

week nine  
semester one  
2013



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Save the Red  
Rattler  
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The F-Game: A girl's  
guide to phallic  
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If chivalry is  
dead, why am I  
waiting for him to  
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WOMEN'S EDITION



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# WOMEN'S EDITION

We were originally going to write an editors' welcome in which we slammed the barrage of criticism we have already received as a result of the production of Women's Honi. After reading the stories, articles and poems of the women of Sydney University this week, we decided this would be an unequivocal waste of space.

We in women's activism give our critics far too much time and thought. Just last week, space was made in the Herald Sun for a story about the outrage caused by a bake sale in which men were charged a different price to women to highlight the continuing pay gap in Australia. No space was spared for reflection on the fact that a pay disparity still exists.

Whether it's because outrage and confrontation sells newspapers, or because sexist attitudes still pervade our collective imagination, we are too busy hearing about the outraged backlash to give time to the real injustices.

This year, Women's Honi is about transcending the vitriolic discourse that inevitably arises whenever ideas of 'feminism' or 'equality' are broached. This year it is about celebrating the women thinkers, writers, poets, artists who inspire us. It's about sharing our stories, and about starting conversations. It's about addressing the real issues with feminism: not 'reverse sexism' or 'excluding men' but the lack of representation of women of colour, of queer women and other intersectional

women in the women's movement.

We thank all the amazing women who sent us submissions for this edition; who continue to persevere in a world that doesn't give them the space they deserve; and who inspire us every day by their very existence.

**In the words of Margaret Cho: 'If you are a woman, if you're a person of colour, if you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, if you are a person of size, if you are a person of intelligence, if you are a person of integrity, then you are considered a minority in this world ... For us to have self-esteem is an act of revolution, and our revolution is long overdue'.**

Hannah & Emily

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**Cover Image:** Clare Angel-Auld  
**Back cover image:** Rose Wallace McEwen

Special thanks to Beyonce, Solange, Taylor, Cat Power, Robyn and all the other talented women whose music made this week bearable

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*Honi Soit* is published by the Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney, Level 1 Wentworth Building, City Road, University of Sydney, NSW, 2006. The SRC's operation costs, space and administrative support are financed by the University of Sydney. *Honi Soit* is printed under the auspices of the SRC's Directors of Student Publications: Clare Angel-Auld, Adam Chalmers, Bebe D'Souza, Brigitte Garozzo, James O'Doherty, Lane Sainty. All expressions are published on the basis that they are not to be regarded as the opinions of the SRC unless specifically stated. The Council accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of any of the opinions or information contained within this newspaper, nor does it endorse any of the advertisements and insertions. Printed by MPD, Unit E1 46-62 Maddox St. Alexandria NSW 2015.



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## WHY FEMINISM IS STILL RELEVANT

Katie Davern

If you haven't been living under a rock for the past year or so, you may have noticed the surge in popularity that the once-defamed and oftentimes avoided culture of feminism has been riding on lately. Public figures like Lena Dunham, Tina Fey, Sheryl Sandberg and many others are rekindling the feminist in us all.

But WHY are we even discussing gender inequality? (Surely that's a thing of the past associated with late-19th Century suffragettes?)

Here's why:

\*In 2012, the 'pay gap' between male and females graduates in their respective fields widened from 5.2% in 2011 to 9.1%. Female graduates can expect \$3000 less per annum compared to their male counterparts.

\*Roughly 70% of Australian newspaper bylines are male.

\*Only two women in Australia host solo commercial talk back radio shows.

\*A report commissioned by the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation found that out of the 61.5% of commercial sports sponsorship given to gender-exclusive sports, 61% of that sponsorship went to men's sports and only 0.5% to women's sport.

\*Out of the 2255 barristers practicing law in NSW, only 18% are female.

\*American researchers found that since the 1970s, the percentage of women on scientific advisory boards has only ever topped at 10.2%.

\*No woman has ever won the Fields Medal (the "Nobel Prize of Mathematics") since its inception in 1936.

\*Proceedings of the National Academy of Science (USA) published a study in 2009 which found that the lower gender equality in a nation, the larger the math aptitude gap between boys and girls—meaning that the lack of female prominence in maths/science fields is NOT due to a lack of female intelligence or capacity.

\*The Victorian "Women's" Minister stated recently that striving for gender equality in Parliament is naïve and virtually impossible because women are naturally "nurturers".

When an Australian state's Women's Minister is prepared to accept premature defeat in the fight for gender equality, I think it's safe to say that the current feminist surge is justified and the feminist-based discussion which follows is not only relevant, but necessary.

# Why I am (not) a feminist...

The following is a joint article, compiled by two current members of the Women's Collective on Campus. It came about as a series of discussions which were had, both over the course of these meetings and later as a consequence of a couple of sneaky ciders at our local - Manning.

I must say that it been an absolute pleasure to get to know, to a greater degree, the thoughts and experiences which

have shaped each of the respective perspectives of these articles. While we stand together in a number of issues, we are unable to reach a consensus of opinion in many others. This only serves to reproduce the current dynamisms, which are inherent to the conversations regarding women and furthermore, why there is the need to be able to create a space where such issues are both able to be articulated and heard.

ANNA ROBINSON IS A FIRST YEAR SOCIOLOGY STUDENT WHO ENJOYS PICNICS, PARKS & REC, CHEESE AND WINE. SHE IS A FEMINIST.

I think women are amazing. I am also a feminist. To me, these two concepts are mutually inclusive, and intrinsically connected. I truly do like being a woman...

...What I don't like is that society and the media make me feel like I should be ashamed of my sex life. I don't like that I get worried about wearing certain clothes, or that I have to be overly cautious when I'm walking home from the station at night. I don't like that, despite my best intentions, I still hold so much value in my appearance, rather than my capabilities. By the age of 24, I have already had way too many debates with myself about whether I will have children or have a successful career, or what I will have to sacrifice if I want both.

But this is just what concerns me personally: a white, middle class, tertiary educated, highly employable woman. What I do not experience is further discrimination because I am poor, because I am a single mother, because I am a woman of colour. I do not suffer the injustices that Indigenous women suffer. I am not part of the continually marginalised Queer or trans\* community. If I required an abortion, I would not have the financial hurdles many women face, which equates to a lack of access to public health facilities, which provide this service.

What's more is that these are just issues within Australia, which is arguably a first world country. This doesn't even begin to touch on the broad institutional injustices faced by women in developing countries: genital mutilation, poor

access to reproductive services and contraception, stoning, no legal right to own property...this barely scratches the surface.

This is why I am a feminist.

I'm not only fighting for my own rights, my own safety, but for women and other marginalised minorities around the country and around the world.

People ask me, why not just be a humanist? An equalist? (NB: Microsoft Word doesn't recognise equalist as a real word, which I think speaks volumes) I say feminist because humanist implies that all people are currently being treated equally, that all people either suffer discrimination or do not suffer discrimination, which is inherently false. There are certain sections of society who do not face any sort of discrimination based simply on the way they were born and they do not require my support, my activism.

I am proud to be a feminist, and represent all that I believe it stands for. I don't want women to artificially excel beyond men; I don't hate men (in fact, I love men)... I hate the patriarchy that inherently disadvantages not only women, but large swathes of society - even men are negatively affected by the patriarchal society we live in.

The issues that I believe feminism stands to work through and combat are complex and multifaceted, but this doesn't weaken my stand. Rather, it strengthens it. I think women are amazing and I don't ever want to have to apologise for that.

MARIAH OKEROA IS A THIRD YEAR INTERNATIONAL AND GLOBAL STUDIES STUDENT WHO ENJOYS SAILING, JOHN STEINBECK AND TRAVELLING. SHE IS NOT A FEMINIST.

We may as well get this preface out of the way, before I begin presenting my humble opinion. I am a twenty year old, indigenous, heterosexual, beer drinking and sport loving, young woman. I believe in God, I shave, I eat meat, I don't have any piercings besides my ear lobes; I am clean skinned, am a hopeless baker, a solid cook and I really enjoy getting dressed up and going clubbing.

Effectively, that gets the introductions and the stereotypes traditionally associated with Women's Groups and publications, pretty thoroughly out of the way.

It is precisely because of these stereotypes, that I treat with disdain any attempts to categorise me as a feminist. Within recent times, the debate is raging amongst the first, second and third wave feminists- as to how best categorise this new class of women, who are refusing to be pigeon holed into what has been seen as the inevitably encroaching fourth wave of feminism. For some scholars, the idea that a woman wishes to be seen as just a human being should place them within the new wave.

Substantively, what has transpired both in the developing and postcolonial world is a call for the diversity of women's voices and experiences to be articulated so that they may be able to contribute to the conversations, shaping international conventions and dialogues. Necessarily, this means the sidelining of Western rhetoric and instead replacing such notions and communications with those of indigenous women, as representatives of their respective communities. Ultimately, this asks to solidify what is currently a vague call for equality throughout the international system,

by recognising the value and the weight to the arguments and experiences by women in such communities.

Unfortunately, such discourse is once more being subserviently guided to be being classified as the fourth wave- 'intersectional approach', promising to be greatly more normative in its approach and a good deal more culturally sensitive too. To be sure, it certainly is a strange experience to be articulating similar thoughts and ideas as those shared by women participants of the Arab Spring - who refuse to be categorised by American Liberal Feminists as being Feminist Activists. I can see how it could quite easily be construed to say that due to this shared hope across borders of equality and call for greater recognition of women's voices would prove sufficient to propagate a fourth wave of Feminism.

Politely, I would decline such a classification, if only because of the abject revulsion with which it has been met in recent years, amongst young women campaigning for equality, within such geopolitical climes.

With respect to the wake of those feminist movements before me, that gave me the suffrage right to vote, which allowed me to gain a tertiary education, greater sexual liberation - I say thank you. My sincerest thanks for your efforts and campaigns for the work, which you have thus far completed. However: now is the time to cease this worship of bra burning, Greer-like antagonism and kicking up a stink over the fact of our endogenous genitalia.

I believe in the basic quality of equality. I am not a feminist, but a human being.



## Technology is the way of the future, but where are the women?

Nicky Ringland

Whether we're fighting climate change, making the next blockbuster movie or unlocking the secrets of the universe, everything is moving forward by computers. A deeper understanding of computing is becoming increasingly essential in today's world, as is the ability to go beyond simply consuming technology, but to create it is more than just an important skill - it's also a particularly lucrative one.

Computer Science is the best-paying college degree in the United States, and Australia has a median starting salary of \$52,500 for 2012, which is above law, psychology, architecture and economics, just to name a few. It's one of the most flexible disciplines for employees to work flexible hours or work from home, often cited as factors in workplace decisions, especially for women.

But where are they?

High school girls in Australia have virtually no experience with computer science and engineering in school. In 2011, 36,938 girls sat the HSC. Only 116 of them studied Software Design and Development, the only subject which



teaches programming. And the story isn't much better at university or in the workforce. Most of the tech companies my friends and I have worked for in Sydney have had more employees named 'Dave' than female software engineers.

The lack of women in IT has been described as the result of a leaky pipeline. At numerous stages between school and workforce, women drop out of IT. There are awesome programs like Girl Geek Sydney, Sisters, and Girl Geek Coffees that all keep women in the pipeline, and a few that try to grow the initial pool; The Girls' Programming Network is one of them.

Each term, we run free workshops for high-school girls on tech topics. We're all volunteers who encourage the girls to get their hands dirty, whether disassembling and re-assembling computers, writing

machine learning algorithms or making smart-phone apps.

Our last workshop had about 40 high school girls making their own mobile apps for Android. Most had never programmed before, and many attend schools where computing isn't offered. We challenged the girls to think of a problem that a simple, specific app could solve.

After a busy pizza and chocolate fuelled few hours, we had some great apps: drawing apps, magic 8 balls, a quiz to test a foreign-language learner's vocab list, an app to help one of our students cheat at scrabble in Swedish (to be used only against said student's Mum), an app that used text-to-speech to read messages aloud when driving, and of course, pictures of Cats.

By giving girls authentic experiences with computer science, we can encourage women to not just be consumers of technology, but to design and create it.

If you're interested in finding out more, contact us at [gpn@it.usyd.edu.au](mailto:gpn@it.usyd.edu.au) or visit our website: <http://sydney.edu.au/it/gpn>

Quotes from students:

What did you enjoy most or find most interesting in the workshop today?

"Being able to create apps that we could use."

"Mainly the people, but also creating something that I was able to put on to my own phone and annoy my friends back at home."

"The puzzle-like programming, it was like playing with a huge jigsaw puzzle."

I thought the topic was:

"Really fun! It's not something I would have done in my own time, most definitely not."

"Cool! Because I've always wanted to make my own app."

"Really interesting. Going to use app inventor in the future just to mess about"

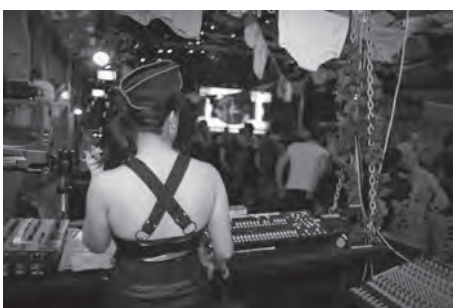
"Amazing! I'm getting people (students & teachers) asking me how to make them."

"I want to learn more about everything!"



## The Rat at Risk

Elizabeth Mora



For the love of what I would like to call Queer Feminism, I would like to use this space to talk a little about the work of five great local women who took it upon themselves, their money and energy to create a creative utopia where regardless of who you were you could lend your ideas and artistic pursuits to the eyes and appreciation of many.

This Creative Utopia is none other than The Red Rattler Theatre in Faversham St, Marrickville.

The Red Rattler is a not-for-profit arts and community incorporation which began as the collective dream of five local women artists, who wanted to create a legal warehouse venue to showcase

alternative Sydney arts, performance and grassroots activism. The aim was for the space to practice a feminist queer ethic and attempt to nurture, re-energise and build a non-traditional family of friends, artists and activists. The Rat was founded in April 2008 and operation commenced in early 2009 after the outstanding efforts of volunteers to establish the infrastructure and compliance to the Marrickville Council Development Consent and Change of Use and associated licensing. The founders and original directors are Teresa Avila, Penelope Benton, Patzy Black, Annette Moore and Meredith Williams who have to date provided a personally funded (hocked into individual debt and mortgage) rent free space to The Red Rattler Theatre business. The founding model is now shifting and as some of the founding visionaries begin to move on to other creative and personal endeavours and hand over the Rat keys to the next Board and community visionaries, I would like to encourage you to join me in the support for the longevity and sustainability of this space!

Currently the Rat is running a campaign to secure its survival within the Sydney arts scene. In order to secure the ongoing sustainability of the space, Rat directors, supporters and volunteers are aiming to raise \$40,000 by May 2013 so that the Rat can buy a 40% share of the building it lives in. the Rat's directors are exploring options to ensure its longevity as a self-sustainable incorporation is not at the mercy of developers or landlords they have avoided to date.

The main reason why I make this pitch, why I write these words about this great space is because as a supporter of alternate creative expression, the Rat is at the cornerstone of what I call inclusivity in the face of creative experiments and artistic doubt. Often ideas of colour and sound are stored away because they don't fit behind the many guises of today's society. But the Rat has always been different and the women of its inception ensured this. For that, many artists and the community alike are more than thankful.

The Red Rattler has held over 500 events since officially opening in 2009,

one third being free to hire for various not-for-profit organisations and 20% reduced rate hire for various social collectives, both running their own inter-community projects and initiatives within the Rat's space. Events at the Rat are eclectic and comprise of music, performance, theatre, cabaret, burlesque, film, dance, arts practice and much much more.

My hope is that the Rat continues to be a creative playground for performers, musicians, artists, designers, new media makers, experimentalists, film-makers, theorists, activists, writers, collective organisers, and local punters.

If you love the Rat and would love to help keep its doors open for many generations to come, please spread the word and or head to the online campaign: <http://pozible.com/savetherat>





# Strength in struggle: Syrian women soldier on

Chloe Smith

The horror and bloodshed of the Syrian civil war has been a consistent feature of our newspapers and TV screens since it began in March 2011. As of February 2013, the United Nations estimates that more than 70,000 people have been killed because of the conflict, with approximately half that number civilians. About 1.4 million Syrian refugees have fled the conflict to seek shelter in neighbouring countries like Jordan and Turkey. By December 2013, the UN expects the number of refugees in Jordan to swell to 1.2 million – about one-fifth of Jordan's total population.

