

ISSUE #1  
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# MERIDIANS

Sidwell Friends School  
International Magazine

Cover Art: Haohan SiMa '25 (SFS)

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*en Bogotá*  
Izzy Fandl

*Perspective* <sup>11</sup>  
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*of Spanish*  
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# About the Magazine

Meridians stretch all over the earth and pass through countless geographies independently of one another but reconnect at the poles. They can be a metaphor for the many languages and cultures of our planet, different from one another and yet vehicles for dialogue and mutual understanding.

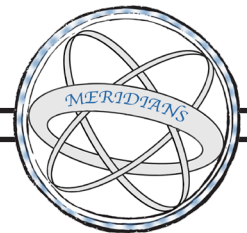
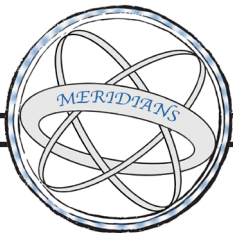
Taking inspiration from this comparison, I hope to share the value of intercultural liasons with the Sidwell community and beyond, celebrating our differences and promoting inclusivity across cultural and linguistic boundaries. *Meridians* welcomes a wide variety of textual genres and topics in all languages--with art contributions to accompany them--, such as: poems, short stories, essays, interviews, reviews of books, plays, movies, translations, excerpts of foreign literary works accompanied by critical reflections. I aspire to likewise expand the magazine's online presence, allowing us to include podcasts and other multimedia works.

And, most importantly, a huge thank you to the students and teachers who have submitted work for this issue; you all have been invaluable for the successful launch of this magazine! Haohan, Gabi, and Wang Laoshi, thank you for helping pitch the magazine and for your contributions to the sample edition.

I cannot wait to embark on this incredible journey with you all.

With gratitude,

**Ilaria Luna, '25 (Founder and Editor-in-Chief)**



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# UniVerses

\* \* \*

*Poems written in different languages  
or about other cultures*



## ***La Gota***

Izzy Fandl '25 (SFS)

Un día, del cielo cayó una gota  
 Brillante, delicada, y perfectamente unica  
 Cayó sobre una hoja, y fácilmente empezó a rodar  
 Rápidamente, sin ningún obstáculo, la gota persiguió el sol  
 Por que que más iba hacer? El terreno, la gravedad, la vida la jalaba hacia la luz  
 Finalmente la gota llegó a un pequeño río  
 Y sin miedo la gota cayó  
 Al instante desapareció y la gota se volvió una de muchas en un río que no paraba de correr  
 Rápidamente el agua perseguía el sol  
 Y la gota, que se había hundido, ando arrastrada por el agua  
 Pegándose contra cada roca, ahogándose bajo las otras gotas,  
 Despaciosamente perdiéndose en el río de gotas como ella  
 Finalmente la gota llegó al mar  
 Y el río se regó, tirando sus gotas al las profundidades del agua  
 Y la gótica que venía de ultimas en el río  
 Que venía adolorida de su viaje  
 Cansada de perseguir el sol  
 No se hundió  
 Las otras gotas del río se hundieron del cansancio de correr tanto hacia el sol  
 Pero las gotas del fondo del río  
 Que venían arrastradas, lastimadas, y fortalecidas  
 La gótica que ese día suertudo cayó sobre esa hoja  
 La gótica brillante, delicada, y perfectamente imperfecta  
 Flotó.



*English Translation:*

## ***The Drop***

One day, a drop fell from the sky  
 Bright, delicate, and perfectly unique  
 It fell on a leaf, and easily started to roll  
 Swiftly, without any hindrance, the drop chased the sun  
 What else was it going to do? The terrain, gravity, life was pulling it towards the light.  
 Finally the drop reached a small river  
 And without fear the drop fell  
 Instantly it disappeared and the drop became one of many in a river that did not stop flowing  
 Quickly the water chased the sun  
 And the droplet, which had sunk, was dragged along by the water  
 Sticking against every rock, drowning under the other drops,  
 Slowly getting lost in the river of drops like itself.  
 Finally the drop reached the sea  
 And the river spilled over, throwing its drops into the depths of the water  
 And the droplet that came from last in the river  
 Who came weary from her journey  
 Tired of chasing the sun  
 She did not sink  
 The other drops of the river sank from the fatigue of running so much towards the sun  
 But the drops at the bottom of the river  
 That came dragged, hurt, and strengthened  
 The droplet that that lucky day fell on the leaf  
 The shining, delicate, and perfectly imperfect droplet  
 Floated.



# Poèmes Symbolistes Sur la Nature

## SFS French IV (Periods 4 & 5)

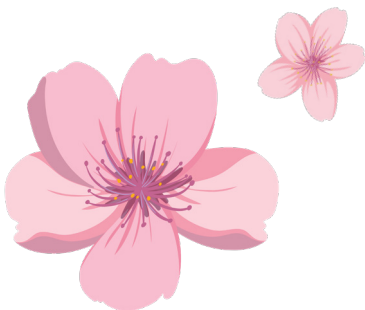
### #1

*Hannah, Jackson, Alex, Jasmine, Navya, Ellie, Cat, Nyla, Nico, Henry, Anya, Izzy*

À travers la ville,  
Elles ajoutent de la beauté à la vie,  
Ce sont des fleurs de cerisiers.  
Pour cette raison, le printemps est parfait.  
    La nature tranquille, universelle, et bigarrée  
    dont la rivière sépare les côtés.  
    La montagne de haut et l'expansive forêt,  
    Les deux parties sont différentes, mais connectées.

