



# Silence Without

Est. 2002 - BRINGING YOU THE VIEWS OF TESSADOM

Thursday, November 06, 2014

## The Long Campaign Against Racism (Bogged)

Copied from below: I see now that in my opening salvo there is much to be interpreted as attempting to absolve the bully of bullying. That was not my intention. I still stand by my attempt to try and highlight that there is more damage going on from other vectors in all this, but the approach was a mistake. I'll leave it as it is, as I'm accountable for what I've said, but for those who feel I have dismissed their hurt; I am sorry.

[quick links to the [first update](#) and [second update](#)]

Three well-established authors doxxed and blackballed a younger, up-and-coming author.

That's a bit shit. I mean, if we want to talk similes, then stomping on the fingers of the people climbing the ladder behind you is it. I'd like to think of the publishing industry as having space for all voices. Accepting that this isn't the state of affairs is still a long ways away from being okay with the idea that the elders of the scene get to pick and choose who is considered worthy to come sit at their feet, to the point of putting those unworthy in physical danger.

That's a bit shit.

That's what G\*\*\*rgaters do.

Two older white western women and one older white western man in a western country doxxed and blackballed a younger WoC in a non-Western country.

That's a bit shit. In fact, I'd go so far as to say that's a bit fucking racist, mate.

That's what G\*\*\*rgaters do. Their artillery is primarily fuelled by misogyny instead of racism, which is really just a different shade of shit. Misogyny, racism: the same machine. The same purpose. The same design. The same effect. The same shit everywhere.

This is what Tricia Sullivan, Liz Williams and Nick Mamatas have engaged in.

Much of the discussion I've seen has focused of the victim, because western culture loves to point all its shitcannons at the victim. The onus of proof always becomes the victim's responsibility, who must be able to account for the motivations, emotions and actions of their attackers, who must justify over and over again why they, the victim, let this attack happen.

You know the name of Z\*\* Q\*\*nn. Do you know the name of her ex-boyfriend?

The one who did the doxxing?

### Vital Statistics

- Name: Tessa
- Location: Melbourne, Australia
- :: alive since 1981.
- :: not a writer
- :: but writes anyway
- :: bookwurm
- :: paid to be a monkey with a typewriter
- :: 7wishes ToC
- :: 365 Project
- :: xml feed
- :: lj feed
- :: shoutout

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Their names are Tricia Sullivan, Liz Williams and Nick Mamatatas.

Persons of Colour are not monolith. The only thing people who fall under the PoC label have in common is that they are not white, and I do deliberately and explicitly say 'white' as the term PoC is American in origin, and thus the hegemony is white, white, white.

We are not white, and that is all we have in common.

That is all that is required, really, for those in a hegemony to assume all the world is structured as they are familiar, and assume that we, too, are some reflected shadow hegemony.

The word 'diversity' is thrown about so much these days, by very nice people with very good intentions. You can see it starting to coalesce; the guidelines for what will be the acceptable change to indicate 'diversity' has been achieved, while for a great many of us, thanks to this 'diversion', nothing will change.

You, with your privileges, may learn how to communicate with a PoC. The life experiences they share are valuable and precious and, most likely, quite different to what the next PoC will know.

There isn't a 'not white' setting you can switch on in your brain to talk to us. PoC are not monolith. We are not legion. We are often but a collection of scarred souls who recognise the wounds in each other.

I'm trying to overstate this, because you, the fucking hegemony, are so busy spouting all the right words and making sure you're seen to be doing something that you've completely obliterated the complex, intricate nuances, contrasts, juxtapositions that exist between PoC and PoC. You talk about diversity but only seem to be able to act using the broadest, clumsiest definition of what that should be. You're still thinking of us as a collective 'them'.

Having a PoC agree with you when you're shouting from a tower of privilege does not lend any extra credence to you. We are fucking *diverse*, we are conflicting politics, clashing opinions, and opposing philosophies.

More than that, it's also a disgusting manipulation. There was another WoC publicly caught up in this attack. She was implicated as the original who doxxed the victim to Tricia Sullivan and Liz Williams, and she denies this. Due to Tricia Sullivan's blog post and a carefully timed silence on both the part of her and Liz Williams, this WoC caught the brunt of backlash. I fell for that backlash too, for which I am sorry. They carefully positioned her so that she became the target and focus, not them. The imbalance of power between white women and WoC cannot be ignored. By dandling this WoC before the masses as a friend and ally they've effectively nullified her own agency. They used her for their own ends, and masterfully so. The blog post from Tricia Sullivan was far too late to have actually been of any effect in helping protect her 'vulnerable friend'.

Having PoC friends does not add legitimacy to your actions, white person. You are still white. You are still benefiting from an imbalance of power and this will not change in your lifetime.

Nor, might I add, does it lend additional credence to mine. But then, I am a PoFuckingC, and I don't require external validation.

To come at things from a slightly different angle, Nick Mamatatas' doxing was not motivated by vengeance, racism, or a wailing ego. In LJ comments he claimed to dox the victim so as to change the narrative, ie, take control of the situation out of the hands of Tricia Sullivan and Liz Williams, who were conducting whisper campaign to blackball and dox the victim. He states the victim contacted him after he'd doxxed her to redact a couple of personal details, but otherwise had no problem. He also stated that he'd doxxed the victim in order to 'reign her in'. Forgive me if I don't go delving into LJ to find said comments, because the thought of even skimming that horseshit is no.

