

# We Need To Talk

*A global, student-run newspaper*





# Table of Contents

<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Current Events</b> .....	03
Facebook’s New Instagram for Kids.....	03
In Honor of Pride Month.....	05
Summary of Biden’s Presidency.....	07
Texas Abortion Laws.....	09
Vaccine Rollout.....	11
<b>History</b> .....	14
Beauty standards and capitalism.....	14
How feminism is affecting sexist practices.....	16
<b>Spotlight</b> .....	18
Genesis Butler: 14-Year Old Activist Using Her Voice to Better the Planet.....	18
<b>Opinion</b> .....	21
Pride or Greed? The Double-Sided Nature of Rainbow Capitalism.....	21
<b>Art</b> .....	23
Rene Magritte.....	23
World Music Day.....	26
<b>Call To Action</b> .....	28
<b>Sources</b> .....	29



# Current Events

edited by Barsha Parajuli

## Facebook's New Instagram for Kids

by Ketevan Gallagher

In March of 2021, it was revealed that Facebook had plans to make a version of Instagram for children under 13. Currently, Instagram does not allow children under 13 to use the platform, but many simply lie about their age in order to gain access to the platform. Facebook says that this new site will provide a safe place for kids to interact away from content on Instagram that may be inappropriate for young children. The site will include parental supervision and not display ads.

However, this Instagram for kids app has been highly criticized by both lawmakers and child safety experts. In fact, over 40 US attorney generals have asked Facebook to halt the creation of this app.

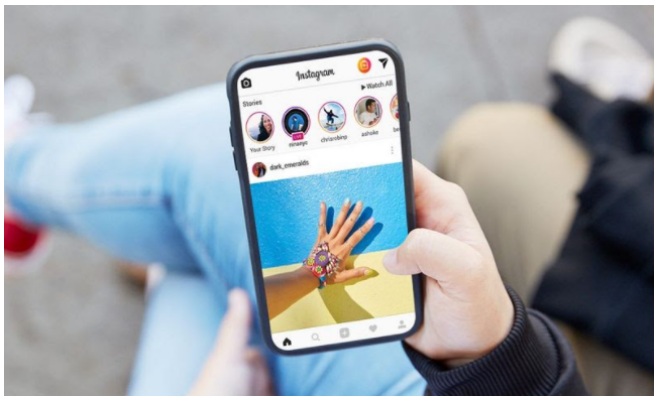
“The alarming rates of cyberbullying among children also present a dire problem that a new Instagram platform could very well exacerbate,” the National Association of Attorney Generals said in a letter to Facebook. The letter also expresses concerns

that this app could exacerbate body image issues that young children may already have.

Many child welfare organizations have also been outspoken about this topic. Experts on child safety say that most of the time, children under 13 are not mature enough to handle the responsibilities that come with a social media account. In elementary and middle school, kids are developing and creating their own self-image. Apps such as Instagram, which is photo based, can cause insecurities. Many experts worry that this app could cause children to compare themselves to others in unhealthy ways, and the issue of cyberbullying could also increase.

Kids may also not want to use a version of Instagram designed for children once they've experienced the real thing. An eleven-year-old may feel more inclined to use an app that's designed for teens, rather than one that's designed for an eight-year-old. This could be dangerous for numerous cybertech-related reasons.

“In the elementary and middle school years, children experience incredible growth in their social competencies, abstract thinking, and sense of self. Finding outlets for self-expression and connection with their peers become especially important. We are concerned that a proposed Instagram for kids would exploit these rapid developmental changes,” said a consortium of organizations that included Berkeley Media Studies Group, and Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood in a letter addressed to Facebook.



Facebook has hired the creator of YouTube kids to launch this app. Much like this new site, YouTube kids promised that kids will not be shown ads, but critics claim there have been examples of product placement on YouTube kids. YouTube kids has also been criticized for its autoplay feature, which keeps videos playing after the original one has ended.

Facebook has not had a very good track record concerning child safety. In 2017, they created a version of their Messenger app for kids, but that app contained a flaw that allowed children to enter group chats with strangers that their parents hadn't approved. Despite this, Messenger Kids is still available today, and its website boasts that “Parents Are in Control... Kids Have All the Fun.”

However, Facebook is a corporation, and corporations will almost always prioritize people over profit. They need to protect their bottom line and make money, so they don't always have the best interests of customers at heart. Facebook has been involved in many controversies and scandals, including the Cambridge Analytica scandal, where the consulting firm Cambridge Analytica harvested data from millions of Facebook users without their consent. Out of all of the social media companies that we interact with on a daily basis, Facebook is known for its mishandling of data and slow action when problems arise. Is this really the site we want controlling the accounts and data of young children?



# In Honor of Pride Month

by Barsha Parajuli



## TW: LGBTQ Discrimination and abuse

Every June, millions of people part of the LGBTQ+ community and their allies gather to celebrate the existence and beauty of different forms of love and connection. This month of wholesome, deserving support was initiated to honor the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan, and soon turned into a movement to push forward the idea of equality of all people regardless of race, sex, or sexual orientation.

### 1969 Uprising

Stonewall Inn was a nightly home for many runaways and homeless gay youth. It was one of the few, if not the only, gay bar left that allowed dancing.

