Mission Statement

We are a Feminist and Queer Collective working to counter misconceptions surrounding Women’s and Gender Studies through the publication of an annual Feminist and Queer review. We are increasing awareness and knowledge of Feminist and Queer issues through the voices, opinions, and experiences of University of Manitoba undergraduate students from all faculties. We firmly believe in multiplicity of meaning and we therefore reject the idea of singular definitions. For this reason, we are often left with more questions than answers. But, through our publication we strive to empower ourselves and other undergraduate students with the tools necessary to address these important questions.

This publication will be a catalyst for change.
We would like to thank the following donors for their generous support:

+ Arts Endowment Fund
+ Women’s and Gender Studies Program

We would like to thank the following individuals and groups for their consideration, commitment, and generosity in the support of this publication:

+ Womyn’s Center
+ Ryan Story / graphic designer of issue
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+ Dr. Liz Millward
+ Dr. Shawna Ferris
+ Irene Del Monte / photo credit for cover art

We would also like to sincerely thank everyone who contributed their work to this issue.
Editors’ note

It’s our third edition, folks! And we, the Feminist and Queer Collective, could not be prouder. As our predecessors anticipated, the FAQ Review has grown both in the number of the members of our editorial board, and the pages of our publication. We are very grateful to the former members of the first two editorial boards for paving the way and relaying the momentum towards us. Still in respect to this growth, we intend to distribute this issue across universities in Canada. Our aim is to spread our passion for (pro-)feminist social change through undergraduate voices, which are often subdued in academic spaces. We hope this issue represents this cause.

Since our formation through the encouragement of our professors, it has been a very exciting process publishing this edition. The current collective consists of an entirely new membership. Therefore, we had to familiarize ourselves to each other and the editorial process. We have had to make many decisions and compromises, which tested where we stood as feminist, pro-feminist and queer activist-scholars and what we understood as (pro-)feminist and queer. From choosing where to have our meetings, which usually translated into to where we would be having our dinners, to debating what topics could be appropriately integrated into feminist and queer discourse, these decisions tested the strength of the collective. This is why the theme for this edition is unity.

Our cover page illustrates our unity as we hold hands; how we can cast our collective shadow on the earth. The focus on our shadows is that we retain our individuality but stay aware of our places in and our effect on the world.

Also, in the process of creating this issue, we realized the power of communication. Communication is a function of the unity of a group. As activist-scholars we aim to communicate our message with clarity but may fail to nurture our communication skills being caught in the metaphorical paper chase either for grades or recognized publications. This should not be the case. We urge our selves and our readers to strive for better communication for the sake of unity.

We therefore present to you as a means of communication, the third edition of the Feminist and Queer Review.

Editorial Board

Breann Maxwell / Charly Wreggitt / Christie Kurz / Dana Austman / Danielle Peebles
Julian Kim / Marcia Toms / Rayna Hillman / Rebecca Quinn-Davis / Tokini Fedusa-Manuel
The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of those involved in its creation.
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**UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA FEMINIST AND QUEER REVIEW**
The late 19th and early 20th century brought with it the rising popularity of swimming, a dangerous activity that was subjected to safety regulations. With this new trend came the dilemma of proper swimming attire and fashion policies. Swimwear is credited with generating “more anxiety and strife” (Latham, 65) than any other fashion of its time. The age of the swimsuit signifies a critical period where women were allowed to publicly reveal their body shape and therefore was “associated with looking at others and being looked at by them” (Latham, 65).

Richard Martin and Harold Koda, fashion historians, state that “swimwear has served throughout the century to establish and represent standards of beauty and morality” (Latham, 65). Consequently, it is through the use of Angela Latham’s *Posing a Threat* and Laurel Davis’ *The Swimsuit Issue* and Sport that the illustration of the bathing suit, a fundamental construction of the good girl/bad girl binary, will be used to portray the controversial issues and regulating authority that governed proper bathing suit rules, the use of the bathing suit to promote global attraction and tourism, and the devaluing of women as consumed objects through the public eye.

The need for safety while in the dangerous waters gave way to the socially constructed idea of modesty in women’s proper swimming fashion. Charles E. Funnel speaks of measures for personal safety during swimming with the use of a “bathing car” (Latham, 66). This apparatus consisted of a floatable cage that swimmers could occupy and use the pulley system to lower themselves to their preferred depth. This resourceful idea for swimming safety equipment led to the “Life Lines for Surf Bathing,” (Latham, 67) in which one end of the equipment was fastened to the beach by masts and the other end to the ocean floor by anchors. Interval lines hung from these cables which allowed swimmers to enjoy the waters depths without the fear of endangering themselves (Latham, 67).

The need for personal safety in the water is valid but further investigation indicates that this need attached itself to the public display of a woman’s figure. Not only were beaches gender segregated but in order for women to get to their side of the beach they used “wheeled bathing machines” (Latham, 67) with build-in “modesty hoods” (Latham, 67) that kept the procedure of entering the water a secret from the public.

Furthermore, to exemplify the control over women’s mysterious bodies, Latham’s book tells of the Atlantic City mayor, Edward L. Bader, who enforced the idea of paid “beach cops” (Latham, 73). Their duty was to implement public morality by ensuring proper bathing suit dress and if a bathing suit did not meet public standards, the beach cops would temporarily fix the swimsuit. Understandably, what was first an issue of physical safety to prevent drowning, which is relevant to all swimmers, became an issue only applicable to women’s conformity towards proper modesty. Having beach cops patrol the beach in search of women who were not dressed properly degrades women, making their bodies seem out of control and in need of others to manage them.
Similarly, William Burkhardt, Chicago’s deputy commissioner of public works, announced that bathing costumes would no longer be left to the consciences of the women who wore them. If it had not been for the unsympathizing policewomen on duty the city’s beaches would have looked like a second Garden of Eden. No sir we are not leaving anything to conscience this year (Latham, 74).

It is here that Latham argues that men in higher authority felt it was their responsibility to control, through conformity, the female body. Even a Kentucky senator proposed a bill to police swimwear on the basis that it would “protect the eyes of the old men and the morals of the young men” (Latham, 86). This proves that the voices of authority figures allowed modesty of women to be a main priority to the city’s wellbeing. Furthermore, showing that in order to be allowed on the beach and enjoy it, a woman needed to conform to ridiculous laws that placed her and her body in a confined situation.

Although women were being controlled by their swimwear they were oblivious to the silencing nature of this fashion. Davis’ analysis argues that the swimsuit was used to make women, supposedly, feel empowered and attractive in culture because it was the ideal representation of sexuality, exoticism, and desirability. Although the main function of the swimsuit edition of Sports Illustrated is for men, women find it useful for fashion and role models (Davis, 76-77). When women read this magazine they are looking for the newest trends and how to incorporate them into their style, but it goes beyond the simple idea of bathing suits. The issue gives women a clear picture of the ideal representation of femininity. Once a woman takes notice of a model; her pose, her facial expression, the context of the photo, etc., that women will try to mirror these images because the purpose of a model is to reflect the perfect image of what it is to be female, giving non model women a guide on how to be appealing and sensational. Another purpose of the swimsuit edition of Sports Illustrated is to “communicate vitality, to lift the spirits of the readers and give them a sense of fun and excitement” as one producer puts it (Davis, 98).

This goal of the magazine makes women feel good about being flirty and fun. Along with the common ideology that women need to marry a man in order to be successful, the swimsuit issue tells women what men think is desirable. It makes women think men want a woman who does not use her brain but instead has great looks. Models are typically thin with perfect features like great skin, beautiful eyes, seductive expressions, and tamed hair. Naturally, women are going to believe the idea that if this image is what men love to look at, then in order for them to get a man they need to be exactly like the models in the pictures.

Latham exemplifies this very point when analyzing beauty pageants because, he states, they “staged performances of physical beauty” (Latham, 90). Additionally Latham goes on to say that “the American beauty pageant now easily assumed a niche within the entertainment industry” (Latham, 90). The Atlantic City owner of Monticello Hotel, H. Conrad Eckholm had the brilliant idea of featuring a bathing suit competition as the main event of the pageant (Latham, 90). As women were using their looks to compete in the modified titles of best looking or most attractive, their bodies were being put on show for all others to view. We can now see that the female body was viewed as something that others would want to look at, like an enticing piece of art that was foreign and sensual in nature.

If good girls who obeyed the rules of attractiveness won the titles than those women who didn’t were made into a spectacles of disgust. Latham explains the story of Louise Rosine, who was a Los Angeles novelist that vacationed on Virginia Avenue beach. During her holiday she made the mistake of rolling down her stockings, which was an offense worth jail time. Rosine was criticized for being old, fat, and violent. Stories explained how the thirty-nine-year-old threw punches at the police officer that arrested her and that she would then be charged for such an act. The significance of this situation was that it was used to scare local women into conformity. This was done through media, by blowing the story out of proportion and thus permitting the bad press to generated gossip that Rosine was a rebel. The outcome for Rosine tells other women that pushing boundaries will produce unsuccessful results. Additionally, the fact that Rosine was single shows that others would want to look at, like an enticing piece of art that was foreign and sensual in nature.

Of course women were only made to believe this side of the story but interestingly enough Rosine was arrested on an intensely hot summer day. None of the newspapers reported this news because it would have suggested to women that acting on their own thoughts was socially acceptable. Through the treatment and media depiction of bad girls, good girls are put in their place through fear. Conforming women are afraid to consider the fact that if they step out of the tiny constricted limitations, that they are ment to fulfill, only bad things will happen to them.
At the same time that women were being placed into categories of good girl and bad girl, countries were using women who wore bathing suits to promote tourism. *Sports Illustrated*, as Davis states, “influences what tourists see, how they see it, and how they understand what they see” (Davis, 99). If the swimsuit issue of *Sports Illustrated* performs this function then it’s comparable to a travel magazine.

Davis mentions that the magazine will often include vacation themes in the background of the models, information on hotels and transportation, articles on recreation and reports of sports native to a featured country, which is usually an exotic place culturally different from North America. Davis furthers this argument by stating that countries that rely on tourism compete for the recognition of Sport Illustrated to feature them in their swimsuit photo shoots because the magazine is associated with publicity. Davis accounts for the correlation between *Sports Illustrated* and advertising by saying that “the swimsuit issues contain many pictures and written texts that mix signifiers of tourism with signifiers of nature, sport, and sexuality” (Davis, 101). The issue at hand is that countries promote their nation through a magazine that features half-naked women. The bodies of these women are being used to generate an economic gain, which the majority of third-world women will not benefit from. For that reason, the majority of men who read the swimsuit edition of *Sports Illustrated* engage in what John Urry believes is the “tourist gaze” (Davis, 103). John Urry states that “to be a tourist is one of the characteristics of modern experience. The tourist gaze involves examination of what we regard as out of the ordinary with an attitude of interest and curiosity” (Davis, 103). A hierarchy in which men consume passive women both individually and internationally leads to the exploitation of women by society. Women that pose in *Sports Illustrated* become objects that men use to travel to foreign countries because they feel they can experience something mystifying.

The history of the bathing suit can be used to explain the still present construction of female bodies. The aftermath of past ideologies, Davis states that;

> Women experience a great deal of pressure to conform to media-related ideals. In the United States, we even tend to believe that women have a moral obligation to conform to, or strive to meet, this beauty ideal. Many women spend an inordinate amount of time trying to shape their appearances to fit the current beauty ideal to gain male approval. As a result, they often neglect to dedicate adequate time to developing or using parts of themselves that would enable them to acquire more power relative to men, such as intellect and physical agility/strength (Davis, 82).

A vicious circle is created in which women are forced to model ideal femininity that is both constructed and consumed by a male dominated society but that is needed for a woman to be validated. The whole construction of being a good girl by complying with society and a bad girl for refusing it is flawed and contradictory. A common theme throughout this history of the bathing suit is that public messages bombard women. Society conjures up sought-after ideas for women. Even now in the 21st century, the ever growing market of diets is meant to prepare a woman’s body for the dreaded swimsuit season. But yet it seems that just before summertime; store after store, ad after ad, present these claims that they have the right bathing suit for a woman’s body type. On one hand the female body is supposed to trim down, suggesting that the body needs to fit the suit. On the other hand the suit is supposed to fit the body signifying that women should feel empowered just being herself. All these sought-after ideas conjured up by culture fuel the good girl/ bad girl binary, creating a worn out reality for women. It really makes a girl wonder; is it really worth it?

References


The concept of post-racialism is addressed in Djanet Sears’ Harlem Duet between the characters Othello and Billie, questioning the possibility of society no longer being embedded in racism. The concept is tied to the idea of cyclical history which asserts that history is never entirely in the past but continues to live on in the ideologies of people. In Harlem Duet, Othello represents the possibility of post-racialism in terms of legal and structural policies that today, meaning post-civil rights era in North America, allow for liberation of all people regardless of colour. However, Billie denies post-racialism in terms of cyclical history where the past remains with its people, even when physical proof is absent, such as legal policies, and points to Othello’s idea of liberation as being directly connected to portrayals of “whiteness”.

In regards to the concept of post-racialism that Sears questions, I would like to consider it in terms of chain-mail I recently received, and have received in the past, regarding the idea that only “white people” can be racist. The email is in regards to Michael Richards’ defense of racial comments in his comedy act. As the email suggests from Richards’ defense, in America, races outside of ‘white’ Americans have the ability to come together in support and pride for their race and rights - for instance Black History Month or Black Entertainment Television - while any form of white pride through organizations exclusive to ‘white’ Americans is considered racist. The email based on Richards’ defense also discusses the double standard regarding racial slurs and violence between two races which suggests only ‘white people’ are considered to have done either act specifically due to racism.
In terms of post-racialism, the email suggests that America should in fact be beyond racism so that any organization around racial pride, including white pride, should not be viewed as a racist act. In response to the email I consider cyclical history, which asserts that history cannot be erased with the privileges of ‘white’ skin, that suggest the past history of racism against Indigenous and minority races by those of European descent should not be ignored. If ‘white people’ are unable to erase their history of racism, would it always be considered a racist act to have a strictly white-only space, whereas other race-based spaces can be exclusive due to their past experiences of racism that portray them as inferior? Furthermore, I question the idea of post-racialism as possible through colour-blindness, which would deny any race-based organization or pride. Based on the email, Richards does not seem to promote post-racialism in terms of colour-blindness which would eliminate pride surrounding one’s race, but a promotion of post-racialism which ignores past hierarchies and assumptions based on race, under the belief that society now views all races equally. Similar to Billie’s voice in Harlem Duet, which denies post-racialism as possible by Othello’s standards because of his lack of consideration of ideological racism in comparison to structural racism, I question the idea of post-racialism under this example due to ideologies still present regarding race, despite legal advancements against racism. Evidence of under-representations of other minorities in regards to history and promotion of cultural practices justify othered races in their promotion of identity in a culture that rests on ideologies embedded in white supremacy. While ‘white pride’ is not in itself problematic, Richards’ assertion of post-racialism seemingly would ignore existing privileges of ‘white people’ that must be considered for the true equality of all races. Further, it may possibly ignore detrimental cultural practices committed by the race that need to be discussed and not glorified in the process of celebrating cultural diversity. Sears, in Harlem Duet, does not seem to explicitly suggest that post-racialism is possible but does consider the possibility of advancement towards it. Similarly, I can only question whether post-racialism as suggested by Richards is possible as well. However, considering the concept of cyclical history where the past cannot be escaped, I question the legitimacy of white pride that ignores its past subordination of other races. I assert that to ensure the ideology of white supremacy is not replicated, other races must be free to exercise their own pride and promote and educate their differences and historical racism as legitimate in the pursuit of a post-racial society.

WORKS CITED
“Be Proud to be White.” Fwd. to Rayna Hillman. 25 September 2011. E-mail.
I am questioning the construction of my identity and that of the Sikh-Punjabi diasporic community. I am particularly interested in Sikh-Punjabi masculinity in the Canadian diaspora, as well as to an extent the North American and European diasporas. Through the depiction of youth and hip hop-based Sikh-Punjabi masculinities, I contest and question the kind of impact these representations are having on other gendered positions, such as my own position as a Sikh-Punjabi female. Using poetic visual language, painting, performance and moving images, I am transforming and subverting notions of masculinity and femininity.

**Title:** Threading  
**Medium:** Acrylic on fabric  
**Year:** 2011

In Threading, I have painted a false beard on my face and am attempting to thread or remove it. The impossibility of this task coupled with my subtly sexual facial expression, with my mouth partly open, reveals a strange and seemingly coded dichotomy. Within this context, I see the audience to be those living in the West, as well the various Sikh-Punjabi diasporic communities. There is a constant negotiation between the narrative, the ideas and the materials where a viewer may seek a certain amount of clarity or answers from the works but the work often functions to pose more questions.
Images of turbans, beards and hair are used as vehicles to create new understandings and question certain established definitions and assumptions about contemporary life and historical Sikh-Punjabi identities and gender locations. I find it necessary to locate myself in the work and to locate the work in the West, as I am primarily addressing this context. In this painting, Christmas Trees, the Christmas trees serve to geographically locate this painting in the West and not in some other distant land. This piece also subtly looks at modes of behaviour and representation, exploring markers of self, sexual desire and sexual orientation.
**Title:** Kiss Me  
**Medium:** Acrylic on fabric  
**Year:** 2011

I address Eastern and Western ideas of vanity, sexual desirability, as well as hair as sacred and what this means for Sikh-Punjabi males, females and families. In re-enacting Sikh-Punjabi youth masculinity through my imaginings and perceptions, I speak to the semi-permanence of identity in the diaspora. There is a performative aspect to my work, as seen in Kiss Me, where I, a female, am seen with my hair wrapped in a bun atop my head with a white cloth, assuming the identity of a Sikh-Punjabi male. This act of a female performing a constructed male identity, an identity that is thought to hold power, is part of a desire to understand the power and what makes it desirable. The image, which has resulted from a performance, references sexual desire, bodily transformation, drag culture, practices of cross-dressing and subjective imaginings about being in the sexualized body of the opposite gender.
Oh, my,

Jennifer Black

my bi-sexual body

doesn’t

get to be my

property

it is stolen by the

straitman and

it is jailed in his

pornography

and

the straitman’s got the world to nod a

languid-head-on as

he binds my

body down

weighs my figure with his diction like a veil made of stone

on which he

carves me what I am

for you to know

my pan-sexual ideology is

partnered with my

femininity
so patriarchy’s disciples can place me in
standard
Woman Dichotomy:
either an angel or a slut and so
simple to say that I
do not love that I
skip long the line that runs ravenous lust down a
lazy sing-song of
just curious
my queer-sexual identity doesn’t
get to have
legitimacy
it is scoffed at by the
diction of
DEFINITION
ABOVE
ACTUALITY
and even from the broad and loving
LGBTQQ*
community
apprehension to acknowledge the honest and whole of my
identity.
WE ALL HEARD HER, BUT DO WE FEEL HER?

Tokini Fubara-Manuel

Reading Lorde’s (1984) essay, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle The Master’s House” is always as emotionally charging, as it is tiring. One hardly ever hears people criticize it, and that is beyond the abilities of this writer – the essay is superb. Most people praise Lorde for her bravery and wise words, as though acknowledging her truth means they practice it. This is the reason why Lorde’s impassioned essays tend to be so tiring – humans hardly practice what is preached and old oppressions take new forms. It is emotionally taxing having to listen to people spew out quotes from Lorde’s essays without holding themselves accountable to their prejudices – without doing the actual dirty work Lorde basically cries they accomplish. The aim of this paper is to invite every one of Lorde’s readers to feel her. Not in the sense of touch but in that of African American vernacular (Ebonics) – really feel her, travel into her world, read her passion and pain, wrap our minds around it, let it move us to the point where we can shed our egos and accept our racism, ableism, sexism, heterosexism and other forms of prejudice.

In Lorde’s (1984) essay she sings the chorus of a token whose marginality comes to box her as well as direct her speech. From placing oneself in Lorde’s position, sounding the words off the written text, it is hard to not feel her frustration and anger. One would propose that the anger from overt racism in The Eighties fueled her speech, but on further perusal it is clear that, almost three decades later, many people still sing this same chorus. Complacency never chases problems away. It only creates that illusion of progress where people can look back and think, “at least it is better than before.” It is this reading from a distance that causes people to perpetuate the same prejudices they aim to destroy.
Scott’s (2005) article is one of numerous pieces explaining the details behind tokenism and oppressive hierarchies that Lorde (1984) was criticizing. Scott (2005) explains how two feminist organizations El Refugio de la Paz and West Coast Women struggled with the issues on racial diversity, representation and power. She explains how informal racial hierarchies caused the “founding members [of El Refugio], who had a vision of creating a shelter for Latinas, eventually chose to leave rather than battle for organizational power with white women who had more financial resources, more available time, and thus more day-to-day involvement in the work of the shelter” (p. 239). Scott (2005) explains the psychological effect of tokenism as “feeling isolated and alone,” with “women of color report[ing] reluctance to challenge the majority opinion” (p. 240). Quoting Yoder (1989), she explains that this “tends to affect self-esteem and results in the desire to withdraw, causing individuals to either isolate themselves or leave the organization” (p. 240).

The conflict in the two organizations progressed from silence to walkouts from meetings and firings (Scott, 2005). Until racialized women and white women who were committed to racial diversity in all aspects of the organization were placed as leaders and more racialized members were added, the friction held constant (Scott, 2005). In her conclusion, Scott (2005) explains that “[g]ood cultural and political intentions alone cannot create a space for change; that space emerges at the confluence of ideology, structure, synergy, and balance” (p. 252). That is to say that racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia and other forms of oppression will not leave simply because people have read Lorde and know that we should accept differences, there has to be a visible structural change in institutions, a synergy of energies, “rather than their additive combination,” and balance so no one is exploited and no one takes criticism as judgments, instead they learn from them (p.252).

In Lorde’s closing paragraph she urges “each one of us here to reach down into that deep place of knowledge inside [him or] herself and touch that terror and loathing of any difference that lives there. See whose face it wears” (para. 16). In this paragraph, this black, lesbian, feminist, mother, and warriorpoet asks her readers to do the long, arduous job of self-examination and acceptance. She asks her readers to face the fear of the other through facing the fear of, and understanding the self. This means that Lorde’s readers would, in order to have truly felt her speech, have to accept that we were all fed the same poisonous hatred – that power vested in the master is also in us. Ignoring the whips in one’s own hands only tampers with what little trust humans have for each other, as we would be blind to whom it lashes. This trust is needed so much. It is this trust and the resulting mutual interdependency that creates “that security which enables us to descend into the chaos of knowledge and return with true visions of our future, along with the concomitant power to effect those changes which can bring that future into being” (para. 6). It is this trust in the other and in the self that will mark a true acceptance of our equal differences and make it joyful to be with one another, but it can only happen when people stop ignoring prejudices and start acting on aspirations of a harmonious and diverse community.

REFERENCES


A feminist curiosity enables us to ask questions about how and by whom womyn’s labor is rendered cheap while rejecting naturalization between gender and the appropriated price of labor (Enloe, 2007). Last May, I went to Bangladesh in order to learn about development beyond a theoretical angle and explore the practical aspects of everyday life from the perspective of our host nongovernmental organization. My particular interest on the trip had been to examine and observe the implications and involvements of rural womyn in the particular NGO’s programs since womyn featured prominently as beneficiaries in the organizations overarching empowerment goals. Since then, I have reflected on the functions of an NGO as similar to that of any other capitalist industry by contrasting these observations with the construction of dutiful daughters in the documentary film China Blue and in Enloe’s Korean/Asian model; as well as by analyzing the links between these creations and an increasingly globalized world economy.

