Please cite the Published Version

A Wench's Guide to Surviving a 'Global' Pandemic Crisis: Feminist Publishing in a Time of COVID-19

Zainab Batul Naqvi and Yvette Russell

Abstract

It has been quite a year so far(!) and as the wenches we are, we have been taking our time to collect our thoughts and reflections before sharing them at the start of this issue of the journal. In this editorial we think through the COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating effects on the world, on our lives and on our editorial processes. We renew our commitment to improving our operations as a journal and its health along with our own as we deploy wench tactics to restore, sustain and slow down to negotiate this new reality, this new world. We conclude with an introduction to the fascinating contents of this issue along with a collaborative statement of values on open access as part of a collective of intersectional feminist and social justice editors. Through all of the pain and suffering we focus our gaze on hope: hope that we can come through this global crisis together engaging in critical conversations about how we can be better and do better as editors, academics and individuals for ourselves, our colleagues and our journal.

Introduction

In these strange times…in these uncertain times…in these unprecedented times. How quickly our conversations and communications have become prefixed with a constant reminder of our current situation. Our concern, our sympathies and our connectedness have all increased for one another as we 'check in' with those we interact with regularly, and crucially, those we don't. As pandemic-related lockdowns in the UK and many parts of the world continue, causing many to experience restrictions in their movement and routines that they have never encountered before along with the enforced closure of businesses and places of work, we have been reflecting on the spaces and positions we inhabit as feminist individuals, academics and editors.

In this editorial we think through some of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and state responses to the spread of the virus in the context of our ongoing efforts to employ decolonising techniques and deploy wench tactics (Fletcher et al. 2017; Naqvi et al. 2019). In doing so, we seek to make sense of our new lived realities, although in many ways, just this attempt to make sense of the effects on our existence is both bewildering and revealing. One way this lack of sense is most starkly manifest is in the way it plays with and disrupts time. We experience time as both exponentially sped up and painfully slowed down. Over the three months during which we have tried to draft this editorial there have been political, social and economic changes and events too numerous to detail; literally thousands of people have died. But somehow this flux is accompanied by a nagging sense of stasis; we're mulling the same issues, many of us are 'stuck' in our homes with or away from family, and we are still beholden to the virus. This discombobulating confrontation with the contingency

of linear time leads us here to feminist work that contemplates time and timeliness and to a necessary reflection on the nature of scholarly work and publishing and the temporal imperatives driving them.

In mulling our work and the time in and according to which it occurs, we are also led inevitably to a rumination on health: what is 'health', and who possesses it? The oversimplified answer is that human health refers to our state of physical, mental and emotional wellbeing; and that surely everyone has health which makes it a global concern. Unfortunately, we have seen that it really isn't that simple or tidy. Fassin (2012) warns us that concern for global health is not something we can take for granted. Both 'global' and 'health' are contested concepts (Bonhomme 2018). Global health is neither universal nor worldwide; it is not free from the politics of life and the value-giving processes that lead to lives being weighed against each other. The term 'global' is not only a geographical signifier but a "political work in progress that calls on us to remain ever mindful of the imperial durabilities of our time" (Biehl 2016, 128 referring to Stoler 2016).

In what follows we reflect further on the lessons of the pandemic and how we view health: as a global public good that we should all be working together to improve and maintain for everyone? Or as a privilege that in this patriarchal capitalist society is only available to those who can afford it? We return to the question of time and the timely and try to think collectively with our feminist colleagues about publishing, 'slow scholarship' and wench tactics. We consider what feminist leadership looks like in a time of COVID-19 and renew our calls for a firm commitment to decolonising academic publishing and the university. For us, this has recently manifested in a collective statement on publishing and open access, which we have jointly produced and signed with several other intersectional feminist and social justice journal editorial boards. The editorial concludes with an acknowledgement of recently retired editorial board members and an introduction to the copy included in this issue of FLS.

Pandemics and disease: it happens to them not us

They are dirty, They are unsuited for life, They are unable, They are incapable, They are disposable, They are non-believers, They are unworthy, They are made to benefit us, They hate our freedom, They are undocumented, They are queer, They are black, They are Indigenous, They are less than, They are against us, until finally, They are no more. (Indigenous Action 2020)

A pandemic is the worldwide spread of a new disease (WHO 2010)

In her discussion of affliction, disease and poverty, Das (2014) discusses the way in which definitions of global health centre on the control of communicable diseases. Controlling the spread of infectious disease between us then, is how we measure the success of global health. Along the same vein, the World Health Organization (WHO) has defined a pandemic as "the worldwide spread of a disease" (2010). These two statements may seem innocuous but contain layers of historical and contemporary oppressions trapped within their layers of

meaning. It would be naive to claim that the COVID-19 crisis is the first phenomenon to lay bare the structural injustices and inequalities which already plague us. And that is the key takeaway for us: we are already plagued and have always been plagued with communicable diseases including war, poverty, racism, colonialism, sexism (Bonhomme 2018; Siyada 2020). All around the world, lives are lost unnecessarily because of these diseases and now the privileged among us are personally at risk we urgently realise that the status quo is a problem—that we are all fragile (Msimang 2020). These existing diseases have spread worldwide and mutate into new forms all the time: we have been living through multiple, simultaneous pandemics our entire lives and for many of us, this is only now being thrown into stark relief.

If we broaden this out further, the editors in us start to inquire into health as a broader concept. Health is not only relevant to the human condition but can be applied to systems, processes and institutions such as the academy and the academic publishing industry. The crisis has highlighted the urgent need for us to reflect on the health of our academic lives and spaces along with the ways in which social plagues have infected our ways of writing, editing, working and being. In doing so, we plan and strategise the best ways to be 'wenches in the works' (Franklin 2015)—taking advantage of this period to deploy wench tactics and rest, restore and sustain. We aim then, to take an all-encompassing approach to health to interrogate the sicknesses and weaknesses that afflict our spaces and worlds and then try to act for change.

