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Proposed question for independent project...

Why is justice not being served for women being spiced and the for the cruel consequences that follow?

In this essay I will be exploring three key words supported with by a minimum of three thinkers and three artists. I will be discussing the words feminism, spiking and fashion. I will attempt to form connections between the three words to construct a question for my independent research project in third year. I have chosen to explore several theorists and philosophers including Bell Hooks, Laura Mulvey and Judith Butler as well a variation of artists that I believe reflect my keys words, such as Sarah Andreasson and Prabal Gurung.

Feminism:

Feminism is a movement. It is also known as the women's liberation movement, and it is a global, political campaign that's aims to reform issues that affects women daily (Lumen, Unknown). 'Feminism is about all genders having equal rights and opportunities' (IWDA, unknown) and over the past century, women have evolved are now incredibly powerful individuals. Feminism is not about hating men or suggesting that women are better than men, it is about highlighting male dominance in society as well as current patriarchy.

Laura Mulvey is a British feminist film theorist who is predominately known for 'The Male Gaze' theory (Sampson, 2015). Mulvey's theory discusses sexual objectification of women in the media and how women are constructed to pleasure male viewers, reinforcing the outdated idea 'men do the looking, and women are to be looked at'. Mulvey continues to discuss how this can affect the 'feminist perspective' as it impacts the way women see other women and how women look at themselves.

Judith Butler is another feminist theorist that talks about how identity is a performance and gender performance is built through repetition of acts. These acts can be the way we walk, talk and dress. Butler challenges the idea of a 'person's gender is determined by their sex' and how they are built up of different notions. Sex is the biological characteristics that you are born with whereas, gender is denoted through how masculine or feminine a person may be.

Sara Andreasson is a Swedish illustrator who is inspired by the 'female/queer separatist movements. According to a recent article by Metal, Andreasson emphasises that feminism to her means 'overthrowing the power structures' that reduce the way people live, such as their freedom. It is all about politics and how it can be used to raise awareness.



Fig. 1: *Sara Andreasson*. Sara Andreasson. Available at <https://saraandreasson.com/> (Accessed: April 5, 2023).

A potential question that has come to mind after looking at Andreasson's work would be feminism and a male's perspective? Women are incredibly powerful in this day in age, is this intimidating to men? Do men now feel undermined and powerless? Has feminism turned into women hating the opposite sex and are women as a sex now becoming too much?



Fig. 2: Andreasson, S. (no date) *One of Sara's illustrations for a collaboration with Monki, ARTIST FEATURE - SARA ANDREASSON*. Four Point Puzzles. Available at: <https://fourpointpuzzles.com/pages/artist-feature-sara-andreasson> (Accessed: April 5, 2023).

The Swedish graphic designer and illustrator uses her illustration to convey alternative ideas of gender and portray ideas of equality through art. She uses bold shapes and colours, as well as powerful figures in her illustrations that disrupt conventional ideas of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' and 'sexuality'. In an interview in 2015, Andreasson revealed that when drawing women in her work, she often uses male bodies and vice versa to reinforce the ideas of 'gender equality'. Andreasson also disclosed she founded a magazine called 'BBY' which celebrates 'female and queer artists and writers' and celebrates feminism.

Luce Irigaray a French feminist, philosopher and cultural theorist who has 'argued that the woman has been constructed as the specular other of man in all Western discourses. Her

work has had a huge influence on the 'poststructuralist feminist thought' and created its own subcategory within the feminist movement; 'radical feminist' (MAMBROL, 2016).

Irigaray claims that the Western culture relies primarily on the 'sacrifice' of the mother, and 'all women through her'. From this, the conclusion was made that 'sexual difference does not exist' and difference 'would require that men and women are equally able to achieve subjectivity' (Donovan, n.d.).

Spiking:

Drink spiking is where alcohol or a drug substance is put into a person's drink without their knowledge or consent. Drink spiking is known to make a person vulnerable for many kinds of motives. It can vary from theft as well as more severe motives such as sexual assault and rape. Symptoms of drinking spiking can vary from loss of balance, fatigue, lowering of inhibitions, visual difficulty, confusion, excessive vomiting, and unconsciousness (Warrender, 2021). Drink spiking and needle spiking is a criminal offence and those caught can receive up to 10 years sentence time (Committee, 2022).

An article from the UK Parliament stated that they launched an inquiry due to the drastic increase in drink spiking incidents in October 2021 and discovered that there was a new form of drink spiking involving a needle. During that time, a survey revealed that '499 of 525 incidents' reflected the 'novelty of needle spiking' (Committee, 2022).