How Jeans Factories make Chinese Daughters

The film China Blue chronicles the life of a young Chinese girl as she moves from her home in rural China to work and live in a jean factory in South China. Jazmine reveals herself to being a second child for her family; a status from which she feels obligated to help her parents as best she can. Documentary style filming follows the lives of and tells the story of Jazmine and her coworkers, especially Orchid, as they experience the harsh realities of working long hours while receiving little compensation. The film also follows Mr. Lam, the owner of the jean factory, as he struggles to compete in the international jean market (Peeled, 2005).

What we observe (and can perhaps speculate on) in the film are the many different and gendered consequences of globalization. For example, we learn that both Orchid and Jazmine feel compelled to work in the factories because they are the second child to either a son or two sets of daughters (Peeled, 2005). China’s One Child Policy had enormously detrimental effects on the rates of female infanticide and on the extreme ways in which the value of a womyn was now immediately compared with that of a man (if one is only to have one or the other). This policy was largely set in place in order to slow down China’s population growth rate and increase its ability to focus on rapid development and establish a method of population control (Peeled, 2005). But as

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1 For the purposes of this paper and its publication, I thought it best to avoid naming the organization that hosted us during our stay. As my paper takes a broad approach to NGO work already, this piece of information is not terribly relevant or important for the central thesis and ideas being explored.
“A backlash against womyn’s rights succeed to the degree that it appears to not be political, that it appears to not be a struggle at all. It is most powerful when it goes private, when it lodges inside a woman’s mind and turns her vision inward, until she imagines the pressure is all in her head, until she begins to enforce the backlash too - on herself.”

- Susan Faludi

we can see in the examples of Orchid and Jazmine, the further devaluation of womyn makes it so that, especially as second children, they are less apt to be following their potential and more likely to be ‘making up’ for their existence by supporting the industrial development of their country. Watching Jazmine’s story made me think back to what I had observed in Bangladesh when it came to womyn’s rural to urban migrations.

**Harder Working Womyn, brought to you by your local NGO**

The organization we were working with was a nongovernmental organization working since its host country’s (Bangladesh) inception. It is celebrating almost 40 years of working towards ‘empowering the rural poor’, helping those who are the most vulnerable and marginalized in their communities. They offer many programs, which include (but are not limited to) skill training, micro-credit loans, school feeding programs, maternity health clinics…etc. Throughout the duration of our visit, we were able to ask questions about the programs and observe meetings as they progressed, and as a result much of the impressions gathered on this subject of my essay origin from direct observations and sentiments incurred while on the actual trip.

Membership in micro-credit circle often came with supplementary skills training programs. These were intended to encourage members in gaining a skill, and then proceed to take out a loan in order to kick start an income generating activity that was related to the training that was received. There was skill training in agriculture, cattle rising and fish farming. However, the most widely used instance of training involved stitching, sewing and mat making. It is important to note here that in an overwhelming majority of cases only womyn are able to become members of a micro-credit circle. While keeping in mind the importance of the textiles industry in Bangladesh and while relating it to the feminized and gendered skill training many NGO’s in the region, including this one, were offering, this begged for a deconstruction of the arguments claiming that this course of action was the only rational and natural thing to do, and that it would empower the masses of womyn who joined the program when facing little other opportunities for income generation. On the contrary, this sort of analysis leads to the investigation of the supposition that NGO’s would be supplying a profit-based textiles economy with ready-to-go trained and gendered female cheap labor.
On Globalization and Global Capitalism

Sklair notes that global capitalism dominates the global system through transnational practices, notably the rise of transnational corporations that affect the economic, political and cultural-ideological aspects of a society. Transnational corporations function as an elite power class that globalizes capital, production and marketing, focusing particularly on the inclusion of the subordinate class through the propagation of its consumerist cultural-ideology (Sklair, 2006). Taking Sklair’s ideas into consideration, the next text I found valuable for this analysis was Stiglitz’s Globalism’s Discontents. Their analysis lays mainly on the ideological practices of the IMF and the shortcomings of many of its recommendations for developing nations. The author first notes that, contrary to classical liberal belief, East Asian countries did their best when their governments were the most involved in liberalizing their economies (Stiglitz, 2004), as is evident in the example of Enloe’s historical rendition of South Korea’s economic boom (which will be visited later on in this paper). On the contrary, it was usually foreign interventions that created problems, notably those of the IMF (Stiglitz, 2004). I would argue that NGO’s become involved by making specific labor markets more accessible for longer periods of time when influencing the development politics of a particular host country, creating a slightly more promising investment for Transnational Corporations and Multi-national Corporations. Trade agreements through the WTO also put developing nations at a significant disadvantage to northern industries, which curves competition into the developed nation’s court (Stiglitz, 2004). Liberalizations of financial and capital markets made developing countries increasingly vulnerable to investors pulling in and pulling out without warning, thus effectively creating a dependent relationship and one that becomes maintained at an unequal balance. These countries are forced to enter an already unpredictable world capital market without the necessary skills to compete with developed nations. These policies threaten to destroy social safety nets by dictating the decrease of expenditure spending and pressuring governments to pick ‘development’ at the expense of gender equality issues, for example (Stiglitz, 2004). Structural adjustment programs usually include high interest and hinder the ability of poorer countries to develop their own industries and instead encourage even higher levels of unemployment (Stiglitz, 2004). If we take these theories further and consider that NGO’s are now training womyn to meet those industry demands for cheap labor, we can see that these two factors are not unrelated, that there exists in fact multiple layers working together to create and sustain a gendered pool for a specific skilled labor that implicitly ties itself to ideological developments that negatively affect and homogenize the category ‘womyn’ in a given community. Stiglitz attempts to explain these issues by examining the responsive nature of the International Monetary Fund to the financial community’s needs, despite the fact that those same economic policies affect the lives of real people (Stiglitz, 2004). This type of rhetoric is also applicable to NGO, whom as Bond outlines in the next section, are usually responsible to their funders before anyone else; funders who also happen to be either transnational corporations or ‘developed’ nations with an arguable stake in what a country like Bangladesh or China produces and more specifically on who produces it.

Bond’s ‘Backlash Against NGO’s’ worries about the growing influence of nongovernmental organizations, especially as they begin to fill in the roles of governments. There are several reasons why Bond is hesitant to trust NGO’s with these influential powers. The first, and perhaps the most problematic, is their accountability to funders but not to an electorate. Secondly, because of its dependency on funds, there is also desperation to maximize memberships. This would consequently create a lot of competition, leaving the rise of NGO influence susceptible to many abuses, such as the stretching of scientific facts in order to make political gain, which can arise at the deficit of communities they claim to be aiding. These actions are also less likely to be penalized. Lastly, NGO’s (in their orchestration of international public opinion) are also very dependent on the media. This can have the dual affect of NGO’s using the media to promote certain projects but also being pressured by the media to adopt more fashionable projects/goals (Bond, 2004). The current NGO fashion is all about this magical word: empowerment. Through this...
tag line, womyn especially are painted as empowered when learning to stitch or sew. However, in examining the gendered nature of skills womyn are taught, while taking into account Sklair's, Stiglitz's and Bond's theories on third party and foreign economic interventions, the empowerment discourse starts to make way for a more troubling and less politically correct discourse on the construction of womyn as cheap laborers.

**Tracking the Militarized Sneaker**

Tracking the Militarized Sneaker, chapter two of Cynthia Enloe's Globalization and Militarism uses the feminist causal explanatory tool by examining the historical links between cheap labor and womyn. Using the example of South Korea, one first point is the incentive for corporate executives to make stitching as low cost as possible in order to maximize their own profit margins. This, coupled with researcher Seung Kyung's findings on the deliberate campaigns launched by South Korea's militarized regimes between the 1960's and 1970's transformed ideas about what constituted natural and respectable behaviors for dutiful daughters. Intertwined with notions on national security, patriotism, modernization...etc, the state goal was to increase the availability of young, unmarried South Korean daughter's in the labor force and thus attract foreign companies. Sneaker companies such as Nike began to hire subcontractors to operate factories in their place and secure relationships for the industry while maintaining close ties with the militarized South Korean elite. However, the 1980's prodemocracy movement led to an increase of factory working womyn as they began to view themselves as citizens rather than as dutiful daughters. As more womyn began to organize companies such as Nike quickly abandoned ship in search of new places to take their business. In her examination of subsequent examples, such as Indonesia, Thailand and China Enloe delves further into the topic by asking if the Korean model and the elaborate construction of a gendered labor poor persists (Enloe, 2007). In this sense, we begin to uncover the capitalist exploitation of a false notion of tradition which ties notions of modernity to a sense of duty towards family and community. Here, Enloe emphasizes a need to investigate how governments and corporations are sending mixed messages about what it means to be a daughter and what it means to be an desirable spouse, as well as the need to unpack how womyn are responding to and dealing with these messages (Enloe, 2007). Following this historical example of the sneaker then proves the author's point that there is a need for feminist curiosity, especially while highlighting the analytical difficulties in deconstructing a femininity that serves both corporate profit and a masculinized state development strategy (Enloe, 2007).

We can apply Sklair, Stiglitz and Bond's observations on dependency and integration in a world market when answering Enloe's inquiry on the status of the Korean model today. I would propose that third party involvement that would be strategically linked and dependent upon funds that linked back to the third world has come to replace previously close knit relationships of TNC’s with local governments. This chain would echo and strengthen historical dependencies that were created through colonialism (thinking back to missionaries and their roles in the colonial project) while concurrently rectifying the Korean model by making it more sustainable and controllable (Reece, 2010). The prior involvement of governments gave way to the possibilities of popular revolutions (as in South Korea) which would compromise the hierarchal relationships between developing nations, developed nations and TNC's. On the contrary, and as Bond outlines, these NGO can actually undermine governments when taking over responsibilities such as education and health for the masses, providing avid breeding ground for corruption. This acts in the interests of the aid industry, which is dependent upon a dependency for aid and irresponsible governments. Within a global capitalist system, this means that NGO’s operate in the interests of a world market to which its own survival is tied. By aligning themselves to seemingly ‘third party’ NGO’s that nonetheless are dependent upon the funding provided by these interest groups, a new-age for colonialism and imperialism develops in a seemingly apolitical fashion (BBC NEWS CORPORATION, 2006) which nonetheless remains unquestioned. The gendered skill training womyn often receive is naturalized and its links towards serving a capitalist demand for cheap labor unexplored.
Conclusion

This paper has drawn connections between capitalist industrialization and the deliberate characterization of certain industries (such as textiles) as womyn’s work which can negatively affect womyn’s capabilities in earning equal pay by economically and culturally confining them to a particular type of work. In Bangladesh, young womyn work in these industries in order to support not only their families but also their chances at a decent marriage, since in Bengali culture it is womyn who pay men dowries. In my observations while I was there, I think NGO’s take advantage of that vulnerability in order to draw more womyn into the working force because of its explicit ties to their own sustainabilities and dependency on foreign funds.

These ideas highlight the intersectionalities between gender inequality and capitalism, and when thinking of this sort of dependency, I found it helpful to use Butler’s definition of the sexual contract and their theories on dismantlement and institutional transformation (Butler, 1988). Throughout my research, I have often asked myself why, if the devaluation of womyn’s work continues to be an issue in countries that have ‘modernized’, there is an insistence to continue to go down the same path in ‘developing countries’ (as with NGO’s Bangladesh).

As explored in this essay, the resounding answer seems to be that it is necessary in order to secure an accumulation of capital and profit for a few, as well as sustain these profit margins with the ideological brainwashing of the masses. Capitalism’s existence depends upon the exploitation of a working class where consequently, systems of oppression continue to be a symptom (Reece, 2010).

My point has not been to single out our host NGO as a particularly ‘bad’ NGO, or to say that all NGO’s are ‘bad’. What I have attempted to argue is that the institutionalized value of capital and profits inherent in almost all industries (those which depend on increasing funds at least) whether a TNC or an NGO, and those industries contribute to the creation of constricting definitions of a gendered category such as ‘womyn’ in order to fulfill a demand for cheap labor. Therefore it is my opinion that, as Butler (Butler, 1988) suggests in tackling the sexual contract and inhibiting gender binaries, that there must be a dismantlement of the profit-based system itself (here capitalism) in order to cure its effects. How that will happen is still a question, but its necessity and the dangerous it harbors is hardly debatable.

Bibliography


the invisible oppressor: a manifesto

Breann Maxwell

This is a story about a woman. A woman who could be described as many things, she is beautiful, intelligent, brave, witty, proud, strong, independent, loving, gentle and compassionate. Despite all of these qualities the first thing people think when they see this woman is someone who is sick, unwell, not healthy and someone who needs their pity. What is the first thing I see when I look at this woman? I see my mother. I see my rock. I see my biggest fan. I see someone who will always be on my side. I see the woman she has always been, a woman who also happens to be chronically ill. This is a story about the oppression my mother faces on a day-to-day basis. She feels this oppression in so many forms: from her body, to her doctors and in the way society and her community treat her.

This lack of understanding and the refusal to listen to what my mother has to say started at a very young age. She was twelve when she experienced her first period. This is a difficult time for many women but it was especially horrific for my mother. She would crawl to the bathroom to vomit because she couldn’t stand without passing out. She couldn’t go to school, she couldn’t socialize with her friends, she couldn’t be a typical twelve year old girl. Upon realizing that there was something wrong, her mother took her to a doctor. The doctor told my mother that she was overreacting and being melodramatic, he said that she should stop whining and making things seem worse than they are. He suggested that my grandmother forced her to go to school. So, my grandmother did just that, she forced my mother to go. On the walk there she passed out on the road... does this sound normal? Does this sound like a little girl who is overreacting?

By the time my mother was in her twenties she had gone through countless bladder and kidney infections- or what she and the doctors assumed to be infections. She went to a doctor to ask about the pelvic pain that she had been enduring. The doctor told her that she was obviously being promiscuous because that is the only reason that anyone ever has this type of pain. My mother had been with one person at this point in her life. ONE. Does that sound like a promiscuous woman?

At the age of thirty one my mother and father decided to try to have a baby. After months and months of no luck they went to a specialist to see if there was an underlying problem. After nineteen years of pain that no one thought was real she was finally diagnosed with Endometriosis. Nineteen years of being told she was overreacting, of being told if she would just keep her legs closed she wouldn’t have these problems, of watching people roll their eyes at her. She finally had a diagnosis. My mother and father were eventually successful in their efforts to become pregnant. They lost the baby. They decided to try once again and became parents on a cold November day. Three years after I was born...
mother underwent a hysterectomy to try to rid her of this pain that had been with her for most of her life. She woke up with the same pain. A part of her gone, the ability to mother another child gone, part of what made her feel like a woman gone, and the pain remained. She was told it was just part of the healing process. She has had this pain since she woke up that day. It hasn’t faded with her scars. It is her life. Everyday is pain.

A few years after this operation she was diagnosed with another chronic condition, Interstitial Cystitis, now called painful bladder syndrome. Painful doesn’t begin to describe what she goes through. Everyone knows what painful is, I am sure that anyone could describe their sickness or injury or whatever the case may be with the word painful. But painful does not begin to describe how my mother feels when she wakes up in the morning.

So much of what my mother has gone through has made her feel less like a woman, less important than the men she tried so hard to explain herself to, less confident in her femininity, the following are a few examples of this:

- Her ability to have children was ripped out of her
- Her bladder was ripped out of her
- She feels unattractive in a body covered in scars and an external bag which acts as her bladder
- Her confidence is gone
- Her pride in her femininity is gone

The way that people treat my mother is appalling; the way they talk about her when she isn’t around is even worse.

- My mother applied for a job at a bank when she was in her twenties, she had recently been diagnosis with epilepsy so she informed the manager of this in her interview. His response to her was, and I quote, “If I wanted a circus act in my bank, I would hire a clown. Thank you for your time.”
- One evening I was at a bar in my hometown with my father; we were celebrating his retirement. A woman approached my father and began to touch his arm and hug him as if I wasn’t sitting right beside him. The first words out of her mouth were, “The two of you are so good to support Tracy the way you have. Doug, it’s amazing how you’ve stayed with her through all of this.”

So, because my mother is sick it’s acceptable for other women to flirt with my dad, like my mom doesn’t even exist? How is it that my father becomes some hero for staying with my mom? My father is an amazing man, but not because he has remained faithful to my mother in good times and bad, in sickness and in health. If it were him that was sick no one would think twice about my mother staying around. Good women take care of their men after all.
I'm afraid of the unknown
I'm afraid of what comes next
I'm afraid of medication
I'm afraid of pain
I'm afraid of getting worse
I'm afraid of getting better
I'm afraid of losing loved ones
I'm afraid of pushing people away
I'm afraid of being alone
I'm afraid of getting out of bed in the morning
I'm afraid of not getting out of bed in the morning
I'm afraid of falling
I'm afraid of life
I'm afraid of death

How do I feel so alone when I'm in a room full of people
How can every place I go be as lonely as the last
How am I supposed to be a wife, a mother, a grandmother, a sister, and a daughter from this bed that has become my prison
How have I missed another concert/play/game/meeting/family dinner/party
How has this become my life
How has this become who I am

How?

Why can't people understand
Why don't doctors believe me when I tell them there is something wrong
Why is it unreasonable for me to ask for something to dull this pain
Why do I have to go through this everyday
Why don't people hear me
Why does it take me falling on my face everyday for a year and a half before a doctor will finally hear me when I say something is wrong
Why does it take an accidental overdose before they pay attention to the amount of medication they prescribe to a woman who is losing weight at such a rapid rate
Why did my mother have to phone
Why did my daughter have to see me in the ICU
Why do I have to lay in bed and listen to my family in the other room
Why do I feel like an outsider looking in on my own life
Why do I deserve to shed all of these tears
Why can't anyone make this better
Why can't I be well

Why?
So Milton says, in Adam’s metered fear,
These words which I do not desire to hear:
“Thy frailty and infirm sex forgiven,”
For he believes it’s Eve who faults by heaven.
But I am woman; hear me roar aloud!
My life, my work, of all my actions proud,
And never bowing down to fault of man
Who, too, reached out to eat from devil’s hand.
Let not my sex permit this madness spread,
That sin of all born human, on my head,
Shall rest, nay! man and woman born below
Alike shall fault and thus be pardoned so.
What purity on Earth can propagate
Equality when man seeks but to sate
An ancient urge to lead, to burn, to quell
The prowess of all women in his spell?
It’s Hell that he creates! when Heaven knows
That both sexes alike have felt the throes
Of life and death - yet inequality
Is to be suffered solely by our “frailty”?
But nay! you can’t deny that women’s plight
Is something so unjust, so worth a fight;
Now Milton, rise and take Puritan pen;
Rewrite: “Women’s oppression soon shall end.”
Women who seek participation in the predominantly patriarchal culture of the military are faced with an interesting challenge. While serving in the military may be considered an achievement or step towards equality, others note the irony of the participation itself. Requisite to the participation in the military is acceptance of an androcentric institution which maintains practices which act to devalue the female gender. This experience has a potentially negative effect on the development of a woman’s gender identity. The following discusses the nature of gender identity development, the impact of a patriarchal structure on women participants, and a short insight to my personal experience with the Canadian Armed Forces.

Gender identity refers to one’s self identification with a gender. This identity is not innate to an individual’s biological sex or sexual orientation but refers instead to a social construct of being feminine or masculine (Levin, 2010). Gender identities are social definitions shaped by external social factors and cultural conditions. For individuals who associate with an institution which embraces a strong organizational culture, aspects of the dominant culture are often adopted into the individual’s self identity (Stoller, 1964; Nelson, 2010; Stets and Burke, n.d.).

Our life experiences shape the selection of our gender-related behaviour and our identity development responds accordingly with our social interaction. This is a socialization process which begins very early in childhood and continues throughout our life. Our experiences influence how we as males and females think, talk and act differently based on acceptable behaviors commensurate with societies definition of gender appropriate behavior. As people act in a manner that maintains their gender identity i.e. masculine or feminine (Stets and Burke, 1966), it is reasonable to assume that women who work in a patriarchal based military structure are prone to adopting a masculine identity.

Socialization of identity through the expectations of a patriarchal institution (Borgatta and Montgomery, n.d.) often includes “gendered scripts [that] serve to legitimize and support the dominant gender system” (Baker-Sperry & Grauerholz, 2003, p. 711). Females employed within the military organization are exposed to and influenced by the masculine culture of the institution.

As a societal construction, gender identity also develops expectations of appropriate and inappropriate behavior based on gender. For women who position themselves in traditionally male dominated industries, their roles directly challenge the gender expectations set out by society. This is of great interest to the feminist community from a paradoxical perspective. Integration of women into the forces promotes empowerment and equality, while at the same time cooperation with patriarchy, a structure that maintains gender inequality.

The military is a predominantly male institution whose establishment and operations are perceived as a masculine activity. It is a “deeply gendered, masculine organization” (Taber, 2005, p. 291) where feminine behavior is “devalued and excluded” (Taber, 2005, p. 291). Women who assimilate into such an intrinsically masculine culture learn that they will remain a highly visible entity if they persist in the expression of undesirable feminine traits (Titunik, 2000). The military is a particularly gendered organization, and the adoption and acceptance of masculine traits is perceived by women to be a required step to achieving status or being deemed valuable within the organization (Levin, 2010).
The “masculinist norms of military culture” (Titunik, 2000, p. 247) are transmitted by both the structure of the organization and the prevalence of the primary group opinion i.e. males. The success of women in the military is often dependent on their ability to internalize institutional norms and embrace and support the dominant masculine culture.

The desire of most women to ‘belong’ motivates the outward expression of acceptance towards patriarchic behaviors that are typically negative towards women and resist the achievement of equality. Women may voice perspectives or engage in behaviors which they would find offensive or sexist outside of the context of the organization. Positive opinion about women, or support for the feminist movement are rarely expressed. Rather than become a target for exclusion, women adopt varying levels or attributes of the predominate masculine culture instead.

Gender identity development theories attempt to explain the social impact of military culture on female gender identity. In a masculine or male dominated culture such as the military, it is extremely challenging if not impossible to be successful or gain acceptance without adopting masculine behaviors, i.e. becoming a social male (Taber, 2005).

Learning theory of gender development describes the influence of the social environment, including reinforcement and modeling, in forming our gender identity. We focus on expressing characteristics which are compatible to our identity, and our identity is shaped by our career choice. Incompatible traits are repressed (Mischel, 1970). From this perspective, women who seek employment with the armed forces are situated in an environment in which only masculine characteristics are compatible and thus expressed, or over expressed. Feminine characteristics are negatively reinforced directly, as well as observed indirectly through the reactions of men to other women. Women adopt masculine identity practices and mimic or model the behaviors of men, including those which are discriminatory against women.

Identity theory describes our motivation for selecting behaviors congruent to desired gender identity (Burke 1980) and the bipolar conceptualization of masculinity (right) to femininity (wrong) (Storms, 1979). Women come to develop a perception that femininity is wrong. Masculine behaviors are right and should be actively selected.

Finally, the symbolic interactionist perspective defines our identity by the interactions with others, and impact on self esteem when inappropriate or unwanted gender behaviors are expressed (Burke and Tully's, 1977). The devaluing of feminine characteristics and behaviors strengthen the patriarchal masculine culture.

Through experience, women in the military develop a gender identity that is alternative to the traditional feminine identity. As SassonLevy (2003) notes, the creation of the alternate gender identity is achieved by replicating the masculine prototype via three interrelated approaches. This includes “mimicry of combat soldier’s bodily and discursive practices, distancing from ‘traditional femininity,’ and trivialization of sexual harassment” (p. 447).

Women in the military learn to accept and accommodate the masculine perspective, even when it is to the detriment of their value as an individual. This includes the acceptance and expressed support for dialogue which disrespects and dismisses women's equality. In cases where women resisted this behavior, the drive to support the dominant culture promotes a resentful response by other women. It is sometimes viewed as a case of ‘ruining it for the rest of us,’ and that these women should put up with it or get out. This places us into juxtaposition between fighting for equality as a woman from a feminist perspective, to equality in the organization as one who embraces the dominant opinion. Women often find themselves at odds such that they openly accept activities which devalue their person, including sexist jokes, innuendoes etc.