La rivière coule calmement  
Toutes les feuilles sont orange  
Le ciel brille comme un diamant  
Ce paysage, sa beauté est étrange  
    L'eau coule comme un serpent,  
    Les feuilles rouges tombent lentement.  
    La lune brille à travers les arbres  
    C'est la beauté de novembre.

Une légère lumière brille dans le ciel  
Avec couleurs d'or, bleu, et rose.  
Les abeilles commencent à faire du miel  
Et les nuages s'ouvrent sans une cause  
    Tout le monde vient voir  
    Cette beauté de mai  
    Mais bientôt vient le soir  
    Et trop vite le soleil partirait.



### *English Translation:*

Across the city,  
They add beauty to life,  
They're cherry blossoms.  
For this reason, springtime is perfect.  
The quiet, universal, variegated nature  
with the river separating its sides.  
The mountain from above and the expansive forest,  
The two parts are different, but connected.  
The river flows calmly  
All the leaves are orange  
The sky shines like a diamond  
This landscape, its beauty is strange  
The water flows like a snake,  
The red leaves fall slowly.  
The moon shines through the trees  
This is the beauty of November.  
A light shines in the sky  
With gold, blue, and pink colors.  
Bees begin to make honey  
And the clouds open without a reason.  
Everyone comes to see  
The beauty of May  
But soon comes the evening  
And too soon would the sun would be gone.

## #2

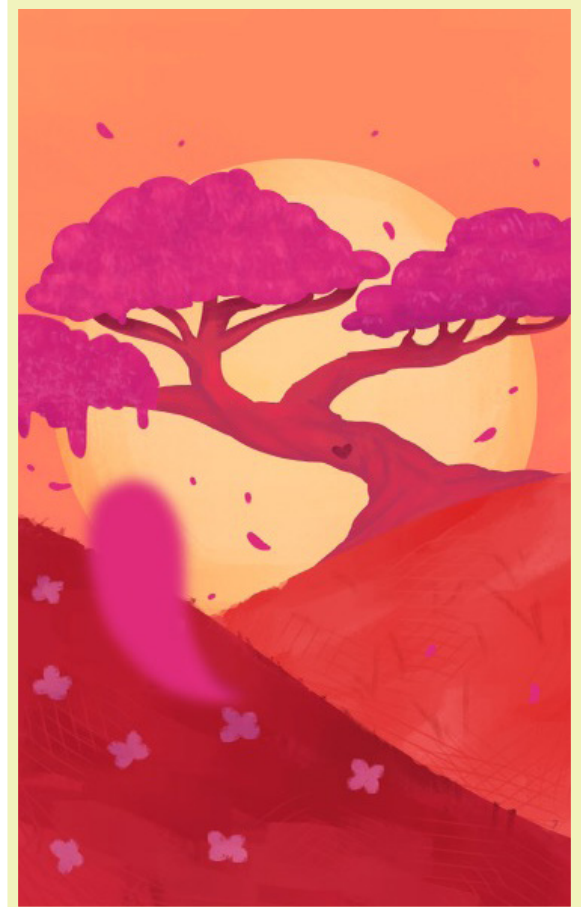
*Kaila, Alma, Galen, Robert, Abby, Kidist, Jet, Kevyn, John, Sune, Annica, Ava, Divya, Easy Amelia*

Les feuilles sont colorées par le soleil.  
La pluie fait du bruit dans la nuit.  
Quand je marche, je vois le blé,  
Et l'air sent bon comme des fruits.

Les feuilles sont rouges comme mon sang  
Elles se battent avec ses bras, je me bats avec ma langue  
L'automne disparaît, l'hiver va arriver  
Mais la Révolution française est née.

C'est tout tranquille, le ruisseau est calme,  
Soudain une grenouille traverse le buisson,  
Elle ne s'arrête pas pour boire au ruisseau,  
Derrière le buisson, avec les petites grenouilles, les renards  
restent à leurs châteaux.

La rivière a coulé comme le vent dans mes cheveux,  
Les nuages ont créé des illustrations artistiques pour mes yeux,  
Les rayons de soleil sont comme une chaude couverture pour  
mon corps,  
Donc, qu'est-ce que le but de la nature si on ne lui est pas  
reconnaisant ?  
Une feuille orange et rouge,  
Elle chute dans le vent.  
Un ciel d'or, les nuages se rapprochent.  
La forêt est désintégrée et brûlante.



ART CREDIT: DANIEL LEA '25 (SFS)

### *English Translation:*

The leaves are colored by the sun.  
The rain makes noise in the night.  
When I walk, I see the wheat fields,  
And the air smells sweet like fruit.

The leaves are red like my blood  
They fight with their arms, I fight with my tongue.  
Autumn is fading, winter is coming  
But the French Revolution is born.

It's all quiet, the stream is calm,  
Suddenly a frog crosses a bush,  
It doesn't stop to drink from the stream,  
Behind the bush, with the little frogs, the foxes stay at  
their castles.

The river flowed like the wind through my hair,  
The clouds created artistic designs for my eyes,  
The sun's rays are like a warm blanket for my body,  
So, what is nature's purpose if we're not thankful for  
it?