Before 1966, the New York State Liquor Authority penalized and shut down establishments that served alcohol to known or suspected LGBT individuals, arguing that the mere gathering of homosexuals was “disorderly,” but due to activist efforts these regulations were overturned in 1966. However, engaging in gay behavior in public (holding hands, kissing) was still illegal so police harassment of gay bars continued. Fed up with constant police harassment and social discrimination, angry patrons and neighborhood residents hung around outside of the bar rather than disperse, becoming increasingly agitated as the events unfolded

and people were aggressively manhandled:

**June 24, 1969:** Police arrest Stonewall employees, confiscate alcohol. The NYPD raid began in the early hours of June 28, 1969 when the police decided to raid the Stonewall Inn.

**June 27-28, 1969:** Stonewall crowd erupts after police arrest and rough up patrons. Early hours of June 28, 1969: Transgender women resist arrest. Bottles are thrown at the police.

**Close to 4 a.m. June 28, 1969:** Police retreat and barricade themselves inside Stonewall.

June 28-29: Stonewall reopens, supporters gather. Police beat and tear gas crowds.

**June 29-July 1, 1969:** Stonewall becomes a gathering point for LGBT activists.

**July 2, 1969:** Gay activists protest newspaper coverage.

The Stonewall Riots served as a catalyst for the gay rights movement, and its impact is seen in protective legislation in the United States and around the world.

### Legislation

While an increasing number of states work to pass laws to protect LGBTQ people, we continue to see state legislatures advancing bills that target transgender people, limit local protections, and allow the use of religion to discriminate.

Supportive bills would look like *Affirmative Nondiscrimination Bills* with *comprehensive protection*. These bills would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (or only gender identity if state law already covers sexual

orientation), in a range of contexts, including employment, housing, and public accommodations. Comprehensive bills do not have overly broad religious exemptions or other carve-outs that allow discrimination against LGBT people.

There are also some bills that may look like supportive bills but are not effective. These are known as *incomplete bills*. They lack gender identity protections, do not prevent discrimination in all key contexts, and contain broad religious exemptions language or carve-outs, including for sex-segregated facilities. Among this same level, *state bills that preempt local protections* are another form of incomplete or rather ineffective bills that prevent cities and other local government entities from passing nondiscrimination protections that are more expansive than the protections offered at the state level.

Of the 24 statewide supportive bills across only 15 of the 50 states, only one has been signed by the governor of its state so far (New Hampshire).

Outright discriminatory bills are known simply as anti-LGBT bills. These bills are masked in numerous ways including:

- Religious Freedom Restoration Acts (RFRAs)
- First Amendment Defense Acts (FADAs)
- Health Care Access
- Adoption & Foster Care
- Marriage-Related Exemptions
- Schools and Student Organizations
- Single-Sex Facility Restrictions
- Identification Documents
- And unfortunately, even more

According to the ACLU, there are over 50 of these types of bills in almost all 50 states. A

substantial amount was killed on the legislative body's table but there are enough bills that have either already been signed by their states governor or have been moved forward to be discussed in committees.

Throughout history, there has been an enormous pushback from public institutions and governments to implement laws and legislation for the good of equity and in the name of equality. Even up until the 21st century, there are numerous discrimination-based laws across America that constantly put up a brick wall for the LGBTQ community to scale and it's time the same wall-building institutions build them a ladder.

### **Impact Today**

Pride month celebrates the incredible contributions of LGBTQ+ individuals and advocates in building today's world. Year after year, pride gatherings bring the LGBTQ+ community together to celebrate the immense amount of persistence, courage, and strength that has brought them this far. Although we've come very far, there's still a long way to go until we reach some version of a society that values and respects LGBTQ+ equality and authority.



## Summary of Biden's Presidency

by Tara Vidyababu

It has been over 100 days since Joe Biden's inauguration into the White House as the 46th president of the United States of America. In the span of Biden's presidency so far, a lot of changes have been made which ranges from policy reversals, overturning Trump's policies, to taking executive actions to further his own presidential agenda.

The first change, or changes, President Biden made after being inaugurated was signing 15 executive orders. The orders addressed issues such as immigration, economy, equity, and census. A specific executive order directed towards ethics required "executive branch appointees to sign an ethics pledge barring them from acting in personal interest and requiring them to uphold the independence of the Department of Justice," ensuring that no hidden agendas are being held. Another action taken was a proclamation stopping the construction of the border wall, this was done by,

"terminating the national emergency declaration," which was being used to fund the creation of the border wall. Finally a memo focused on immigration was also declared, and this memo fortified DACA after "Trump's efforts to undo protections for undocumented people brought into the country as children." These three actions as well as many more were all implemented on January 20th, 2021, the day of Joe Biden's inauguration.

Throughout Biden's presidency, he has focused on a few core issues. These issues are the COVID-19 global pandemic, immigration, and economy. In terms of the Coronavirus, President Biden has introduced around 17 new orders in his first 100 days in office. Some examples are, reversing the United State's withdrawal from the World Health Organization and instead creating a COVID-19 Response Coordinator who reports directly to Biden. Another being, launching a

100 days masking challenge; requiring masks to be worn in “airports and on certain modes of transportation, including many trains, airplanes, maritime vessels and intercity buses.” Specifically, expanding COVID-19 testing capacity and calling on the “Department of Education and HHS to provide guidance for safely reopening and operating schools, childcare providers and institutions of higher education.”