From a feminist perspective, the argument can be made that women in the military who adopt masculine concepts reinforce the patriarchal structure. Liberal-feminists, which focus on achieving gender equality through gender sameness, argue that the participation of women in the military supports the attainment of equal rights through equal responsibilities. Military service provides women with the opportunity to achieve equal citizenship to that of a man, and is often referred to as the “feminist egalitarian militarist approach” (Sasson-Levy, 2003 p. 443). By not serving in the military, women accommodate the role of the subservient, protected by the men. This association is exemplified in the Israeli society in which mandatory service (Sasson-Levy, 2003). By not serving in the military, women accommodate the role of the subservient, protected by the men. This association is exemplified in the Israeli society in which mandatory service exists for both women and men. The terms of service for women are reduced or minimal, resulting in a perceived inequality of women based on their unequal service (Sasson-Levy, 2003).

Radical feminists contrast sharply with this view. They argue that women who join the military are in fact “strengthening a fundamentally immoral institution” (Sasson-Levy, 2003, p. 443) and this “intensifies gender

Prior to receiving any education on the topic of feminism or the feminist perspective, my position would have been to support the opinion of liberal feminists. The ability or opportunity for women to join the military was a movement towards equality. Subsequent to the knowledge gained about the feminist theory, I have gained a better appreciation for the theory behind military culture as a driver for patriarchal structure. The adoption of the masculine or androcentric norms, and acceptance of a culture which devalues or degrade femininity not only cooperates with a patriarchic structure, it is in some forms damaging to our efforts for equality. My own participation in the military has spurred a perception that to be successful you must adopt more masculine behaviors. Women who are revered as successful leaders often display a tendency towards masculine behaviors and traits. Overly feminine traits are certainly not preferred.

The androcentric institution has influenced my thinking to the extent that I now consider most typical feminine traits to be negative, and that women who are unable to assimilate should not be supported by the organization. Women who are unable to adopt some level of “toughness” or resilience to the unique challenges of being in the Armed Forces are ineffective in their role.

Upon further analysis, women who serve in the military present a greater discussion piece than just equality to serve. As discussed by Frye (1983), failing to recognize the alternate perspective, we also fail to see the “structure as a whole” (p.5). Service in the patriarchal system is the service of men and men’s interests as men define them” (p. 9).

In conclusion, I believe the acceptance of military culture by women in the armed forces does indeed cooperate and support a patriarchal structure. I also believe our service is a significant step towards gaining equality and respect. With greater understanding of alternate perspectives related to the topic, I recognize the influence of the military organizational culture on the development of gender identity and expression. As is true for many theoretical debates, with greater awareness comes a greater understanding. A new perspective on a previously assumed position reveals “elements of the situation as systematically related in larger schemes” (Frye, 1983, p.7).

References
From a feminist perspective, the power structures of patriarchy systematically oppress women based on the essentialist ideology of male supremacy and female inferiority. Since the Suffragette movement, feminism has continually fought for the equality of women and men within both the public and private realms. Feminists posit domestic violence, as well as other forms of violence against women, as the direct result of patriarchal structures of power that privilege and encourage male domination through the forceful subjugation of women. Feminism understands domestic violence as a complex social and cultural problem, at the center of which exists the issue of gender difference (Moore, 1992, p. 22). Furthermore, sex and gender are understood within feminist ideology as the most fundamental forms of difference between males and females, above and beyond factors such as class and ethnicity. The aim of the feminist movement has been to dissolve the structures of patriarchy in order to achieve gender equality; part of this effort consists of lessening the rigidity of patriarchal gender roles so as to encourage a more egalitarian society: "In order for women to be free of oppression, it is necessary to change the patriarchal structure of society" (Moore, 1992, p. 22). On a daily basis, women exist within sociopolitical and cultural conditions of inequality, which fosters abusive relationships between men and women. In order to break the cycle of domestic violence, it is essential that feminism reach its ultimate goal of achieving equality between men and women.

In the ideal intimate relationship between human beings, partners are reciprocally loved and respected, each finding the union as a source of strength and empowerment. However, when violence and abuse becomes a part of a relationship, love and respect, as well as strength and empowerment are removed from the equation, being replaced with a host of negative emotions and experiences. “Family violence” is an umbrella term used to define violence which “occur[s] in relationships of intimacy, kinship, dependency, or trust” (Straka 2008, p. 256). Violence against girls and women occurs
in various forms including sexual assault, incest, battering, and sexual harassment. Researchers [Schulman, 1979; Straus, 1979] typically define severe assault as actions with a relatively high likelihood of causing injury to the victim [Dutton, 1988, p.1]. Following these lines, wife assault is a specific kind of violent assault against women, defined as any physical act of aggression by a man against a woman with whom he is in an intimate relationship, whether that be sexually or emotionally. Victims of wife assault may find herself too economically dependent upon her male abuser to simply leave him. She may have children that she needs to support and protect, resulting in her decision to endure the abuse in order to help her children. Baly (2010) explains that many women remain psychologically healthy after experiencing severe abuse; however the stressors of the abusive situation increase the risk of depression, feelings of helplessness, and posttraumatic stress disorder. Although there are government programs that work to support and aid battered women and children, these essential programs have experienced an unprecedented decline in federal funding under neoliberal governmental regimes. Moreover, the victim of domestic violence may not be aware that these programs exist. Many victims of violence will use private strategies such as relying on their own resources to resist the perpetrator, or more public resources such as involving friends and family members to change the perpetrator’s behavior or to increase the options of escape as they attempt to address the abuse (Baly, 2010, p. 2298). It is a primary goal of feminism to make sure these women are aware that they have some options; however constrained they may find themselves. Carol Sheffield (1984) argues that male violence against women, as well as the looming threat of violence, is a tool used by the patriarchal systems of power to deny women the control of their own bodies and lives” [Moore, 1992, p. 22].

Domestic violence is the result of women’s oppression under patriarchy. Child abuse occurs less frequently when there are multiple adult alternative caregivers; wife battering occurs less frequently when partners share power equally and make financial decisions together. Furthermore, violence within one family relationship is often associated with violence in another family relationship; wife battering in a family is often indicative of the corporeal punishment of any children within that particular home. Finally, patterns of male dominance that are maintained...
through violence are associated with specific cultural circumstances. For instance, wife beating is infrequent in cultures in which other social norms and cultural practices control women and limit them to severely inferior positions (Campbell, 1985, p. 183).

Feminists seek to force mainstream society to recognize the issue of domestic violence by attempting to put the reality that battered women endure at the forefront of political discourse. Additionally, the aim of feminism is to encourage an egalitarian society in which gender equality can exist and domestic violence can be eradicated. Domestic violence is a continuing cycle that cannot be broken unless there are equal opportunities for men and women to make the necessary changes; feminist activism is part of the solution to this complex social and cultural problem.

Although violence towards women is undeniably a major social problem, violence inflicted against men by women is generally ignored. Kimmel argues that the “victimization of husbands” is often ignored, trivialized or blatantly denied within the realms of public discourse (2008, p. 423). Due to both its rarity and largely unreported nature, violence against men by women is not perceived by dominant society as a serious issue. Therefore, little in the way of governmental funding has been secured to support male victims of domestic violence. Within the public eye, male violence is understood as commonplace, whereas male victimization is considered almost unthinkable. The perpetration of violence is indeed gendered as masculine, whereas to be the victim of violence is femininely gendered: “The alleged similarity of women and men in their use of violence in intimate relationships stands in marked contrast to men’s virtual monopoly on the use of violence in other social contests, and we challenge the proponents of the sexual symmetry thesis to develop coherent theoretical models that would account for a sexual monomorphism of violence in one social contest and not in others” (Kimmel, 2008, p. 423).

Blaming women for being battered has lead many psychologists, counselors, social workers, and physicians to respond to battering on an isolating case-by-case basis (Tifft, 1993, p. 7). Researchers agree that they need to focus on the responses of public policy to battered women. These responses are based on several interconnected factors. To begin, husbands typically repeat their violence and continue to inflict more increasingly physical forms of violence against their wives. A pattern of abuse is described in which the abusers may develop several controlling strategies such as verbal harassment, isolation, control of family finances, destruction of important things from the victim such as photos, threats and physical and/or sexual violence (Enander, 2010, p. 29). Battered women are more likely to suffer stress and serious psychological distress including headaches and depression. In the public eye, battered women are less commonly reported as having initiated violence; the violence they are subjected to is more often defined as self-defense. Finally, the need for women to feel safe and empowered within modern Western culture and society is particularly important because sex equality is a central component in the prevention of domestic violence (Tifft, 1993, p. 9).
In order for society to understand the trauma battered women face, women need to be able to speak out so that feminist researchers can further their analysis and make positive changes, such as the establishment of more safety shelters for women and children. The overall claim of feminism is that patriarchy is a universal condition, oppressing women in all cultural and political settings (Moore, 1992, p. 23). The primary goal of feminism is to achieve equality between men and women. The social and cultural problem of domestic violence cannot be remedied until this goal has been achieved. In order to end the cycle of domestic violence, the patriarchal oppression of women must be overthrown.

WORKS CITED
The purposes of the two posters that have been presented are to gain awareness of the 600+ Missing and Murdered Indigenous women within Canada. I wanted to make a point that Indigenous women within this country are targeted because of, not only their gender, but their race as well. I wanted to demonstrate the reality through these posters that this is a significant issue and it continues to impact Indigenous women. Indigenous women have been subjected to unnecessary violence and I wanted to inform others by these posters so that I can help, if only a little, create social change to end violence against, not only Indigenous women, but all women.
"NOTES FROM MY CLOSET: ON FEAR AND SHAME"
TOKINI FUBARA-MANUEL

Mommy, my feet hurt
the soles of my shoes have been eaten off
I have blisters and scars all over my toes
I’ve been wandering for lives and no one else knows.
Not even you. My life seems so stable
But you can’t see it, that I’m unable
Too scared to stay and open up, so I leave
and when I do I carry with me
grief in my pouch instead of food
It’s stupid I know. Would change if I could
I’d tear myself open so you can see my cracks
and bruises, and bumps and all of my past.
But that is too risky, no one loves what they know
they bask in the essence, the darkness consoles.
The very thought of “it could be or not”
seems to be all that I’ve given; all that you’ve got.
Ignorance is bliss and I put out the light
so you could sleep warmly without thought in sight
And my imperfections are just the beginning!
they go deeper and wider than the belly of hades
into eternity; my bottomless pit
as it grows, it consumes and my flaws grow with it.
So I give you a gift made of heaven’s threads,
un-knowledge, a blanket and a bed
Sleep mother dear, sleep Earth, sleep tight
I’ll keep your eyes shut from the terrors of the night.
People travel long distances to far off countries in the pursuit of romance and sex, whether it is long or short term. The search for anonymity, different “genes”, a stress free life, and a sense of belonging all help feed the sex touruism industry. Travel and tourism carries with it the notion of sexual liberation and exploration, yet through the exploitation of exotic bodies and consumers of the pink economy the tourism industry quietly encourages sexual conformity.

Anonymity is an important factor in travel because it brings with it a sense of freedom. There are no longer as many rules to follow because the tourist is not a permanent resident of the country. A person will not worry about being judged by others if they do not know who the others are. This allows a person to stop, or minimize, their self-surveillance. Less self-surveillance means that a person could be more open with their sexuality because they are not constantly afraid of who will see them acting this way. This might be more appealing to non-heterosexual couples because they are under more public surveillance. There is a trend for couples to travel to New Zealand to get married or honeymoon. This is because “couples – alone in nature – are able to distinguish their marriage from, and elevate it above, other affectionate bonds with their family and friends” (Johnston and Longhurst, 2010, p.135). In this statement the heterosexual couples that are getting married are considering their bond to be stronger than other bonds because they are alone together in nature. But this idea is excluding all other forms of couples who are not able to be married in New Zealand. This then creates a dominant discourse that heterosexual couples will have a stronger marriage bond due to the exotic nature of New Zealand, while other couples who are not married or heterosexual will not experience this bond. Anonymity for heterosexual couples is easier because they are free to do almost anything they like during their vacation stay. For couples of another sexual orientation it is not as easy. Their sexuality may not be seen as legitimate or include the right to marry. New Zealand weddings “romanticizes both nature and heterosexuality as the couple, like the landscapes, are deemed to be pure, natural, exciting, and romantically ‘meant to be’” (Johnston and Longhurst, 2010, p.137).

The search for new or different “genes” by wealthy men and women in developed countries is a trend that promotes racism and exploitation. One of the reasons that males travel to foreign countries is to find a mail order bride. In this case women are not exactly exploited but misled (Johnston and Longhurst, 2010). The men in this situation feel that American women are spoilt, unappreciative, and have too many demands. Therefore they go to less wealthy countries where they believe women think less highly of themselves, as they do of males (Johnston and Longhurst, 2010). By marrying an exotic, usually Latin American, woman they hope to raise their children to believe that men are superior and restore patriarchy to America. This creates a discourse that foreign women have the “right biological makeup and cultural grooming, constructing them as more feminine, traditional, and better mothers” (Johnston and Longhurst, 2010, p.143). Men are not the only ones who follow the discourse that assumes people’s characteristics are genetically inscribed. Wealthy women will engage in ethnosexual tourism in pursuit of a short or long term sexual relationship with a man of colour. This is because “black masculinity is sexualized through naturalizing global discourses about erotic Others as attractive, virile, and masterful” (Johnston and Longhurst, 2010, p.146). Women use these exotic and less wealthy men to break free from the sexual norms and constraints that they are used to. What they do not account for is that the men expect money and material goods in exchange for sex and intimacy. These women also risk “a loss of their self-esteem, a feeling of ‘giving too much’, and a loss of identity...abuse and poverty” (Johnston and Longhurst, 2010, p.148). It is hard to tell if these relationships are a negotiation or exploitation.
When people choose their travel destination they will mostly likely choose a place where they will feel comfortable and welcome. Tourist industries have started marketing particularly to gay men because they are expected to be cosmopolitan, have a large disposable income, and want to have sex all over the world. Homosexual people buying into gay tourism is known as the pink economy. Special flights are offered to non-heterosexual people because “gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people face discrimination and oppression when travelling” (Johnston and Longhurst, 2010, p.152). The travel companies seem to be promoting a message of sexual diversity and pride, but they are also creating a discourse about the global gay. For instance, “The Pink Flight and the Flight of the Fairies makes apparent that gay identities are increasingly forged through consumption practices and this is especially the case in relation to international tourism” (Johnston and Longhurst, 2010, p.152). The practice of a gay person buying into the pink economy forms an ideology that this is what all people do to reaffirm their sexuality. This pattern of consumption and production forms the belief that all non-heterosexual people are wealthy and want to be promiscuous all over the world, when in reality all sexual couples are different.

People seek to get away from the everyday stresses of their lives and have a new experience. This can be seen in the couples who go to New Zealand to marry without telling their family or friends. Weddings have now become “more and more a means of separating a couple from broader ties and obligations” (Johnston and Longhurst, 2010, p.135) as well as getting away from “the unnatural stress and fuss of weddings at home with family” (Johnston and Longhurst, 2010, p.137). People also travel with the hope to reinvent themselves and develop a new attitude while they are on their trip. For example, the ethnosexual women tourists are “interested in being ‘swept away’ by their local male lovers” (Johnston and Longhurst, 2010, p.145). Another group that is hoping for a different experience during their travels are the people going on gay and lesbian trips. While tourism industries sell the idea of a unique and exotic experience to each couple, they are actually all being categorized into either romantic heterosexuals, ethnosexual heterosexuals, or the cosmopolitan gay. Their sexualities become categorized and marketed.

To conclude, it seems that through marketing the tourism industry promotes certain kinds of sexuality while overlooking, and therefore constraining, other types. The stress-free New Zealand wedding idealizes the natural, pure heterosexual couples while ethnosexual tourism and mail order brides all promote heterosexuality as well as racism and exploitation. There is also the pink economy which aims to sell an idea of feeling free to express ones sexuality while travelling. Yet “within the context of the global pink economy ... [it] is potentially based upon uniformity and conformity” (Johnston and Longhurst, 2010, p.153). Creating the idea of a global gay limits the potential for couples who are not heterosexual if they do not follow this discourse. Also this discourse excludes people who are “trapped in poverty, unable to buy into the ‘global gay lifestyle’” (Johnston and Longhurst, 2010, p.153). The idea of the global gay, ethnosexual tourism and New Zealand wedding couples excludes people who don’t have money to travel, the homeless, asexual people, people who cannot obtain passports, refugees, internally displaced persons, and people stuck in poverty and civil violence. It also excludes non heterosexual people who can’t travel to marry because their sexuality is not recognized as legitimate. Also tourists take advantage of the idea that anyone can take a break from their lives by travelling. For the people in less wealthy countries their home is not a vacation for them. They face stress and harsh realities daily and aren’t fortunate enough to take a break from them. The marginalization of sexualities in the context of tourism is happening on a large scale but it can also take place on a smaller scale, such as city to urban movement.

Reference
Patriarchy can be defined as a system of hierarchal beliefs in which all things male or masculine are valued over all things female or feminine. Our current Canadian society is made up of patriarchal systems and social structures that work to oppress women. These systems are evident everywhere, from political structures run primarily by men, to marital relations in which women are expected to take on their husband’s last name. If we desire to live in a society that does not oppress women, we need to change the patriarchal systems we live in. Lorde and Rich introduce us to concepts that I believe could be extremely useful in making these required changes.

Audre Lorde’s essay “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” (2006) introduces readers to a new idea of how relationships might exist between women (particularly feminists). Lorde drew on personal knowledge surrounding lesbian relationships in order to insinuate that if a similar framework was applied to other forms of relationships between women, then we (feminists/women) may finally be able to break free from patriarchal structures which insist that women 1) must only rely on men and 2) must always be in competition with one another. Lorde (2006) proclaims that a lesbian model of relations between women could lead to an existence of mutuality, support and interdependence between women (p 1-2).

Many women use a patriarchal system in order to govern their own personal relationships. They distance themselves, to some extent, from other women because they fear the connotations associated with the term lesbian (i.e. manhater). However, if women use this male-dominated system in their interactions with one another, we will never be able to build strong and healthy relationships. Instead oppressive systems become so naturalized that they eventually are viewed as inevitable and if women are encouraged to believe that they cannot maintain supportive relations with one another, they will never be able to fully band together in a fight against their oppressors.
A brief class discussion surrounding Lesbian Feminism brought up Adrienne Rich’s idea of a lesbian continuum. She describes this as “a range - through each woman’s life and throughout history - of woman-identified experience; not simply the fact that a woman has had or consciously desired genital sexual experience with another woman” (1980, pg. 18). This incorporates an ideal of strong, intense relationships that can range from experiences between family members, to those between co-workers, friendships and sexual partners. I feel as though this could a definition of lesbianism that is not about sexual preference or distancing yourself from males and heterosexuality, but is instead about closing the gaps in female relationships. I feel like this may be a less threatening use of the term for many women who fear an all-or-nothing approach to how relationships, both sexual and non-sexual, should function.

Rich’s discussion of a different range of lesbianism ties in well with Lorde’s notion of a lesbian framework between relations of women. Both encompass a view of strong female relationships in order to maintain a healthy existence between and amongst women. We have been governed and oppressed for too long by systems that keep women away from one another. Women, feminists in particular, should be able to see the power the lies within building strong, healthy and supportive relationships between females (and female identified individuals). Whether we adhere to Rich’s lesbian continuum to label our experiences, or we make use of a lesbian framework as Lorde suggested, we need to change our relations with other women before we expect to change our relations within society as a whole.

WORKS CITED
My mind is warped
My body is torn
My eyes are grey
My soul is worn

I cook your meals
I clean your mess
I tell you I love you
I fall asleep on your chest

My exhaustion consumes me
My only friend; this darkness
My senses clouded in anger
My soul fighting a state of sadness

I wait for a time of satisfaction
I struggle against my fears
I wait for a sense of calm
I smile through these years

M-Jay T.
Domestic Violence
I am a victim of domestic violence. I know what it’s like to be scared for your life. To CRY and CRY and CRY. To be SILENCED;

“SHUT UP YOU FUCKING SLUT!”

How the hell can there be theories that feminists aren’t needed? How can a society say that women have so many choices, that they have power, that they are no longer oppressed?

I am a woman, I have had no power, and I have anguished in despair at my lack of choice.

That is oppression, you fool!
To be beaten into a corner, crying out for your life.

“Please stop”

“I won’t leave”

“I promise”

“I’m so sorry”
A women's soul left out hanging, as his heavy fist swallows her whole, over and over. Her body becomes numb as the fear sets in. This fear is so intense that it doesn't disappear when he is gone; rather it engulfs her, spreading like a deadly disease throughout her, a constant reminder that he has taken the light out of her, she is empty.

“Stop” ..... “PLEASE”... “I am so sorry”... “I won’t leave”... “I promise”...

Women wake up daily with bruises on their bodies, feeling empty inside, alone. You can’t tell me they don’t when I’ve woken up day after day with those same emotions and that same anguish.

Society is in desperate need of feminists. Don’t you dare tell me differently!

“Shut up you fucking slut!” I’ve been silenced. I’ve needed the voice that was exiled from my body by a man that had no respect for women, who took away her power and forced her to believe that she had no choice.

To say that feminists are not needed is an outright lie!!! The idea that post-feminism exists in our present day is a lie! Men that believe that women have the same rights as them, that they no longer suffer oppression, that they are “equal” are blind. Women who believe that the choices they make are their own are consumed with consumption, they are lost and naive. These men and women are smothered in the patriarchal society that suspends them into believing that women’s oppression no longer exists. How many women walk at night with their keys in hand, one eye over their shoulder? How many have heard the words bitch, cunt, slut and whore repeated, and repeated throughout their lives? I do and I have.

“YOU CAN’T LEAVE YOU FUCKING CUNT”

“You’re just a fucking whore”

..........“stop ..... please” ..........

How is it that women are not oppressed today, in our society? If this were true words like “cunt” would not exist in a person’s vocabulary. No one would be able to tell me that I can’t leave, literally forcing my body to surge to a quick halt. No man would be able to tell me that “no one will ever love you like I’ve loved you”. No man would be capable of bringing me down to such a disgusting level.
Rape

Is our society blind? Are people so stupid that they can’t see that women are constantly being abused in so many different ways? Is it not obvious to people that feminism is still an essential part of life?

I’ve had my legs forced open. My arms tied above my head.

Figuratively:
Society spreads our legs open with images of sex infecting our media sources, consuming our immature minds, moulding us to belief that we have to be someone, something provocative. Men have forced our arms above us, literally penetrating our bodies with further repetition of who were are meant to be, objects of their desire.

“Why the fuck are you crying?”

“Can’t you just fucking pretend you’re enjoying this?”

Literally:
So many women have suffered bruised knees as a strange man engorges himself in her. They have cried out to stop as he’s ripped into her delicate un-touched, most intimate parts.

I now watch from a distance, in my mind, as he drags me by my hair, throws me into the shower and leaves. I’ve felt the numb coldness that washes over a woman, as her mind floods with tears, as the burning hot water smothers her body. Her voice is gone, my voice was gone.

Do not tell me that feminists are not needed to come together to speak for those who have lost their voices. I’ve yearned for these women.

“Please just let me talk to her”
“I just want to call her”
“Mommy please come get me, please come save me”

She had tried to shatter the glass that locked her in his room, the room that she so severely suffered the apparent oppression that does not exist. She had thrown her fists up against the wall screaming at him to let her be free, “just let me go”.

“please just let me go”
Abuse

It took 9 months of endless abuse, degrading verbal terminology, and his hands around our throats while countless times he forced himself upon us, before we finally shattered the glass, before we escaped.