Whilst the WHO states that a pandemic involves a *new* disease spreading throughout the world, the current situation shows us that it is not just the spread of this viral pathogen that is causing the pandemic. It is the combination of intersecting oppressions with the spread of the COVID-19 viral molecules that make up the pandemic. We always benefit from employing decolonising techniques, by looking back to the past to better understand the present. The history of global health is a neo-colonial project (Biehl 2016; Magenya 2020) mired in imperialist and Eurocentric attitudes towards disease control. Disease control has been repeatedly used "to bolster the moral case for colonialism" (Flint and Hewitt 2015, 297) with colonialist administrators considering their ability to control the spread of infectious diseases in the colonies as an important skill. This speaks to their civilising missionary attitude that in purportedly tackling the spread of infectious disease, they were benefitting the natives and their presence was therefore positive (Flint and Hewitt 2015, 297). This is further reflected in the international regulations for containing infectious disease spread, which have historically emphasised controls to protect European and North American interests. The US' endorsement of the WHO prior to its inception in 1969 was predicated on concerns for trading relationships, which were central to US economic growth (White 2020). The US was only dedicated to "wiping out disease everywhere" when there was a risk disease would enter its borders and affect its economy (White 2020, 1251).

These imperialist attitudes around prioritising the health and economies of majority white countries in Europe, North America and Australia display the lack of regard for the deaths of those outside of these territories. The spread of cholera in Haiti in 2010, the Ebola outbreaks (one of which is still ongoing in DRC), avian flu, swine flu, and BSE have all been

deemed epidemics which are not seen as serious or widespread enough to count as pandemics despite the alarming number of sufferers and fatalities. These disease outbreaks all have one thing in common: they affected racialised people in "exotic, far-away and (made-to-be) poor lands" (Bonhomme 2020). These are lands that have deficient healthcare systems and resources because of imperial exploitation. This perception of communicable disease outbreaks as afflicting unhealthy and dirty others in far-away places underpins global health approaches and policy along with responses to the outbreaks in the West. Even the labelling of the COVID-19 crisis as a 'global pandemic' is loaded with meaning: it represents that the disease has spread to and is also killing white people in the West on a mass scale. If it were not affecting this subset of the population in a meaningful way, it would 'just' be an epidemic.

This is clearly demonstrated by the UK government's woeful response to the disease and the increasing mortality rate we are experiencing. Aaltola states that "diseases exist, flourish and die wider than physical environments where they adapt to local memories, practices and cultures" (2012, 2). By thinking that the UK is invincible because of imperial arrogance, the government has wilfully ignored the memories, practices and cultures of other countries with experience of managing such crises. Instead of rushing to save lives, there was a rush to save the economy telling us that there has been no progress in mindset since the 1940s. Who suffers the most as a result of this? The marginalised, the poor and the underpaid key workers who are disproportionately not white because diseases are "embedded in and violently react with the fabric of political power" making them "signifiers of the underlying patterns of power" (Aaltola 2012, 2; Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development 2020). The virus may not discriminate but systems and structures by which the imperial state dictates who lives and survives do (Anumo 2020; Rutazibwa 2020).

This discrimination has spilled onto our streets and into our living rooms with the racist and xenophobic discourses that have led to the unjust treatment of vulnerable minorities in society. From the US President deliberately calling COVID-19 the 'Chinese virus' to the abuse shouted at East Asian people on the streets, reactions to the virus have been rooted in intolerance and ignorance. These unsurprising (and imperialist) responses are further manifested in policy responses which disadvantage the most vulnerable of us including minorities with greater representation in lower socioeconomic groups; victims of abuse who are now told to stay locked up in the house with their abuser; elderly people in care homes or congregate living arrangements; those with 'pre-existing' conditions or disabilities and; immigrants who are being subjected to yet more nationalist rhetoric around border control and surveillance (see also Step Up Migrant Women UK 2020).

later that night

i held an atlas in my lap

ran my fingers across the whole world

and whispered

where does it hurt?

it answered

everywhere

everywhere

everywhere.

(Extract from 'What They Did Yesterday Afternoon' A Poem by British-Somali poet Warsan Shire)

Amidst these waves of pain and suffering we reel as we witness the continual devaluing of life with the deaths of Breonna Taylor on 13 March; Belly Mujinga on 5 April; George Floyd on 25 May; Bibaa Henry and Nicole Smallman on 6 June; Dominique Rem'Mie Fells on 8 June and Riah Milton on 9 June. These are just a few of the Black women and men whose lives have been cruelly and callously taken this year. The list is endless: bleeding and weeping like an open wound. The Black Lives Matter movement was given the attention it deserves by the national and international media as people took to the streets in solidarity, but the wheels of justice move slowly, grinding regularly to a halt leaving us feeling helpless and hopeless at times. We wanted to express our support and decided to share links to free downloads of our articles on a twitter thread written by Black authors and papers that adopt critical race approaches.[1] We have now provided a period of open-access to some key contributions made by Black scholars and activists to FLS over the last 27 years.[2] What might have always been an inadequate response/intervention quickly revealed some undeniable shortcomings in the journal, its processes and the academic publishing context we negotiate every day. The lack of contributions published in the journal by Black scholars is undeniable and something we intend to reflect further on as a board. We know that this needs to be better and we need to have more critical conversations around realising this. We are not looking for an immediate fix or cure. Much like the coronavirus, there is none forthcoming yet. But health for humans and for journals is in a state of constant flux, it is an ongoing journey and we can only keep trying to take steps in the right direction to be the best we can: to affirm the value of Black scholarship and Black lives and counter the appalling racism of the institutions and operations that has heightened in visibility throughout this pandemic.

So, yes, we are afflicted and have been since before this pandemic spread, but amongst the fear and the trauma, this situation has revealed hope in humanity and offered an opportunity to step back and re-evaluate. If what they say is true, things will never be the same again and that's exactly what we need: for things to change for the better; to remind us that our health is our wealth and that we need a (genuinely) global effort towards achieving this and not just for certain parts of the world. As feminist academics, writers, dreamers and above all wenches, we have been thinking about how to best deploy our tactics, our resources and our energies to change the 'global' health of academic publishing for the better. An approach to health which is not geared towards saving the economy of the industry first, but the people, their ideas and creativity, their knowledges from all over this suffering world. This leads to us to try and make sense of the gendered and racialised impacts of the virus and this 'new reality' on the workforce and our work as part of an industry: the academic industry.