In terms of immigration, President Biden has done a lot of reversing of what former president Trump had put into place. Examples of legislation President Biden has reversed that was installed during the Trump presidency includes: policies banning refugees from key regions; a proclamation that limited legal immigration during the COVID-19 pandemic; an order which justified separating families at the border. Instead President Biden created a task force that advises Biden directly and gives recommendations on steps to reunite separated families, and more regarding immigration.

In regards to the economy, President Biden rescinded seven Trump administration actions that had “eased regulatory requirements, as well as actions that called for withholding funding from cities for allowing protests in support of Black Lives Matter, that imposed stricter work requirements to be eligible for federal welfare.” President Biden also closed loopholes and reduced waivers on the federal purchase of domestic goods; laid the foundation for \$15 minimum wage; called for assistance on individuals struggling financially; extended the existing pause on student loan payments and interest for Americans with federal student loans until at least September 30, and much more.

Recently, President Biden has made Juneteenth a federal holiday, honoring the date of 19th, 1865. On that day slaves were told of their emancipation via Union Army Major General Gordon Ranger. Although President Abraham Lincoln had delivered the Emancipation Proclamation two years before then, slaves had still yet to be freed. Juneteenth has often been forgotten but is now being spoken of due to the “momentum generated by the Black Lives Matter movement.” Now, in 2021, President Biden signs the bill into a law, making Juneteenth the newest federal holiday to be introduced since Martin Luther King Jr. Day in 1983.

Only a couple months into his presidency, President Biden has made many significant changes. It is expected for him to continue moving forward, imposing various executive orders, policies, proclamations, and memos that he puts forth and to always work for the benefit the people that make up the United States of America.



# Texas Abortion Laws

## by Shrinidhi Thiruvengadam

On January 22nd, 1973, the Supreme Court decided through a (7-2) ruling that “unduly restrictive state regulation of abortion in unconstitutional.” This decision, known as *Roe v. Wade*, arose as a result of Jane Roe, a name used to safeguard the identity of the plaintiff Norma McCorvey, taking federal action against the district attorney of Dallas County, Henry Wade. Roe argued that the state laws regarding the illegal nature of abortion attempted to inhibit her right to personal privacy, which was protected under the First, Fourth, Fifth, and Ninth Amendments. The Supreme Court decision was eventually made on the basis that the Fourteenth Amendment defends the right to privacy against the state, violating a woman’s right to choose whether to have an abortion or not. The case concluded that the state may not control a decision on abortion until the second trimester, in which regulations may be instituted on abortion that are related to maternal health - once the the third trimester has begun, the state may prohibit abortions entirely as long as the law contains exceptions for which an abortion is needed to protect the life or health of the mother.

While attempts to limit the scope of *Roe v. Wade* are not new, a recent legislative action by Texas Governor Greg Abbott will severely threaten the protections that *Roe v. Wade* promises. On May 19th, Abbott signed a measure that prohibits abortions in Texas as early as six weeks, which is before some women know that they are pregnant; essentially banning abortions as a whole given that the six-weeks cutoff is two weeks after a missed menstrual cycle, according to the Texas Tribune. Authored in the chamber

by State Senator Bryan Hughes, the “heartbeat bill” will ban abortions after a heartbeat has been detected; an amendment to the bill was later added by House Representative Shelby Slawson to include cases in which the fetus was conceived through rape or incest. The bill differs from other previous bills that attempt to limit *Roe v. Wade* in that the bill allows private citizens to involve themselves with abortions that may occur exclusive of their personal decisions, giving private citizens the right to sue abortion providers or anyone who helps someone get an abortion after a fetal heartbeat has been detected, which could potentially include “family members, abortion funds, rape crisis counselors, and other medical professionals.” Moreover, plaintiffs who sue physicians will be awarded a minimum of \$10,000 in damages and court fees. Despite opposing arguments, including one from House Representative Donna Howard who cited medical officials to say that the “heartbeat” during the six-week ultrasounds are “electrically induced flickering” of fetal tissue, the bill is still set to pass in September.

Over 56,000 abortions were performed on Texas residents in 2019, with Texas law banning abortions after 20 weeks. However, the pandemic has proven to exacerbate the existing limitations on abortions within Texas, as NPR reports that the early months of the pandemic saw an almost complete ban on abortions by the governor in an effort to preserve medical supplies and resources, leading to other Southwest states receiving a large influx of Texas patients. Texas has always had a thorough history of attempting to pass abortion restrictions, including a 2011

mandate that required women to view a sonogram and listen to the heartbeat of the fetus prior to receiving the abortion. Additionally, the city of Lubbock elected to pass an ordinance that would ban abortions, becoming the largest municipality out of more than 20 municipalities who have taken this action.

Pro-choice advocates have expressed a great deal of concern over the past few years in response to the jeopardization of *Roe v. Wade*, drawing attention to the expansive inequities that exist within the reproductive health sphere. A 2018 study titled “Socioeconomic Outcomes of Women Who Receive and Women Who Are Denied Wanted Abortions in the United States” found that women who were not able to receive abortions had higher odds of poverty six months later than women who received abortions. They were also “less likely to have full-time work and more likely to get some form of public assistance,” indicating the dire financial implications for women who are not allowed an abortion. The study also suggested that laws that “impose a gestational limit for abortion or otherwise restrict access to abortion will result in worsened economic outcomes for women,” highlighting the reality that many pro-choice advocates have vocalized at great lengths in order to stymie the passing of such restrictive bills.