It took 4 months of bi-weekly therapy session for us to finally realize that it wasn’t our faults, that we hadn’t done anything wrong.

It still takes countless numbers of women to remind each other daily that we do not have to succumb to society’s abuse.

These women are needed to save women who are drowning in man’s power, who have lost their own sense of self. These women are needed as voices to women who have lost their ability to speak, who are murder or missing.

So to all those ignorant people who think that feminists are not needed, who think that society is over women’s oppression, consider this me proving you wrong. Oppression comes in many different forms, spousal abuse, rape, degrading terminology, extensive and repulsive media images and the list goes on. Take this into consideration all you disbelievers....

• Between April 1, 2005 and March 31, 2006, nearly 106,000 women and children were admitted to shelters, most often to escape abuse. (Statistics Canada)

• Nearly 8 in 10 abused women in shelters on April 16, 2008 were under 45 years of age. (Statistics Canada)

• My eight year old cousin stood in front of a mirror 4 months ago and asks me if her shirt made her look fat, followed by how she would love to lose a pound of two.

• Women are so insecure that they insist that fucking as many men as possible making them feel better, hole, as if it is filling a void. Are these women so vulnerable and misguided that they are unable to fill this apparent void by themselves? But it’s their choice right?

• An article that was published in the Times (August 2010) states that an Afghan woman was traded to another family because of her families bad deeds. Living in her new in-laws home she was beaten and slept with the livestock. When she tried to escape with a group of other women, these women tried to sell her. Her name is Bibi Aisha. She was arrested with these women (who tried to sell her) and returned to her in-laws, where her husband took her into the streets and asked what should be done with her. The community responded by demanding he cut off her ears and nose, to which he did.

• 30% of women killed are murdered by their boyfriends or husbands

......have I convinced all you post-feminist believers all you judging, un-educated souls?
reflexive portfolio on

white privilege

Jane Maina

My decision to reflect on this subject stems from an unfortunate experience I had in one of my courses last week. We were discussing colonialism and its attending aftermaths, particularly the cultural genocide that happened to most of the colonized Indigenous people not only in Canada but everywhere in the British Empire. One courageous student (I’ll call him Ken) raised his hand and asked the class whether we ever wondered who started all these theories about colonialism, cultural genocide and the rest of the colonial evils. Our very professional instructor assumed her usual, deep analytical demeanour and encouraged the class to respond to the question. Ken clarified his inquiry, asserting that it seems like there is a group of high powered individuals who lord it over everyone else, leaving the rest of us helpless and powerless. He wondered who the so called powerful people were.

In what I considered a light-hearted response, I told him that everything we know as truth today was handed down to us by the white, educated, protestant, heterosexual male. The rest of the class responded in what to me, was safe amusement, though I sensed that Ken did not think what I had said was funny at all. I tried to diffuse the now apparent tension by reminding him that what I had said was a direct quotation from the “Contemporary Human Behaviour Theories” a text book that we had all used for the six credit Human Behaviour course. For some reason, he seemed even more exasperated as he explained his struggle with an assignment which required that we analyze Memmi’s book, The Colonizer and the Colonized. The instructor was now genuinely concerned that this discourse was turning counter-productive. She tried to dissolve the tension by reassuring Ken that we will explore the subject further, before we start doing the assignment.

However, Ken was not ready to let things go. It was apparent that he was determined to have us explain why we must go on and on about colonization, when we are not sure whether these theories existed or not. At this point, I was getting a bit impatient. I simply could not believe that he was trying to minimize and trivialize the devastating economic, emotional and psychological effects of colonialism. Directing my comments to the professor, I said that my short experience in the social-work faculty has taught me to name oppression for what it is. I explained that through the Feminist Perspective course, I have realized that there is a phenomenon called “White Privilege” and lamented that it was very unfortunate that the social work students who are supposed to deconstruct colonial myths continue to ignore the obvious oppressive and discriminative structures of the society.
Even before I finished what must have come across as a direct attack on Ken, he said: “Stop! Would you just stop!” The anger and hostility with which he addressed me shook the whole class, including those who had obviously dismissed our discourse as the usual “us versus them” bickering. Before the professor could diffuse the blow-up, the now aggrieved Ken quickly packed his backpack and left the class. It took us quite some time to recover from the unexpected reaction. I personally did not expect this extreme anger because from the very fruitful discussions we had had in the class, I had started feeling that the environment was safe enough for everybody to express what they felt. The professor herself had made it clear from the beginning that one of her goals was to create a safe forum where we could all learn as much as we could from each other.

Fortunately, the professor’s calm demeanour saved the day. Though she was caught off guard by Ken’s abrupt departure, she quickly took charge of the discussion and reiterated that her unrelenting goal is to promote safe discussions. She allowed enough time for people to respond. Thankfully, almost everybody was ready to talk. Most of the students expressed deep regret that the situation had blown out of proportion. They however agreed that White Privilege was a reality. Others observed that Ken had a right to feel attacked. My comments were too obviously directed at him, especially the assertion that most human behaviour theories were master-minded by the white male. They also argued that all of us, including the white students have been victims of the system at some point in our lives. Thus we should not assume that all whites are privileged. The professor tried her best to make us understand what the phenomenon is, including the fact that that afternoon, she had entered a fancy store that sells jewels without attracting undue attention from the security guard because she can pass for a white woman, but when an Aboriginal customer appeared at the same store, the guard was obviously very alert and vigilant.

I personally felt very sad that I had derailed the class and made a colleague so uncomfortable that he had to leave. I insisted that my comments were not a personal attack and promised to apologize to Ken not for the point I was trying to make but for the manner in which I delivered the message. The professor assured us that she would follow up with Ken and continued probing whether everybody had said whatever needed to be said. From my observation, though I could be wrong, this is a small evening class that comprises four Caucasian students, including Ken, three Aboriginal students, two African students and a gentleman who may either be Aboriginal or Asian. One student commented that our combination provided the best environment for a meaningful, open discussion about race since there does not seem to be a dominant group. Another student indicated that that was the first time she had ever experienced any honest discussion about race and said she was very pleased to be part of the class.

I went home feeling very disappointed with myself. No matter how much I tried to dismiss the class as one big, bad joke, I could not. I had to go On-line and check out what the literature had to say about white privilege. To my amazement, there is quite a bit of research on the subject, including the fact that anger, guilt and paralysis is a predominant response to discussions on privilege. For example, a research participant reported that her response to any discussion on white privilege is the desire to retreat from an overwhelmingly impossible task and to avoid paralyzing feelings of guilt about her privilege. Another research participant said she was tired of feeling like she has to apologize for being white. To her, the personal struggles she experiences every day do not make her feel privileged at all. She actually felt victimised and oppressed by employment equity, affirmative action programs and the constant talk about discrimination (Solomon et al, 2005).
These findings were very eye-opening to me. First, it is clear that any discussion on white privilege is bound to cause profound discomfort. While some participants in the research on white privilege dismissed the phenomenon as artificial and divisive, others derailed the conversation, or withdrew in silence. Others lacked the ability to separate personal struggles from the discussion. By drawing too much attention on their discomfort, frustration and anger, they “ensured that there was no space to address the needs of the other groups, whose existence is mired in oppression” (Solomon et al. 2005).

As an African immigrant, I have first-hand experience with the dehumanizing and degrading legacy that was and is still being visited on the Indigenous people. Through deliberate and systematic destruction of cultures, British Imperialists were able to take away Indigenous peoples’ human worth and dignity, reducing them to mere objects of oppression and exploitation. It would be wonderful if we could all ignore this history and urge everybody to move on, but the sad reality is that the economic, political, social, psychological and spiritual exploitation that began with colonialism continues unabated to this day.

One of the salient values in the Code of ethics for social workers is to uphold the intrinsic worth and dignity of all persons, respecting their right to self-determination and autonomy. This is one value that I endeavour to internalize in my work with clients. Even as I challenged Ken to take that significant step towards admitting that the system is oppressive to the “other,” it was not out of the desire to put him down or shut him up. My explanation originated from this value that exalts social workers to proffer equal rights and privileges to all our clients, regardless of their color, gender, class, age, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual preferences and ability.

As far as I am concerned, the first step towards challenging these hostile structures that continue to perpetuate discrimination is to feel and own the discomfort that comes with the realization that you could be contributing to the oppression. For example, I have already acquired and unconsciously adopted a few stereotypes regarding the Indigenous people of Canada, including the fact that they are over-represented in the social welfare system and jails, they drop out of school early and most of their children are in foster care. When these negative stereotypes are hammered in the media and the neighbourhoods every day, even the rest of us, who should know better, begin to feel superior. I cherish these enriching courses that have continued to sensitize me to the ugly tendency to stereotype other human-beings.

In my pursuit for social justice, I must however be very careful how I bring my views to the table. The values of integrity, objectivity and competence require that I challenge discrimination and other injustices with empathy and compassion. In this discussion on white privilege for example, if I had listened to my colleague more empathetically, I could have perhaps put my point across more sensitively. Emotions can be very high especially when colleagues are unable to separate their personal pain from the painful experiences of the “other.” On such occasions, I should do my best to diffuse the situation instead of escalating it. I have to deliberately work at respecting my colleagues and according them the dignity they deserve, without compromising my endeavour to challenge discrimination. It’s a tough call.

Reference
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN MALE SAME-SEX PARTNERSHIPS: Silencing, Myths and Comparisons

— MARCIA TOMS

This paper discusses the ideals surrounding the silencing of domestic abuse in both heterosexual and gay male relationships through the division of the private and public spheres, and also how queer groups work to silence victims within their own communities. This paper examines the myths and realities surrounding male same-partner domestic abuse. It looks into not only the myths themselves, but also how the myths have impacted the lives of both victims and perpetrators within violent same-sex male relationships. Similarities and differences between heterosexual and male same-sex relationships are looked at in terms of violence in order to build a better framework for understanding the ways we as a society can come together in order to help and treat those within abusive relationships. Suggestions are made in terms of laws and legislation. Also, methods for educating and helping current professions are given and the need for more research is addressed.

Keywords: partner/domestic abuse/violence; Same-sex relationships; gay communities; silencing; myths

Domestic Violence in Same-Sex Partnerships: Silencing, Myths and Comparisons

Introduction

There is little research done on domestic violence within same sex male relationships. This form of abuse is not only prevalent, but more importantly it is silenced by not only the heterosexual communities within our society but the queer communities as well. My research on the topic focused on why this silencing occurs, as well as both how and why we need to overcome it.

The silencing of same-sex domestic violence, along with the myths surrounding this form of abuse have made it extremely difficult to determine the exact numbers of victims and perpetrators that take part in this horrible act. Further, without proper numbers and communication from individuals who have lived within these circumstances, it is difficult to determine the prevalence of different forms or levels of experienced abuse, the resulting consequences of the abuse; or effective ways for treating this form of abuse. This paper will discuss the myths surrounding same-sex domestic violence and will present an understanding of some of the statistics surrounding the topic.

Similarities between heterosexual and same-sex couples involved in domestic abuse are important in order to establish a connection with what we already know through our research on heterosouex domestic violence. These similarities can also help to elicit compassion and understanding from outsiders of same-sex relationships, who may understand domestic abuse within a heterosexual realm. More important are the differences between same-sex and heterosexual domestic violence. It is essential to establish the differences in order to illustrate the importance in researching same-sex domestic violence, since the two forms of partnered relationships should be approached and treated in different ways. Also, research dealing with same-sex partner violence will help eliminate the myths surrounding same sex domestic abuse and will create safer places for this topic to be discussed. Further, this material can be used for educative purposes. This will in turn remove the silencing surrounding same-sex partner violence and hopefully lead to better protection and resources for those individuals involved in this form of abuse.

Silencing

Silencing of domestic abuse is not a new ideal that is implemented within queer communities alone. Up until the 1960’s there was little research done on partner abuse within heterosexual relationships and even less available in regards to queer relationships. Communities are socialized with the belief that what happens within a household is the responsibilities of those people alone. The public and private spheres are two areas that have been kept separate and therefore any abuse that occurs within the private sphere of a household is simply that; private. Vickers (1996) discusses the ways that these ideals have established a separation between the needs of an abused individual and the help granted by outsiders. She states, “Indeed the ‘privacy’ principle has been a major obstacle in effectively addressing heterosexual domestic violence in terms of disclosure and official responses. The police, for example, have historically shown a great reluctance to interfere in the sacred patriarchal domain of personal (heterosexual) relationships” (Vickers, 1996, p.5). This view is widespread within the heterosexual community, but Vickers believes it has also translated over to the queer community.

Vickers’ (1996) article also discusses a second way that silencing occurs in regards to the privacy argument. This second stream of thought occurs within gay and lesbian communities as an argument used by activists in order to fight for the rights of gay men and lesbian women. This argument follows that, “sexuality is a personal, private issue which the state has no business regulating” (Vickers, 1996, p.5). This argument demonstrates how an
individual has freedom to choose their own sexuality, yet by saying that the state has no right to interfere with this (ex. through marriage laws), they are also stating that what happens within a sexual relationship is private (ex. abuse) and therefore the state also has no business within such occurrences either. The privacy argument is a compelling argument as to why outsiders have often steered clear of domestic abuse, and also demonstrates why it is difficult to get answers within research.

Brown (2008), for instance, also agrees with Vickers (1996) that same-sex partner abuse is often silenced by the ideals of the private household. Her article demonstrates several of the same points as Vickers, however she takes things in a slightly different direction by discussing another silencing technique: shame. Brown argues that often gay men and women are shamed into not coming forward with reports of domestic abuse because of, “shame brought not only to the victim through possible ‘outing,’ but also the shame brought to the gay community as a whole” (p. 461). Brown’s (2008) argument goes on to discuss the fear, faced by the GLBT community, of negative stereotypes that will continue to emerge if they were to admit to a large occurrence of domestic violence. The idea is that, if people were to realize the prevalence of domestic violence within same-sex partnerships, it might then strengthen and support ideals of homophobia. This argument was also discussed in great length by Island and Letellier (1991) in their book Men Who Beat the Men Who Love Them. At one point they state, “Some members of the gay community believe that information about gay male domestic violence, if widely known, would merely fuel the fires of anti-gay discrimination from the heterosexual world” (1991, p. 9). Research demonstrates the difficulties gay men have in coming forth with accounts of abuse because of this silencing, however if the voices of these victims and perpetrators continue to be silenced then this problem will never disappear. There are concerns of the issues surrounding same-sex domestic abuse worsening, since law enforcement, education and outsiders are not properly prepared to deal with and treat the individuals involved in same-sex partner abuse. We cannot help people if they remain silent and we cannot create preventative methods to lessen a problem that we are told does not exist. Both heterosexual and queer communities are harming the people within our societies by turning their backs on those within these abusive situations. Even though silencing shows up in a majority of the works I have read, an even bigger obstacle for victims of male partner abuse to face are the myths surrounding this form of violence.

Myths

Research shows that one of the biggest myths surrounding same-sex male domestic abuse is the theory that, as Kirkland (2004) puts it, “boys will be boys” (p.5). Our society perceives males as aggressive and masculine; roughhousing is often a common side-effect of growing up male. Therefore, abuse in gay male partnerships is often seen as “natural” and accepted. The dangers are down played and as Kirkland (2004) describes, “The notion, held by some, that men are violent by nature contributes to the perpetuation of male violence” (p.5). This myth works to reinforce a notion of male versus male violence being a lesser danger then male versus female violence. This lessening in regards to the levels of danger and the degrees of abuse cause outsiders, including individuals within law enforcement agencies, to shrug this form of abuse off. This leads to an increase in under reported cases, escalations in violent acts and the potential for a circular effect in the relationship whereby the victim continues to go back to the perpetrator because he has nowhere else to turn.

Another myth that Kirkland (2004) discusses in his paper is the argument that men are capable of taking care of themselves. Along with the assumptions about men in the previous paragraph, our society also assumes men to be strong and tough. They should not need outside help; they should be able to handle any situation on their own, including abuse. These are the characteristics that our society believes gives a man status and worth; it is these things that make a true man. Kirkland (2004) states:

A common belief within mainstream culture is that men cannot be victims, that men do not suffer, and that “big boys don’t cry.” The ideal of masculinity has traditionally connoted independence, self-reliance, strength, power, dominance and emotional restraint. A gay man may attempt to assert his notion of what it means to be manly, while at the same time feeling inadequate and less than manly because of his sexual orientation. He may resist seeking therapy to address his victimization in an intimate relationship because it may seem equivalent to surrendering control to another. (p.5)

This is another myth that reinforces the idea that male same-sex domestic violence has a lesser danger level then heterosexual partner abuse.

Both myths lead to less help being granted to victims in queer relationships than to those within heterosexual partnerships. Potoczniai, Mourot, Crosbie-Burnet, and Potoczniai (2003) demonstrate this in their opening paragaph by discussing the murders committed by Jeffrey Dahmer. They discussed how in one particular case the police returned a young boy into Dahmer’s care, even though it was obvious that he has been beaten badly. The police were quoted as saying, “It’s a boyfriend-boyfriend thing” (Potoczniai et al., 2003, p. 252). These stereotypes of
masculinity create damaging circumstances for males when they are in dire need of help. They create circumstances where the victims are either not comfortable asking for help or unable to ask for help, and then not given help when they do request it. This leads to under-reporting of abusive circumstances, which in turn creates situations that are not understood because we do not have the research and background education to deal with them.

There are many other myths surrounding male same-partner abuse; however the last one discussed here involves the notion that only women can be victims of domestic abuse. This assumption labels same male-partner violence as non-existent and thus creates the notion that there is no need to intervene within minor disputes of same-partner couples. It illustrates that we have no need for research and education about the topic, nor do we require resources or findings to help victims of such abuse. Further to this myth is the notion that all domestic abuse within male relationships must be dual-sided. There cannot be a victim or a perpetrator, because males cannot be victims, only women can. Potoczniak et al. (2003) states, “men, unlike women, have been socialized to defend themselves” (p.225), and our society has been socialized to believe this. Therefore, once again we are met with a lack of outside help because it is unclear as to who requires help.

Instead, it is more likely that both parties are in the wrong and therefore they will work it out between themselves. As many of us know, this is certainly not the reality. As Rohrbaugh (2006) puts it, “The existence of same-gender domestic violence contradicts this assumption and suggests that domestic violence is an abuse of power that can happen in any type of intimate relationship, regardless of gender or sexual orientation” (p. 202). Therefore, since we know this abuse takes place, we need to know what resources are required to treat both the victims and the perpetrators in these situations. The first step is to compare what we know about gay male violence to what we know about heterosexual violence. From here we can discover the differences and work towards changing our current resources, education and laws to fit around these differences.

**Comparisons**

It is important to establish that all incidents of domestic abuse can differ in one degree or another. The experiences of straight men or women can be similar to or drastically different from the experiences of lesbian women or gay men. Further to this, experiences of two different gay men can also be similar or very different from one another. Situations and circumstances change, and so it is important to note that not all similarities are the same for each individual, nor are all the differences. Each account of domestic abuse is unique and should be treated as such.

Partner abuse experienced between heterosexual couples and gay male couples have many similarities. An example can be seen in occurrence rates of violent incidents. Exact percentages are difficult to calculate because of under reporting, however research done by Stanley, Bartholomew, Taylor, & Oram (2006) suggests “that violence occurs in 21-50% of male same-sex relationships, which is comparable to rates reported in lesbian and heterosexual couples” (p.31). This similarity is the most important because it illustrates the true need for more research on this overwhelming topic. Further, if our society believes that domestic violence in heterosexual relationships is prevalent enough to warrant such in-depth research, then surely it can be concluded that the similar prevalence reports of domestic violence within male-gendered partnerships would call for the same.

Domestic abuse between heterosexual couples, compared to gay male couples have many other similarities that are beyond the scope of this paper to discuss, however I have included a list of similarities. This list, by Parry, S. & Skill, L. (2010) consists of the following: control tactics, effects, entitlement attitudes, goal is to control & dominate, children are affected, other people & pets are also at risk, post-separation abuse is common, under-reporting is common, each victim is the expert on their own experience & need. A set of differences listed by Parry, S. & Skill, L. (2010) in their manual consists of: seeking help can mean coming out, additional tactics & risks, male privilege less predominant, less effective responses, very few services, role of LGBT community, wrongfully seen as mutual, legal remedies are limited.

This paper has already discussed the role of the LGBT in silencing victims of domestic abuse, how male same-sex partner abuse is often considered to be mutual, as well as the reality that there are less effective responses from police and outsiders to help victims within this form of violence. Research has shown that one of the most prominent differences for same-sex domestic violence is the fear from a victim of being “outed” by their partner. Aulivola (2004) lists this as one of the main differences in domestic violence, as well as one of the main issues surrounding under reporting of abuse. Aulivola (2004) says, “In some circumstances, outing may result in the loss of a job, support systems, and even child custody. The abuser may focus on the existence of homophobia to reinforce the victim’s fears that people will be unwilling to help because of the victim’s sexual orientation” (p. 164). The victim’s fears are not unfounded in this instance. Homophobia is still a major concern in our current society and all of the above mentioned consequences of being openly gay are a reality for many men and women. Until societal views change, these things will continue to be
relevant issues. Therefore, we need to build on our existing resources to educate counselors, law enforcement agencies and work places to be more accepting of different sexual orientations. Further, shelters and facilities that are established to help individuals suffering from domestic abuse need to be more aware of these issues in order to adjust their programs to help all individuals. These resources and shelters also need to better advertise their own acceptance towards people from the LGBT communities, so that individuals are aware that resources are available to them.

They ways that laws affect heterosexual and same-sex couples differ a great deal. The differences in legal aid and protection for the two have contributed to a large majority of unreported incidences, since the legal ramifications can be drastic towards not only the perpetrator but the victim as well. Up until fairly recent the existence of sodomy statutes amongst many states and countries, made it impossible for a victim of male same-sex partner violence to file a report and request for protection without admitting to the crime of sodomy (Aulivola, 2004). This crime could result in “penalties that ranged from fines to 20-year prison terms” (Aulivola, 2004, p.164). Although recent enforcement of this law has been rare, the law itself has been enough to reinforce stigmas and stereotypes surrounding sexuality and homophobia. In 2003 the U.S. Supreme Court over ruled the sodomy statutes, stating that it is within one’s own right to liberty. Although this is a huge leap forward for gay and lesbian rights, the facts still hold that many laws surrounding heterosexual couples, such as family law, do not uphold for same-sex couples. “For instance, many domestic violence statutes in these states refer to ‘partners,’ ‘cohabitants,’ or ‘household members’ but fail to clearly express the inclusion of same-sex couples. Consequently, the application of these laws may rely on the discretion of the individual judge who may or may not be affected by person bias” (Pattavina, Hirschel, Buzawa, Faggiani, & Bentley, 2007, p. 378). This form of misguided nature within the legal system makes it easy to see how individuals within the legal system can be unsure of how to react to situations of same-sex domestic violence, which is why our society needs to start expressing the need for more clear language and proper education on these circumstances. Everyone has the right to be free of abuse and violence, however until these freedoms are properly documented for everyone, they can be easily side stepped.

Conclusion

Domestic violence within same-sex partnerships is as, if not more, prevalent then domestic violence within heterosexual couples. The silencing administered by our current society works to repress reports from both heterosexual and queer victims of partner violence. Older views about private and public spheres continue to aid in a belief that domestic abuse is something that needs to be dealt with internally, and therefore outsiders should simply look the other way.

In order to fully be able to treat and help individuals of same-sex domestic violence our society needs to invest in much more research surrounding the topic at hand. Extensive work needs to be done in order to understand what the primary causes are surrounding domestic abuse within these relationships and what forms of resources and support systems are required in order to help the victims when they need it. The problem that continues to re-occur is the homophobic status of the society we currently exist within. Until our society moves away from a patriarchal heterosexist society, under-reporting of this form of abuse will continue to happen. Further, we will be unable to get cooperation from the LGBT communities or from either victims or perpetrators until they feel comfortable and accepted within our society.