Gender, race and labour politics: working in and through the pandemic

As is to be expected, the recent crisis has laid bare and exacerbated existing socio-economic inequalities. In the United Kingdom, for example, British Black Africans and British Pakistanis are over two and a half times more likely to die in hospital of COVID-19 than the white population (Platt and Warwick 2020). Researchers speculate that among the reasons for the higher death rates among Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)[3] populations in the UK include the fact that that a third of all working-age Black Africans are employed in key worker roles, 50% more than the share of the white British population. Pakistani, Indian and Black African men are respectively 90%, 150% and 310% more likely to work in healthcare, where they are particularly at risk, than white British men (Siddique 2020). Underlying health conditions which render people more vulnerable to risk from infection are also overrepresented in older British Bangladeshi men and in older people of a Pakistani or Black Caribbean background. Over 60% of those National Health Service workers who have died due to COVID-19 thus far were from BAME ethnic backgrounds (Cook et al. 2020).

In addition to these stark ethnic and racial mortality disparities, research continues to emerge attesting to the disproportionate health, social protection and security, care, and economic burdens shouldered by women as the pandemic progresses (United Nations 2020). While men appear to carry a higher risk of mortality from the virus, the differential impacts on men and women of COVID-19 remain largely ignored by governments and global health institutions, perpetuating gender and health inequities (Wenham et al. 2020).

In terms of labour politics, a noticeable shift in working patterns during the pandemic has, perhaps unsurprisingly, disproportionately impacted women. As Joanne Conaghan observes, the effects of the pandemic are compounded for women due variously to "…their weak labour market position in low paid, highly precarious, and socially unprotected sectors of employment, their greater propensity to be living in poverty, along with the practical constraints which a significant increase in unpaid care work is likely to place on women's ability to pursue paid work" (2020). Conaghan points out that the gender division of labour manifests itself in different ways throughout history, affecting the social and economic status of women. But what the COVID-19 crisis reveals in this historical time period is the extent to which labouring practices for many have been 'feminised', "not just in the sense that the proportion of women participating in paid work has exponentially increased but also because the working conditions traditionally associated with women's work—low-paid, precarious, and service-based rather than manufacturing—have become the norm" (Conaghan 2020). Thus women workers, but also vulnerable young people, migrants, and low-paid precarious workers are further exposed by the "perfect storm of poverty, destitution, sickness and death" generated by COVID-19 (Conaghan 2020).

How then are these labour realities relevant to us in the academic publishing sector? Some editors are reporting a noticeable downturn in submissions by women authors and, in some cases, an upturn in submissions by men (Fazackerley 2020), which would be consistent with

Conaghan's thesis. The current paradigm, however, provides us with another opportunity to look at the mode of production operating in journal publishing, one that we at FLS are implicated in and have long been critical of (Fletcher et al. 2016, 2017). Our insistence that academic publishing, and feminist publishing in particular, be seen as a political endeavour drives a lot of our editorial policies including an emphasis on the importance of Global South scholarship, employing decolonising techniques in our editorial practice, our involvement in the recent Global South writing workshops (Naqvi et al. 2019) and our continuing support for early career researchers (ECRs), particularly those from marginalised or minoritised communities.[4]

We remain troubled, however, by the insidious ambivalence of the neoliberal university as it lumbers on, undeterred and uninterested in the new lives we are all trying to adjust to. It was of serious concern to us, for example, that the REF publication deadline remained unaltered well into the onset of the pandemic with associated impacts on journal editors and boards, reviewers and authors.[5] In another appalling example of how structural disadvantages for Black researchers are embedded in the academy, we are currently watching the unfolding saga of none of the £4.3 million worth of funding allocated by UKRI and NIHR to investigate the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on 'BAME' communities being awarded to Black academics. This is compounded by the revelation that of the 6 grants awarded, 3 had a member of the awards assessment panel as a named Co-Investigator.[6]

Many of those in our feminist community have come together over the last four months in various fora to share ideas and to support one another as we both adjust to this new paradigm, and resist the continued imposition of the old one (see, for example, Graham et al. 2020). We took part in collective discussion in July with colleagues on the editorial boards of *Feminist Theory*, *Feminist Review*, *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *European Journal of Women's Studies* and *Sociological Review* about the academic publishing in the context of COVID-19. That discussion enabled us to share resources and build morale with a view to envisioning a future for feminist and critical academic publishing. A future in which we challenge existing models of open access in publishing as a starting point. The issues with open access are manifold and we have reflected on these previously (Fletcher et al. 2017).

We aim to build and strengthen the links between the board and our fellow social justice and feminist journals to address this along with the other problems that we have identified, experienced and maybe even fed into as editors. As a first step, we have written a collaborative statement on our joint reflections concerning open access which sets out a non-exhaustive list of some of the values we wish to embody as journals and imbue our editorial work and processes with going forward. You can read the collective statement below at the end of this editorial, and we encourage other journals to join and sign the statement.

Returning to wench tactics

Reflecting on what has changed in this time of COVID-19 and what has stayed the same has led us back in many ways to where we started with wench tactics (Fletcher et al. 2017). How do we engender our own time and space when what little time and space there is isn't really for us? Returning to a conscious consideration of timeliness and to the promise of the decolonial public university might be a way to carve out time and space anew or to resist the pull back to 'normality'.

One way of undoing time in the institutional contexts in which we find ourselves is through attempting to articulate and practice an ethics of slowness. Mountz and colleagues deploy a feminist ethics of care in trying to reimagine working conditions that challenge the imperatives of the neoliberal university (2015). The authors emphasise the need to prioritise "slow-moving conversation[s] on ways to slow down and claim time for slow scholarship and collective action informed by feminist politics" (Mountz et al. 2015, 1236). This understanding of slow scholarship is predicated, of course, on a thoroughgoing critique of neoliberal governance and its drivers, which have fundamentally transformed the university in the UK (and elsewhere) over the last 10 years. Karin van Marle points out how neoliberal epistemologies crowd out other ways of knowing and being such that they become common sense. This has a chilling effect on the university, which "instead of being a space where multiple views and knowledges are celebrated… becomes a very specific place of exclusion and limitation" (2019). Van Marle insists that we try and think of the university by reference to a different set of aesthetics: "At least it should be one that acknowledges bodily-presence, sensory experiences, complexity and the need to slow down, to step aside from counting, competitiveness and suffocation" (2019).

