

Social Justice Watch 0729

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The KarenBecky meme has officially gone too far

What if your identity doesn't matter at all

'Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982' offers Western MeToo activists a chance to catch up to radical Korean feminists

来源：Social Justice Watch

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 <p>#FREEJAGGINOW</p>	<p>Jagtar Singh Johal ("Jaggi") is a British Sikh activist who was arrested in India in November 2017 while visiting for his wedding. Since his arrest, NO evidence has been heard against him and NO formal charges have been brought. Without any evidence or formal charges, Jaggi's detainment in jail for over TWO YEARS is illegal</p>
<p>Jaggi was a popular Sikh activist who spoke out against the Indian government and the 1984 Sikh genocide. Jaggi's arrest and detainment is the latest in India's prolonged history of silencing Sikhs who call attention to human rights abuses carried out by India.</p>	<p>Jaggi has been in jail now for 950 days WITHOUT a trial or conviction. He reported to his family that he is being tortured in jail by electric shock and sleep deprivation. The International Rehabilitation Council (IRCT) has found reasonable grounds to believe Jaggi was tortured in jail. India has yet to address these allegations. India continues to delay legal proceedings as well as refusing to allow an independent medical exam of Jaggi. India's lack of due process and transparency in this case is egregious.</p>

The term Womxn (/ˈwʊmən/), used by some feminists, especially in the intersectional feminist movement, is one of several alternative spellings of the English word woman. It is used to avoid the spelling woman (which contains and derives from men), and to foreground transgender, nonbinary, and non-white women.



Mother and grandmothers join the resistance in Portland, Oregon! “Grammy says feds leave Portland!”

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[telegra.ph/Kim-Jiyoung-Born-1982-offers-Western-MeToo-activists-a-chance-to-catch-up-to-radical-Korean-feminists-07-28](#)

Telegraph

‘Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982’ offers Western #MeToo activists a chance to catch up to radical Korean feminists

Jamie Chang’s English translation of the best-selling Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982 will soon be available to Western readers, and its film adaptation is already screening throughout Asia. The novel, originally published in 2016, describes the sexism faced by a...

[telegra.ph/Megan-Rapinoe-and-AOC-join-forces-to-discuss-social-change-in-America-07-28](#)

Telegraph

Megan Rapinoe and AOC join forces to discuss social change in America
Megan Rapinoe will join forces with “some of America’s most innovative thought leaders” including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez for a new TV special on social change. Rapinoe, who led the US women’s football team to World Cup victory in 2019, has long been involved...

[telegra.ph/INTERVIEW-Julia-Beck-on-the-Equality-Act-sex-self-identification-and-why-she-perseveres-in-the-face-of-controversy-07-28](#)

Telegraph

INTERVIEW: Julia Beck on the Equality Act, sex self-identification, and why she perseveres in the face of controversy

Julia Beck is a lesbian from Baltimore, Maryland. She advocates for women-only spaces and honest conversations. This year, she represented Women’s Liberation Front (WoLF) at congressional hearings for the Equality Act and the

Violence Against Women Act. I...

[telegra.ph/Layla-Moran-Pansexual-MP-sees-huge-boost-in-Lib-Dem-leadership-race-07-28](#)

Telegraph

Layla Moran: Pansexual MP sees huge boost in Lib Dem leadership race
Pansexual Lib Dem MP Layla Moran has been endorsed by equal marriage architect Baroness Featherstone and other former MPs as she seeks the party leadership. Moran, who came out as pansexual in an interview with PinkNews earlier this year, is one of two candidates...

[telegra.ph/Hepatitis-C-Scotlands-NHS-Tayside-first-region-in-world-to-eradicate-virus-07-28](#)

Telegraph

Hepatitis C: Scotland's NHS Tayside first region in world to eradicate virus
A health board in Scotland has claimed to be the first region in the world to “effectively eliminate” hepatitis C. NHS Tayside, one of 14 NHS Scotland boards, started pioneering efforts to tackle the blood-borne virus in 2012. After targeting people who inject...

[telegra.ph/INTERVIEW-Nina-Paley-on-Seder-Masochism-censorship-and-her-fight-for-a-free-culture-07-28](#)

Telegraph

INTERVIEW: Nina Paley on ‘Seder-Masochism,’ censorship, and her fight for a free culture

“It’s scary here. There’s really legitimate threats happening. They’re saying I’m a white supremacist and a eugenicist, and that the community needs to protect itself. They’re very angry, and they are very aggressive.” Award-winning filmmaker Nina Paley is...

[telegra.ph/Ellen-DeGeneres-Show-under-investigation-over-toxic-working-culture-07-28](#)

Telegraph

Ellen DeGeneres Show under investigation over 'toxic' working culture
WarnerMedia has launched an investigation into the working environment on The Ellen DeGeneres Show following claims that the set is "dominated by fear". According to Variety, staffers received a memo last week from Warner Bros executives and the production...

[telegra.ph/INTERVIEW-Women-of-colour-speak-out-against-prostitution-07-28](#)

Telegraph

INTERVIEW: Women of colour speak out against prostitution
On February 21, SPACE International, a survivor-led organization fighting against the sex trade, hosted a groundbreaking event in London. "Women of Colour Against the Sex Trade" was the first event of its kind to take place in Britain, focusing specifically...

[telegra.ph/Lady-Red-Couture-GoFundMe-launched-after-drag-queens-death-07-28](#)

Telegraph

Lady Red Couture: GoFundMe launched after drag queen's death
Lady Red Couture's loved ones have set up a fundraiser to help with the late drag queen's funeral arrangements and hospital bills after ghouls set up a fake GoFundMe. It was announced that Lady Red, a pillar of the LA queer community, proud trans woman and...

[telegra.ph/The-KarenBecky-meme-has-officially-gone-too-far-07-28](#)

Telegraph

The Karen/Becky meme has officially gone too far
Today, yet another "Karen" video went viral online. This time, it seems a woman flipped off a male driver, one Karlos Dillard, who then followed her home and filmed her as she melted down into hysterics, posting the video online, which included her home address...

telegra.ph/Luke-Strong-Five-time-champion-trampolinist-just-came-out-as-bisexual-07-29

Telegraph

Luke Strong: Five-time champion trampolinist just came out as bisexual
Luke Strong, the 27-year-old five-time British champion trampoline gymnast, has come out as bisexual and said he “feels sorry” for homophobic bullies. As well as becoming a British champion on five separate occasions, Strong is a world and European medallist...

telegra.ph/Donald-Trump-Jr-has-Twitter-account-locked-for-COVID-19-misinformation-07-29

Telegraph

Donald Trump Jr has Twitter account locked for COVID-19 misinformation
Donald Trump Jr has had his Twitter account restricted for sharing a video of an anti-LGBT+ doctor who thinks people get sick because of sex with demons talking about coronavirus. Twitter confirmed it has limited Trump Jr’s account for “spreading misleading...

telegra.ph/JLos-pole-dancing-during-the-Super-Bowl-is-not-benign-07-29

Telegraph

J.Lo’s pole dancing during the Super Bowl is not benign
Embed from Getty Images Remember the meme that said, “Camping: when rich people spend a fortune to live outdoors like poor people”? That could similarly be extended to pole “sport,” where wealthy women pay to re-enact women’s sexual servitude. But don’t take...

telegra.ph/Surrogacy-is-not-a-gay-rights-issue-it-is-a-womens-rights-issue-07-29

Telegraph

Surrogacy is not a gay rights issue; it is a women’s rights issue

Embed from Getty Images On April 2, New York Governor Cuomo approved a bill legalizing commercial surrogacy despite opposition from women's rights advocates and fellow lawmakers. The Child-Parent Security Act (CPSA) was tacked on to a budget plan rushed through...

telegra.ph/Prostitution-is-already-destigmatized-its-not-helping-07-29

Telegraph

Prostitution is already destigmatized, it's not helping

Last week, 22-year-old Marylène Lévesque was murdered by a 51-year-old man named Eustachio Gallese. Lévesque was in prostitution, employed by a Quebec "massage parlour," where men paid her for sex. The Montreal Gazette reports that Gallese had been banned...

telegra.ph/Madonna-censored-by-Instagram-for-sharing-coronavirus-conspiracy-07-29

Telegraph

Madonna censored by Instagram for sharing coronavirus conspiracy

Madonna has been flagged for spreading "false information" on Instagram after she shared the same coronavirus conspiracy video that got Donald Trump Jr suspended from Twitter. The Queen of Pop shared a video of the controversial anti-LGBT+ doctor Stella Immanuel...

telegra.ph/What-if-your-identity-doesnt-matter-at-all-07-29

Telegraph

What if your identity doesn't matter at all?

In a matter of a week, we've all been yanked back to reality. Most of us, anyway. It seems some stragglers remain blissfully ignorant, continuing on with their lives much as they would have pre-global pandemic. Refusing to care about anyone but ourselves...

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Donald Trump Jr has Twitter account locked for COVID-19 misinformation

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Houston doctor Stella Immanuel

Donald Trump Jr has had his Twitter account restricted for sharing a video of an anti-LGBT+ doctor who thinks people get sick because of sex with demons talking about coronavirus.

Twitter confirmed it has limited Trump Jr's account for "spreading misleading and potentially harmful information related to COVID-19".