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## Sound Off

a softer world

aanimal

acid head war

amanda palmer

andrew macrae

aurgasm

auros

ben payne

ben peek

blake charlton

chicago sane

chris barnes

conrad williams

conrad williams 2.0

daily coyote

dave moles

david moles

dd

deborah biancotti

deborah kalin

deep sea news

donna

dooce

effulgent13

enter the octopus

fuck yeah sharks

gareth

gigi

gillian

glenda larke

haha.nu

jaime

jeff vandermeer

jesse bullington

justine larbaletstier

kaaron warren

karen healey

kj bishop

let's sexy fighting

lily

malaria, bedbugs, sea lice & sunsets

manu manu

margo lanagan

marian

max barry

Here is an editor who behaviour polices an author. I understand publishers have invested in authors and don't want a PR mess, but there is a difference between sending someone an email telling them to calm their farm and doxing them. Authors, would you like your publisher to feel comfortable displaying that level of control over your public life?

Here is a white western man in a western country doxing a WoC in a non-western country.

He did not have her permission.

Pretty sure 'reign in' is a really politically correct way of describing what G\*\*\*rgaters are trying to do to their targets.

Women must be put in their place. People of Colour must be put in their place. Young people must be put in their place. And so on, and so forth, ad infinitum, until you, white person, probably straight cishet and able-bodied, have put everyone in their place and are left standing atop a pile of bodies.

Most of you don't seem to know what hypocrisy looks like.

An example of hypocrisy: demanding a bully be held accountable for their actions and then contributing to an environment which actually makes that impossible.

Here's another: demanding apologies and accountability from a bully, receiving actions towards that in good faith, and not demanding apologies and accountability from the bullies who did worse to said bully.

And another: being outspoken against G\*\*\*rgate and promoting the work of Tricia Sullivan, who has stated publicly on her blog that she doxxed and blackballed. Hanging good intentions and bleeding hearts from a doxing does not mitigate the crime.

I haven't written about this because.

Fuck, I don't even know how to articulate that, and I'm not involved.

Because, ultimately, I had given up hope for positive change.

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Regardless, when it comes to horseshit like this, I love to be wrong. I'll leave the doors and windows open to welcome any opportunity for the better, even if I don't believe it will come. Can I tell you that when I read the victim's apologies my heart sang, because right there was effort, hard work, and a push toward positive change. It gave you, the white masses, and opportunity to come around as well. To make this fury and fight one that is a stand against bullies, instead of a demonstration of racism.

I haven't been proven wrong. I didn't expect to be.

I also didn't expect to see the white publishing scene – let's call a turd a turd – take on my Shovel of Oh You Are So Right Tessa and start digging graves with it.

Suddenly, you're all promoting Tricia Sullivan's new book.

Solidarity is for white women, hey.

There's John Scalzi over there, making a point of featuring Tricia Sullivan's work, and making an even larger point of deleting comments that 'drag in online drama from elsewhere'. You know John Scalzi, right? You guys fucking love him. He's

michael phillips

molly tanzer

motorbike

mwy

nadine

of blog

one sentence

orwell diaries

pink tentacle

post-weird thoughts

postsecret

rajan

rjurik

ronald chevalier

scott westerfeld

sean williams

selena

sing your own lullaby

stu barrow

suzanne

the other 95%

this fish

tiny ghosts

trudi canavan

ugly overload

vanishing point

what claudia wore

white hat stories

yunny

zooborns

zooillogix

zoran zivkovic

## Misc

depression

weird tales

clarion south blog posts

clarion south

shadowmarch

young endeavour

rooster teeth

## Fine Print



Tea is greater than coffee.

Zombies do not run. These are the facts of life.

generally a beacon for progressive reasonableness, a vocal ally, decent writer and I've seen him dance. People like him. He's a great guy. I've noticed that you, white person, are really championing him for his overt stance against G\*\*\*\*rater. He's a rich white cishet man in a western country, he has privilege coming out the wooza, it's ace to see him going in to bat against the G\*\*\*\*raters.

Because doxxing is bad!

But not all doxxing!

("Not all men!")

Doxxing is okay if done to a PoC.

This is the message John Scalzi sends when he promotes the work of Tricia Sullivan. He has significant platform and volume and he ticks all the privilege boxes. The reach and impact of this message should not be dismissed or underestimated. It is tacit approval of her actions, taking the position that she should not be reproached but instead supported.

This lack of intersectionality undermines all the otherwise good work he has done. How can I take "We Need Diverse Books" seriously – which I really fucking want to, and do – when there are white feminists such as John Scalzi providing implicit support to a white woman who has shown not a moment of regret for what she has done to a person of colour?

I can't.

I've let this post sit since first bashing it out. Since then, Laura J Mixon has taken it upon herself to write a bloody *brief of evidence* on all that the victim has ever done wrong. It has two (2) appendices, and I have no intention of reading it. This is after the victim issued two apologies, neither of which smelt *faux*. It is apparently not enough for a PoC to publically make efforts to mend their ways and atone for the damage they've done. The white women have said so.

Doxxing, blackballing and writing stalkerish reports is not enough punishment for you to be satisfied. Apologies given is not enough for you to feel satisfied.

I doubt there is anything that will ever be enough to satisfy you, white person.

You are not doing anyone a service. Just as we are never able to not be PoC, you are never excused from being white. You will always hold the balance of power, and there is nothing in the current circumstances that absolves you from your privilege. You are kicking down.

The message is that people like me are lesser. The message is that you, the hegemony, just like the idea of being progressive. You love the idea of being good and active and part of the rebellion. You love that idea. But you're not prepared to think of non-white people as anything other than lesser. You're not even prepared to admit the possibility of this unconscious bias.

To dismiss this as 'online drama' is an exercise of white privilege. To call for everyone to 'get back to work' is an exercise in white privilege. To 'stay out of it' is an exercise in white privilege. I'm repeating myself because for fuck's sake *this is repeating because the problem is not being addressed*.