Amongst all these facts and figures, it can be easy to forget about the actual people caught up in the conflict, and the humanitarian crisis that is threatening to tear their lives apart. There have been recent riots about food distribution and conditions in the camps, as well as access to clean water and electricity. But a less reported casualty of this conflict is the toll it takes on the lives of girls and women, and the exacerbated dangers they are facing within these camps.

According to the Women News Network, women in the Za'atari camp in Jordan face danger every time

they wish to go the toilets, which are located far away from the tents they are housed in. There are no lights around the toilets, and no locks on the doors. Women are not able to venture there at all during the nighttime, and in daytime they must always travel in groups for safety. They claim security is non-existent. The striking thing about this situation is that it is a problem faced by many women around the world, even in our own societies that are not affected by war – wanting situational crime prevention, like adequate lighting, to make us feel safer when we go out at night. To not have this in a strange and dangerous refugee camp must be a thousand times worse, and yet is an entirely preventable issue.

Women often have to walk over an hour to access health clinics, feeding centres, schools, and other essential services for their families. Access to proper menstrual health and sanitation is limited at best. 13-15 babies are born in Za'atari camp every day. And now a more sinister problem facing women and girl refugees is the threat of kidnapping, rape, and sham marriages in the camp designed for their protection. Reports of "pleasure marriages" where men can buy a woman or girl, marry her for sex, and then divorce her, abound within the camps. Syrian girls from the age of six are harassed and kidnapped, sometimes raped.

Whilst the refugee influx continues, and the camps overload, these problems are likely to get worse. As they have throughout history, women and girls are bearing the full force of the ugliness of war, fighting daily battles for basic needs that often go unrecognised and overlooked in the face of more prominent, publicised issues.

And yet, there are always signs of hope and endurance in these battles. Samar, a Syrian refugee in Jordan, has turned her house into a beauty salon and hairdresser to support her family. She is now the sole breadwinner. Many women help to distribute basic needs and services to their fellow refugees within the camps. And girls who were never allowed to at home, play soccer together to fill the days and have fun. Despite the hardships that we continue to face around the world, women and girls always can and do find opportunity and strength in a crisis, often when it is most needed. No doubt, once the conflict in Syria subsides and the task of rebuilding lives becomes a priority, women will continue to play a vital role in doing so. And hopefully the girls may even be allowed to play soccer while they're at it.

## "She doesn't even go here": FEMEN's white saviour complex

Ellen O'Brien

The controversial feminist group, Femen, have returned to the headlines once again. This time, the focus of their "topless jihad" on April 4 were Muslim women, who according to Femen need to be 'liberated' from the oppression of wearing a hijab or burqa.

Femen are but one example of a group suffering from the white savior complex. While existing in all forms of aid administered by Western groups, this complex seems to be especially prevalent in the Western feminist movement. Groups like Femen react decisively to intercultural issues, but their response hedges on a simplistic understanding of the real issues at play, as shown by their stereotyping of Muslim women as helpless victims who "write on their posters that they don't need liberation but in their eyes it's written 'help me'."

One of the main problems with Western feminism is the tendency to speak on behalf of women from other countries and other cultural backgrounds, including women within our own society. The irony of this is that stripping people of their voice is the exact opposite of the liberation and freedom that feminism strives to obtain for all people. Not only that, but shutting out the voices of non-Western feminists discredits the hard work that grassroots organisations are doing within these cultures and countries. Organisations which, unlike groups such as Femen, have a deeper

understanding of all of the pressures and influences on women in their society.

A lot of Western feminists avoid stepping on this cultural minefield by simply ignoring any potential instances of inequality in cultures and countries other than our own. But this is a cop out. In a recent interview, Ayaan Hirsi Ali (a Somali feminist activist known for her critical views of Islam) claims "that Western feminists are really looking for the easy way out" by choosing not to develop a deeper understanding about the issues faced by women of other cultures.

Instead, these women should support feminism across cultures by working in collaboration, establishing networks that foster conversation and education from and for all parties. Inna Hudaya, the founder of Samsara, a grassroots women's NGO based in Indonesia, says that working with a network makes feminist solidarity across cultures possible. Samsara is a member of Asia Safe Abortion Partnership, along with 26 other organisations from the Asia-Pacific region. As Inna says, such networks are invaluable to all feminists, no matter their background. According to Inna, "seeing all the groups from different countries, doing the same things, it makes me humble."

Discussions of networks such as Women on Waves and grass root organ-



isations need to be in the forefront of the media. Instead of mulling over the effectiveness of Femen's strategies, news outlets should focus on what women are doing to 'liberate' and 'free' themselves. But attention must also be paid to issues of gender inequality in Australia. Domestic violence remains the number one cause of homelessness for women in Australia, with numbers of victims reaching endemic proportions, especially amongst the Indigenous community. Mulling over questions of the oppressive nature of the hijab seems quite arbitrary compared to issues that we face on our own doorsteps, yet willingly ignore.

There is no blueprint that tells one

How to Be a Feminist. We must find what works for us, without dismissing what works for others, or telling them how to behave.

Groups like Femen attempt to save non-Western women, just as men have felt the need to save women in general. This approach only serves to make people angry, as autonomy is ripped out of their hands and their voices are deafened. The white savior complex isn't helping anyone, or feminism in general. Because, as Ernesto Sirotti, an expert on sustainable economic development, demonstrated in his TEDx talk, if you really want to help someone, the first thing you do is shut up and listen.





Leigh Nicholson

In March this year, as a response to the number of (potentially problematic) articles published on female scientists, journalist Ann Finkbeiner devised what is now referred to as the 'Finkbeiner Test'. In order to pass this test, an article must not mention, among other things, the fact that the scientist is a woman, her husband's job, or say that she is 'the first woman to...'. This test came in apt timing to a number of articles which drew attention to the relevance of such an examination; a notable one being the New York Times' obituary of Yvonne Brill, a Canadian Scientist who invented the hydrazine resistojet propulsion system. In the obituary they gave equal, if not more space to her 'excellent cooking skills' and husband's career, than to her own scientific achievements. Finkbeiner's rationale behind this analysis is that 'when you emphasise a woman's sex, you inevitably end up dismissing her science'. This suggests such a move could potentially be inherently sexist as it is predicated upon the notion that women cannot perform as well as their male counterparts in the field, and so that when they do match their male colleagues it must draw special attention. Around the same time of Finkbeiner's own response, came a very relevant and startling example, however, of what happens when a female scientist is 'found out'. Elise Andrews, the creator and active writer for the Facebook page 'I Fucking Love Science', recently posted a link to her personal Twitter account which inadvertently had a photo of herself on it. What followed was an aggressive influx of comments almost entirely regarding her gender. The general consensus from reading the page, was that almost all members presumed that the creator of the page was a male. At first shocked, and then resorting to sexist stereotypes, the comments showed a diverse range of

wit and intellect, including 'Are there kitchens in space?' and 'MUST BE LESBIAN. Just kidding'.

Failing to draw attention to the gender of female scientists and how they are 'the first women to...' or 'are role models for other women', is in itself potentially problematic. There is a severe lacking of female mentors in STEM fields, and sexism is still very much a problem for many scientists. A catch-22 is involved, however. 'Stereotype threat' is the term given to the fear that your behaviour will confirm a stereotype of a group to which you identify with, and this fear can go on to impair performance and, in some cases, result in indirectly confirming said stereotype. A study observing this effect showed that women's performance in math tests were significantly lower when the women had been told before hand that men were inherently better at math. Now picture the frame in which most young children are exposed to science: a history of almost only male scientists, discussing the results of almost only men's work; coupled with the disappointing prevalence of direct sexism towards women in STEM which unfortunately is still alive. It is not difficult to imagine why so many young women are deterred from pursuing such careers. An interesting insight was given on this topic in a lecture by Dr Ben Barres in 2008; Barres is a practicing researcher, and a transgendered man who passionately discusses the sexism which women face whilst trying to pursue such a career. He graduated MIT as Barbara Barres, and points out the differences in behaviour towards him since his transition. One student pointed out that his work was 'much better than his sister's' (he was in fact talking about his previous publications when he was Barbara Barres) and that he has noticed people treat him with more respect if they are unaware that he

is transgendered. When Dr Barres was still studying, he was once accused of plagiarising work in a math assignment, being told by his lecturer 'your boyfriend must have done this for you'. This example demonstrates that, on the other hand, creating a community of female scientists is vital in encouraging younger women to pursue a career in STEM. But where to draw the line?

In the recent Nature journal which devoted its publication to the celebration of 'Women in Science', a controversial image was used as the opening image. It featured a conventionally attractive female scientist, in a wind blown lab-coat and gloves, above the opening lines 'Science still remains institutionally sexist'. It was later revealed that the woman was mixture of stock and original photography, and was in fact a model. The problem with all this is not the representation of the female scientist, but rather the fact that there were no notable female scientists to photograph for the cover instead. Baroness Susan Greenfield, researcher of pharmacology and former Director of the Royal Institution, stated that she was deeply disappointed with the choice of photo, especially as the journal was supposed to be drawing attention to the lack of female mentors and recognisable role models in science.

However, to completely disregard the gender of female scientists in conjunction with their achievements could perhaps be seen as historically insensitive to ignore the challenges that women have faced. What perhaps needs to instead be challenged is the norm which causes people to assume that a scientist of no specified gender is a man. The question is whether or not deliberately publishing the gender of female scientists is helping to alter this norm, or simply reinforcing it.

# THE MEDIA AND WOMEN IN STEM

"women's performance in math tests were significantly lower when the women had been told before hand that men were inherently better at math."





## Where are all the female slackers?

Laura Good

I love how the word slacker contours up a distinctly 90's aesthetic- tied dyed t-shirts, dirty long hair, listening to the Grateful Dead and skateboard riding. But to me, it's an inescapably male image. I'm thinking particularly of Travis, the loveable, if idiotic, stoner constantly on the grassy knoll in 1995 movie Clueless. Or of Wayne's World in 1992, where the main character had a slew of failed jobs and ran a community TV show from his parents' basement.

I don't want to talk here about the merits of this archetype and whether these characters present us with positive images of rejecting mainstream, hyper competitive capitalist materialism or do us all a disservice by championing apathy and disconnection from the political sphere that is shaping our lives, whether we choose to engage with it or not. I don't want to talk about the undeniable material and white privilege of these characters in their sense of entitlement to choose where and how hard to work. Instead, I want to focus on why there aren't more female characters presented in this way. Why aren't there more young, flawed and female anti-heros?

Maybe it's the case that having women at the centre of the story is still in the process of being normalised. As so many have spoken about, stories with female protagonists continue to be underrepresented on TV and in movies. Germaine Greer noted on Q & A the other day that we have to achieve gender equality in the world we live in before attempting to change the system, so maybe in pop culture terms that means accepting any woman as the focus of

film before seeking the stories of more ordinary women.

Certainly, there are several depictions of individual women in power, like Elizabeth I or The Iron Lady. Thankfully, these contemporary media portrayals are generally giving a more complex picture of women than the saint/sinner dichotomy. These complex characters are breaking down gender stereotypes of women as either saints, who through their womanly virtue are better than men, or sinners, who drag men down because they are crazy and hyper sexualized. But they are still far removed from the experiences of most women and they certainly don't speak to the lives of young women.

Social expectations are still so strong in restricting accurate depictions of female behaviour and desires. Undeniably, there is a whole genre of female-centric stories, the romantic comedy, but they are so limited and unrealistic as to be formulaic. As Natalie Portman has said, in most romantic comedies with female lead characters, the drama comes as the woman has to change in some way, usually her physical appearance or job or beliefs, to gain happiness by getting a boyfriend/ husband. Usually these are superficial changes in her appearance (think any movie with Katherine Heigl), but sometimes these are about rejecting female behaviour that is considered socially deviant, like having one night stands.

In this way, the female main characters in Bad Teacher, Young Adult and L!fe Happens are just as unrealistic as idealised presentations of women, as

initially their sole focus in life is having sex. Even if, like slackers, their behaviour deviates from what is considered socially acceptable, that's where the comparisons end as the men are celebrated for their behaviour, whilst the women are required to change. At the end of each movie these women somehow grow up and become responsible by getting a boyfriend and a stable job, because they've realised that's what they want as well, unlike the male slackers who are adored precisely because they've done the opposite and resisted the pressure to conform. In this way, these stories do not provide female anti-heros and are also really unrealistic portrayals of the experiences of young women.

However, I don't deny that there are more complex, flawed, ordinary women being presented than we've seen before. Juno was a really refreshing movie with an offbeat young female character dealing with her pregnancy and expectations of those around her. American Beauty also had lots of developed, interesting female characters with different motivations, albeit revolving around the male lead. The female protagonists of Girls are also amazing for their honesty, rawness and the more complete picture of their lives that is presented, beyond their relationships with men. Depictions of more complicated young women like these provide us with a step in the right direction, but interesting stories like these should stop being so extraordinary and become commonplace; so I can watch more movies and TV shows while I slack off from my uni work.

## MASTERCHEF: A REVIEW

Gila Segall

Broad shouldered blokes  
don blue and exhausted stereotypes

waving breadstick and tongs  
to reinforce gender inequality  
last seen in nineteen-fifty-five

preparing for battle  
these baby pink gals  
yield fairy dust and rolling pin  
and face the trials and tribulations  
of poor advertising executives  
and equally apathetic audience.

brandishing burnt snags and beards  
'the dudes' commence their lesson  
in sexism 101  
while pouting 'little princesses'  
fashion flowers, femininity and  
teacakes.

At the apogee of horror  
the three Judges emerge  
in bulging suit and tie  
to confirm out nagging suspicion  
that what we watch ahead  
is not a clever parody  
nor an innocent prank  
but just another instalment  
of channel ten's  
prime-time best.

India O'Neill...

# calls for intersectional activism

"My feminism will be intersectional or it will be bullshit" – the title of feminist Flavia Dzodan's seminal essay has become the mantra of today's intersectional feminists. It's time now to follow through.

I need feminism. As a female law student, I engage with strong women in the legal profession who fire warnings at me - warnings of the "boys' club" mentality of top tier law firms, and the incompatibility of a profession at the bar with a work-life balance. As a college student, I'm surrounded by a culture of slut shaming and objectification of women. And even among my close friends, experiences of being sexually harassed on public transport are nauseatingly common.

But I will be the first to admit that I am privileged, as the challenges of women at the intersections of gender, sexual orientation, race, socioeconomic background, age and disability will always be greater than my own.

This is why my feminism will be intersectional or it will be bullshit. Intersectional feminism seeks to engage with the challenges faced by women of colour, women who are disabled, women from low socioeconomic background and LGBT women. While playing oppression Olympics and ranking sources of oppression is belittling to all involved, intersectionality is about recognizing that the experience for women of colour is more powerful than the sum of their race and gender.

This is where modern feminism is lacking. While third wave feminism has sought to engage with these issues, the feminist debate sparked by Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg has moved mainstream feminist discourse away from intersectionalism, social justice and equity to questions of behaviour modification. This so-called "modern feminism" has placed the onus of rectifying disequilibrium upon women while failing to acknowledge institutional bias against women at the intersections.

The reason for this lack of engagement with the intersections among white, cis-gender feminists is that it is easy to ignore vectors of oppression when they work in our favour. However, true activism should not be self interested, and feminism without intersectionality is worthless. A racist or ableist woman is not a feminist, as she only cares for

women who are physically and mentally like her. By the same token, feminism that fails to actively fight against issues such as racism, heterosexism and classism is worthless. True feminist activism is about engaging with those women who are placed in the most vulnerable position from a society where feminism has colluded with white supremacy, heterosexism and classism for decades.

This version of intersectional activism needs to be translated internationally through engaging with women who are most vulnerable in a global setting. In a world where socioeconomic inequality is extreme and where women make up 70% of the world's poor (Guardian Professional 2013), feminist activism should prioritise resources to women most in need.

In a 2009 talk at a conference in Oxford, Gordon Brown championed the idea of a global ethic. In an increasingly connected world, the former British prime minister stated, we as global citizens must face our responsibilities. When we see wrong that need righting in the world or problems that need to be rectified, it is our responsibility to act. This is the mentality that feminism must embrace – the global ethic.

There is, admittedly, danger in assuming that women in Western democracies know what is best for

women in developing nations, or can "save" them from their plight. There is certainly danger in Western democracies decrying women's oppression in developing nations while lionizing their own gender equality. There is danger in adopting a single lens perspective without regard to others' culture, religion and identity. A telling example of this was the Femen International Topless Jihad Day, which ignored Muslim feminists and was inspired by thinly veiled Islamophobia.