The president's son was one of many Trump-aligned figures to share a video of Houston doctor Stella Immanuel supporting Trump's baseless claim that

antimalarial drug hydroxychloroquine should be used to treat coronavirus.

In the video, the Nigerian-born doctor – who says she “went to medical school in West Africa” but does not specify where — falsely claimed that face masks aren’t necessary to stop the transmission of the virus.

Stella Immanuel thinks the government is run by reptiles.

Immanuel is a conspiracy theorist and a homophobe who has lashed out at the gay agenda and believes that medical issues are caused by sex with demons.

The doctor, who is also an independent baptist minister, has previously claimed that alien DNA is used in medical treatments, that the government is run by “reptilians”, and that scientists are making a vaccine to stop people from being religious.

The Daily Beast notes that she has frequently claimed that gynaecological problems are caused by people having sex in their dreams with demons and witches.



Immanuel also has a long and vocal record of public homophobia, uploading lengthy sermons to her YouTube channel asking: “How long are we going to allow the gay agenda, secular humanism, Illuminati and the demonic New World Order to destroy our homes, families and the social fibre of America?”

Her videos, which regularly attract hundreds of views, include an hour-long rant against the Supreme Court’s 2015 decision to legalise same-sex marriage.

She also appears to have promoted conversion therapy in the past, with her website claiming of homosexuality: “All kinds of sexual bondage can be broken through the power of the blood of Jesus. As you pray sincerely with a contrite/repentant heart, God will set you free from the chains of sexual perversion.”

Donald Trump Jr’s locked out of Twitter over ‘misleading and potentially harmful’ video.

Donald Trump Jr’s Twitter account will be locked for 12 hours, Twitter said.

The video was retweeted by the president himself and was also boosted by a string of right-wing figures. It has been pulled down from Twitter and also removed from Facebook for violating COVID-19 misinformation policies, but only after it racked up millions of views between the two websites.

Twitter’s action against Trump Jr is a long time coming, given his lengthy record as an anti-transgender MAGA troll.

Transgender cyclist Rachel McKinnon revealed in December that she faced death threats and disgusting abuse online after being targeted by Trump Jr.

He also trolled a queer news outlet with a “joke” about HIV.

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Ellen DeGeneres Show under investigation over 'toxic' working culture

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Ellen DeGeneres, after production of her show was suspended due to coronavirus, is back and is filming from her Los Angeles living room. (Screen capture via YouTube)

WarnerMedia has launched an investigation into the working environment on *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* following claims that the set is “dominated by fear”.

According to *Variety*, staffers received a memo last week from Warner Bros executives and the production company Telepictures informing them that they have engaged WBTV-owner WarnerMedia’s employee relations group and a third party firm.

This third party will interview current and former staffers about their experiences on set, which some say is rife with racism, fear and intimidation.

Ellen DeGeneres has long been plagued by rumours of “notoriously mean” behaviour behind cameras, seemingly at odds with her famously sunny disposition. The allegations have intensified as several reports of a toxic workplace environment surfaced over the past four months.

In April, as DeGeneres moved her daytime talk show to her Beverly Hills mansion, staffers complained they had been dismissed and ignored for weeks on end amid the pandemic.

With many of DeGeneres’ team facing job insecurity and pay cuts, it emerged that only four core crew members were hired for the remote version of the broadcast, and that an outside, non-union tech company had instead been hired to help the star film from home.

Later in mid-July, BuzzFeed published a report that painted a damning picture of alleged racism and intimidation on the show.

Ellen DeGeneres urged to ‘take responsibility’.

DeGeneres, 62, is said to have fired people for attending family funerals or taking medical leave, while producers joked that they’d mix up two Black employees because they had the same hairstyle.

One Black woman alleged that one of the show’s main writers said they only know the names of white employees, and people just “awkwardly laughed it off” rather than confronting it.

Others claimed that direct managers instructed lower-ranking employees not to speak to Ellen if they saw her around the office.

One staffer was reportedly ordered to take down a GoFundMe campaign to raise money for medical costs not covered by the show’s insurance.

Overall, the former staff blamed senior managers and producers for the toxicity, but stressed that as it’s DeGeneres’ name on the brand “she really needs to take more responsibility”.

“I think the executive producers surround her and tell her, ‘Things are going great, everybody’s happy,’” one staff member suggested. “And she just believes that, but it’s her responsibility to go beyond that.”



The show’s executive producers addressed the allegations in a joint statement to *Buzzfeed*.

“We are truly heartbroken and sorry to learn that even one person in our production family has had a negative experience. It’s not who we are and not who we strive to be, and not the mission Ellen has set for us,” the group said.

“For the record, the day to day responsibility of the Ellen show is completely on us. We take all of this very seriously and we realise, as many in the world are learning, that we need to do better, are committed to do better, and we will do better.”

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Hepatitis C: Scotland's NHS Tayside first region in world to eradicate virus

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A health board in Scotland has claimed to be the first region in the world to “effectively eliminate” hepatitis C.

NHS Tayside, one of 14 NHS Scotland boards, started pioneering efforts to tackle the blood-borne virus in 2012.

After targeting people who inject drugs — an approach the health board developed because 90 per cent of hepatitis C infections occur when people share needles — NHS Tayside said it has now eradicated the virus.

This comes four years ahead of the Scottish government’s target to eradicate

hepatitis C by 2024.

Around 20,000 people in Scotland have the chronic viral infection, which causes progressive damage to the liver.

Lorna Birse-Stewart, chair of Tayside NHS Board, said it was “the first region in the world to effectively eliminate the virus”.

She added: “It is testament to the work of the teams involved and, as a board, we are very proud of them.”

NHS Tayside did not reference LGBT+ people in its approach to tackling hepatitis C, but it spreads through the same networks as HIV among gay and bisexual men, according to a recent study reported by Aidsmap.

“The study investigators conclude that awareness of hepatitis C transmission routes should be promoted among gay and bisexual men, through PrEP clinics, social networking apps and sex-on-premises venues,” said Aidsmap, an HIV-related news website.

NHS Tayside’s approach to eradicating the virus, in collaboration with the University of Dundee, saw it eschew standard treatments — which wait for people to stop using drugs before offering them treatment — in favour of offering people at risk of infection help immediately.

This helps prevent the spread of the virus. The approach was made possible by challenging previous thinking that the lives of people who inject drugs are too chaotic to allow for the sort of sustained treatment that hepatitis C needs to achieve a cure, according to consultant hepatologist and gastroenterologist Prof John Dillon.

Dillon said that the disease consumes significant NHS resources, adding: “However, our view was that with the right approach, supported with appropriate resources, we could tackle what is a very significant problem and reduce the rates of hepatitis C infection.

“If you can offer treatment at a very early stage, while people who are infected are still actively injecting, when they have contact with other people who inject and share equipment with other people, their chances of transmission disappear because they’re not infected any more.”

The project began in a Dundee needle exchange and then expanded.

Scotland's public health minister Joe FitzPatrick said: "NHS Tayside should be congratulated and recognised for this achievement.

"The Scottish government remains committed to the elimination of hepatitis C in Scotland by 2024, and we will now work closely with NHS Tayside to understand how their achievement can be replicated in other regions across Scotland."

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J.Lo's pole dancing during the Super Bowl is not benign

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Embed from Getty Images

Remember the meme that said, “Camping: when rich people spend a fortune to live outdoors like poor people”? That could similarly be extended to pole “sport,” where wealthy women pay to re-enact women’s sexual servitude.

But don’t take my word for it. According to one upscale strip club manager in South Carolina, quoted in a 2016 study, “An exotic dancer is simply a product to be bought and sold.” Another club manager quoted in the same study explains, “What we serve is women.”

After J.Lo’s recent Super Bowl halftime show performance, many women expressed criticism in relation to her pole dancing. As is often the case when women push back against the normalization of the sex industry and of objectification, the response was less than fair. Could it be that women all over the world are just angry and prudish? Jealous of how exciting and empowering it must be to pole dance like J.Lo? Or could it be that some women are actually sick and tired of being peddled the lie that dancing like a stripper is empowering?

Consider the realities of how pole dancing “empowers” women:

- 100 per cent of dancers report assault on the job with 82 per cent saying they have been punched by customers.
- Over half of dancers report being digitally raped at work.
- In countries where women’s economic status increases (e.g. Canada), economically vulnerable women are trafficked from overseas to dance under poorer conditions.

- Earnings of US dancers are generally decreasing while demands for more nudity and physical touch are increasing.
- Dancers are increasingly expected to accept physical harassment, in part due to the proliferation of free pornography.
- Strip clubs are illegal in egalitarian jurisdictions like Finland where they are recognized as a driver (and consequence) of gender inequality.

The ugly realities of pole dancing are hand waved away, not just by men, but, increasingly, by women. This is understandable in some ways. Many of us want to defend our right to be sexual beings — to not feel ashamed or repressed about how we dance, have sex, or make money. The problem is that, instead of defending women’s right to understand and express our actual sexualities, women are defending the *commoditization* of our sexuality — a “sexuality” that has little to do with female pleasure, and everything to do with performing for the male gaze. Far from defending women’s sexuality, arguments in favour of pole dancing do the opposite.