An orange and red leaf,  
Falls in the wind.  
A golden sky, the clouds are closing in.  
The forest is disintegrating and burning.



ART CREDIT: DANIEL LEA '25 (SFS)

## *Untitled* Krish Batra '25 (SFS)

We floated under the quagmire's shaded canopy  
and reached respite from golden summer's day—  
Geeses' wings beat rhythmically in their ascent,  
as tunes of Hamsadhvani echoed from the wind's play.

Through refreshing, emerald-brimmed waters  
poised, in the gilt evening viscera of May.

Oh, how luscious were the ambrosial stretches of meadow,  
That lined Varuna's brook; passing by a serene village  
We basked, in the shade of the Lord's imagination  
As if bliss' ambience recited His divine hymnbook.

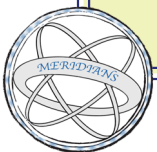
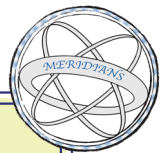
Malay Idiomatic Poem,  
Jawi Script

## *A Pantun Peribahasa* Robby Matsui '25 (SFS)

Singa diusir tak pulang,  
Bahkan arnab bersenjata,  
Ku biar putihkan tulang,  
Ku jangan putihkan mata.

The expelled lion can never return,  
Even the rabbit can bear its claws,  
I'd rather die for a cause,  
Than cover my eyes from reality.

سيغا داوسير تق فولغ  
بهكن ارنب برسنيات  
كو بيار فوتيهكن تولغ  
كو جاغن فوتيهكن مات







# *Stories Across Borders*

\* \* \*

*Personal narratives--experiences or reflections--and creative writing in foreign languages or about foreign cultures*

## *Un Domingo en Bogotá*

Izzy Fandl '25 (SFS)

The car ride from Bogotá to Chia should take 30 minutes. But on a Sunday, on the Colombian highway where the speed limit is 40 km per hour, with the sun boring through the windows of a cheap red Chevrolet that your Abuelito used to drive, with impatient drivers honking their horns so much it becomes ambient noise to you, with you squeezed between your Abuelita and your Tía who are yelling into a phone, speaking as though their voice is loud enough to reach through the phone and hit the eardrum of your Mamí, the trip feels twice as long. The bumpy Colombian roads rock you back and forth, with the car hitting you against potholes every minute, and swerving to avoid cars who ignore the faded attempts at lane lines. The smell of rubber on hot pavement wafts through the cracked window, which you can't close because there is no air conditioning in the car, and you can't fully open because if you do a motorcyclist could rob you at gunpoint on that slow-moving highway.

Around you, men sell popcorn and flowers, fruit and candies, stuffed animals and soccer jerseys. Their kids walk around with their hands cupped in front of their faces, begging you for even a single peso, in hopes that you will help them pay for dinner. Mothers stand on the side of the road, nursing their undernourished baby, watching as their husband juggles milk bottles while on a tricycle, trying to attract attention and get the bill that will buy his baby a blanket. As you pass them, your Tía and your Abuelita scourge the seats for an extra coin, finding one hidden at the bottom of the cup holder. You open the window a bit more and pass the coin to a little girl with darker skin than yours, her brown hair tied in pigtails, her pink dress tearing slightly at the seams. Her shoes are broken, but she walks to you anyways and receives the coin with a smile on her face. You have just given that little girl hope. But what of the other little children weaving through the aisles of traffic, asking for a cent? What of their hungry families? Who is there to give them a coin?

In the heat, your head falls back on the seat as you drift in and out of consciousness, praying for the ride to be over. You wonder how you got there at all, and you long for your home in the United States, with air conditioned cars, reasonable traffic, empty, clean streets. You long for the silence of your house there, for the warm bed, and cool sheets, and comfortable bed you call home. Eventually you fall asleep, and wake up when you get off the highway. You wake up to grass fields all around you, cows grazing on one side and mountains towering over the other. You pass the amusement park where you used to go on weekends, its gate closed and rusty, with dust in the place of children playing. You finally reach the familiar yellow flags, flapping in the wind, signifying your imminent arrival to Chia.

You reach the gate of your Tía's neighborhood, and as you drive down that long, wide road, you see the mountains you once climbed reaching for the sun and pulling it down towards them. The city you drove half an hour to escape now lights up, painting the sunset with the faint glow of buildings.

*(continued on p. 11)*

**IMAGE CREDIT:** Craiyon.com



Finally you reach the driveway of her house, parking slowly to avoid hitting the 4 other cars there. You can't wait to leave the car, and find internet in the house, and find a signal to home. But you have to wait, as your Tía slowly puts her cane on the ground and finds her footing for what seems like an eternity, for she does it all while telling you a story about her time as a girl your age. You rush inside and are greeted by the copious amounts of Tíos and Tías and Primos that are cooking in the house. The sound of your Abuelita's favorite vallenato fills the living room and your Tía pulls you up to dance. The smell of buñuelos and empanadas and carne from

your Tío's grill sneaks into your stomach, making you forget all other desires except for food. Finally, it's served and you squeeze between your two primos on the kids' side of the table. Everyone talks at once, the sound of cutlery against plates lining your ears. The sun falls slowly and the sound of a guacharaca rises as your Tía and Tío get up to dance to show the gringos how it's done. And there, squished between the primos you see once a year but treat as siblings, distracted by the gossip about the neighbor's new wife, lost in the sea of your family's asado, you don't realize it, but you are, truly, home.