This is not online drama. This is our fucking lives. This racism, bullying, racism, discrimination, racism, solidarity for white women, racism is every fucking day. We're not making a fuss because someone got our coffee order wrong, we're speaking up against you the oppressor doing oppressive shit. Again. And again. And again. Because you, the privileged, the oppressing, the shining white right, aren't listening. You've no idea how to walk the walk, and the last couple of weeks have revealed that most of you are far shitter at talking the talk than you imagine.

This is not a distraction from work. This is work. Trying to change the world is

work. I sit on the bus and think about this. I sit on the toilet and think about this. I write my fucking fiction and I think about this. This isn't a television soap opera. We're not standing around the water cooler gossiping. We're not white, and this is work.

You're not Katniss. You're some git in the Capitol, gossiping while you watch us tear each other apart for you.

Don't point out all the PoC also supporting Tricia Sullivan's work as if that makes it okay. PoC cannot be judged by the same criteria that you are, white person. The imbalance of power between you makes that impossible and ultimately pointless. I recognise that a minority can be complicit with its own oppression. I recognise that although each PoC suffers the same blind, blundering racism as the next, and I also recognise that how we learn to survive such a life sentence is not something to be judged lightly. That conversation is for another time. This conversation is about you, white person, and your hypocrisy.

I mean, here's an analogy that might work for you: try being unwillingly unemployed for a while. Awful, isn't it. It's degrading, humiliating, debasing, and the longer it goes on the harder it gets to smile when you walk into an interview room. You've no money. The writing of job applications is actively shit for you mental health. This whole situation is actively shit for you mental health.

Know that? Remember how it felt on a weekend, when there was nothing different about your day? Every day was the same. You don't get a break from being unemployed. You don't get to 5pm and are like, well, that's me done for the day. You're still unemployed when you stop to make dinner, and you look at the contents of your fridge and calculate how many meals you can get out of that versus how much money you have til your next dole cheque, and when you watch a movie all the people are working and able to pay their bills and buy that coffee and go out with their friends without asking for charity and you're watching this because a friend gave it to you on a USB stick not because you can afford to see a film, or use that much of your monthly download, and you go to bed knowing that tomorrow you'll be unemployed as well, and will think the same things again, and again, and again, and you don't ever, ever, ever get to clock off from being unemployed.

That there is a privileged example of unemployment. That's still at the easier end of unemployment.

Now imagine that you're not able to do anything about your unemployment. Just imagine that for a moment. You can't address the problem at hand, you cannot act to alter your circumstances or shift your fate, just imagine, for a moment, that you have no agency to enact change.

Just imagine you have to endure these miserable circumstances without being able to address them.

When I watched hundreds of white people mob WoC.  
While I am still waiting for you, white person, to apply the same standards to Tricia Sullivan, Liz Williams, and Nick Mamatas as you did to the victim.  
When I see you, white person, dismiss this entire event as drama and distraction.  
When I hear you dismiss the voices of PoC as not being work.  
While I watch you support and promote a white woman who publicly admitted to doxxing and blackballing a WoC.  
When I see you wave your flags and chant your slogans against G\*\*\*rgater and not Tricia Sullivan, Liz Williams, and Nick Mamatas.  
When I see you still, *still*, writing *reports* after the victim has already conceded.

When this happens on top of posters in bus shelters, conversations overheard between high school students, radio broadcasting, the books that are placed face out and the books that are left spine out, correcting X on X's own culture, newspapers with their bold headlines and white owners, television commercials with such white teeth, dramas with dramatic white people, the packaging on soy

sauce, the easy appropriation of patterns in the mass-produced fabric of underpants, the desserts in the freezer aisle, the looks I get, the looks I don't get, the names that don't get interviews, the assumptions, the assumptions, the assumptions.

When I, a non-white person, see this all this, I realise that the only opt out is death.

Dramatic; yes.

Rhetoric; no.

This is our *lives*.

None of us can take a break from not being white. You, white person, with all your supposed good intentions, will never let us. Either because you're actively racist, racist but with too delicate an ego to ever do anything about your racism except cry about the mean PoC, or willing to remain silent and let us carry on without support.

You've already won. You won centuries ago when you left Europe and decided to crush the rest of the world. Conquer, colonise, crush. Centuries this has gone on. You have centuries of victory and triumph.

You've won again. You've succeeded in driving PoC from the scene. You succeeded in driving me and others from the internet. You've wrenched open schisms between PoC which will take years of hard work to heal, if they heal at all. We're diverse, we're not monolith. We're divided, and you will always ensure that remains so.

What does this do to a person? How does all this shape the heart that endures it?

From this I have learned about hate. Hate, like anger, is a poison for me, and so I've worked on myself hard to ensure I'm not attracted to the philosophies and perspectives of hate. But from this, from watching all of you, I am learning about hate.

My privilege is being born in and living in a western country with a decent income. My privilege is being ambiguous in my physicality; as it's not easy to identify which 'other' I am, most people are hesitant to voice what they know to be racist-ass opinions around me. The discrimination and bigotry I experience is largely unconscious and insidious, and in fact not grounded in hate at all. I'm fortunate. Very fortunate.

I don't feel hated as a WoC. Hate implies that the hater believes the target of their hate to have some sort of power or control. No.

As a WoC I feel cheap.

Not worth as much to you, white person, as your fellow white people.

I'm learning about hate because I am coming to hate you, white person. You have all the control, all the power, all the privilege, and there is nothing holding you accountable. I hate the double standards and hypocrisy you display, the rank dishonesty of your conduct. I hate that you can harm us, when we cannot harm you. I hate that you have actually impacted on careers, multiple and not even directly, with your hypocrisy. I hate that you're so dominant in the publishing industry there's very few venues I'd consider safe to even submit to now. I hate what you have done to PoC I don't know. I hate what you have done to PoC I do know. I hate what you have done to me, and I was not involved.

I've seen phrases coming from the mouths of people I'd thought knew better, and I have learned that sometimes 'us vs them' is true.