The pole is not a symbol of female empowerment, rather it symbolizes voyeurism of women’s bodies. It wasn’t all that long ago that “sideshows” of “exotic” women toured the Western world. Indeed, the pole originates from these sideshows — the pole quite literally being the tent pole holding up the circus tent. During this time, in the 1890s, wealthier women began to be sold dance instructions teaching them how to re-enact “exotic dance” at home in order to sexually excite their husbands. Sound familiar?

There is something about fetishizing voyeurism of women’s bodies that is deeply embedded in our psyches. To the extent that, collectively, we cannot even conceive of female sexuality that doesn’t revolve around objectification. Women’s sexuality is so deeply intertwined with our exploitation that the two are often defended as one in the same.

What pole dancing offers us as women is the opportunity to try on how this sexual subservience feels — without the costs and stigma associated with actually being a stripper. This stripper role play may very well be interpreted as feeling sexy or empowered precisely because we are taught to view our own sexual subservience as titillating.

The sexual subservience of women is codified as sexy and exciting for both men

and women alike. This helps explain why objectification of women is misinterpreted as women's genuine sexuality, rather than exploitation of it. Even within groups of psychologists, I am told women can "explore their sexuality" by replicating striptease. By no fault of our own, most of us struggle to conceptualize a female sexuality not connected to objectification, because an unobscured female sexuality does not exist and cannot exist in the cultural psyche today, while women continue to be socially, economically, and politically unequal to men.

As Meghan Murphy wrote in 2016:

"It's worth asking ourselves why all these practices presented today as 'expressions of female sexuality' (from burlesque, to pole dancing, to the sexy selfies young women post on Instagram) are rooted so firmly in male-centred ideas about what 'sexy' means. Why does our so-called 'sexual empowerment' look so very similar to the pornified imagery men have long imposed on women?"

Andrea Dworkin offers an answer in her 1983 book, *Right Wing Women*:

"Men have constructed female sexuality and in so doing have annihilated the chance for sexual intelligence in women. Sexual intelligence cannot live in the shallow, predestined sexuality men have counterfeited for women."

The fallacy of pole dance as empowering is not benign, but a dangerous and manipulative lie, designed to undermine women's ability to truthfully engage with their sense of self, sexuality, and reality. It is gaslighting to continually insist "pole dancing is empowering" against all evidence that it is the opposite, and then claim women who state the facts about this evidence are just cognitively incompetent because they jealously wish they could do pole dancing too. What's worse is how many women will engage in this gaslighting in a futile bid to reclaim sexual agency.

It is unsurprising to me that many girls experience mental health and body image issues suddenly around sexual maturity, considering the amount of cognitive dissonance we must endure to live in a world where re-enacting subservience is presented as our only path to sexual maturity or exploration. As Adrienne Rich wrote:

"Women have been driven mad, 'gaslighted,' for centuries by the refutation of

our experience and our instincts in a culture which validates only male experience. The truth of our bodies and our minds has been mystified to us.”

What chance is there for women’s equality to be taken seriously when the baseline assumption is that all women, deep down, aspire to pole dance like J.Lo, and that, therefore, we cannot possibly have any rational concerns about the facts of stripping.

Women are expected to stay silent on the exploitation of women and its subsequent glamorization in pop culture lest we be chided as irrationally jealous and prudish. We must diligently fall into ranks, fawning over J.Lo’s pole prowess, partaking in strip club culture and signing up ourselves and our daughters to learn pole dance in the hopes that one day, we too might become empowered enough to be sexy.

Laura McNally is a registered psychologist, author, PhD, and professional shit-stirrer. Her commentary has been featured in The ABC, The Guardian, The Australian, The Ethics Centre, and more. You can find her at The Same Drugs with Meghan Murphy on Patreon and YouTube.



Guest Writer

One of Feminist Current's amazing guest writers.

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Lady Red Couture: GoFundMe launched after drag queen's death

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Lady Red Couture's loved ones have set up a fundraiser to help with the late drag queen's funeral arrangements and hospital bills after ghouls set up a fake GoFundMe.

It was announced that Lady Red, a pillar of the LA queer community, proud trans woman and beloved co-host of the *Hey Qween* YouTube series, had passed away in the early hours of Saturday (July 25).

She had been in intensive care for several days due to complications related to cyclic vomiting syndrome, but had seen her condition improve before she passed. She was just 43.

As tributes continue to pour in from the queer, trans and drag communities, Lady Red's sister Krystle Barnes and best friend Jonny McGovern, with whom she hosted *Hey Qween*, have launched a fundraiser to help the family with her

funeral arrangements.

“We are devastated by the loss of Lady Red as is the world and we want to be able to lay Lady Red to rest properly,” the GoFundMe page reads.

Monies raised will also help her family pay what they say are likely to be “astronomical” hospital bills related to her intensive care stay.

“As a Black trans woman Lady Red had many hardships on her journey but she persevered and brought so much joy to so many people,” the page continues.

“We ask that you give as much as you can to help put her to rest in the way that she deserves.”

McGovern had earlier in the week asked well-wishers to avoid a fake page set up in Lady Red’s name, which has since been deactivated.

Lady Red Couture remembered as a ‘beautiful soul’.

Since the tragic news of Lady Red’s passing was announced Saturday, tributes have poured in from those who knew her and worked with her.

“I am a black, american, trans woman, who is making a difference in this world. All I’m asking is that you love me, like I love you.” – Lady Red Couture’s last video message about #BlackLivesMatter and #BlackTransLivesMatter. please watch it.#RIPLadyRed
pic.twitter.com/ImS1tAaJPv
— elijah daniel (@elijahdaniel) July 26, 2020

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Layla Moran: Pansexual MP sees huge boost in Lib Dem leadership race

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Layla Moran said she wants to restore voters' trust in the party

Pansexual Lib Dem MP Layla Moran has been endorsed by equal marriage architect Baroness Featherstone and other former MPs as she seeks the party leadership.

Moran, who came out as pansexual in an interview with PinkNews earlier this year, is one of two candidates vying to become leader of the Liberal Democrats, facing interim leader Ed Davey.

Equal marriage architect backs Layla Moran in Lib Dem leadership race.

Former Liberal Democrat minister Baroness Featherstone, who was responsible for the introduction of equal marriage during the Coalition government, this week signed a letter in *The Independent* throwing her support behind Moran's insurgent bid for the leadership.

The letter, also signed by former MPs Julian Huppert, Martin Horwood and Stephen Lloyd, says: "As former Liberal Democrat MPs, we represented seats in both Leave and Remain and Conservative and Labour-facing areas.

"We are convinced that electing Layla Moran as leader would be the best way to win these seats back. Because to win back former Liberal Democrat strongholds and become competitive again across the country, we need to build a broad base of support amongst voters. That means we need to send a clear message we are renewed as a party.

"We must start listening to voters again, and show that we have learnt the lessons of the past decade. Layla Moran will provide the strong, liberal voice the party needs to cut through in the media and to stand out from the crowd."



Meanwhile, Davey has been backed by the party's former leader Tim Farron, best known for admitting to misleading the public about his belief that gay sex is a sin.

Leadership hopeful says trans people feel 'under attack'.

Moran has set out a progressive pro-LGBT+ vision during the campaign.

In an interview with the BBC's Nick Robinson last week, Moran said that trans people feel "under attack" in the UK.

She said: "I am really worried about where this debate is right now... and what I'm hearing from my trans friends in particular is that they feel very very under attack. In recent weeks, many are considering leaving the country because they feel it's going the other way.

"I am really really worried about those who equate trans women for example with predatory men, those are two very very different things.

"I stand firm in my support for the trans community and the Liberal Democrats as a whole always have. We're very proud of it, it's not dividing our party, it's something that we all agree is important, because at the core of liberalism is that you should be able to be who you are, and there is no conflict with fighting for feminism and women's rights and fighting for trans rights.

"We are all humans, we all deserve to be able to self-determine, we all deserve to feel safe and at the moment, the debate is actually having the opposite effect and it's very regrettable."

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Luke Strong: Five-time champion trampolinist just came out as bisexual

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Luke Strong of the British Trampoline Team warms up for a training session at Lilleshall National Sports Centre in 2016. (Photo by Alex Livesey/Getty)

Luke Strong, the 27-year-old five-time British champion trampoline gymnast, has come out as bisexual and said he “feels sorry” for homophobic bullies.

As well as becoming a British champion on five separate occasions, Strong is a world and European medallist, and won the “first British senior medal at a European level” for more than two decades.

In an interview with the *BBC Sounds LGBT Sport Podcast*, he explained that while this is the first time he has spoken publicly about his sexuality, his close

friends and family have known for a while.

He said: "I've never hidden anything and I'm really open about the fact that I'm attracted to both sexes, male and female, but I've never been in a relationship with either of them so I don't know."



Strong also discussed his experience of bullying at school when he began trampolining at the age of 11.

He said: “I think like most people in the LGBT+ community, growing up is always a little bit difficult.

“Especially wearing a leotard, doing gymnastics, doing the splits – you get the typical ‘you’re a fairy’ and the gay jokes and ‘gymnastics is a girls’ sport’. I had that growing up in school and then especially in high school it got a lot worse.

“There was a period of time in Year 8 and 9 where the bullying was kind of bad. I wouldn’t really talk about trampolining because I was embarrassed.”