## Perspective

Kaila Saad '25 (SFS)

I used to dread Saturdays.

They meant that I had to spend my entire morning at Japanese school. I hated it. I couldn't really understand my teachers, we were only allowed to speak Japanese, and worst of all, we got homework! On a weekend!

Wednesdays were similarly ruined by Arabic lessons. I remember very clearly that my homework every week would be to read a certain passage five times until I had it smooth, and then I had to write it in my notebook. I didn't know what the passage meant, but I became very proficient at reading, even if I had no clue what I was reading. I've also been told that my handwriting in Arabic is much better than my English handwriting, so I guess I learned something.

As I've grown older, I've started to feel a lot less hostile towards Saturdays and Wednesdays. I have Arabic lessons on Saturdays now, and my Japanese lessons have been moved to Tuesdays. But I feel a lot more appreciative of the chance to learn new languages. I really like connecting to my heritage and my culture, and I love being able to communicate with people. Whenever I'm in a scenario where one of the languages I've learned is helpful, I'm always really excited.

Last year, in my English class with Dr. Harvat, we had a very interesting discussion about *The Namesake*, by Jhumpa Lahiri. So many of us related to the main character and his struggle to find the right balance between his cultures. Apparently, Saturdays are popular for language schools, because there were lots of other people who used to hate Saturdays because they had to go to school where they barely understood what was happening. But now, most of us are grateful that we've learned the languages that connect us to our cultures.

I'm not fluent in any languages other than English, and sometimes I'm not very good at that, either. But I really cherish the opportunity to learn these languages. Figuring out how to express what I mean in other languages means that I can connect to so many more people from different cultures. Learning languages is a good way to foster understanding between very different cultures. Different grammar rules or words for things that don't have words in English show what the culture values, and can enrich your own worldview.

I used to hate Saturdays. They're still not my favorite day. Learning languages is difficult, and it can feel impossible to become fluent or even able to hold a conversation. But if you keep trying and learning, it's so worth it. Knowing languages opens doors in life that you never even knew were there. It's hard, and sometimes I just really don't want to, but in the end, I'm really grateful for the chance to connect with so many people, cultures, and ethnicities across the world.

Hope y'all have a good day.

Kaila Saad

كايلى سعد

サード かいら

# *On the Global Stage*

\* \* \*

*Reviews of books, movies, shows, exhibits, etc. about other  
cultures in any language*



# ***THE CASE OF SPANISH DRACULA-- Behind the Phenomenon***

Deanna Paukstitus '25 (SFS)

**B**ack before the days of subbing and dubbing, did you know that it was commonplace for big-budget American films to create a Spanish cast and produce an alternative-language version of the same movie? Most often, these variants, filmed at nighttime when the English production wrapped, would be complete replicas of their original counterparts—same sets, dialogue, costumes, and all—but in the case of 1931's Spanish Dracula, directed by George Melford, the world was delivered a unique, bona fide spinoff, with almost every shot and line being different. The question of how this was even allowed is interesting enough, but perhaps even more thought-provoking is the plethora of people around the world now arguing that the Spanish "alt" version is better than the original Tod Browning film. So, how did we get to this civil war, and ultimately, the battle of the two multi-lingual Draculas?

In the 1930s, Universal began embarking on a quest to introduce more foreign language-speakers into their consumer base, and thus directed their efforts to producing films in Spanish at the most minimal cost possible. Using the same soundstage, plot, and recycled costumes, an entire generation of late 1920s-early 1930s English Universal films had a Spanish replicant, but none were as trailblazing as Dracula, which wasn't just trailblazing—it was different in every sense of the world. To put it bluntly, director George Melford (who, ironically, did not speak Spanish) set out on a mission to, not only make a great movie, but make a better iteration than Tod Browning's daytime production. Now, this isn't to say that he expected the Spanish Dracula himself, Carlos Villariás, to stand up to the iconic Bela Lugosi, but he and his filmmaking team would sit down every evening and rewatch Browning's shots from the earlier sessions, take notes, and revise them to improve upon their own as much as humanly possible. To get this level of pettiness nice and ingrained,



*"The blood is the life, Mr. Renfield!"*

IMAGE CREDIT: IMDb.com

if Lugosi looked to the left, Villariás looked to the right. If Dwight Frye's Renfield was bitten by Dracula, Pablo Alvarez Rubio's Renfield was bitten by his brides. (Well, on second thought, the reason why Spanish Renfield was bitten by the brides was because Melford was worried that Dracula biting him would cause the audience to question his sexuality, but that's a story for another day.) If English Dracula walked down the stairs, Spanish Dracula stumbled down them. Essentially, everything was either different or built upon, ultimately giving the Spanish iteration a runtime of 104 minutes—a half-hour longer than the English version.