I hate that I am learning this.

Naive trust now broken, I find myself silenced anew.

Being open about my mental health is my way sabotaging the stigma surrounding mental illness. Because I am comfortable discussing it openly, publicly and honestly, others are comfortable discussing their experiences with me. The more comfortable they are with these words on their tongue, the more tools they in turn have to wield against their own struggle, the more comfortable they too become with speaking openly, and thus this is my contribution toward change.

Watching this conflagration has done terrible things to my state of mind. I am not in a good way, I'm in a very doubleplus ungood way, I am on the brink of being in danger.

Purely because I know people who disagree with me have already made moves to dismiss my voice, I have not been able to speak openly about this. It would be too easy to use against me. "Oh, no wonder Tessa has a wasp up her arse, she's a bit cracked up at the moment."

That sounds reasonable. I even say it to myself. Such is the power to silence someone who is oppressed at multiple indices.

I am not angry because I am struggling with mental illness.

I'm struggling with my mental illness because I am angry.

Having one does not invalidate the other. It is neither rhetoric nor melodrama to state that you, white person, are fucking with my depression. I hate you for that too.

Liz Williams was particularly fond of slinging around ablest slurs. I'm not going near any of her online pisspots to check if she's ever tried to atone for that. Highly doubtful. She's a white woman, after all, all the solidarity is for her.

I have depression, and for those of you that need that statement quantified, I've been diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder. I have fibromyalgia, which slams me with fatigue and a cognitive fog that make the air pollution in Beijing look like a wisp of smoke. My memory is unreliable and I have to reverse engineer whatever it is I'm doing many times a day, an hour, over and over minute to minute. I'm a sensitive little introvert who is stomped on by the oblivious extroverted population. That's enough to keep me occupied and frequently crippled by despair.

None of this invalidates anything I've written here. None of this undermines my arguments. Knowing that I'm as addled as I currently am means I've take my time over these words, and tested them over, and over, and then over again because I will have forgotten whatever paragraph I had just reread.

This is a very basic example of intersectionality. Nothing occurs in isolation, none of us live in a vacuum. Complex and sensitive issues are being processed by jamming them into a binary dichotomy, because everything is being processed as You the Oppressor and Them the Others Who Are Complaining. Until you let go your fixation on binaries, until you stop centring yourself on every single stage, until you stop considering yourself the default/normal, until you recognise and respect that your opinion is not warranted or wanted in all areas of discourse, until you glean that sometimes it really is not your place to act, this 'online drama' is going to happen again, and again, and again, and again.

My bitterly disappointed heart believes most of you are too self-entitled and comfortable with your privilege to attempt this. You'll think the right things to make yourself feel good, but thinking, talking, and walking are all vastly different. It's hard work. Very hard work. I know because I do it on myself, and I do it over, and over, and over. The privilege of growing up in a western country comes with the cost of internalising all that western horseshit. The same horseshit that works against me. It's complicated.

Oh, now here's an analogy I can't pass up. Remember the teacher in Donnie Darko who is so oft quoted as "doubting your commitment to Sparkle Motion!" Prior to that beautiful moment she calls for the banning of a book at a PTA meeting, stating that as she's the only person present who is both a teacher at the school and has a child attending as a student, only she "transcends the Parent-Teacher Bridge."

Being biracial and raised in a western country, I grew up thinking I was a 'normal' (read: white) kid, and internalised all the horseshit I'm currently calling you, white person, out on. Oh yes I did. I watched the same TV, read the same books and hung out at the same shopping centres as the white kids. Which was everyone.

Being biracial and raised in a western country, I was never allowed to belong because I wasn't a 'normal' (read: white) kid. Because I looked different. Even if I was white as fuck on the inside.

I TRANSCEND THE WHITE PERSON-OTHER PERSON BRIDGE.

Know that when I call you out, what I'm calling out is what I've recognised and worked on deconstructing in myself. The hard work I'm asking you to do is nothing that I don't ask of myself. The standards I hold you to are the same standards I expect of myself.

I recognise the internalised horseshit you're toting because I tote it myself.

I hope you'll work at it.

Honestly, I don't expect you will.

I gave up all hope for positive change.

However, in the interests of equality, I do call for a sharing of the laziness. I for one am getting very fed up with investing trust in a white person only for them to either dismiss the struggles of PoC or turn around, spout some thoughtless racist shit and then cry 'bully!' when called on it instead of you know, listening and respecting. I really can't be fucked spending more energy on you, white person. You're fucking lazy, well, so am I. PoC come in all shapes and sizes, including bitter, mean and lazy.

So if you identify as a feminist, either in conversation, bios, correspondence, whatever, make sure you're specific. Identify yourself as a White Feminist, and PoC everywhere won't bother you. It won't mean you're a bad person, just that you're easier to assess from a distance. Like G\*\*\*rgaters.

I'm not involved.

This is the impact your actions have had, are having, will continue to have, on me.

I don't speak for all PoC, but don't for an instant doubt that I am not alone.

To my friends reading; I recognise by posting this I will hurt some of you, and for that I am sorry. I hope you will understand that, aware of my identity as I am, none of my relationships are free from politics. This is the reality of the world we live in. You are welcome to speak your mind, here or via other channels. I hope too you will understand that I have let many hurts slide in the past and will continue to do so in the future because I love you, and it is because I love you that I have to say this now.

We are different.

Please listen.

9 November 2014 on a Sunday arvo - EDITED TO ADD:

The conversation has evolved, and at this time I think it would be prudent for me to address a couple of things.

A couple of commenters have stated they'd initially dismissed this post as pointless rage, or just another angry rant, but on a second pass conceded I raised some good points.

Well.