Finishing off a positive week with some new combinations

pic.twitter.com/fD5uZZLaUt

— Luke Strong ♂ (@Luke_strong2) March 9, 2019

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Madonna censored by Instagram for sharing coronavirus conspiracy

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Madonna has been flagged for spreading “false information” on Instagram after she shared the same coronavirus conspiracy video that got Donald Trump Jr suspended from Twitter.

The Queen of Pop shared a video of the controversial anti-LGBT+ doctor Stella Immanuel, whom she described as her “hero”. Immanuel believes, among many other outlandish ideas, that people get sick because of sex with demons who talk about coronavirus.

The video showed Immanuel supporting Trump’s baseless claim that hydroxychloroquine should be used to treat coronavirus. The FDA has warned

that the drug carries dangerous side effects and is not an effective treatment for COVID-19.

“The truth will set us all free! But some people don’t want to hear the truth,” Madonna wrote in her caption, also claiming that authorities were hiding the cure for the coronavirus.

The post appeared blurred with a “False Information” warning over the video. The text from Instagram continued: “Reviewed by independent fact-checkers.”

When users clicked further, they were shown a list of falsehoods in Madonna’s post. Fact-checkers note that there is not yet a cure for COVID-19 and that the drug hydroxychloroquine is not a cure, as Immanuel claims.

Unfortunately this isn’t the first bizarre coronavirus announcement we’ve seen from the star: earlier this year she delivered a surreal monologue about the pandemic being a “great equaliser” while sitting in a bubble bath strewn with rose petals.

Her soapy sermon remained on Instagram despite attracting criticism, but her latest post now appears to have been removed altogether.

The social media platform started flagging content for inaccuracies late last year as part of the social app’s commitment to “reducing the spread of false information”.

Twitter has begun doing the same, and yesterday the president’s son was suspended for posting a tweet in which he declared the video of Stella Immanuel a “must watch”.

The video was retweeted by the president himself and was also boosted by a string of right-wing figures. It has been pulled down from Twitter and also removed from Facebook for violating COVID-19 misinformation policies, but only after it racked up millions of views between the two websites.

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Megan Rapinoe and AOC join forces to discuss social change in America

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Megan Rapinoe will join forces with “some of America’s most innovative thought leaders” including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez for a new TV special on social change.

Rapinoe, who led the US women’s football team to World Cup victory in 2019, has long been involved in politics and has been recognised as a trailblazing activist since she kneeled during the national anthem at an international match in 2016.

The lesbian athlete made headlines in the summer of 2019 when she clashed with Donald Trump for telling a reporter: “I’m not going to the f***king White House.”

While the US president attacked her online, Rapinoe stood her ground and

refused to be silenced on issues like the anti-LGBT+ policies of the Trump administration and homophobia in sport, insisting that it would be irresponsible not to use her international platform to effect change.

On 1 August, *Seeing America With Megan Rapinoe*, a 30-minute talkshow special, will air on HBO Sports.

We have an opportunity to reimagine society and ourselves. Join me in a conversation with @AOC, @nhannahjones and @hasanminhaj to talk about the challenges we face as a nation and how we can move forward together. Seeing America with Megan Rapinoe premieres 8/1 at 10pm on @HBO
pic.twitter.com/zrUMPN4z4D
— Megan Rapinoe (@mPinoe) July 27, 2020

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Prostitution is already destigmatized, it's not helping

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Marylène Lévesque. (Image: Facebook)

Last week, 22-year-old Marylène Lévesque was murdered by a 51-year-old man named Eustachio Gallese. Lévesque was in prostitution, employed by a Quebec “massage parlour,” where men paid her for sex. The *Montreal Gazette* reports that Gallese had been banned from the massage parlor for being violent with other women working there, so Levesque agreed to meet him at a hotel.

In 2004, Gallese was given a life sentence for killing his girlfriend, Chantale Deschenes, who he beat with a hammer, then stabbed in the face and chest. Gallese reportedly covered her dead body with a comforter, then wrote, “A cunt is always a cunt” on the bedroom wall before turning himself in to police. This not a one off. He had a history of domestic violence, and had been convicted of assault against a previous partner in 1997.

Due to good behaviour in prison, Canada’s parole board downgraded Gallese’s

risk of reoffending from “high” to “moderate,” then granted him day parole at a halfway house in March.

According to the *Montreal Gazette*, visiting prostituted women was an approved part of Gallese’s Parole Board of Canada-approved “social re-insertion plan.” Though they recognized he could not safely have relationships with women, it was determined that Gallese should have his “sexual needs” met.

In September, after being granted a further six months of day parole, a summary of the board’s decision explains:

“Although you are still single and you say you aren’t ready to enter into a serious relationship with a woman, you are able to efficiently evaluate your needs and expectations towards women. During the hearing, your parole officer underlined a strategy that was developed with the goal that would allow you to meet women in order to address your sexual needs.”

It was due to this decision that Gallese was permitted to continue to abuse women, and gain access to Lévesque. It is unclear why the Parole Board of Canada would make such a determination, considering Canada’s current laws, which criminalize the purchase of sex. One might assume this is the result of a failure of Canada’s Liberal government to take seriously and enforce this law.

In response to Lévesque’s murder, Stella, a Montreal lobby group advocating the legalization of prostitution, claimed the incident signals a need for the government to decriminalize the purchase of sex and “destigmatize” prostitution.

But this has already happened, essentially, and it enabled Gallese to kill Lévesque. Prostitution is so normalized in our culture, that authorities deem buying sex a man’s right — not only harmless, but rehabilitative. Though Canada’s prostitution laws criminalize the purchase of sex, as well as pimping and keeping a “bawdy house” (brothel), “massage parlours” operate with near impunity and the police do little to go after johns in many provinces.

Sandra Wesley, Stella’s executive director, told *Vice*, “It is very obvious that criminalization of sex work facilitated the violence of this man.” She also claimed these kinds of laws — based on the Nordic model — means prostituted women are not able to “operate in a safe and secure environment.” The very case in question, though, demonstrates the emptiness of this claim. Levesque was working in a supposedly “safe and secure environment.” According to lobbyists

for the full decriminalization of prostitution, a “massage parlour,” hotel room, or apartment is an ideal location for prostitution. Indoors is safer than outdoors, they claim. Working out of brothels, we are told, ensures women are not subjected to violence. And yet, the women working in the Quebec massage parlour frequented by Gallese were not protected. In truth, those working under full decriminalization say they experience more abuse than they did before legalization.

Violence against prostituted women does not happen because of “stigma,” it happens because men who pay for sex seek out vulnerable women to abuse. And because they are permitted to do so with impunity. It also happens because prostitution inherently makes women vulnerable (they are alone with strange men who have no interest in their health, safety, or well being) and draws vulnerable women — women who are desperate and who have no other options. Men who pay for sex know this — they know the women they are paying have no other choice, otherwise they would not be there. They know they are in a position to behave in violent, abusive, cruel ways, and that there is little the prostituted woman can do about it. Men who pay for sex see these women as disposable, and are aware they are likely to get away with the abuse they inflict on them. They believe that’s what women in prostitution are for.

Had prostitution been stigmatized and had the law been taken seriously, Gallese would have not been allowed access to *any* women. If prostitution were viewed as another form of misogynist abuse, an exception would never have been made. If selling sex were not widely viewed as “a job like any other” or a necessary “service,” this situation would not have occurred.

One thing that will stop men from abusing women in the sex trade is accountability — that means *stigmatizing* men who purchase sex. Sending the message that those who exploit women by buying or selling them will not get away with it. Saying that women are human, and do not exist for men’s use — they are not things to be bought and sold and used and abused. The other thing would be removing access: ensuring men do not have the option of exploiting vulnerable women. Making it easier for men to find women to abuse will not curb violence.

Normalizing the sex trade has already happened. We joke about porn and prostitution as though it is harmless. We imagine that women in the sex trade enjoy themselves and are making an “empowered choice.” We act as though all

men use porn, go to strip clubs, and pay for sex. We think nothing of it. We tell them it's normal. It is a "need," after all. We don't think about the women and girls at the other end of these transactions or on the other side of the computer screen, and wonder about the physical and psychological impact of being degraded and abused day in and day out. We don't think about the circumstances that led them there in the first place. We treat them as one-dimensional objects.

One reason Marylène Lévesque is dead is that authorities consistently do not take men's violence seriously. They don't pay attention to histories of abuse, and they let men who have shown themselves to be dangerous slip through the cracks. Another is that prostitution has been successfully sold by groups like Stella as good for society, good for men, and good for women — both harmless and necessary. These kinds of lobby groups have argued for years that sex is a human right, and that men will be violent or abusive if they don't have access to porn and prostitution. Yet we can see clearly that the opposite is true. Treating sex and women's bodies as a right — something men are entitled to access — hurts women, particularly those women men are told do not matter, are not human, who are there to be used and discarded, who are there to fulfill a fantasy, no matter how dark.

Let us not use the tragic death of a young woman to further normalize the very thing that supported her murder.