I believe the solution to this is to follow the strong women leaders already in developing nations. We need to respect the decision making capabilities of these women leaders and offer support as they require. We should support women like Tawakkol Karman, a Yemeni Nobel Peace Laureate who has fought to ensure women's full participation in the peace building work in Yemen. We should support women like Kavita Ramdas, former CEO of the Global Fund for Women, who encourages women to use their culture as a tool of empowerment. We should support micro-finance and micro-insurance to empower women to be self sufficient.

Only through engaging with these issues can we achieve gender equality, and intra-gender equality. The only true feminism is intersectional activism.

## IS FEMINISM DEAD?

Isobel Smith investigates.

Feminism is dead, it's true. The lack of ambition, or wish for a career at all is often lamented over coffee by young women (myself, at times, included), replaced by a wish for children or, more often, a permanent position as a member of the leisure class, filling one's time with tennis, philanthropy and social alcoholism.

When considering university courses, I was cautioned against applying to the ubiquitous arts degree, as I was attending college and this combination was often called husband hunting. However, given that 30% of girls from the Women's College ultimately marry the men of St Paul's, this title appears not to have deterred many. The rise of the pick

up line "I can earn more than you can spend" also evidences this (when used on me, it received a raised eyebrow and "challenge accepted" which had the desired effect of scaring the guy off). Vocal feminists are, like, obviously lesbians – their lack of interest in the obnoxious, rude men who characterize them as such is proof, right?

What is striking, however, is that these lamentations are made by women receiving the same education as men, who will predominantly go into the same fields as men. Are we not, by taking advantage of the opportunities presented to us, unthinkingly continuing the feminist agenda? Although in our

time equality is not fought for through rallies in the street or burning of our bras, we would be appalled if we were excluded on the grounds of gender.

One of the only places in which feminism is seen in its earlier more combative form is in less developed, or less free nations. Here the traditional, patriarchal familial and political structure is (often) more prevalent, and the rights of women are actively fought for. In Egypt, where the constitution offers no protection from discrimination, women march to protest their right to equality. In the Ukraine, the feminist group Femen has gained fame (and infamy) for their topless protests, which have

been so effective in bringing awareness to women's issues that they are now exporting the technique to South America and North Africa.

Perhaps our form of feminism is a reflection of our society: our relative level of empowerment means there is little motivation to make radical change and we, for the most part, continue living our lives in relative happiness. Either way, feminism is not dead. A feminist of the University of Sydney is not a loud argumentative woman who calls men pigs and misogynists, but rather she is any woman who claims her right to the same education as her male counterparts: you.





Photograph of Eloise Taylor.  
Credit: Clo Schofield

# ‘The Light on the Hill’: it’s not that bright

Brigid Meney

There is a gross assumption among those who often should know better that the left have championed women’s rights across the ages.

From Trade Unions to the socialists of old, left wing activists have sought to misrepresent history in a way that suggests they were the lone soldiers holding high the banner of women’s rights like a shining pillar of light, while the rest of the nation lay quiet and ignorant to their plight. Australia seems to have a very short memory.

When one analyses the history and statistics, it seems nonsensical to think that the left on both a political and organizational front, were really any better than the quiet and ignorant masses. Some would argue further that they were incredibly detrimental to the plight of women over the course of Australia’s history. Were they really out to stop the progress of women, or were they just terribly bad at finding any solutions to help them despite the possible existence of good intentions? It’s really a question of whether you would rather consider their behaviour in times gone by aggressively patriarchal, or just pitifully incompetent.

To highlight just one example of the outcomes the left (and I use this label in the context of the time) never achieved, we only need to examine politics state by state. It is commonly known that the left of politics cannot claim the first woman in the Federal House of Representatives (Edith Lyons was a stalwart of conservatism). However it is rarely brought to our attention that not even one of the first women to be elected to the lower house in each respective Australian state can be claimed by the left of politics. They hailed from the Australia Party, the Nationalist party, and the Country Liberal party. In fact, in NSW, no left of centre party saw a woman elected to the lower house until 1939. To give some context to this, this date is around 37 years after women obtained the vote in NSW and 21 years after they became eligible to stand for office.

Now the latest fad to hit the left which can be witnessed at any student political hack hangout venue on campus is Labor-leaning women wearing t-shirts with the slogan “Strong Unions need Women”. I commend

such a marketing move in that most institutions and organisations are better when the majority (yes, women are a majority these days) are represented, and maybe find it woeful that such an obvious statement has to be draped across a t-shirt. However the irony of the anti-woman history of the Australian Trade Unions is not lost on me.

The Harvester case, a defining moment in our history that saw the initiation of lawful grounds for the minimum wage in the Commonwealth of Australia, was a decision that saw the Unions of Australia place the minimum wage for a man over the basic rights of a woman in Australia to be recognised as an independent citizen. Harvester, after much campaigning by the Unions, saw a frugal wage provided for the support of a man and his family and consequently women were recognised exclusively as “dependants” of the man, unable to claim any dependents themselves. This resulted in them receiving only 54% of what the male minimum wage was at the time. Women indeed campaigned for an alternative but received no support from the Trade Unions as they feared it would cause a reduction in the male wage.

Now the left could claim that in the context of 1907, all Australians were just working out that women were indeed human beings and not kitchen appliances, therefore they should not take the fall for their actions in the context of the time. Jumping forward half a century then, we can quote the President of the Queensland branch of the Australian Workers Union when he declared in 1952 on record that “today it should be the union’s policy not to tolerate employment of females in industry while a breadwinner was unemployed.” A member added, “If times get bad it is every man for a job and every woman in her place.” The conference unanimously agreed.

Is this the great Labor tradition? Is this the ‘Light on the Hill’? I do not in any way seek to hail political conservatism as a champion for women’s rights either, as it too has a dark past. Nevertheless facts like this do challenge the common misconception that feminism belongs to any ideology exclusively, and at least conservatives have not attempted to re-write history, whether it be out of shame, or innocent delusion.

“it is rarely brought to our attention that not even one of the first women to be elected to the lower house in each respective Australian state can be claimed by the left of politics. They hailed from the Australia Party, the Nationalist party, and the Country Liberal party.”



# Sisters doing it for themselves

Rose Wallace McEwen

To the men of the world:

Don't open the door for me because I have a vagina. Don't resort to violence for me when I get into a fight because I have a vagina. Don't pull a chair out for me because I have a vagina, and for the love of god, don't say to me "ladies first" because I have a vagina.

The age of chivalry is dead. It's not 'courtesy', it's sexism.

There's this frighteningly common belief that because Australian women now have the vote and are allowed out of the kitchen, fighting for women's rights is no longer necessary and sexism died in the 1970's and 80's. I feel that it's necessary to remind people that one in five women are sexually assaulted, 97% of rape victims are women, and even though we take up over 50% of the population, it's still amazing when

a women breaks through the 'glass ceiling' making it into the measly 4% of CEOs of major companies that are women. Not to mention social sexism, like when I choose to sleep with more than \*GASP\* one person, people laugh and say to my face that I'm going to 'get a reputation', the bullshit criticism I get from men when I express that I think the right to have an abortion is a basic human right - it's actually none of your business because it's MY body. Don't ask me on a date because you think it's a "man's job" - if I haven't asked you, it's because I don't like you enough. When we do go out, don't assume I'm not going to pay for my meal - I'll have my cake, eat my cake and pay for it too.

The idea that women need special assistance is what chivalry is innately built upon, that we are physically weaker than men and that we lack agency. It's not because I don't like being treated and being made a fuss of, it's that it's done on the basis of my gender. It's a stereotype which is based on a gendered premise - so even though it's nice and all, it doesn't make it any less sexist, in the same way that making

the generalisation that people of Asian descent are good at math doesn't make it any less racist. There's a distinct difference between being chivalrous and being polite - and when you make a big deal out of opening a door for me (because I have a vagina) to show me how chivalrous you are, it makes me feel uncomfortable. There's this unspoken entitlement that chivalry demands, like you're trying to get something out of it, which is completely different from just politeness, which doesn't demand anything in return. Feminism is about being treated EQUALLY. Being treated in a special manner because I'm a woman is an oxymoron to the cause of feminism. I don't speak for all women here. Some women like chivalry and that's all well and good, but those women don't generally identify themselves as feminists, which I do.

It's not that I don't like niceties, or manners. People should be aiming to be polite to other humans - so if you pull a chair back for me, you should also be doing it for other people, regardless of their gender.



## A snapshot

Clare Angel-Auld

I reach my tutorial room early to get my readings done before the class. The door is locked. I move to sit down against the wall in the hallway, but pause mid-crouch. "DO NOT sit in the hallway" is printed on a large sign across the door. I sit down anyway.

I start reading, mindful that I might be asked to move. Four staff members walk past in the space of about ten minutes. I smile nervously at them. Two smile back, the other two appear unbothered. They are all women. I continue to skim the reading. A few minutes later a man turns the corner at the far end of the hall. Without thinking, I have imagined him saying "Can't you read?"

I continue highlighting, head down. He reaches me, stops, and says unpleasantly "Can't you read?" I apologise and scuttle back up into a standing position. Hats off to my psychic brain. He grunts, giving me a lingering look of dissatisfaction and walks away.

Something twinges in my mind. I consider the series of reactions to my rebellion.

Why did the man feel the need to reprimand me, when none of the women had? Why did I suspect that the man would reprimand me?

They say intuition is a powerful indicator of reality.

The fact that I knew something was coming confirmed internalised notions of the patriarchy I didn't know existed in me. It is no surprise at all then, that the enforcing of rules and ordering of society falls predominantly to men. That is to say, that men hold 84% of the bench in the Federal Court of Australia.

Of course it is entirely plausible given the sample size and subjectivity of my experience that gender had nothing to do with who was or wasn't willing to tell me to obey the sign stuck on my Sociology2604 classroom door.

But intuition tells me something else.



'When thinking of you'  
Stella Ktenas Karver



# If chivalry is dead, why am I waiting for him to text me first?

Amy Knox advises you to not wait for him to phone home.

We often hear that chivalry is finally dead and men no longer have the engendered responsibility of 'protecting' women from the danger of a closed door or an unpaid dinner bill. Despite the fact that generally guys still do this, it is commonly believed that men can now do this out of politeness and not because they believe women are incapable of doing these things themselves. However, while I generally agree with that view, I think that rather than chivalry being dead, the concept and the negative patriarchal values which accompany it have grown and mutated to suit the growing use of social media technologies available to us today. Like the way infections are becoming increasingly immune to various antibiotics, chivalrous gestures which denigrate women have adapted to an era of Facebook chat and text message and have become engrained in every little way we choose to interact through these technologies.

[R]ather than chivalry being dead, the concept and the negative patriarchal values which accompany it have grown and mutated to suit the growing use of social media technologies available to us today.

Initially I was going to write an article about how all men are being assholes and are perpetuating the idea of chivalry for their own hidden agendas and plans of world domination. But of course, not only would I receive a truckload of backlash from these 'gentlemen' but I would be wrong to solely blame men for the continuation and transformation of chivalry. Yes ladies, we are equally to blame for what chivalry has now

become. By sitting at home and 'pining' for men to call us first, we have created a social script which determines that it should be man's place to make the first move and not a lady's.

So how has chivalry managed to get this far? Chivalry is medieval in ideology, quite literally, as it has derived from the medieval Knights' Code of Conduct, stating that Knights should protect those who cannot protect themselves: women, children and the elderly. Whilst probably one of the most noble ideas to come out of the middle ages, the idea of chivalry developed into something far more damaging than just protecting those in need. It became a way of putting men in control and of viewing women as constantly being unable to look after themselves, as needing the help of men wherever possible. Today women constantly lament the death of chivalry, wishing for a 'simpler' time when men were required to be polite and to be 'gentlemen' if they wanted to stand a chance with the ladies. Well girls, not to fret, chivalry is alive and kicking as men are still expected to be 'gentlemen' who are responsible for taking control of our relationships and steering it in, what they believe to be, the right direction. Chivalry lives! Hurrah!

The reason why chivalry has continued to survive is the social networking etiquette that has developed alongside social media. We all must abide by this etiquette unless we want to be publically humiliated, become the new 'clingy girlfriend meme' and eventually be exiled from the internet altogether. Hey, it happens! With such etiquette has come a number of concerning norms regarding the passivity of women online: "women should never start an online conversation with a boy," "Let him text you first," "Oh you called him first? Seems a bit desperate, don't ya think?"



[S]ocial norms...demand women to rely on the initiative of men when it comes to calling, texting or starting an online conversation first.

The expectations surrounding the roles of men and women under social media etiquette are evident in iconic female targeted television such as 'Sex and The City' and self-help books for women "desperate" to find a man such as, 'He's Just Not That into You'. Both of these examples have reflected social norms that demand women to rely on the initiative of men when it comes to calling, texting or starting an online conversation first. Under these ideas women have been expected to see their love interest's name next to a little green circle and sit and stare furiously at the screen, 'willing' them to make the first

move, when really, it would be just as easy to hit the name and say something equally quirky, intelligent or flirty as you would expect a guy to, and hey presto! You have started the conversation that you so desperately wanted to have with him!

In a world which is supposedly meant to be moving further towards equality, it is quite a phenomenon that something as modern as social media has managed to adopt such backward ideas which celebrate female passivity. It is incredibly unfair on both sexes to put all of the responsibility on men, whilst simultaneously excluding women from having any of the control. Feminist pioneers fought long and hard against the sexist connotations associated with chivalry, and what social media etiquette has proved to us, however trivial it may seem, is that the fight for gender equality still has a long way to go.

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# DISCOVERING NAN

Angela Collins finds some hidden treasures

My Nan died a couple of years ago, but only recently did I find a whole box of old photos and miscellany from her life. I was alone one day in my family house and decided to have a good old-fashioned storeroom rummage (as anyone who was meant to be studying would have done). As soon as I laid eyes on this treasure



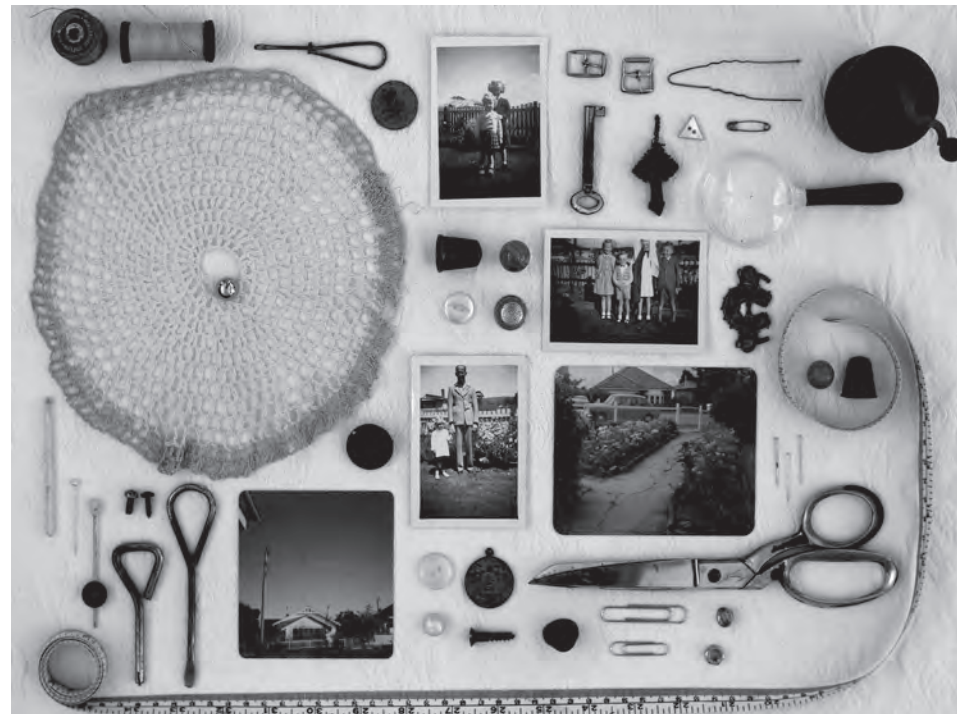
trove of memories, I knew I had to store them digitally, all for myself.

So, somewhat tautologically, I took photos of the photos, and did wee little arrangements of the old knick-knacks in the box. It was such an emotional and solitary experience for me, in the quiet of our living room.