Martha Williams a student from Edinburgh launched a campaign in October 2021 which developed into a national movement after hearing about the dramatic increase in spiking cases, especially needle spiking. 'The Night In' campaign was urging people to stay away

from nightclubs for one night to emphasise that the nightlife industry needed to 'protect' their customers. The campaign was aiming to stop 'victim blaming' and for clubs and bars to take 'responsibility for the people' in their venues (ITV, 2021). Sarah Buckle, 19, was spiked via a needle in 2021 and woke up in hospital with no recollection of what had happened the night before. She felt pain in hand and noticed the large bruise and pinprick wound. Buckle has now been left feeling 'violated' and 'petrified' to go out (ITV, 2021).

Mell Hall is a feminist TikTokker from Toronto. Hall recently uploaded a TikTok which demonstrates how easy it is to spike someone's drink. Her aim was to emphasise how easily women are targeted with 'date rape drug', most known as rohypnol and gamma hydroxybutyrate (Police, n.d.). Hall uses several techniques to 'slip' the drug into a drink, all being playful and successfully familiar. Later in her video, she discusses how impossible it is to detect the date rape drug, the drug itself is fast dissolving, colourless and tasteless (Whalen, 2020).

Anti-spiking campaigns make it very clear that you should seek medical advice if you believe you or someone else are showing symptoms of being spiked. However, '1 in 4 Britons' claim that they do not believe that the police would take the seriously if they were to report a drink spiking (Raven, 2022). The article stated that 1 in 10 women have had their drink spiked at least once and '35% of women either had their drink spiked or know of someone who has'. The rate amongst men is a lot smaller but still surprising; 5%.

The article takes another outlook and discusses whether spiking is taken seriously by the police. 40% said they were 'not very confident', while 15% said they were 'not confident at all' (Raven, 2022).

An article from The Guardian stated that many victims do not report the crime as they feel 'embarrassed or ashamed'. One of the biggest factors of this is memory loss from the drug and don't believe anything will be done or taken further. Unfortunately, victims of spiking are often blamed or often told that they were just 'too drunk' (Young-Powell, 2014).

I was also a victim of drink spiking in 2021. As lovely as the support workers were, they were not helpful. The day after the incident, I was asked to provide a urine sample, and this needed to be done within the 24 hours. The test did not test all drug types, it was not accurate, but the results were instant. One drug came back as not conclusive, but no further investigation was conducted, and I was told to be more careful when I was out.

Drink and needle spiking is still an issue in 2023 and a potential question I would like to explore in my third-year project would be, what makes viable to be spiked? Does it depend on what you wear? Is there more that could be done to prevent drink spiking? Is there more that could be done to make people, especially women, feel safe when they are out?



Fig. 3: Twssmagazine, (2018) Drink Spiking: A Short Story, That's What She Said. Available at: [https://twss magazine.com/2016/11/02/drink-spiking-a-short-story/](https://twssmagazine.com/2016/11/02/drink-spiking-a-short-story/) (Accessed: April 21, 2023)

'That's What She Said' is an online magazine made by Students from University of Bristol.

The online platform established in 2011 and offers feminist talent and discusses issue through a range of poetry and art. Isabel Kilborn created an illustration to reflect the short story about a girl called Emily who had been spiked (twssmagazine, 2016). I really like how unconventional her art is. It focuses on the visual effects and how someone perceives an object when you have been spiked. Kilborn uses a cocktail and repeats the design three times so empathise the distorted effect and how being 'roofied' can affect you.

Fashion:

When I think of the word fashion, I immediately think of clothing, catwalks, London Fashion Week, and somehow it all leads back to design. I would like to explore how design, especially graphic design, has an influence on the fashion industry.

Graphic designers have a huge role within the fashion industry. Graphic designers 'transform' a 'vision into reality' as well as designing flyers and promotional tools for fashion events and other fashion related material. During the industrial revolution, women took fashion inspiration from magazines and catalogues. These catalogues were filled with creative visuals and graphics to showcase global trends within trends within the industry, and this was done by graphic designers. One hundred years on and this is still a huge area within the fashion industry. Although printed magazines are becoming something of the past, graphic designers use online platforms to showcase the fashion industry, this referencing back to zeitgeist and the theory of 'the spirit of the time' (M.S., 2013). Fashion is a balance with timeless pieces and keeping up with current trends. It is all about selling people an idea or a dream of the type of lifestyle that they crave. A graphic designer's job is

to sell this idea to the consumer. By creating visually pleasing pages in glossy magazines, they can sell fashion in paper form (Digest, Unknown).

A current trend within the fashion industry that is peaking is graphic designs on t-shirts. Readers Digest described this trend as 'wearable works of art'. Graphic designers work 'hand in hand' with the fashion industry to create 'compelling' designs (Digest, Unknown).