How was this pioneering production received? Slowly. Very, very slowly, but then very, very quickly. You see, within a few years, Universal pitifully realized that their Spanish iterations were notorious box-office bombs and appealed to a negligible audience, killing the concept of alternate takes and introducing subbing and dubbing as we know them today. To add more icing to the cake, in the 1960s

and 70s, the film was primarily only known to a few horror historians and had yet to be remastered for modern screens, leaving it inaccessible to those who didn't enjoy a grainy theatrical experience. When discovered in a blessed New Jersey warehouse, however, new interest sparked in the film, leading to a meteoric screening at the Museum of Modern Art in 1977, a VHS remaster in 1992, a Blu-Ray release in 2012, and finally, its selection by the Library of Congress to join the National Film Registry for being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant." I know it sounds like we skipped a few chapters there, but really, when it was discovered, it became a quick phenomenon because of the burning question still brewing in



*"La sangre es la vida, Señor Renfield!"*

IMAGE CREDIT: IMDb.com

the back of everyone's minds: which version is better? How many YouTube video essays do we need comparing the two? And most importantly, does Villariás stand up to Lugosi's complete and utter ownership of the character as we know it?

Film theorists can (and will) bicker forever, but ultimately, the answers are up to the viewer's interpretation. Spanish *Dracula*'s main strength is stagnating on certain scenes and allowing them to organically develop rather than resorting to the rapid-fire pacing of the original, which can either be interpreted as ingenious or a tension-killer, depending on one's horror preferences. Additionally, aside from the to-bite-or-not-to-bite Renfield mishap, the Spanish version was significantly more brazen, daring to show the grotesque bite marks on Lucía's neck and allow Eva to wear low-cut, scanty nightgowns, hence more accurately reflecting the original book's intentions. This may not sound important, but the permission of the jarring aspects of Bram Stoker's source material offer an enhanced viewer experience, obliging the audience to, for example, wince at wounds in the same way they were grotesquely described in the text, or swoon for Eva with the same intensity that implores Jonathan to slay a vampire for her.

Less can be said about the cinematography, however, with fewer cuts-per-scene and ambitious dolly & tracking shots that leave it feeling stage-bound and more frozen in time; and with the double-whammy of slower scenes and drawn-out dialogue, it is fair to not be won over by its hesitant, tantalizing horror. Also, while Villariás delivers his lines with equal passion as Lugosi, it's a different sort of passion, with him lingering in melodrama and comedy while Lugosi just has that fierce, predatory, stomach-churning, pulse-quickening intonation that has made his iteration the definitive version of the character.

So, which do you care about more? Tension or plot-development? A scary or comical vibe? It's up to you to choose your favorite; neither is better, they're just fundamentally different and check off entirely separate boxes of accomplishments. One should not tarnish the legacy of the other, as they are both valid artistic interpretations in their own right, and should go down in history as such. One thing we can agree on, though, is that Melford should have let *Dracula* bite Renfield. Come on, it's what Bram Stoker would have wanted!



# *NewsRoom Intl.*

\* \* \*

*Short essays; news about other countries  
(fact or opinion-based) in any language*

# ***Kasus yang melawan sebutan berdasarkan jenis kelamin: Sebuah Esai yang Ditulis di Bahasa Indonesia Buruk***



Robby Matsui '25 (SFS)



**S**aya mau ikhlas kepada pembaca terhormat. Ekspektasi saya tidak tinggi. Saya mengekspektasi tidak ada pembaca yang bisa menghuraikan tulisan ini. Akibatnya, saya akan mengikhtiarkan lebih sering daripada biasa menggunakan kata yang kelihatan mirip dengan bahasa Inggris. Selain itu, saya akan memberi peringatan sebagai sinar yang menerangi kegelapan. Pakailah Google Translate.

Saat saya mulai meneliti bagi proyek ini, saya heran menyadari kata ganti berdasarkan jenis kelamin kurang umum daripada yang dahulu saya memikir. Sebaliknya, menurut Anna Siewierska, seorang bahasawan yang sudah mendokumentasi keberagaman kata ganti orang, hampir lima puluh enam persen daripada bahasa-bahasa dunia tidak memiliki perbedaan jenis kelamin di kata ganti orang. Namun, bahasa yang terbesar, yang punya terbanyak penutur, masih memiliki perbedaan jenis ini. Contohnya, bahasa Hindi, bahasa Inggris, bahasa Spanyol, bahasa Tionghoa, dan semacamnya. Tetapi walaupun demikian, di seluruh Asia tenggara, dan di komunitas orang Amerika asli, jenis kelamin tidak diekspresikan dalam kata ganti.

Jadi, kenapa kata ganti yang berdasarkan jenis kelamin seumum ini? Apakah ada kecenderungan alam yang menuju kepada dominasi bahasa jenis ini? Saya mau mengusir gagasan ini. Ide ini berbahaya, berhubungan dengan potensi membuat kita memandang bahasa yang tidak menitikberatkan jenis kelamin di tata bahasa sebagai kurang maju, berhubungan dengan pandangan yang salah bahwa bahasa-bahasa Eropa sewajarnya mendominasi. Jadi, apa alasan alternatif? Jawaban kepada pertanyaan ini sulit ditemukan. Kecuali bahasa Tionghoa, bahasa-bahasa ini yang disebar di seluruh dunia, yakni bahasa Inggris, bahasa Perancis, bahasa Spanyol dan bahasa Hindi, tiap-tiap termasuk dalam keluarga bahasa yang sama, yaitu keluarga Indo-Eropa. Ini bermaksud mereka

adalah keturunan bahasa kuno yang dituturkan oleh orang Indo-Eropa. Orang Indo-Eropa berasal dari wilayah yang saat ini bagian dari Ukraina dan Rusia. Setelah menjinakkan kuda, mereka merantau sekeliling Eropa dan India, and bermukim di masing-masing daerah. Bahasa dan budaya orang kuno ini memusatkan jenis kelamin secara berat, sehingga pembelahan masih berada di tata bahasa hampir semua bahasa yang termasuk dalam keluarga Indo-Eropa. Jadi, penyebaran kata ganti yang berdasarkan jenis kelamin ini sebenarnya merujuk penyebaran satu keluarga bahasa sahaja. Kita lebih dekat dengan jawaban. Ia bisa ditemukan di dalam peristiwa yang mengorbankan banyak jiwa dan memelaratkan banyak bangsa.