Finally, the most important act that continues to come up within research and articles is the need for a different legal system. Our current society needs laws that include individuals from the LGBT community, instead of either leaving them out completely or leaving open ended legal wording that results in them sometimes being included and sometimes not. We are supposed to live in a free world, where everyone has rights and liberties, however it is clear that this is only the case for those that are fortunate enough to live within the dominant cultures. Those who remain outside of dominant cultures are left to mostly fight for themselves, which in the case of many domestic abuse cases, has the potential to end in death.

References


In Her Father’s Shadow, and Mine
Vito Capobianco

She stands in the shadow of gargantuan
The sweeping, all encompassing tsunami wave.
She throws open her arms because,
There is nowhere to run.
The drowning, all consuming need.
The obliteration of all that ever was,
The rock hard wall,
Covering the looming cave.
The paving of the freshly made,
Empty space. Where we set up shop
And peddle our wares. A smile, a sigh,
A loving fiery stare. A desperate attempt
To ward off despair.
My parents came to this country to make a better life for me. They sacrificed everything to ensure that I had a better life. I believe that’s probably the biggest gamble that any human can take. Any child that would not understand and be grateful for such a gift is out of their mind. How is it possible that 30 years later, we speak the same English the “white person” speaks, we go to the same schools, we shop at the same stores and make the same income; but still face the trials and setbacks our parents did? We are second generation immigrants and are proud of who we are. If we do not succeed, our parents did not succeed.

While growing up in a “white” system, it became apparent from a young age that we have differences culturally, socially, and behaviourally. And to add to ethnic differences, gender differences also played a big role. Every day we were reminded that “If a white person has to work for 4 hours to achieve something, you will have to work for 8” and “You have more to prove, you are an ethnic minority and you are a woman, YOU MUST BE A SUCCESS to prove them wrong.” So coming from this perspective, while you read this, please put yourself in my shoes. Be ethnic; be a woman; have a parent that is unfamiliar with this culture and works so hard; and be a university student, who has pressures that are unknown to many white people.

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**What It Means to be Ethnic**

By Dupe Daodu and Julian Kim
the life of a white girl

• Growing up middle class
• Parents working 9 to 5
• Maybe going to a private school
• Having two parents that are well established
• Partying and drinking through high school
• Getting decent grades (B maybe even a C)
• Extracurricular activities galore; ie. Swimming, hockey, a ballet dancer, art classes, piano lessons
• Unlimited support
• Family vacations
• Owning a cabin
• But “my life is so hard”

Now welcome to our world
the life of an ethnic woman

• Our parents changing their way of life
• Parents working around the clock
• Parents doing whatever it takes to give us a good education
• Our parents starting at the bottom trying to work their way up
• Drinking and partying what???? What is that???
• Getting perfect grades (A = failure, so what is a B or C)
• Extracurricular’s are a must. We must be athletes, poets, musicians and geniuses because anything less makes us inferior
• Selective support. We do what they want. We only have a select amount of careers ie. Doctor, lawyer, engineer or million businessman
• Family vacations??? “But we need to go to church, that’s your vacation”
• Going to a friend’s cabin if our parents let us have sleep over’s
• But my life is easy, because it is nothing in comparison to the life my parents have lived

We are not saying that every white person’s life is like this. But this is our personal story. We will never throw ourselves pity parties, but just to be clear, one must be aware that these differences do exist. Being an ethnic woman puts us at the furthest edge of society, we must be the best and beat all odds. It is pure ignorance to believe that female ethnic minorities have the same opportunities and advantages as white Canadians. This piece is not for you to feel sorry for me, or think that I am sad and wish I was white. We are proud, second generation Nigeria and Korean women. We will see you at the top. We will make our parents proud.
The Harlequin Shotgun Wedding by Charlotte Lamb contains gender issues including the relationship between women, marriage, and property as well as the problems of affirmative and negative consent. In this book, the heroine is passive and dismissive. She is portrayed as physically and mentally unsure of herself. The hero on the other hand is the dominant character who asserts his position by using physical force and verbal abuse. These character traits are reinforced by the idea that the hero owns the heroine because they are married, giving him consent to treat her as his property. Since she is his property, he does not need her consent to engage in sexual activity with her. The book contains a constant underlying theme of male domination and domestic abuse which is meant to be accepted as part of a hetero normative marriage. This theme is made clear in the book through the heroine’s constant guilt and the idea that the body and mind are separate. The book also contains the idea that male sexuality is uncontrollable and that domestic abuse is not real abuse.

The heroine, Juliet, feels guilty and is very apologetic for defying her marriage with Simeon. Her father is angry at her for leaving because he had to deal with the gossip that was created by her absence. She replies to this by saying “I’m sorry—I was unhappy, I just wanted to forget...” (Lamb 142). She is apologizing for the pain that the broken marriage has caused her father. Yet he does not offer her an apology for forcing her into the marriage and throwing her out of his house. This is an example of the sense of obligation that a woman has to a man after marriage. The book makes it seem like she is the one who needs to apologize because she did not follow the rules of marriage. If marriage grants Simeon ownership over her then she broke the rules of marriage by running away. The circumstances that she was under are irrelevant to her father. After her apology, she feels optimistic about her new relationship with her father. The fact that he did not offer her an apology suggests to the reader that Juliet was wrong to try to escape a forced marriage.

The Harlequin contains many situations where Juliet cannot decide between her mind and her body. Therefore, she does not know whether to advantage of her uncertainty and decides that she is giving him consent for sexual activity. This is dangerous to the reader because it suggests that the male does not need a clear answer from the woman, especially if they are married. According to Juliet; “her body could make dangerous mistakes, her body craved pleasure, was easily tempted—her mind was a much more reliable guide” (Lamb 64). When she decides to follow her mind, she pushes Simeon away from her body. When she cannot decide what she wants she simply does not react to his touch. Simeon assumes that she is giving him affirmative consent when she does not push him away. This idea implies that a man does not have to ask for permission before touching a woman.

There are many scenes in the Harlequin where male sexuality is portrayed as uncontrollable. This is due to the idea that men can only handle a certain amount of temptation before they snap. It implies that women are the reason men lose control, even if the woman has done nothing to suggest sexual availability. The idea that women can cause uncontrolled actions in a man justifies sexual aggression and domestic abuse. This means that even if the woman gives consent for the man to kiss her,
it may cause him to do more to her because she has provoked him. In the book Simeon makes another sexual advance toward Juliet and she runs away. Then he says, “Did I frighten you? I didn’t mean to—I went a little crazy... your fault again” (Lamb 91). Every time Simeon tries to force himself onto Juliet he blames it on her. By doing this the author is making marital rape seem like an entitlement that Simeon has because of their marriage. This idea is reinforced when Simeon says “She acted like a woman until the time came to prove she was one, and then she chickend out” (Lamb 101). In this statement both negative consent and the ownership of women through marriage comes into play. The author is suggesting that Simeon’s rage is justified because Juliet did not want to have sexual intercourse with Simeon even though it is what a woman is supposed to do on her wedding night. Simeon had forced himself on her even though she did not give consent because he thinks it is his entitlement as her husband. The author does not give any indication that Simeon’s idea is wrong, or is considered rape. Instead, Juliet apologizes frequently to Simeon for making him lose control. This gives the reader the impression that marital rape is acceptable.

Domestic abuse is the dominant theme throughout the entire Harlequin. It can be seen in the many examples of sexual activity without consent and how sexual aggression towards women is justified through marriage. Juliet is never given an apology for being forced into a marriage. Instead, she is blamed for the forced marriage because she was “flirting, being provocative” (Lamb 73). The men in Juliet’s life are angry with her because of how their lives were impacted after she ran away. They do not care about the traumatisation that she endured which caused her to run away. They also do not consider the fact that she would have stayed if she was allowed to have an equal say in the marriage and the sexual activity that followed. Instead, her father and Simeon are angry at her because she broke the rules of marriage by running away. The marriage gives Simeon ownership over Juliet; therefore she should not have run away. It also grants him permission to force sexual activity upon her because of the idea of ownership. In the end, Juliet ends up with Simeon, giving the reader the impression that his controlling and abusive behaviour is the correct way to win a woman’s heart after all. The domestic abuse and Juliet’s lack of sexual consent throughout the book was overlooked as well as justified through Simeon’s ownership of her through marriage. This idea is dangerous to the readers of Harlequin books because it tells them that patriarchy is a part of love and marriage. The numerous books are giving them a guideline for behaviour that encourages female passivity and domestic violence.

Reference
I endeavor to critically examine two pieces of medical literature that discuss the loosely defined medical pathology currently branded as Female Sexual Dysfunction (FSD). This branding has occurred at the hands of pharmaceutical industries to create a market for a medication to address FSD. I critique two articles published in medical literature that may have had a role in creating a market for such a drug, by reifying FSD as an extremely prevalent and problematic condition, incorporating feminist critiques of science. Through this analysis, I implore all individuals to respond critically to both medical and social constructs informing their sexualities.

Maynihan (2010) describes the roles of medical literature in marketing pharmaceuticals. This literature may include information on the prevalence of the disorder, the development of diagnostic tools, and the recommended treatments. This type of information is necessary to improve population health and wellness, when it is accurate and unbiased (an impossibility given sociological influences). However, this research can also create fertile ground for capitalization on the products created to treat these disorders. The potential for economic gain can compromise the accuracy of research, as is shown in the following example: Boehringer, a pharmaceutical company, had funded research while preparing for the launch of an aphrodisiac type product (Maynihan, 2010, p. 269).

One statistic that emerged from this data was that 1 in 10 women had a “disorder of low desire.” Maynihan (2010) describes the problematic nature of this statistic, “the assertions that tens of millions of women had this condition and that there was a massive ‘unmet need’ for treatment was based largely on the answer to a single survey question about whether a woman felt the desire to engage in sexual activity” (p. 639). Marketing and medical science therefore appear to be inextricable in some cases.

The first publication I will analyze is titled simply Female Sexual Dysfunction, and was published by MDs Clayton and Hamilton in 2009. The introduction states, “practitioners have come to understand that healthy, even satisfying, sexual function may extend throughout the life cycle” (p. 323). This statement separates notions of healthy sexuality from satisfying sexuality, implying simultaneously that they can be somewhat exclusive and that they are static, well-defined concepts. They then introduce three models of the female sexual response cycle, two of which cover arousal and orgasm as stages of sexual response. The third model presents the concept that women participate in sex because of emotional and not sexual desire (p. 323). Assuming these models of sexual response are worthy of comparison (though two follow physical sexual responses, and one explores women’s motives for engaging in sex), emotional and physical gratification are again rendered exclusive. Furthermore, a study is cited that claims FSD has a higher prevalence in women who “identify” with the third model (p. 323). This correlation is invoked, yet the significance of this information, such as the potential links between emotional and physical health, as well as the issues in diagnosing FSD, is not discussed.

Clayton & Hamilton (2009) describe types of FSD, such as dysfunctions in desire or arousal. It is emphasized that a woman’s distress concerning her dysfunction is necessary to diagnose it as such. The descriptions of subtypes of FSD contain statistics for prevalence. These statistics are stated simply and unquestionably to be “valid and reliable,” though there is no discussion of the methodologies used to derive them (p. 327). Quantifying natural or ideal levels of desire is impossible, so the notion of measuring dysfunction in desire is especially problematic.

The authors describe a particularly problematic requirement for a disorder called Female Orgasmic Disorder, the woman must not have a sexual partner who ejaculates.
prematurely, “thus depriving her of sufficient stimulation to reach orgasm” (Clayton & Hamilton, 2009, p. 328). This requirement may exclude women from a possible diagnosis on the basis of another individual’s sexuality, and not their own symptoms. This discourse is representative of heteronormative and patriarchal concepts, with the assumptions that sex ends once a male partner ejaculates, and that female orgasm requires only vaginal penetration.

The first treatment briefly presented is psychological treatment, accompanied with several impressive statistics on its efficacy. The use of lubricants is very briefly discussed, though other tools such as sex toys and written or visual erotic materials are not included. The section in this paper on interventions focuses greatly on pharmaceutical therapies, such as estrogen creams and testosterone patches. It is made clear that the production of a “pink Viagra” is an objective, “Unfortunately, Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved treatments for FSD remain an unaccomplished goal of medical science” (Clayton & Hamilton, 2009, p. 332).

Delfgatis & Burnett’s (2008) critique the body of literature on the epidemiology of FSD in their paper. The Epidemiology of Sexual Dysfunction. Despite being published prior to Clayton & Hamilton’s article, it still articulates many of the issues present in their work. This paper discusses both male and female sexual dysfunctions, and treats them as comparable yet unique. A preoccupation with the qualitative nature of diagnosis of sexual dysfunctions is present in this discussion.

The section on FSD begins with a discussion of the nosology, or tools, used to diagnose FSD. Similar models to those used by Clayton & Hamilton are discussed, though the authors acknowledge, they are “descriptive in nature, with no basis in pathophysiology (abnormal physiological processes that are associated with illness) or etiology (scientific exposition of the origin of the disease)” (p. 280). Delfgatis & Burnett (2008) also describe a number of other factors which have an “impact on clinical judgment in an FSD condition, causing its precise nature to be unclear and obscuring the appropriate diagnosis”, such as comorbid symptoms, the difficulty of estimating distress levels, and the impacts of the partner’s sexual health and age (p. 294).

Delfgatis & Burnett (2008) conclude very generally that the prevalence of FSD is considerable for both men and women, and both sexes show similar trends with age. They inform us that literature on rates of low desire shows an enormous range of 10 – 64 percent, with a general consensus of a rate of 20-25 percent (p.297). A number of problems with the diagnosis of these dysfunctions are explored, it is emphasized that we lack “unified, meaningful definitions of the diagnostic entities we seek to evaluate” (p. 298). Most importantly, these authors acknowledge variability in experiences of sex among individuals. This provides more room with which to analyze the social structures informing understandings of sexuality.

Delfgatis and Burnett’s (2008) article explores the complexities in diagnosing and treating a disorder in sexual function. This exploration is sorely lacking in Clayton & Hamilton’s work (2009), where science functions solely within our society’s ideology. This science becomes less reliable if critiqued through a feminist lens. In the case of FSD, it is easy to see how this literature supports the creation of a market for a pharmaceutical treatment, diagnostic tools and standards for normality have the potential to create a false pathology informed by ideology, not science. While women who experience personal distress concerning their sexual satisfaction should have access to methods to improve it, their dissatisfaction should not be informed and exploited by a corporation. Delfgatis and Burnett’s (2008) work uses a discourse that responds to and incorporates feminist critiques of science.

Roberts (2007) states, “technoscientific and biomedical knowledges are not produced within cultural vacuums, but rather are the products of socio-material networks of practices and discourses” (p. 3). Ideologies surrounding femininity and sex influence the diagnosis, prevalence and treatment of FSD, which then support the continuing exploitation of women and their bodies. The false insistence that science remains objective leads to further ignorance of the ideologies functioning on it, acknowledgement of these biases may undermine the assertive style of patriarchally defined science and legitimize the accuracy of the research presented.

REFERENCES
ALBERTA JOHNSON ARTIST STATEMENT

“I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN FASCINATED WITH THE CONCEPT OF GENDER AS PERFORMANCE AND BY THE SMALL ACT OF PUTTING ON MAKE UP, YOU ARE THEN EMBODYING THIS GENDER. I WANTED TO SHOW THIS IDEA IN A CONCRETE WAY.”
HAPPY MEDIUM
Laura Veroba

Flash! Of light unnoticed by the growing crowd
They dance in dizzying circles!
They dance in dizzying circles!
They drink till they are dizzy
Circles of dancers drink in a
Flash! Of light unnoticed.

Flashing red light under short skirts and teenage giggles,
Showing off long legs with long necked
Bottles. Treacherous footsteps unheard;
Flashing red light unseen.
Unseen, unheard, undone
Uploaded by one; seen by all.

Scene one is short skirts and giggles--
Giggles turned tears accusing alcohol and the
Treacherous footsteps unheard
And the flashing red light unseen;
Destruction of innocence in a
Flash! Of light unnoticed.
This research paper will explore lesbian feminist community organizing in Canada during the late 1970’s. I will focus particularly on the structure of lesbian feminist organizing which was centered on the formation of an autonomous and visible lesbian feminist identity. To do this, I will provide an analysis of one lesbian feminist group, the Lesbian Organization of Toronto (LOOT), which was one of the first lesbian organizations in Canada. I will also provide a background of the history which led to the forming of a lesbian-feminist identity politics in the context of other social justice movements. As I will illustrate, lesbian feminist organizing was built on the combined identity of lesbian and feminist, and on the collective building of a visible and autonomous lesbian feminist community.

The 1970’s in North America was marked by increased visibility for lesbians and the formation of a publicly visible lesbian community. Central to this increased visibility was the development of a distinct political identity combining a feminist analysis of sexism, as well as the experience of being a lesbian in a heteronormative and homophobic culture. The formation of a “lesbian feminist praxis” was influenced by other social movements, primarily the women’s liberation movement, or second-wave feminism, and the gay liberation movement (Ross, 1995, p. 15). Many lesbians were involved with gay liberation and the women’s movement, but were often confronted with homophobia, sexism and lack of representation within these movements.

As Becki L. Ross (1995) states, from the late 1960’s to early 1970’s tensions were growing between straight and lesbian women in the women’s movement, both in the U.S. and Canada (pp. 26-27). Beneath the rhetoric of ‘sisterhood’, lesbians were often forced to keep their identities as lesbians private within the women’s movement. Many feminist organizations refused to acknowledge the oppression lesbians experienced for their sexuality, as well as the presence of homophobia within the women’s movement itself. By the early 1970’s, many lesbians within the women’s movement felt alienated and oppressed by a movement they were supporting, but did not support them. In 1972 Rita Mae Brown, a member of the Radicalesbians in New York, called for an autonomous lesbian feminist movement centered around the notion that choosing a lesbian identity was revolutionary (Ross, 1995, p. 27).

In addition to the women’s movement, many lesbians were involved with the gay liberation movement of the 1960’s and 1970’s. In Canada, the political climate was changing in terms of the rights of gay men and lesbians, after the Trudeau government partially decriminalized homosexuality in 1969 (Goldie, 2001, p. 18). Gay liberation organizations worked to continue pushing reforms for the civil and legal rights of
gay men and lesbians in Canada, such as including sexual orientation as a protected human right. One of the primary strategies of gay liberation was widespread use of ‘coming out’ and promoting pride (for example though the expression “gay is good”) for gay and lesbian identities, instead of shame and isolation, and the assertion that homosexuality was natural and not a choice (Ross, 1995, p. 33).

However, for lesbians involved in gay liberation initiatives, they found that the majority of organizations and media were controlled by and for the benefit of gay men. Lesbian identities were largely subsumed under the broader category of homosexuality, which erased their dual experience of being lesbians and being women. Lesbians were under-represented in gay organizations, often experienced sexism from gay men, and recognized that although both lesbians and gay men experienced homophobia gay men still had access to male privilege. As women, lesbians had little access to public space and economic independence, and experienced oppression for their identities quite differently than gay men did (Smith, 1999, p. 29). Experiences like these of sexism, homophobia and invisibility in both the women’s movement and gay liberation prompted many lesbians to call for lesbian feminist independent initiatives, with a “gendered and sexed experience” at the centre of analysis (Ross, 1995, p. 40).

Autonomous lesbian feminist cultural, political and identity based organizing, as a separate movement, began largely in the U.S. in the early 1970’s. Lesbian feminism emphasized lesbianism as a political choice- rather than an immutable essence- vis-à-vis heterosexuality. To be a woman-identified-woman was to choose not to give energy to men, and thus sustaining patriarchy, but to support women and the growth of women’s culture. This positionality is most aptly summed up by Ti-Grace Atkinson famous dictum, ‘feminism is the theory, lesbianism is the practice’ (Smith, 1999, p. 61). Lesbian-feminist groups, largely made up of white, middle-class and college educated activists, organized publicly based on this distinct lesbian-feminist identity, using feminist grassroots strategies such as consciousness-raising groups, public demonstrations, publishing newsletters and periodicals, supporting women’s studies courses, and encouraging lesbian women’s art, music and culture. There was a surge in lesbian feminist literature supporting the collective formation of a wider lesbian community, or rather -referring to Jill Johnston’s 1973 text- the formation of a Lesbian Nation.

By the mid-1970s, the utopian vision and excitement of lesbian feminist culture and building a lesbian community had also begun to spring up in Canada, predominantly in urban spaces. Central to the formation of a lesbian community- and a future Lesbian Nation- was the firm belief in the power of coming out. The lesbian-feminist use of the coming out narrative combined the emphasis of pride for a lesbian identity, as influenced by the gay liberation movement, as well as a consciousness of collective strength and support, similarly to the women’s movement’s discourse of sisterhood. In her chapter on “The Rise of Lesbian Feminism” from Surpassing the Love of Men, Lillian Faderman addresses the redefining of lesbian identity during the 1970’s through lesbian feminism, moving away from the discourse of lesbians as abnormal or sick, towards a discourse of pride. Quoting the 1973 issue of Sisters, the journal for the San Francisco lesbian organization Daughters of Bilitis, “Lesbian is a strong, proud word. As women-loving-women, proud of who and what we are, we must think of ourselves in strong, proud terms- as Lesbians- with a capital ‘L’” (Faderman, 1981, p. 385).

The prompting for lesbians to come out en masse challenged the invisibility of lesbian identities and the silencing of lesbian voices. Coming out was central to this emerging discourse of lesbian-feminist identity because it worked against the imposed isolation that lesbians often experienced, living without a community in an extremely heterosexist culture. In her introduction to Lesbians in Canada, Sharon Dale Stone (1990) argued, “since the 1970s [...] more and more lesbians have been coming out of the closet and learning to take pride in a lesbian identity” (p. 18). Embracing the ethos of “the personal is political,” lesbian feminism necessitated being out as well as being a support to other lesbians; “the net effect of such politically motivated, purposive
disclosure is an intensified commitment to lesbian identity and lesbianism as an alternative lifestyle” (Ross, 1995, p. 77). To create a visible culture and community, coming out and actively being out was necessary. At a time when lesbians still had no legal protection from the law, organizations, like the Lesbian Organization of Toronto, were central to challenging the isolation of being a lesbian in a heterosexist culture by creating community.

Jarvis Street in downtown Toronto by the mid-seventies had already been the base for early lesbian feminist organizing and community building. The Lesbian Organization of Toronto (LOOT) was founded in 1976, and by 1977, the group took over the lease at 342 Jarvis Street (Ross, 1995, p. 51). LOOT was first organized by a 10-woman task force made up of predominately white women in their 20’s, many of whom had strong backgrounds in social organizing. Their backgrounds proved central to the organization of LOOT; as Becki L. Ross describes in her text, The House That Jill Built: A Lesbian Nation in Formation Ross (1995), “[…] the women I interviewed told me how past experience as community organizers or service providers had taught them self-confidence, consciousness or oppression, a sense of their own capabilities and the power of working together” (p. 67). Having literal space from which to ground their organization provided the basis necessary for community building. It offered a place to bring lesbians together in a very visible way; this was public space for lesbian’s to be out, and to connect with and support one another. The building of this lesbian community in Toronto, similarly to lesbian communities all around North America, was largely separate from the bar culture of working class lesbians and gay women who were often viewed as apolitical. Although this lesbian-feminist identity became bounded into its own form of hegemony, at this historical moment it offered a new way to ‘be’ a lesbian in a fiercely heterosexist culture.