Amid COVID-19 we are on the precipice of an economic catastrophe for Higher Education in which many of our colleagues will lose their jobs and the futures of early career researchers and those without permanent jobs is looking more precarious than ever. We are also concerned about those vulnerable and disabled colleagues, pregnant people and others who can't acclimatise to the changes that are going to be demanded of us. We need to combine our ethos of slow scholarship with sustainable collective labour politics that prioritises the most vulnerable among us, and one that is particularly attentive to the disadvantages that devolve in line with the socio-economic/class, race and gender disparities discussed above.

That the sector has long been poised on a knife-edge is something that many of our colleagues and unions have been warning about, and in the UK this has become more and more acute as austerity politics ravage the state sector, of which the university used to be a part. The notion of the public university feels often like a concept that is fast fading in our collective consciousness, but publishing, teaching and living in a time of COVID-19 makes it prescient once again. As Corey Robin puts it: "Public spending, for public universities, is a bequest of permanence from one generation to the next. It is a promise to the future that it will enjoy the learning of the present and the literature of the past. It is what we need, more than ever, today" (2020).

That imagining how we want our world(s) and universities to be is also a profoundly decolonial imperative is something that we must reckon with and take responsibility for (see

also, Otto and Grear 2018). As many institutions of higher learning in the Global North have been forced to confront their complicity in the global slave trade and in other forms of imperialism in the wake of #BlackLivesMatter, we have to insist on meaningful accountability and not, as Foluke Adebisi warns, PR stunts or marketing sops to 'diversity' politics (2019). Adebisi makes clear the importance of locating ourselves as researchers and teachers as a continuing part of the university's legacy, and the need to acknowledge racism and colonialism as ongoing processes: "My constant fear is that in the process of universities 'coming to terms', our proposals can turn out to be non-contextualised recommendations that do not take into account the embedded and extended nature of slavery and the slave trade" (2019). What if we showed to our students, asks Adebisi, "in very concrete terms, exactly how the past bleeds into the present, how we walk side by side with histories ghosts, how we breathe coloniality every day, how our collective history is literally present in every single thing we do?" (2019). In other words, how can we effectively distinguish, asks Olivia Rutazibwa, between teaching and learning that foregrounds the will to power versus the will to live? By this she means that in our attempts at decolonising we "go beyond the merely representational" by engaging with and understanding the very materiality of being and the systems that determine and produce our lives (and deaths) (Rutazibwa 2018, 172). That such pedagogical and activist praxis necessarily requires time, space and slow conversations is immediately clear.

Trying to think through slowness in the context of feminist decolonial editorial praxis is also a key aspect of wench tactics (Fletcher et al. 2017; Fletcher 2020). Being a wench in the works entails us deploying tactics to influence how our journal is used, accessed and circulated. We add to this by now utilising wench tactics to influence how our journal is produced. Intrinsic in this is the timeline around production, use, access and circulation. As we work from home, experiencing lockdowns and shielding and distancing, time simultaneously runs away from us and stretches out before us. To ground ourselves then, we take a step back: we step out of the rat race that life has become and prioritise health; for ourselves, for others and for the journal. We first set out to rest and restore. We break out of the increasingly frantic rhythms and deadlines that are being fired at us by our institutions and do something else—we aim to remind ourselves of who we are and what we do. In practical terms, this has reminded us that the production and success of our journal are not dependent on us alone but on others including our amazing authors, reviewers, copyediting team and of course our readers. In recognition of the hard work, commitment and engagement of all these people, we have given extended periods for the different steps in the issue production process from reviews to revisions and even writing this editorial. As we do this, we remain defiant and difficult in the face of the publishing industry's environment which requires constant, enthusiastic engagement. This is mirrored in higher education more broadly as we are inundated with email after email about all the changes we must effect to our teaching, research and general working practices in the upcoming year. We need to rest and take restoration measures; we need time and resources to return to ourselves and using wench tactics is an important way to achieve this.

To support our rest and restoration, we have also been guided by slow scholarship principles which sideline the measures of productivity, competition and finances

underpinning the current institutional and structural approaches to this crisis. Instead we emphasise slower conversations and work to sustain ourselves, our health and the journal. We withdraw from institutional priorities which value automation-levels of speed so that we can sustain critical engagement with ourselves, our editorial practices and one another. We place worth and value then on ways of being and working which sustain us, nourish us and keep us grounded, reminding ourselves and one another that it is completely understandable things will take time, need more time, deserve more time than the industry wants us to believe. Again, this requires us to be difficult and defiant; a decolonial feminist technique which reconfigures what is seen as valuable and worthy. Here, we critically question what is currently being positioned as valuable and worthy in industrial terms and then re-order the list to move our rest, restoration and sustenance to the top. Getting things done is valuable and worthy but ensuring that we are rested and restored so that we can sustain ourselves, our engagement with the work we do, and our health are more so.

FLS is a community and we have been taking time in our meetings to make the space to check in with one another, hear how each member is doing and to practise building care and solidarity with and for one another. This is not limited to our meetings but even the spaces and platforms outside of our 'formal', scheduled interactions. We aim to be there for each other on social media and in collective and individual ways. In doing so, we seek to model best practices of feminist leadership. Inspired by Leila Billing's writings ([2020]), we first make the invisible, visible and cultivate cultures of mutual care. We make ourselves visible to one another, and to others—we want to be accessible to all of you and remind our colleagues and readers that like you, we are human beings struggling with our lives, health and commitments during this crisis. We are there for each other in an ongoing state of mutual care. In response to the terrible impacts this crisis and the already toxic aspects of the academy are having on minoritised ECRs and to make us more visible and model these mutual care principles, Zainab and Kay have secured funding to run a writing and mentoring workshop for 'Global South' feminist ECRs in the social sciences and humanities based in the UK. More information will be released on our social media channels, so please look out for it and apply if you are eligible and interested.