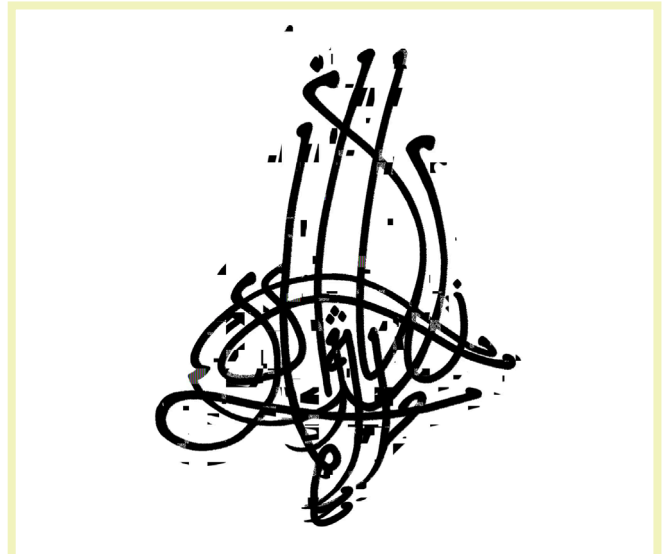
Bahwa kolonialisme memperluas pengaruh bahasa Eropa adalah fakta yang tidak dapat dibantah. Negara kolonial, terutama Prancis, memaksakan orang yang dijajah oleh mereka untuk berbicara bahasa mereka. Kezaliman kolonialisme kepada bahasa asli juga membolehkan penyebaran ini, berhubungan dengan penggantian bahasa yang terlepas dari tata bahasa berdasarkan jenis kelamin dengan bahasa Indo-Eropa. Fitur-fitur yang dalam bahasa mereka pula menyebar begini. Selain menundukkan bahasa asli, kolonialisme juga memudahkan peredaran tata bahasa yang berdasarkan jenis kelamin dengan cara berbeda. Keberadaan kata ganti yang berdasarkan jenis kelamin dalam bahasa kolonial ini mewakili kecenderungan yang lebih luas, yaitu sifat yang represif kepada ekspresi gender. Dahulu kedatangan tenaga kolonial di daerahnya, orang Austronesia tidak hanya punya sikap yang lebih longgar kepada jenis kelamin di tata bahasanya, tetapi di hidupnya pun. Misalnya, pemerintah matrilineal Aceh yang bertahan berabad-abad, dan budaya orang Bugis yang punya lima jenis kelamin berbeda. Saat Belanda menaklukkan nusantara Indonesia, mereka membumihanguskan adat-adat tersebut secara tidak



kenal ampun. Tindakan keras pasukan kolonialis menanamkan konsep gender kolonialis di seluruh dunia. Ini adalah asal usul peredaran luas kata ganti yang berdasarkan jenis kelamin, dan ia lanjut terpelihara dengan alasan mirip. Itu sering dikatakan bahwa jenis kelamin bertahan di tata bahasa karena menyediakan manfaat yang materi dan menjadikan bahasa lebih efisien. Saat mendengar kata secara tidak jelas, gender tata bahasa dianggap memudahkan pengertian. Umpamanya, bila kamu mendengar akhiran sahaja di bahasa Spanyol, kamu masih bisa menentukan jenis kelamin kata, sehingga lebih muda menguraikan maksudnya. Tapi, keuntungan ini tidak terbatas kepada gender tata bahasa. Bagaimanapun mau memisahkan kosa kata, keuntungan ini masih tersisa. Contohnya, sistem kelas kata benda bahasa Swahili. Perpisahan yang berdasarkan jenis kelamin diperbandingkan dengan sistem lain masih meluas, karena ia menebalkan sistem gender normatif. Gender, terutama yang biner, telah merembes ke dalam segala bagian hidup kita, dan mempengaruhi semua tindakan kita. Kekuasaan represif gender memudahkan keberadaan gender dalam tata bahasa, jadi tanpa tenaga gender yang mengubah timbangan, gender tata bahasa seefisien sistem lain apapun. Untuk menghancurkan sistem represif gender dan kolonialisme, gender tata bahasa, terlebih kata ganti yang berdasarkan jenis kelamin, pula harus dilawan.

