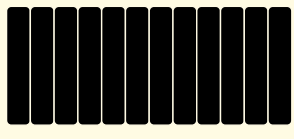



NOOOO 

MMMMORSE 

SILENCE!

ISSUE 02

2022 

**Offering uncensored
personal accounts of and
reflections on race and
inequality from students
and staff at UWE Bristol.**

Content

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Title No More Silence Zine Vol.2

Date	Book Title
04	Introduction
05	Are We Segregated or Diverse?
06	Challenging my Curriculum - A First Step to Decolonisation
10	A "how to guide" on incorporating decolonial feminist perspectives into your work"
14	If We Hope...
18	The Blank Slide of Decolonization
22	Decolonising UWE
34	Email conversation
38	Covid Tales (2020)

Date	Book Title
42	While you sleep at night
44	Education Saves the Day
48	Misunderstood? Yes, that's me.
50	Black Lives Matter
52	The Life of a Travelling Man
56	Qmọ Pupa to tí dí ọmọ dúdú
62	Credits

University of the West of England Library Services

introduction

Welcome to this second issue
of our No More Silence Zine.

This zine provides a platform for students and staff to share their experiences and thoughts related to the topics of decolonisation and diversity, offering uncensored personal accounts of and reflections on race and inequality. It comes from UWE Bristol's ongoing commitment to addressing inequalities and the awarding gaps between groups of students. The Library, Inclusivity and Equality services and the UWE Students Union have continued working together on this zine project since 2020 - a year which has also seen local debate intensify with the toppling of the statue of slave trader Edward Colston, and the national and international rise in prominence of the Black Lives Matter movement.

*A big thank you to all the contributors
who have shared their work with us.*



Challenging my Curriculum : A First Step to Decolonisation

A viewpoint that all problems rest in international marginalised communities, problems that we as English people need to go out and fix.

Author *Katie Jaggon*

Our course curriculums shape us, for our future careers and when broadening our knowledge but with a Eurocentric and westernised curriculum how do we make sure we are getting a decolonised and inclusive curriculum? On the Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Science (WECS) programme at UWE Bristol, colonisation and white saviourism is a relevant topic, however we are taught about it in approach that assumes that everyone on the course is white English. As someone who is of mixed-race heritage I was surprised, that there was an assumption by lecturers that we were all white.

Conservation is rooted in colonisation, and we have modules and lectures that state this, along with an explanation of white saviourism but with an assumption of the same level of ignorance and it became clear this was all with a very westernised viewpoint.

A viewpoint that all problems rest in international marginalised communities, problems that we as

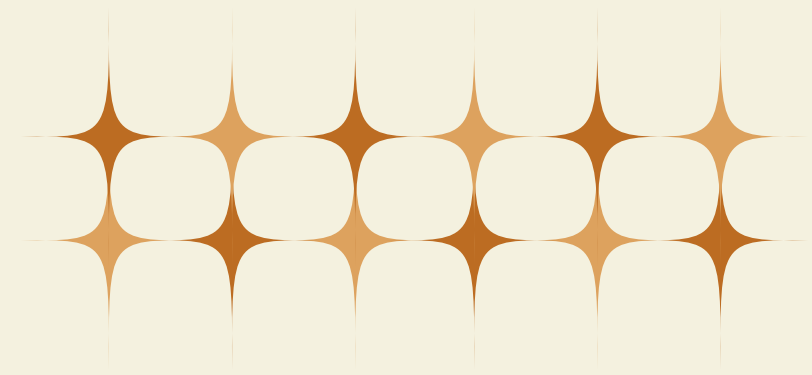
English people need to go out and fix.

It was not just issues with content either. Probably over 90% of guest speakers we had, from incredible UK and International organisations were white English, the majority of our lecturers are white English, there is little diversity and inclusivity on our programme, yet we talk about international work, international organisations and white saviourism constantly whilst the diversity on the programme and in the subject area continues to remain minimal. If this is to represent the industry I want to go into, what hope does that leave me with after this course?

A questionnaire was sent by the WECS Programme Leader, and one question stuck out to me “Do I think job opportunities within this field are limited to myself as a person of colour?” Without thinking I said yes, and the fact I didn’t have to think about the answer, I knew I had to personally say something. I sent an email to my Programme Leader detailing

all of this, and if this exclusivity is representative of the industry itself, then we should be taught about this and I want to know how we change this, and how we get better? When I met with the Programme Leader to talk further, I was told it is a reflection of the industry and the exclusivity is something that is slowly being addressed in the industry and they wonder how they can open the discussion to the students. I communicated that we needed a way to start a conversation, to not shy away from the discussion and to not pretend like this isn’t something my entire course will face once we graduate. He told me that a student raising their voice, stating this issue of colonisation, white saviourism and lack of diversity, told them they needed to start something not soon, but now. From here, I started to talk to my course mates about this, and regardless of their ethnicity, they all said the same things, “there is definitely a lack of diversity on the course “ it’s a real problem,

they need to do something about it ” “There have been things taught from a very westernised view”. We all had the same thoughts, all could see a problem, that change was needed, but they all thought it would cause too much discomfort to bring up. But it’s not about discomfort, it’s about being open and honest and without this how can we move forward? These conversations should not be uncomfortable, they are seen as so because we think speaking up is criticising and aggressive, but it isn’t. It’s not about being scared to say the wrong or right thing, it’s about allowing others to let you know what should and can be done. We started this with the first decolonising the WECS Curriculum workshop involving staff and students from the programme and support teams, starting to talk about these issues, and as we progress together, we can hope to decolonise and create more diverse and inclusive spaces within the industry .