Meghan Murphy

Founder & Editor

Meghan Murphy is a freelance writer and journalist. She has been podcasting and writing about feminism since 2010 and has published work in numerous national and international publications, including The Spectator, UnHerd, the

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Surrogacy is not a gay rights issue; it is a women's rights issue

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Embed from Getty Images

On April 2, New York Governor Cuomo approved a bill legalizing commercial surrogacy despite opposition from women's rights advocates and fellow lawmakers. The Child-Parent Security Act (CPSA) was tacked on to a budget plan rushed through in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, to provide paid sick leave for New York State, which has been hit hardest in the US, in an apparent attempt to prevent the surrogacy bill from being rejected a second time.

New York state legislators abandoned the CPSA last year after Gloria Steinem wrote an open letter to Gov. Cuomo, outlining the health risks and ethical concerns posed by the industry. She argued:

“Any legislation that legalizes and allows profiteering from body invasion — for instance, becoming an organ donor, an egg donor, or a surrogate womb for impregnation and nine months of pregnancy — must have many more safeguards than this legislation does. For all the years from menstruation until the end of fertility, it could turn the bodies of disenfranchised women, both U.S. citizens and legal and undocumented immigrants, into profit centers.”

In addition, over one hundred New York-based women's rights campaigners signed a letter expressing their opposition to the CPSA last May, including Taina Bien-Aimé, executive director of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women. According to Bien-Aimé:

“Both commercial surrogacy and prostitution are industry-driven — one by gestational surrogacy companies, and the other by a multi billion-dollar sex trade and its lobby. Both thrive on the vulnerabilities of disenfranchised people, especially women of colour. Both turn their profits on growing demand for women's bodies as commodities, and both kick open a wide door for sex and reproductive trafficking.”

Last year, state assemblywoman Deborah Glick, who became the first openly gay member of the legislature in 1991, told *the New York Times* that surrogacy is not centred on LGBT rights. “I’m not certain that, considering the money involved, that this is an issue for the broader LGBT community... It is pregnancy for a fee, and I find that commodification of women troubling.”

Though New York is only one of three US states that had not yet legalized commercial surrogacy, local legislation previously allowed for what is termed Compassionate Surrogacy, wherein a willing mother may volunteer to birth and give her infant to an intended family. Also protected under New York law was the ability for a mother to keep the child she delivers should she have a change of heart. The CPSA has now removed this right: “The law will make it clear that donors do not have parental rights or obligations and that those rights and obligations reside with the intended parents.”

Referring to women as “gestational carriers,” the bill provides no protection against the trafficking and exploitation of marginalized women over state lines. In order to be considered a “gestational carrier,” one must only have resided in New York for 90 days. Background checks are not required, meaning that anyone could potentially traffic women from any country into New York as a “gestational carrier.”

However, the CPSA was drafted with at least a few good intentions. For instance, the bill specifically allows the mother to make her own decisions about her health, which had not been a right previously protected under other surrogacy contracts globally. It has been standard procedure in multiple countries where commercial surrogacy is practiced, as in India, to allow clinics and intended parents to monitor a woman’s diet and exercise and to deny her pay for breach of contract should she be deemed negligent with her health. In this regard, the senators responsible for drafting the bill no doubt feel they are progressive, and possibly “compassionate” themselves. Yet it is not immediately clear why a state where non-profit surrogacy is already legal would seek to advance the commercialization of womb rental. That surrogacy has primarily been framed as a fight for LGBT rights rather than an issue impacting women’s rights is similarly baffling.

Indeed, New York state Senator Brad Hoylman, one of the key supporters of the CPSA, is a gay man who purchased his two daughters through a “gestational carrier.” He also sponsored a bill aiming to legalize the sale of breast milk in

order to create a breast milk industry, and advocates for the legalization of sex trafficking.

Writing for Buzzfeed, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo declared:

“By banning gestational surrogacy, we are saying to the LGBTQ community and those who struggle with infertility: You can’t have a child in your own state.”

Cuomo’s statement is not entirely accurate, and appears deliberately misleading. Gestational surrogacy refers specifically to transferring a fertilized embryo into a woman’s body to which she has no genetic connection. Surrogacy itself is not banned in New York — it is *commercial* surrogacy, along with gestational surrogacy, that are currently banned. It is legal for a woman to volunteer to act as a birth mother for another couple using IVF, or through natural conception, if she is not financially compensated.

Gestational surrogacy potentially involves the use of two women’s bodies: the egg donor, who is administered powerful hormones to put her body into a temporary state of menopause in order to better harvest her eggs, and a second woman to accept the fertilized embryo transplant and carry the fetus. The only reason intended parents would need to travel out-of-state would pertain to situations involving embryo transplantation, or if no women are willing to act as a “gestational carrier” without economic coercion.

Cuomo, along with supporters of the surrogacy industry, are attempting to portray the issue as an advancement of LGBT rights. Following Taiwan’s 2018 decision to legalize gay marriage, US surrogacy corporations flooded into the country. New York-based campaign group Men Having Babies (MHB) held their first conference in Taipei in 2019 to promote the rental of US women’s wombs by Chinese men. MHB has been actively organizing and campaigning to change international surrogacy laws. In 2019, for instance, the American-based organization held yet another conference in Belgium, asserting that gay men have a right to pay to use women’s bodies to reproduce for them.

Ron Poole-Dayan, founder and executive director at MHB, told the *Thomson Reuters Foundation*:

“We have been witnessing over the last three years, a growing interest from Asia — mostly Chinese — intended parents coming to the United States for surrogacy. People are starting to realize... the fact that they’re gay doesn’t mean

that they're not going to be able to have a full life including starting a family and having children."

Surrogacy is a *women's rights* issue, and not a human rights issue for homosexual men. This view removes women from the centre of the debate, reframing male entitlement to women's reproductive function as a pitiable cause to elicit sympathy from would-be progressives. The majority of lesbian couples do not have a pressing need to rent a woman's body. Even infertile couples have other options, such as IVF, though drugs involved in this type of treatment may increase a woman's risk of contracting fibromyalgia, ovarian cancer, or a fatal condition known as ovarian hyperstimulation (OHSS). The decision to take these risks is presumably motivated by the woman's own desire to have a child, rather than by economic coercion to produce a child for someone else (though coercion from a male partner to undergo IVF is not unheard of). Therefore, it is rather obvious that the commercial womb-rental industry confers the greatest benefit to same-sex attracted men, or infertile women, neither of whom undergo the myriad of health risks involved for women who give birth via surrogacy contracts.

Though the CPSA was supported by Democrats and championed by media and politicians as protecting the rights of the LGBT community by supporting their "right" to a family, the CPSA was based on the same principles used by conservatives to control women's reproductive capacity: namely, that the right to a child carrying one's own DNA (also known as paternity certainty) is a higher priority than the freedom, health, and lives of women.

Easier access to ethical adoption and addressing discrimination against same-sex couples is an issue of LGB rights; surrogacy is fundamentally concerned with female bodies, and no one, regardless of their orientation, has the right to pay for the use of a woman's body. It is a disservice to women and the LGB community alike to continue to frame the ability to rent women's bodies as a right — one that is inextricably linked to same-sex orientation. Bills that seek to regulate the industry often reveal their homophobia by excluding sperm donation, which benefits lesbian couples, or by also banning adoption for gay couples. Women must demand that this issue focus on the rights of women, or we will continue to have our rights legally bound to men's sexual rights.

But, perhaps to obscure this reality, the language of the CPSA went to great lengths to erase biological sex. A significant number of edits were made by

Democratic lawmakers wherein “mother” was crossed out and replaced with “gestational carrier,” or “person who gave birth.” Such terminology explicitly mirrors the way conservative anti-choice advocates view women, referring to women as “host bodies,” for example. In this case, “gestational carrier” is used to refer to the woman whose body is being used to gestate a fertilized embryo that does not carry her DNA, though “handmaid” might be a more appropriate term.

Similarly, many instances of the term “woman,” “man,” and “paternity” have been removed and replaced:

“A [woman] genetic surrogate agrees either to be inseminated with the sperm of a [man] person who is not her [husband] spouse or to be impregnated with an embryo that is the product of [an] the genetic surrogate’s ovum fertilized with the sperm of a [man] person who is not her [husband] spouse.”

Language is being deliberately obfuscated to cover up what this issue is really about: fundamentally, legalizing commercial surrogacy would secure male entitlement to paternity certainty — so a man can be assured the child is his genetic descendant. This is not a new concept — rather it is the basis of patriarchy. For centuries, men have subjugated women in order to secure their paternity.

At Fair Observer, Dianne Post explains:

“The birth mother is not in the place of another; she is the mother. That was the law in every country in the world until now. We always knew who the mother was — she was the one who gave birth. That is the first definition of a mother. We weren’t so sure about the father, which is why women’s freedoms have been curtailed so men could be assured of their lineage. Now, with DNA, we can be scientifically certain of the father. So the first ‘success’ of the surrogacy movement was to change the definition of the mother and remove the woman who gave birth from the frame. By applying the word ‘surrogate’ to the wrong person, it depresses the position of the birth mother but does not elevate the position of the other woman. Instead, the position of the sperm donor, or the father, is elevated as the only person with rights.”

