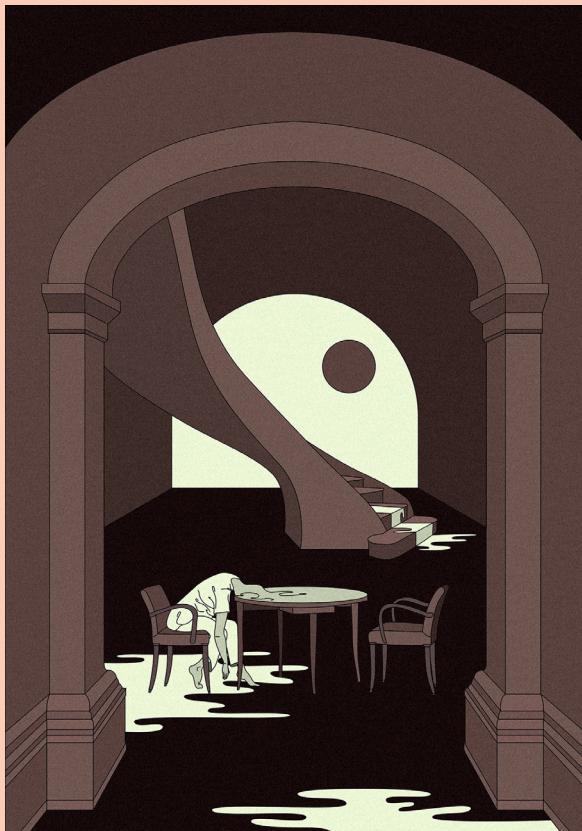
**Madeleine Parkhill** is a young ambitious woman who has a passion for literature and feminism. Living in Ontario, she appreciates and indulges in artistry, sewing and writing. At 16, she often writes about problems and perspectives that affect her including beauty standards, gender norms and dysphoria generally tying into nature. She takes her inspiration from Mary Oliver and Maya Angelou with environmental links and feminist undertones.





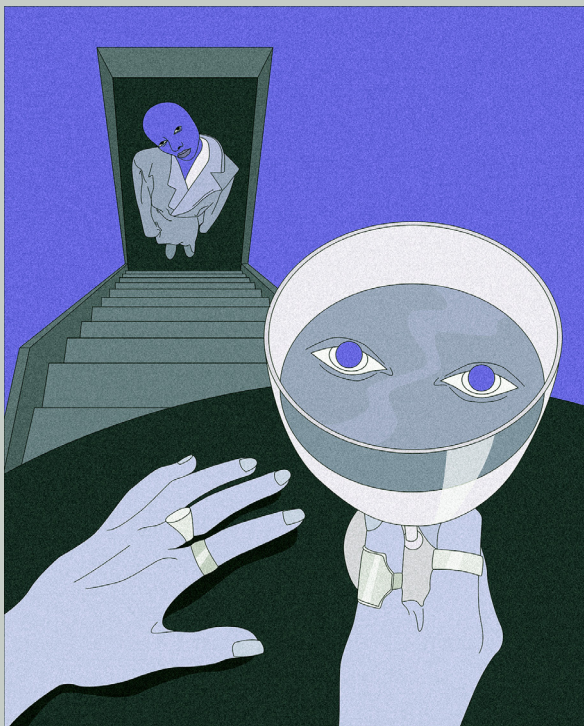
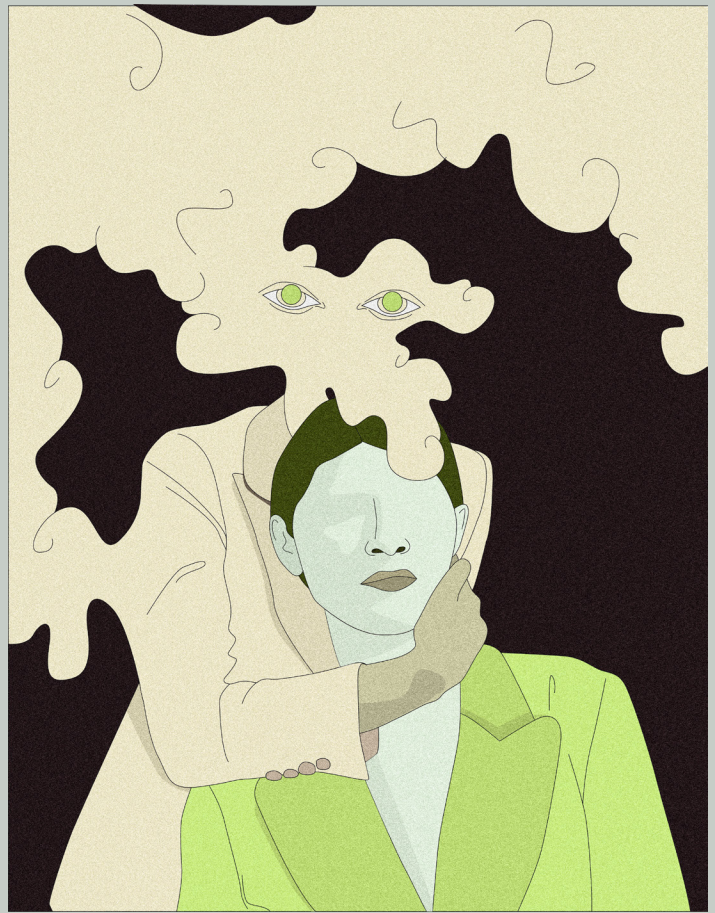
# Divine Suffering

Sierra McLean



"Divine Suffering" reflects consciousness and the duality of isolation and connection that it offers us. Simultaneously comforting and uncomfortable, the pieces visualize feelings that are difficult to articulate. Someshi wants to merge our separate realities and find the divinity in the suffering that underlies our humanness.





**Sierra McLean** (someshi\_idid) is a surrealist illustrator based in Ottawa. Her work features simplified, ungendered figures and unorthodox colour schemes, creating scenes that come across as comfortably uncomfortable. Someshi\_idid focuses on the human condition, and the insanity that lurks just below its surface. Facing a plethora of mental health struggles throughout her life, she aims to visualize the painful and beautiful parts of living that are difficult to describe.