A 'how to guide' on incorporating decolonial feminist perspectives into your work

Full Disclaimer: I am white British. The core demographic of people who need to be working on decolonisation given a history of colonial empire, universalising knowledge and continuing issues of structural racism. No. I was not born in a time of colonial rule. But that doesn't mean that it didn't happen and also doesn't negate responsibility from trying to dismantle racist structures. My staff experience matters, as decolonisation is everyone's business. As someone who works on UWE's gender equality processes, I advocate that addressing gender oppressions needs to work in tandem with anti-racism and decolonisation. So how can feminist perspectives collaborate with decolonial approaches? Decolonial approaches guide us to other ways of knowing, to better account for the diversity of global realities. Feminism is built upon a foundation of equality. The two combined, offer a powerful lens for equality, diversity and inclusivity that can be incorporated into work.

Author Grace Biddulph

Recognise that there is 'no universal patriarchal framework'

One of my favourite scholars, Chandra Mohanty once wrote that there is: 'no universal patriarchal framework' (2003: 20)1. This was a lightbulb moment for me in decolonial thinking. There are no linear experiences of patriarchy. Thinking of gender inequalities based on western experiences fails to encompass the whole of gendered realities. We all have our different experiences of patriarchy which come in different formations. Recognition of this helps with dismantling hierarchies because ordering gender oppressions reproduces power structures.

Question: What are global issues? And what are our issues?

Historically, Britain has had a nasty habit of othering, constructing issues as 'over there'. But what about over here? Sure, other universities, may have lower percentages of minoritized women in senior leadership roles, but that does not make us perfect. Until we have a gender balance, and a much more equal representation of minoritized individuals, the work is not done. Gender and race inequality is a global issue, not just something to be addressed in 'other' contexts. Thinking of ourselves as 'modern' or 'developed' fails to recognise our long journey ahead towards social justice. What can we learn from different cultures' solutions to gender inequality in universities?

Remember, exclusion based on gender should not be addressed historically

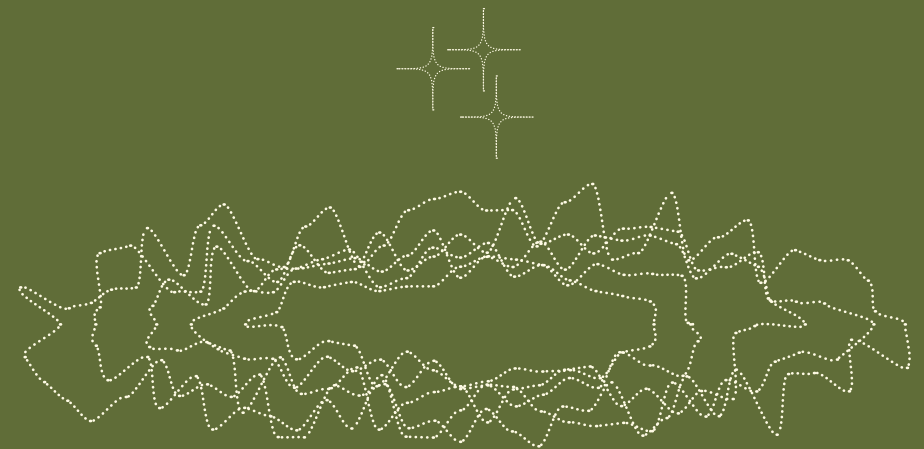
A global pandemic, slavery, colonialism and war all affected, and continue to affect how women and other genders continue to be marginalised within society and subsequently in the workplace. We all have a history behind us that cannot, and should not be ignored. Understanding the uniqueness of each context of gender inequalities will allow for a richer understanding of the historic exclusion of women and other genders from higher education institutions. Dismantling power structures can start with learning about, and celebrating different cultural feminist experiences.