A coalition of 370 lawyers have signed a letter opposing the bill, pointing out both the unconstitutional restriction it imposes but also the manipulation of the legal system to sue people who may aid a mother in receiving an abortion. Given the Supreme Court’s new conservative majority (6-3), it is likely that states will continue to challenge *Roe v. Wade* and its position in society.

# Vaccine Rollout

by Shrinidhi Thiruvengadam

In the United States, many people over the age of 18 still harbor a level of resistance towards receiving the vaccine due to the fact that all COVID-19 vaccines are currently non-FDA approved. Following Pfizer's announcement in May to seek approval from the FDA for their COVID-19 vaccines for ages 16 and up, Moderna has also announced that it will start the approval for people 18 and up. An approval could help bolster vaccination rates - according to Kaiser Family Foundation's latest vaccine monitor report - due to the fact that nearly a third of unvaccinated adults are waiting for a full FDA approval of a vaccine before getting it. In an interview with ABC, Dr. William Moss, executive director of the International Vaccine Access Center at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, indicated that there are some caveats to waiting for the vaccines to become FDA-approved due to the "rigorous" nature of the approval process. The authorization process, in comparison, is shorter than the amount of time needed for approval (at least two months of follow-up data from phase 3 clinical trials), whereas six months are required for approval. But how has vaccine rollout been despite the lack of FDA approval?

In the United States, it is clear that the vaccination program and community mitigation efforts have resulted in lessened cases. According to a report by the CDC, "High vaccination rates and compliance with public health prevention measures are essential to control the pandemic and to prevent surges and hospitalizations and deaths in the coming months," with CDC director Dr. Rochelle Walesky briefing that

previous predictions of a more grim summer may not hold true if the appropriate measures continue. But there are signs that immunization efforts may be slowing down, as inoculations have declined more than 40% from the peak on April 10 of 4.6 million shots. Strategies to further drive momentum for vaccines have included public health workers knocking on doors, dispatching mobile clinics to large employers and sending doses in similar quantities to family doctors to reach more people. It is important to note that a good portion of these areas include people who live in underserved communities or lack appropriate accommodations to get to a vaccination site, on top of people who are still hesitant to receive the vaccine. According to public health officials, the amount of doses that will need to be shipped out from drug companies will have to be in smaller quantities in order to help mediate the waste of doses in a vial.

Globally, the COVID crisis has been a marker of inequities for access to healthcare resources that high-income countries have a clear abundance of, compared to other lower-income countries. According to the Washington Post, 45 percent of all vaccine doses administered so far have gone to just 16 percent of the world's population in what the World Bank considers high-income countries, with wealthier countries locking up 53 percent of near-term vaccine supply. Wealthier nations likely gained a head start in the vaccine process beginning in the summer and fall of last year when higher income countries began business with vaccine-makers, purchasing an inequitable number of vaccines compared to the world's population. While the United States and

other wealthy nations continue to drive forth immunization programs, much of the rest of the world is grappling with attaining such a supply, which could result in achieving herd immunity at a much later time.

The World Health Organization (WHO) further explains how access to vaccinations have discerned between richer and poorer nations. While affluent nations have discussed the possibilities of booster shots, a vast majority of developing countries have not been able to provide their front-line workers with their first shots. Low-income nations have received less than one percent of vaccines administered so far, in which these conditions naturally lend themselves to the mass spread of variations. The WHO reports that a budget proposal by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which is an estimated \$50 billion, will prioritize inoculations in developing countries, a significant proportion needing to come in the form of grants and concessional financing. Doses would also be donated to developing countries in order to keep pace with national vaccine development plans, which would require adequate diplomatic proceedings. While sharing tangible doses are just as important to mediating the virus in low-income countries, the sharing of other related technology is just as imperative, including “diversifying production to regions with little current capacity, sharing technology and know how, scaling up genomic and supply-chain surveillance, and contingency plans to handle virus mutations or supply shocks” in order to ensure that booster shots are not required.

Although higher-income countries have been able to act relatively quickly with vaccine rollout, there are still many communities within these countries who have been unable

to enjoy the benefits of such a rapid rollout, especially within the United States. According to data collected by The Marshall Project and The Associated Press, fewer than 20% of state and federal prisoners have been vaccinated, and when prisoners are available to get vaccines, much of the information that comes with receiving the vaccine is inaccessible. Due to the overcrowding of many prisons and scarcity of necessary resources, nearly 3 in 10 prisoners have died since the beginning of the pandemic, amounting to a total of 2,500 inmate deaths. While the CDC has told states to “prioritize corrections staff and people in prisons and jails” regarding the vaccine rollout, due to the sheer concentrations and large clusters of people within prisons, both Arkansas and Florida had not begun vaccinating inmates by the end of March. In Tennessee, the process was especially long given the controversy surrounding the nature of vaccinating inmates first, with health officials eventually announcing in March that some of the prison population could receive the vaccine if they qualified by age or had certain health conditions. Despite all inmates being eligible to receive the vaccine in April, many inmates still have reservations regarding the ethics of the prison health system, with a Marshall Project survey of 136 inmates expressing a deep distrust of prison medical systems, citing “misinformation spread by staff and previous experiences of not receiving care” as reasons for vaccine hesitancy.