Finally, we want to model feminist leadership by imagining and celebrating alternatives. This is exhibited in our recent work to imagine what a life after existing models of open access could and should look like with our colleagues from other feminist and social justice journals (see below). The dreamers inside us envisage alternative ways to share our research and celebrate forms and productions of knowledges that are not given enough attention by us or the academy. In her work around complaint Sara Ahmed advances the formation of the 'complaint collective' ([2019]). When we complain, we object to something that should not be happening, but also because we are hopeful about how things could be different (Ahmed [2017]). As we speak out against existing publishing models, we are optimistic about how things can change and become connected with others who have the same complaints and same hope. This leads us to form a complaint collective with our fellow editors and those who are also concerned about the status quo giving us the necessary space, time and opportunity to collaboratively imagine, celebrate and speak out in hope for an alternative model of publishing that is healthier, more equitable and representative. Change and

movement are inevitable and as we face the challenges of the present and dream about how we can make things better for the future, we now celebrate several of our cherished colleagues who are moving on to new and exciting things.

Thanks to departing members: McCandless, Barker and Ashiagbor…and looking to the future

Before we introduce the papers that make up this issue of the journal, we want to acknowledge the work of our colleagues who have recently retired from their roles on the editorial board of FLS. Julie McCandless, Nicola Barker and Diamond Ashiagbor are irreplaceable members of our collective and we already miss their sage wisdom, warmth and dedication to FLS. All three joined the FLS editorial board in 2014, when the journal became independent of the University of Kent and were instrumental in guiding the journal as it has grown over the last six years. Julie McCandless is a powerhouse whose commitment to and influence on FLS cannot be overstated. She was a co-ordinating editor for the journal for most of her tenure and authors will remember her thoroughness, care and generosity as an editor. Nicola Barker was a book reviews editor during her time on the board and her invaluable contributions to our lively discussions and decision-making processes filled our time together with warmth and laughter. Finally, Diamond Ashiagbor, as well as serving as a book review editor for a significant period of her tenure, brought such vast experience and rigour to her role on the editorial board we will dearly miss her wise counsel. We send our love and solidarity with these wonderful colleagues (and fellow wenches) and wish them well as they continue to blaze a feminist trail for us.

And so, we are on the lookout for some more wonderful colleagues to join our editorial board. We have released a call for members aiming to recruit colleagues from the UK and Ireland through an application process. If you are interested in joining the board, please do apply. We want the board to be as representative as possible and especially encourage colleagues with a feminist background at any career stage from minoritised groups to apply. If you have any questions about applying, please do get in touch with us, we would be delighted to tell you just how much fun it is to be a wench in the works.

Introducing Volume 28 Issue 2

This issue of the journal includes some remarkable feminist legal scholarship, notable for its breadth, both scholarly and geographically. Caroline Dick's article entitled 'Sex, Sexism, and Judicial Misconduct: How the Canadian Judicial Council Perpetuates Sexism in the Legal Realm' is a fascinating and sobering look bias in decisions of the Canadian Judicial Council. Dick considers two separate judicial misconduct complaints adjudicated by the Council, one in which a male judge exhibited bias against women while adjudicating a sexual assault trial and a second in which graphic, sexual pictures of a female judge were posted on the internet without her knowledge or consent. Dick concludes that the decisions of the Council

indicate that it is itself perpetuating gendered stereotypes informed by the notional ideal victim, further perpetuating sexism both in Canadian courtrooms and among the judiciary.

In our second article of this issue, Maame Efua Addadzi-Koom carefully examines the history and effectiveness of the 2003 Maputo Protocol, a uniquely African instrument on women's rights that was established with the promise of addressing the regional peculiarities of African women. Analysing what little case law there is invoking the Protocol and concerning gender-based violence against women, Addadzi-Koom takes stock of the potential of the Protocol and the burgeoning due diligence principle on the women's rights jurisprudence of the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice (ECCJ). Addadzi-Koom concludes her discussion with some recommendations arguing that the Protocol and the due diligence principle should be more widely applied by the ECCJ to centre women's rights in the sub-region and beyond.

In '"Is this a time of beautiful chaos?"': Reflecting on international feminist legal methods' Faye Bird delves deep into feminist jurisprudence with an intriguing interrogation of Margaret Radin's work, and in particular, her distinction between 'ideal' and 'non-ideal' to evaluate different methodologies for critiquing international law and institutions. Bird asserts that (re)viewing Radin's framework in this context presages a new and more fruitful feminist pluralism through which we might better navigate institutional strategising.

Having featured heavily in Faye Bird's foregoing article, in our next paper Dianne Otto reflects artfully on the latest iteration of the Feminist Judgments Project in her review essay: "Feminist Judging in Action: Reflecting on the *Feminist Judgments in International Law* Project". Otto observes aspects of the feminist judgments that were transformative, before turning to the contributors' 'Reflections', which highlight some of the obstructions encountered and compromises made in the processes of judging. Otto concludes that the new collection makes a useful and compelling contribution to concretising feminist methods and highlighting the role of international jurisprudence as a feminist endeavour, while contributing to the insight of the Feminist Judgments Project more broadly by exposing the scope and limits of justice delivered by the legal form of judging.

The issue is completed by book reviews of three exciting new titles, all of which speak to issues of immediate concern to feminist legal scholars: Eva Nanopoulos reviews Honor Brabazon's wonderful edited collection *Neoliberal Legality: Understanding the Role of Law in the Neoliberal Project;* Lynsey Mitchell considers the *Research Handbook on Feminist Engagement with International Law,* edited by Susan Harris Rimmer and Kate Ogg and; Felicity Adams reviews Emma K Russell on *Queer Histories and the Politics of Policing.* We are, as always, eternally grateful for the generosity and collegiality of our reviewers, without whom the journal could not function.

We conclude this editorial with the recently written feminist and social justice editors' collaborative statement of intent on the values and principles we wish to adopt and embody in our work and efforts to survive, thrive and maybe even dismantle parts of the academic publishing machine. Our journey and vital conversations around and towards health

continue as we try to become better editors, academics and women: taking the time and resources, to be our best (and healthiest) wench selves.

After Open Access: Collaborative Publishing for Social and Environmental Justice

We are a collective of intersectional feminist and social justice journal editors.

We reject the narrow values of efficiency, transparency and compliance that inform current developments and policies in open access and platform publishing.

Together, we seek further collaboration in the development of alternative publishing processes, practices and infrastructures imbued with the values of social and environmental justice.

Open Access is Not—Yet—Open

The dominant model of open access is dominated by commercial values. Commercial licenses, such as CC-BY[7] are mandated or preferred by governments, funders and policy makers who are effectively seeking more public subsidy for the private sector's use of university research, with no reciprocal financial arrangement (Berry 2017).