My Nan was, and still is, one of my heroes. She was such a strong woman on the inside, even though, when I knew her, she was frail and shrunken from the polio she had as a kid. Even though, after her 94 years of caring and doing and living, her body was failing her, she remained sharp as a tack till the end. She'd been through a lot: being born in the First World War, living through the Second, learning how to be a single mum of five shortly after the war. My respect for her was/ is immense. I learnt a lot through the photos - my Nan, as I had known her, was always full of stoic wisdom and stories, but was, to me, just a grandma. Looking through these photos completely opened my eyes. I could now see her for what she had been, what she still was, inside. She was

beautiful - so stylish, never seen without a beautiful sundress on or her hair in rolls. She was in love, and it shines through in the pictures, particularly in her wedding photo, taken before my pop went to war. She was an amazing mother, wholly devoted to her children - I could now see her feminine strength so obviously apparent in my aunties and my mum. In short, I could now see her as a woman, not just Nan. I am so glad

I found these photos - I love them for their age, for the beautiful clothes on my then-chubby aunts and uncles, and, of course, for the profound insight into my Nan's life. As I packed up the memories and stowed them back in the storeroom, I was bursting with remembered love and a new pride. I was proud, not only to be her granddaughter, but also to have known and loved such an amazing example of a woman.



## MOAN

Priscilla Petit

My sisters have become slaves!  
Niggers of the days of equality,  
They are erased. Cunts in chains, the  
universal hate of history.  
My my, our mothers ran bleeding but  
free- Here now I stand,  
Men buying parts of me. Husbands  
humping like dogs the legs  
Of patriarchy. We persist, from our  
knees,  
The fury of the behaved, the docile,  
the passive or tame,  
The sexless rage, the pain. We moan  
to our oppressors.  
To the Gods who have their cruelty  
to explain, to the saints,  
To the instruments used on us, to the  
instruments we used ourselves,  
and the surgeons and the nurses who  
helped;  
To the fathers and yes, the mothers,  
who raised us as ladies, not as people;  
To the smiles asked for and the smiles  
given,  
To the gentlemen who paid our  
checks or held our arms or opened  
the door,  
To the doors we left closed, to the  
stairways we could not conquer, to  
the ceilings we did not meet,  
To history who buried us, to  
husbands who buried us,  
To beauty and our energies,

To the girdle, to the perfume, to the  
face-paint,  
To the rags, to the apron, to the habits,  
To the priest and the chapel and the  
crucifix,  
To the nunnery and the nursery and the  
nursing home, to the fairy tales,  
To our cruel, cold realities,  
We moan. For ourselves, for the others,  
we moan  
For the mothers, for the fatherless,  
For the babies aborted, for the  
daughters unborn,  
For the lovers torn, and the unloved,  
and the unrequited,  
For the wedded woman, and the  
spinster,  
For the housewife and the working  
woman, for the slave, for the Goddess,  
For the hated and the worshipped,  
For those whose bodies were rejected,  
for those whose bodies were taken,  
For those whose nights were  
nightmares, whose darkness was  
danger,  
Whose lovers were strangers or  
enemies,  
For the child-wife and the abandoned  
elderly,  
For those whose scars are new, for  
those who have suffered for centuries,  
We moan.  
My body is not a disease. You may kill,  
but I conceive.

## TO SAPPHO I, II, III

Elena Zagoudis

I  
And though I saw the stars  
Burning in your eyes  
I reached for the reflection  
Of the winterlight

Where those trapped amidst your  
Miniature snow-covered globes  
Repeat against the glass, this  
Frantic refrain

That which grows within us is  
The essence of some strength  
And though we may become but  
Shadows of ourselves, in this coming  
Winter, let our song carry  
These Delphic winds homeward

II  
And while there is an uprising of  
Voices,  
Perhaps yours in the only one I can  
Hear

In its beauty of few words and  
Multitudes of silence,  
Perhaps it is yours I am seeking  
In these times of quiet dissolution

Let us consume ceaselessly  
Until the night becomes endearing  
And carries us to some fleeting  
Home

III  
It's such a harsh road, this  
One of reckoning and reason

Give me the grain by which to  
Live my life and let it  
Again be forgiven

Let us not forget what we are  
Made from, and yet not be  
Sculpted from it erroneously

But everything is its own creation  
And we are defined secondarily

And everybody praises you  
momentarily  
But I stand in praise of eternity

And none of us know the rightful  
Piety of this life  
But in gaining wisdom we live  
Vicariously without fail



# UNTITLED

Lucy Robéau

She passed a row of precariously leaning motorbikes. Metallic beasts in waiting. She caught herself before an almost trip and wondered what would have happened if she hadn't. Would the row collapse in a deafening roar? Would their owners descend from surrounding crevices and encircle her?

She would stand, her spine bent, the defeat in her stance a kind of victory. The bikies would notice the hopelessness of her hanging arms, the heavy apathy of her eyes and slowly retreat, lest they be trapped in the curling claws of her unhappiness, which latch onto collars, crawl into ears and poison minds. She would lay in the twisted wreck of the motorbikes, her limbs becoming entwined with shattered glass, twisted metal. She would settle down for an eternal sleep with her broken mechanical echoes. Their destruction prompting a kind of union. Where do robots go to die?

Karen realises she was caught in a stare, a young boy sits quivering under the weight of her eyes. "Sorry darling, I was just thinking." She pats his feathery hair and hoists him up by his backpack, landing him on his feet. His legs buckle a little and he clutches her waist. "Where are we going, mum?" he asks, his voice weary with unanswered questions. "Home," she replies, "our new home." The uncertainty of this statement weighs on them both, but Karen takes a defiant step onwards and clasps her son's hand.

They approach a building whose foundations struggle to support the despair within. A child sits on the stairs, bouncing a ball on the concrete. The rhythm underscores a monotonous chorus of crying and yelling and pounding and thrashing. The ball slips from her grip and she listlessly watches it as rolls away. She shakes her hair off her face and vaguely glances at Karen and Jacob as they climb the stairs, as if they were memories. The woman at the desk gives an inch of a smile and hands over a form which Karen takes before retreating into a corner to fill it in. Jacob stands before the woman, whose nametag reads 'Susan'. "Where you from sweet?" she leans over the counter. "Not too far," he replies. "Not so far that he won't find us here," he inwardly adds. She holds a purple lollipop over the counter, which he grasps gratefully and walks to join his mother on the bench, his feet swinging over the edge.

The bed is small, but Karen insists that Jacob stay with her, the coughing and grunting of the men's dorm too reminiscent of other frightening nights. They curl under the blanket, Jacob nestling into her belly, as if it were still enough to protect him. His dreams are mercifully blank, while Karen shudders in her sleep, feeling men's fingers on her throat, the stench of beer hanging in her face and the drawl of contempt echoing in her ears.

## TALK ABOUT IT

### Anonymous

There are always events that change your life, even when it doesn't happen to you.

I had always known that my family was a little different to many of my friends; I lived with my grandmother who is still traumatised from WWII. I guess that's what happens when you have a 6 year old growing up with bombs dropping outside and breaking every window in your house. Follow that up with when having escaped a war zone, being threatened with being sent back to it; not something any person, let alone a child, should ever have to face. It's not hard to imagine that growing up with that experience might affect how you interact in society. Even once you have escaped as far as possible from Europe and arrived in Australia. But trauma is not easy to escape. It is just these sort of experiences that contributed to ending up in an abusive marriage and constant fear for her children, until finally she left. The silver lining if there is one is the support she had from her family. After one generation had been through so much you would think the next might be given some respite.

I was 13 when my mother told me she had been raped at 15. Not knowing what to do I just asked if I could

go to bed and we never really talked about it again. From that moment on, the way I responded to my peers and the rest of the world changed. To this day, it still influences how I interact with everyone I meet. I never had a 'rebellious' stage - how could I knowingly put my family through more stress, and for what purpose? I guess that one of the reasons we are still really close, that understanding of why my family can be so coddling, makes it much easier to accommodate.

My experience of the world has been shaped by my family history more than any other factor. I don't own what has affected me most, and have felt unable to express this part of my identity for years, leaving me confused and very much alone. Feeling unable to explain why some situations distress me more than they might to others, because it's not my story to tell. Even when I do tell people, it still seems that many don't understand how this has shaped who I am today, or how it will always be a part of my life.

Even now I'm still hesitant at pushing boundaries, after all, when you really understand what the "worst case scenario" really means you never want to put anyone through that kind of fear. It changed the way I interacted people, especially with boys, and even now I still

avoid possible relationships worrying about how my family may react. That may not be a logical response, but not having a place to express how I felt did lead to slight extremes. There is still a part of me that never wants to make my family worry more than I know they already do.

I've grown up as an only child with no one else who understands what it is like. To live in a family where the ones you love most and love you are still haunted by their past, a past that has, for the most part, been left unacknowledged. It has shown me what life after such an event can be like, and one I feel - regardless of our experiences - we should all try to emulate. It is a life based on hope, strength, passion and love. One that teaches us to stand up for others who can't, to never let our independence be taken away, or our voices silenced, and most of all to care for one another. To try and build a world where what has happened to my family and to many, many more never happens again. Apathy will get you nowhere fast. Fighting may be the harder road but you know you are at least trying, and what else can we do but try.

Before I wrote this I spoke to my mum to make sure it was OK. She never realised how unable I felt to talk about it, and I never realised I could.

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Above: Emilyrose Siers Sh-head Below: Brigitte Garozzo





# COUNTER BITCH



## Melanie Jayne

**Make no mistake**, working in customer service and confronting the imaginative ways the general public consistently reach new levels of stupidity on a daily basis is a mind-numbing task, regardless of your gender.

While a good majority of the people I interact with at my jobs cause no trouble, there exists a certain sub-section of the population who have bestowed upon themselves the entitlement to make orders of the ‘bitch’ (or ‘cunt’, as one pleasant individual affectionately yelled at me once) behind the counter. The bitch in question is me, by the way. Hi! Being a young female that’s relegated to being an easy target for pestering in an environment where all I’m there to do is complete a job.

Harassment in customer service roles isn’t an experience unique to women. However, there are severely different expectations to how I should behave in my workplaces compared to how my male colleagues should behave.

Of course, because my job requires me to be on display to the public that immediately entitles one to make judgements on my appearance. Please, continue to enlighten me on all the ways I’m doing my job incorrectly. And don’t forget to instruct me on how to alter my behaviour to satisfy your inspired pre-requisites of femininity.

There’s a startling high frequency rate of complete strangers telling me that I don’t look good enough for them. I’m **NOT YOUR PROPERTY**. Please keep the following gems of unwarranted advice to yourself:

“I don’t like your hair like that.”

“Some more make-up wouldn’t hurt. It’d really brighten your face.”

“You’re very pale. You should get some sun.”

Whenever I can sense a customer

is going to be difficult or abusive, I’ve been instructed by my male managers to immediately call one of them down to the front. And I do. I’ve just had to accept that there are a number of people who won’t listen to me, but if my male colleague gives them the same information the customer’s attitude changes completely.

It is impressive how quickly I get called a “bitch” on the occasions I take it upon myself to assertively address someone that’s being rude. It’s fine for my male colleagues to actually yell at people, but if I speak to someone clearly and directly it’s interpreted as being aggressive.

Perhaps the most common offence is the perpetually annoying - disguised as a cute, playful jab - demand that I “**SMILE!**” I don’t think I’ve ever in my life heard someone request one of my male colleagues to smile, yet it happens to myself and my fellow female staff constantly. It’s not even purely when I’m at work, it happens when I’m out. Seriously, do you know anyone that walks around grinning all the time? I highly doubt it. That’d be astonishingly creepy.

What’s extraordinary is the below-average person’s incapability to recognise my face does not naturally take shape of a toothy, forced smile. My face sits in its default resting position and it’s misconstrued as being hostile.

Only the other week, I had the pleasure of having yet another encounter with The Smile Brigade. I completed a transaction with an individual as per norm, there being no hints anything being wrong, only to have her say to me, “a smile would go down well,” hastily running out of the shop before I even had the chance to process what she said.

Shockingly, you purchasing this Kit Kat at 7:30am is not the happiest moment of my life. I apologise for the mass inconvenience I must have caused to your life by failing to give

you the fake, cheesy grin required to meet your needs of the transaction.

And then there was the guy who decided to be the Champion of the People and told me that I was “cold” to my customers, and that I needed to “smile more.” Topped off with the astute observation that I have an “angry face.” Oh, thanks for that. I’m happy now. Although that encounter made the quick transition from aggravating to just being weird after he said that my angry-face-ways “broke [his] little heart.” What? Is my face making you uncomfortable?

The Smile Brigade is definitely very gender-specific. The men I work with are Serial Non-Smilers, but that doesn’t seem to be an issue. Also, don’t assume that men alone exhibit this type of behaviour, because that’s far from the case. I’d say there’s only a slightly uneven balance between men and women who try to dictate my behaviour. It’s too easy to forget that other women can be just as guilty of exhibiting sexist behaviour.

Having to answer the phones at work has also allowed me to discover another part of my demeanour that needs improving: my voice. It’s not a baritone, but it’s not exactly what I’d describe as high-pitched. I’ve been educated to the fact that my voice isn’t “warm,” or “bubbly” enough. These are two extremely gender-specific adjectives. I’ve never heard one of my male colleagues be described as either of the two. My voice is the way it is. It’s rather difficult, pretty much impossible, to alter the intonation of my natural speaking voice without sounding like an automated robot.

However, my favourite comment I’ve received from one of my colleagues at work: “Mel, your voice has no tone to it.” Tone...? Certainly one of the most bizarrely specific criticisms I’ve ever received. Fat thighs, no boobs - these are pretty standard misogynistic critiques - but tone? That’s new.

I understand what customer service is. I strive to do my job as well as I possibly can, to be personable and helpful, but I strongly resent the fact that I’m being evaluated not on the basis of how efficiently I complete the tasks I’m assigned, but rather how much I’m smiling while I’m doing it. My physical appearance becomes of greater importance than how well I’m actually doing my job.

However, my experience with this incredibly irritating behaviour isn’t exclusive to the workplace, although it’s certainly heavily concentrated here. I, along with many of my other female friends, get it while we’re just going about our daily lives. The gentlemen at a bar who complained to me that he, “wasn’t used to women speaking to [him] confidently”, has a special place in my memory. Oh, dear...

It’s truly amazing how many people think it’s their responsibility to police a woman’s behaviour and appearance, right down to insignificant details such as tone of voice (again, really??!!!!). Women ought to be hyperactive, bubbly, smiley and cute to everyone all the time. And once it’s revealed that we - scandalously - are human beings that are simply not like that, it surprises and unsettles people. Behaviour from a female that is marked as being grouchy, bitchy and miserable is seen as self-assured, assertive and simply normal coming from a male.

The root of these attitudes goes back to the classic notion that women are decorative ornaments: decorate us, mould us, and control us how you like. The idea that women need to be sweet to sickeningly high glucose levels is perpetually frustrating. If I’m not smiling, that doesn’t mean that I’m out to get you. It just means I’m not smiling.

Please, let’s retire this prehistoric, trivial criterion of how a woman should behave.



# Apples, Pears and Lives in Miniature

Sophia Benedict

**S**crawling mindlessly down my facebook newsfeed recently, I came across something that made me stop. It was a photo of a girl wearing a pale bra and underpants, staring vacantly at the camera. She was skinny. Her hip bones protruded and her inner thighs curved away from each other. The accompanying #Thinspiration tag informed me that this was apparently the point. I continued to look at the image, not meeting her gaze, but focussing on the gap between her legs. Seeing the pattern of the wallpaper behind her through this gap, I felt both disgusted and mesmerised.

The picture appeared on my feed because five friends had liked it. We are used to seeing these women each day, sprawled on the sides of buses, on the front of magazines, but I am not used to seeing their skinniness endorsed by people I know, and like. That this girl, evidently ill, was being used in the promotion of thinness as a lifestyle distressed me. That these five friends had reacted to the image positively, even with admiration, filled me with worry. After further clicking and scrolling through pages of instagramed images filled with concaved stomachs and train-track ribs, I was not only far more aware of the softness that padded my own stomach and hips than I had been five minutes before, but angered that social networks provide

such an easy outlet for the conflation of beauty with extreme thinness, around which individuals may be bound in community by using relevant hashtags.

As the name suggests #Thinspiration images are there to inspire and motivate weight loss by providing goals and possible outcomes. It reflects the way so many of us align ourselves in accordance with categories and ideals. We set goals for ourselves to better inhabit these categories, which, without too much exception, usually involve shrinking ourselves. Shrinking, flattening, and smoothing out the edges.

I remember once reading in the shimmery pages of a women's magazine about the magical similarity one can draw between female body shapes and types of fruit. For my convenience, a range of different clothing styles that might best complement my pear/hour-glass figure combination had been suggested. The question of which fruit you are, encapsulates the way the shapes of female bodies are categorised. If she doesn't fulfil the prescriptions of the options on offer to her, she is not individual, but disproportionate. We create a hierarchy of desirability, that is itself inseparable from a hierarchy of smallness.