Another community that has been undermined by the U.S. vaccine rollout are rural communities. According to KUOW, Alaska is the only state where average rural rates of fully vaccinated people have grown faster than urban rates since April 19th, with every other area having urban counties far ahead of rural counties for vaccine rates.

Access to vaccines in rural areas is especially essential given “the higher proportion of residents over 65 years of age, lacking health insurance, living with underlying medical conditions or disabilities, and with limited access to health care facilities with intensive care capabilities” according to CDC epidemiologist Vaughn Berry.

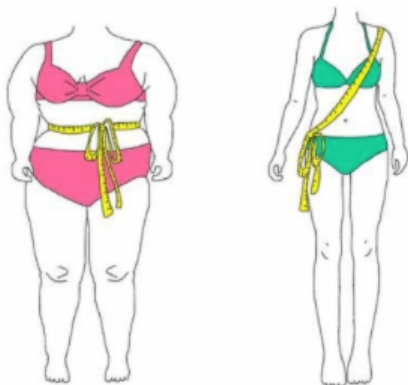
Indigenous communities have been a model of how communication plays a key role in achieving high vaccination rates - the Navajo Nation has paid community health members who work with the Indian Health Service and are committed to ensuring that relationships are forged in rural communities. Despite being hit hard by COVID-19 (American Indians and Alaska Natives are more than twice as likely as white Americans to have died of COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, according to the CDC), nonprofits such as the Denver Indian Health and Family Services have been working within communities to rally community members to receive the vaccine. Although Indigenous communities were largely tossed aside by the government during the brunt of the crisis, community members have been adamant about an equitable vaccine rollout within their communities, creating an efficient paragon for dispersing immunizations.



## Beauty standards and capitalism

by Marina Soares Moreira

The standard of beauty is produced by patriarchy and capitalism. The more difficult it is to reach this standard, the better for these two, because then we feel insecure with our appearance, we develop low self-esteem, submitting ourselves to aesthetic procedures as well as excessive and unnecessary consumption of a series of products. A conclusion that is practically instantaneous would be the description of the aesthetic qualities currently understood and extolled as beautiful, explained by the physical attributes of individuals considered beautiful by society in general, constantly conveyed by the media.



Historically, we have records that men have always set a standard of beauty to be appreciated, from times when they appreciated fatter women because they represented plenty, until the 2000s (and a little before) when the standard of beauty was a very thin one, for being seen as elegant and versatile, a fact that has alarmed the cases of bulimia and anorexia (which still make up huge rates), which occur mainly in young girls.

Therefore, we deduce that determining these standards of beauty is historical and changes over time, but the question is to understand the consequences that the imposition of these standards can bring to people's lives. As we live in a capitalist society, obtaining profit often becomes a priority, thus coming above the happiness of people (and animals). This is because cosmetic companies make money on the low self-esteem of women that is manufactured by themselves; Plastic and aesthetic surgery clinics profit from the dissatisfaction of people who do not meet the imposed standards, and clothing

and shoe companies profit from our consumption thirst because our society values appearance. So, when buying, we have the false idea of happiness, which is momentary and fleeting, but beauty itself keeps us alive, or rather, seeing beauty. It was through what our ancestors considered ugly or beautiful (huge animals, small insects, dangerous flowers, colorful fruits) that they survived, they identified what they could or could not eat, what killed and what was harmless... And, a more recent example, decorated hospitals usually release people suffering from pain earlier.



So, the standard of beauty is not something modern, it has actually been around since society was organized into groups, but it always changes according to priority, better known as wealth. The standard of beauty has always had a direct or indirect connection with the demonstration of power and status, consciously and unconsciously. In antiquity, the most important thing was to survive, so historians, based on the sculptures found, concluded that the women considered the most beautiful were the fattest, because it meant that they had more resources and food at the time it was not easy, just like in the Industrial Revolution. The Asian beauty standard, in a part of the continent, is to be extremely white, because the most working population mainly was engaged in agriculture, so if you weren't tanned at all, it would be indicative of wealth.

Meanwhile in the West, if you're brawny, it means you have the time and money to attend the gym.

Young people are more influenceable than adults, so the media turns all its resources to them, causing them to increase their desire to consume, to buy and want those clothes, shoes, haircuts or styles that are trendy at the moment, a way to feel valid or cool.

When we introduced the term beauty in the definition of the phenomenon to be studied, the concept started to constitute a new problem. What beauty are we referring to? We should be taught to first value health, physical and mental, and prioritize self-acceptance.



# How feminism is affecting sexist practices

by Maitreyee Malla



**TW: non-graphic mentions of sexual abuse and descriptions of abuse and sexism**

Feminist movements in the world started over a hundred years ago. Society has taken great strides towards the equality of men and women. Governments across the globe have established laws and regulations to ensure fair and equal treatment of women but that isn't enough yet for communities that have been built on hundreds of years of patriarchy and misogyny.

Men have always been considered to be stronger than, smarter than and superior to women, and despite years of revolting and fighting, these ideologies are still prevalent. Men have been deemed heads of families, protectors and heirs while women were made homemakers and caretakers. This entitled men to power over the women in a household, which enabled crimes like rape, domestic abuse and oppression. However, women are now able to speak up about such atrocities.

In the past, women in India were forced to practice sati, a custom where a widow is

burnt alive on the funeral pyre in honour of her husband and because widows were considered irrelevant and a burden on the society. Raja Rammohan Roy spearheaded the social reform movement against it in the early 1800s. Consequently, a law was passed by Governor-General Lord William Bentinck making sati illegal all over India. With that, he also helped suppress other practices such as child marriage and female infanticide.