Open access platforms such as academia.edu are extractive and exploitative. They defer the costs of publishing to publishers, universities and independent scholars, while selling the data derived from the uses of publicly funded research. As such they represent the next stage in the capitalisation of knowledge.

Commercial platforms are emphatically not open source and tend towards monopoly ownership. Presenting themselves as mere intermediaries between users, they obtain privileged access to surveil and record user activity and benefit from network effects.

A major irony of open access policy is that it aims to break up the giants of commercial journal publishing but facilitates existing or emerging platform monopolies. The tech industry—now dominating publishing, and seeking to dominate the academy through publishing—having offered open access as a solution to the ills of scholarly publishing is currently offering solutions to the problems caused by open access including discoverability, distribution, digital preservation and the development and networking of institutional repositories that stand little to no chance of competing with academia.edu.

Platforms are not only extractive but have material effects on research, helping to effect a movement upstream in the research cycle whereby knowledge is redesigned, automatically pre-fitted for an economy based on efficiency, competition, performance, engagement or impact. Alongside the transformative agreements currently being made between commercial journal publishers (mainly) and consortia led by powerful universities, publishers such as Elsevier are gaining greater access to the research cycle and to the data currently owned by universities.

Open access benefits commercial interests. The current model also serves to sideline research and scholarship produced outside of universities altogether, creating financial

barriers to publishing for scholars outside of the Global North/West and for independent scholars, as well as for early career researchers and others whose institutional affiliation is, like their employment status, highly precarious and contingent, and for authors who do not have the support of well-funded institutions and/or whose research is not funded by research councils.

Moreover, STEM fields and preprint platforms are determining the development of open access publishing cultures. These are forms of content management that offer cost reduction and other efficiencies by erasing the publisher and minimising editorial function. They raise questions of quality assurance and further the technologisation, standardisation and systematisation of scholarly research such as the automation of peer review, and the disaggregation of journals and books into article or article-based units that can be easily monitored and tracked.

Therefore, the underlying values of widening participation, public knowledge and the fair sharing of resources need to be reclaimed. Platforms should be refitted for AHSS scholarship (where speed, for example, is not an indicator of the importance of research) and integrated with more conventional modes of dissemination and distribution more suited to the field and its preference for print monographs.

Platform development should be distributed and institutionally owned and instead of replacing the publisher-as-problem, it should recognise and represent a more diverse set of publishing interests, stemming from scholar-led and university press publishers that are mission-driven and not-for-profit. It should enable and sustain the innovation generated through intellectual kinship across diaspora spaces.

After Open Access

Open access reaches into, and disrupts the academy through policy mandates that are, at present, unfunded or underfunded and that defer more of the costs of publishing onto a sector that could not support them even before the Covid-19 pandemic and its catastrophic effect on institutional finances as well as individual lives and wellbeing.

As a collective of feminist and social justice journal editors we believe that journal publishing during and after the pandemic should seek to end the exploitation of scholarly labour and foreground a new ecological economics of scholarly publishing based on cooperation and collaboration instead of competition; responsible house-holding, or careful management of the environment rather than the extraction; and the fair-sharing of finite resources (such as time and materials).

Rather than extracting more resource (including free labour) from an already depleted and uneven sector, thereby further entrenching inequalities within and between universities globally, and sidelining scholarship produced outside of universities altogether, journal publishing after open access should be responsive and responsible toward the wellbeing, values and ambitions of diverse scholars and institutions across AHSS and STEM in the Global South and the Global North.

We will learn from, and engage with other collaborative ventures such as AmeliCA in Latin America,[8] Coko in the US[9] and COPIM in the UK.[10] Building on these initiatives, which are primarily concerned with implementing open science or open humanities agendas, we are inaugurating a more radical project of reevaluating and reorganising journal publishing:

- replacing the values of efficiency, transparency and compliance with those of equality, diversity, solidarity, care and inclusion

- providing a more sustainable and equitable ecological economics of scholarly publishing in tune with social and environmental justice

- working collectively and collaboratively rather than competitively

- thinking and acting internationally, rather than through parochial national or regional policies

- working across publishing and the academy with a view to responsible house-holding and accountability in both sectors

- seeking to work across funding and institutional barriers, including between STEM and AHSS scholars

- seeking further collaborations and partnerships in order to build new structures (disciplines, ethics, processes and practices of scholarship including peer review, citation, impact, engagement and metrics) and infrastructures to support a more healthy and diverse publishing ecology

- challenging the technologisation and systematisation of research by working to increase our visibility as editors and academics making us and our publications more accessible and approachable for those who are minoritised in academic publishing

Publishing after open access does not have a resolution (let alone a technological solution) or endpoint, but rather is a continual process of discussion, controversy-making and opening up to possibilities. We do not know what journal publishing after open access is, but we do know that we must work together in order to create a just alternative to the existing extractive and predatory model, an alternative that operates according to a different set of values and priorities than those that dominate scholarly publishing at the moment. These values and priorities need to inform or constitute new publishing systems committed to the public ownership rather than the continued privatisation of knowledge.

We recognise that the choice we face is not between open and closed access, since these are coterminous, but between publishing practices that either threaten or promote justice. We fully recognise the scale of the challenge in promoting justice against the global trend of entrenched populism, nationalism and neoliberalism. Collective action and intervention is a start point, and we take inspiration from the recent statement issued by The Black Writers' Guild.[11]

Our open exploration of the future of journal publishing will be informed by the history of radical and social justice publishing and by intersectional feminist knowledge and

communication practices that are non-binary, non-hierarchical, situated, embodied and affective. Against the instrumentalisation and operationalisation of knowledge, we will foreground both validation and experimentation, authority and ethics. We will ask, against a narrow implementation of impact and metrics, what really counts as scholarship, who gets to decide, who gets counted within its remit, and what it can still do in the world. We believe that knowledge operates in, rather than on the world, co-constituting it, rather than serving as a form of mastery and control. The re-evaluation of knowledge and its dissemination is, therefore, we believe, a necessary and urgent form of re-worlding.