Intersectionality, intersectionality and more intersectionality

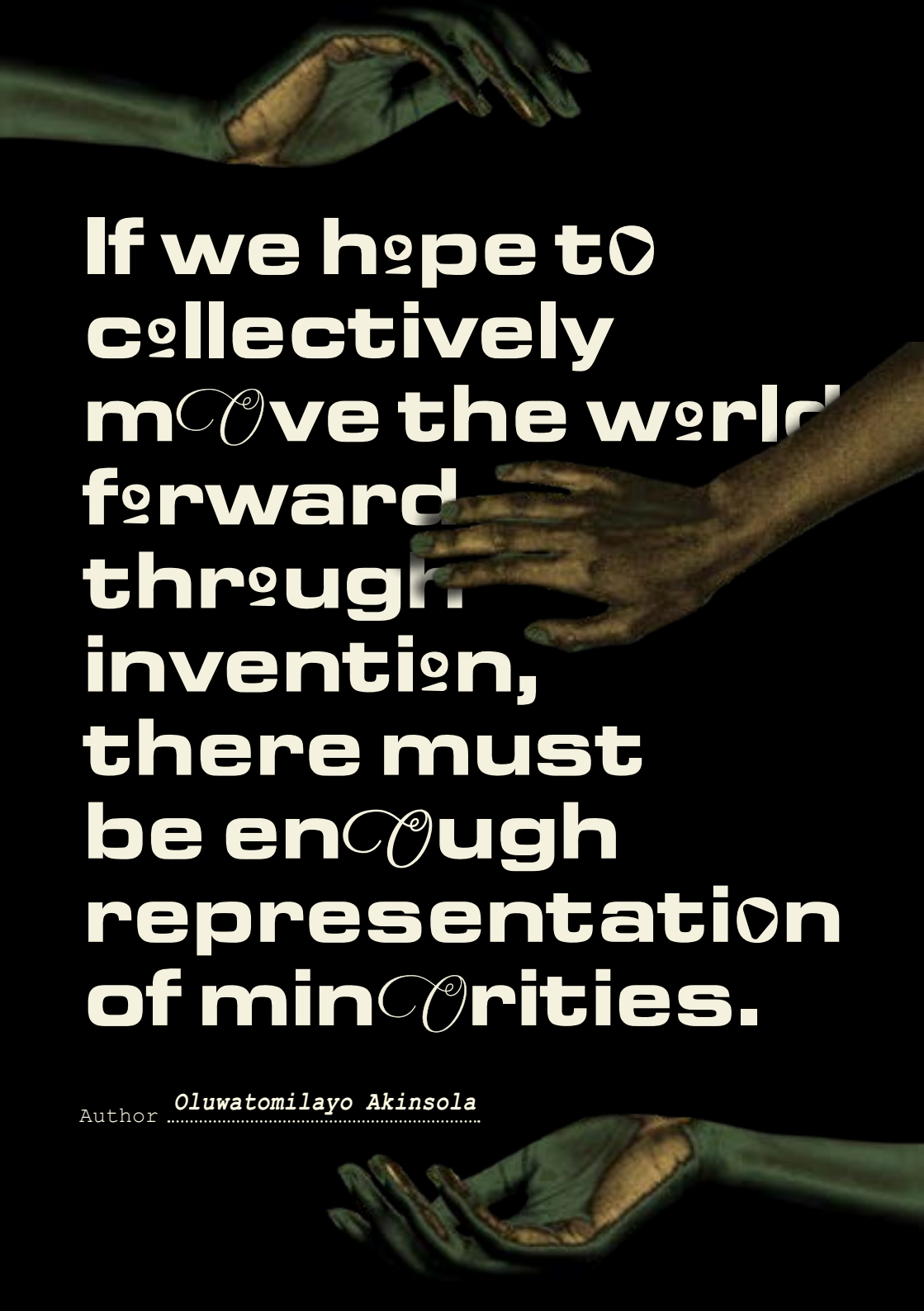
I really can't stress it enough. An intersectional approach recognises that systems of inequalities exist within society and this determines experience. We are a complex bunch of identities that create unique experiences, and this diversity is to be celebrated, not ordered. If we want to achieve equality, we must first recognise that systems of oppression exist and people may experience multiple marginalisations which are reproduced in university settings. Ensuring these voices are heard and represented is an important first step.

And remember, this is just the beginning.

Our minds must be ready to move as capital is, to trace its paths and to imagine alternative destinations.



Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*



If we hope to collectively move the world forward through invention, there must be enough representation of minorities.

Author Oluwatomilayo Akinsola

There is an unspoken depth of gender discrimination and bias in the STEM field. Everyone knows it exists, but it is barely talked about, if at all. Bear in mind, I came to a predominantly white European country to study. There was the expectation that I would experience racism, or gender discrimination—or both. My earliest experience was from a fellow student who made it his task to ensure I experienced both. This happened on many occasions. To my astonishment, he did not seem to care about the consequences. I thought about the incident the first time it happened. I wanted to understand the reason behind his micro-aggression. At the instigation of another incident by the same person, I soon realized it was racially motivated.

As someone who has seen racially motivated attacks in the media, I ask: why do people who live in a racially diverse society turn out to be racist?

It was in utter disgust that I watched my classmates make

fun of a Chinese professor. They had made snickering remarks about how she speaks the English language. How they did not understand what she was saying even though she is clearly speaking English.