In 2006, Sampat Pal Devi, a government health worker, started Gulabi Gang (pink gang) in Uttar Pradesh, a North Indian state, to fight domestic abuse. It is an initiative in which women, dressed in pink (signifying womanhood) with bamboo sticks, attack domestic abusers directly. It is a direct response to the patriarchy that exists around us. The Gulabi Gang also focuses on educating young women to be financially strong and independent. Such groups are the ones which are helping fight misogyny and patriarchy in rural places where ideas like feminism are ridiculed.

Most women in India are not educated and are often married as soon as possible.



Families aim to save up for their daughters' weddings rather than their education and despite dowry having been made illegal in the country, families that don't pay it are rare. Often, when a bride doesn't pay a good amount of dowry, she is mistreated. In urban centers, women are given much more liberty in comparison to their rural counterparts. Women have more control over their careers and choice of partners. Men today are also trying to be of help, like Arunachalam Muruganatham, also known as pad-man, who created a machine to produce sanitary napkins at a low cost to help spread awareness about menstrual hygiene in rural India. Many young men today are also trying to educate themselves on sexism and more men today are feminist unlike their predecessors. Today, because of the great things all of these people did, more and more people are taking up the mantle and fighting for a better world for women.



**1. Raja Rammohan Roy**

**2. Governor-General Lord William Bentinck**



# Spotlight

edited by Rachel Lewis

## Genesis Butler: 14-Year Old Activist Using Her Voice to Better the Planet

by Grace Huang



“We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children. Please consider my generation and future generations, and know that we’re worried about our future on this planet, and we’re looking for adults to help,” said the 10-year old veganism activist Genesis Butler passionately near the conclusion of her TEDx speech. This inspiring speech took place in 2017, titled “A 10-year old’s vision for healing the planet.” In the summer of 2021, four years after the delivery of her TEDx talk, Genesis’s arguments for animal protection have only grown more compelling and inspiring for the younger generation to hear.

The average reader may be surprised at

how young this teenage activist is when she delivered the talk, as well as what she has accomplished at such a young age. In fact, the desire to speak up runs in her blood - from her great-granduncle Cesar Chavez. As a well-known Civil Rights activist and well-respected labor union leader, some of Chavez’s greatest accomplishments include serving as the cofounder of the National Farm Workers Association, which later became the United Farm Workers that fought for higher wages and improved working conditions under the grape growers in California. Hearing about the inspirational life of her great-granduncle at an early age, Genesis developed a passion for activism earlier than most of her peers.

As Genesis described herself in her TEDx speech, she stopped eating animal meat at the age of three, and then stopped consuming dairy products one year later, officially becoming vegan at the age of four. According to Genesis, the reason behind stopping consumption of animal meat stems

from a conversation with her mother out of curiosity. As a child, she was curious about where her favorite chicken nuggets come from. After hearing the answer from her mother, she immediately removed animal meat from her diet. One year later, upon seeing her mother nurse her baby sister, she once again posed a question out of curiosity with regards to the source of the milk that she drinks everyday. Connecting the source of milk from mother cows to her mother's action of breastfeeding her sister, Genesis decided to turn vegan and end her consumption of milk. Soon, she was able to persuade her entire family to turn vegan with her.

Fighting for animal rights wasn't the only motivation behind her desire to promote veganism to more people. Genesis pointed out that veganism may have significant environmental benefits. Some scientific research results suggest that animal agriculture and the natural resources necessary can negatively impact the environment and contribute to climate change. These studies provide statistics suggesting that raising animals for consumption costs a considerable amount of water as well as other natural resources. Researchers also argue that animal agriculture is projected to produce a far larger amount of emissions than energy consumption. Thus, Genesis hopes to persuade her audience that veganism may also benefit the environment for the prosperity of the current generation, and more importantly, future generations to come.

At the incredibly young age of 14, Genesis has achieved much through the brave expression and later amplification of her voice on various platforms. After her TEDx speech in 2017, she consequently spoke at the Switch4Good's Dairy-Free Athlete Summit in

2018, discussing the importance of activism. Later in 2019, she participated in Farm Sanctuary, where she gave a speech titled "How Adults Can Support Youth Activism; The Importance of Activists Speaking Up for the Animals and for Our Planet." The accomplishments of young Genesis are certainly not a result of pure luck. In the previously mentioned and many other speeches, she demonstrated professional public speaking and persuasive skills beyond that expected of her age. She was able to send a message of confidence and passion through her fluent speaking and casual use of hand gestures at the age of ten. At a young age, she learned to use evidence and anecdotes to empower her speech and inspire the audience, leading to a great round of applause from a large number of listeners every time she speaks.

Genesis' hard work certainly did not go unnoticed. She received much attention for her work, as shown by the large number of articles written about her and well-known activism events in which she participated. In one interview, she mentioned her actions beyond speeches - her management of an Instagram account, using which she sends a message to her large number of followers about veganism and animal protection. Even more impressive, she founded a nonprofit named Genesis for Animals. Through this



nonprofit, she collects donations to raise money for sanctuaries. She donates the money to aid animal protection efforts when those in need of help reach out to Genesis for Animals. Furthermore, Genesis also strives to promote the passing of animal protection- and veganism-related bills. She has been known to support three bills in California, the SB 1248 Cruelty Free Cosmetics Act, the SB 1487 Iconic African Species Protection Act, and the SB 1138 Plant Based Meal Options.