# Conflicted Agency Line: Neoliberal women create sexual actualization routes

Farinaz Basmechi

The notion of “women’s sexual agency” focuses on sexual rights and women’s ability to define and control their own sexuality.<sup>1</sup> Neoliberal capitalism is the means by which young women are encouraged to take up the discourse of agency and participate in an open market of sexual and romantic transactions as individuals with free will.<sup>2</sup> However, women’s sexual agency is influenced by the sexual politics and power relations of the context in which they live.<sup>3</sup> Even in culturally and politically highly restrictive contexts, women in the neoliberal capitalist world may create some practices to actualize their sexual agency in their lives while tiptoeing on agency line. For example, women can engage in sexual activity before legal marriage as free sexual agents, and then repair their hymen to follow existing socio-legal restrictions. I focus on women living in the Islamic Republic of Iran, where the neoliberal capitalist values have been partly accepted and are practiced,<sup>4</sup> but the state-regulated policies regarding sexuality mainly remain under the influence of religious and traditional patriarchal culture. The ‘biopolitics’<sup>5</sup> of Iran’s Islamic government mainly target women’s bodies, aiming to force-fit them into the Islamic patriarchal order.<sup>6</sup>

According to cultural and religious perspectives in Iran, girls are supposed to remain virgins and not engage in sexual intercourse until marriage as a sign of their purity and chastity.<sup>7</sup> Also, according to the Islamic penal code in Iran, sexual activity outside the legal heterosexual marriage is a criminal offense.<sup>8</sup> However, free access to information using the internet and social media in the late modernity have worked as “informal emancipatory educational tools”,<sup>9</sup> provided a way for young women to connect to the West,<sup>10</sup> and developed a new route for young women to negotiate their intimate relationships and overcome the

1 Stevi Jackson & Sue Scott, “Sexual skirmishes and feminist factions: Twenty-five years of debate on women and sexuality,” in *Feminism and sexuality: A Reader*, 1–32. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781474469517-002>

2 Laina Y. Bay-Cheng, “The Agency Line: A Neoliberal Metric for Appraising Young Women’s Sexuality” *Sex Roles* 73, no. 7, (2015): 279–291, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-015-0452-6>

3 Kate Millett, *Sexual politics*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

4 Kayhan Valadbaygi, “Hybrid Neoliberalism: Capitalist Development in Contemporary Iran,” *New Political Economy* 26, no. 3 (2021): 313–327. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13563467.2020.1729715>

5 Eduardo Mendieta, “Biopower,” in *The Cambridge Foucault Lexicon*, ed. by Leonard Lawlor & John Nale, 138–140. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Biopolitics refers to the use of political power to control individuals through enacting regulatory disciplines in order to govern bodies and pleasure.

6 Bahar Tajrobehkar, “Power and the Body: Iranian Female Immigrants’ Perceptions and Experiences of Bodily Freedoms in Iran and Canada,” in *Body Studies in Canada: Critical Approaches to Embodied Experiences*, ed. By Valerie Zawilski, 171–188. (Toronto: Canadian Scholars, 2021).

7 Marzieh Kaivanara, “Virginity dilemma: Re-creating virginity through hymenoplasty in Iran,” *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 18, no. 1, (2016): 71–83. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2015.1060532>

8 Ziba Mir-Hosseini, “Criminalising Sexuality: Zina Laws as Violence against Women in Muslim Contexts,” *SUR – International Journal on Human Rights* 15, no. 1 (2011): 7–33.

9 Tannaz Zargarian, “Iranian Women’s Quest for Self-Liberation through the Internet and social media: An Emancipatory Pedagogy,” PhD diss., (York University, 2019). <https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/handle/10315/37668> : i.

10 Kaivanara, “Virginity dilemma: Re-creating virginity through hymenoplasty in Iran”; “West” is referring to North America, most of Europe, and Oceania.



imposed gendered social norms regarding their sexuality.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, in spite of legal and cultural barriers that aim to restrict Iranian women's sexual agency, the number of young women who engage in premarital sexual activity has increased.<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, the regulations and beliefs regarding girls' sexual activity remain traditional and virginity is still considered an indicator of purity and a commodity of women before their first marriage. The virginity of a girl can be assessed through traditional practice, such as verifying bleeding after the first vaginal intercourse, or the modern practice of medical virginity testing.<sup>13</sup> In such a context, young neoliberal women experience conflicted sexual agency. Their performance as free sexual agents can still be policed and result in punishment and disreputation for the young woman and her family<sup>14</sup> or violence toward the young woman, and even honor killing.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, due to the high level of state and cultural surveillance on women's sexuality and the possible harm that young women may encounter because of their lost virginity, some may decide to repair or fake their virginity. This is where Iranian women devise some leeway by seeking assistance from the capitalist market that sells products which enable girls to fake their virginity—pills that release red liquid<sup>16</sup> is one example. A second is the offering of a medical procedure named hymenoplasty to surgically “restore the hymen.”<sup>17</sup> By faking or repairing their virginity, young neoliberal women tiptoe on a conflicted sexual agency line where they encounter a complicated intersection of the neoliberal notion of sexual agency with restrictive contextual regulations, while absconding stigma or punishment because of their free sexual practices. In other words, since women's sexual agency in the neoliberal world is still patrolled by patriarchal religious values, they need to be creative in governing their sexual agency to avoid stigma and harm. However, according to Cense, the sexual agency should be considered “not only in the longing for sexual freedom and the striving for sexual rights, but also in gaining strength or developing navigating skills while enduring unequal sexual relationships or leading a double life,”<sup>18</sup> including tiptoeing on a conflicted agency line. Women's sexual agency in the neoliberal era in Iran is patrolled by patriarchal values, and they need to govern their own sexual agency to avoid stigma and harm.

11 Vahideh Golzard & Cristina Miguel, “Negotiating intimacy through social media: Challenges and opportunities for Muslim women in Iran,” *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 9, no. 2 (2016): 216–233.

12 Kaivanara, “Virginity dilemma: Re-creating virginity through hymenoplasty in Iran”

13 Azal Ahmadi, “Recreating Virginity in Iran: Hymenoplasty as a Form of Resistance,” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (2015): 222–237. <https://doi.org/10.1111/maq.12202>

14 Kaivanara, “Virginity dilemma: Re-creating virginity through hymenoplasty in Iran”

15 Landinfo, “Honor killings in Iran,” (2009). [http://www.landinfo.no/asset/960/1/960\\_1.pdf](http://www.landinfo.no/asset/960/1/960_1.pdf)

16 Alijani Ershad, “Virginity pills and surgery: Iran's fake hymen industry,” *The Observers - France 24*, January 22, 2018, <https://observers.france24.com/en/20180122-virginity-pillssurgery-iran-fake-hymen>

17 Azal Ahmadi, “Recreating Virginity in Iran: Hymenoplasty as a Form of Resistance”: 222.

18 Marianne Cense. “Rethinking sexual agency: Proposing a multicomponent model based on young people's life stories,” *Sex Education* 19, no. 3 (2018): 249. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2018.1535968>

**Farinaz** is an Iranian feminist and currently completing her PhD at the University of Ottawa in the Feminist and Gender Studies Institute. Her areas of interest are sexuality, feminist mobilization, and digital media analysis. In the last few years, she has been working on an anti-mandatory hijab movement in Iran and published a few articles regarding this issue.





# The Woman Has Power in Love

Kathia Côté

When I heard that you were looking for contributions on the topic of feminist leadership and solidarity, I couldn't help but participate since I had just finished reading an inspiring book on women and power entitled *Transformez vos disputes en grand bonheur* ("Transform your Quarrels into Great Happiness") written by a couple, Faustin Bouchard and Lucie Demers.

