FOOTNOTES

A FOREWORD BY
AMIA SRINIVASAN
I was on my knees in front of him he was drunk I had his dead cock in my mouth Koka kept saying suck it suck it don't stop keep sucking more more come on suck it suck it in a mean voice full of despair and impending doom eight months later he was killed in Afghanistan

Lida Yusupova

‘The law sees and treats women the way men see and treat women,’ Catharine MacKinnon wrote in her 1983 essay on the relationship between feminism and the state.¹ The law sees, for example, a woman’s short skirt as a come-on, a woman’s domestic labour as a gift of love, a woman’s pregnancy as her biological destiny, a woman’s love for another woman as an aberration. It follows, for MacKinnon, that women are in a bind. They can turn to the state, trying to make their case as abstract persons with abstract rights, knowing all the while that the state will
have little interest in overturning the structures of sexual subordination that gave rise to their complaints. Or they can abandon the state and place their hope in civil society, ‘which for women has more closely resembled a state of nature’.

But to say that the law sees and treats women the way men see and treat women is not to say that the state is on the side of men. The state is on the side of the ruling class. The worker is sent to die in the factory, but he can be allowed the satisfactions of beating his wife and children when he gets home. The soldier is sent to die in a war, but, first, he can demand that his dick be sucked. The wages of masculinity are paid out as compensation for the deprivation of political power. Women, who have always worked for free, receive no such wages.
now there’s someone to look up to
now there’s plenty to pick from—the new seriousness of buttons and peaked caps
the subtle irony of collaboration
so die for us, black sun of the pig’s uniform

Elena Georgievskaya

Anti-carceral feminists dream of a world without prisons, without police. In response they are often asked: what will we do with the rapists, the murderers? We might begin by responding: which rapists, which murderers? The police and prison guards, or the other ones?
What is to be done with the family? It is perhaps in regard to the family that the men of the left most converge with the men of the right. Men have found it difficult, on the whole, to give up the fantasy of the family (by which I mean the bourgeois, straight, nuclear family) as a place free of the alienation of the market, of the domination of the state. When I was taught Marx as a first year undergraduate, my professor asked: weren’t we already acquainted with a working communism, an institution in which each gave according to his ability, and took according to his need—
the family? I did not at the time think to ask: in the family, whose needs are served, whose abilities nourished, and who gets to decide? Who in the family is free?

Too often men on the left talk about ‘saving’ the family from the logic of market capitalism—from the encroachment of ‘neoliberalism’—forgetting that this distinction, between the perversity of market relations and the integrity of familial relations, is a false one. First, what could be more perverse than the alienation from mind and body that the family demands of women? Second, market relations depend on the non-commodified relations of the family. ii Silvia Federici wrote: ‘By denying housework a wage and transforming it into an act of love, capital has killed many birds with one stone. First of all, it has gotten a hell of a lot of work almost for free...At the same time, it has also disciplined the male worker...by giving him a servant after he himself has done so much serving at the factory or the office...In the same way as god created Eve to give pleasure to Adam, so did capital create the housewife’. iii
At the level of logic, the market and the family stand in tension; at the level of politics, they form an organic whole.
mama says: grandma needs a good hand
cream, no,
she needs a different world
where grandfather doesn't chase her with a
dog's chain across the garden,
where food and things create themselves,
a world of different labor.

Galina Rymbu

One day men will hunt in the morning,
fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the
evening and criticise after dinner. Who,
meanwhile, will hang out the laundry,
wash the dishes and wipe the baby's
bottom? Or are those, too, forms of la-
bour to which we can, suitably freed
from the strictures of distributed pro-
duction, have unalienated relation-
ships? Is human flourishing realised
in the reflection of a shined sink?
How much hope to place in technology: in the power of automation to free us from the doldrums of labour, in the power of the internet to radically democratise politics, in the power of new technologies to take us beyond the tragic confinements of biology – from birth, from death? I am instinctively inclined to pessimism. I want ‘a world where food and things create themselves’. But all the technologies that were promised to bring about this world have not materialised. Instead, we have technologies that have brought ecological disaster, repressed wages, strengthened the surveillance state, collapsed our free time and stolen our attentions. And still the kitchen sink must be scrubbed.

