

Reflection on the Spring 2023 Special Issue on Engaging Feminisms: Challenging Exceptionalist Imaginaries

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Volume 8, Number 2, Spring 2022

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1094540ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15402/esj.v8i2.70818>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

University of Saskatchewan

ISSN

2369-1190 (print)

2368-416X (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this document

Bradford, L. (2022). Reflection on the Spring 2023 Special Issue on Engaging Feminisms: Challenging Exceptionalist Imaginaries. *Engaged Scholar Journal*, 8(2), 215–215. <https://doi.org/10.15402/esj.v8i2.70818>

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From the Editor

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Chiasmus is a rhetorical device in which the second part of a piece of writing is a mirror image of the first. It is not necessary for the second part to exactly mirror the words that appear in the first part—that is a different rhetorical device called anti-metabole—but rather concepts and parts of speech are mirrored.

As I read the articles that were so carefully crafted for this issue, I thought about how by exposing exceptionalisms, we become exceptional; that is, as Lovrod and Mason suggest, the very same researchers, writers, documentarists, activists, and others who expose inequities and fight to change them face incessant erasure. I learned a great deal about the breadth of work pursued by the scholars who generously shared their work in this volume. They do this work despite being persecuted for it by their colleagues; by their own institutes' governing systems (i.e., review ethics boards, peer-reviewers, departments); and by social norms like those challenged in the Exchanges in this issue. Certain phrases stuck with me and I used those to compose my own chiasmus:



Lori Bradford

Image credit: Victoria Schramm

Sustainable feminism? Feminism sustained.

The 'gender person', the 'fat person', homeless yet home
in their skin, disciplined in their ubiquitousness.

Purity and pollution of caste. Cleansed not by being forced
together, but by forcing others to understand why the universal
'we' is not always desired.

Nudged by institutions away from feminist decolonial practice, but in
dancing on them, over them, we refuse the norms.

Feminism sustained? Sustainable feminism.

As you read and listen to the written and audio pieces in this issue, please think about how you can mirror what you've learned in ways that resonate with you.