The efforts of Genesis created a considerable impact in her community. She not only converted her entire family to veganism despite their initial doubts, but also persuaded 7 or 8 friends in school to convert to a vegan diet. Beyond the scope of family and friends, her speeches and actions achieved considerable attention from the public and inspired many debates regarding the extent to which animal agriculture is harming the planet. Despite the great debate around veganism, Genesis certainly contributed much to increased public attention around a vegan diet, animal protection, and environment protection through her influence via speeches, social media accounts, and her nonprofit. Although at a young age, Genesis has already demonstrated her dedication to activism and her devotion to transforming an idea into words, then into action. There is no doubt that she will move on to achieve even greater accomplishments and inspire more people, and the younger generation should certainly view her as a role model for her willingness and ability to use her voice to impact this world.



# Pride or Greed? The Double-Sided Nature of Rainbow Capitalism

by Deetya Adhikari



Time and time again, capitalism, by nature, exploits marginalized communities by transforming them into mere markets, and selling them back to these communities as a commodity. Rainbow capitalism, the innate commercialization of LGBTQ+ movements, cheapens the meaning of pride month and the LGBTQ+ community. Many people are unaware of the hardships queer people of color went through in order to make pride month a reality, though this month is coincidentally meant to commemorate them. It has been found that an estimated 20 to 30 percent of the LGBTQ+ community abuses substances, compared to about 9 percent of the population as a whole and despite this, June is perhaps the biggest promotional

season for the alcohol industry (“The LGBTQ Community and Addiction”).

As LGBTQ+ pride has become a more prevalent topic over the years, businesses are earnestly slapping rainbow on all their products in solidarity with queer crowds as a means for profit during June, in financial and social standings. Many of these companies may not support LGBTQ+ rights, yet they still slap some rainbow onto their merchandise, in an attempt to showcase their brand as activists and “woke.” More often than not, the profits from this merchandise do not holistically go towards helping queers in their fight for equity, but are instead being used to further their business and increase profits even more. This makes the marginalized communities that pride month was dedicated to feel like paltry commodities, subsequently subtracting from the urgency of LGBTQ+ rights. Pride month began as a way to appreciate queers and give them the opportunity to freely express

themselves, but through fervent consumerism, the celebration of this month has begun to feel somewhat inauthentic. As a queer person, it feels as if nobody is sincere about their rights and are just paying lip service in order to gain their loyalty as a consumer, which is dehumanizing to see. Once the end of the month arrives, a significant number of these companies will remain deafeningly silent in their support for LGBTQ+ rights, showing that they do not truly care about the rights of LGBTQ+ communities. It is imperative to wait and see how a brand acts outside of June, to see if they are genuine in their support.

Some luxury brands have been shown to back LGBTQ+ communities outside of paying lip service. Balenciaga has pledged to donate 15% of their pride collection to LGBTQ+ charity the Trevor Project, and Calvin Klein has pledged an undisclosed sum to charities such as the Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund. This shows that there are companies willing to exhibit loyalty to the LGBTQ+ community, which is a step in the right direction. However, 15% is not a very significant donation to the cause; seeing as these corporations are putting the pride flag on their merchandise, they should be giving all the proceeds back to the community.

Dedicating to a cause is a 12-month, year-round commitment, and that kind of dedication does not come from spouting buzzwords for a month. A reformation of the systematic discrimination that queer people receive can only come about through authentic support from public figures and well-known brands, and not from feigned activism to bolster ulterior motives. Though the extra LGBTQ+ exposure is better than where the community was even some years ago, it shouldn't be considered progress that

these corporations accept the LGBTQ+ community; they only accept it because they can make a profit off of it.



## Rene Magritte

by Paleesa Kapoor

Rene Magritte was born in Lessines, Belgium on November 21, 1898. His father was a tailor. His mother was a milliner, and died when Magritte was 14. Magritte was also the oldest of three boys. Rene began his art studies in the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Brussels (Royal Academy of Fine Arts of Brussels). He studied there from 1916 to 1918. Magritte was the student of the world known painter, Victor Servranckx. However, Magritte became unimpressed with the institution, although he was shown to develop styles such as cubism and futurism. Eventually, Magritte began to make money by reproducing paintings by famous artists. Several of his art pieces from the early 1920s were influenced by Pablo Picasso. His career finally launched in 1927, when he had his first solo exhibition, at the Galerie Le Centaure in Brussels. As he started gaining popularity, he became famous for surrealism, furthermore his interesting images. His paintings often included humorous illustrations. Magritte had a gift for painting simple images and ordinary objects and giving them distinctive meanings. His precision and how he invoked

reality through his paintings was also one of the many reasons people adored him. Rene Magritte is now one of the most prominent Surrealist\* painters.

### Rene Magritte's Paintings



**The Son Of A Man**  
Oil Paint on Canvas  
1964

- The Son of Man is a Belgian surrealist painting.