I am not a luddite. I like it when Paul Preciado talks about hacking the body
with hormones, when the activists of the Arab Spring describe their subversive use of Facebook and Twitter, when the Xenofeminists revive Shulamith Firestone’s observation that the natural is not the necessary, when Aaron Bastani imagines a fully-automated luxury communism. I suppose I am a ‘techno-realist’, if that means believing that an emancipatory technology presupposes emancipation; that it cannot be straightforwardly produced by it. What I oppose is the idea that the emancipatory power of technology can itself can be automated.
I have this dream: there’s no more us. Flying out into the light
Come the puffin, the curlew, the pale harrier,
Wings beating. The black and rufous elephant shrew,
The hairy-nosed wombat, the angelshark.

Ekaterina Simonova

On one of the last flights I took before the pandemic, from Munich to London, I was suddenly gripped (not without a sense of irony) by the conviction that climate change would be the ruin of us. Not just a problem on a list of problems—the rise of right-wing strong men; the oppression of women and refugees and queers; spiraling inequality; technology undisciplined by democracy—but the problem. How many of us mock climate change sceptics while tacitly presupposing, in our daily lives, that somehow, in some way, disaster will be averted? How are all my friends having children?
As a child myself I loved nature but detested humanity, which seemed to me clearly nature’s enemy. I was instinctively a deep ecologist and an anti-natalist. My parents expressed some concern about this—I remember their line was ‘how can you care so much about plants and animals when there is so much human suffering?’ Later I learned from ecofeminists that the target of such anti-natalist thoughts is inevitably (if only sometimes intentionally) poor women and women of colour. Deep ecology anti-natalism presupposes that the needs of humanity and the needs of nature must be antithetical. Ecofeminists counter that women have long known how to live in equilibrium with nature: Malthusian crises betray masculinist assumptions. Vandana Shiva writes of the rural Himalayan women who knew how to sustainably lop oak trees to produce fodder for livestock, in turn increasing the productivity of their communally tended forests. But the ecofeminist vision has no place for me or others like me: urban, deracinated, wandering. There is nothing I know about the earth except what capitalism
has taught me. This is perhaps the sole premise shared between ecofeminism and right-wing nationalism: that life, in its proper state, is a wholly local phenomenon. Perhaps that is right. From a certain view, the impulse to theorise—that is, the impulse of the intellectual—is itself a sign of alienation, of homelessness.
What is it about feminism and poetry? Audre Lorde writes that it is ‘through poetry that we give name to those ideas which are—until the poem—nameless and formless, about to be birthed, but already felt’.iv In her poem ‘Planetarium’, Adrienne Rich writes:

I am an instrument in the shape of a woman trying to translate pulsations into images for the relief of the body and the reconstruction of the mind.
Audre Lorde also writes, in a different essay, that ‘Of all the art forms, poetry is the most economical. It is the one which is the most secret, which requires the least physical labor, the least material, and the one which can be done between shifts, in the hospital pantry, on the subway, and on scraps of surplus paper...A room of one’s own may be a necessity for writing prose, but so are reams of paper, a typewriter, and plenty of time.’
Of course, a poetess has plenty of time in prison.
fn. 10

Oh! and is my writing sufficiently feminist
Oh! and is it sufficiently activist
Oh! and is my writing sufficiently political
is it relevant to the here and now or am I hurtling into eternity
or am I hurling into a damned distant despairing infinity
and does my writing mirror history’s specificity
...
Oh, will it be understood will it be loved

Stanislava Mogileva

Sometimes, we are trying to preserve those things that make human life, should it survive in something like its current form, worth living. We go on not in the hope of saving anything, but so that there might be something worth saving. Is this enough?
Participation in a tradition is a condition of intelligibility. If I am to be understood, I will have to use words—make signs, sing songs—as my ancestors used them, as ‘my people’ use them. They will not understand that I am rejecting them unless I do so in their terms. They will not understand that I am trying to change their ways of speaking unless I speak mostly like them.

But can I not have my own private language, one that makes sense only to me? To this Wittgenstein famously replied: what purpose could such a thing possibly serve?vi

How about this: because it is only when I speak nonsense, when my ancestors disown me, my people deny me, that I am free.
slitting open the night, slitting open the night of discursivity
...

_Dilige et quod vis fac_, my love, my dear

Lolita Agamalova

What is that unruly thing that cannot be named, that cannot be brought to heel by words? It would be foolish to try to say. But sometimes the poets slit open the night, and give us a glimpse.

—AS

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Oxford
i Catharine MacKinnon, ‘Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State’.
ii Nancy Fraser, ‘Behind Marx’s Hidden Abode’.
iii Silvia Federici, ‘Wages Against Housework’
iv Audre Lorde, ‘Poetry is not a Luxury’.
v Audre Lorde, ‘Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference’.
vi Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations