



Feminist Activism - Feminist Asylum

Feminist Asylum Editorial Collective

ABSTRACT

Editorial notes for the third issue (Vol. 2) of Feminist Asylum: A Journal of Critical Interventions

KEYWORDS

Feminist activism, feminist asylum



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FEMINIST ACTIVISM – FEMINIST ASYLUM

Our third issue is being published later than we had projected and reflects our decision to take time to build our readership and make contact with more potential authors. In the beginning we planned to publish two issues per year. Temporal and spatial complications of our dispersed collective, the difficulties faced by any project relying solely on volunteers, and the contingencies of life have hindered this plan. Since *Feminist Asylum* is a new, multilingual, online, open access journal still establishing its reputation, we are only gradually reaching potential readers, contributors, and reviewers.

Here we share our third issue with joy, sorrow, and aspiration, hoping to share as well the power we derive from working together. It is our hope that you join us by following our journal, and we invite you to contribute writings, artworks, films, interviews, and conversations to future issues. These are tough years when it is hard to hold onto hope in the face of casual and institutionalized intolerance. The loudest public discourse around the globe denies the interdependence and value of all humans, not to mention the interdependence of all life forms and the independent value of non-human life. In the face of this self-serving destructiveness, our feminist togetherness helps us to cultivate hope. The empowering effect of working, producing, learning and acting together continuously guides us to remember that the sun rises anew every day.

This issue of *Feminist Asylum* develops the premise that activism not only can bring about meaningful political improvements but also can enrich the daily lives of women and feminists.

The past year has witnessed new waves of atrocity in Gaza (and new waves of anti-Islamic and anti-Semitic discourse in the global response), setbacks for women's rights and LGBTIQ+ rights, increasing violence against non-human animals, and continuing discrimination against children, people with disabilities, the elderly, migrants, and countless other vulnerable groups. Still, we continue to stand against all forms of cruelty, injustice, and intimidation – individual or systematic. We hope that this issue will summon up some of the very real benefits and satisfactions that activism brings to women and feminists as they are undertaking it, not only after it succeeds and if it succeeds.

Our third issue starts with two autoethnographic works that explore experiences of feminist academics in exile. The first is Gülden Özcan's video, "Academy in Exile," which was produced within the scope of CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees) Digital Storytelling project. A founding member of our editorial collective, Özcan passed away on May 11, 2022. Her insightful perspectives on the social sciences, feminist knowledge production, and social justice activism continue to inspire us. "Academy in Exile" outlines a long and frustrating history of injustices by means of Özcan's concise, feminist autoethnographic narration. The narrative is not bounded by Özcan's experience, but it also does not negate its subject. Produced in 2018, the video is narrated in English and made available here in English and Turkish transcriptions.

The other autoethnography, grounded also in research, is Gülden Özcan and Simten Coşar's co-authored text, "Feminist Praxis in Exile: A Collaborative Autoethnography," which was originally published in

Sohini Chatterjee and Po-Han Lee (Eds), *Plural Feminisms: Navigating Everyday Praxis* (London: Bloomsbury, 2023). Özcan and Coşar's collective autoethnographic narration is framed within the scope of intergenerational experiences of feminist activist researchers in the universities in different geographies. We read the significance of differences, commonalities, and feminist activism. We would like to thank the editors and publishers of the *Plural Feminisms* collection for letting us reprint this chapter free of charge. Unfortunately, this opportunity is rare: it is often expensive or impossible to share previously published texts with wider groups of readers. We urge authors and editors to support responsible reprinting.

Our second research article is Burcu Çırtlık's "Gender Bias in AI," which Çırtlık contributed in English and Turkish versions. The essay analyzes forms of structural bias in the operations of AI, making use of a wide range of recent examples and proposing some concrete measures for working to offset this bias.

The third issue continues with rich and hope-giving contributions. In the Commentaries section, Sofia Dona's "Mnemo-technics and other Psycho-geographies of 'Flying'" offers a tribute to queer activist [Zak Kostopoulos](#), who was murdered in Athens, in 2018. Dona contemplates the role of space and place in cultural memory and their potential to inspire and infuse rights-based text flows. We are glad to present Dona's text in its original language (Greek), in English (trans. Sofia Dona) and in Turkish (trans. Simten Coşar). The other commentary in this issue is Didem Yıldırım's impressive manifesto about the urgency of collectively resisting the violence of patriarchal decision-making about women's bodies.

This issue offers creative work by two marvelous contributors. Rania Mammoun, activist in exile, generously shares two poems, and Aslı Alpar's cartoon for this issue fills us with joyful courage.

Our third issue closes with a conversation among Leyla Bektaş Ata, Simten Coşar and Dilek Çiğerdelen, feminist activists and thinkers. Focusing on vegan feminist activist Çiğerdelen's ideas about political choices lived daily, this interchange nourishes hope, opening a space of asylum for repose and breathing.

We have mentioned before that the title of our journal opens up multiple possibilities of the term "asylum." We sought a term that would embrace different states of feminist existence. Asylum can reference a state of exile that is also a space for sheltering from discrimination, tending our wounds and preparing to start anew. The exile can be physical — geopolitical — or it can be another kind of exclusion, invisibility, or distortion that creates the need for asylum. In a different register, asylum can evoke a state of wildness and passionate dreaming. With these possibilities in mind, we look forward to future issues in which we can explore other literal and figurative dimensions of asylum.

Then we wish for future issues where we write together, read and listen together, and learn together!

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