

Panel A: Crossing Borders, Building Bridges

Families, Borders, and Cisheteronormativity

By Elin McCready, Midori Morita, Ippei Nakao, and Elis Ottosson (M.O.M+I)

The current pandemic situation has caused nation-states to close their borders, with some exceptions for humanitarian reasons or people categorized as family members of citizens. Among the many affected by these policies are families who are not recognized by the states in which they are resident or seek to gain entry. This paper describes one such case in a Japanese context – our own, an instance of a queer family separated by national borders – and an artistic response to it. Three of the four project members comprise part of a family structure. McCready and Morita are married under Japanese law, but their marriage is currently in question due to McCready's gender transition, which has altered their marriage to a same-sex one, which Japanese law does not recognize. Consequently, McCready's Japanese documents are inconsistent in their gender marking: those not indicating her marital status say that she is a woman, and those that do indicate it say that she is a man. They are now suing the Japanese government over this cis- and heteronormative policy. Ottosson is McCready's partner, currently located in Sweden due to the closure of Japanese borders to non-family and his non-recognition as part of McCready and Morita's family unit because the Japanese government recognizes only 'nuclear family units.' This legal situation calls into question (yet again) the idea of structuring immigration around nuclear family units, the authority of governments to deem families 'genuine' or not, and indeed the authority of nation-states to exclude people from their territory without regard for their desires and needs. The remainder of the paper describes a response to this question in the form of a participatory art event and corresponding video installation.

***Nuestros afectos* in Latin American feminist movements: a collective cartography**

By Constanza Barraza Vargas, Milena D'Atri, Lucía Berlanga, Valentina Romero Yuriscic, Isabella Muñoz Gomez

Website: <https://collectivemapping.wixsite.com/nuestrosafectos>

Our artistic proposal consists of a digital collective mapping of Latin American feminist movements told from our own positionalities. We are away from home – a pandemic cuts across this distance – yet we carry our movements with us. Building a joint narrative of what it means to be a feminist latina is our affective response to a world in revolution.

This intervention is born out of the necessity of building transnational communities, enabling critical pedagogies and practices that respond to a time of urgency, to the distance, and to our feminist desires to relocate epistemologies. It is also a reflection of the need to open the instances of communication that channel transformative practices from intersectional and decolonial approaches.

To produce this cartography we will conduct an exercise of storytelling, affect-telling and re-mapping of common threads and particularities of the feminist struggles in our territories. We will present the graphic result of this collective research, using digital mapping, poetry, and artistic digital collages as inspiration. We are deeply conscious of our privileged positions and our experiences' limitations. In consequence, we will conduct the exercise and the presentation following a principle of collective care and love, patience and understanding of others' experiences.

Panel B: Locating Bodies in Movement

'Coming Out' for Abortion: Countering Shame and Reconstituting Feminist Political Agency

By Aideen O'Shaughnessy

In 2018, Ireland voted by an overwhelming majority to repeal the 8th amendment of the Constitution, removing constitutional protection of 'the unborn' and legalising abortion. In this paper, I argue that the campaign for abortion rights – a grassroots, non-hierarchical movement – not only brought about the successful implementation of abortion legislation but furthermore, catalysed a large-scale transformation in the conceptualisation, embodiment and performance of political agency among a new generation of feminist activists. Drawing upon data gathered through in-depth qualitative interviews in 2019 and 2020, this research demonstrates how politicisation around the issue of abortion in Ireland and the 'embodied transition' towards 'taking to the streets' entailed a process of 'coming out' for Irish activists as well as a radical re-enactment of their (political) agency.

In a country where abortion itself has historically been regarded as inherently sinful, and where collective action – specifically political protest through informal, non-parliamentary means – has been highly stigmatised since the foundation of the State in 1922, 'coming out' (in)to 'the streets' in favour of abortion is a doubly disruptive movement. Moreover, in a religious and cultural context characterised by the repression of all things bodily, mass mobilisation and all such embodied political activity is further pathologized. Borrowing from new social movement

theory, phenomenology and feminist political philosophy, this research demonstrates how the collective movement of (feminine) bodies from the private to the public sphere in favour of abortion activism served not only to destigmatise abortion but to normalise the presence of the feminine body in public space and to reconstitute feminist political agency through embodied performance. Analysing the process of 'coming out' for abortion and as an abortion activist is therefore integral to understanding new modes of (feminist) political engagement in the Irish context since 2018.