This *is* an angry rant. I mean, phwoar. Did you see that? Plinean. That was plinean. That was an eruption of awesome proportions and, wow. I'm really angry. I mean, I knew I was, but even I'm shocked. After that blast, after I'd given myself enough time and distance to remember how to breathe and for my adrenaline gland to settle down, even I was taken aback. I didn't, I mean, I didn't. (You did, Tessa. You'd accepted this price long before pressing 'publish'.)

But why would anger in a PoC speaking of oppression be considered pointless?

America has a whole bloody news network dedicated to giving old white men a platform from which to shout angrily, and America is so loud that the rest of the western world has no say on whether or not this is permissible, conscionable or allowable; it saturates my world too. The apex of the privilege pyramid shouting and shouting and shouting and my anger is dismissed as pointless.

The SFF publishing scene cannot be divorced from this reality and to attempt to do so would be irresponsible. There is an incredibly damaging trope that exists purely to enable the disenfranchisement of black women in America, one of the most oppressed people in that country, because by segregating the judgement of that anger from the context of that anger, that anger then becomes...pointless.

Why would the anger of the oppressed ever be pointless?

You've won, you've been triumphant for centuries, I say again. Of course I'm angry. I'm furious. I had that screed of rage seething in my heart for far too long, until the balance tipped and the short term consequences of not screaming into the abyss were going to far outweigh the long term consequences of becoming a mouthy PoC, and that is the product of living at the softer end of discrimination.

My anger is not pointless.

Reenacting the eruption of Vesuvius has done much to relieve my internal pressure, but the anger remains. Magma cannot be reasoned with. Magma will not be told it is without merit and evaporate in a puff of convenience.

My anger is *justified*. My expressing of my anger is fucking *reasonable*.

I'm not shouting at clouds; I'm screaming into the fucking abyss.

I have been patient my whole life. I have been respectfully asking to be respected, I have been avoiding being derailed by the Tone Argument by cutting my emotions from my words just to increase the chances that you might listen to me, white person, and not dismiss me as 'another angry minority'.

This is the result of running out of patience. This is the point at which I take my small cup of a writing career and smash it against the wall. This is the point at which the idea in the idealist dies. This is the point at which my effort to remain respectful in the discourse, in the hope that this will promote and nurture respect that I may one day experience, starves and dies. A colossal fuck you to anyone who thinks I owe it to you to keep fighting the good fight, for a given definition of 'good'. A massive, monstrous fuck you to anyone who thinks I owe you a moment more tolerance of the shit you've been pushing for centuries, shit you don't have to live with, white person.

You are owed more anger than mine.

Defending a victim who is a bully is not synonymous with defending, condoning or enabling abuse. To infer such is disingenuous, and disrespectful to those who share my stance who have also suffered abuse. I think we can all agree that bullying is vile, and I think you, bunch of writer types that you are, should be capable of recognising this. Otherwise I despair the simplicity of binary moral narratives that the publishing industry must hold.

I had made a deliberate choice not to discuss the victim's behaviour in my initial post. Discussions anchored upon what the victim did or did not do and the degrees of her horribleness danced and continue to dance around the question of whether the victim *deserved it*.

There were things I thought could go without saying, but.

This has long since gone past the point of being a reasonable discussion raising awareness of someone's problematic behaviour. This is victim blaming, and it is a pile on.

A person can be both bully and victim at the same time. These two states do not cancel each other out.

Being as the victim was both PoC and bully, people are rightly pointing out that by the victim's behaviour, ammunition has been put into the hands of the bigots. This is true. I'd also say that's true of a giant fuckload of people, John Scalzi being the first and most related example that springs to mind. He's receiving accolades. He's fine and pretty much untouchable.

Tossing out this line simply emphasises the message that PoC must meet a higher moral and social benchmark than you, white person. We're allowed to be arseholes and scumbags and make terrible mistakes and the wrong decisions like you do. We're obliged to stay in line to make your job easier. That is oppression and silencing of yet another kind, and it smells horribly like allowing the indefensible to occur for 'the greater good'. The problem is in the reception, it is always in the reception. The double-standards are the gold-trimming on your anti-bully banner. The problem is that while you decide the price, you're not the one to pay it.

Some have argued that the victim wasn't really doxxed, being as the connection between two pseudonyms reveals no actual personal details. The victim has often stated she had stalkers, serious enough to warrant anonymity. The revealing of another alias is still something a stalker can and will make use of.

We are all about believing victims. Right?

But not this victim...right? That would be inconvenient.

It is not for you to determine when a person's privacy has been invaded enough for the damage and danger to be considered real. It is not for you to determine at what point someone else is allowed to feel their privacy and safety violated. To dismiss this because it is inconvenient for the villain in your narrative to be a victim is double-standards, it's victim blaming, and it's racism and it's hypocritical. Again.

By not touching on the victim's behaviour, I am not dismissing it. I think we can all say that bullying and abusive behaviour are toxic things, the mitigation of which should be acted upon. I was trying to shift the focus, but the conversation keeps reaching back into that mob. Like Common Miner Birds, mobbing, mobbing, mobbing.

This is not a nice neat narrative where the morally right and good and the wrong and bad are clear-cut. This is real life. A person can be both bully and victim at the same time. One does not invalidate the other.

Like it or not, the victim's narrative is going to shape the narratives of all PoC to come. We've already seen how many guards are at the gates, and who we'll need to pay tribute to, and we have seen what happens when a PoC steps out of line. Here, you justify the extreme lengths you've gone to by waving the victims of bullying around like a war banner. The next PoC who comes along and doesn't pay tribute can already see what to expect. Maybe next time it won't be bullying with which you, the white person, assert your moral superiority and right to crush those you don't approve of. I'm not you, I can't travel your thought paths, so it isn't for me to predict what guise you will work under.

What will you say when you come for me? You are coming for me.