To begin, the first notion that the authors share with us is the fact that it is the woman who has the power, not by her education, her intelligence, or her beauty, but by her incredible capacity to give life which gives her natural altruism. They write:

"It is the woman who experiences the pregnancy. It is she who for nine months must make the sacrifice of sharing her body with a small human being whose survival and well-being she must ensure. This is where the woman holds the power. She has the power of life or death over her child, and it is this fundamental hold, this ultimate decision-making yoke that is anchored deep in the feelings of men."<sup>1</sup>

That being said, we must realize that it is not because the woman has the power that she automatically wants to keep it. It turns

out that our will to keep and assert our power or our tendency to let go of it largely determines our love personality, because when we are in a relationship, whether we like it or not, two fears automatically come into play.

"On the one hand, there is the **fear of losing our partner** because when we form a couple with a person who is important to us, it is surely not to separate two days later (...)

But on the other hand, there is also the **fear of losing ourselves** because when we apprehend the high number of compromises that we will have to make in our new couple, we may feel like separating two days later (...)"<sup>2</sup>

And the authors continue their statement:

"There are thus 2 love personalities based on these 2 fears: the first includes people whom we call in the **high points** and the second includes those in the **low points**.

The difference between the two is simple: people in the high points overestimate themselves and see no need to question themselves at all when they create conflict. In this sense, they develop a greater fear of losing their identity than of losing their partner, which allows them to take for granted what they are doing to their

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<sup>1</sup> Translated from French; Faustin Bouchard & Lucie Demers. *Transformez vos disputes en grand bonheur*. Self-published, 2023 : 13.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid: 99.



partner.

On the other hand, there are people in the low points who underestimate themselves and question themselves unnecessarily when they experience conflict, which leaves them no choice but to leave their decision-making power to their partner. In this sense, they develop more fear of losing their partner than of losing their identity because they don't really matter to themselves."<sup>3</sup>

They conclude by saying:

**"People in the high points are willing to argue and take advantage of the love of others for power.**

**People in the low points are willing to give up their power to not fight and to gain the love of others."**<sup>4</sup>

I didn't really have any difficulty recognizing myself in the low points. It's true that I tend to think that what other people say is thoughtful only because they say it, that I can't fight to get what I want because I don't really know what I want, which pushes me to fall back on what others want and that I would much rather take the blame and be silent than argue.

Unfortunately, this faculty that I have long considered a strength, and which pushes me to erase myself when conflicts break out so as not to worsen things has finally proven to be a major weakness which skews the precarious balance of all relationships that I have been in.

To be balanced, a couple must be in what

the authors call the **middle points**. It is a place where we are as capable of putting ourselves first to satisfy our desires as of respecting and listening to our partner to help them satisfy their own.

But this balance comes at a price. It must be understood that as soon as a person goes up in the high points, they will automatically push their partner to go down in the low points to maintain the balance of power within his couple. Absolutely nothing will prevent them from doing so and some will even go so far as to adopt negative behaviors to achieve this.

Few women in the low points make the connection that their unconscious fear of displeasing their partner is what gives them the flexibility to maintain their sense of power within the couple, with the partner also struggling with their own fears, which is perhaps hardly forgivable, but unfortunately human.

As the authors say so well: "Give someone a habit, they will do anything to keep it," and: "Suffering only encourages our partner to make us suffer even more!" which gives the false impression that the voluntary abnegation of these women is responsible for the perpetuation of negative behaviors towards them...

But being in the low points, I was immediately taken aback by this heavy responsibility that more reasonable women seem to have. Why should we mend broken pots when we didn't break them? Isn't the easiest way to stop a conflict is to avoid provoking it in the first place?

Fortunately, on this point, the authors explain, in great detail and in a comforting

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3 Ibid: 104.

4 Ibid: 155.



way, the logic of this mechanism of maintaining balance. The truth is that we can never stop our partner from rising in the high points when it comes to their love personality. Never. All we can do is improve our reaction to their attempts to take power and decide everything.

Unfortunately, I cannot convince any woman of the benefits of fighting to stay in the middle points. It is a task that seems to put a lot of weight on our shoulders because we have the impression of having to take responsibility for the provocations of our partner, but rest assured, this is not the case.

The responsibility we must take is that of having chosen our partner to share our life with the sometimes-unpleasant consequences that this entails... Because it is clear that if we do nothing, the situations we experience with them will never improve!

We must understand that it is better to make the effort to respect ourselves before situations become unbearable than to make the effort to suffer them without saying anything! Just because we've gotten into the habit of tolerating doesn't mean the habit takes less effort, far from it.

And believe me, that is the strength of this book; how to transform that kind of injustice I felt from having to stop my partner's unpleasant behaviors into a real pride in being able to respect myself regardless of his abusive actions!

So, imagine all the benefits there would be if all the women in the low points were united and had a place where they could exchange advice to come to respect each other more. They could finally assert their innate strength and refuse to be pushed around while raising awareness and fighting their fear of losing their partner. That would be really great!

Finally, you will surely have guessed that I strongly recommend this reading to all women.

Thank you for taking the time to read my piece.

Kathia Côté

I am a quick-witted and ambitious woman. I have been a fast-food restaurant manager since I was 19, which is young to have so many responsibilities, but I am also in the low points. So I strive to get to know myself better and to communicate better by discovering what causes my limits to overcome them and be happier.





# Beautiful Space

Linnea McPhail



Linnea's art is centered around cultivating self-esteem and self-compassion, both within themselves, and the people they encounter. Humans are from nature, and like the flowers that rise from the earth, perfect just as they are, as too are humans and their creations. Linnea strives to make art that inspires others to create, to love, and connect.

**Linnea** is a queer gendered artist and art therapist. Passionate about healing through art and creating accessible and affordable healing spaces. Linnea works with any and all materials in their art practice, and works with humans of all ethnicities, genders and backgrounds. Linnea uses art to make the spaces around them astonishingly beautiful. It is pretty fun, you should try it sometime.





# Firey minds

Seba Jaradat

How swiftly the morning trees will sway  
when there's nothing left but your darkened rays  
When emptiness hauls away its pride  
You're left to wonder where you lie  
Swept away your dreams can lay  
When forever missing are the days  
The days you spent in empty sorrow  
The winter owls then start to burrow  
Your somber void is where you stay  
For days on end you're locked away  
A promising piece of a missing mind  
One filled with thoughts of a bigger crime  
Crimes of which they wish to hide  
Frozen are their toneless eyes  
They're thrown around in reckless waves  
Dancing on their future graves  
They remain heedless with their pride  
The one that paid them so little mind

**Seba** is a self-taught Canadian mixed media artist with most pieces being abstract, colourful, texturized, and come with a deep meaning behind them. She enjoys using acrylic paint, as well as digital art. Seba has been doing art and been creative ever since she was a child. She has since explored different forms of fine arts including realism, but has developed a greater love for abstract over the years. Seba also has a love for other forms of art including poetry. She currently resides in Ottawa, Ontario. Seba received the Krista Jensen Art award in 2018.





# No Women's Land: Ownership and Exploitation

Rebecca Swityk

In *Caliban and the Witch*, Silvia Federici posits the necessity of a distinctly feminist critique of capitalism that resists the urge to distance itself from male labour. Federici's work outlines how the separation of production from reproduction finds its original roots in the capitalist use of the wage to command the labour of the unwaged. Through this, the transition to capitalism also devalues the social position of women as primary care workers of society. Care work is the unpaid, undervalued domestic labour of women that allows for men to be the primary breadwinner in many households. This home-centred work is not seen as legitimate work and for many decades, those in positions of power assumed that women needed children like they needed to "eat and breathe".<sup>1</sup> The disproportionate placement of domestic care work onto women has allowed for those not responsible for it to insist that there is no political will behind this work. The lack of opportunity for those responsible for care work to be present at the time of these claims is to be noted; thus, these discussions yielded false results. Due to calamitous effects of land privatization and waged work during the transition to capitalism, individuals were separated from and forced to compete against one another for the ability to live. This had detrimental effects on the collective, communal way of life once enjoyed by society and created rifts on individual levels.<sup>2</sup> The act of childbearing, which once began with the partnership of two people working together to create life, became so isolated from the wombs it was nurtured in that the once-sacred experience became macabre for many. The sacred intimacy present in a partnership that creates a pregnancy was absconded from the pregnancy itself, and this loss saw ripple effects of consequences.

Connection to commodity production in the pre-capitalist world allowed people the freedom to create their own work schedules and gave them increased food security through the community centred system. This communal land use encouraged a self-governed and collectively regulated way of life in everything, from the communal agricultural fields to the "commons", open spaces shared by the working class where peasant solidarity and women's sociality thrived.<sup>3</sup> The commons were the essential place for social gatherings such as festivals, but they were also critical to the social life of women in the 17th century. Excluded

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1 Sourayan Mookerjee, "SOC370 LECTURE A1 Care Economy," SOC370 LEC A1 Racism and Decolonization. Class lecture at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, October 12, 2022; "SOC370 LECTURE A1 Cultural Politics," SOC370 LEC A1 Racism and Decolonization. Class lecture at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, September 19, 2022.

2 Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch* (Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 2004): 72.

3 Ibid, 70-72.





from the legitimacy of land and the social power that came with it, women actively used the commons as a communal space to be heard and to interact with others at an equal level. This was the only place where women could exchange news, discuss opinions, give advice, and speak away from men. Despite the instrumental role the commons played in burgeoning neighbourly relationships between peasants and allowing for their social reproduction, they were denigrated in literature and subsequently, their reputation suffered — when the open-field agricultural system was abolished, so were the commons. The loss of these commons was devastating to the social life of women and would have catastrophic consequences for women moving forward. When the commons disappeared, so did opportunities for women to form relationships with anyone other than their husbands, forcing women into isolation as pawns in their husbands' lives and subsequently enslaving them to domestic work.

The exploitation of these members of society cannot be overstated, though the insidiousness of this exploitation is found in what Federici names “the patriarchy of the wage”.<sup>4</sup> Throughout this transition to capitalism, the public sphere separated itself from the family, which became the centrepiece of reproduction for the workforce. In the family unit, women's labour was hidden, undervalued, and at the mercy of the house patriarch who was able to collect a wage from working in the public sphere. The imbalance of power in the public sphere via women being unable to work for a wage infiltrated the family as well. It worked to proliferate the illegitimacy of women's labour in every corner of women's lives. Now unable to work in the public sphere for a wage, they relied on their contributions at home to make themselves necessary. The exclusion of women from these “legitimate” spheres of work forced them to rely on care work as their means to survival, a ticket to belonging. These contributions were soon devalued; they were attributed to the natural order of life and came to be expected of women, largely due to a socially constructed “maternal instinct” that is argued to not exist.<sup>5</sup> This assumption disparaged the work that women had been doing for centuries and would eventually go on in such unprecedented and underhanded ways to make them slaves to their own wombs;<sup>6</sup> their greatest virtue became an enemy in their own bodies.<sup>7</sup> These horrors can all be traced back to the introduction of the wage, and the initial exploitation of the working class.

The commonality of desired profit accumulation began by relying on the trans-Atlantic slave trade. To keep up with demand and to preserve their place in the tradelines, each continent placed the most emphasis on commodity production; whether these commodities were raw materials, slaves, or manufactured goods. The need for commodity production often meant that for those enslaved on plantations, Black women were expected to work alongside the men with no special consideration, even when pregnant.<sup>8</sup> Early distinctions between sex and gender grew out of racist eugenics that postulated Black females were not analogous to white women, thus negating the need for a feminist revolution to free enslaved women as well as presenting a rare opportunity for exploitation. By stating the theory that Black females were biologically comparable to white women while reinforcing the societal disparity between them, white women would be able to exploit Black women for childbearing, breastfeeding, and child-rearing without worrying that their social position was vulnerable. Despite this ironically perceived “equality” women held with the men enslaved alongside them, they were given less to eat, were subjected to gruesome assaults by their masters, and endured much harsher punishments; the physical beatings were coupled with sexual humiliation and even pregnancies.

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4 Ibid, 97.

5 Viktorija Borovska, “Demystification of maternal ideologies—Maternal instinct”. *MIND THE GAP(S): Family, Socialization and Gender* (2015): 112.

6 Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 89.

7 Ibid, 87.

8 Ibid, 112.





Image by: frank mckenna on Unsplash

The control exerted over the wombs of enslaved women for the purpose of maintaining an adequately sized labour force followed them for decades, and communities made up of slaves only started seeing true population growth after slavery had been eradicated. Much like the unpaid labour by women in the home being the unseen “pillar” of waged workers, this regulation of slave procreation acted as an invisible oppressor of women that was promulgated as necessary. These coexisting systems relied on each other to continue and encouraged the exploitation of each other for profitability.

The desire for profitability, while blinding, is powerful. Capitalism encourages competition; it encourages a winner. Equating the ability to obtain one of the basic necessities for survival, money, to a competition is dehumanizing, immoral, and unethical. Capitalism, at its core, is a violation of the people and a thievery of community. Because of this, those in power are forced to go to extreme measures to ensure its longevity. Extreme measures such as the cumulative effects of enslaving women to their wombs, isolating them from meaningful social interaction, exploiting their bodies for the state, denigrating that which they were able to contribute to society, and excluding them from any space where real change is made were cataclysmic to the longstanding social propensity of women. Collaboration and community are some of the driving forces behind women’s action; experiencing womanhood is showing up for one another in any way you can, a notion ideologically opposed to capitalism. The inclination to stand in solidarity with not only the women around you, but the women who came generations before you, is intertwined with the experience of womanhood. Only in the fall of capitalism and its antisocial sequester can women truly be liberated.

My name is **Rebecca Swityk** and I’m a third year Criminology undergrad. My academic interests include the ethics of true crime consumption in media, radical feminist theory, and topics in women’s and gender studies. Society’s reactions to crime and deviance are often tainted with biases proliferated by the media, social interaction, and history; these biases also often lend themselves to the alienation and vilification of women. I am deeply interested in the commodification of women as a medium through which men advance their own stories with little to no regard for the personhood of these women.





# Unapologetically You

Sarah Carter

So often, so suddenly, an emotion will take over

Eyes will meet, details will rush in, a memory will fill the space between us

And then all that comes out is folded hands, and a trepid sorry

A response to a moment passed, not sure how long ago now

As the time since has been vastly filled with so many small, brief moments of joy

Interactions across a span of time that illuminated my worth

It took a while to see what value was held within my folded hands

It unraveled with each task, with every instance of work

A wipe here, a mop there, a brief dusting if I liked

Then maybe more, 15 minutes on YouTube

A liked picture on Instagram

Saved videos on Pinterest

Scrolling through Tik Tok

So much time spent learning so much, engaging with a distanced virtual world

These were some good days spent, learning what was available what was accessible, and seeing what was being done

Finding new ways to live, laugh and have fun

Thrift store finds to having a small business on Poshmark or Varage Sale

Turning my time into profit, becoming a small business, an entrepreneur

Who me, could it be, creativity unfolding

Business owner becoming, social media learning

How revolutionary what was sparked when hands unfolded

Not sorry for the time spent on what I didn't realize transferred into paid skilled work

My name is **Sarah Carter**, I am an olive skinned, cisgender Canadian female, of Pakistani-Muslim descent. I am a proud mother, a mature student, and an active feminist centred worker. There are pauses in the flow of this work, disruptions in this poem's flow, these are intentional. Created to facilitate pauses in the work.





# Clothes

Larissa Jamin-Lynn

We pull up: a green car on a bed of grey slush. The cracked store window decal is, of course, the first thing one of them notices. Pausing for a moment I remind them both that clothes here are divided on a binary, which just means we have two sections to look in! "Yeah!" they say. In we walk, grab a basket (take a moment to argue over who gets to pull it) and venture on. The very first time they get to pick their own clothes to buy. It's a momentous day.

Down the narrow aisles of the second-hand store until we find the right sizes. I have my guesses, but hold myself in suspension, excitedly waiting to see what they choose. The brightest colors are eyed up first, but feel is key, so garments are stroked and considered, all with a subtle sense of awe. Who knew there were so many choices in the world!

For one: fuzzy bright red pants, a pink shirt with black sequins (I'm informed that the sequins are a great fidget and the word they spell doesn't matter), and a pair of soft velvet pants with a gold stripe. For the other: leggings in multihued pink and purple, a fluorescent orange zip-up and a shirt with a hood like a disco ball. I quietly delight in their bold and unique choices.

They're both quiet. Like they can't quite believe this is happening. It's taken until they're eight and five to get here. After years of embodying sensory overload, and pandemic years of shopping online, here we are. I'm proud of us. And despite my wariness of keeping them from this until now,

today we are ready. Today they know who they are and they are not bound in the social expectations of a binary existence or presentation. Today they are free. I am careful not to be too excited, lest I scare away this precious feeling or create undue expectations.

I gently temper my enthusiasm later at home when I tell their dad and their grandma what we did today. Strategically trying to open the door for the showing off of treasures. I want these little humans to know how excited I am for their choices; for the process of embodying themselves and not the physical garment of choice. My wish, almost desperate in intensity, is for them to be free to create themselves everyday, without worrying about the need to justify change. I never want there to be a place they have to "come-out" of.

And yet, it will happen. How can it not in the world today? Someday they will notice the misgendering, the hesitations in conversation...the deadnaming. And my heart will break a bit, as I tell them they are valid, they are wanted and they are loved.

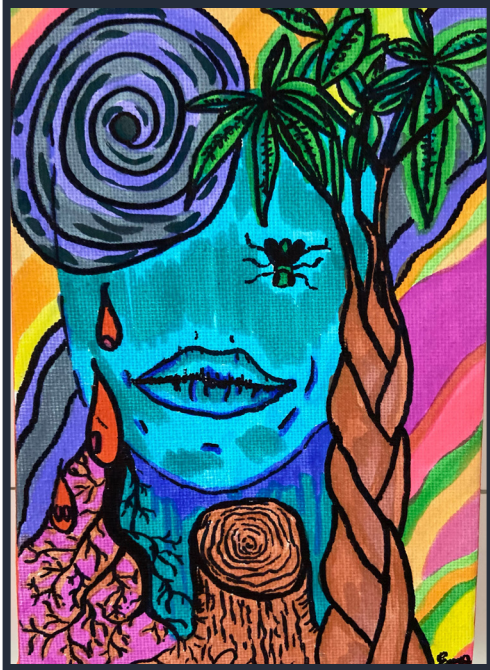
Today, perhaps I'll just let myself show my excitement. Let myself feel it. Turns out they're not the only ones I'm protecting.

**Larissa** (she/they) is a parent of two amazing little humans alongside her spouse and partner of over a decade. She is currently a student in both Gender Studies and Psychology at the University of Alberta, after having trained as a professional dancer and then being a full-time parent. She thrives in a multi-generational home and chosen family network that encompasses disability, neurodiversity, a spectrum of gender identities, and several furry companions.





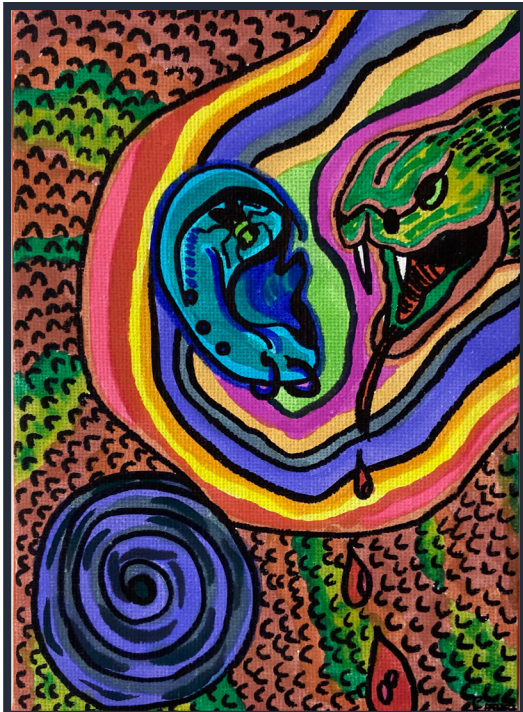
# The Palette of Violence



Economic Violence - Taken by the Throat:  
The Cut of the Money Tree



Physical Violence - Even If I Wanted to Leave



Verbal Violence - Venom to my Ears

As part of the 16 days of activism to end gender-based violence, from November 25 to December 10, 2022, Emilie has created her first artistic work: The Palette of Violence, thus illustrating the different forms that gender-based violence can take based on the victim's perspective. She drew on her personal experience and her knowledge on the subject to illustrate psychological, physical, verbal, economic and sexual violence. The artist is inspired by human biology and nature to convey the emotions that victims may feel when faced with their aggressor. In each painting, the feeling of emptiness and loss is omnipresent, the threat takes control and deteriorates, hope fades, help (represented by the fly) is always nearby, but also out of reach and hard to grasp...