Panel C: Transing Concepts, Transing the State

Choosing Threat, Embodying Viral: Trans* Endemics in Times of Pandemic

By Matt Thompson

This paper examines the critical capacities of claiming *threat* for trans* subjects, taking seriously transphobic understandings of trans* as an endemic threat to feminism. In revisiting trans*figurations of itself as monstrous and viral, I argue that a purposeful political embodiment of toxic and viral threat is generative for a consideration of trans* politics and survival-making. Inherently grounded in the trans* body, trans* threat offers avenues for resistance and disruption that doesn't rely on tangible trans* ontology, but, rather, on a trans* epistemology of imagined toxicity that possibly counters the problematics of framing trans* as *only* transgressive. In situating such an analysis in trans* organisations' efforts to confront the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, and among trans*-exclusive feminist rhetoric that figures trans* as a "social contagion", I ask, what does it mean for trans* to be endemic during a pandemic? What are the flows of meaning and political power that perhaps open up a politicisation of 'trans* endemics' that result from such a figuration? I take the toxicity and virality of trans* threat to its theoretical limits to propose a celebration and acceptance of trans* as threat, in resistance to normative modes of trans* politics that neglect such potential. Trans* will forever be threatening; what happens when we take *threat* as a site of politics to say: 'Yes, we are a threat'?

Celibate Gods, Menstruating Women and Disrupting 'Activists' : Women's Entry into Sabarimala Temple in Kerala within a History of Adamant Women

By Dr Aparna Eswaran and Hameeda C.K.

From a moment of powerful protests and solidarity movements in India which has women at the centre of a resistance against the majoritarian right wing BJP government, we look back at a

protest from the South of India, Kerala, which saw women at the centre of a discourse on the issue of women's entry into a place of worship. In the recent past, Kerala, a state in South of India, which boasts of high development index compared to rest of India, saw itself being polarised on the issue of women's entry into the temple complex of Sabarimala. After the 2018 Supreme Court verdict which ruled that the ban on entry of women of 'menstruating years' from entry into Sabarimala is *ultra vires* the constitution, women who had attempted entry into the temple couldn't do so despite the Communist State Government's acceptance of the verdict as well as the police protection promised. This changed in the dawn of 2019 with the entry of two women. The public debate that followed after the verdict raises many questions important for feminist inquiry.

The first is the tussle between *Acharam* (tradition/rituals) and the law; when the traditions are invoked to detract women from their rights, how efficient is law as an alternative site? The second question of debate is around the category of *bhakta* (believing woman) and the activist. The repeated claims that truly believing women will not enter the temple complex, while activist women who only want to make a point are out to defile the temple rituals were rife in the public conversations about Sabarimala. This criticism spiked after Rehana Fathima, a Muslim woman demanded entry, drawing criticism even from the CPI-M left cadre. This throws up the sensitive issue of spectrality of the first woman entering the temple complex, the political valence of this act and how the 'women subject of temple entry' even for those supporting the SC verdict had to bear symbols of the *bhakta* woman, which was mostly marked by Savarna imagination. Finally the paper fronts the Dalit and Bahujan interventions in the debate examining how different their arguments have been from the other popular feminist articulation of the issue.

The paper attempts to place the struggle for women's entry into Sabarimala within the history of lower caste women's struggle for entry into the public sphere of Kerala like the *Maarumarakkal Samaram* (Protests for the Right to cover breasts) and *Mookuthi Lahala* (The violence against the struggle by lower caste Pulaya women to wear nose rings). For the contemporary moment, we propose that these movements be placed within a larger history of adamant women, especially of Dalit and Bahujan women and the strategies they used successfully or otherwise in their fight on patriarchy. We draw upon the idea of *Sthree vashi* (stubbornness of women) coined by renowned feminist and historian, J Devika, to think further about feminist protests in an age of revolution.

Panel D: Digitalising Activisms, Navigating Justice

Women Speak: Cyber Ethnographic Discussions on Resistance, Gender and Power

By Mariyeh Mushtaq and Zara Bakshi (Zanaan Wanaan)

On Aug 5th 2019 the Indian state abrogated Article 370 of the Indian constitution which conferred special rights to the disputed region of Jammu & Kashmir. With this, the state ended the semi-autonomous status of J&K whilst placing the valley under militarized lockdown and a complete communication blockade. This paper will investigate the hypervisibility of 'Kashmir' in the online spaces throughout the world that emerged during this time as a form of protest to the government's arbitrary actions. In doing so, we look at this increase in the digital content production from a decolonial and feminist lens. This will raise and address the question regarding the potential for mobilization and finally, trace the involvement of Kashmiri women in these spaces. For this analysis we will consider the example of Stand with Kashmir (SWK) a diaspora led organisation. We will also look at the new emerging forms of resistance in online spaces, particularly produced by women, through visual arts. The paper will conclude with mapping out the complex challenges that young Kashmiri women face while navigating the online spaces amidst increased surveillance, online trolling and internet shutdowns. It will also highlight the role of women's groups that are creating ripples with their critical work on gender and militarisation in Kashmir. Overall, we will argue that in Kashmir, social media platforms and their usage by Kashmiri voices has immense potential for feminist reflection and we locate this discussion within the larger global movements for peace and justice around the world.

The New Mainstream in the Making

By Navkiran Natt

On 26 November, 2020, 250 million Indian workers observed the largest ever strike in recorded history. Farmers, who had been protesting in the state of Punjab (A state of India situated in the northwest of the national capital Delhi) for over 3 months, decided to march to Delhi on the same day. The march faced brute state repression on their way and the visuals of that sent shivers to everyone across the world. Indian government has showed its distaste for dissent in broad daylight. That's where the resistance rose up, to assert its right as citizens; not only in the form of protest but as a fountain of many initiatives. Newsletters, libraries, film screenings, cultural groups are few such initiatives. Media is considered as a watchdog of democracy but in India it has become a para-state agency to muzzle the voices of dissent. In the early days of farmers' protests, mainstream Indian media relentlessly demonized the movement. It was only this ongoing farmers' movement when many young protesters bluntly faced and closely felt it.

They decided to start their own media houses, a people's media; a mode of resistance and the voice of dissent. In a short span of about 2 months nearly 5 newsletters started from the protest-sites talking about gender, caste, class and other aspects of the movement which the mainstream media didn't. In this paper I would like to talk about these new collective media initiatives that started from within the movement. How are they the new media in production, busting the real face of the mainstream media, overcoming the limitations of the alternative and trying to become the new mainstream?

Bearing Witness and Building Bridges

By Pascha Bueno-Hansen

This paper reflects on how beneath the urgency of the current global historical moment, there is a continuity of feminist transnational solidarity initiatives resisting coloniality and racial and gender discrimination. These initiatives have had to navigate the changing conditions due to the global pandemic and rise of the right. On a practical level, this has created BOTH generative yet exclusive openings through virtual spaces AND severe closure of political spaces accompanied by a growing permissibility towards and complicity with structural and historical oppression.

Bearing Witness and Building Bridges brings a transnational, decolonial and anti-racist feminist curiosity to this current historical moment, by way of a reflection on the critical politics of location and transnational feminist praxis in the ongoing struggles for justice in the emblematic cases of sexual violence during internal armed conflict and forced sterilization in Peru. These are decades long struggles for justice that refuse oblivion and impunity for crimes committed in the 1980's and 1990's largely against Quechua speaking communities of the Andean highlands. Both cases are currently in the phase of oral trial in Peru, during these multiple political and health crises.

What does transnational feminist solidarity look like in this context? My reflections lead me to the answer of Bearing Witness and Building Bridges. The move to virtual space given the health crisis has facilitated transnational witnessing in the cases since there are online. WhatsApp exchanges before, after and throughout creates a sense of closeness and intimacy in the collective exercise of bearing witness and strategizing ways to counteract blatant discriminatory expressions of racism and sexism through collective care and political action. Furthermore, the transition to online space and virtual connection facilitates the possibility of building bridges across the region to uplift collective presence and envision feminist indigenous futurities in the face of multiple and ongoing apocalyptic conditions. In specific, this paper will reflect upon the Global Institute of Research and Action for Indigenous Leaders: Women's Perspectives on Justice, Rights and Healing initiative that offers a synchronic virtual school for and by indigenous women leaders across the region to address the many challenges they face in a spiritually grounded way.

Panel E: Weaving Resistive Imaginaries

Resisting Covid Capitalism in the Global Garment Industry: Women's Workplace Struggles in Authoritarian Neoliberal Cambodia