It is bewildering why people who grew up with different races can be insensitive. I would assume they would know better having been raised in a mixed-race society. Yet, here they were, making a wild assumption that she must not be a good teacher for speaking in a “funny” way.

Some native speakers see people who do not primarily speak the English language as less smart. This is because these non-native speakers find it challenging to articulate their words.

If my Chinese professor had that experience, I wonder how many students have lost their confidence to speak in class. I often see the call for diversity as a posturing adopted by the West. This posturing is to lay a claim to appreciating being of a different culture. What is the point

of diversity when people who are different have to thrive in an unhealthy environment?

Diversity is a commendable phenomenon. Bearing that in mind, it is more important to create a healthy environment. The values of the environment must accept people from diverse backgrounds. The healthy environment must respect how they relate to their culture-or speak.

It is my opinion that academia should be more informed. The knowledge they have acquired has a mandated expectation to transcend race. It is worrisome when ethical responsibilities of engineers come up, and people point to Africa. This happened in one of my classes on ethical responsibilities of engineers. I knew Africa would get mentioned as an example of ethically irresponsible. From the lens of a Nigerian, I find it embarrassing and disrespectful. I have had to endure various instances of Africa ignorantly cast as the poster child of poverty porn.

To challenge this narrative all

the time, I must then accept the confrontational tag. An indeed another needless stereotype associated with Africans defending their culture and heritage.

UK companies like SHELL are one of the major contributors of poisoning in the Niger-Delta. The reason for my curriculum, I am told, is corruption. These foreign companies have aided the corruption. They have participated in rendering corruption, even through bribery. Why then is the United Kingdom not studied in the curriculum? That must count for an example of countries that lack ethical responsibility, surely? It is noteworthy that in this case, these companies chose profit over the sanctity of the human life.

Africa has the lowest carbon emission rate the last time I checked. Why then does Africa get into the discussion on climate change? Why does an African using a wooden stove become an illustration for an engineering society magazine in the UK?

Meanwhile, I live in a city in the UK where a plane flies over my

head every few minutes.

I am aware that associating abject poverty with Africa is enthralling to so many. But it is important to be aware of unconscious bias and the power of narrative. It paints an ignorant picture in the mind of learners. Especially those whose knowledge of a place ends with what their professor taught them.

It is important to challenge these biases and it starts in the classroom (Universities), in engineering sometimes inventions are not universal they should be specific to certain people factoring in their way of life. If we hope to collectively move the world forward through invention, there must be enough representation of minorities. We must have these discussions that makes us uncomfortable, we must ask ourselves how developed countries contribute to the under-developed states of developing countries (from mining to environmental pollution, child labour, importation of banned/controlled substance (like pesticides) in Europe and North America to Africa, by passing/breaking of laws in Africa through bribery, one they would not break in their country just to make profit) instead of displaying a sense of superiority in how they have a better society.



The Blank Slide of Decolonization



We are a student and a teacher from UWE's Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology. Melissa is doing her doctorate research on how black women's subjectivity is structured within psychotherapeutic training contexts, and Miltos is keen to learn from that. In the piece below, we try to capture our experience of co-facilitating a BLM process group, first as part of the curriculum and subsequently as an optional space open to all staff and students on the program. Our co-authored piece speaks to the origins, process, and desired outcomes of this initiative. While we are conscious of our separate voices, we tried to write it collaboratively. We dedicate this piece to Sula.

Author *Melissa McCallum & Miltos Hadjiosif*

It all started with a blank slide... Never has a blank slide shined so black or fully. We are a black woman student and a white male teacher. Three descriptors suggesting a chasm of privilege and experience, oppression and inexperience. Tricky words: we are more than that and sometimes less. Learn more about us and the illusion will fade as our identities intersect and more mis(fortunes) become visible.

It did not happen in a vacuum. It absolutely didn't and perhaps it might never had if less benign eyes were cast upon us. If the social ecology was arranged differently. If the filter-less pixie hadn't spread some dust. If one of us got up on the wrong side of the bed that morning. If we let offence and 'please and thank you' dictate the space between us. Holding that space together. A black woman student and a white male teacher. Collaboration. Solidarity. Humility. A hint of cautiousness and critical reflection; are we missing something?

The first time we had no idea what would happen, humbled as we were by what participants brought.

They filled the space with affects, stories big and small, silences and guilt. Did everyone feel as energised and demolished at the same time?

The second time, we entered it more knowingly.

Bring the discomfort we wished. Were we too naïve?

Flattened hierarchies, bodies connecting; or at least trying to. The wish to know history before slavery.

Families and neighbourhoods; the first with secrets the latter without hoods.

We will do it again. A drop in the ocean as we whisper : Black Lives Matter.

And the whisper becomes an echo and the echo a song. A song we haven't heard yet. A song we have forgotten...

Entanglements. Enmeshments? Let's try something else.

For me this was about exploring the unknown and I felt excitement at the prospect of having some autonomy in understanding my intersectional existence.

I am me. I am Black but who's version of Black? Sometimes this is everything, sometimes this is nothing - enforced binary.

A moment of recognition sparked on a canvas of Nothingness – an acknowledgement that was intangible and unspoken, witnessed by many but understood only by a few – spiritual soul-talk.

I see you ; you see me. The unchecked truth of an authentic moment in what can be an inauthentic space can inspire uncomfortable personal honesty. Is this what we hold? Did we spark revolution? The expulsion of convention and social performance? Did we provide a peek behind the curtain before the lights go on? Inviting others to take part backstage. Will they? And if so, how?

Decolonising



SUMMER 2022

ISSUE 2

Author Ayomide Erinle

UWE?

DO WE
EVEN
KNOW
WHAT IT
MEANS?

Foregoing the
ideals and
rules a nation
has established
in order to
maintain
domination
over foreign
territories.

DECOLONISATION IS
NOT A METAPHOR!
...until stolen land
is returned, critical
consciousness does not
translate into action...
-Eve Tuck & K. Wayne
Yang

Drained



More has to be done. You cannot just claim to recognise it what are you doing to fix it?



Sanguine?



"Inequality has deprived many societies of hope and opportunities. The absence of dreams and a meaning in the future is being used to divide our communities, intensifying racism, xenophobia and violence"

Maria Espinosa Garcés



"For years, Africa has been the footstool of colonialism and imperialism, exploitation and degradation. ..."

Kwame Nkrumah

**If you want to win
the same race,
you have to run it
twice as fast.**



Email conversation between Ludo and Wuon-Gean
(June 2022)

Lu

Good afternoon, Wuon-Gean

Thank you very much for your contribution to the zine. Such a powerful and beautiful video. Unfortunately, we won't be able to include it into our zine. As your piece focuses on the impact of COVID on your personal life as a British-born Chinese woman living in London, it doesn't directly address and/or refer to the main theme of race and racism, and exclusion.

We will be very happy to discuss with you how we could potentially display your work in the library alongside the written pieces produced by this year's Commissioned Writer in Residence. Let me know what you think.

I am very sorry about this as it is such a powerful piece.

I hope you will understand our decision.



Hallo Ludo

Thank you for your reply.

I experienced racism growing up in the UK, (people spat at me, I was called names and told to go home to where I really come from, I was cast as the Angel of Death in the school play etc etc) and felt this was in no small part due to the fact that East Asians are represented as the baddie in movies, or the exotic in dramas, or the prostitute in popular musicals such as Miss Saigon and Madame Butterfly. The invisibility was extended to observing how Chinese diaspora are not shown in adverts, in politics or in music, and there are very few role models available in popular media particularly in the UK, even now.



WG



WG

My creative response is to put myself as the main character in my prints to address and achieve a more balanced and nuanced picture of subjecthood and validation.

As a result, I don't really understand exactly why my work does not address the main theme of race and exclusion? How many images are seen in daily life with a British Chinese person as subject with agency and command, who command respect? The last few adverts including an East Asian face in the metro paper in London were for "Tackling Hunger in the UK" showing an East Asian child looking longingly at an apple, "Do you want to stop smoking?" showing a moody East Asian woman staring out the window with a cloud of smoke, and "Looking for a cleaner? Look no further!" showing a jolly east Asian man with an apron on. These images are of hunger, addiction and cleaning. I am acutely aware of how under-represented my demographic is and want to change this. My video, Covid Tales, does have another storyline related to the pandemic, but it is based upon a quiet assertion of race and gender as a British Chinese woman living in the UK.

In fighting for a voice, there is often an expectation for ferocious uprising, or noisy agitation, but the Chinese diaspora tend to be the model minority, quiet, hard-working, sitting on the fringes and observing, not necessarily happy with the situation, but feeling safer in being marginalised. If I agree to your suggestion in not including the work in the magazine, I feel that I would be allowing the same pattern to repeat again. I am aware that perhaps the work fails to conform to certain model ideals of protest, but I am very saddened to hear that you don't think it is relevant to a zine entitled NO MORE SILENCE.

Lu

Hello Wuon-Gean,



Thank you very much for your response to our email.

Your response shows that we misread your video and failed to see within it your assertion of race and gender as a British Chinese woman living in the UK. Our zine is not about exclusion but inclusion. The zine is there to help people learn about those issues, including ourselves. I think it would be helpful to meet and discuss these issues and how we could present your video into our publication. Please let me know what you think.

Lu

Hi Wuon-Gean,



No worries. I know what it's like!

Absolutely fine to carry on the conversation by email.

I'll save our email into a word document. I may add a bit of my own reflection and learning on it.

I'll share that with our graphic designer, a year-2 student, who will layout the zine together for us.



WG

For sure, I would love to meet. I'm mainly working from London next week and taking leave on Friday but will be in Frenchay on 22 June and Bower on 23 June. So please suggest a time to meet either online or in person and we can discuss further.

Wishing you all the best



WG

Fantastic. Thank you...

Also, my dad's quote

"If you want to win the same race, you have to run it twice as fast" should go in somewhere!

All the best

Wuon-Gean

(still on hold over here...!)



WG

Sorry Ludo that our conversation got cut off.

I'm now on hold...

So if it takes a long time for them to get back to me, shall we continue this conversation by email?

I like the idea of publishing the email exchange.

All the best

Covid Tales (2020)



Author Wuon-Gean Ho



Covid Tales is a six-minute video that tells the story of the pandemic from the point of view of a British-born Chinese woman living in London. The video is illustrated with prints which were originally made for her father, who had broken his neck in an accident and was disengaged from the world. Showing herself as the main protagonist, the images give an under-represented character agency and power. As a trained veterinary surgeon and junior research associate, she shows herself in both roles, and by doing so, breaks conventional representations of surgeons and researchers.

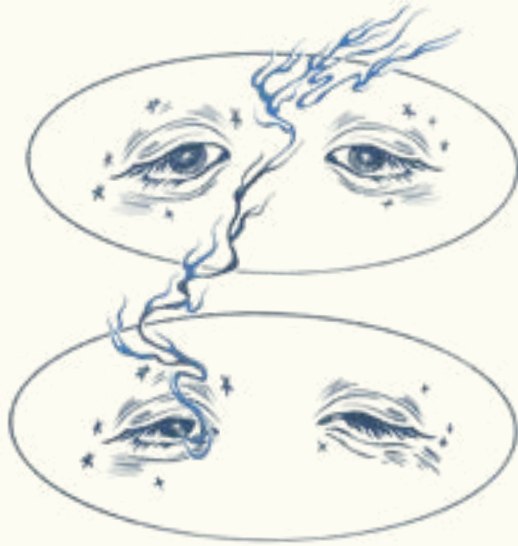
At the same time, there is an undercurrent of deep absurdity and wry humour. In isolation, she experiences the freedom of working from the bathroom on the floor with no trousers on; attempting yoga with a mobile phone; carrying her enforced isolation outdoors like a poisonous cloak; eating to excess and finally being completely engulfed by multiplying computer screens. The video ends with her re-entering the world as a vet with a dangerous moment with a dog and its owner.



<https://vimeo.com/435765992>

Scan the QR Code or click the URL to check out the video !

While you sleep at night



While you sleep at night I toss, I turn,
 While you sleep at night I writhe and I learn,
 While you sleep at night I am renewed, I am reborn.
 A life, so far removed from shore and destiny of birth,
 Is more than I or you could ever have imagined.
 The guns, they lay silenced,
 barrels bowed to attest to so much violence.
 Their destructive disorder, a distant memory,
 now echoes all ... while you sleep.
 Yet still the scars that I wear, bear witness to a life once lived,
 Written on skin with ink of blood,
 a testimony to my forebears.
 And while you sleep at night, I think and you dream,
 Of what I wonder, oh what a legacy it would seem.
 So many lives now lost, so many more to go.

The ghosts and ghouls of souls not resting, haunt my dreams,
 From depths below, oh dearie me, oh woe !
 Their screams solicit my help in anguish, all the while you sleep.
 And while you sleep good sir, good lady,
 I toss and I turn and I weep,
 For there is no good morrow for those not born into wealth or status,
 I don't dare, I discern it.
 No, naught but a life of subterfuge and sorrow was written for me
 at the behest of my betters.
 And now, while you sleep at night I writhe and I learn,
 For I dream of a life you spoke of,
 The promise of a rainbow, after the rain, to usher in a life sans pain.
 And while you sleep at night, I am renewed, I am reborn,
 For I know now, what must be done to right a wrong, my shackles shorn.



Author Clay C. Johnson



Understanding
Saves the Day



Compassion
Saves the Day



Love
Saves the Day



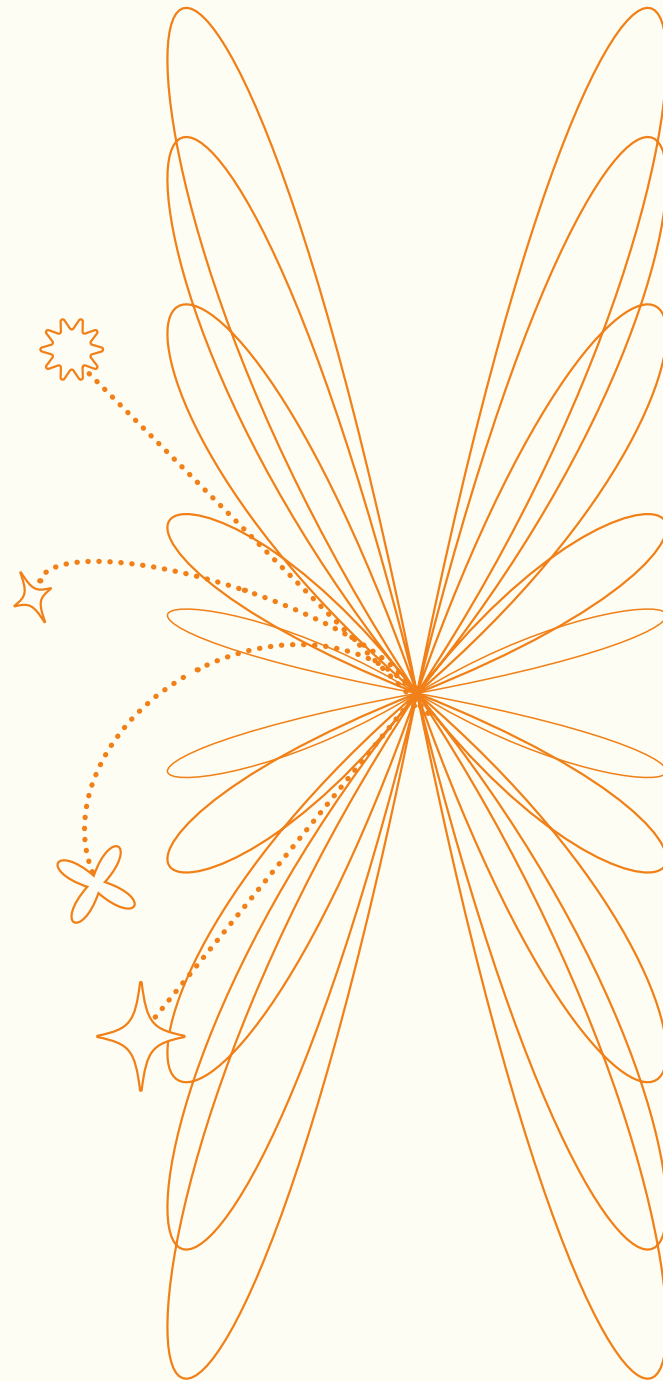
Education
Saves the Day

Author *Robert Moore*

As I stand soaked to the skin in a Bristol field at a “summer” music festival it all becomes clear!

It’s bank holiday in early June in England. The weather is Meh! It’s the afternoon. The sky is overcast. The temperature is way below what should be expected of our geographic position or our seasonal orbital path around the sun. Then it rains. We try to ignore it. It rains some more. We are actually starting to get quite wet. Our resolve is strong. But now the clouds seem to want to test us some more. The rain gets heavier. Spotlights emanating from the stage seem to highlight and magnify rains drops so they look the size of golf balls. I can seriously never remember standing out in such a heavy prolonged downpour. If I were to jump into the raging torrents of the River Avon, I could not physically get any wetter than I am! The MCs, who have braved the weather on the open stage, spit their rhymes with passion, the DJ builds the music to crescendo, the Bass drops! Our bodies are filled with the resonance of low frequency sound energy. We jump, we bounce, we dance, we roar. We are filled with the euphoria of a shared musical

epiphany! OMFG! A-Maze-zing!
 So, what did the few thousand of us stood in wet West Country landscape have in common? Were we the same age? Same gender? Same race? Same religion? Or same sexuality? Was it a requirement for us to have any specific physical characteristic? Would a statistical analysis of our demographics enable us to experience more or less of the enjoyment of that moment than any other person at the event? 67.2% of left-handed people, when accosted in a shopping mall at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, who expressed a preference said... Modern day analysis and reporting on our society seems intent on subdividing, classifying and pigeon-holing us so that it can highlight injustices, increase tensions and propagate flashpoints of conflict! We do not need a calculation of the arithmetic mean, or a standard deviation of spread of results or a definition of the lowest common denominator to make things fair or just.



How do we learn from historical errors is discrimination and equality? How do we move towards integration, balance and universal inclusion? Education! We educate well. We facilitate intelligent, creative interactions. We make sure there are few barriers to entry. We showcase success. We support students to overcome obstacles. We educate on a wide range of topics. We ensure there is visibility of the education available. We educate to expand future choices. We educate to eliminate judgement. We educate on the wonderful cosmic array of humanity that exists.

Education Saves the Day <3

Misunderstood? **Yes, That's Me**

Misunderstood? Yes, that's me
Prejudice and judgements are what I have received
Welcome to the world of my disability
Being an outcast is how I was perceived

Struggling with my focus and could never pay attention
The victim of many malicious words
Words that cut deep like a razor-sharp knife
These words sometimes made me consider ending my life
Buried beneath layers of sand

My brain is wired slightly different.
Though that doesn't give you the right to leave me hung out to dry
Fitting in is a dream I used to have
Though now I ask myself why?
Why would I want to fit in with people like that?



I used to show off my sad smile when you were torturing me
I used a mechanism to cope because
that's the only thing that I could rely on
Really though, it was giving me plenty of false hope

You made me question what was wrong with me?
Though in my unbiased opinion,
the real question is what was wrong with you?
Kindness and courage were always carried in my heart.