## Emilie Major-Parent

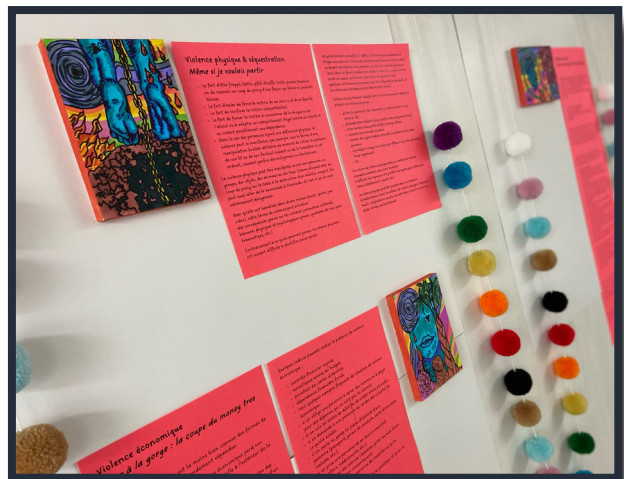
The palette of vibrant colors that was the person fades in the shadow of the palette of the violence suffered.



Psychological Violence - My Brain in Mycosis



Sexual Violence - Twelve Red Roses and the Bouquet of Thorns



Artwork exhibit



**Emilie Major-Parent** is a mother of two young children under the age of two and works for a Francophone feminist organization located in Whitehorse, Yukon, since February 2022.

Having always had a penchant for literary creation and reading, this is the first time that a creative burst for visual art pushes her to draw. Emilie, newly acquainted with feminism, is particularly interested in the invisible labor and mental burden of women and mothers, the unpaid work of caregivers, and gender-based violence in Canada and around the world. She hopes to use poignant ways to talk about these issues in the future using diverse mediums.



# Women Demand Rights: A Look at the Women's March in Pakistan

Asma Farooq

In this essay, I critically analyze the Charter of Demands made at the Women's March in Pakistan,<sup>1</sup> held in March 2020 just before the onset of the pandemic. Specifically, I look at the March in one of the biggest cities in the country, Lahore. We see that the March, held to mark International Women's Day celebrated on March 8 every year, serves as a site for feminist activism and solidarity.

Mainly, this analysis seeks to destabilize the singular representation of feminism within Pakistan as being either non-existent or monolithic. In a country where women's rights, agency and mobility remain highly contested on multiple fronts, what issues within the domain of feminist activism are prioritized? By examining the varied, comprehensive demands made at this March, it becomes clear that the feminist movement in Pakistan is not only alive and well, but also that it is responsive to community needs and aware that its feminist objectives are tied to broader socio-political, economic, and environmental issues as they manifest in this particular context.

The primary argument proposed is that the March represents a site for solidarity, grieving, activism, and community-building. While studying the Charter of Demands for the Women's March in Lahore, three key themes emerge. This content analysis serves as an entry point to analyze the issues that are foregrounded in the March and the corresponding assumptions made about the relationship with the state. By way of background, the Charter of Demands for the Lahore Women's March outlines the specific measures of reform that the coalition organizing the Women's March is demanding.

## **Demanding Legal Reform and State Accountability**

The first key theme is legal reform; the Charter demonstrates that the demands for legal rights span issues of property laws, land reform and inheritance laws, economic justice (including rights to a living wage, social security, mandated parental leave and workplace equity), protection of civic and academic freedom, environmental rights, and addressing and mitigating discrimination, harassment, abuse, and violence.

The next key theme within the Charter's demands pertains to government services and accountability for the equitable provision of: housing, electricity, transportation infrastructure, clean water, education, healthcare, universal childcare. Straddling both these foci of analysis i.e., legal reform and government accountability, are the Charter's demands for trans rights, disability rights, reproductive rights, and minority rights. Collectively, these demands appeal to a state-sanctioned and state-led framework of justice and equity. This maintains the role of state

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<sup>1</sup> Aurat March Lahore. "Charter of Demands." (March 2020): 3. [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jQOPLrMmsMYpuN-zl\\_OVi-w0RG1v0svJ8/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jQOPLrMmsMYpuN-zl_OVi-w0RG1v0svJ8/view)



apparatus as inherent sites of justice that should, and in fact, can be adjusted to meet the Charter's demands. Directing the Charter's demands to the state in this manner also erases the role of the state as an instigator and perpetrator of violence towards its subjects.

To exemplify this, let's look at the positioning of the state in light of the demands made. These demands reinforce the notion of the state as the giver and upholder of justice. Asking for provisions for living wages, universal childcare, and mandated parental leave from the state, ignores the ways in which systems of governance benefit from the exploitation of underpaid labour and from the broader belief system that humans are of value only when they produce for capitalist gain. Similarly, demanding civic and academic freedom and protection from violence glosses over how government mechanisms rely on suppression of dissent and on the use of violence for the sake of self-preservation and their own interests.

Finally, the Charter's emphasis on public and political participation takes the form of demanding accountability for police brutality and for enforced disappearances of state subjects, advocating for self-determination for Kashmir, rights to ethical media representations and the creation of community-led truth and reconciliation committees. These demands seek to create space for citizen-led activism and contest the idea of state institutions as being the sole, or even primary distributor of justice. While these demands require state co-operation, they simultaneously challenge the state's role as leading the fight for social justice, instead offering the possibility of state subjects being at the helm.

## Impact

The above analysis sought to propagate inclusivity and to broaden societal understanding of what localized models of feminism can and do look like. A secondary goal of this essay is to demonstrate the multi-faceted approach to feminism adopted by the coalitions hosting the Marches.

The essay also strives to contextualize the Charter's demands within its environment. In doing so, it calls for accounting for the ways in which the dynamic and evolving geographic, political, social, and economic conditions of this environment inform the issues at the forefront of feminist activism. Last but not least, this essay suggests that the diverse nature of issues addressed in the Charter's demands lend themselves to coalition-building with social justice actors that have other areas of primary focus, including unions, environmental justice organizations, and legal reform activists, to name only a few.

My name is **Asma Farooq** and I am a PhD candidate at the University of Ottawa, majoring in Feminist and Gender Studies. As a woman of colour, a second-generation immigrant in the Middle East and a first-generation immigrant in Canada, my research interests lie at the intersection of feminism, race, nationhood and citizenship. My current work involves looking at the impact of digitality in the feminist activism of Muslim women, in the North American context.