Selain alasan di atas, kata ganti yang berdasarkan jenis kelamin tidak dibutuhkan di perbincangan, karena ada banyak bahasa yang bisa dituturkan secara lancar tanpa fitur ini. Bahasa-bahasa ini melengahkan jenis kelamin secara cukup bahwa gender sering tidak pernah disebut, tetapi mereka tidak menderita oleh karena itu. Contohnya, bahasa Indonesia tidak punya kata ganti yang berdasarkan jenis kelamin. Bahkan istilah keluarga, semacam kakek, abang dan adik tidak punya gender batin. “Dia,” atau “beliau” di situasi formal, meliputi semua gender: untuk melukiskan wanita, pakailah “dia,” untuk melukiskan pria, juga gunakanlah “dia.” Di paragraf-paragraf sebelum, saya menyembunyikan informasi. Walaupun mayoritas bahasa terbesar di dunia punya kata ganti yang berdasarkan jenis kelamin, bahasa yang terbesar kelima sesungguhnya tidak. Bahasa ini adalah bahasa Indonesia. Saya mengungkapkan

pengelabuan ini untuk menunjukkan bahwa bahkan melalui penghambatan kolonialisme, sistem beda masih bisa bertumbuh. Penumbuhan ini juga bisa disimak dalam bahasa kolonialisme, yaitu bahasa yang menggunakan gender tata bahasa dan disebarakan oleh penjajahan.



“Derhaka kepada negaraku/Disloyalty to my country”

IMAGE CREDIT: ROBBY MATSUI '25 (SFS)

Contoh fenomena ini adalah kisah-kisah cinta gay yang semakin sering ditulis di zaman modern. Sebagai dua-duanya penulis dan pembaca kisah-kisah ini, saya bisa menjamin bahwa kebingungan yang berdasarkan kata ganti antar tokoh utama bukan masalah. Kualitas masih tergantung pada penulis: bila dia bisa memberi ciri-ciri yang cukup beda kepada setiap karakter, dan bisa menjadikan karakter-karakter itu memikat minat pembaca, pembaca masih bisa memahami siapa melakukan apa. Bahkan di bahasa yang gender tata bahasa berwadhakan, penghilangannya tidak merupakan tantangan atas pengertian. Di tulisan Perancis Monique Wittig, semacam *Les Guérillères*, semua kata dijadikan feminin. Namun, langkah ini tidak sumber kebingungan, tetapi adalah sumber pembebasan. Peran penutur yang biasanya dikendali oleh maskulin disita dan digulingkan. Di sini, pembinaan kata ganti yang berdasarkan jenis kelamin adalah tindakan liberasi. Dengan pergeseran ini, wanita dibolehkan mendapat posisi baru, yaitu sebagai subyek yang aktif, subyek yang bisa menyertir pembicaraan.

(continued on p. 18)

Saya tidak menyarankan bahasa ini seharusnya tidak dituturkan lagi. Tidak pandang fitur-fiturnya, setiap bahasa harus dilestarikan. Namun, gender tata bahasa, terutama kata ganti yang berdasarkan jenis kelamin, tetap menegakkan sistem gender represif, dan berasal dari ketidakadilan kolonialisme.

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*English Translation:*

## ***The Case Against Gendered Pronouns:*** ***An Essay Written in Poor Indonesian***

I want to be honest to my readers. My expectations are not high. I expect that there won't be any readers capable of reading this text. As a result I have made an effort to use words that look similar to English words more frequently than normal. Besides that, I will bring a warning that may act as a ray illuminating the darkness. Use Google Translate.

When I began research for this project, I was surprised to realize that gendered pronouns are less common than I thought beforehand. Instead, according to Anna Siewierska, a linguist who has already documented the diversity of personal pronouns, almost 57% of world languages do not have gender differences within personal pronouns. However the largest languages, those that have the most speakers, still use these gendered differences. For example, Hindustani, English, Spanish, and Chinese, among others. But even so, all across Southeast Asian and in communities of Native Americans, gender is not expressed within pronouns.

So, why are gendered pronouns this common? Is there a natural trend towards the domination of these types of languages? I want to drive out this idea. This idea is dangerous, with reference to the potential to make us view languages that do not emphasize gender in their grammar as less advanced, and to the false view that European languages are naturally dominant. So, what's an alternative reason?

Answers to this question are hard to find. Besides Chinese, these languages which are widespread across the world, that is, English, French, Spanish and Hindustani, are all included in the same Indo-European language family. This means that they are descendants from the same ancient language spoken by the Indo-European people. Indo-Europeans originate from an area that is currently a part of Ukraine and Russia. After taming horses, they expanded all around Europe and India, settling in each area. The language and culture of these ancient people heavily focused on gender, so divisions persist within the grammar of almost all Indo-European languages. So, this spread of gendered pronouns actually refers to the spread of just one language family. We are closer to an answer. It can be found in events that victimized many lives and impoverished many nations.



IMAGE CREDIT: Craiyon.com

That colonialism spread the influence of European languages is a fact that can not be disputed. Colonial nations, particularly France, forced colonized people to speak their languages. The oppression of colonialism towards indigenous languages also allowed for this spread, with reference to the replacement of languages freed from gendered grammar with Indo-European languages. Features within their languages also spreaded in this way. Besides subduing indigenous languages, colonialism also facilitated