By Sabina Lawreniuk and Katherine Brickell

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused severe hardship for workers in the global garment and footwear industry, where an estimated 80% of 70 million workers worldwide are women. As fashion brands and clothing suppliers navigate the effects of volatile retail demand caused by rolling consumer lockdowns, they have prioritised protecting profits over this precarious female workforce. These dynamics are best exemplified through the mass layoffs that grabbed global media headlines throughout 2020, but are also revealed on the ground in slower, everyday practices of workplace restructuring. Drawing on original data from the GCRF-funded ReFashion study in Cambodia's garment industry, combining a quantitative survey of 200 female workers with 60 in-depth qualitative follow-ups, as well as further interviews with garment sector stakeholders including government, industry and labour representatives, in this paper we trace the contours of Covid capitalism in Cambodia's garment industry and its resistance. Covid capitalism here, we argue, is underscored by deepening reliance on techniques of flexibilization and intensification in an already precarious and highly pressurised feminised workplace. In an increasingly authoritarian country context, hostile to civil society and trade union organisation, the possibilities of women's resistance against the worsening terms of their employment are tightly constrained, bound further by traditional gender norms of compliance and docility. However, although they are increasingly marginalised, female workers are not without voice. Building on previous work that theorises the "intimate geopolitics" of women's grassroots activism in the global South, we highlight some of the emerging practices by which subaltern female workers are confronting the might of global corporations and the neoliberal state in the age of the pandemic.

La Red Sorora: Weaving care networks for Domestic Workers in Ecuador during the pandemic

By Kruskaya Hidalgo Cordero

Domestic workers have been part of the population most impacted by the pandemic crisis in Ecuador. In our context, pay housework services are done primarily by women from impoverished afro and indigenous communities. Those communities were completely abandoned by the State, reinforcing racist and classist policies. The preventive and mandatory social distancing was one of the Ecuadorian government measures to face the pandemic.

However, since the beginning of its application, the question posed was who can stay at home and if so, under what conditions. Informal labor—people outside any social protection system, living off their day-to-day work as the domestic workers—represent more than half of the economically active population; thus, #StayAtHome was a class privilege. In all extends of necropolitics, it was established which lives are worthy to save and protect, and which ones are disposable to be left unprotected at the frontlines of the pandemic.

In the face of that state negligence, a group of domestic workers, activists and researchers created the so-called Red Sorora. A network to support and care for domestic workers and their families, as well as to denounce the extremely vulnerable conditions they faced. In addition, la Red organized humanitarian campaigns to collect money and food resources for them and their families. Furthermore, as a political and affective practice, we organized psychological accompaniment for women workers and a feminist school for they and their communities.

For this paper, I want to focus on transnational feminist solidarity by showing how Red Sorora put in conversation Latin American migrant women based in Europe, domestic workers from South America and local feminist activists. In addition, I want to analyze the affective social network of domestic workers who demonstrate that life experience is a powerful source of knowledge. I will draw upon decolonial and intersectional methodologies to talk about the collective initiatives we were carrying on during the pandemic. Finding inspiration from in flesh writing, I want to use poetics and translanguaging to challenge academia. I feel fortunate to learn from my compañeras domestic workers, and I understand this text as a way to put into value their practices, ethics, and collective knowledge.

Textile Resistance: The use of textiles and embroidery to advance women's rights in Chile

By Ignacia Ossul-Vermehren & Isabel Pacheco

"When curfew was imposed [in October 2019], I felt my hands were tied, I couldn't be outside protesting, so I started embroidering banners."

Female, 35 years old, Santiago (interview December 2019)

In the last forty years, women and feminist groups in Chile have used textile and embroidery as a way to advance gender rights and protest against violations of human rights by the state. Building on the tradition of 'arpilleras' – fabric collages of everyday scenes made during the military dictatorship (1973-1989) - women (and some men's groups) have returned to textiles as

a way to articulate solidarity and make claims, seen most vividly during the social uprising of 18th October 2019 and scores of feminist protests in recent years.

The aim of the presentation is twofold: to situate and characterise contemporary embroidery collectives in Chile, discussing the process, context and strategies used by grassroots organisations; and to analyse key moments in the use of collective banners in recent years. We propose that there is a synergistic relationship between textile practices and feminist demands. On the one hand, embroidering collectively has allowed women to create community, facilitating a process of awareness that supports feminist ideas, while on the other, feminism has found in embroidery and textiles an effective means of communication and a new space for the expression of the movement.

We ground our presentation in our own experience as embroidery-activists in Chile. We will share the textile campaigns we have been involved in, our research on the use of embroidery to raise awareness of gender violence with low-income women and the process of editing the book [*Resistencia Textil: Luchas feministas en Chile contemporáneo*](#) (Textile Resistance: Feminist Struggles in Contemporary Chile) which features contributions from 26 collectives across Chile that explore the role of textile in advancing women's rights. Such has been the widespread and urgent use of textile in recent years, the book seeks to document this contemporary phenomenon as it evolves, providing a space for grassroots organisations, activists and academics alike to share their experiences of textile both as a participatory methodology and a way to strengthen communities in advocating for women's rights.