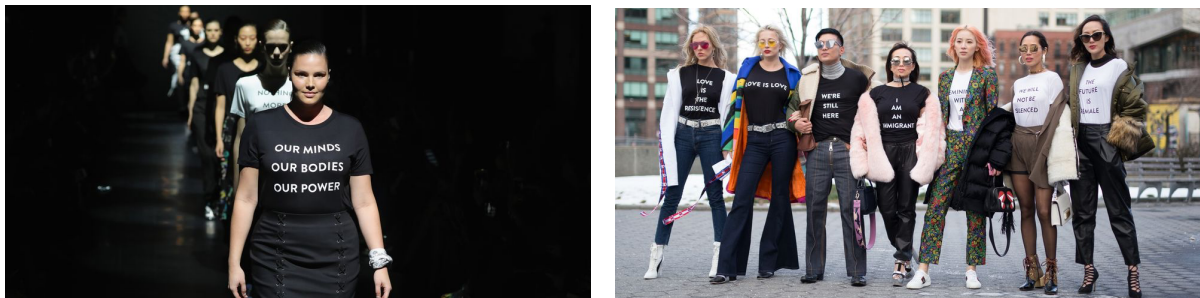


Fig. 4: Murray, D. (2018) *Prabal Gurung spoke to us about wearable politics and fashion's New Order*, ELLE. ELLE. Available at: <https://www.elle.com/uk/fashion/trends/news/a34880/prabal-gurung-spoke-to-us-about-wearable-politics-and-fashions/> (Accessed: April 9, 2023)

Prabal Gurung is a women's fashion designer which aims to spread the message of 'diversity and strength' through inspiration of fashion. Gurung is a feminist supporter and describes feminism as 'not just a trending topic – it is a constant battle'. In 2017 Gurung released his AW/17 t-shirts. These graphic t-shirts had slogans printed on the front focusing on immigration, feminism and genderless love. Gurung wanted to use his voice and his platform to induce change. The AW/17 t-shirts were a huge success in the Fall show in 2017 as well as in New York Fashion Week. In his interview with Elle magazine, he continued to discuss how there is a new 'demand' for fashion garments which have an impact and creates a statement. Gurung challenges 'notions of what fashions role can be in our society' and

celebrates diversity through fashion and design (Murray, 2017). Without graphic design, this would not be possible. Even though his design is simple, they are powerful. The typeface for the slogans on the t-shirts has been thought about and the strong black and white theme throughout the design emphasises the strong connotations of diversity.

With both graphic design and fashion design industries growing, there is now job vacancies for a 'modern-day fashion graphic designer'. The role of the designer integrates between the two creative fields. The job includes producing 'print motifs' for clothing as well as promotional materials for a fashion brand. Another key quality is being able to keep up trends (zeitgeist) and present visuals for mood boards and marketing materials for clients (Patanella, 2021).

Graphic design welcomed itself into the fashion industry in 1858 when Charles Frederick Worth opened a fashion house. He started by introducing a sewn label which was his signature. From then, Worth discovered his own style, especially with typefaces. Graphic design was used to create coherent visual styles and in 1920 Coco Chanel was one of the first brands to do this. The highly recognizable graphic logo was subtly repeated through the fashion industry which started the brand identity for Chanel.

After exploring my chosen three words in some sort of depth, I have discovered that the words link. All three words relate to women, feminism and the misogynistic theme. For the word feminism I have discussed theories regarding the male gaze and women are purely to be looked at from the other sex, as well as discussing other theorists that also support this

theory. The word spiking also involves women and how they are targeted and how most women spiked are given a date rape drug with the cruel intentions to be sexually assaulted and abused. Fashion slightly defers from the two previous themes; however, I discovered a fashion artist who is a strong feminist supported and works with fashion to communicate injustice for women. I enjoyed researching how feminism is campaigned through multiple platforms, not just through posters and protests.

There is a strong relationship between the word's women, spiking, and injustice which I have gathered from my three words. A possible question I could work with for the independent project in third year could be: Why is justice not being served for women being spiked and the for the cruel consequences that follow? I would like to explore why women feel like they cannot speak about their experiences and report the issue after the event has taken place. I would like to know why women are not taken seriously when reporting the crime, what campaigns are available currently to aware people of spiking and is there a demographic for women who are spiked or is it a random selection. Do women need to look a certain way, do they need to wear a type of clothing, and why are so many students' victims to drink spiking and have they recovered physically and mentally since the incident. I would like to focus on university students in particular as I am interested to see the ratio of students to non-students who have been spiked in city centres.

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