In reality, a surrogate is someone other than the birth mother who raises a child; this means that commercial surrogacy refers to the birth mother as the improper

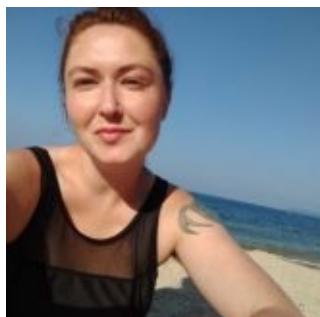
parent, while conferring authority and legitimacy to the male parent or intended parents. In this way, the true aim of the industry reveals itself: the commodification of the female body for the extraction of reproductive labour, in order to protect paternity certainty and replicate the male's genetic material for him.

This is especially troubling given that there are no official records kept regarding how many women die in the surrogacy industry. In January, Michelle Reaves died due to complications from a surrogacy birth. Reaves succumbed to a condition known as an amniotic fluid embolism. According to a statement from the Center for Bioethics and Culture (CBC):

"Recent studies have shown that surrogate pregnancies are different and are high-risk. Studies show that women pregnant with donor eggs (as in gestational surrogacy) have a more than three-fold risk of developing pregnancy induced hypertension and pre-eclampsia."

All surrogate pregnancies are medically classified as "high-risk" due to the use of hormones involved, and even egg donation confers risks of developing endometriosis, infertility, or the fatal condition of OHSS.

By passing the CPSA quietly and attaching it to a budget intended to help those suffering financial repercussions as a result of a global pandemic, New York lawmakers are sending a clear signal that they are deliberately ignoring women's opposition to the surrogacy industry, and that they value profit and male entitlement to use female bodies over women's safety and health. Surrogacy is a predatory, profit-driven industry — whether appealing to women's kindness through terms like "compassion" and "altruism," or exploiting marginalized women in economic need, it turns both women's bodies and children into a commodity to satisfy the desires of the wealthy for a child that carries their genetic material.



Mary Hickman

MARY HICKMAN HAS DONE VOICE WORK FOR THE ENGLISH AUDIO TOUR OF THE WAR AND WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS MUSEUM IN SOUTH KOREA. SHE IS CURRENTLY DEVELOPING A VOLUNTEER-RUN AUDIO PROJECT TO BRING AWARENESS TO FEMINIST WRITERS.

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The Karen/Becky meme has officially gone too far

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How the FUCK does Twitter allow this video to still be up? The dude posts her license plate number. It is COMPELTEL Y unclear what happened.

There is no context. The entire goal is to ruin this woman's life permanently over... flipping him off? 5 million views... <https://t.co/TDPRswcnVi>

— Jesse Singal (@jessesingal) June 23, 2020

Today, yet another “Karen” video went viral online. This time, it seems a woman flipped off a male driver, one Karlos Dillard, who then *followed her home* and filmed her as she melted down into hysterics, posting the video online, which included her home address and licence plate. Over eight million views later (sure to be more by the time you read this), and Dillard is selling t-shirts based on the incident.

It seems this is a hobby for Dillard, who has posted other similarly antagonistic videos, accusing women of “racism” (despite no evidence of racism) in an attempt to turn Karen virality into profit. Other t-shirts for sale on his Instagram profile include one with the words, “Karen... Are you OK?” and another reading, “Keep that same energy, Karen.”

The Karen meme has been misogynist from the get-go, originating from an anonymous male Reddit user, Fuck_You_Karen, who was angry at his ex-wife, named Karen, for taking custody of his children. In 2017, his misogynist rants became a subreddit, r/FuckYouKaren.

Recently, the meaning of “Karen” was said to refer specifically to middle class, middle aged white women who are so entitled they ask to speak to the manager when perturbed, but has since morphed into a specifically racist white woman, who “weaponizes” white, female fragility against largely black men. This connects to sexist tropes that claim women use their emotions, vulnerability, and tears to manipulate men.

What began as a joke has become more than that, and has moved into explicitly misogynist (and, in my opinion, dangerous) territory.

“Becky,” which originated as a means to refer to basic white women — the Uggs-wearing, Starbucks-buying, pumpkin spice-loving kind — probably young, probably blonde, probably not working class. Like “Karen,” I never found this to be particularly offensive, as I had little desire to defend boring people who love Starbucks, but what was once a joke has become something much more egregious.

Following someone to their home, doxxing, filming, and harassing them because they gave you the finger is unhinged. People are going to act like assholes in this world, and you need to learn to deal with that. Moreover, these viral videos, like the Amy Cooper/Christian Cooper bird watching/dog-off-the-leash incident, are always decontextualized. No one really knows what happened preceding the video, nor do they know why either party reacted as they did. We all know social media leaves little room for nuance, and far too many people enjoy a rage reaction over asking questions or considering they may not know the full story. The truth is that, today, people’s lives can be destroyed in an instant, via a viral post. And our culture is wielding that power with very little care.

While those participating in the mobs targeting the subjects of these currently popular Karen videos claim some form of racial justice, this is not an accurate representation.

This has little to do with race, and everything to do with a progressive left that has adopted woman-hating as political virtue signalling.

someone sent me this and told me they are being posted near Dufferin Mall
pic.twitter.com/KqKcasVE2o
— Jonathan Kay (@jonkay) June 16, 2020

Last week, journalist and editor Jonathan Kay tweeted a “Wanted” poster he’d come across in Toronto, depicting a young, blonde, white woman. The text below her face mocked her as a “Basic Bitch” — privileged, entitled, and unwoke. The image and text presents “Becky” as dangerous — the new enemy. The A.C.A.B. (All Cops Are Bastards) logo on the poster implies it likely was produced and distributed by young anarchist men. I wouldn’t be at all surprised if they were white men, considering the face of groups (or non-groups,

depending on who you ask) like Antifa.

The trend of presenting women as a threat extends beyond Becky and Karen. In recent years, Antifa, anarchists, trans activists, and leftists have targeted feminists who question the impact of gender identity ideology on women's rights as dangerous — even more so than male predators. Rhetoric that claims "TERFs kill" intentionally erases the fact that it is men who are overwhelmingly responsible for violence against both women and men (including trans-identified males). As a result, reversing this claim to say "Kill TERFs" or to show up at events discussing gender identity with cardboard guillotines with the words "TERFs and SWERFs step right up" written on them has become an acceptable form of "activism."

This has all happened within a left that has consistently ignored and even defended the misogyny, racism, and violence of prostitution and pornography, painting women who fight the sex trade as "whorephobic" and as causing harm to "sex workers." Everyone knows who is responsible for the abuse that happens to women in porn and prostitution. We can see it on PornHub or we can read about it in the news. Yet the left consistently fails to hold those men accountable for the harm they cause. No, no. The real problem is women. Terms like "TERF" (which means "trans exclusionary radical feminist," but, in practice, is used to smear anyone who questions gender identity legislation or ideology) and "SWERF" (which means "sex worker exclusionary radical feminist," but is used to smear women — even women who have worked in the sex trade — who wish to stop the universal violence and exploitation inherent to prostitution) exist to misrepresent, vilify, and end conversation. One cannot defend a "TERF" or "SWERF" any more than one can defend a "Karen" or "Becky," unless they would like to be pilloried as unwoke and bigoted themselves.

A few years ago, trans activists and their progressive allies adopted the term "cis" to refer to those whose "gender identity matches their sex." Putting aside the fact that no one's "gender identity" matches their sex, as whether or not a person is male or female has nothing to do with whether or not they identify with a list of sexist gender stereotypes, the term "cis" is said to denote "privilege." This means that a woman who understands she is female is, as per trans ideology, "privileged" over a man who desires to be viewed as a woman or who does not feel connected to masculine stereotypes. This is ridiculous, of course, as women are impacted by sexism on account of being born female, and are vulnerable to male violence regardless of how they identify. Understanding one

is female does not make a woman “privileged,” it makes her a sane human being. In other words, “cis” or “cisprivilege” completely erases the reality of sexism and male violence against women. Suddenly, we are to believe women pose a threat to males who identify as transgender. Just as we are now to believe “Becky” and “Karen” are so dangerous they deserve to be hated, harassed, and destroyed. Maybe punched. Maybe worse.

This is, I’m afraid, woman-hating. And it is dangerous. The popularity of the Karen meme has led people to seek out and invent Karens in order to gain followers and profit, as evidenced by Dillard’s racket. And rhetoric that positions feminists as dangerous, harmful “TERFs” has led to the acceptance of open violent threats against women, simply for speaking out in defence of women’s rights and spaces. Karen, Becky, SWERF, and TERF are nothing more than excuses to hate women. And I am tired of people participating and defending this misogyny simply because it is on trend, and because it results in applause from the male centred left.

Yes, women can be assholes. Yes, women can be racist. No, women are not all innocent victims. But this has become about much more than calling out annoying, racist, or entitled behaviour. And, in fact, I think it was always about more than that. Let’s stop this before someone gets (*literally*) hurt.



Meghan Murphy

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What if your identity doesn't matter at all?

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Stages of a quarantine meltdown

A post shared by Sam Smith (@samsmith) on Mar 19, 2020 at 7:43am PDT

In a matter of a week, we've all been yanked back to reality. Most of us, anyway. It seems some stragglers remain blissfully ignorant, continuing on with their lives much as they would have pre-global pandemic. Refusing to care about anyone but ourselves remains a popular pastime among humans, as ever.

GQ published a badly timed article last week, just days before reality (and panic) set in for most, profiling Ezra Miller — an actor I've never heard of and wish I had still not.