The Lesbian Organization of Toronto, or LOOT, was centrally focused on creating and sustaining a lesbian-feminist community and provided a myriad of services for lesbians. While the organization was active, from 1976-1980, LOOT produced a monthly newsletter for the lesbian community, peer-support and a lesbian-only help line, offered a coming-out group, and held bi-weekly meetings for members (Ross, 1995, p.144). LOOT worked to support lesbian culture by organizing dances, socials and fundraisers; additionally, many lesbian musicians, actors, writers, and filmmakers also frequented LOOT headquarters. Each event and service was organized by collectively structured committees and funded largely through community fundraising.

Collective organizing- without use of a hierarchy and based on consensus decision making- was central to LOOT, and to lesbian feminist community building; as Ross states, “the overarching theoretical and practical commitment to collective process- no leadership, rotation of administrative tasks, agreement by consensus, and emphasis on personal experiences- marked a deliberate attempt to include all lesbians, especially those with little history of political activism” (Ross, 1995, p. 154). The revolutionary tone of lesbian feminist discourse centered on the unique vision of coming together as lesbians to build a broader lesbian community; this collective idealism, the feeling that that “the revolution was just around the corner” was in stark contrast to the individualistic conservatism of Canada in the 1970’s (Ross, 1995, p. 72).

Organizing a visible lesbian community in Canada in the mid to late 1970’s was not an easy task. The cultural milieu at the time was rife with conservative and moralistic rhetoric which was often aimed at attacking the efforts of feminists and those working for the civil rights of lesbians and gay men. As Donald G. Casswell (1996) states in Lesbians, Gay Men, and Canadian Law, the common discourses of homosexuality constructed same-sex desire and identity as a sin, or as stemming from abnormality or pathology ( p.10). As the “first lesbian-feminist centre in Canada”, LOOT directly challenged these discourses of lesbianism which were aimed at maintaining compulsory heterosexuality and patriarchal control over women, through the services they offered as well as consistently stressing the importance of being out for building a community (Ross, 1995, p. 64). Carmen Paquette attests to the importance of visibility for lesbians, in her article “Personal Reflections on Lesbian Organizing in
Ottawa, “[…] our increased visibility and recognition can only be of benefit to us, to the feminist movement, and to society at large […] For my own survival, for the survival of other lesbians, and for the survival of all women who choose to live their live with self-respect, lesbians need to speak up” (Paquette, 1990, p. 225). Lesbian feminism was also a departure from the political models of women’s liberation and gay liberation which focused primarily on civil rights; as Miriam Smith (1999) states in Lesbian and Gay Rights in Canada, “lesbians saw civil rights as a less important strategy for social transformation” (p. 62). Although lesbian feminists were supportive of efforts towards including sexual orientation in Canadian human rights codes, the formation of a lesbian community was their central political goal. LOOT embodied this lesbian feminist model; as a basis for forming and sustaining a visible lesbian-feminist community, LOOT was about creating space for lesbians to live their politics, this collapsing the dichotomy between the private and public sphere that had served to oppress them as lesbians and as women (Smith, 1999, p.6). The notion of building a lesbian community (or a Lesbian Nation) was a method of social transformation, and of bringing lesbian lives out of the private sphere and into the public. As Becki L. Ross states, “[…] nation served as a potent metaphor for the visible maturation of a subculture once consigned to debilitating secrecy” (Ross, 1995, p. 16).

LOOT officially closed on May 1st, 1980. Although there were many factors which caused this organization to close, the effect that it had in it’s less than three year existence was profound. In Toronto, it was central to the formation of not only a new kind of visible lesbian identity but to a lesbian-feminist community.

This organization provided a hub to create a new community from scratch with little funds. Additionally, LOOT was run by a small group of core members, which changed often in the less than four years that it was active. The Lesbian Organization of Toronto- similarly to the larger lesbian feminist movement- experienced its share of internal divisions and struggles; however, this small group was able to form a basis for a previously non-existent community. Although lesbian feminism was hit with a barrage of critiques, during the 1980’s of many of its exclusionary tenets, from both inside and outside of the community, the importance of this community building in the 1970’s cannot be understated.

In The House That Jill Built, one of the former members of LOOT sums up her experience:“[…] when LOOT closed, it wasn’t like a lesbian community stopped; it was that we reformed, or formed in different ways like atoms moving in a different direction” (Ross, 1995, p. 201). As the first lesbian feminist centre in Canada LOOT institutionalized lesbian autonomy and visibility, and organized collectively to build community. Lesbian-feminism offered a politics that challenged the invisibility lesbians experienced in the broader Canadian culture, as well as the invisibility they often experienced in the women’s movement, and gay liberation movement.

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When faced with the discussion topic on how I perform gender, I thought long and hard about things that I may do that were fake. I had difficulties with the fact that there are lots of things in my everyday life that I do just to portray the ‘right’ image to those around me. I do things like putting on make-up in the mornings and changing my clothes six times before I leave, because I’m afraid the more revealing outfit might give others the impression that I am somehow not intelligent, and the more conservative outfit might give others the impressions that I don’t get out of the house very often. The more I thought about how I ‘do’ gender, the more examples I came up with and the more frustrated I became with myself. I am an intelligent young woman and picking out things that I do for no rational reason just irks me. There are even times when I feel like I am under heavy surveillance (like for example walking by three or four men on the sidewalk when I’m alone), that I have almost had mini panic attacks because I am so nervous about what other people might think. Should I make eye contact, should I not make eye contact, should I smile, should I swing my arms, should I fix my hair – these are all questions that go through my head on an hourly basis. I find myself even doing these things at home when no one is watching, simply out of habit.

The above mentioned habits and thoughts are frustrating to me because I feel like it should be easy to stop playing the games set up by our capitalist, patriarchal, heteronormative society. Just stop doing it. However, like Marylin Frye’s article Oppression, I feel as though I am trapped in a bird cage. If I did ‘just stop’ acting, all of my current relationships would change, along with my future relationships. It’s hard to say whether they would change for the good or for the bad, however stepping out of the comfort zone that I am in with my relationships is difficult to do. I also feel as though the way that I act and conduct myself makes life easier for me. Most of the time I act in a way that molds to fit the people that I am with in order to fit in and not be rejected. I have noticed since starting to analyze my actions more closely, that my criticisms of other women increase when I am in male company. The virgin/whore dichotomy, as we had mentioned in class, does make me want to distance myself from those stereotypes, and I do that by gaining power and putting down other women. Essentially I am helping to fuel the fire of our heteronormative patriarchy that we live in by getting my power from the hierarchy.

In Melissa Herbert’s Camouflage Isn’t Only For Combat, chapter titled Doing Gender / Doing Sexuality, she mentions that women in the military often feel trapped between being either too feminine or too masculine, and I definitely relate to what she is saying. When I was twelve I was enrolled in the Royal Canadian Air Cadets; I felt the pressure from the day I enrolled to prove myself. However, as I started to prove myself and climb in ranks, I found that people were calling me out to be too masculine. I was made out to be either a lesbian or a bitch with no friends. So I started to feminize myself and the way that I acted. I no longer did my hair in a bun, but rather in french braids; I wore earrings and jewelry with my uniform and I started to be more relaxed in my teaching methods. Now I had more friends and I was much more accepted, but I wasn’t being promoted as often as I was before, despite my efforts.

After processing all of the negative things I do, and have done, to blend in with society, I found myself thinking of instances when perhaps I had gone just a little against the grain of society. Every time I go out without make-up on, wear my sweat pants, tell someone that I am a feminist, refuse to laugh at a sexist/racist/classism comment, advertise for the FAQ collective, take a Women’s and Gender Studies class or go to the SlutWalk in Winnipeg I feel liberated. For that short amount of time I truly feel confident about myself and my convictions, no matter how taboo they may seem to other people. I feel like, as long as I keep doing small things like that, I am not completely giving in to the societal norms that we are all presented with everyday. By doing this I hope to eventually unlearn these fake performances and just be myself.

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Pansexual, or omnisexual, prefix meaning “all”, attached to sexual, as a form of sexual identity that reflects the capability of love and attraction regardless of an individual’s gender identity or biological sex.

Attraction to people from a gender-blind perspective that rejects heteronormativity and validates all forms of sexuality and sexual expression.

Not to be confused with bisexuality which is a sexuality that is open to opposite or same sex relations, but still fit within the limitations of the existing gender binary of man and woman, even when expectations of one’s gender expression are rejected by the involved individuals.

Social constructions of gender are irrelevant so that the dichotomy of man and woman and feminine and masculine are replaced with a spectrum of possible gender identities where constructions of hierarchy and domination have no place.

Engaging in romantic and sexual relationships with men, women, transsexuals, transgender and intersex people through an understanding of individuality and agency.

Exceeds the boundaries constructed in heteronormative societies that confine individuals to the gender binary and both romanticizes and normalizes the love between the two sexes as natural due to biology and is often open to homosexuality only as a form of male pleasure.

Understands gender and sexuality as fluid and belonging to a spectrum so that no human being feels need to alter themselves from the way they were born and is not excluded or forced to identify by someone else’s standards that limit their agency and value of experience.

Accepts people based on their individual characteristics and personalities, regardless of how they are identified by themselves or by others, particularly regarding sex, gender, and sexuality.

Limitless; opens possibility of lust and love to all individuals regardless of biology and promotes acceptance and importance of seeing human beings as individual subjects with agency to embody their own identity and to be proud of how they were born without outside judgement.
I can't stop
My crawling eye.
I can't keep this shame
Inside. My body controls my mind.
My mind distorts my sight,
Retina stretched
To a thin line.
Perspective lost as self
Through time.
My sex dominates
My soul, that is a crime.
Your sex dominates
My mind, the thrill eye
Cannot deny because
They've filled our minds
With bodily lies
To keep us from
Coming clean.
Reduce us to repeating machine.
UNTIE! UNTIE!
Your wrists from the strings controlled by the system.
UNITE! UNITE!
You're not moving if you don't feel the resistance.

My Crawling Eye
Vito Capobianco
Introduction

“Given that women make up 80 per cent of health care providers, paid and unpaid, and a majority of patients, you would expect the question of the impact of reforms on women to be on the top of the agenda. But you would be wrong” (Armstrong et al., 2002, p. 8). Concentrated power has been working to erode Keynesianism in favour of neoliberal agendas. This has led to a shift from collective responsibility to a focus on individual responsibility (Steger & Roy, 2010). Neoliberal reforms have had a disproportionate impact on women, as women make up the bulk of workers health and social services where jobs are being lost; because of these job losses, care work is forced to be picked up in the home where it is unpaid. Neoliberal reforms are detrimental to women’s personal and economic well-being.

From Keynesianism to Neoliberalism

John Maynard Keynes was an economist who developed the theoretical framework for macroeconomics. The application of his ideas is regarded as Keynesianism (Steger & Roy). Keynesianism is an egalitarian-based ideology that was dominant after the Second World War and it is characterized by regulation of markets and industries, a large government, high taxes on the rich and on big corporations, and vast social welfare services for the population (Coulter, 2009; Steger & Roy, 2010). During the 1970’s there was an economic crisis across industrialized nations. (Peet & Hartwick, 2009). Neoliberal theorists claimed that such high government involvement in the market and in public lives hindered the market’s ability to naturally stabilize itself, a theory known as the ’invisible hand’(Steger & Roy, 2010). Neoliberal regimes were sought to end the economic crisis though deregulation of the international market, by embracing free trade, and maximizing profit through cheaper inputs such as labour.

Neoliberalism is an ideology, mode of governance, and a policy direction that gained popularity in the 1980’s and 1990’s and remains dominant in world governments today (Steger & Roy, 2010). Neoliberalism is based off the main principles of deregulating the economy, liberalization of trade and industry, and privatization of public enterprises (Steiger, 2009; Steger & Roy, 2010). Other characteristics include downsizing government, expanding international markets, the absence of barriers on international trade, large tax cuts, control of organized labour and reduced spending on public services (Steger, 2009). The shift from Keynesianism to neoliberalism has meant a shift of collective responsibility for the wellbeing of the population, to individualistic responsibility where people and families are expected to take care of their own problems.
'Women’s Work'

In families today, especially those with children, multiple incomes are needed for a household to survive economically. This means that women have little choice whether to enter paid work or not (McDaniel, 2002; Stinson, 2004). Entrance into the paid labour force has meant a step toward gender equality and women now experience greater financial autonomy than they have in the past. Unfortunately a double standard exists and women are still expected to perform the bulk of unpaid work in the home (Korabik, Lero & Whitehead, 2009; Stinson, 2004), as male partners have not been picking up the slack.

Given these trends, it is no surprise that Statistics Canada’s 1998 General Social Survey found that the population experiencing the most stress are women between the ages of 25-44 who are employed full time and have children at home (Stinson, 2004). Chronic stress is a very serious concern as it increases a person's risk for every chronic disease. Lack of control over one’s life, as well as lack of opportunities, resources and support networks are all aspects of inequality that are predicative of chronic stress, ill health, and higher mortality (Unnatural Causes, 2008). Essentially, inequality is bad for health.

Women are not only providing the bulk of care work in the home. They make up over 80% of paid employees in health and social services (Armstrong & Armstrong, 2002), providing the bulk of paid care work outside the home. Among all Canadian full time employees, women earn a little over 70% of the income that men do. It is speculated that the wage differences between female-dominated careers and male-dominated careers contributes to this wage gap (Drolet, 2001). This reflects an assumption that women’s paid work is less valuable than men’s paid work.

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McDaniel, J. (2002). Entry into the paid labour force has meant a step toward gender equality and women now experience greater financial autonomy than they have in the past. Unfortunately a double standard exists and women are still expected to perform the bulk of unpaid work in the home (Korabik, Lero & Whitehead, 2009; Stinson, 2004), as male partners have not been picking up the slack. Given these trends, it is no surprise that Statistics Canada’s 1998 General Social Survey found that the population experiencing the most stress are women between the ages of 25-44 who are employed full time and have children at home (Stinson, 2004). Chronic stress is a very serious concern as it increases a person’s risk for every chronic disease. Lack of control over one’s life, as well as lack of opportunities, resources and support networks are all aspects of inequality that are predicative of chronic stress, ill health, and higher mortality (Unnatural Causes, 2008). Essentially, inequality is bad for health. Women are not only providing the bulk of care work in the home. They make up over 80% of paid employees in health and social services (Armstrong & Armstrong, 2002), providing the bulk of paid care work outside the home. Among all Canadian full time employees, women earn a little over 70% of the income that men do. It is speculated that the wage differences between female-dominated careers and male-dominated careers contributes to this wage gap (Drolet, 2001). This reflects an assumption that women’s paid work is less valuable than men’s paid work.

Neoliberal Policy Reforms and the Impacts on Women

In recent years under Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s neoliberal agenda, many equality-seeking groups faced cuts to their funding. They were also renamed as ‘special interest groups’, a label meaning that the interests of such groups stood apart from those of ‘ordinary’ Canadians. The Court Challenges Program (CCP) has been eliminated altogether. The CCP provided financial support to those who wished to challenge public policy for breaching rights to equality under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. At the time, the interdepartmental agency in charge of promoting women’s equality at federal state level, the Status of Women Canada (SWC), suffered from regional office closures, operating budget cuts, the elimination of its Independent Research Fund (PRF), and received the label of a ‘special interest group’ (Brodie, 2008). Policy makers and policy advocates regarded the PRF as a critical and credible resource and “the cancellation of the PRF effectively put an end to the capacity of the SWC to generate policy research and to assemble independent expertise to advocate for women’s equality inside the federal government” (Brodie, 2008, p.168). When the federal government withdrew their commitment to the SWC, they were essentially withdrawing women’s entitlement to full citizenship; that is, the equal participation as social and political actors, and the conditions of shared responsibilities and entitlements of women and men (McDaniel, 2002).
Women make up the majority of employees in the health and social service sectors where privatization is occurring (Armstrong & Armstrong, 2002; Stinson, 2004). Privatization is a shift of responsibility away from the public sector (Armstrong et al., 2002). It occurs through transferring operation and/or ownership of public services, assets and enterprises to the for-profit business sector and it is frequently a strategy used to cut costs (Stinson, 2004). Privatization can occur in the form of sub-contracting or outsourcing, where parts of a public service are delivered by private firms who use cheaper labour. This leads to lower wages, less benefits, more casual and part-time employees and less union obligations (Baker, 2006; Stinson, 2004) creating a ‘disposable’ labour force. Three out of four women working in the public sector are unionized, meaning they are better off economically because of their power to collectively bargain. This is compared to a mere one in seven women unionized in the private sector (Stinson, 2004). Unionization is important because union members are more likely to have permanent employment as well as better wages and benefits (Armstrong et al., 2002).

Through reforms to health and social services, “families [have] become the new social safety nets with women in families as unpaid social workers” (McDaniel, 2002, p.143). With all the cuts to health and social services there is an implicit assumption that women will take on this extra workload, unpaid. Considering that the most stressed population of Canadians are made up of women and many are currently facing increasing job insecurity, it is not practical to expect women to take on more unpaid work especially since they already perform the bulk of it.

As neoliberal restructuring occurs women are expected to take on increasingly more caring labour and gender equality gains are quietly being taken away (Neysmith & Chen, 2002). The amount of unpaid care work performed by women is overwhelming. It is estimated that women provide 156 million hours annually caring for those who are expelled form the hospital quicker and earlier, this could potentially translate into 77,000 full-time jobs (Stinson, 2004). The actual dollar value of all care giving performed by women is estimated at $50.9 billion if these services were paid for on the market. This is more than the income brought in by both the health and social service industry at $42.1 billion, more than education services at $40.1 billion, and more than the income brought in by financial, insurance and the real estate industries combined at $43.4 (Stinson, 2004).

**Conclusion**

Deregulation and privatization has impacted women through removal of public services that contribute to women’s full citizenship. This has happened through cuts to health and service sectors of work which had meant a reduction in secure jobs for women, and through the implicit assumption that women take on the increasing amounts of unpaid care work. It is overwhelmingly clear that neoliberal reforms are detrimental to women’s personal and economic well-being. Neoliberalism has taken over the welfare state and shifted away from collective responsibility toward individual responsibility. As this shift has occurred, it is as if women have been told ‘your work has no value therefore you must do it for free’.

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These photos were all taken in March of 2010 while in the city of Diriamba, Nicaragua. I was struck by the differences in how the child there are so much more appreciative of what they have in comparison to children here. It was a life changing experience in how heavily culture can effect how you behave and interact with others. All images are black and white 100film, shot with a 35mm canon.

Thank you,
Julie Cross
A Lesson About Patriarchy

Christie Kurz

LESSON 1: THE PATRIARCHAL BOX

You may not think outside the box, it is a rather type of block. And this block contains a lock.Inside there is a type of talk, and when questioned Anger strikes, just like a clock. So, you must not mock.

The Model Woman

Because I am a woman I will be a good little wife, I will cook and clean and serve all of my life!
Because I am a woman I need help when in despair, all the while well I still maintain my hair.
Because I am a woman I will love and care, but I wouldn't cause a stir, not even if I dare.
Because I am a woman I am stupid, like a box. It is a man who has wit, like a fox.
Because I am a woman I must satisfy my man, and if I do not, his hand will be my biggest fan.
Because I am a woman I must make a lower wage. For if it higher than a man's, it will cause quite the rage.
Because I am a woman I am fragile at mind. For if I think outside the box, I won't be treated kind.
Because I am a woman I can be called a slut. And even if he likes, he can pinch my butt!
Because I am a woman I am not allowed to fight. Although it is because I do not have any might.
Because I am a woman I am a possession, even when the country is in a recession.
Because I am a woman I must know I have no power, I should not question anyone, for I am beautiful like a flower.

LESSON 2: THINKING OUTSIDE THE PATRIARCHAL BOX

The Feminist

Because I am a woman I will resist patriarchy
Because I am a woman I do not need to cook, clean and serve
Because I am a woman I do not have to conform to beauty
Because I am a woman I am intelligent
Because I am a woman I protect myself
Because I am a woman I deserve an equal wage
Because I am a woman I am independent
Because I am a woman I will not be shamed by demeaning words
Because I am a woman I am strong
Because I am a woman I have a voice
Because I am a woman I own myself

Because I am a woman I am powerful
I will resist patriarchy
I will fight back
I will be heard
I will stand up
I will not be silenced
Will you?
A woman with a mop bucket and a mop is exhausted. Someone is calling for help. A man’s wage is shown, followed by a broken heart. A woman’s wage is shown, followed by a broken vase. A sold tag and the word "THE END" are displayed.
The article written by Sherene Razack (2000) demonstrates how colonialism and patriarchy has objectified, over sexualized and subjected Aboriginal women to violence due to racial and gender differences. In this article Razack (2000) explores the murder of Pamela George who was First Nation and who occasionally worked as a prostitute; in the trial more was know of her white middle class killer’s accomplishments in life rather than the brutal crime they committed. A main detail that Razack (2000) states is “the fact that Pamela George was a prostitute was something to be considered in the case” (92). Because of her occupation and the fact that she was First Nation she is essentially blamed for her own death, through the eyes of the judicial system. The stigma that surrounds the industry of sex work, combined with the negative racialization of being Aboriginal, creates bodies and spaces that privileged white men, like Kummerfeld and Ternowetsky, feel entitled to. Razack (2000) notes “colonial violence…has not only enabled white settlers to secure the land but to come to know themselves entitled to it” (97). Due to colonization, patriarchy, and negative racialization Aboriginal women like George have become targets of violence and murder.

Another similar example of white men feeling entitled to Aboriginal women is the case of Helen Betty Osborne. This young woman of seventeen was raped, tortured and then brutally murdered by four white men. This case was unsolved until ten years after the fact, because members of the community of The Pas, whom some of the men confided in, would not come forward. These men and the men who killed Pamela George have not been held in total accountability for their brutal actions. Razack (2000) emphasizes this point in her article because we knew more of George’s white middle class killers than of this First Nation mother of two. Both of these young women were dehumanized because they were negatively racialized and because they were women. One difference that seems to have been a main factor in the death of Pamela George, according to the courts, is the fact that she was a prostitute; in the eyes of the judicial system because of her being a sex worker she somehow deserved to die a brutal death for the reason alone that she exchanged money for sexual encounters.

In conclusion there are two main questions that have been quoted in Razack’s (2000) article by a man whom lost his daughter to a violent act due to being immersed in the sex industry. These two questions sum up the truth and totality of the systemic issues Aboriginal people, specifically women and children, are faced with (and prostitution is just one of the many problems faced). Razack (2000) quotes Morning Child "Why was she prostituting herself when the Queen promised her a prosperous life on the reserve?...Why would she prostitute herself if the treaties had been fulfilled?” (96).

WORK CITED
ARTIST STATEMENT – GILLIAN KING

I am a mixed media visual artist with a focus on painting. As a vegan woman, my work focuses on issues surrounding animal consumption and feminism. I am interested in the connections and comparisons between the mistreatment of animals, the mistreatment of women throughout history, and the conditions this has created in modern society.
Goddess of the Hunt, oil on canvas, 9x12ft, 2011

Eggs and Legs, low fire red clay with clear glaze and boiled eggs, 2010

One of the Same, Bronze and Marble, overseen by Mexican Sculptor Octavio Gonzalez, approx. 1x3ft, 2011
**BIOGRAPHY**

I was born in 1987 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. In 2007 I began studying at the School of Art at the University of Manitoba and I am now in my final year completing my painting thesis with an additional focus on ceramics. Since being in Fine Arts I have immersed myself heavily in the community by collaborating with fellow artists, participating as the Painting Representative on Student council, being a member of the Fine Arts Fundraising and Party Planning Committees for the Students of Fine Arts Students Association (SOFSA), curating the SOFA Gallery at Edna Fedya Restaurant, and teaching painting classes privately and though Forum Art Institute. Recently, I have also started a new gallery called Gallery Ingenue, which is located in Stella’s Café and Bakery on Osborne Street. I run the gallery and curate monthly shows featuring emerging Winnipeg artists, many of which are current students or alumni of the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Manitoba.
Everyone has their ideology that guides their actions in life, and mine happens to be feminism. Now I’m not gonna lie, being a feminist takes hard work, dedication, and is at times EXHAUSTING. You would think that in this day and age, where everyone is professing to be a Liberal, rights loving, peace seeking individual, that being a feminist would not provoke such contention among people, but you would be wrong. To put this into context, let me retell what happened to me the other day.