Stitching Transnational Solidarity: Textile Crafts, Cross-Cultural Encounters & Affective Tension

By Katja May

This paper explores the political potential of textile crafts for transnational feminist solidarity through an analysis of the contemporary Afghan-European embroidery initiative Guldusi. It critically examines Guldusi's objective to facilitate cultural understanding between European and Afghan needlewomen by sketching out the limits of feminist solidarity grounded in claims about a shared identity as needlewomen. Narratives about the power of practices of needlework to foster solidarity between women from the Global North and the Global South often privilege the stories of white, middle-class western women. I trace how these narratives and the textile artefacts created by the women from the Global North in response to the Afghan embroideries may reproduce contemporary Orientalist discourses that have regained new prominence through the political and media rhetoric accompanying the War on Terror. However, by placing these discourses in relation to the affect and materiality of practices of needlework, my analysis also identifies openings for the reconfiguration of the unequal power structures between needlewomen. Through attending to the transnational affective entanglements of everyday

practices like stitching, tea drinking, cooking and gardening, I show how making provides a way of connecting not only materials, but also bodies, in ways that generate new openings for transnational feminist solidarity. I locate these openings not in a shared identity politics, but in the affective tensions that may surface, linger and circulate as a result of engaging with creative embodied practices like sewing or embroidering.

Panel F: Feminist Futurities and Afterlives

“You Can’t Have a Future If You’re Dead”: The Politics of Mourning and Mobilization around South Africa’s Gender-Based Violence “Emergency”

By Emma Louise Backe

In August of 2019, organizers and activists gathered in front of Saartjie Baartman Hall decrying the spate of sexual assaults on the University of Cape Town (UCT) campus. The staged die-in of the silent protest occurred in the shadow of Rhodes Memorial, the memory of the “Hottentot Venus” abutting lingering activism around #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall. Not one month after the silent protest, the body of UCT student Uyinene Mrwetyana was discovered in a township, her rape and murder igniting the #AmINext protests which spread across the country. #AmINext asked not whether but when they too would fall prey to gender-based violence (GBV) and intimate femicide, signaling the peculiar and pernicious recursive temporality of violence against womxn in the country. During the early stages of South Africa’s coronavirus lock-down, Uyinene’s image circulated again, this time to remind the government that sometimes the home, and an intimate partner, were more perilous than the virus itself. In the ongoing protest movement around GBV in South Africa, I seek to investigate the sedimentation of violence in the country, the ongoing pressure exerted by historical figures like Saartjie Baartman, and the constructions of time mobilized by activists behind #AmINext. How do survivors conceive of a future free from violence when the harms of the past remain unaccounted for, and the vicious cyclicity of violence is culturally “normalized”? How do the ongoing repertoires of spectacular violence call for a different chronotope of crisis, one that accounts for the ongoing everydayness of vulnerability, and draws upon these repetitive legacies of victimization to mobilize public solidarity and political will.

Queer Struggles in Brazil: On Carceral and Abolitionist Strategies

By Alexandre Nogueira Martins

This paper aims to present the paths of anti-queer violence struggles in Brazil from 1980 to 2021. We analyze how carceral and abolitionist strategies were put in place by LGBT Brazilian activists in two moments: (i) in the disputes over the criminalization of homophobia and transphobia from 1984 until 2019, and (ii) after LGBTphobia became a crime, in the controversies on the following paths to counter anti-queer violence. Through a sociological discourse analysis, we investigate documents from the Brazilian LGBT movement, bills and lawsuits, as well as semi-structured interviews with LGBT activists positioned in a complex carceral-abolitionist continuum of practices and strategies. On the one side, there are queer activists who aim at making this criminalization “effective”, on the other, the ones whose abolitionist practices and discourses envision liberation futures for queer struggles. In this paper, the hegemonic carceral strategies are read as a form of governing through crime “from below” within the process of (des)democratization and neoliberalization of Brazilian society which has had the effect of entrenching a “criminalizing rationality” in queer activisms. This rationality puts the crime, the victim and the criminal as main frames for activisms, and it channels affects such as rage, grief and resentment to foster carceral times. Countering this criminalizing logic and attaching rage and grief to anti-carceral and anti-colonial horizons, abolitionist strategies to fight LGBTphobia have been opposing in different ways the hegemonic neoliberal and criminalizing trends and have become more notable in these fascist times we live in Brazilian society.