Miller is 27 years old, insists on being referred to as “they” or “them,” and has a personality to match these demands. He is intolerable, in other words. The fawning interviewer, who can’t have been more than 30 years old themselves, or they wouldn’t have fallen for the embarrassing charade of faux-intellectualism, conveyed through the use of as many big words as Miller could memorize, quotes the actor saying things like:

“Straightness and cis-ness and whiteness and racism, as in the belief in race, physical appearance as a determining factor for fucking anything, including ethnicity, ethnography — these are all like the circus, the carnival, the Hollywood instead of all the different storytelling practices... All these things are relatively recent colonial inventions.”

Genius! This is a man who knows his history (and can convey ideas in a clear, cogent way). Obviously, the notion that females are women and males are men is a modern invention of oppressors! Same with heterosexuality. Pre-colonialism, no one could tell what sex anyone was and no babies were produced

at all. That's why civilization fully collapsed in the 19th century, and the planet is now inhabited by aliens. Oh did you guys not learn that at college?

To support his historic expertise, Miller adds:

"We're better at sex than y'all. We're better at art. We're better at warfare. These are things carried in the old understandings of so-called, whatever-you-want-to-call-it: non-binary, queer, genderqueer, trans, gay, lesbian. Just like the neurodiverse peoples, these people are all sacred beings, superior to other beings."

I'm sorry, dear. But you are 27. You are definitely not better at sex than anyone. Moreover, anyone so narcissistic as to insist they exist outside material reality — those who identify as "non-binary, queer, genderqueer, and trans," in other words — is probably not much of a hero in bed. A chubby, polyamorous inside cat of a human, posting facetuned selfies of themselves in an attempt to force the world around them to validate their fuckability, is unlikely to thrive in warfare.

And here we are: in a time that has been compared, by numerous people, to World War III. It is major crisis, at very least, that will have a major impact. And where are the Ezra Millers of the world? The young trans-identified and non-binary warriors? Well, apparently joking about "boomers" dying from coronavirus; posting dramatic selfies of themselves fake crying outside their mansions; complaining that their cosmetic surgeries have been postponed, due to hospitals being overwhelmed by treating actual sick people; and buying lingerie.

Diana Willow Penrose Thomas — formerly David William Penrose Thomas — who has been writing a column for the *Telegraph* about his transition at 60 years old, and informed us last week that the pain of childbirth was comparable to having his legs lasered, says what he worries about the most, in terms of the impact of this pandemic, is his hair:

"My wondrous weaves need adjusting on a regular basis because the longer my hair grows, the more they detach from my scalp. If I can't get to the salon safely before the end of April, my lovely new 'do will be flapping around like a tarpaulin in a force-10 gale..."

It is a "terrible pandemic," Thomas knows, but nonetheless contributes that, "keeping up appearances feels important."

“The Four Horsemen may be riding down the road, but sisters are dyeing it for themselves,” Thomas writes, imagining thousands of women across the globe, fists up in solidarity with his vacuous insults.

It is true that we currently don’t have access to the luxuries many are accustomed to, and I’m not sure when we will again. But those of us with rational heads on our shoulders realize not only that what is important right now is not what will become of our manicures, but that, even if we are concerned, now is not the time to complain. Not when so many are suffering very real, very serious problems, and while we are all (or should be, in any case) fearful about what the future holds.

If anything, what we should learn from this is that, in the grand scheme of things, your pronouns; your complaints about “misgendering” and invalidation of your imagined uniqueness; and your overdependence on superficial, unnecessary cosmetic alterations like fillers, botox, weaves, laser hair removal, hormone treatments, and plastic surgery, should not be our top priority.

And don’t get me wrong, I have a rather superficial streak myself. But I also don’t feel it would be the end of the world if I had to file my own nails or if my roots grew out. I do feel it would be the end of the world, if, say, a deadly virus killed tens of thousands and our society collapsed, due to lack of employment, income, and access to food and healthcare. Oddly my existence and sense of self do not depend entirely on my ability to access a boob job, or to get my leg hair permanently removed. Nor would I fall to pieces if someone failed to recognize, based on my outfit, what my relationship to gender was, inside my head.

“Ezra Miller confirming that trans people are superior to other folks? Motion passed,” *PinkNews* crowed.

But the truth is that anyone who is so heavily reliant on a weave, surgeries, laser treatments, filler and botox, as well as on fashion, for their “survival,” is not going to survive trying times like these. Claims that “misgendering literally kills” or that one’s cosmetic surgeries are a matter of life and death are laughable at best, and contemptible at worst, considering our current circumstances. Those who are so weak of mind that they fall apart without strictly controlled forms of validation will not have the mental fortitude to withstand isolation and a sudden withdrawal of fawning attention from yes-men, due to society’s sudden need to pay attention to, well, things that actually matter. Currently, no one is going to

care about your OOTD or the trauma of being “misgendered.”

If you want people to believe you are a “superior being,” you need to work on resilience. You also need to contribute something of worth to society, beyond self-indulgent whining, flagrant superficiality, and profound fragility, manifested as a demand that the entire world become your helicopter parent. People who have chosen weakness as their political manifesto cannot simultaneously announce superiority.

I have noticed a distinct lack of identity politicky hot takes online since COVID-19 threw us all into turmoil, and am interested to see if, when we do return to a version of normalcy, our priorities are reordered. Post-coronavirus, will “My non-binary status is about life and death” seem more clearly like the joke it is? Or will we immediately forget our close call, and go back to the vapid narcissism that passes for politics this decade?



Meghan Murphy

Founder & Editor

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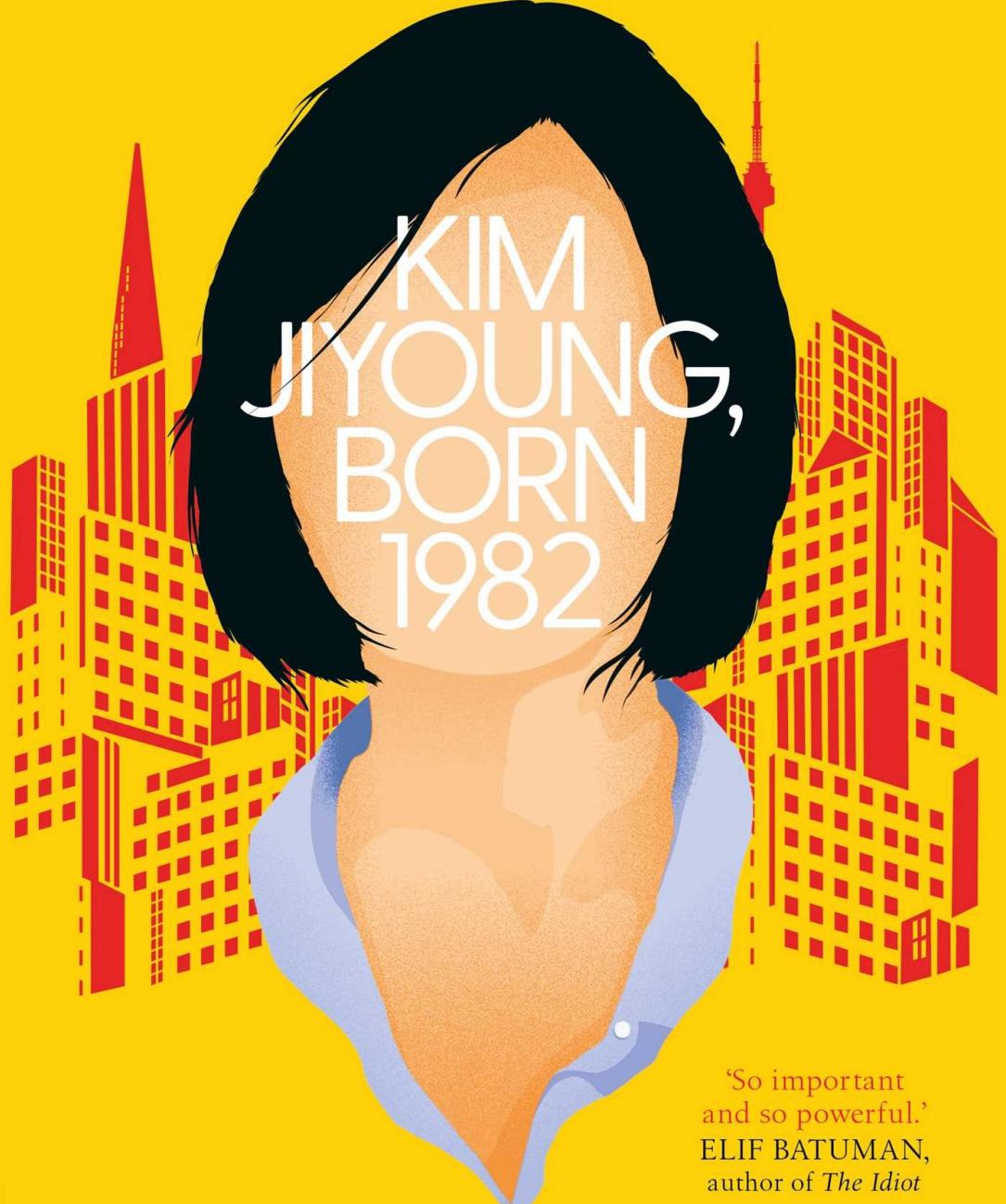
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‘Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982’ offers Western #MeToo activists a chance to catch up to radical Korean feminists

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THE MILLION-COPY
INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER



KIM
JIYOUNG,
BORN
1982

‘So important
and so powerful.’
ELIF BATUMAN,
author of *The Idiot*

CHO NAM-JOO

Translated by Jamie Chang

Jamie Chang's English translation of the best-selling *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* will soon be available to Western readers, and its film adaptation is already screening throughout Asia. The novel, originally published in 2016, describes the sexism faced by a young South Korean woman from childhood to early motherhood, when it eventually breaks her. Fictional accounts of sexism's impact on women are quickly genre-ed part of the #MeToo literary cannon these days, but *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* was published in Korean before the country's feminist uprising in late 2016. In fact, the novel's narrative is underpinned not by the #MeToo movement, but the politics of the women's liberation movement that came before it. Its upcoming English-language release in March 2020, therefore, is an opportunity for Western #MeToo activists to learn the politics of the movement that preceded it, and catch up to Korean sisters.