My disability is a huge part of me
I am unique as we all should be
More love and less hate, then maybe
Misunderstood? It won't be me.



Author *Cheyenne Smith*
.....



Black Lives Matter



Maybe if black lives matter then all lives will



Author Cheyenne Smith

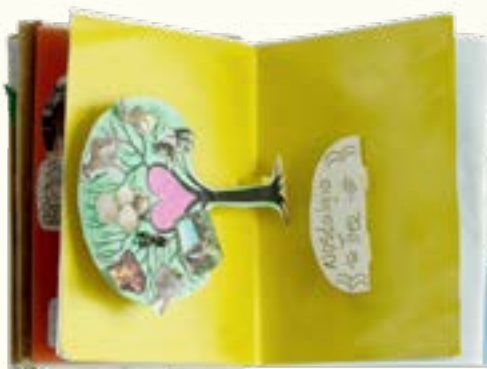
Before you judge, ask why is it this way ?
Listen to them, take it in is what I'd advise
All lives matter is what you say ?
Could you please try and hear their voice ?
Kindness could eventually beat this hate

Listen to their cries, worries and fear
Is that really what you want to hear ?
Violence and mistreatment happens
Energy & positivity is the way to go
Stand up tall & lift your hands up in the air

Maybe if black lives matter then all lives will
Are you ready to take part ?
To show the world the fire that is in your heart
To fight against the prejudice and malice ?
Each person should unite and fight
Remember to lift your hands in the air



**And, now I am on a stage
of my life. Where I can look
back on the moments of
contentment, not strifes.**



Uncle's

.....

Ọmọ
Pupa
to tí
dí ọmọ
dúdú



Author *Oluwadamilola Okeyoyin*

I am a Yoruba, Nigerian, black, African woman
 I am from a town called Tede,
 Oyo state and can trace back my lineage hundreds of years.
 My skin is like dark chocolate, glistens like polished
 mahogany and I have the most beautiful woolly hair with
 an amazing mixture of coil patterns that defies gravity and
 grows towards the heavens.
 I am an African woman,
 yet my hair and skin are not good enough.....

I come from a lineage of strong independent
 Yoruba women and yet these words hurt me
 I come from a country of people with unmatched
 strength and resilience which flows through my blood,
 yet a part of me feels insecure.
 I come from ancestors who fought hard for me to
 exist, surviving several European invasions,
 British colonisation, yet I feel like I do not belong.
This is my experience of internalised racism



From when I was young, people have always fixated on what I look like, what I sound like, how much weight I have put on. But nothing hurts the most than what I cannot change- which is the colour of my skin and my hair.

Maybe it would have been easier if the judgement were coming from people that have oppressed my kind for centuries, But coming from people like me.....family and friends, the knife cut deep and made it a confusing experience

Omo pupa to ti di omo dudu –

A light-skinned child that has become dark-skinned

How do I tell my family that this ‘joke’ is not funny?
 How do I say,
 ‘please don’t make side comments about my skin’?
 How do I shout ‘IT IS ENOUGH, I HAVE HAD IT’.....?
 without disrespecting the people that bore and raised me.
 How do I make them understand that those words hurt my inner child and make me very self-conscious, that even at my adult age, I am still going through therapy to work through my emotions?

How do I tell them that these words
 ‘omo pupa to ti di omo dudu’ broke me?

Sometimes I try to understand why?

I receive so much love regarding me excelling academically, spiritually, financially and growing as a person, so I understand that I am not experiencing hate.

But why?

Why is the colour of my skin such a bother?

Why is it something to be discussed in disgusted tones in an African house?

Why are people with darker skin than me and like me being the ones to tear me down?

Why am I being told to bleach or ‘tone’ my skin?

It took a while for me to understand what was happening

It took a lot of self-reflection and therapy for me to realise that.....

The reason for my experience is racial trauma.



I realised that the reason family and friends made fun of the colour of my skin is because they associate having a better life with how light the colour of one's skin is
Whiteness was being associated with happiness and goodness
They think that the lighter I become, perhaps the world will treat me with more kindness than what they got
The day I realised this, oh how I wept.
I got flashbacks of my days in secondary school where only the light skinned or mixed-race girls received the prizes of the most beautiful, gorgeous, and attractive
I realised that the reason why when I am in a group of friends and are approached by boys, I always pull back is because of fear of rejection

I realised that the worst thing that could happen to me was accepting the transfer of self-hate that was forced down my throat.

Whiteness does not equate happiness
Being dark skinned does not mean I deserve to suffer
Being a black woman is one of the best things that ever happened to me, and I will not trade it in for anything else.
It took therapy and self-healing to get to the point where I am immensely confident
However, what pushes me is my goal to ensure that no one who comes after me, get a transfer of racial trauma.
They must have a better experience.

Racism will not define me or direct my life.



Credits

Title **No More Silence Zine Vol.2**

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If We Hope...	© Oluwatomilayo Akinsola
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