When I'm old, I will look back and think that I was beautiful. I will look at a photo of myself from the age I

am now, the same way I look at fuzzy photographs of my Grandma in fifties dresses and think how glorious she was. I will look at myself and wish I had felt it then, because happiness is experienced in being and not in reminiscing. We talk about growing older like it's a fight. Armed with bottled anti-ageing formulas, we will fight the seven signs with dapping and spraying, until the day comes when we can let ourselves go. At sixty maybe. Definitely not before fifty five. Until that time when old age dissolves us of responsibility, loosens our skin, redefines the horizons of our faces all by itself.

#Thinspiration, #Bumspiration, and whatever other form of bodily inspiration I'm bound to stumble across in the near future all have something in common beyond the endorsement of a certain shape and size. They are reflective of the way so many people condition self-acceptance to the achievement of goals. By constantly working towards each goal of self improvement, we defer our own happiness to the future. We deny ourselves the feeling of contentment in the present. And if we reach these goals, we'll probably just set new ones anyway. Older people so often tell

younger people to enjoy their youth, and we should probably listen. Never again will we be so smooth-skinned or perky-boobed. But it's hard to remember this when elusive goals promising future satisfaction, are, on achievement, simply replaced with new ones. Contentment can only come from the present, however wobbly and non-conformist to particular fruit figures that present may feel. Because looking back when we're older will be too late. Nostalgia is something very different from happiness. We will wish then that we knew it now.



Forgive me, First love.

Time goes beneath my feet, it pulls the mind  
On and gone, until the world has caught  
Behind me and my love is all that I shan't find.  
I crave my young love that I have not fought.

But all extinguished fire, all my blanketed chill  
Haunt the handleless clock of my autumn peace.  
And your deny, stupid cupid, is unfulfil  
Must you remind that love is only lease?

The Memory, faded, of that young arrows plea  
Consume me and my tired eyes as I  
Cast guilty imagines into the sea.  
Though hot virgin winds now grow cold, I shy.

I know this why- not for passion to end  
But for losing the best had to me ever, friend.



Anonymous

Top and facing page: Madeleine Pfull  
Above: Victoria King



# Waxing Lyrical

Shelley Smith

Recently, I had a discussion with a female friend about the best and most convenient way to remove body hair. Shaving was all the hard work for only two days worth of smoothness, while waxing - though I've done it - has always terrified me to the end of the Earth. She suggested an epilator, which I'd never heard of, and at my blank expression proceeded to describe in great detail how it is used. After that conversation I Googled epilators, and that got me thinking about all the different devices aimed at women for body hair removal; the tweezers and the foul-smelling creams, the DIY wax kits and the electronic razors, which got me thinking about body hair in general.

After I started high school, I became conscious that all the girls had started shaving their legs, whilst mine remained a soft, smooth forest. Not wanting to seem abnormal, I quickly bought myself some disposable razors (THESE THINGS ARE THE ANTI-CHRIST), and set to work. The soft smooth forest was gone forever, to be replaced by an oscillating mixture of desert and spiky grass. Since then, it has been a never-ending battle between me and my leg hair; I've tried all manner of things to get rid of it, including cursing it for

being so dark and visible. I kept seeing the positive side of things though, in the sense that I would not stand out for having hairy legs; that I was just doing what was normal for women to do. However, I soon found out that maybe I wasn't so normal. It started when girls around me began to manicure their eyebrows. My eyebrows have always been dark and scary, and just looked like a horror movie compared to these other girls I knew. I tried plucking, but it was too painful. I didn't dare wax them, so out came the trusty razor. I'm not going to go into detail on that one, but let's just say shaving and eyebrows are not meant to go together.

*"It isn't right to judge a woman for wanting to shave or wax, but at the same time it is just as wrong to judge a woman for choosing to keep her hair in all its glory."*

I realised I wasn't normal when friends began telling me about their foray into Brazilian waxing. "But we always used to cringe at the very thought!" I would protest. "Yes, well, it gives my boyfriend

better access, and I look way better in a bikini," they would cheerfully reply. Thus, my sense of being a normal female went out the window. I didn't dare wax down there, ever. While my waxing friends were cool with me saying this, I still felt like the odd one out, the one who hadn't grown up. Or maybe like I was being superior about it, particularly as I would often wax lyrical (sorry) about the stupid things women do for beauty.

But then I realised these feelings I was having were not normal. The whole perception of body hair is not normal. It isn't right to judge a woman for wanting to shave or wax, but at the same time it is just as wrong to judge a woman for choosing to keep her hair in all its glory. While I do believe body hair removal has a lot to do with distorted views of what makes a woman beautiful, and shallow male ideas of femininity, I can say with certainty that my hair removal has been more for women than other men; for my peers, for everyday women on the street. Just as we dress to impress our female peers, we also pluck, shave, and wax to impress them, to be accepted by them, to prove we are as much of a woman as they are. I say this because I am ashamed to admit I always scrutinise

women's legs, and compare them to my own, hair-wise. In some ways, competition with other women is worse than trying to please a man. We are our own worst enemies in a lot of ways. I remember my first trip to the beautician to get my legs waxed several years back, and the female beautician made a big deal out of my arm and stomach hair, trying to wax it off. I was horrified at the time, but looking back on it I'm horrified for other reasons; namely, that women scrutinise the choices of other women as though it's their business.

I guess the point of this insight into my rollercoaster beauty regime has been to try to encourage women - particularly young women - not to compare themselves to other women. It's a well-worn cliché to be sure, but each of us really is unique, and the people you want most in your life are those who appreciate your uniqueness. To use a shallow example, I have a few friends who refuse to shave their legs, and I appreciate and almost envy them for their ability not to worry about it. It probably makes for a less expensive and less stressful existence. It makes you a much stronger person to refuse to alter a part of yourself to please other people, and I wish more of us (me included) could learn that lesson.

# My Health is none of your goddamn business

Ruby Chandler

*"Guys, look at how fat that woman is! I bet she's going to order like three of everything, and then eat her husband's meal too! Doesn't she have any self-control? I mean... I just worry about her health!"*

I'm really moved by how so many people these days are concerned with the health of others. No, not concern for previous illnesses they may have had or even their mental health. It turns out people are really concerned for just 'health' in general, which it turns can be determined by simply looking at you! Because if someone is over what is supposedly an acceptable weight, bam - they must be unhealthy. It shows that they clearly are lazy, don't exercise, have no self control and eat too much. I had no idea people had developed such amazing talents at knowing a person's entire life just by one glance! It's amazing. Because, of course, trying to determine someone else's 'health levels' or lifestyle is really important, seeing as how they're a detriment to the health system and all...

Okay, so how much longer is it going to take until we can all just accept that human beings come in a variety of shapes and sizes? How much longer until we can finally address that maybe the real reason we associate being fat with being lazy, unhealthy and undesirable is due to the constant stream of media that portrays an unrealistic and narrow perception of beauty, all in the hopes we believe that if we buy their products we too can be as beautiful? Then maybe we could acknowledge that the diet industry is a multimillion industry that benefits if we feel shitty about how our own bodies look, causing us to criticize and deprive ourselves until we

can't take any more and 'fail' the diet, which then of course takes us back to square one and starting the diet all over again! (That's twice the profit for the diet industry compared to if we had just felt ok about ourselves).

I'm not disputing all claims that there are health concerns to weight gain, and I'm also not saying that there aren't people who would genuinely feel happier or better after losing weight. I am however saying that EVERYONE IS DIFFERENT. Just because a person may be slim does not therefore prove that they are healthier, happier or more successful - or that other people should find it

*"How much longer until we can finally address that maybe the real reason we associate being fat with being lazy, unhealthy and undesirable is due to the constant stream of media that portrays an unrealistic and narrow perception of beauty?"*

just as easy to be slim. Why is it perfectly acceptable to be 'naturally thin', but 'naturally fat' is just an 'excuse'. Just because a person may place a lot of value on their own diet and exercise (which I think is great, if that makes them happy) still does not give them the right



to assume that others, who have a different body shape, can't possibly also value diet and exercise. It also definitely doesn't mean that if others don't value the same things, they are then 'failures' or 'bad' people.

The point of this also isn't "people shouldn't care about others and just mind their own business." I'm sure there are people who wish they could make changes in their lifestyle but aren't sure how

(and that applies to people of all sizes). What I am arguing against is that this help shouldn't come from a place of judgment, superiority or following assumptions that everyone wants the same thing and has the same values. I believe that if we, as a society, can first work to accept the amazing variance of humanity, as well as learn to love our own bodies (yes, I know it sounds corny!) we can make great improvements as a society in truly caring for others, as well as reveling in how awesome it is that humans come in such a huge variety - and how ridiculously boring it would be if we were all the same.



# Sex Life of a Modern Woman

Anonymous

I like sex. A lot. And I don't have to speak with lots of people to know I am not alone in enjoying sex. What I do believe I am alone in is the amount of people I have slept with. As I reach my mid-twenties, I guess that I have slept with roughly 80 people, though this number is indeterminate as I stopped counting at 50, around 3 years ago.

As a woman, the above fact comes with its fair amount of stigma—probably why I am submitting this article anonymously. I do not discuss this topic with my friends often and when guys ask me, I politely decline to answer, saying it's not relevant.

My journey to where I am in my life has been interesting to say the least, and hasn't always been happy or fulfilling. I lost my virginity in a blissfully romantic first relationship at the age of 15, where I formed a healthy relationship with sex. I felt safe to explore what I enjoyed about sex, and how to make it enjoyable for my partner. When this relationship ended, I found that even though I was single, I still—surprisingly enough—wanted sex. So I did what any logical person would do: I went out and found it. Being an attractive girl, this wasn't too hard.

At first, I thought I could form connections with guys through sex. Understandably, this led to many disappointments. The guys I was sleeping with, in general, I thought I truly liked, so I was repeatedly let down when nothing evolved from our night of passion. There were other nights when I slept with guys where the sex was just downright terrible. These nights, combined with my perceived rejection, led to the inevitable guilt that girls and young women are taught to have after casual sex.

I felt like crap, like I was being used, so I did what any budding teenage feminist would do: I sought to turn this 'oppression' around. I went from the girl who wanted sex to lead to something to the young woman who fucked and fucked off, all at her own discretion. I fucked like men did. Surprisingly, or not surprisingly, this led to my first adult, long-term relationship; an adult relationship which, as it turns out, wasn't so adult.

During the three years of this relationship, I was completely faithful, despite the constant accusations from my partner. I was on the receiving end of regular verbal abuse, was manipulated and made to feel guilty for not wanting enough sex, or wanting too much sex. It was also during this relationship that I explored what few sexual avenues I hadn't already explored previously—sex on drugs, threesomes, etc. However, this time it was all happening in the midst of a very unhealthy, unhappy relationship.

Even though I finally worked up the guts to end the relationship, things did not get better immediately. Still recovering from the emotional battering I'd received for the previous three years, I looked to sex as a comfort. While there were potential boyfriends here and there, I was never really interested in anything beyond a couple nights of fun in the sack, and continue to have many anonymous, often drunken, one night stands.



"I like sex. A lot. And I don't have to speak with lots of people to know I am not alone in enjoying sex. What I do believe I am alone in is the amount of people I have slept with. As I reach my mid-twenties, I guess that I have slept with roughly 80 people, though this number is indeterminate as I stopped counting at 50, around 3 years ago."

I did have Ben\* as a wonderful asset for a number of years, who filled a position as my friend with benefits (though we weren't really friends). This created space for me to put the search for good sex to the side, and get on with my life, and most importantly to enjoy being single, properly.

In the last year, I've reached a place of true confidence when it comes to my sex life, and my life in general. I'm still single, and while a boyfriend would be nice, my life is perfectly full without one. I still have sex with lots of different guys, but I'm safe, and put all my cards on the table—I never sleep with someone under false pretences.

Sex isn't something I do to make guys fall for me, nor is it something I do for self-confidence. I do it because it feels good (orgasms do release endorphins) and I won't apologise for that. Ever. But if you ask me how many people I've slept with, I won't tell you, not because I don't know, but because it isn't relevant.

\*Not his real name

# EVERY

# AND

Eda Gunaydin considers pleasure and patriarchy

The sexual diseducation which permeates polite society is not acceptable. This we know. In WA, a state which is not required to implement sex education, the YACWA reports that 1 in 5 young people have chlamydia.

In Australia, sex education has been historically excluded from the national curriculum; a lack of resources which forces teachers to cut 'non-core' content, coupled with a majority of teachers reporting discomfort over discussing topics as fundamentally common as menstruation, saw sex ed regularly shelved among encyclopedias and wads of gum, while sexual activity will never be circumscribed with similar unsexy efficiency.

The Secondary Students and Sexual Health survey reveals that 78% of Australian Year 10 and 12 students have had sexual experience. Less than 50% of sexuality education teachers teach the pleasure of sexual activity, and young women report having positive feelings after sex at significantly lower rates – 56% of women in the same study reported feeling 'fantastic' after sex as compared to 74% of men. More women felt 'used' (9%), 'regretful' (7%), 'worried', 'upset' or 'guilty' than men. 38% of women versus 19% of men had experienced sex they did not want.

It is not acceptable that young adults do not receive a comprehensive detailing of their sexual rights and responsibilities, at the age they're wanting to have it but have little grasp of how, these two forces competing so hard their bodies turn blue. Yes, most of us concede that there are ways to learn on the fly and make do and to live on the seat of one's pants, if one elects to wear pants. There are other sources of information: the internet and porn, friends, family, the nebulous haze of ambient noise which surrounds us, imbuing us with information as conveniently available as air. Indeed,



# EVERYTHING IS NOT PENIS

# AND NOTHING HURTS

hy

we seem to turn fervently to these sources to allow us to bridge the chasm of disinformation. This is in fact the most damaging facet of that chasm—people try to fill it. And so it clogs with the same old bullshit.

\*\*\*

The air we breathe when it comes to sex is laced with patriarchy—you can disagree here, but miseducation will still be prevalent and it will still be damaging. We live in a world which not only fails to teach men to respect women's bodies, but rather that it is acceptable not to. By the age of 11 I watched my male peers make 'well, officer, she fell on my dick' jokes, while we still had not participated in any formal sexual education program. We live in a world in which women disproportionately experience the consequences of sexual activity until sex itself is reconfigured as a consequence—of poor upbringing, low moral fibre, low intelligence, a certain manner of dress, speech or speed of liquor consumption.

Is it surprising, then, that women, on average, experience less pleasure from sex, and that men develop such a fundamentally phallocentric view of sex that not only does female pleasure not count, but pain doesn't matter?

I can't think of a single woman I've heard the story of their 'virginity loss' from who hasn't experienced undesired pain, nor one who hasn't felt trepidation over the prospect. They expected to bleed, and had those expectations fulfilled or, when they let themselves breathe, found they didn't bleed after all, but the anxiety had choked them up like an ungreased chain. Others who gritted their teeth—like you would before a dental appointment—found that it hurt less than they'd expected, but nonetheless more than they wanted. I've known women who masturbated with make-up brushes and fingers in rubber gloves and knife handles. Women who had been assiduously using tampons and other insertibles for years, alone or with a hand mirror or a friend. Who felt they were virgins after oral sex, sex

with a woman, sex with a plant, sex with something penis shaped that wasn't a penis. If it wasn't sexual contact which nullifies virginity, was it penetration? Or did it have to be both? Why? I, and these women I grew up with or now know, learnt these things: You are a virgin. You don't stop being a virgin unless you have penetrative intercourse with a human penis. You probably should stay a virgin. Oh, and losing your virginity is going to hurt. You will probably bleed. Have a nice day.

I was told one thing about my body which I never heard about any other: it's supposed to hurt.

**Your hymen isn't getting in the way, society is**

There are painless dentists in our society. Painless endoscopies. Painless piercings. But *there is no nominal sex culture or education teaching people with a vagina that penetrative intercourse with anyone with a penis should never literally tear your hymen.* This controversial debunk of thousands of years of—male-written—history has emerged only recently, and calls itself The Hymen Myth.

"I was told one thing about my body which I never heard about any other: it's supposed to hurt."

It's a cultural fixity where Tamagotchis and top-buns come and go that the hymen has to be broken, removed, popped, like opening the lid of a jar. Even shows with modern aspirations—if not outcomes—such as HBO's *Girls* inadvertently reinforce the myth: 'Do you miss your hymen?' asks Elijah with patronising sincerity to Shoshanna, a 20-something year old who's just shed her virginity (finally!). Months before, an almost-sex-partner had capitulated after hearing of her predicament, by reason of finding virgins to be attached bleeders. That the former statement emerges from the mouths of bit

characters doesn't necessarily discomfit me, but that it emerges from other mouths and pens does.