#MeToo is fuelled by indignation at the misogynistic excesses and sexual abuses of overly powerful men. Extraordinary practices of woman-hating, like assaults on women in the American entertainment industry and fatal gang rapes of girls in India, drove the global feminist outrage that launched #MeToo. The movement responds to sexual excess, so is focused on rampant, long-standing perpetrators like Harvey Weinstein and Donald Trump, who represent everything #MeToo stands against.

But the earlier women's liberation movement was the inverse. Consciousness-raising groups stoked women's indignation at everyday, routine practices of sexism that drove them to examine even mundane aspects of their lives, from housework, to feminine beauty practices, to penetrative, heterosexual sex. Outrage at unremarkable practices of household and labour inequality, including male segregationist pursuits of work and leisure, led to feminist actions like "pub liberations," wherein groups of women took over men-only bars.

Women came to comprehend wrongful treatment beyond extremes of male violence like rape, incest, and domestic violence, even if these were targets of political action.

Outrage, too, at insidious forms of sexism produced novels like Doris Lessing's portrayal of Anna Wulf's breakdown in *The Golden Notebook*. Wulf keeps diary entries of her life as a writer with a young daughter while in a relationship with a male physician who is leaving her. In the grief of the break up, she writes of resenting him "because he will spend his day, served by secretaries, nurses,

women in all kinds of capacities, who will take this weight off him.” Sexism in the lives of Lessing’s female characters is not portrayed dramatically or violently, but nonetheless leads them to mental breakdown. Lessing’s readers are taught to see the intolerability of the sex inequality that pervades even the most unremarkable female lives. Raising the bar of tolerance in this way, rather than lowering it, is what distinguishes the politics of the women’s liberation movement from those of #MeToo.

Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982 puts readers through the paces of the same politics, if in more concentrated, blunt form, and with even greater attention to fine-grained, unexceptional practices of sexist discrimination in the lives of women and girls. Kim Jiyoung is deprived of food in childhood in favour of the feeding of her brother, whose existence came at the sacrifice of an earlier aborted sister. On the other side of the coin, the male chivalry she later enjoys in a university mountaineering club, in which female members have their packs carried and choice of “what to eat from the lunch and post-hike menus,” is shown as hollow when she overhears the friendliest, most trusted male club member referring to her, after a break-up, as “chewing gum someone spat out.” She reflects on the incident that, “[E]ven the usually reasonable, sane ones verbally degrade women — even the women they have feelings for.” Even in the best of circumstances, in other words, women’s degraded social status, decided before birth, sees them held to a different standard of human existence. Even when, in the case of the mountaineering club, “[i]nstead of choosing the lunch menu, they want to run for president.”

Author Cho Nam-Joo pushes readers to confront sexism as relentless and inescapable, and thereby attempts to lower their tolerance of it. Her trick is to regularly punctuate the narrative with accounts of women intervening in the sexist situations Kim Jiyoung faces, helping her in times of hardship, and serving as models of stronger female behaviour. In these recollections, readers’ hopes are raised, in a liberal, individualistic way, that Kim Jiyoung will find a way out of the condition of womanhood. But these hopes are continually dashed, and readers are left helplessly waiting for her impending mental breakdown.

The kindness and efforts of other women, in other words, are no match for the overwhelming power and seriousness of sexism. Kim Jiyoung descends into psychosis even with a mother who goes against her husband’s wishes and allocates her daughters a room of their own with study desks, a female primary school teacher who takes her complaint of bullying by a male classmate

seriously and moves her classroom desk, an older woman on a bus who saves her from a would-be rapist, another older woman who shoos train passengers off seats to allow her to sit down in the late stages of pregnancy, a fellow female job interviewee who stands up to the sexist question of an interviewer, and a gang of tough girls in her middle-school class who catch, tie-up, and drag a flasher at the school-gates to the police station.

Readers are also not permitted the luxury of imagining men waiting in the wings to save women. All the novel's male characters, except Kim Jiyoung's husband Daehyun, are left unnamed. In remaining indistinguishable from the flashers and rapists, in other words, they too constitute the everymen of women's lives who enact the treatment that reflects and secures female subordinate status.

The sexist treatment women face in the best of circumstances, even when their male minders are kind, is Cho Nam-Joo's relentless focus. She shows this treatment as arranged in biologically defined terms, beginning before birth. In her teenage years, Kim Jiyoung asks her sister why, “[i]n a world where doctors can cure cancer and do heart transplants, there isn't a single pill to treat menstrual cramps.” Years later, she begs nurses for pain relief when giving birth to a daughter in agony, and afterwards reflects on the fact that, around the time she married, there had been a “sudden widespread popularity of natural births, the crux being minimal medical intervention and a natural birthing experience in which mother and baby make their own decisions.” Her best friend later dies in childbirth. After the birth of her own daughter, Kim Jiyoung develops paralysis in her wrists, and comes close to being unable to care for the new baby and household. Regardless, she is told by a doctor, “I can't prescribe anything too strong if you're breastfeeding,” and is encouraged instead to attend time-consuming physiotherapy sessions. The message is that, even for relative winners of the patriarchal lottery, different treatment on the basis of biological sex can be fatal.

Female fatalities of sexism are mostly not portrayed in physical terms — women's spiritual destruction is shown as equally devastating. The self-esteem Kim Jiyoung gains through securing a white-collar job and succeeding, despite its workload and pressurized environment, crumbles when she later finds out early-career female employees are allocated the company's highest-maintenance clients not because of competence relative to male peers but because “management didn't want to tire out the prospective long-term male colleagues from the start” — the assumption being that women do not constitute permanent

employees. Ironically, these same male colleagues later complain about company policy allowing pregnant female employees to arrive 30 minutes late to work, even if they must make up the time at the end of the day. Futilely, Kim Jiyoung insists in response that “she didn’t intend to get a single minute for free.” Their acts of betrayal continue even after she leaves the company, when they are found to have secretly shared pictures of her colleagues taken by a spy-cam in the company’s female bathroom and uploaded to the internet. Kim Jiyoung’s experiences in the workforce remind readers that women cannot count on solidarity from their brothers even when they work hard and accommodate themselves to the man-made world.

Even in environments of capitalist enterprise, which are supposed to be impersonal and gender-blind in their single-minded accumulation of capital, Kim Jiyoung and her female colleagues discover sexism overrides rational profit-seeking, and their social value is determined by forces overruling even the market. This value drops even further, though, when they find themselves on the outside. “[B]eing an individual who did not belong to any group, Jiyoung realized that the company had been a fortress for her.” She is awakened to this in even more jarring terms when men from the same cohort of “office guys, 30ish, wearing suits” verbally abuse her in public. Sitting on a park bench with a pram, drinking coffee, gives the men license to call Kim Jiyoung a “mum-roach” — a freeloading housewife whose husband should be pitied for having married. This sudden confrontation with the escalating nature of her socially degraded female status comes as a shock to Jiyoung, and prompts the now-famous line of dialogue with her husband that defines the novel and, indeed, the politics of women’s liberation:

“Am I stealing from you? I suffered deathly pain having our child. My routine, my career, my dreams, my entire life, myself — I gave it all up to raise our child. And I’ve become a vermin. What do I do now?”

The novel’s thesis, that the sexism of female life in its mildest form is so intolerable as to induce psychosis, will not likely resonate with the #MeToo politics currently animating feminists in the English-speaking West. Being called a name like “mum-roach,” after all, pales in comparison to the horror of being raped by Harvey Weinstein on a hotel bed after waking up to him banging on the door. Being compared to vermin (and this treatment deemed rightful), though, is the factor that unites these experiences: degraded treatment enacts sub-human status whether it is delivered through men’s words or their most brutal, violent

acts. Even under the best of conditions, Kim Jiyoung and Anna Wulf find this treatment incompatible with soundness of mind. *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* therefore confronts the #MeToo movement with the possibility its approach has been both too serious and not serious enough. The extremes of male violence the movement brings to light are, without a doubt, a threat to female personhood of the most serious kind. But these extremes exist in a world that has already chipped away at women's lives and sanity to the point of destruction.

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Kim Ji-young, Born 1982, by Cho Nam-Joo, translated by Jamie Chang, is published by Scribner UK (2020).



Guest Writer

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