More to the point, the pain of victims of bullying does not invalidate the pain of victims of oppression. It seems to fall higher in the hierarchy established by you, the white person, as being more worthy of attention, although that's hardly surprising given the current climate. A victim of bullying at least has the potential to be white.

These wounds the victims of bullying and PoC bear do not nullify each other. They exist and will continue to exist and *hurt* regardless of whether you believe them justified.

You've done a fine job of creating a space for the victims of the victim to come forth. I have been told that some people have only felt safe opening up now, and I'm glad they're able to open up at all.

The healing afforded for these victims need not be bought with the silencing of PoC.

Again and again the crimes of the victim are put on parade. Again and again people are telling me, as though I haven't been watching and reading the same words as you. I know. The victim knows. We all know. The victim has made moves toward some sort of peace but you, white person, continue waving that banner.

What makes this racist is the simple fact that you, white person, have not done this to your own.

Jim Frenkle, Vox Day, Harlan Ellis, Will Shetterly. For fuck's sake, how many *decades* did you let Frenkle prey in the scene before some young uppity voice of dissent forced your hand? You *let him sexually assault people*. You fucking enabled him *for years*. But he's gone! you cry. We got rid of him! Your hand was fucking forced. You wouldn't have done a thing if one of his victims hadn't stuck her neck out to 'make a fuss'. He would still be employed in a position of power in this field if it was left to you, white person. But we got Vox Day out of SFWA! Holy shit, how many years did that take too? How many mouthy PoC's publicly pushing their dissent did it take for you act? *Years. Decades*. Remember Elizabeth Moon and Wiscon? How long did you 'consider all sides of the story'? How slow were you to act? How, when discussing the making and maintaining of safe spaces, 'fair' is it to give the voice of the privileged equal consideration as that of the oppressed?

Fucking *hypocrites*.

Those are only the publicly notorious. I'd say most of you are in far better positions than I in being able to identify predators and poison. Geographical and financial barricades keep me from being a regular con-attende, chronic illness has curbed my own crippled little career so I'm simply not active enough and in contact with enough people to know what is going on in the back channels. You, white person, are probably far better equipped than I to do something about these people.

Do us both a favour, and don't for an instant try to downplay the existence of such predators and the damage they are currently doing.

Recognise that you are picking your targets, and you're picking the target that has

no power and cannot harm you, and you're doing sweet fuck all about those other victims because that predator is *white*.

This is a muddy narrative in which both sides have acted reprehensibly. I've been invited to read various accounts, and I have. I've seen and heard enough to know that the public narrative is unreliable from both sides. I've also taken the time to consider what my stance would be if I were to take what various parties have said be at face value, and have concluded it would not be different. All roads lead to Rome, and to the crossing of my own Rubicon. At this point, for me, the details of the doxing no longer matter. How we got here no longer matters. What I see are the privileged circling and mobbing a PoC with a viciousness that comes from centuries of practiced oppression. Whatever path we take, we still end up here, white person, because you don't listen.

One side has all the power, the other does not.

As you, white person, do have all the power and privilege, I would very much appreciate it if you could stop namedropping PoC when engaging with me. I shall repeat:

*There isn't a 'not white' setting you can switch on in your brain to talk to us. PoC are not monolith. We are not legion. We are often but a collection of scarred souls who recognise the wounds in each other.*

And:

*I don't speak for all PoC.*

To take that further, it also means other PoC do not speak for me.

You, white person, hold all the power. I am challenging you from a position of weakness. Do not drag in PoC names to shield you, don't you dare try to throw them before me with the inference that *this* PoC's voice, which is conveniently similar in view to your own, is somehow a more legitimate voice than mine. That PoC is not talking to me, and if they were, the conversation would be a very different one because a conversation between PoCs at least has the potential for both parties to be on relatively equal footing. A conversation with you, white person, never will be. I'll say it again, having PoC in agreement does not somehow lend your point of view extra credence. Argue your position *from the position of privilege you occupy* and stop tossing in PoC as if they will absolve you of your privilege. They're not chum to distract me, the nasty PoC shark. I am talking to you, white person.

I am not alone, but I entered into this prepared to argue my position alone. Because fuck you, I've seen enough damage done to PoC, I will not call on *anyone* to speak up. You've made a space for victims of bullying to come forth and hopefully heal but only by shitting all over a whole demographic. A really broad, clumsily general in definition demographic. PoC are now afraid to come forward. But you will throw them in front of me, try work on the schisms that exist within this complex and intricate group of people so that I attack them, not you.

This is depressingly reminiscent of so many historical battle philosophies. Going to battle the enemy? Well, send in the [insert disdainful demographic here], the enemy will waste all sorts of ammunition reserves firing at them, what?

Own your fucking privilege. This conversation is with you, white person. The power imbalance is so huge and so engrained that you don't see the hypocrisy in your strategies. Fight your own fucking battles.

That imbalance is why I, and many other PoC, hurt.

It is magma. It doesn't require your approval or acknowledgment to exist, it will flow

and flow because the source remains whole and healthy, and much like magma, it will keep coming out.

Make this not about racism. Please, please, prove me wrong. Go clean out your own cellar, white person, before HAZMATing ours. Stop asking us to trust that this is a special case, that this one time you tear a PoC apart it is unique, it doesn't count, and you wouldn't ever do it to us because we're not like that. There are no grounds for trust. You are not worthy of trust. Stop justifying your actions. You, white person, keep justifying this frenzy, and in doing so the message is sent that the suffering of the PoC watching horrified from the margins is also justified.

That's not your fucking call. For fuck's sake.

*Listen.*

Don't set this precedent.

Please, just.

Let us breathe.