We are open to other journals joining this collective. If you are interested please get in touch with any of the signatories below:

- European Journal of Cultural Studies

- European Journal of Women's Studies

- Feminist Legal Studies

- Feminist Theory

- The Sociological Review

Footnotes

[1] https://twitter.com/FLS_journal/status/1273903728530272256.

[2] https://www.springer.com/journal/10691/updates/18223880.

[3] The term BAME and what it represents is overridden with issues, but we include this here because it was cited in the original studies of the effects of the pandemic on minoritised communities in the UK.

[4] Zainab Naqvi and Kay Lalor have recently secured a grant from Feminist Review Trust to run a workshop for 'Global South' feminist ECRs based in the UK who work in the social sciences and humanities. See https://www.feminist-review-trust.com/awards/.

[5] We joined with many colleagues in signing this open letter to demand an immediate cancelation of the publication deadline: https://femrev.wordpress.com/2020/04/30/call-for-the-immediate-cancellation-of-the-ref-2021-publication-period/. 1 May 2020.

[6] We support this open letter that has been produced by ten Black women colleagues to call on UKRI for transparency and accountability regarding this: https://knowledgeispower.live/about/. 18 August 2020. The letter points out that according to HESA data, only 1.3% of full-time research positions in the UK are awarded to Black and mixed heritage women exposing the seriousness of this marginalisation where Black researchers cannot even get grants to do research with their own communities.

[7] CC-BY is the creative commons attribution license, allowing for commercial reuse as long as the original author is credited.

[8]https://amelica.org/index.php/en/home/.

[9]https://coko.foundation/.

[10]https://re.ukri.org/news-events-publications/news/re-awards-2-2m-to-project-to-improve-open-access-publishing/.

[11]https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/jun/15/black-writers-guild-calls-for-sweeping-change-in-uk-publishing?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other.

References

1. Aaltola Mika. *Understanding the Politics of Pandemic Scares: An Introduction to Global Politosomatics.* London: Routledge; 2012. [Google Scholar]

2. Adebisi, Foluke. 2019. Universities in the Global North and Legacies of Slavery. *Foluke's African Skies*. https://folukeafrica.com/universities-in-the-global-north-legacies-of-slavery/. Accessed 17 August 2020.

3. Ahmed, Sara. 2017. Complaint as Diversity Work. *feministkilljoys*. https://feministkilljoys.com/2017/11/10/complaint-as-diversity-work/. Accessed 17 August 2020.

4. Ahmed, Sara. 2019. Why Complain? *feministkilljoys*. https://feministkilljoys.com/2019/07/22/why-complain/. Accessed 17 August 2020.

5. Anumo, Felogene. 2020. Unchecked corporate power paved the way for COVID-19 and globally, women are at the frontlines. *Cambridge Core*. https://www.cambridge.org/core/blog/2020/03/17/unchecked-corporate-power-paved-the-way-for-covid-19-and-globally-women-are-at-the-frontlines/. Accessed 17 August 2020.

6. Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development. 2020. COVID-19 Highlights the Failure of Neoliberal Capitalism: We Need Feminist Global Solidarity. *APWLD.org.*https://apwld.org/covid-19-highlights-the-failure-of-neoliberal-capitalism-we-need-feminist-global-solidarity/. Accessed 17 August 2020.

7. Berry, David. 2017. The Uses of Open Access. STUNLAW, *Philosophy and Critique for a Digital Age.*http://stunlaw.blogspot.com/2017/02/the-uses-of-open-access.html. Accessed 19 August 2010.

8. Biehl João. Theorizing Global Health. *Medicine Anthropology Theory.* 2016;3(2):127–142. [Google Scholar]

9. Billing, Leila. 2020. What does Feminist Leadership Look Like in a Pandemic? *Medium*. https://medium.com/@leila_billing/what-does-feminist-leadership-look-like-in-a-pandemic-35b2ee0eb994. Accessed 17 August 2020.

10. Bonhomme, Edna. 2018. Epidemics and Global History: The Power of Medicine in the Middle East. *Issuu.com*. https://issuu.com/isrf/docs/isrf_bulletin_issue_xvii/s/12392. Accessed 17 August 2020.

11. Bonhomme, Edna. 2020. Coronavirus, Colonization, and Capitalism. *Common Dreams*. https://www.commondreams.org/views/2020/03/17/coronavirus-colonization-and-capitalism. Accessed 17 August 2020.

12. Cook, Tim, Emira Kursumovic, Simon Lennane. 2020. Exclusive: deaths of NHS staff from covid-19 analysed. *HSJ*. https://www.hsj.co.uk/exclusive-deaths-of-nhs-staff-from-covid-19-analysed/7027471.article. Accessed 17 August 2020.

13. Conaghan, Joanne. 2020. Covid-19 and Inequalities at Work: A Gender Lens. *Futures of Work*. https://futuresofwork.co.uk/2020/05/07/covid-19-and-inequalities-at-work-a-gender-lens/. Accessed 17 August 2020.

14. Das Veena. *Affliction: Disease Health and Poverty (Forms of Living)* New York: Fordham UP; 2014. [Google Scholar]

15. Fassin Didier. That Obscure Object of Global Health. In: Inhorn Marcia, Wentzell Emily., editors. *Medical Anthropology at the Intersections: Histories, Activisms, and Futures.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press; 2012. pp. 95–115. [Google Scholar]

16. Fazackerley, Anna. 2020. Women's research plummets during lockdown - but articles from men increase. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/may/12/womens-research-plummets-during-lockdown-but-articles-from-men-increase. Accessed 17 August 2020.

17. Fletcher Ruth, McCandless Julie, Russell Yvette, Thomas Dania. On being uncomfortable. *Feminist Legal Studies.* 2016;24(2):121–126. doi: 10.1007/s10691-016-9325-9. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar]

18. Fletcher Ruth, Ashiagbor Diamond, Barker Nicola, Cruz Katie, El-Enany Nadine, Godden-Rasul Nikki, Grabham Emily, Keenan Sarah, Manji Ambreena, McCandless Julie, McGuinness Sheelagh, Ramshaw Sara, Russell Yvette, Samuels Harriet, Stewart Ann, Thomas Dania. Wench tactics? Openings in conditions of closure. *Feminist Legal Studies.* 2017;25(1):1–23. doi: 10.1007/s10691-017-9355-y. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar]

19. Fletcher, Ruth. 2020. Playing with the slow university? Thinking about rhythm, routine and rest in decelerating life. Presentation at QMUL 18 June (unpublished).