# poems from drama therapy behind bars

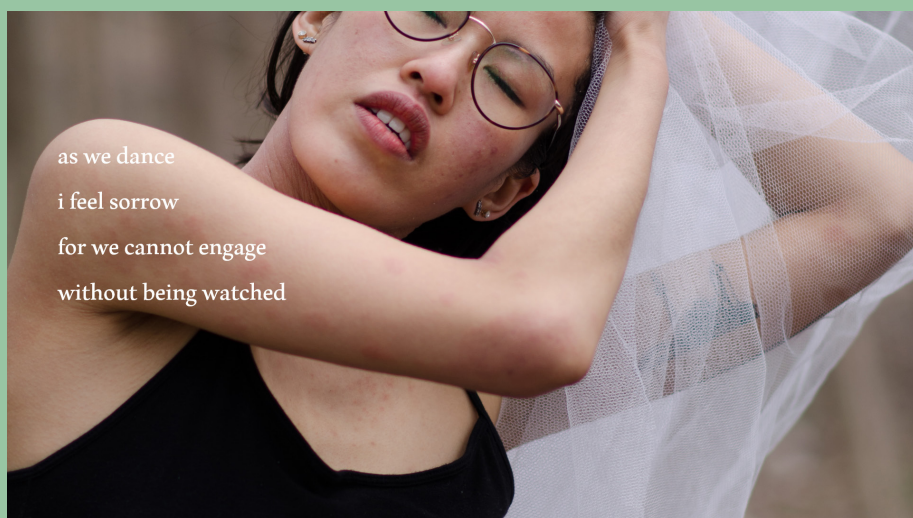
Rowena Tam



i'm not ready to  
say goodbye

i'm not ready to say goodbye

as we dance  
i feel sorrow  
for we cannot engage  
without being watched



as we dance  
i feel sorrow  
for we cannot engage  
without being watched



light permeates  
and  
transcends with  
no bounds

offerings  
take me

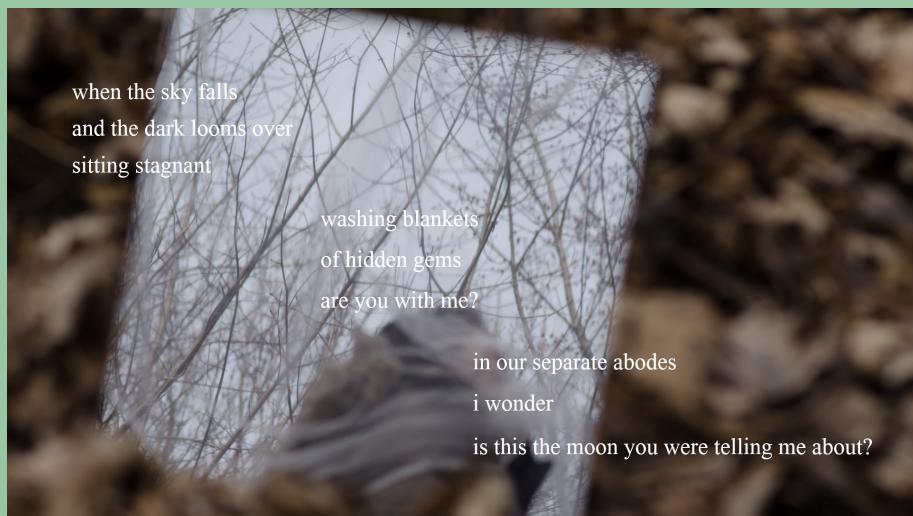
how attractive  
superiority  
becomes

light permeates  
and  
transcends with  
no bounds

offerings  
take me

how attractive  
superiority  
becomes





when the sky falls  
and the dark looms over  
sitting stagnant

washing blankets  
of hidden gems  
are you with me?

in our separate abodes  
i wonder  
is this the moon you were telling me about?

when the sky falls  
and the dark looms over  
sitting stagnant

washing blankets  
of hidden gems  
are you with me?

in our separate abodes  
i wonder  
is this the moon you were telling me about?

you showed me  
connection

and  
passion

and  
vulnerability

and  
trust



you showed me  
connection

and  
passion  
and  
vulnerability  
and  
trust



The site-specific solo exhibition *drama therapy behind bars* (2019) was recently published as a photo essay in the Drama Therapy Review's Special Issue 8.1 on Drama Therapy with Incarcerated, Criminalized and Justice-Impacted Populations. This project became a necessary creative outlet to document my contentious experience working as a racialized woman and

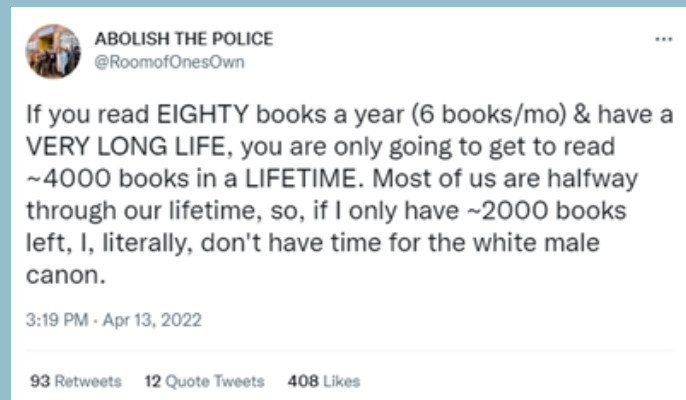
drama therapy intern in a women's detention centre in Quebec. I used response art, a tool developed by Barbara J. Fish for art therapists, as the primary mechanism to engage in self-expression, embodiment and confidentiality to process my personal, professional and relational experiences. Artistic mediums included: drawing, painting, sculpture, performance, photography, videography, mixed media and as showcased here, poetry.

**Rowena Tam**, MA, CCC, is a drama therapist, artist and PhD Candidate at Concordia University. She is a guest living and working in Tiohtià:ke/Mooniyang/Montréal, on unceded Kanien'kehá:ka territory.



# A Love Letter to my Book Club

Nicole Beier



We all know the stereotype of the women's book club: women \*say\* they are going to read a book and discuss it, but they end up drinking wine and chatting. Although the beginning of (white women's) book clubs have been traced to the late 18th century in Europe,<sup>1</sup> book clubs are still viewed today as proof that women are air-headed gossips who can't engage in anything intellectual.

This stereotype is harmful to women regardless of whether it's true or not. In a misogynist society, women are often stigmatized or punished for existing outside of their role in serving men,<sup>2</sup> and women therefore feel required to have an excuse to gather outside of celebrating marriage or a baby. A book club is an (almost) perfect cover to gather, regardless of whether the focus is

on the book or on kinship with other women.

But this stereotype of the boozy, gossipy book club perpetuates not just because it is sometimes true, but also because our society doesn't allow women to engage in intellectual activities without retribution. Women who step out of the realm of what is typically seen as their role and into the sphere of men - such as reading, or engaging in discourse and politics - are faced with criticism. This plays out in the form of dismissing the intellect in women's book clubs.

So whether your book club is simply a cover for a monthly safe space to get a little drunk and spend time with your friends, or a place for a heavy political debate, you will still be unjustly seen as participating in a frivolous and farcical event. It's another example of how important it is for subversive spaces for teaching, learning, and discussion, especially for women.