I would like to make one amendment to my original post. I have given up all hope for positive change; that is still true. The responses I have received so far have not challenged my position, and for the most part the responses have been thoughtful and far kinder than the tone I set. I would not change the degree of anger in my writing if I had my time again. It is there because I want you, white person, to see how deeply this effects me. Maybe from this you will catch a glimpse of the scale of the hurt, which has wholly consumed me, and is doing the same to who knows how many others. It is awful. Analogies of volcanoes and natural disasters abound not to intimidate you with the scale of destruction, but so you can comprehend the scale of destruction. All that magma sits in my rib cage and hurts. It's awful. It is awful. It is hurting me far more than it hurts you, white person.

But. Yes, there is a but!

I know I am not alone.

I screamed into the abyss, and in that endless darkness the abyss answered with fireworks.

I am not alone. We are not alone.

I have still given up hope.

But.

I have not given up.

Find your fireworks, you howling hearts standing on the edge. Find your fireworks.

#### **EDITED TO ADD Wednesday arvo 12 November 2014:**

The conversation continues to evolve, and life doesn't stop for any of us.

I guess I'm used to anger – clearly it has been building up for some time – but I have no practice in wielding it. It is anathema to me, and this experience hasn't challenged that. There is no way to use it without it becoming stained, and by no one's actions but my own.

It took two hands to wield that anger. To control it, to keep it from simply burning

the house down, took two hands and the making of an internal debt that is now being collected. I had to put down the ability to take joy in things. There was no room left in me. The anger took it all, the volcano destroyed itself in being itself. There's no fire left, only ash now. Only ash.

This isn't a baited sympathytrap. This is simply my reality. The overtime put in by my adrenaline gland the last few days has lent me some emergency resilience, but at a price. I've spoken more online than I have in the last few months, and now tendonitis and ye olde RSLs are rising creakily from sleep. The stress and threat provided by every new comment, regardless of whatever the contents of the comment turned out to be, has done astonishing things to my fibro. My flobby little braingrapes have processed so much information in the past few days – and when considering the pain of others nuance is everything – that they're now simply out of juice. I don't consider myself as having the capacity to contribute anything useful to the dialogue right now.

I have to stop. That is all.

Because it was specifically brought to my attention, I will make a quick comment on the idea being floated of beginning a mentor programme specifically for oppressed and vulnerable writers. None of what I'm about to say is spoken in anger. I have none left. This is spoken in tired monotone.

I very much like this idea, especially as it is not limited to PoC. I think we all remember how utterly bewildering the industry was when we first dipped our toes in, and the fact that it never really stops being bewildering is something underemphasised.

SFWA would, from a purely logistical stance, be a great platform to germinate such a programme, being as the administrative infrastructure is already in place. However, from the point of view of the vulnerable, it is not yet a safe space. Change is happening, and it's definitely change for the better, but until the organisation has a proven track record of not blundering into bigotry, and has done so for some years, it is not a place I would trust with vulnerable voices. Not yet.

For that matter, I feel that the spirit of the concept will be undermined if it is crewed and helmed by the privileged. I infer to no individual when I say this, it is simply a pattern that has proven itself time over.

A space cannot be trusted as safe, while those for whom it is supposed to be sanctuary do not have control over it.

It is again asking the vulnerable to put power in the hands of the oppressor and then trust the oppressor with that power. This is a trust that has not been established or earned, and there are no grounds to argue that, right now, such trust should be given.

As space over which the privileged have power will never be safe for the vulnerable.

I hope this is not taken as an attack, but constructive criticism, the devil we're all too familiar with. I see there a gesture made in good faith, and although I have seen too much to hope anything new and good will come of it, I must enable the chance, and hope this will be given consideration should this idea come to fruition.

And with that, I'm tapping out.

It hasn't even been a week, and I daresay many will choose to read this as me not being able to take what I dish and fleeing; whining, wailing and cowardly. They may choose to read on, or not.

Anger is an incredibly powerful tool, but it is also a weapon. Just as I cannot be anything other than Other, anger cannot not be a weapon, no matter how I wield it.

Axes and hammers and brute force. It is ugly. Threatening, intimidating and upsetting. It is what the oppressed live with day in and day out, along with fear, hurt, and doubt, not because of what is happening in the SFF scene now, but because this is the state of the world. It would come out, one way or another. It will do its damage, one way or another.

No doubts have sat with me, and I haven't second-guessed my decision. Surprisingly. I stand by the validity of my anger and the expressing of it. I still accept the cost of expressing that anger. I do not regret this.

I have learned a little, though.

To weaponise your voice is to become that tool which is also an instrument of attack, and though you may be very careful in what directions your anger is aimed, still you stand, howling, and that is frightening. To everyone. The people standing behind you as well as those opposing you.

The current state of the world needs weaponised voices. We are so far from being able to have this conversation as equals. Not in my lifetime.

But a weaponised voice should not be used in all places.

You need to see that this anger is not pointless. It is born of anguish and grief, not indignation, and is of a scale beyond comprehension. It is an anguish shared by those hurt by abuse and those hurt by discrimination. I used my anger like fuel, rocket fuel, to launch this cry into space. Now it's in orbit, and the rocket is space junk.

After anger, there is space for grief, and in grief, there are small niches of healing.

I have no hope, I do not believe, but I must enable that healing. Windows and doors open, it is an opportunity worth inviting, courting, coaxing in. Take away hindrances. Let the way be clear.

By weaponising my voice I have taken a position. I don't consider myself to be in the camps that have formed, but I have made my stance known, and not been gentle about it. In doing so, there are people who bear the wounds of bullying who will not feel comfortable speaking up in a space in which the inconvenient PoC shark is swimming, and there are people who must endure the same oppression that has twisted me around who do not agree with how I have processed this, and they too will not feel safe speaking out in a space in which I may be lurking. PoC fall in both categories easily.

My satellite is in orbit. The signal was sent. It was what was needed to survive, and now that I know I will survive, it is for me to step aside and allow others that right as well.