I have a very close friend, who I respect and adore, in this story we will call him Charlie. Now Charlie has a best friend (we will call the best friend Mike), and as a result of me and Charlie being friends, I have had the unfortunate privilege of seeing Mike. Mike has never been shy around me and talks about girls quite frequently. However, the way he talks about girls is very rude; to say the least. I let it go at first because I was, at the time, trying a new technique of brushing things off that bothered me. However, it is hard for me to let things go and so I brought it up with my friend Charlie. I discussed with him my distaste for the way Mike cat called girls, and the derogatory comments he would make towards them. Now, Charlie is an amazing, loyal, and loving friend. He defended Mike’s actions to the end; not because he agreed with them, but because he promised me that Mike is a good person.

Four days after that conversation I was with Charlie and Mike and was telling them about the bake sale that was coming up in support of the FAQ magazine. Charlie was very supportive and told me he would be coming, however when I asked Mike if he was coming he responded, “In all seriousness, I can’t come. I don’t support feminism.” I’m not going to lie, my heart was racing and I instantly became devastated. I tried to discuss with him his issues with feminism but it was clear that he lived in a bubble, where the issues of pay disparity between genders was non existent. Where, the fact that women make up 52% of the population and yet only around 20% of Parliament was just not true in his mind (or maybe he knew these were true but he just did not care). This conversation ended quickly because I could see there was no point to the conversation, he had his beliefs (which are wrong) and I had mine.
This incident happened over a week ago, and yet it still is weighing me down. I meet so few feminists, even within my close friends. I only know that one for sure is a feminist, and I am too scared to ask the others in case they are not, I would miss them dearly. I respect that people are allowed to have varying opinions but to not be a feminist is to think that it is okay that the vast majority of sweat shop labourors are women; that it is okay for the Criminal Code of Canada to discriminate against sex workers; that pay disparity between genders is good. There are such abundant feminist issues within our own Country, that it is astounding to me that there are the “Mikes” who can claim that feminism is wrong. I hope one day I can learn to let go the frustration, anger, and sadness that Mike and people like him have caused me. However, reflecting on what happened I have come to epiphany that not everyone can be a feminist because feminism requires bravery and courage; qualities that many do not possess.

I will end this with a message told to me by a friend; to all feminists: Do not be discouraged by the ignorance that is out there, but be understanding and empathetic that they live a life that is unenlightened. Understand that we have chosen the road less travelled and we must bear with it, the difficult path that is feminism. However, never lose hope and relish in the fact that there are others like you, who are fighting the good fight.
The first time I heard Lady Gaga’s song about loving yourself, my reaction was, “Finally, a gay anthem that actually mentions being gay.” Unlike other recent gay anthems (Katy Perry’s Firework, Ke$h’a’s We R Who We R, and P!nk’s Raise Your Glass, to name a few), who simply make vague declarations about being proud of your differences and partyin’ it up, Born This Way makes it explicitly clear she’s talking about being queer. This is good because she acknowledges those of us most impacted by current attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community. Other singers claim to have written gay anthems, but when you listen to them, they could be about anything. I see it as a way to capitalize on the current trend among the famous; to be pro-gay rights, while still retaining appeal for the more conservative audience. This is profiting from a marginalized group without really attempting to further our cause.

So that’s a plus for Lady Gaga. On the flip side, the message conveyed by the constant use of the term “born this way” is that all us gays can’t help it, so we shouldn’t be discriminated against. This implies that no one would ever choose to be gay, given an option. Personally, I believe that I could live my life as a straight woman if I wanted to, but I don’t think I would be as fulfilled, complete, or happy. In other words, given the choice, I would choose to remain queer. Does that justify my oppression? Do I deserve to not be able to marry my partner in my home state or not be protected from employment discrimination if I choose to be gay? This denies queer agency, and paints gayness as inherently unappealing.

Another qualm I have with Lady Gaga is her focus on gay men. I understand that her type of disco-esque, soul diva, dance-ya-pants-off music and image is traditionally associated with the culture of gay men, but that doesn’t make it okay that she gets touted as a gay rights icon while turning most of her focus on gay men. Gay men are sidekicks, BFFs, advice-givers, and shopping companions in popular movies, television and books, and these are deeply flawed relegations and stereotypes of an oppressed group. But at least they’re present, and people generally like them in these circumstances. The presence of queer and lesbian women in books, movies, and television is sparse, and we’re often portrayed as angry, womanizers, unattractive, and/or interested in men, within Western popular culture. Lady Gaga perpetuates this through
“Just put your paws up. ’Cause you were born this way, baby.”
“No matter gay, straight or bi, lesbian, transgender life,
I’m on the right track, baby, I was born to survive…”

- Lady Gaga, Born This Way

her focus on her gay male fans. For example, when she played in Madison Square Garden, she said at one point “This one’s for the boys, and the girls, tonight. Celebrate your gay pride!” and then sang her song titled Boys, Boys, Boys. Really? Come on now, that is clearly not for all the boys and the girls that night, just the ones who like men. And with this song, only gay men can celebrate their gay pride. Although she does include lesbian women (for example, she took four soldiers discharged under ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ to the 2010 MTV Music Video awards, two of which were women), she still maintains lesbian underrepresentation in pop culture gay rights discussions.

Don’t get me wrong, though; I love Lady Gaga. I love that she is unabashedly adamant in her support for gay rights in the United States, and that she uses her stardom to further these efforts. It’s a huge step for a country that classified homosexuality as a mental illness until 1973 to have one of the most popular singers of the decade be so publicly devoted to LGBTTQ* issues. When she ended a deal with Target stores (which included an exclusive expanded edition of her album Born This Way) because they financially backed a Minnesota political candidate that was anti-gay, I let out a silent “Fuck yeah” to myself, because she was actually exercising the power she had as a celebrity in a concrete way. Lady Gaga, despite her ideological shortcomings and her often not-quite-feminist actions, is an inspiringly influential figure that joins the ranks of other pro-gay singers such as Madonna and Cindy Lauper; she can impact positive change for the LGBTTQ* community within dominant culture in the United States and elsewhere.

But again, what if I wasn’t born this way? This discourse, along with the ideas that inform research about what makes a person attracted to the same sex or identifying a “gay gene,” pathologize being queer in a way that ultimately contributes to our Othering, whatever the speakers’ intentions. So, while it’s a nice sentiment of acceptance and naturalization, I’m not sure if Born This Way, or Lady Gaga’s politics in general, do enough in terms of gay rights and legitimization.
I am supported in an environment that promotes the sharing of ideas and discussion, that tells me I have a voice and that I can use it.

I am taught to theorize and question. Isn’t that how discoveries are made and real change begins?

I am taught to communicate effectively. Does not matter if you are the smartest person in the world, if you cannot communicate that knowledge to people it is worth nothing.

I have come to the realization that everything is connected and science has real consequences for real people.

So wipe that look of surprise, distain or confusion off your face when I tell you I am double majoring in Microbiology and Women’s Studies.

Swallow your words that tell me it is ‘pointless’, ‘worthless’, and feminism is not longer ‘needed’.

Tell me that the world wouldn’t be a better place if everyone strived to obtain these skills and were told that their voices matter.

Most of all my Women’s Studies degree matters because it matters to me!

**My Women’s Studies degree matters because...**

Alberta Johnson
Hybrid Identity. When searched on the internet, a range of explanations and definitions show up. As it was expressed to me in one of my Women’s and Gender Studies courses, hybridity or hybrid identity can be understood as being influenced by two cultures at one time. For me, hybrid identity is an emotion, a feeling - something that has had and continues to have an enormous impact and influence on the way in which I think, act, speak, understand and relate to others and the world in which I live. I chose to entitle my Research Proposal as “Stuck in the Middle with Two” for a simple and strategic reason. I believe that the word stuck, emphasizes struggle, an internal struggle that I have experienced from a young age of not being able to clearly define and identify myself. Today, at the age of 21 I have chosen to define one portion of my identity as an Italian Canadian 2nd/3rd generation woman. To clarify, I define myself as both second and third generation (descendant of Italian Immigrants), being that my father is a first generation Italian immigrant and my mother a second generation Italian-Canadian citizen. Certainly, because of the fact that I am both a Canadian and Italian citizen who has had the opportunity to live in both Canada and Italy, I have from a young age struggled with who I am and where I fit in. When I travel to Italy, and I am introduced to someone new, they often ask me “what are you? Where are you from?” to which I reply “Canadian.” On the other hand, when in Canada I get asked “where’s your family from or what are you?” To which I reply: “Italian.” For me my hybrid identity goes much beyond labels and language. For me this struggle of not fitting in is the source and cause for my personal self exploration which has thus intrigued me to encourage other women to share their stories.

The research topic of hybrid identity has been formed as a result of my personal experiences and because of my “position” as a Canadian Italian woman. I have chosen to research a topic that is personally connected to me because I feel empowered to engage in the production and documentation of knowledge. I feel it is critical to understand and record other people’s experiences and the way in which they develop and understand the world they live in. I identify myself in various ways with numerous titles/labels. I would argue that a large portion of my identity including the way I perceive myself and the way I perceive others is based on many internal and external factors. One’s individual experiences, cultural, religious and educational backgrounds as well as geographic location play a role in influencing one’s identity. I propose that all human beings are complex and diverse individuals with numerous identities. This duality has presented itself in my personal experiences in both in my native Canada, where I was born and raised as well as Italy, the basis for many of my cultural traditions. It is valuable for me to gain the perspectives of other women and most importantly begin a discussion surrounding this topic.

Before I begin to discuss some details about the research I am aiming to conduct, I feel it’s imperative to mention that this is an under researched group which experiences many hardships but also hidden strengths. As I mentioned previously feeling like an outsider is certainly one of the grave hardships I have struggled to overcome. Hybrid identity (in this particular context) is not something that can be distinguished visibly. Hybrid persons can be anyone, no matter the race, gender and other distinguishable characteristics.
I feel like an interesting part of my hybrid identity is the way in which I perceive my race. If I were asked to put a check mark in a box to identify my race, I would check the box that indicated “white” or “Caucasian.” Interestingly, as a young girl, I didn’t perceive myself to be of equivalent status or class of other white or Caucasian persons in Canada. White to me, at one time, signified privilege, wealth and more specifically of English descent. Certainly my understanding of white was a result of my environment, more specifically a reflection of the people who attended the same private school as I. The relevance, for which I have chosen to share with you this information, is because it reinforces my feeling of being an outsider and also feelings of inferiority. More importantly it acknowledges my awareness of perceptions, which inevitably is one of the chief principals of Feminist Social Science Research.

This type of research enforces a political approach in which the researcher and the researched work together, sharing power, to gain knowledge, empower individuals and ultimately give a voice to those whose voices are rarely heard. Feminist social science researchers use honesty, (self)reflection, and awareness as key ingredients when conducting research. In order to be a Feminist Social Science Researcher, it is important to build an entrusting relationship with the research participant. As a researcher, I aim to establish and explain my objective and my “place” within the research, this reflexive feminist approach may assist in creating trust. The commonality (though personal experience or similar cultural backgrounds) that I will establish between myself and the participant will most likely make them feel at ease and willing to share information. Offering stories and experiences allows for a “shared vulnerability and comparable positioning for researchers and participants…” Although the researcher is the one conducting the conversation and questions, the researcher may also classify as the researched.

Discovering how hybridity has played a role in women’s lives is the first step in dissecting Canadian women’s identities and being able to compare them with other women and men in different geographical locations. As a model of hybrid identity it is especially valuable for me to begin this discussion among women. Often times, in Canadian/patriarchal society, women’s perspectives and experiences are invisible and/or ignored. By encouraging hybrid women to openly and comfortably share their stories, an awareness and new found knowledge will be established and documented. There are numerous benefits for which this research should take place. Some are as follows:

- **To unite a group of women** - hybrid identity, is a part of one’s “self.” Similar to gender identity, it is defined in different ways by different individuals. In order to better understand hybridity, it is important to set up a forum (through interviews and group discussion sessions) in which women can speak openly and define hybrid identity for themselves. This “uniting” of a group of women, will allow each woman’s experiences to be validated, as well as make individual women feel a part of a larger community.

- **Also, being influenced/affected by two cultures at once is changing the world that we live in.** - Over generations, with the invention of new technologies, the world’s population has the opportunity to travel to other destinations. This “freedom”, has created new identities and increased the number of inter-racial/cultural persons. With the facility of travel and greater accessibility to information (through the media and education provided by post secondary institutions), culture and culture’s effect on human beings is relevant not only to second and third generation Italian Canadian women in Canada, but to all people. Researching this specific category of participants is one small portion of the population that will fuel more research on other hybrid persons.

Sharing power, conducting honest research, and an awareness and understanding of difference and identifying myself as an “instrument to the research” are all key components of Feminist social science research. I hope that my research will ultimately celebrate the compelling stories women tell about their lives and produce new information which will contribute to the documentation and preservation of women’s history.
The story of Cinderella has been passed down through generations, sharing the story of how a beautiful, disadvantaged girl finds true love, escaping her meagre existence and those who did not appreciate her to a royal life of grandeur and magic with a wealthy prince. The Cinderella Bride, a Harlequin romance, encompasses the same basic ideas; a lower class, mysterious beauty mesmerizes the wealthy ‘prince’ and acquires her happily ever after. This romance could be regarded as a “how-to” guide, dictating how to acquire a man of higher status - or, how to be a woman worthy of the love of such a man. Introducing a variety of female characters and placing them into one of two categories- virgin or whore- creates a dichotomy that dictates how it is appropriate to behave as a woman, should there be the desire to turn out like Cinderella, or in this case, the protagonist Emma O’Rourke. This virgin-whore contrast restricts women’s sexuality, insinuating that it is only appropriate when one is not aware of it; when one is not actively utilizing it to pursue a man; and when it is associated with marriage and, ultimately, the goal of procreation.

For a woman to be worthy of a man’s affections, according to this Harlequin romance, they must not be aware of their own sexuality. Emma O’Rourke, the innocent, chaste heroine, is contrasted to her mother, Janet O’Rourke, the promiscuous aged whore. This stark contrast works to demonstrate how ‘good girls’ don’t know about sex, or sexuality and, therefore, are worthy of love. The difference in awareness of sexuality is visible within a phone conversation that Emma and her mother have while Emma is away on a business trip:

‘We’re not interrupting anything, are we?’
‘Huh? No. I’m in bed.’
‘And?’

It took her a moment to realize what her mother meant. ‘No!’ Emma repeated vehemently.
‘I told you, Mom, this is a business trip.’

‘What, you don’t think men like to combine business with pleasure?’
Flashes of her dream popped into Emma’s mind. She shook them off, replacing them with Gideon’s gentlemanly departure last night. ‘Not Gideon.’
‘Ooh, Gideon, is it?’
‘Mom, he’s my boss. Quit trying to imply something else.’ (Wallace 85)

Janet, who cannot find love for herself and has had numerous bad relationships, is blatantly sexual in her comments. She wants Emma to pursue a relationship that would not fall within appropriate boss-secretary social expectations, while Emma approaches the conversation with much less lust, and does not let herself engage in the fantasies of a desperate woman. As well, Emma hesitates throughout the conversation to comprehend her mother’s sexual suggestions. Janet’s suggestion that Emma might be in bed doing something other than sleeping initially baffles Emma and then causes her some contempt as she realizes what her mother is suggesting. The virgin, Emma, does not even consider sex, while the whore, Janet, focuses on it. This consideration of sex immediately disqualifies Janet from ever finding true love, and Emma’s unawareness of sex and sexuality enables her to be worthy of pursuit by Gideon.

If, however, Emma was to pursue Gideon it would not be considered appropriate, especially if she used her sexuality to do so. Women should not attempt to achieve a man’s attention using her sexuality. Emma is seemingly oblivious to her sexuality, demonstrated by her hesitations in the phone conversation and in the comments she shares with Gideon during a sarcastic exchange; “Goodness. I can’t wait to find out if I have a mouth.” (Wallace 81). There is an obvious sexual
nature to the comment but “she seemed clueless to the innuendo” (Wallace 81), so Emma is not committing the faux pas of blatantly engaging her sexuality. Emma may not ruin her chances of being worthy of a man’s love by using her sexuality to charm a man but Maddie, a waitress she and Gideon encounter, does. Upon delivering Gideon’s whiskey and Emma’s tea “…the waitress had undone two more buttons on her uniform. And was leaning forward more than usual” (Wallace 43). Despite her best attempts however, Gideon pays no attention and instead stays “busy studying the contents of his tumbler” (Wallace 44). The waitress, who exudes her sexuality through the overt exposure of her breasts and her sexually tainted comment “…I’ll be more than happy to accommodate you” (Wallace 43) is unable to capture Gideon’s attention, while Emma, who sits quietly and self- consciously, captivates him. Emma’s demure nature leads to her receiving an invitation to travel to New York with him and, eventually, her happily ever after.

For a woman’s sexuality to be appropriate, she not only must be unconscious of it and not use it to pursue a man, but it must also be associated with the happily ever after- specifically, marriage. When Emma and Gideon first engage in sex they are not married but they did not plan the intercourse. After Mariah Kent, Gideon’s grandmother’s heart attack, Emma had “simply wanted to offer comfort. To somehow let him know he needn’t feel alone” (Wallace 131). This act of comfort became passionate lovemaking, but this is considered forgivable because the desire to be nurturing is misinterpreted by both and becomes sexual desire- neither Gideon nor Emma had intentions for it to occur. Emma is not aware of her capacity to be overcome with sexual desire, or her ability to cause Gideon to be defeated by their passion, so her sexuality is considered acceptable within this context. As well, Emma feels guilty about being a ‘one-night stand’ and desires more from this relationship. After waking up in Gideon’s arms after wonderful lovemaking, Emma quickly excuses herself and finds herself in the washroom questioning her emotions:

She wasn’t going to compound the situation by expecting more. Nor would she embarrass herself by clinging. She would handle this with sophistication and maturity. She wouldn’t think about how Gideon’s touch made her feel or how it made her feel like the most desirable woman in the world. She wouldn’t let her lover’s prowess cloud her reality. Why, then, did her heart feel as if it was ripping in two? (Wallace 138)

To dwell on the pleasure of the evening would be too disheartening for Emma, as she believes she can never have such an experience again. However, Emma does desire more of Gideon’s glorious lovemaking, and she desires even more than that- it is her heart that is breaking, not her vagina. She feels remorse about what has happened because she believes that Gideon is incapable of giving her forever, her very own happily ever after.

Emma’s desires go beyond mere sex- she wants a relationship from Gideon. This wish is deemed an appropriate outlet for women’s sexuality so she remains worthy of his affections. Having channelled her sexuality into the desire to create a relationship, Gideon continues to see Emma as valuable, and the two begin a relationship. Despite their best intentions, Emma eventually realizes that Gideon will have to leave and that he lacks the ability to give her a future. The suitable outlet for her sexuality gone, Emma withdraws from sexual acts with Gideon and refuses to engage with him at all, causing her to become distracted and “wonder if she’d ever stop thinking of him” (Wallace 174). Emma’s decision to end things when the acceptable outlet for her sexuality- a long-term relationship- disappears allows her to remain worthy of Gideon’s love, so he continues to pursue her. The pursuit ends when Gideon recognizes that Emma, his own “Little Match Girl” (Wallace 15), will make a perfect first mate and that the two should embark on a very long journey together- a journey that just might take ‘forever’. As Emma’s sexuality becomes associated with marriage it is deemed suitable and she is still able to remain within the category of ‘virgin’. In contrast Janet, who is not married, despite having a daughter, does not equate sex with marriage and instead has numerous affairs that never fail to end badly and “…as she got older, she fell faster and harder, the endings more bitter and dramatic” (Wallace 162). Janet’s blatant sexuality, accompanied by her pursuit of men and her lack of marriage association (Wallace 162)- her pursuit of marriage reserves her the contrast position within the dichotomy of ‘whore’.

Maintaining the virgin/whore dichotomy within The Cinderella Bride, by contrasting Emma O’Rourke to other less ‘wholesome’ characters, such as Janet O’Rourke and the waitress Maddie, creates a rigid view of women’s sexuality. The restrictions around a woman’s sexuality indicate that for it to be appropriate, and for the woman to be worthy of love, she must not be aware of her sexuality, she must not use her sexuality to pursue a man and her sexuality must be associated with marriage. Under the restrictions of a woman’s sexuality, she must be the ‘virgin’, like Emma O’Rourke, to be worthy of a man’s affection, and this extends beyond romance novels. Outside of the pages of romance, women are influenced by the structured view of sexuality put in place by the virgin/whore dichotomy, as “…the virginity movement gives young women only two choices of who they can be sexually: sluts or not sluts...and there’s no in-between identity for young women who are making smart, healthy choices in their sexual lives” (Valenti 83). The restrictions on women’s sexuality, the dictates that it is only appropriate if they are unaware of it, if they do not utilize it to pursue men and if it is in association with betrothal, have consequences that extend beyond the pages of The Cinderella Bride. The ‘virgin’ is not the only one who is worthy of a man’s, or anyone’s, love and affection- sometimes the ‘whores’ deserve a happily ever after too.

Works Cited
immigrant blues
Tokini Fubara-Manuel

A pile of worthless air,
No, not air. 'Cause nothing’s there.
As if emptiness emptied her soul,
Which subdued the world and swallowed it whole,
Leaving no color; not even grey.
Not blacks; not whites - they’ve all gone away.
No happiness or sadness or hatred or love.
No hell, below burning; no heaven above.

Just an island in a galaxy.
Just an entity in some billion beings.
From without; cannot lead or follow,
So I live the present in a thousand tomorrows.
With lost gods, eyes, and touch.
With lost self, mine and much.
Must not care - I can’t afford such.
'Cos I’m not here - NOT HERE - to fill me up.
“Have you seen him yet?” Melantho Woods asked her friend, jumping up and down, unable to remain still longer than a minute in her excitement.

“Have I seen him, who?” Gwen Morgan replied calmly, used to her friend’s over-exaggeration of everything in life, especially when it came to men.

“Jude Evans!”

“Any relation to our boss, Sarah Evans, by coincidence?” Gwen asked, still uninterested. The constant search for gorgeous men was, and always had been, Mel’s game. Gwen had learned early on in their friendship, to just ask the questions that needed to be asked, before looking for a way to switch the topic.

“Her nephew!” Mel replied. “He owns and manages the largest media technology organization in North America.”

“Pomegranate Co.” No wonder the name Jude Evans had sounded vaguely familiar. Gwen dealt with all the little things in the film company her and Mel worked at, ‘Eve’s New Fruit’. Any of the things that could be done without Sarah, the owner of the company, was passed down to Gwen to handle. She had recently done a shipment of new equipment into the studio from Pomegranate Co, which had seemed odd at the time. Eve’s was in a huge deficit she knew, and was having trouble getting scripts that would make it as big hits to up their company; even harder was convincing big name actors to star in the films. Gwen had come across the name Jude Evans on the invoice sheet, and had wondered vaguely if he had been of any relation to Sarah. She couldn’t guess otherwise how the company could afford all new equipment.

“Yah,” Mel said, snapping Gwen out of her trance. “His business just made it into the list of top multi-billion dollar companies. Rumour has it, he’s here to help his aunt get out of the rut the companies gone into. He’s supposed to have like, a million connections with big name companies and stars. Oh and have I mentioned how gorgeous he is? To die for!”