the distribution of gendered grammar with other methods. The existence of pronouns based on gender within these colonial languages represents a wider trend, that is a repressive attitude towards gender expression. Before the arrival of colonial powers in the area, Austronesian people not only had a looser attitude towards gender in their languages, but their lives also. For example, the matrilineal rule in Aceh that lasted for centuries, and the culture of the Bugis which had five different genders. When Holland conquered the Indonesian archipelago, they mercilessly scorched these traditions. Colonial military crackdowns planted a colonial conception of gender in the whole world. This is the origin of the widespread distribution of gendered pronouns, and it was preserved for similar reasons. It is often said that gender remains in grammar because it provides a material benefit and makes language more efficient. When hearing a word unclearly, grammatical gender is considered to ease understanding. For example, if you only hear the suffix in Spanish, you still can determine the word's gender, so can more easily decipher the meaning. However you want to divide a vocabulary, this advantage still remains. For example, the noun class system of Swahili. Divisions that are based on gender when compared to other systems are still expansive, because they strengthen a normative system of gender. Gender, especially in the binary, has seeped into every part of our lives and influences our every action. The power of repressive gender facilitates the existence of grammatical gender, so without the power of gender tipping the scales, grammatical gender is as efficient as any other system. To destroy the repressive systems of gender and colonialism, grammatical gender, especially in gendered pronouns, must also be opposed.

Besides the reasons above, gendered pronouns are not needed in conversation, because there are many languages that can still be spoken fluently without this feature. These languages neglect gender enough that gender is often never mentioned, but they do not suffer because of it. For example, Indonesian doesn't have gendered pronouns. Even family terms, such as "kakek" (older sibling), "abang" (older sibling) and "adik" (younger sibling), do not have inner genders. "Dia" (they), or "beliau" (they) in formal language,

cover all genders: to describe a girl, use "dia," to describe a boy, use "dia" as well. In previous paragraphs, I hide information. Although the majority of the world's largest languages use gendered pronouns, the fifth largest language actually doesn't. This language is Indonesian. I reveal this trick to show that even through the hindrance of colonialism, other systems can still grow. This growth can also be observed in colonial languages, ones that use grammatical gender and are spread by colonization. An example of this phenomena are gay romances that are increasingly being written in the modern era. As both an author and reader of these stories, I can guarantee that confusion based on pronouns between the main characters is not a problem. Quality still hinges on the writer: if they can give different enough attributes to each character, and can make those characters appealing to the reader, the reader still will understand who does what. Even in languages where grammatical gender resides, their disappearance doesn't pose a challenge to understanding. In the French works of Monique Wittig, such as *Les Guérillères*, every word is feminized. However, this step is not a source of confusion, but a source of freedom. The role of the speaker that is usually controlled by the masculine is seized and overthrown. There, the destruction of gendered pronouns is an act of liberation. With this shift, women are allowed to obtain a new position, that is as an active subject, one that can steer the conversation.



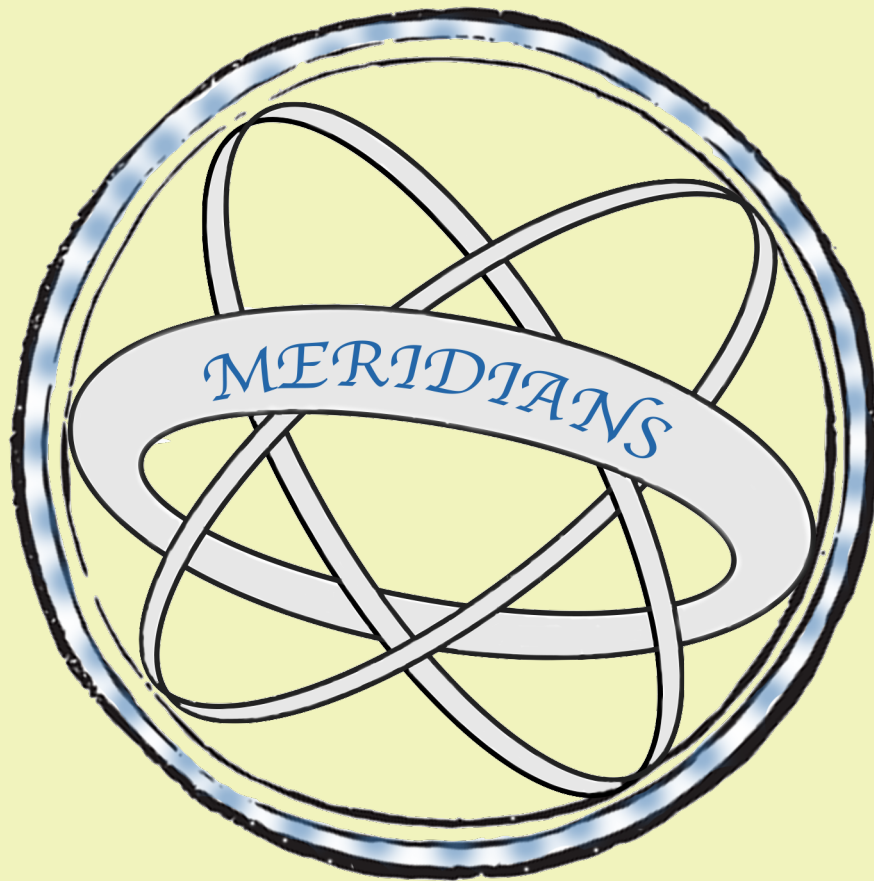
IMAGE CREDIT: Craiyon.com

I do not suggest that these languages must no longer be spoken. Regardless of these features, every language must be preserved. However, grammatical gender, especially gendered pronouns, still reinforce a repressive system of gender, and originate from the injustices of colonialism.

*Thank you for reading!*

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will be incorporating contributions from our  
**INTERNATIONAL** friends!*



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