The hymen is not a seal—it's passed menstrual fluid through vaginas for years, and millennia before that. Even Joan of Arc, famous virgin, confirmed by scholars as having a particularly sturdy hymen, passed something out

"It's a cultural fixity where Tamagotchis and top-buns come and go that the hymen has to be broken, removed, popped, like opening the lid of a jar."

of somewhere. It's flexible, so can be stretched rather than torn. If you can't get your fingers past your calves, but find that if you stretch every day for two weeks you can bend down to your toes, then that's what I mean. Not even the anus is *supposed* to bleed during intercourse, that being the orifice more likely to—it is, like with most bleeding, a signal that you are doing something wrong.

\*\*\*

It does merit reflection, then, as to why something so flawed is repeated so often; and not just from big or bad men, but from the women who truly mean to nurture us. Unfortunately, we teach our beliefs and experiences as truths. All that is air—precedent, expectation—freezes solid. And so, in a way that defies self-preservation, it becomes okay for sex to be unpleasant for women. And suddenly, women are treated as being essential to sex only insofar as they facilitate the pleasure of men. If a man's formative experience with heterosexual intercourse is that he should *do it, it's okay to hurt her*, and a woman's is that she should grit her teeth and power through, then I certainly view that as contributing to the skewed statistics

on female pleasure and shame vs male pleasure and shame and disrespect for female autonomy.

Perhaps I say this too late and to the wrong audience, but I want to tell everyone worried about pain during intercourse to focus, laser their pre-occupations onto sweating the other stuff, every other detail, but not this one. I want to say: 'The prospect of intercourse shouldn't make you feel like you're about to have your wisdom teeth removed. You're not having anything removed at all. You were whole then and whole now. There are alternatives to trying not to tense and a bottle of lube. Your fingers can be put to use; you can use someone else's. You can still have and give orgasms in the interim period. You can play Mario Kart instead and forget the whole thing. Men aren't Impatient or Uncontrollable – we live in a culture which allows concessions of decency to be granted to them. Their readiness has no parallel to yours. A penis is not a board-certified hole punch. The patriarchy tells them they possess something more sacred than a silicone wand, more sacrosanct than your girlfriend's hands. All sex is as sexy as you think it is. If you go without sex or penetrative masturbation for four months or a year and it hurts again, it must seem obvious that physiology isn't bound to the inane discriminations of humankind. Relax – listen to the knee-jerk 'ow' you've fine-tuned since the age of three, and use that as your guide.'

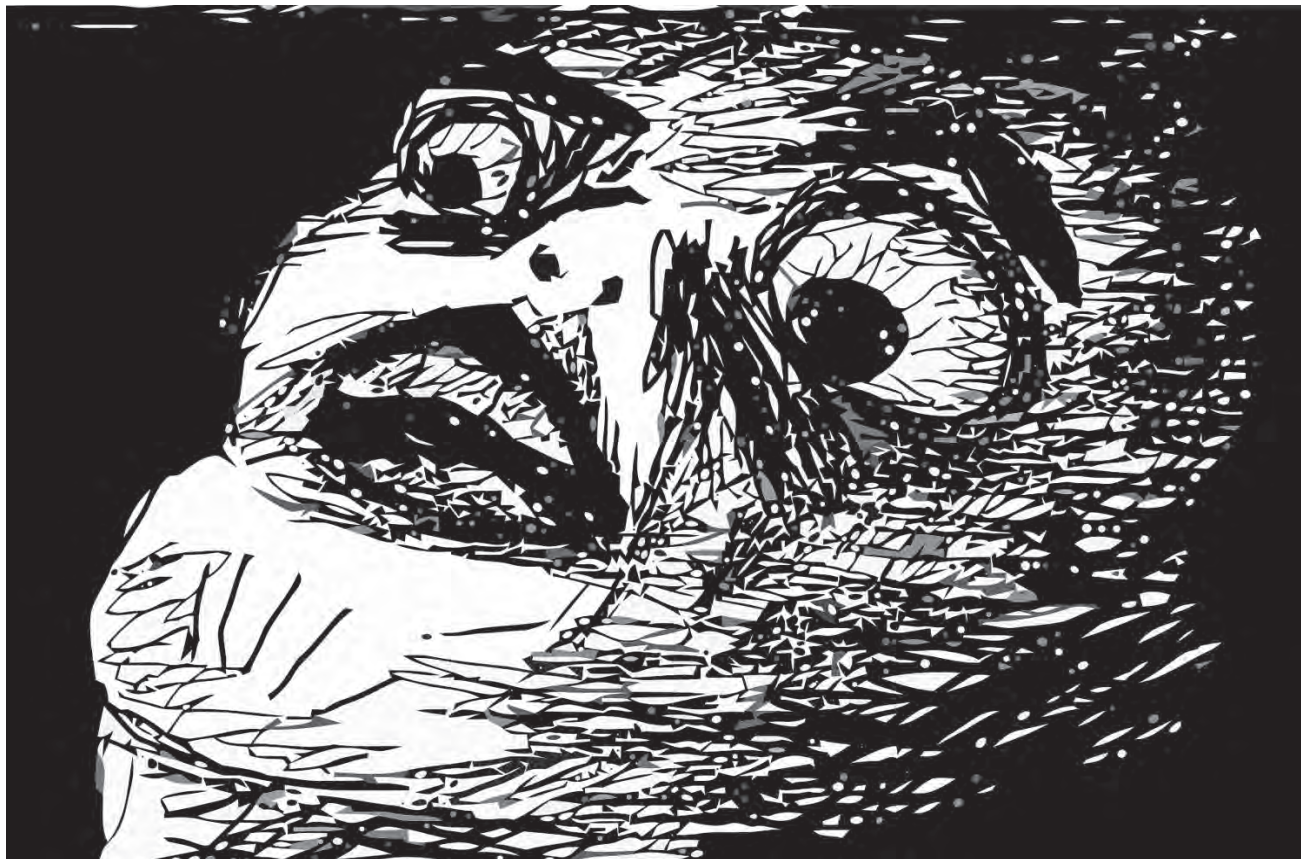
\* There are cases of women who report extreme pain with any penetration who suffer from a condition called vaginismus.

\*\* Yes, there are men whom it hurts equally to hurt their partner. There are all types of men.

\*\*\* There is a use of male/man and female/woman to describe those in possession of a penis and vagina respectively. I've appropriated the typical partners these conversations assume.



## WOMEN? MASTURBATING?



Stella Klenas

“When these symptoms [womb disease/hysteria] indicate, we think it necessary to ask a midwife to assist, so that she can massage the genitalia with one finger inside, using oil of lilies, musk root, crocus, or [something] similar. And in this way the afflicted woman can be aroused to the paroxysm. This kind of stimulation with the finger is recommended by Galen and Avicenna, among others, most especially for widows, those who live chaste lives, and female religious, as Ferrari da Gradi proposes” – Pieter van Foreest, *Observationem et Curationem Medicinalium ac Chirurgicarum Opera Omina*.

Descriptions of this method of treating hysteria in females have been found throughout history, as early as the Hippocratic corpus, and Works of Celsus (1 A.D.). Yet, antiquity is not rendered as authoritative, especially regarding medicine and science; in fact, our superior medical knowledge regards hysteria as simply normal sexual urges, and the above described treatment for women's complaints as simply MASTURBATION, which is immensely healthy, and a part of the normal functioning of female sexuality and was declared so by the American Medical Association as late as 1972. Now, I don't advocate that masturbation is especially necessary for widows, virgins, and nuns; rather, I advocate that masturbation is necessary for ALL. We all should masturbate. We probably all do. But to those who don't, I ask, WHY?

When I masturbate I go with gusto, 2 hour sessions or even till dawn; other's it's 2 minutes through the underwear with a bullet vibe. Essentially it's whatever works best for you! But my orgasms, like sclerosis, are multiple, or at least that's the goal of the exercise.

Reasons to masturbate: It's fun, safe, I love me, I want to get to know me and my anatomy, I love satisfying me, and it's FREE! The list of reasons to masturbate is exhaustive. Masturbation is the most direct route to an orgasm. Learning your responses to certain stimuli of the erogenous zones and getting to know your body are key in becoming orgasmic.

## What you need:

- **Water-based lubricant.** Refrain from using oils, as they cause infections when including the vagina in the masturbation session. Lubrication is vital and relying on your own vaginal lubrication is stupidly inefficient when water-based lube feels so wonderful and is harmless to porous toys. I use Sliquid which is vegan and doesn't test on animals. There are even lubricants which emit warmth during use;
- **Privacy,** unless you wish to be charitable to the voyeurs within the wall cavity;
- **Music,** which helps with mood and mental zoning. I enjoy orgasming to Ravel's Bolero, and Mascagni's Cavalleria Rusticana;
- **Bullet/Egg Vibrator** if you feel uncomfortable or simply find it difficult to climax with manual stimulation. In this case always have spare batteries. The worst feeling is when you're close and your vibrator decides to suicide. Also, some people get drawn into thinking they NEED a vibrator like a rabbit pearl, but a bullet vibe used on, around and near the clit is enough, however some enjoy the fullness a phallic-like vibrator or dildo provides. Whatever you need to get you to the summit, I say do it with lube.

The clitoris contains 8,000 nerve fibres, twice as many as the penis, and 95% of females orgasm from clitoral stimulation, so I may appear clitoral-centric, but I should be forgiven as I'm loaded with statistics.

Clitoral-Tip Specific Techniques (requires finger dexterity or a small vibrator):

Up-Down Motion: with all motions one should play with speed and rhythm over the clitoris and clitoral hood. This may be modified with the variant side-to-side motion, or combining up-down with side-to-side; Figure Eight; Tapping; Rolling/Pinching the clitoris; Circular Rubbing; Three fingers: stimulating the clitoris with the middle finger as you hold open the labia; Full Rub: using the entire flat of your hand and fingers to massage.

For once we must embrace our hysteria and masturbate for our health. Doctor's orders!



Brigitte Garozzo

## “WHAT IS POLYAMORY? WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN POLYAMORY AND POLYGAMY?”

Polyamory means consensual relationships with multiple partners. People often wrongly conflate polyamory with polygamy (polygamy refers to a relationship structure where a man holds multiple wives in an oppressive patriarchal relationship). Such conservative polygamous relationships exist, but bear no relationship to modern polyamorous practice. In fact polyamory is the ultimate reversal of the idea of ‘woman as a possession’; instead of being an object owned by a man, she is free to have consensual sex, or romantic relations, with whoever she pleases. The idea that polyamory is inherently anti-feminist is erroneous and misleading.

## “WHAT DO POLYAMORISTS WANT IN THEIR STRUGGLE FOR RECOGNITION?”

It is impossible to speak for all – certainly some may want marriage extended to multiple partners, while others, including myself, want marriage as a legal institution to be dismantled. It is not for the state to endorse a single type of relationship and offer it legal legitimacy at the expense of all other types. Who I sleep with is none of anybody's concern, and if the courts and the tax office want guidance they should offer a regime that reflects any possible type of relationship, no matter how novel.

## “BUT IT'S TOO HARD TO CHANGE THE LAW TO ALLOW POLYAMOROUS RECOGNITION!”

There is a common argument that it is too hard to recognise poly relationships in our legal system. This is nonsensical. Governments handle countless pieces of complex regulation every single day. The idea of altering our rigid conservative marriage structure to recognise a variety of relationship types is a simple task in comparison. Imagine if America had never overturned segregation laws because it was too difficult? I don't give a shit if it's difficult; if it's the right thing to do it bloody well should be done!

## “SURELY POLYAMORY LEADS TO UNMANAGEABLE JEALOUSY?”

First of all, jealousy is only an acceptable part of our relationships because we allow it to be. You don't restrict your partner from having other friends besides you and you don't restrict them from talking to people that aren't you. What is magical about sex? What is magical about love? You do not run out of love, just as you don't run out of ability to form friendships. Jealousy is something we are told is inevitable but it is not so. When we examine jealousy, it is really a bundle of emotions like envy, fear of loss, frustration or confusion. When discussed with a partner honestly and openly in an atmosphere



# AMORRY

## a guide

of trust, many of these disappear or can be managed. Sometimes it will require renegotiation of the relationship. These practices, far from being threatening, are strengthening - the communication helps the relationship flourish and grow, and frees it from the spectre of misunderstanding.

### "SO YOU'RE SAYING THAT MONOGAMY IS WRONG THEN?"

Monogamy is a legitimate relationship structure individuals may choose to pursue. Most poly people have been or will be monogamous at some point. However, it is unjust to enforce it on everybody through legal discrimination (eg. marriage) or through social stigma. People yearn for freedom, and they will get it one way or another, usually through cheating or constantly breaking off relationships. The desire to enforce monogamy against common emotional and physical desires to break it can lead to destructive cycles of jealousy, mistrust and frustration. A polyamorous relationship deals with these realities constructively by recognising that not all of one's needs can be met by one other person necessarily. In other words, monogamy isn't wrong, but it is forced down our throats from the moment we breathe our first breath and we're told that it's the only legitimate form of relationship. That's what is wrong.

### "BRIGITTE, WHY ARE YOU A POLYAMORIST?"

As I've said, monogamy is a legitimate relationship structure individuals may choose to pursue. However, I find this structure conflicts with my personal morality. For me, monogamy is problematic. This is because I do not believe in the ownership of people. The idea of monogamy, and particularly monogamous marriage, is that one person must exclude all others from sex and romantic love except their own partner, and ideally, that this partner does the same. In my mind this represents the very concept of ownership. Ownership is claiming power over something to exclude others, whether you actually need to or not. To be monogamous is to refuse a part of another person's life that could bring them joy at no actual expense to you - love is not a finite resource, and sex with another does not 'spoil' your partner for you. It represents ownership over part of another human being, an empire over their love life.

People think this helps them keep their partners. I say, it merely delays action on discontentment. If your partner loves you, trusts you, wants to be with you, the presence of others will not deny this. If they do not, your relationship should be renegotiated, or it should end, as no relationship can or should exist without it benefiting both parties. Love is not charity. Monogamy simply helps to keep unhappy relationships alive and denies fantastic ones from flourishing.

This is why I say: monogamy is problematic.



Madeleine Gray

Feminine feminism. It's the idea that you can like cupcakes and still be a feminist. Second wave feminism. It's Germaine Greer throwing a burning bra at you and yelling that if you let a man protect you, you are disavowing your womanhood and advocating a revocation of suffrage. I don't think gender politics are as diametrically opposed as this. I think all gender relations lie on a complex spectrum that involves interplay between societal norms, our personal insecurities, and the feminist debate that runs daily on Radio National.

For years I thought my power in relationships was my female-ness. Before my current relationship, I always dated men. I thought of the whole thing as a control game. The curve of my back, the pout of my lips, the (hopefully) sultry way in which I argue: all weapons I could use to ensnare the opposite sex. I saw gender as something that so differentiates us it makes all our interactions stilted and unreal. When I was with a man, I think I gender-stereotyped so much in my head that I subconsciously forced a divide between us. I couldn't understand the man I was sleeping with as a person with faults, just like me. If he annoyed me, he would be dumped. Because I was a woman and I had power and society had taught me not to undervalue myself for the sake of an inadequate male.

"I think all gender relations lie on a complex spectrum that involves interplay between societal norms, our personal insecurities, and the feminist debate that runs daily on Radio National."

Now I am dating a woman. She's wonderful. And our relationship? It just happened. No complications, no games, no dating rules. Just two people who got together because they were attracted to each other and enjoyed each other's company. I don't second-guess her motives. When she annoys me, I empathize. I understand where she is coming

from and I don't solve the problem by breaking up with her. We are in it together. Is this because she is a woman, or is it simply because I'd never found the right person before?

The reason I am happy to let a man pay for my meal is the same reason I love it when my current girlfriend buys me a drink. It's because I love her and when you are in a relationship with someone, it's nice to have him or her show they care for you and want to look out for you. This isn't patriarchy, it's affection. I'll buy her a drink later. Or maybe a kebab at the end of the night.

I don't feel the need to be overtly feminine. I'm just me. I make ridiculously unfunny jokes and when I'm in an awkward situation I reference it in a sing-song voice. I allow myself to let my guard down. And perhaps this is a result of society conditioning me to act a certain way with men. But I also think it is just a reflection of my own insecurities and the way I over-intellectualize and scrutinize gender in my life. Will the next relationship I am in with a man (on the off-chance that I ever break up with the current gf - luv u babe!) result in the same lack of communication as it has in the past? Or will I have learnt from this foray into being myself with the person I sleep with? All of this could just be me. But I think the constant feminist discourse in our post-modern society has fucked us all up a bit.