When I first moved to Toronto from Ottawa,

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<sup>1</sup> Jess McHugh, "How women invented book clubs, revolutionizing reading and their own lives," *The Washington Post*, March 27, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2021/03/27/womens-book-clubs-history-oprah-reese/>

<sup>2</sup> Kate Mann, *The Logic of Misogyny*, 2017



two friends started a book club, and I was an enthusiastic member. I left every meeting with my brain tired from the stimulation and vigorous debate. Sadly, that book club petered out and I was left without a deadline to finish books, and no one to dive deep with me on what I was currently reading.

Fast forward a few years - I had just completed my master's degree. Renewed with an academic spirit and with time to pursue activities outside of school and work, I realized I had amassed a group of feminists in my life with an interest in progressive politics and who all read good books. Missing the classroom discussion from my master's, I started the Rational Creatures Book Club in October 2019. The group is a drop-in book club for women and people with lived experience of misogyny to read books by women and gender diverse authors. We alternate between fiction, non-fiction, and memoirs. The group is now in its third year after continuing virtually throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We are currently reading our 29th book.

Sure, some of us drink during book club, and definitely take time to catch up, but we also have deep discussions about crucial topics that are relevant to the feminist movement. By focusing on books written by BIPOC authors and by reading non-fiction, it's become a key space for me to discuss topics like anti-racism, prison abolition, Trans rights, Indigenous rights, and colonization and understand my privilege as a white woman. Hearing experiences and

thoughts from others, as well as articulating my own arguments, has made it easier to be an ally outside of the book club. It has become a way of ensuring that my feminist views and values stay current, challenged, and intersectional.

Beyond the personal impact, the book club also subverts the publishing industry that has historically prioritized white authors and the appropriation of BIPOC stories by white authors by promoting and supporting diverse authors. I've also used it as a way to promote the feminist movement, including CRIAW-ICREF, by requesting donations and membership, and sharing their publications.

Despite the benefits of this club, this of course does not automatically make me an ally to any movement. Thanks to Black and Brown activists, I have learned that reading and discussing books is not the end of my own personal anti-racist, anti-misogynist work, but is simply the starting point for learning what I can do to disrupt the systems that harm women and perpetuate inequality. I challenge all book clubs to support their members in doing other essential work such as protesting and donating to feminist organizations that the authors they read are calling for.

I wrote this piece as a way to reflect on something that seems inconsequential but has become a meaningful part of my life. Along the way I realized that dismissing a space that is created by women for themselves is the patriarchy at work. We are entitled to spaces without the male

Image by: Kari Shea on Unsplash







Image by: Joyce McCown on Unsplash

gaze, with or without intellectual discussion. From this realization I have grown an even stronger appreciation for the importance of the space my book club friends and I have carved out, and for those who have joined and supported Toronto Feminist Book Club over the years.

If you would like to join the Toronto Feminist Book Club (as it's now referred to!), please email [rationalcreaturesbookclub@gmail.com](mailto:rationalcreaturesbookclub@gmail.com) or follow [@feministbookclubTO](https://www.instagram.com/feministbookclubTO) on Instagram.

Top recommendations from the Book Club:

Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present by Robyn Maynard

Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi

Seven Fallen Feathers: Racism, Death, and Hard Truths in a Northern City by Tanya Talaga

Ace: What Asexuality Reveals about Desire, Society, and the Meaning of Sex by Angela Chen

I Hope We Choose Love: A Trans Girls' Notes from the End of the World by Kai Cheng Thom

Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval by Saidiya Hartman

A Mind Spread Out on the Ground by Alicia Elliot

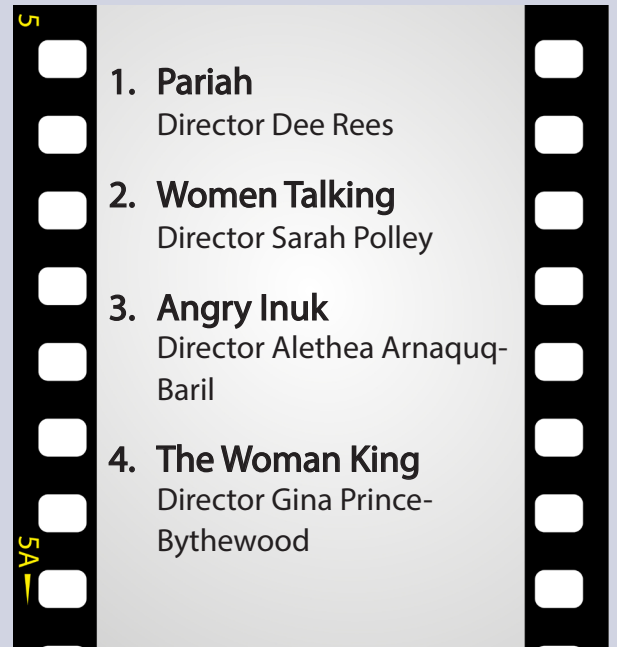
**Nicole** is a feminist reader, gardener and policy person living in Toronto. She has been a community organizer for human rights campaigns, is a board member of the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women and is published in *THIS* magazine. Her work focuses on gender equality and social policy.







## Flicks



## Reads



## Fem Hits, Flicks & Reads



# The Rise of the Alt-Right in Canada

Luna KC with Jackie Neapole and Miriam Edelson

As the alt-right becomes more visible, it is important to highlight the insidious ways the alt-right harms our society and how we, as feminists, should fight against this hateful movement. The key facts were taken from CRIAW's "[The Rise of the Alt-Right in Canada: A feminist analysis](#)" paper. This paper examines the alt-right movement in Canada using an intersectional feminist analysis and outlines how feminists can work collectively to counter this movement today.

The 2019 Global Terrorism Index identified that acts of terrorism committed by far-right groups have increased around the globe by 320%.

Alt-right groups such as 'Incels' target women specifically. Anti-choice champions such as "#50ForLife", "Pro-Life", "March for Life", and "PreBorn" are part of the alt-right's agenda in Canada.

Alt-right ideology incorporates homophobia, heterosexism, genderism, misogyny, sexism, and racism. Racialized women, LGBTQ2SIA people, Indigenous women, and Black women are at disproportionate risk from this racist misogynist movement.

Collective actions of all individuals, governments, political parties, labour unions, schools, universities, communities, civil society organizations, media, and related groups have a role to play to combat alt-right extremism.



## CRIAW celebrated its 47th birthday!

Since 1976, CRIAW has been researching and documenting the economic and social situation of women in Canada. This year we celebrate our 47th anniversary and in order to continue on in our mission, we need YOUR help!

Support CRIAW, support feminist research! CRIAW relies heavily on membership and donations to continue doing our work.

Help us stay strong for another 47 years!

For more information visit [www.criaw-icref.ca](http://www.criaw-icref.ca) or email us at [info@criaw-icref.ca](mailto:info@criaw-icref.ca).

## New Publications

Here Today, Gone Tomorrow: Public Transportation and Vulnerabilities in Rural and Remote Canada: Public Transportation and Intersectionality

Transportation as Infrastructure in Rural & Remote Canada

Transportation Equity Through Public Participation

Check out [www.criaw-icref.ca/publications](http://www.criaw-icref.ca/publications) for more!



# NEWS