\* Surrealist- movement in art and literature during the period between World War I and II

- Originally supposed to be a self-portrait
- The artist is trying to convey humanity from the painting
- The appearance looks similar to another painting from Magritte, resembles The Great War on Facades



**The False Mirror**  
Oil Paint on Canvas  
1928

- Created between World War I and World War II
- Currently shown at New York's Museum of Modern Art
- The style of this type of artwork has also been referred to as "magical realism"



**The Treachery of Images**  
Oil paint on Canvas  
1928-1929

- The treachery of Images is one of Magritte's most recognizable pieces of art.
- Magritte was recognized for painting with the clarity of an advertisement in a magazine while infusing a message that

- causes the viewer to question their reality.
- Shows how contemporary art can have meaning
- Completed when he was only 30 years old



**Golconda**  
Oil paint on Canvas  
1953

- Inspiration from a wealthy city in India, draws reference to the desire of wealth
- Even though the men seem to be the same, observing the faces the viewer is able to notice that some of the faces are different
- Magritte himself claims one of the faces
- Represents people and objects that prove how reality can be limited to how one looks at it



**Elective Affinities**  
Oil paint on canvas  
1933

- It portrays that a person's ideas are born into a solid world that is surrounded by limitations
- This concept was introduced by Johann von Goethe, a German polymath
- revealed the reason behind free will





### **Lycism**

Oil Paints on Canvas

1947

- Many people around this time could recognize the pear-head man as French King Louis Phillippe I (1773-1850).
- King Louis Phillippe was unresponsive to his people when they demanded more economic needs and political desires.
- The painting detailed the pear with expressions that showed how he believed he had power.

Magritte's artistic creations left both visual and mental impact on his audience. The reality is that the compositions are images or illustrations that convey a more profound importance. Magritte accomplished fundamentally in the art world, and his works of art stay pertinent because of the rich message they convey.

# World Music Day

by Vijay Fisch

During the global coronavirus pandemic which shook all of our lives, the music industry was halted. Concerts were canceled, bands stopped performing, and the future of the music industry looked dreary. I was inspired, though, by the speed at which musicians adapted. Bands in New York City playing in their apartments through their windows for onlookers on the streets below went viral. Musicians such as Coldplay, and my personal favorite, Rex Orange County, hosted free Instagram live concerts. Other famous musicians such as Charlie Puth and Travis Scott hosted paid virtual concerts.

Still, the end of the pandemic couldn't come soon enough, and World Music Day 2021 (AKA Make Music Day) will be a breath of fresh air. Founded by France's Minister of Culture and a French Composer in 1982, the aim is to provide a day of free music to all. Amateur musicians are encouraged to showcase their talents. The holiday is usually accompanied by over 5,000 free outdoor concerts. The holiday has a global impact, with over 1,000 cities in 120 countries taking part. Over 85 US cities take part.

Make music day has a variety of interesting events. For example, Leaf Music, where musicians are encouraged to use leaves to make songs. According to the official Make Music Day website, "a humble leaf becomes a reed instrument like no other. Leaf playing has a long history in many nations around the world, including China, Cambodia, Australia, Brazil, Japan and Nepal..." #MySongIsYourSong is a project to encourage artists to cover each other's songs, and "Over 200 artists participated in the inaugural #MySongIsYourSong for Make

Music Day 2020" (Make Music Day). This Moment In Time is a beautiful project to honor the millions of lives lost due to the coronavirus pandemic by playing a gong in public spaces around the world for one hour, uninterrupted. Junko Phonics, a mix of arts, crafts, and music, is a project to make instruments from scratch.

My favorite event, Window Serenades, is an opportunity for musicians to give back to their communities and provide music safely for immunocompromised elderly folk. These programs took place across the United States in 2020, and will continue into the future.

To support the event, over 40 iconic landmarks across the U.S. including Niagara Falls will turn orange in support of Make Music Day. This includes

- Niagara Falls in Buffalo (NY)
- City Hall in Portland (ME)
- Waterbury Palace Theater Marquee in Waterbury (CT)
- Cira Centre, Cira Garage, FMC Tower, One Liberty Place and Two Liberty Place in Philadelphia (PA)
- Gulf Tower, Koppers Tower and One Oxford Centre in Pittsburgh (PA)
- Prudential Plaza and 875 North Michigan Avenue in Chicago (IL)
- Overture Center for the Arts in Madison (WI)
- Several city parks fountains in Kansas City (MO)
- City Hall in Houston (TX)
- City Hall in Beverly Hills (CA)
- Aloha Tower in Honolulu (HI)

If you want to take part in world music day and your town is not included, that's no

problem. World Music Day is an event for all, and it is easy to get involved locally. With their expansive group of musicians all around the world though, many of us are just miles from a free concert.

While cultures around the world have their own individual and unique styles of music, World Music Day embodies unity. As people from nations around the world come together for a day of song, we're all more connected than it seems at first glance.

Check out the link in the Call to Action section if you would like to participate!



(AP Photo/Kathy Willens)

Make Music Day- New York in Brooklyn's Ditmas Park Neighborhood. Musicians played jazz, classical music, and other genres, right from their houses.



World Music Day Logo



# Call to Action

Participate in World Music Day: <https://www.makemusicday.org/participate/>

Donate to the trevor project:

[https://give.thetrevorproject.org/give/63307/#!/donation/checkout?  
c\\_src=website&c\\_src2=HeaderDonateButton](https://give.thetrevorproject.org/give/63307/#!/donation/checkout?c_src=website&c_src2=HeaderDonateButton)



**Instagram for Kids:**

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**Pictures:**

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