I have always seen men as a different species. For this reason, whenever I have been romantically involved with them, I have objectified them. In my head I have made them something I cannot ever really know. This is bullshit. Men are people too. Perhaps what we need to work on is not just female power, but a mutual acknowledgement of personhood, without gender stereotypes from either direction. I think I need to give men the credit they deserve. I need to stop thinking of them as inherently less interesting and less able to have complex emotions than women. Strangely enough, it has taken me being in a lesbian relationship to work this out. Not Germaine Greer, not Kathy Lette. In the wise words of Macklemore - "same love".



# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: WHAT EVERY YOUNG PERSON SHOULD KNOW

Kate O'Brien

According to the UN, 1 in 3 women will experience assault in their lifetime, while NSW Rape Crisis Centre reports that 1 in 5 women will experience sexual assault in their lifetime. Take a moment to think about how many women we are talking about here. Apply these statistics to all the women in your life – the ones you like and the ones you don't, family, friends and acquaintances. These statistics are, if anything, a conservative set of figures. Many more women experience abuse without ever reporting.

Based on these statistics, it is a given that you have already encountered and will encounter women who have experienced some form of violence. So, how can you help support a friend who may have experienced violence? Tracy Howe, CEO of NSW Women's Refuge Movement, and Bonnie Souter, Projects Officer of NSW Women's Refuge Movement say the most important thing to remember is to listen, be supportive and believe what they tell you. They also highlight the importance of your reaction to a disclosure of assault as this often impacts whether the disclosing person ever comes forward again and how they feel about their experience. You should "ask them what they want to do, do not gossip about it and also don't promise to keep it a secret." It is important not to make this promise because you don't want to betray the trust of your friend if at a later date they don't seem to be coping or need help and you have to tell someone else.

Another way to be supportive of women who have experienced violence is to speak out against rape jokes and comments that make light of violence against women. Even challenging myths you hear about abuse or sexual assault, including victim-blaming sentiments such as "she was asking for it" or "well, she was walking alone" or "she was wearing a short skirt" contributes to a cultural change in attitudes and understandings of the complexities and variety of experiences of abuse. By taking a stand in these everyday situations, you contribute to making the world a better place for everyone.

But let's back up. What even is violence against women? Howe and Souter of the NSW Women's Refuge Movement, the managing body behind all 55 women's refuges in NSW, say that domestic violence is not only about physical violence, it can include emotional, psychological, social, sexual, financial and verbal abuse, explaining that "you do not have to wait until it gets physical to access a

refuge." Women's Refuges do not just offer crisis accommodation, they also provide a heap of support including counselling and assistance to finding long-term accommodation as well as medical assistance and court support. It's important to note that these services can be accessed by women regardless of whether they are living in Refuge accommodation or not.

Women's Refuge staff are trained to provide support to children and women from all walks of life, including Indigenous women, LBTQ women and CALD women. Howe and Souter explain that, "no matter your income, ethnicity, sexual orientation or background or disability, there is support and options that a Women's Refuge can support you with." All services offered are free of charge. The staff work in prevention and education as well as crisis and post-crisis support. Women's Refuges are basically hubs of resources and information specifically designed to help women and respect their choices. Howe and Souter encourage women to explore their options within refuges, saying, "refuges do their best to make a welcoming environment where all women and children feel safe."

Lisa Simpson, the Program Manager at Eastern and Central Sexual Assault Service, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, says "sexual violence and other forms of violence against women such as domestic violence are considered to be gendered crimes because the overwhelming majority of perpetrators are men." She continued to say that, "although women can commit sexual assault, research findings consistently report that 95-98% of perpetrators of sexual assault are male." So, regardless of the victim's gender, the vast majority of abusers are male which in itself makes this a gendered issue.

Royal Prince Alfred's Sexual Assault Service operates from a position which recognises the abuse of power inherent in sexual assault, the responsibility of which lies solely with the perpetrator of violence. Simpson says the RPA Sexual Assault Service takes the view that "sexual assault is an act of violence which is motivated by the desire of the perpetrator to exert power and humiliate a victim." All staff at RPA Sexual Assault are women, however, anyone can access the service. Approximately 10% of people who access their service are men, with people of all genders accessing the service due to experiences of sexual assault as an adult and/or as a child.

So what 'counts' as sexual assault?

In explaining the role of RPA's Sexual Assault Service, Simpson says "you can access our service if you have or believe that you have experienced any kind of unwanted sexual activity. You may have been harassed, coerced, pressured and/or forced to have sex against your will or to engage in sexual behaviour to which you did not or were unable to give your consent." She emphasises that the experience of sexual assault can be confusing, especially if drugs or alcohol were involved, and strongly encourages any woman who has any concern about sexual assault to contact the service.

The media tends to report mostly on cases of sexual assault that occur when a woman is in public – you know the typical stranger-danger script. While this form of assault does in fact occur, it is important to note that it makes up a small percentage of all reported sexual assault and violence experienced by women. Most women are at more risk of violence when they get home at night than walking on the street in the dark getting there. In other words, domestic violence can happen to anyone – you do not have to be a middle-aged person in a married, living-together situation to experience abuse or violence. Controlling and obsessive behaviours, stalking and emotional manipulation, as well as physical and sexual violence can be experienced by people of all ages while dating or in a de facto relationship, too.

People often wonder why women don't leave a violent relationship. This mentality ignores binding elements such as the emotional manipulation, financial constraints and feelings of shame and hope the women in domestic violence experience. Howe and Souter from the NSW Women's Refuge Movement explain that "many women arrive at a refuge with no bank account, no licence, no mobile phone, no job or money for food," as perpetrators of violence often try to isolate their victims in every possible way to entrap them in the relationship. Instead of asking why women don't just leave violence, they suggest we start asking why someone would be violent to someone they love, or how bad is the abuse that the perpetrator actually drives their family out of their home. This is an important shift away from victim-blaming and towards understanding violence as being a crime committed by an abuser.

As an independent advocacy service, RPA Sexual Assault offers crisis and ongoing counselling and therapy. Many people don't realise that they also operate as a specialist

## RPAH SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICE:

**Phone: 9515 9040**

**(8.30am-5pm weekdays)**

**After Hours Phone: 9515 6111**

**(outside Business Hours/**

**Public Holidays on-call staff**

**are available for anyone who has experienced sexual assault within the past 7 days and require urgent counselling and medical response)**

**Location: Ground Floor KGV Building, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (On Missenden Rd, opposite Emergency Dept).**

**On-call staff will be notified if you go to Emergency about sexual assault and, if undergoing medical proceedings, you can request a staff member to be present.**

## NSW WOMEN'S REFUGE MOVEMENT:

**Phone: 1800 65 64 63 (24/7**

**Domestic Violence Hotline, free call) for referrals to refuges and other DV services**

**You may also be connected to refuges via the police, a doctor or the hospital.**

**<http://www.wrrc.org.au/>**

medical service and provide support to people who have been sexually assaulted in navigating legal processes, including court proceedings and dealing with the police, if they choose to do so. Note that there is no requirement upon an adult who has been sexually assaulted to report the crime to Police. Anyone over the age of 14 can access their free, 24/7 services. Simpson sums by saying, "Our advice to you is that if you have any question or concern that you may have experienced sexual assault, please contact us."

If you, or a friend, feels unsure about any experiences you may have had or can recognise your own experiences in any of the above text, please know you are not alone. These services exist to assist women. I encourage you to explore your options in the reliable, safe and supportive environments provided by RPA Sexual Assault Service and NSW Women's Refuges. For more information, feel free to contact these services.



# Seven Steps to Living on Little Money

## 1. Loans, Bursaries and Scholarships

The University has a few ways to get some extra money, sometimes as a loan. Talk to the Financial Assistance Office and explain your situation. Of course there are conditions that apply which may include being on a Centrelink payment, how you are planning to use the money, or what your grades are. Scholarships are also available under certain circumstances. You might be surprised to find how many there are available.

## 2. Killing Debts

There are a few companies that can help to consolidate your debt. Be very cautious about signing up with anyone without reading all of the fine print. Some of them are the equivalent of you becoming bankrupt, which is something you might want to avoid. In the first instance talk to the SRC Solicitor to see if there is a softer approach you can use.

## 3. Gambling

Confidential help can be accessed at the Gambling Treatment Clinic on campus. The service is free. Call 9351 6346 for details.

## 4. Housing

The UN believes that the cost of housing should not exceed 30% of your income. Clearly they don't live in Sydney on Youth Allowance. If you fall behind in your rent you might be eligible for a "boost" of funds by Housing NSW. That's not a loan, it's a grant. Of course conditions apply. If you are facing homelessness you might be able to get emergency housing. SRC Help can give more information on both of these situations.

## 5. Utilities

The most obvious way to have smaller bills for electricity, water and telephone is to use them less. Carefully look at the plan you are on and pick the best one for your use. Consider pre-paying a little each fortnight so as to reduce the bill at the end of the cycle.

## 6. Food

There is a surprising amount of free or very cheap food in Sydney. For those in the city or inner west go to the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre website, then go to their Information Sheets, then go to Essential Services, then Food. If you're in other areas of Sydney ask at churches and community centres. It is likely they will have similar services.

## 7. Health

Having a Medicare Card can give you access to Bulk Billing. Students at the Darlington or Camperdown campus can try the University Health Service (Wentworth Building). Outside of that if you do find a doctor you like, who does not bulk bill, ask them if they will make an exception for you. The University also has a Counselling Service (Jane Foss Russell Building, Darlington campus) that is free to all students. If you'd like to see a psychologist elsewhere ask SRC Help for a list of people in your area who bulk bill (Medicare only). If you're an international student some of these services will be covered by your private health insurance. Local students may be eligible for a low income health care card if your average weekly earnings are less than \$465 per week.

# Ask Lily



Dear Lily,

I am in my second year in the \*\*\* faculty and trying very hard to do well. I've been asking lots of questions during and after class in order to get a good idea on what to write in assignments. My tutor encourages me in class and as far as everyone else can see I am doing quite well. However, my tutor has taken things too far. He invited me to his office and touched my leg while he talked to me. I am very shy and am scared about what people will say about me if I tell them. I certainly did not mean to confuse him about what I wanted. Now I feel that I cannot go back to his class. I have to do that subject at some point because it is compulsory. I really don't know what to do.

HG

Dear HG,

I'm really sorry to hear that you are feeling confused and scared. I think that this is a common goal for people who are trying to harass someone – use their power to make the other person feel threatened and unsure and feeling like their concerns are not legitimate. However, that's just not right. You have every right to feel uncomfortable in the situation that your tutor has created and he has a responsibility to make sure that you are not intimidated by him. What he has done is wrong.

The University has very strict policies on sexual harassment, which includes a safety net to ensure that your marks will not be affected if you make a complaint.

Talk to someone regardless of whether you want to make a complaint or not. You do not deserve to feel bad about what this person has done to you. The SRC has caseworkers you can talk to about the processes of making a sexual harassment complaint. They will explain how the university will go about investigating your allegation and what the possible outcomes are. There are also university staff members who can explain these processes. The SRC caseworkers can also suggest other courses of action that can consider. This might include things like changing tutorial classes, changing your phone number and using informal resolution processes.

It may also be a good idea to talk to someone about the way you feel. This may be a counsellor or your GP. The

University's Counselling and Psychological Services offers free help to students, or you can ask your SRC caseworker to help you find someone near your home. These services can be expensive but the University offers their services to students for free, and the SRC can help you find someone who will only charge you the Medicare or OSHC price. That is, will not cost you anything.

Remember, though, that it is ultimately your decision to take whatever action you choose. So don't just wait for things to get worse, talk to someone about it now. The SRC are always happy to help.

Lily.

This column offers students the opportunity to ask questions on anything that may affect their "welfare". This can be as personal as a question on a Centrelink payment or as general as a question on the state of the world. This week's women's edition column is presented by guest dog Lily. She is a border collie with lots of spunk and is not too proud to get good advice. Abe returns next week so if you would like to ask him a question, send an email to [help@src.usyd.edu.au](mailto:help@src.usyd.edu.au). Abe gathers his answers from experts in a number of areas. Coupled with his own expertise on dealing with people, living on a low income and being a dog, Abe's answers can provide you excellent insight.



**SRC Legal Service**

**For undergraduate  
Sydney Uni Students**

**FREE**

**FREE legal advice, representation in court and a referral service to undergraduate students at The University of Sydney.**

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## Vice President's Report

Amelie Vanderstock responds to a letter in last weeks Honi

[vice.president@src.usyd.edu.au](mailto:vice.president@src.usyd.edu.au)

Unfortunately, Harry Stratton needs to master the humble Google search engine before announcing 'I tend to research my claims.' Indeed, the Kimberley Land Corporation initially voted 60% in favour of the LNG processing plant going ahead in the Kimberley region. That must have appeared in the first search option. However, Harry, I'm sorry to inform you that quite a great deal of supreme court level corruption has occurred on the part of the WA government on this issue.

Prior to the vote, the Goolarabooloo/Jabbir Jabbir people had been threatened by the WA Government that if the Kimberley Land Council voted against the LNG proposal their land would be compulsorily acquired, the project would go ahead anyway, and they would not receive the compensation package which would arrive if they voted 'yes'. Surely, such threats entwined in a 'democratic'

vote is evidence of corruption?

Yet with such threats to land and livelihood, only 60% of the indigenous representatives voted yes. That's not exactly an 'overwhelming vote in favour.'

In September 2011, after Walmadan (James Price Point) had been confirmed as the exact location of the gas hub, traditional owners from across the Kimberley denounced the Kimberley Land Council as their legal entity and announced their staunch opposition to the project. The Goolarabooloo people even went so far in their opposition of the project to invite Sea Shepherd Conservation Organisation, amongst other 'professional protestor friends' to join them on their land, in their fight. Does that sound like the actions of people who wanted the project to ensue? Community campaigning then took form as Indigenous elders and community members set up a blockade

at Walmadan to stop the destruction of their lands and of their songlines. The Lurujarri Heritage Trail follows part of a traditional Aboriginal Song Cycle which goes directly through Walmadan. I'd agree that those traditional owners 'know a damn sight more about where their songlines are' 'than the both of us.

Evidently, indigenous communities of the Kimberley are not a homogenised mass and there were those in favour of the project due to its economic benefits or otherwise. But making an 'indigenous benefits package' contingent on the project is evidence that State and Federal governments are still withholding from remote indigenous communities, and using autonomy as a bargaining tool. I feel quite comfortable labelling that as corruption. Is it not a repetition of 'paternalistic policies of the past' when indigenous Australians are forced to compromise their lands, their beliefs

and their heritage in order to gain the economic and social support that **every other Australian living in cities across the country receive?**

It's really really easy for 'inner city trendies' such as ourselves to argue within the lines of a student newspaper. It's harder to sustain solidarity when complex questions of environmental and social justice are playing out in the real world. Community campaigning in the Kimberley demonstrates the coming together of not just 'professional protestors', but everyday people for intersecting reasons. Whether they feel personally afflicted or no, they choose to fight corporations to save the land of a peoples for generations to come. Hopefully the rest of the country agrees that autonomy and justice to indigenous Australians is long overdue.

## Sexual Harassment Officers' Report

[harassment.officers@src.usyd.edu.au](mailto:harassment.officers@src.usyd.edu.au)

Tabitha Prado-Richardson has advice for anyone targeted by creepy stalker-space websites

Hi! I'm Tabitha, and with Eve and Rose we are the SRC Sexual Harassment Officers. This year we've been working on campaigns in conjunction with the Women's Officers, and we started a campaign called SWAG (Sydney Women's Action Group) Against Sexism and Sexual Harassment. We want to focus on prevention of sexual harassment, providing services to people who experience sexual harassment, and also take a positive angle to sex and consent. Hopefully soon we will be providing lots of free condoms, pregnancy tests and sexual health resources for y'all.

Our belief is that sex should be fun, free and informed, rather than a source of anxiety. However, we also want to support students whose experiences have led them to be fearful or apprehensive of sex. Sexual expression should not be held to a standard and should be entirely down to what anyone is comfortable with.

On that topic (of comfort), any person who has had experiences with being harassed or stalked is likely to be alarmed at some of the posts being made on the confessional Facebook sites, 'USYD: Confessions' and 'USYD: Spotted'. Not at all like Gossip Girl, I'm afraid. I myself feel a little more exposed and worried on campus knowing the thoughts of particular students who racialise and sexualise other people to excess, especially after being validated by (non-anonymous???) commenters. Somehow these commenters are facing no repercussions for either encouraging bad behaviour, or shaming other people without due reason (slut-shaming and fat-shaming are common).