My part in this conversation has been specifically aimed at the white hegemony; this next bit is not for you.

We PoC are not monolith. The diversity, contrast and resonance which can be found in those three letters are sublime. Our paths are so extraordinarily different, a difference that can be just as hard to traverse as that between oppressor and oppressed.

But in this western world, we are all subject to the same prejudices and wounds. We are shaped by the wounds we carry, wounds collected every day since birth. It is exhausting and debilitating and unrelenting.

We may not agree on the finer points, we may be in adamant opposition over the larger points, we may think each other complicit in sustaining the status quo and the damage perpetual and be devastated by that perceived betrayal.

All of these things are true, but I cannot and will not judge you, and I won't condemn you.

We are just people. To survive this for years on end, knowing that there will never be any respite, contorts the skeins of our soul. We say nothing because we need to survive that moment there and then, in order to be able to get up the next day. We compromise ourselves both deliberately and unconsciously just to make sure we can still see a way forward, to leave us with enough in our bucket to worry about groceries and the weather and whether we have any clean socks. We let our guard down and make questionable decisions because we're tired, we're so tired. We want so much to believe your good intentions are enough. We cannot afford to give all over for the good of the future when the present already asks too much of us. In this sense, enduring bullying and enduring oppression play out identically.

This plinean howl is me coping, compromising, doing what I need to do to stay out of hospital. I do not say that to garner pity or sympathy (please, do not), nor do I say it flippantly. This is my reality. Sadly, I know that, in this, I am also not alone.

All roads lead to this.

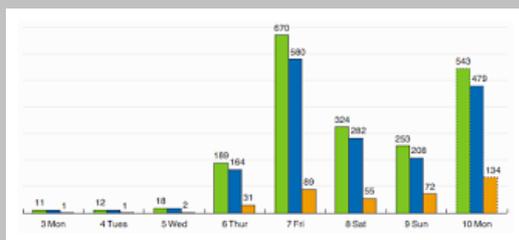
Only you know what you have had to do in order to survive. Only you know which of the many damages on offer you can live with, what regrets you can live with. Each of us stands as an individual with a perspective the evolution of which only that individual will ever understand.

I don't agree with you, and I don't need to in order to recognise this.

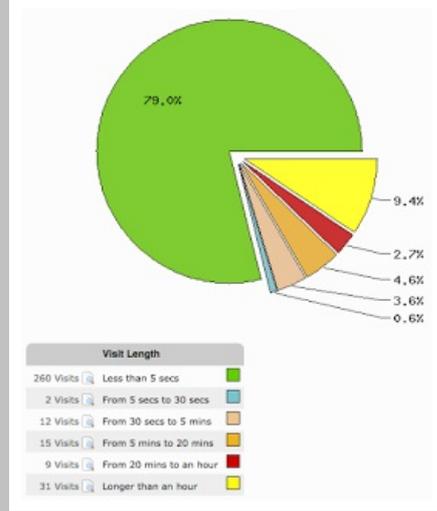
You, I will not judge.

Thank you, again, to those who have engaged and responded with more kindness than my tone invited. There's that wonderfully saying, which my brain is currently mangling, which goes something like: you shouldn't say thank you when being given something that should be yours by right. That is true. It's also true to say that unpacking privilege is hard, learning to listen is hard, and everything about this is hard.

Look at this. Traffic spike from the initial posting of this on Friday. Such reach. The mind boggles.



This blog has no volume and the reach is tiny. I thought to myself, I am actually being listened to. This might be a nudge toward change. But, then I saw this:



No, not much reach at all. Very few people are listening. (I probably account for a large chunk of the yellow wedge, with all the reading, previewing, rereading I've been doing.)

When I look at those graphs, I must be thankful for those who listened, and who gave my voice genuine consideration. Thank you.

I'm withdrawing to go sift my private ashes, and because withdrawing, too, is a means of surviving. I'll be leaving the comments open, as some have taken this post to be a safe place to speak, even with the veil of anonymity. I will certainly enable that. I hope in withdrawing my absence will also make other spaces safer for those I have silenced in my rage.

This isn't retreat or defeat. I simply don't have any spoons, or knives, or forks left to give. There's only ash. Staying out of hospital will always be more important than activism. For me, one cannot happen without the other. I will never be able to contribute as much as a healthy person, and so I call this enough, on my terms.

I'm still here. I daresay, now that I've made myself this ridiculous new hat, inconvenient PoC shark will venture into the crowded waters again, when a volcano is grumbling. But later, later. The fare of this blog and my other social media platforms will return to what they have always been: self-absorbed, introspective, pretentious and self-deprecating wank.

I'm giving myself permission to return and update this last section as I see fit. Add to, not edit. I've been writing this across the span of the day, simply because my mind won't hold all I wish to address at the one time. I'm sure there are things I've missed, but this needs to be put in place now.

I'm going to dive deep and dark, and I'm going to survive.

You hurting from abuse, you hurting from marginalisation; may you find your way through this and do the same.

Aha! I remembered some things to add.

Shit, I just forgot one again. No, wait, got it.

I see now that in my opening salvo there is much to be interpreted as attempting to absolve the bully of bullying. That was not my intention. I still stand by my attempt to try and highlight that there is more damage going on from other vectors in all this, but the approach was a mistake. I'll leave it as it is, as I'm accountable for what I've said, but for those who feel I have dismissed their hurt; I am sorry.

Also, there was some definite good to come from this. The pledge by publishers not to reveal the personal information of their authors is definitely a good thing, and should be acknowledged. Forgive me for not linking, but I'm loathe to direct the animosity aimed toward me at anyone else.

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Posted by Tessa at 9:14 am 

Labels: activism, anger, courage, cultural conflict, diversity, publishing, racism, social justice, steaming pile of horseshit, submarineasaurus, This Is Tessadom, trust, writerly stuff

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