20. Franklin Sarah. Sexism as a means of reproduction: Some reflections on the politics of academic practice. *New Formations.* 2015;86:15–33. doi: 10.3898/NEWF.86.01.2015. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar]

21. Flint Adrian, Hewitt Vernon. Colonial tropes and HIV/AIDS in Africa: sex, disease and race. *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics.* 2015;53(3):294–314. doi: 10.1080/14662043.2015.1051284. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar]

22. Graham Laura, Raj Senthorun, Munro Vanessa, Westmarland Nicole, Wheatle Seshauna, Sanders Teela, Russell Yvette, Maine Alexander. Dialogue on the Impact of Coronavirus on Research and Publishing. *International Journal of Gender, Sexuality and Law.* 2020;1(1):403–417. doi: 10.19164/ijgsl.v1i1.1003. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar]

23. Indigenous Action. 2020. Rethinking the Apocalypse: An Indigenous Anti-Futurist Manifesto http://www.indigenousaction.org/rethinking-the-apocalypse-an-indigenous-anti-futurist-manifesto/. Accessed 17 August 2020.

24. Magenya, Sheena. 2020. Making a Feminist Internet in Africa: Why the Internet Needs African Feminists and Feminisms. *GenderIT.org.*https://www.genderit.org/editorial/making-feminist-internet-africa-why-internet-needs-african-feminists-and-feminisms. Accessed 17 August 2020.

25. Mountz Alison, Bonds Anne, Mansfield Becky, Loyd Jenna, Hyndman Jennifer, Walton-Roberts Margaret, Basu Ranu, et al. For slow scholarship: A feminist politics of resistance through collective action in the neoliberal university. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies.* 2015;14(4):1235–1259. [Google Scholar]

26. Msimang, Sisonke. 2020. Homesick: Notes on a Lockdown. *Africa Is a Country.*https://africasacountry.com/2020/03/homesick-notes-on-lockdown. Accessed 17 August 2020.

27. Naqvi Zainab Batul, Fletcher Ruth, Ashiagbor Diamond, Cruz Katie, Russell Yvette. Back at the kitchen table: Reflections on decolonising and internationalising with the Global South socio-legal writing workshops. *Feminist Legal Studies.* 2019;27(2):123–137. doi: 10.1007/s10691-019-09409-y. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar]

28. Otto Dianne, Grear Anna. International Law, Social Change and Resistance: A Conversation Between Professor Anna Grear (Cardiff) and Professorial Fellow Dianne Otto (Melbourne) *Feminist Legal Studies.* 2018;26(3):351–363. doi: 10.1007/s10691-018-9393-0. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar]

29. Platt, Lucinda and Ross Warwick. 2020. Are some ethnic groups more vulnerable to COVID-19 than others? *The Institute for Fiscal Studies*. https://www.ifs.org.uk/inequality/are-some-ethnic-groups-more-vulnerable-to-covid-19-than-others/. Accessed 17 August 2020.

30. Robin, Corey. 2020. The Pandemic Is the Time to Resurrect the Public University. *The New Yorker.*https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/the-pandemic-is-the-time-to-resurrect-the-public-university. Accessed 17 August 2020.

31. Rutazibwa Olivia U. On babies and bathwater: Decolonizing International Development Studies. In: de Long Sara, Icaza Rosalba, Rutazibwa Olivia U., editors. *Decolonization and Feminisms in Global Teaching and Learning.* Abingdon: Routledge; 2018. pp. 192–214. [Google Scholar]

32. Rutazibwa, Olivia. 2020. The Corona Pandemic Blows the Lid off the Idea Western Superiority https://oliviarutazibwa.wordpress.com/2020/04/12/the-corona-pandemic-blows-the-lid-off-the-idea-of-western-superiority/. Accessed 17 August 2020.

33. Shire, Warsan. No date. What They Did Yesterday Afternoon. *Verse*. https://verse.press/poem/what-they-did-yesterday-afternoon-6524900794187889060. Accessed 17 August 2020.

34. Siddique, Haroon. 2020. British BAME Covid-19 death rate 'more than twice that of whites'. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/01/british-bame-covid-19-death-rate-more-than-twice-that-of-whites. Accessed 17 August 2020.

35. Siyada. 2020. Coronavirus Pandemic in the Shadow of Capitalist Exploitation and Imperialist Domination of People and Nature—Statement by the Regional Secretariat for the North African Network for Food Sovereignty. *Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debt*. https://www.cadtm.org/Coronavirus-Pandemic-in-the-Shadow-of-Capitalist-Exploitation-and-Imperialist. Accessed 17 August 2020.

36. Step Up Migrant Women Campaign UK. 2020. Migrant Women: Failed by the State, Locked in Abuse. *Step Up Migrant Women*. https://stepupmigrantwomen.org/2020/06/26/migrant-women-failed-by-the-state-locked-in-abuse/. Accessed 17 August 2020.

37. Stoler Ann L. *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times.* Durham: Duke UP; 2016. [Google Scholar]

38. United Nations. 2020. Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women. 9 April. https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1406. Accessed 17 August 2020.

39. van Marle, Karin. 2019. Law & Critique: "Life is not simply fact" – aesthetics, atmosphere & the neoliberal university. *Critical Legal Thinking*. https://criticallegalthinking.com/2019/04/30/law-critique-life-is-not-simply-fact-aesthetics-atmosphere-the-neoliberal-university/. Accessed 17 August 2020.

40. Wenham Clare, Smith Julia, Morgan Rosemary. COVID-19: The gendered impacts of the outbreak. *The Lancet.* 2020;395(10227):846–848. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30526-2. [PMC free article] [PubMed] [CrossRef] [Google Scholar]

41. White Alexandre R. The art of medicine – Historical Linkages: epidemic threat, economic risk, and xenophobia. *The Lancet.* 2020;395(10232):1250–1251. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30737-6. [PMC free article] [PubMed] [CrossRef] [Google Scholar]

42. WHO. 2010. What is a pandemic? https://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/frequently_asked_questions/pandemic/en/. Accessed 17 August 2020.