One particular post that stood out was one written by a woman who recounted her experiences with a man who followed her off a bus, insisting on conversation. She managed to lose him after her lecture, but the main issue that came out of this experience was

that she was unable to state her true wishes (of wanting to be left alone) in fear of upsetting the man. Even though he was a complete stranger, his wants were prioritised over her own.

Here are all the things I want to say to this girl, wherever you are:

1. I know how you feel, sometimes being nice seems like the only thing you can do without being seen as a 'bitch', and anyone who shames you for not 'saying no' has got it wrong.
2. For future reference though, being a bitch to people you don't know is 100% okay. His feelings were never your responsibility. It's ok to tell people to shove it, because it's your life and it's your boundaries and it's not a crime to be a bitch. This society necessitates it.
3. This is my personal opinion, but people who follow other people round

to talk to them because they liked them just on the basis of their looks are really creepy. It happens far more to women, presumably because they're not supposed to have personalities (oops). Each to their own, but it's also good to be reflexive about your own pick-up techniques, so.

4. I hope next time you feel okay to say 'Leave me alone S'IL VOUS PLAIT' with a sense of empowerment, because each time you define boundaries it's like eating a really delicious empowerment cookie.

Much love, The SRC Sexual Harassment Officers xoxox



### contact your SRC

(all emails [@src.usyd.edu.au](mailto:@src.usyd.edu.au))

#### Environment Department

Students working together for environmental and social justice, and sustainability.

[environment.officers](mailto:environment.officers)

#### Indigenous Department

A voice for indigenous Australian students on and off campus.

[admin.assistant](mailto:admin.assistant)

#### International Students Department

Lobbies to ensure the rights of international students.

[international.officers](mailto:international.officers)

#### Queer Collective

Students working together for justice for gay, lesbian and transgender people.

[queer.officers](mailto:queer.officers)

#### Disabilities Department

Assists students with any form of disability, and carers, with any difficulties they may face during their time at university.

[disabilities.officer](mailto:disabilities.officer)

#### Women's Collective

Organises events and campaigns around issues affecting women on campus - from harassment and discrimination to better representation in our chosen fields!

[usyd womens collective@gmail.com](mailto:usyd womens collective@gmail.com)



## Disability Officers' Report

Sarah Chuah talks about the struggles facing carers

Since the 1970's there has been a noticeable shift in the appreciation of disability matters in Australia. From a concern over welfare for the disabled, today we recognise the rights for those with disabilities to participate in and engage fully with society. We are also witnessing a change in attitudes toward mental illness. Statistics telling us that one in four Australians will suffer some form of mental illness in their lifetime, forces the issue into the public and, with the issue of over diagnosis aside, arguably helps dissolve stigmas that have long been attached to mental illness diagnosis. While those with disabilities and mental health issues have benefitted from these advances in recent decades,

the recognition and rights of one group remains largely ignored.

The systemic move away from institutionalised care means that more and more family members and friends of people with disability, who are frail, elderly, have mental health, chronic health or substance abuse problems, must provide care for their loved ones with little to no support. Although caring can be a rewarding and fulfilling experience with the potential to strengthen relationships, it places additional strain on the carer who must continue to meet their own educational, financial, psychological, social, emotional, and health needs while looking after those of another.

This year we are working hard to raise awareness about student carers at university, with an emphasis on recognition and establishing support mechanisms which help eliminate the gap in education participation and success and allow student carers to realise their full potential in tertiary education. Similar to the shift from welfare to rights of those with disabilities, there is a need to acknowledge the substantial contribution that carers make to society and support them adequately in their endeavours.

We are currently collecting data and stories of student carers at university and encourage anyone who provides



support for another person to complete a quick 10 question survey which can be accessed through our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/USYDdisabilities.carers](http://www.facebook.com/USYDdisabilities.carers), or contact us for more information..

[disabilities.officers@src.usyd.edu.au](mailto:disabilities.officers@src.usyd.edu.au)

## Education Officers' Report

Tenaya Alattas wants to take Class Action in a safe environment

Class Action is a network formed to address the current crises in our education system. Its political impulse is caught in its title: class action. It begs the question though, is 'class' the primary axis on which to measure our oppression, understand our experiences and hope to be liberated from through grassroots organising? Or does the title belie something more insidious, an assertion perhaps of the primacy of class, with oppressions (of gender, race, abilities etc.) relegated to a secondary role, seen as an effect of class struggle (rather than an experience within it's own right)?

For the organisers of the conference, facilitating a convergence for the radical left was a momentous task on its own accord. Coordinating the accommodation for those travelling inter-state (thank-you STUCCO), making healthy-vegan food for attendees (on a campus whose outlets are

privatized outside of our pay-range and no communal space to access to fridges, sinks and stoves) and organising an open spaces-open-mic night, documentary viewings, party-planning, drafting safer-spaces policies, grievance collectives/ conflict resolution models, creating the program (40 workshops, plenaries, strategic all-in's) etc. etc. and ending it all with the creation of a national education-activist network. It follows that wrangling with the complexities of recognition/identity politics vs. class and distribution took the back-burner during those four days.

It is important that I clarify that the question I raised earlier is not leveled at the semantics of the title 'class action', but rather to stress that for us to fight for a (better, different, alternative) education, it is important for us to prefigure the world we want to create through our own actions and organisations. Therefore, for 'Class

Action' to be a network, which is truly inclusive, participatory and capable of effecting radical change, it is important for the members to recognize that oppressive behavior will occur in our networks and is not always "out-there". On the corollary it is important to stress that the goal of a safer environment under-writing 'class action' is to not police people's language and behavior, or to be the best at safer space, but to support each other in challenging some deeply engrained cultural and economic systems.

In fact, given the prevailing cultures of racism, sexism, transphobia and ableism in an oppressive economic system it would be a miracle if we had not taken on (or internalized) ways of behaving that oppress others and ourselves. So rather than arguing whether these 'isms' do exist; or viewing 'gender, race etc' as 'divisive' issues, the organising collective



designated the conference a safer space, to make explicit the political decision to prioritise the voices of people who are usually silenced. In fact, we only have to look around us in our classrooms and in our activist circles to see that they are dominated by white, cis-gendered, middle-class university students.

To this end, I will finish this report with a shout-out to some of amazing organisers I had the pleasure to help realize the Edufactory vision with, a group of the strongest, most intelligent-awe inspiring, super supportive/talented amazing wom\*n: Amelie, Elly, Casey, Clo, Mariana, Brigitte, Nina and Helen <3

[education.officers@src.usyd.edu.au](mailto:education.officers@src.usyd.edu.au)



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LAUNCH PARTY  
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**HERMANN'S LAWNS  
5PM - 7PM THURSDAY 9TH MAY**



\*in the case you're a lady  
picking up a lady, see Section 5

# THE F-GAME: A GIRLS' GUIDE TO PHALLIC HUNTING AND FISHING

Phoebe 'Lusty' Moloney & Julia 'Rabbit' Readett  
Artwork: Madeleine 'The Paint Brush' Pfull

## Prepping:

- Props - necessary tools and tricks you will need on your person
- + The gender card
  - + Flash cards to appeal to his visual needs
  - + Football

## Approaching Destmanation



Us Sistas have always believed in using science to the game's best advantage. Thankfully, much scientific research is angled at demystifying the deceptively simple nature of man. Recently, ground-breaking experiments conducted at the prestigious Sealed Section of the C.O.S.M.O institute, revealed 99.7% of real men are "heaps turned on" by the female orgasm face. Let the truth be yelled from the mountain top: all you ladies who approach with a pout are just wasting time!

Loosen up girls because, as every Sista knows, the best first-impression always starts with a capital 'o'. Here's how it's played:

## The 'O'pproach

When fixing your make-up be sure to also fix a façade of utter ravishment upon your frontage (review Chapter 9, "Until you make it")

Enter the fold and identify your destmanation. Drop your jaw 2cm lower than where it already was. Strut.

Make contact (an assertive nudge will suffice) and hold 'O' for at least 5 secs before sensually shrieking your own name. For added affect, maintain complete eye contact (this means no blinking girls!) or if you're a real shark, like Rabbit and I, practice eye-roll-back technique.

Watch him squirm with delight!

The 'O'pproach: unrefined, spontaneous and primal. Let him know you speak his language.

## Station Flirtation

When embarking on what we at F-game like to call, 'linguistic foreplay' it's always best to keep the capabilities of your target in mind. Here's a few pointers to keep your game as smooth as a melting Sundae.

Endowed with two eyes, it follows that men are very visual/aesthetic creatures. If your use of aural signification is proving tiresome for your target, don't be afraid to shake things up with a few visual cues (See 'Props': flashcards)

Ensure that you do not talk AND dance/ eat/ laugh/ 'snog' at the same time. Forcing your target to multitask may cause overheating, and in rare cases, a spot fire.

DO NOT overestimate your man's intelligence. Unfortunately this has proven to be the Achilles Heel of many a great woman, from blessed Ophelia to poor Katie Holmes. No matter the profundity of his facial hair, seeing-aids or 'ironic' t-shirts (t-shirts that have not been ironed), only a rookie mistakes a dishevelled aesthetic for actual mental agility. Speak in monosyllables, and if you really want to drive a point home, rap it.

## Sealing the deal

In the case your destmanation is unresponsive to the above tactics, it's time to bring out the **BIG GUNS**. (Note: unresponsiveness may simply be an expression of target's usual state. Test this before proceeding. See 'Props': Football)

## The Cocktail:

"Wow, I bet you're not MAN enough to drink this FIFTEEN standard drink concoction. Whoah! You are!" Now you've got him right where you want him... the state Rabbit and I coyly describe as, "Drunk as Copulation." Sisterly chortles all round!

## The put down Pick-up:

This technique is played on girls too, but, as it is downright abhorrent for the male sex to harbour any insecurities, indeed, any ambivalence at all, the put-down pick up works best on men. Time to remind him of his shamefully simple complexes! "How quaint! - A man without a six pack in sight!" "Golly! Is that the third-eye of enlightenment I see here?... my mistake, it's just a third nipple", "Are you peacocking or is that your natural nose?"



## Wall flowering

When creating a killer ensemble keep in mind that men can be easily intimidated by forward or out-there clothing, such as dresses and skirts. Make the target feel at ease by donning the print of his favourite pub, sports club or 'man cave'.

**Sex talk:** Unfortunately, it's in the gentlebeans nature to assume we are actually interested in their small, insubstantial lives. Obviously, if we were craving some stimulating chit chat, we wouldn't be talking to them. What's a girl gotta do if she's got sex on the brain? Say it loud and clear...without actually saying it, of course! Try some of these alluring lines and rhymes out on friends and family at home! You could even try and come up with some yourself, but, being asexual, you'll find it pretty hard.

## SEX TALK TIPS:

|             |                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| WEATHER     | Brrr. It's a bit nippy out, isn't it?                                                                                                        |
| MUSIC       | Yeah, I hear he's a huge pianist on the funk scene.                                                                                          |
| UNCERTAINTY | Come again?                                                                                                                                  |
| POLITICS    | I just don't agree with their stance on the penile code. If they increased the stimulus package, I'd be down with that.                      |
| FOOD        | Golly! Choosing from the menu just gets harder every time I come here! ...you know, darling, you should really masticate before you swallow. |

Now that you've got him all hot and bothered, we'll leave 'the rest' up to you. But don't worry sista, since the dawn of time women just like you and I have been practising the art of the pick up. Some call it 'women's intuition', but we call it:

## THE F-GAME.



Section 5: Kjkdjasndldzkjfhxinsme,..... (Eds note: Unfortunately, our knowledgable guides could not offer more on this point - after spontaneously combusting.)

I usually hire girls as law clerks. I can tell them what to do more easily than guys.



# Feminist vs. average human

Subeta Vimalarajah

Every feminist faces a constant battle between feminist theory and everyday life. It leaves many of us confused as to whether we're sexually empowered or objectified; whether we're exercising choice or being oppressed by the patriarchy. Although seemingly serious, it was only when sitting down with a group of "feminist sisters" did I realise that whilst well intentioned, this meant that sometimes we were all, a little bit, completely crazy. This in mind, I present you with five ordinary scenarios of the responses of your average feminist versus that of your average human being.

## First though, a few disclaimers:

1. This article uses hyperbole. Remember hyperbole? The one you learnt in year ten English. Or maybe earlier, if you're a technique legend.
2. To all men: try not to form a 100m exclusion zone around me, I do not want to singlehandedly castrate all of you. Some of you, maybe. #reasonablefeminist

## Here goes:

*Scenario One:* Guy pays for romantic meal at nice restaurant on first date.

Average human: What a nice and thoughtful gesture.

Feminist: You must not accept this meal, nor should you ever see this man again. His motives are clear, the food he has paid for is a patriarchal device to oppress you. He is clearly just feeding into the cultural narrative of commodifying sexuality, thinking that paying for this meal entitles him to your holy temple. Clearly no man with such reductionist and misogynistic views could be a potential civil union partner. Perhaps you should consider political lesbianism instead.

*Scenario Two:* Asked to make cupcakes for 10 year old sister's primary school bake sale.

Average human: Should I use a White Wings or Donna Hay packet mix?

Feminist: This bake sale is clearly being coordinated by a male teacher who is trying to oppress my poor sister. I must use this as an opportunity to show her that idealised gender roles and femininity exist only to be subverted. Dad will have to cook the cupcakes and they will be marked with licorice vulvas as a stamp of empowerment, making a clear reference to Judy Chicago's seminal feminist installation Dinner Party.

*Scenario Three:* Miss gender studies lecture because you were with your boyfriend.

Average human: The lecture is recorded, no biggie.

Feminist: He did this on purpose! He wants to limit my knowledge so I can't join with my feminist sisters in rebellion against the patriarchy. He also clearly wants me to fail my degree so I'll be financially dependent on him, restricting us to the archetype of oppressor and oppressed. Such blatant repression must not go unnoticed. I will kindly ask him to come to my next gender studies tutorial. Then, in a planned act of patriarchal destruction, his crime will be named and shamed, giving him the label he so clearly deserves: misogynist.

*Scenario Four:* Male sex partner suggests doggie style.

Average human: It is one of many positions; no harm in trying it.

Feminist: The name says it all. He now sees you as both subservient to the male gender and whole human race, akin to the friendly and lovable canine—eaten in some societies and left caged and beaten in others. This is a slippery slope. Next he will be fashioning new sex positions with the intention to further demean you—ratty style, insect style, foliage style and no doubt one day: inanimate object style. There is only one feminist sex position: you on top, engulfing him as he whimpers for mercy beneath you; the most true and visceral act to symbolise equality.

*Scenario Five:* Family friend asks you to babysit 3 year-old.

Average human: Decent money, love children.

Feminist: The purpose of this request is unashamedly clear—to condition you into the traditional maternal role. This male has heard about your aspirations to be a high flying corporate lawyer and attempts to quash such dreams in their formative stages. This has one end—to prevent you from challenging the male legal discourse and to free up a position on the High Court for his son. The only circumstance in which this job is to be taken is if the money is redirected straight into an Afghani women's education trust or if during the course of babysitting you choose De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* or Naomi Woolf's *The Vagina* as the bedtime story.

Necessary Justification: So in reflecting on the crazy, don't forget to remember the disclaimers. But equally, don't dismiss the underlying content. All of these scenarios come from genuine thoughts, even if their responses are misrepresented. The point of illustrating them, however, is not to say that any of them are overwhelmingly correct or overwhelmingly irrational, but rather to question exactly how they fit into feminism (get ready for some brief preaching).

Feminism is not a codified set of rules that define your existence. There is no one conception of feminism, or one ideal feminist. Feminism only exists as an ideological standpoint that in all its diversity seeks a common end: equality. But that doesn't mean that we have to be social battering rams along the way. If we want to make cupcakes with pink frosting because they taste better, or if you enjoy doggie style – go for it. Because feminism is not just about equality, it's about empowerment. And after all, if we let it be the oppressive force in our lives – what would be the point of men?

Eve Radunz investigates:

HOW TO TELL IF  
YOUR MAN IS A  
MEN'S RIGHTS  
ACTIVIST IN 10  
EASY STEPS:

1. He hates women, including a deep resentment for his mother
2. He claims that girls just don't like "nice guys", which is why he's such a sexy badass
3. He loves his penis... like a lot
4. He frequently finds solace in the website [avoiceformen.com](http://avoiceformen.com) and the subreddit [/r/mensrights](http://r/mensrights)
5. He makes rape jokes
6. He has a video blog about his life as an MRA and the oppression he faces
7. He insists that all feminists are misandrists
8. He would never let your son be circumcised
9. He doesn't check his privilege
10. He wears a fedora





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