“Have you even seen him yet?” Gwen asked, laughing at the ridiculous love-struck expression on her friend’s face.

“Well, no. But I’ve seen a ton of pictures. His names one of the top searched male names in the google data base. And he’s been on the cover of sooo many magazines by now!” Melantho replied, eyes gleaming with excitement, as she gushed on. “He’s supposed to be at the meeting tonight. You know. The meeting you’re going to conveniently be at.”

Part of Gwen’s job, as Sarah’s lead assistant, was to be present at all meetings so that she could better attend to the details of the business that Sarah didn’t have time for. Melantho dealt with the more artistic bits of production – hair, make-up, costumes – so she always relied on Gwen to fill her in on any juicy information from the meetings that she wasn’t herself invited to.

“I’ll be sure to keep an eye out for him for you, and fill you in on just how gorgeous he is,” Gwen promised. Sarah’s nephew coming into the business to help must be a recent decision for me to have missed it, she thought.

“No guy is ever up to your standards. You’ll come back and report that ‘he’s decent looking with a nice smile and good hair’ just like you always do. I want juicy details! I want to know how muscled he is and if he has a thick jaw-line and, and, and, how tight his pants are...” Mel gushed, getting louder and louder as she went on.
“Alright, alright, I’ll do my best.” Gwen said through laughter. She was used to her friend getting excited, but never this much so. He must really be something else, she thought. But she knew that as always, his looks and charm would mean nothing to her. Ever since high school, when she had first met Melantho, it had been the same thing. Mel would get excited over every male who attended the school or walked by the grounds. And if he was actually good looking, she would die at the thought of him looking at her. In contrast Gwen had never met a girl she truly liked. She had seen guys she had thought were cute, or nice. And she had dated, sure. But none of them had ever created any sort of emotion in her anywhere near as strong as what Mel went through with half the male population. She was just stubbornly waiting for the right one. And then she would know.

“We’ll begin the meeting now if everyone is here,” Sarah said loudly, to be heard over the excited chatter of the group. Everyone had heard about the arrival of her nephew by now, and all were curious not only to meet him, but to see what changes he would bring to the company. For the past year, the fact that the business was going under had become apparent. The past few months had been tense, as people debated if they should continue to stick it out or start job hunting again. Eve’s New Fruit was a good company to work for though, so most had chosen to stay in the hopes that it would soon get better.

“Alright than,” Sarah continued, as the buzz died down. “I know everyone is excited and eager to meet my nephew. He will be joining us shortly once he tends to a few matters of his own. Let’s begin with other matters than.”

As Sarah droned on about budgets, upcoming prospective clients, storylines, and other matters of business, Gwen dutifully took notes while letting her mind wander as it always did at these meetings. She loved her job and was thankful she wound up having to support her mother’s lifestyle of booze, cigarettes and men, by working multiple part time jobs while still trying to do well in high school. After graduation, her friend Melantho had gone off to take an aesthetics program at a nearby college. Upon return to their hometown she had gotten a job at Eve’s New Fruit. She was the one who had told Gwen about the job as an assistant at the company, and had helped convince Sarah that despite Gwen’s lack of training, she would be perfect for the job. A choice that Sarah had many times told Gwen, she was grateful for making.

The room suddenly went completely silent, snapping Gwen out of her zombie-like reverie. She looked up to see the most beautiful man she had ever seen. He’s…gorgeous, she thought. But there was something else about him, something that was different from all the good-looking men she had ever seen. He was slightly taller than her, she could tell from his position in the doorframe, only a couple inches away from being six feet tall. He had rich, shortly cut dark brown hair, and his skin had a healthy tanned look to it; like someone who, despite having an office job, still managed to get outside in the sun as often as possible. He was slighter framed than most men, but even through his suit she could tell he was someone who took time to stay healthy and build up muscle. She remembered something Melantho had said about him owning part of a horse ranch nearby. That would explain the tan and muscles.

But she still could not explain what it was about him that was so attractive to her. In every other sense, he was just like any other man in the room. As he turned his head and looked directly at her, she felt her heart stop as she forgot to breathe, and it hit her. There was something almost, feminine, about his face. No, that can’t be right. The rest of him was so, so, perfectly masculine and strong. But she couldn’t shake the idea out of her head. And she realized it was this aspect of his face, that she found herself so irresistibly attracted to.

“I’ve heard a lot about you,” he replied, only a couple feet away now. She started, realizing that he was talking to her. She had missed Sarah stating her name as she went around the circle introducing everyone. “My aunt has told me what a wonderful assistant you are to her. Her high praise has made me consider stealing you away for a few hours, and silky. Instead of the usual harsh, deep guttural sounds Gwen found most men made. His was like listening to a woman, so soft and silky. Instead of the usual harsh, deep guttural sounds Gwen found most men made. His was like listening to a song, the words flowing one into the other.

“Any assistance I can offer, I’m more than willing to give,” Gwen replied. She avoided eye contact, for fear she would blush and pass out if the gaze were to become too intimate.
She's so amazing, Jude thought, the second he walked into the room. His aunt's assistant was the first person he had noticed in the crowded meeting room. Gwen, she had been introduced as, what a beautiful name. He tried to focus on each person his aunt was introducing him to, but his gaze was constantly magnetized towards Gwen.

Although she was looking down at the notes she was taking, her hair covering half her face, he was able to clearly take in the rest of her. She had the blondest hair he had ever seen; almost white it was so fair. It matched perfectly with her clear skin. As she looked up at him and smiled upon hearing her name, the perfect dimples on her cheeks made him weak at the knees.

“I have a few phone calls to make first, but how about we meet at the café down the street in an hour after the meeting?” He asked, ignoring the warning glance his aunt gave him. She worried too much. He would be careful. He knew Gwen could never find out the truth about his past; he knew the danger that her knowledge could bring. He wasn't about to jeopardize the empire he had spent the past ten years building up. But there was something about her, about the way she looked at him with such questioning innocence, that he knew he could not resist. He had to know more about her. He had to know everything about her.

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“An hour would be perfect. I’ll meet you there.” Gwen replied sweetly, finally looking up at Jude. Blue. But not just blue. No the most perfect blue, a sort of azure blue, Jude decided, looking deeply into her eyes.

Looking back up at his aunt he said, “I hope you don’t mind me stealing her away. I promise not to take up too much of her time. But I know how busy you are, and she appears to be the next best choice in someone to catch me up on the business.”

“Yes, Gwen knows the ins and outs of this company almost better than I do some days,” Sarah replied, still fixing her nephew with an icy look of warning. “Back to the meeting now though, we have a lot more to go through,” she said, regaining her smile and continuing on like nothing had happened.

“He’s... I have no words for it. Gorgeous. And perfect. And he has the most amazing voice and lips and his whole face and everything is just…”

“And below the waist?” Melantho asked teasingly of her friend. She had never once heard Gwen at a loss for words when describing a guy. Unless of course she had run out of ways to criticize him, and was trying to convince Mel on what a bad choice he was to date. But for her to like someone? Mel was giddy with happiness. She had Gwen approved of.

“I’m only teasing,” her friend retorted. “Besides, what if he were to make the move?”

“He wouldn't. He's a professional and wouldn't do something as silly as running off with his aunt's assistant. Plus, when I was leaving I overheard him on the phone to Dyany Cox, the new and upcoming actress and model. And it sounded intimate.” Gwen replied, speaking the last sentence softer than the previous. It's silly really, to even like him or think about it. Dyany is gorgeous, with her long red hair and perfect body. As if Jude would even see me if I were to stand next to her. But still… she let herself hope.

A shrill ringing pierced the room as Gwen’s cell phone went off, breaking the silence that had come over the room. “Gwen Morgan,” she said, answering the phone. “Yes?...uh huh...Of course, no problem. Tomorrow night works perfect. I’ll see you then.”

“Oh-my-god, he cancelled on you!” Melantho said.

“He didn’t cancel. He just postponed. He’s a busy man and he just got here today. I’m sure he has lots to do.”

“Oh yes, like hang out with a certain someone who coincidentally just arrived tonight? A certain Dyany Cox?” Mel responded, anger in her voice. “Great, the one guy you like and he turns out to be a complete pig!”

“Mel, it’s fine,” Gwen said, trying to laugh it off. “We have plans to meet at his office tomorrow night. Than I can fill him in on what’s going on at the office. And that’s it!” She said, catching the look of mischief in her friend's eyes.
“Yah, yah. He conveniently cancels the public meeting place for a more private one? And you’re telling me that’s it?”

Melantho asked teasingly as she walked away to head home.

Yah, just business. That’s all. Gwen thought, Nothing more.

Looking at her watch, Gwen picked up her pace towards the offices at the far end of the set of buildings that made up Eve’s New Fruit. She had lost track of time sorting out all the new invoices and shipments that had been coming in that day. Apparently Jude had been busy doing work last night. It was nice to see the company getting in an influx of new equipment and costumes. It was about time. They were just doing the last touches on some deals for their next film and the company was sure to be on its own two feet again. But for now she had to worry about getting to the office on time. She hated making people wait for her, especially someone as important as Jude Evans.

She hesitated as she crossed through the lobby and found herself directly in front of his closed office door. This is silly. There’s nothing to be nervous about. We are just having a quick meeting to I can fill him in on any details he needs to know, and update him on our current project, and that’s it. Straightening her shoulders, she knocked on the door twice loudly. Hearing a muffled ‘come in’, she opened the door and stepped into the brightly lit office of Jude Evans.

She was even more gorgeous than he had remembered at the meeting. He had only seen her sitting down than, but now, standing up, she’s perfect. She had her long blonde hair tied back in a loose ponytail, and was wearing a simple light blue skirt suit, that made her eyes stand out. Eyes, oddly enough, with no makeup, and yet still so beautiful. There was something so natural and innocent about her that Jude could not get over. How was it even possible for one person to have so much beauty and yet appear to be so unaware of it?

How stupid am I? He saw me hesitate. Now he’s going to think I’m some silly girl with a crush. And how embarrassing to catch him in the melodramas, as he tried to get work done. He smiled as he thought of the ridiculous rumours that were going around, not just within the company but throughout the film industry, about the two of them. He had escorted her to a couple big name events, but had never had any interest in her outside of business contacts. She was beyond beautiful, but she was cold. After both events, when he had made it apparent he had no interest in spending the night with her, she had sulked off and found some other man to keep company with. Jude had no interest in being with a woman who did not know how to feel anything but bodily pleasure.

He saw Gwen hesitate in the door upon seeing Dyany and quickly jumped out of his chair moving towards her. “Dyany was just helping me with my contact list. She seems to know nearly all the important big names in the film industry. We’re just finishing looking over the contract for her to sign, than she’ll be off and we can start our meeting,” he finished, adding a reassuring smile.

“Oh, no problem, I have a call I should make. I can wait in the lobby,” Gwen said, slipping back out the door and closing it behind her.

How stupid am I? He saw me hesitate. Now he’s going to think I’m some silly girl with a crush. And how embarrassing to catch him in the middle of something with Dyany! Well, he knew I was coming. He should have finished his meeting sooner. Gwen thought, trying to regain her composure.

There was no one she had to call, but the thought of waiting in the office with the two of them was more than she could take. She knew it was ridiculous, she had only seen him twice now since he’d arrived, but there was something about Jude. Something about the way he looked at her, as if he could see right into her. She was used to feeling invisible in a crowd, but somehow, in only a few minutes, it felt like he knew more about her than anyone else ever had.

She picked up her cell and pretended to be going through the numbers, so that when the door opened her awkwardness of what had happened inside went unnoticed. Dyany strutted past her, in her heels and sequined black dress, the strong smell of her expensive perfume filling the air. Jude had followed her out, and turned to Gwen as Dyany tramped out of the lobby.

“Sorry about that,” Jude said smiling, a sincere apology in his eyes. “I normally don’t go over with meetings, but I have never before had a meeting with someone who talks as much as she does. Unfortunately, that means I didn’t get all my phone calls made today, nuisance really. But the gentlemen I needed to get hold of are all going to be at a dinner event tonight, so I can talk to them while we’re there mingling.”
“While we’re there mingling?” Gwen asked, taken aback.

“Well yes, I was hoping you would join me. Assuming of course you had no other plans you can’t change for the evening?”

“Well no, no plans. But I have nothing to wear.” Gwen said, looking down at her simple skirt and suit jacket matched with plain flat black shoes. “Plus my hair must be a mess, and I never carry makeup around at work. There’s no way I could be presentable for a dinner of any sorts unless it were being held in a pub!”

“Oh, no problem. I know the make-up crew here generally leaves early, so I called the hair salon next door, and one of the girls has agreed to stay a bit late to help assist with your hair and make-up.” Jude replied, locking his office door and grabbing his coat off its hook by the door.

“But a dress?”

“Everything’s arranged. Tonight, all you have to do is follow. Leave the planning and thinking to me.” He answered with a wink, ushering her out of lobby and through a side door to the bustle of the street.

Everything seemed like a whirlwind to Gwen. One minute she was in the office, and the next she was in a salon chair being attended to with the most delicate care. Her hair had been elegantly curled to frame her petite face and the final touches to her make-up were just being completed; soft touches of brown with hints of turquoise to bring out her eyes. She looked up as the door opened to see another woman walk in with a rack of dresses.

“Mr. Evans was unsure of what style you would prefer for tonight. He told me to tell you to try on any of the dresses you like, and pick the one which suits you best. He put his favourites at the front.” The woman said, pointing to which side of the rack she considered the front, before pulling each dress out separately for Gwen to choose.

“They’re all so beautiful. But they must cost a fortune! I really can’t.” Gwen said overwhelmed by the wealth and beauty of the dresses being shown to her. One after the next looked original and expensive.

“Don’t be silly darling. It’ll all go to Mr. Evans account. The price tags aren’t shown, you just have to decide.” The woman replied.

Gwen looked at the dress at the front of the rack. It was a light brown, but it glinted almost gold when it moved. She finally said, unable to take her eyes off of it.

All eyes were on her, as they entered through the doors, into the crowded hotel ballroom that was hosting the event that night. It’s unnatural how beautiful she is, Jude thought, as he watched all eyes turn to take her in. The dress fitted her perfectly. It had ribbing on the inside so that it remained fitted, and without straps it showed off Gwen’s long neck and smooth upper back. Her white-blonde hair danced along her bare shoulders as she walked, catching the light brilliantly the same way her dress did.

I shouldn’t be doing this, Jude thought. There’s something about her that I can’t resist. I want to steal her away, out of here; just take her in my arms and leave. Tell her who I really am, the truth about my past. He looked up to greet an acquaintance and proudly introduced Gwen, happy at the result. She was gorgeous on her own, but with her hair and makeup and the dress, she was irresistibly stunning. But I can’t. I can’t let my feelings get away from me. I can’t jeopardize everything.

Gwen felt like a princess. Never before had anyone done anything like this for her. She hadn’t even had a date to go to her own prom with, but this was so much better. It unsettled her when people would look with their questioning eyes, wondering why she was the one with Jude, and not someone like Dyany. But Jude would look at her and smile, and suddenly it was like he was inside her head, telling her it was ok; inside her blood, making it pump faster and hotter. She was still unable to get over the way he looked at her. She had gone over it a thousand times before, and never had she felt that way with any other guy before. The feeling was…amazing. Like she was constantly flying and no one could ever bring her down. She wanted the night to never end. As two in the morning approached though, people began to sleepily, or drunkenly, make their way home.
Although she had been cautious to drink slowly and in moderation, the night's events had her head spinning, and she felt giddy as she walked out of the hotel ballroom. She felt Jude's strong arm come around her side and hold onto her, steadying her as he led her to the bottom of the staircase.

“I was hoping you would join me for a drink in my suite? I'm staying in one of the executive rooms on the first floor. Just a light drink maybe?” Jude asked, adding the last sentence as Gwen's heel caught on the carpet, tripping her slightly so that she had to lean closer against him to regain her balance.

“I would love to,” Gwen answered, looking up into his eyes. The most beautiful green eyes she had ever seen, a sort of, myrtle green.

The suite was huge, Gwen stood in the center of it, looking in awe. She was in the living room which was completely taken over on the one side by floor to ceiling windows, with a door that led out to the balcony. Jude had gone to the bar, which was tucked slightly off to the side, to mix drinks; leaving her standing there in the glory of the suite.

_How is this even happening?_ Gwen thought. She could have sworn she had been in his office ready to go over the aspects of the business just two minutes ago. Yet somehow, she was in his hotel suite, in a gorgeous dress, after having spent an amazing evening with him. Despite having worked in the film company for the past couple years, not once had she ever been to such a glorious event.

“It’s a beautiful view isn’t it?” Jude asked, walking into the room.

“It is.” Gwen agreed, turning to notice that he wasn’t looking out the window, but instead, at her.

“Here,” he said, handing her a drink, brushing up against her arm as he did so. She turned to look at him and instantly both were lost in each other's eyes. Putting his hand gentle on her lower back, he reached in and softly kissed her on the lips. Gwen hesitated at first, than turned around so she was facing him completely, and let him kiss her again.

_I shouldn’t be doing this_, Gwen thought. But it was too late for her to stop. Jude picked her up, as if she weighed nothing, and carried her into the room on the far side of the suite.

Jude continued to kiss her as he lay her down on the bed, unzipping her dress and gently removing it so it wouldn’t ruin. Gwen lost all ability to resist as the moment engulfed her, so unexpected she had no time to sort out what was happening, and how to resist. But so much of her didn't want to resist him. So much of her wanted to give in, to finally let someone else control her, instead of the usual self-control that she was so proud of. And so she did.

Jude removed his suit jacket but left his shirt on. As Gwen reached up to undo the buttons, he placed her hands back down on the bed gently, holding them down above her head. “Leave them,” he whispered. “It’s better this way.”

Gwen looked up at him puzzled, but didn't question his reasoning as she let her own pleasure take over the moment.

She lay on the bed in the dark room, breathing heavily and still in utter ecstasy from what had just happened. Rolling over onto her side, she tried to make out Jude's silhouette. Heat was radiating from his body as he breathed in rhythm with her. His shirt, now damp, still on. Gwen placed her hand on his upper leg and teasingly traced her fingers along.

Feeling braver, she ran her hand up his leg, than froze as she felt a nylon strap running around the back of his leg. Jude stopped breathing, as she slowly traced her hand along the strap and upwards to that which it was attached to. Running her fingers along the material she had come in contact with, she could feel Jude's heat and wetness from below the material. And above…warm, wet, silicon.

“I can explain.” Jude said, sitting up quickly as Gwen angrily slipped back into her dress.

“Explain what? Why you lied to me? And tricked me? And lied to everyone? And to think, you were the first guy I ever actually liked, and it turns out you’re not even a guy!” Gwen snapped, furious and confused as she tried to find her shoes. She didn’t know what to think. She didn’t want to think. She just wanted out of the room and away from Jude. Every survival instinct in her, told her to run.

“And why do you think you like me Gwen? Why do you think you're so attracted to me? Because I'm not like any other guy you've seen or been with before? Because I'm somehow different? Think about it Gwen.”
“There’s nothing to think about. I’m not who you think I am, and I never will be. And what about your aunt? How have you managed to lie to her this whole time about who you are?”

“It was her idea.” Jude said quietly, suddenly transported to the past.

“What?” Gwen asked, stopping in the doorway and turning around to face Jude, still sitting on the bed.

“I grew up with my twin brother, Mark, in a small town south of here on a farm. I only ever hung out with him and a couple of the farm boys who helped out during summers, so it was normal to act and dress like them. No one ever questioned the fact that I was a girl. When my parents and brother died in a car crash when I was five, my aunt Sarah took me in. She tried to put me in dresses for the first couple months and grow my hair, but when I refused, she made the decision to raise me as a boy. She was having trouble as a woman in the industry. She knew how much easier it would be to break through the glass ceiling in businesses if everyone thought I was a man. So she had my name legally changed from Judith to Jude, and enforced strict rules that I never tell anyone the truth. And it worked. I got good grades throughout high school and university, and had no problem creating a company and running it on my own.”

“And you think it’s ok to just lie to everyone so that you can get ahead in life?”

“It’s not lying. My sex is female, sure. But my gender is more male than female most days anyways, and that’s all that matters. I’m not willing to give up my female body, I still identify as a woman, but it’s gone on for too long. I could never come out to people about who I truly am. I would lose everything.”

“This is ridiculous.” Gwen said angrily. “I won’t tell anyone what I know; you don’t have to worry about that. But I can no longer work for you or your aunt. You should be ashamed.”

“You can run away from me Gwen, but you can’t run away from yourself. You can never run away from who you truly are. We connected for a reason. Don’t fool yourself into thinking you can just conform to heterosexual society.” Jude shouted, as Gwen stormed out of the room and through the living room.

“I can’t run from who I am? I shouldn’t conform to society? Look who’s talking.” Gwen said, before slamming the door behind her and leaving the hotel.

“Are you going to tell me what happened?” Sarah curiously asked Jude. “You’ve been avoiding me as often as possible this past month. And every time I do see you, you look like a dying puppy. Plus, I can’t help but notice how your depression seems to synchronize perfectly with my assistant’s sudden departure.”

“I don’t want to talk about it.” Jude said, refusing to look up from his desk.

“She knows, doesn’t she?”

“Yes, and now I don’t know where she is or where to look. Or even what I would do if I found her. She doesn’t want to be with me, she made that much clear.”

“Or maybe she’s just scared. And the fact that you’re scared too, isn’t helping.” Sarah said, sitting down on Jude’s desk and looking at him in a way only a loving aunt could. “I know it’s my fault. I’m the one who scared you into hiding who you truly are from the world. Maybe it’s time you stopped hiding.”

“I can’t. I run one of the largest companies in North America. I have a name and a reputation that I can’t just give up.”

“Not even for the one woman you truly love? Times have changed Jude. I hate to be the one to say this to you, I know I’m the one who convinced you they never would. The business world isn’t as foreign a place to women as it used to be. And maybe Gwen just needs to know you’re scared too, but that you’re willing to put yourself out there. Think about it.”

Think about it. Jude thought bitterly as his aunt walked out of the office. That’s all I’ve done is think about it. All I can do is think about her. I would do anything.

“Oh and by the way,” Sarah said, turning around at the doorway. “You should go cheek out some of the local strip clubs. Go have fun; you never know what you’ll find.” She smiled mysteriously at Jude before closing the door.
“You’re up next sugar.” Tim, the DJ of the club, said to Gwen. She surveyed the crowd. The usual, middle-aged men out for a night with the boys. Men looking for copious amounts of alcohol and even greater amounts of naked women. She shuddered, as she thought of their boozy breath when they leant in to talk to her. Even worse was their rough hands when they tried to grab at her.

She closed her eyes to steady the nerves she still got before shows, and instantly Jude appeared before her. Jude talking to her, laughing, touching her, smiling. The way he...she...he, Gwen didn’t know. Her own confusion was bad enough, but she was working through it at least. She couldn’t get over the impression that Jude wasn’t totally comfortable as a man. In men's clothes, sure. She couldn’t help but feel though, that Jude wanted to be known as a woman, but was just too scared. And that scared her the most.

But none of that matters anyways, Gwen thought. It’s not like I’m attracted to her. I’m not that kind of person. I like...men.

Surveyed the crowd again as she stepped onto the stage and started her routine.

She wasn’t completely sure what had attracted her to the club. She had gone in the next morning, after the night with Jude, and handed in her immediate notice to Sarah before walking out of the office. As she had walked down the street past the club, she couldn’t help but notice the sign out front, proclaiming that ‘exotic dancers of any skill level’ were being looked for. The owner had loved her the minute she walked in the door, and had hired her right away. She was instantly introduced to another one of the dancers who helped her work out a routine.

She had hoped that by exposing herself to men, she would come to accept, and even like the way they looked at her. But she found herself loathing them more and more each night. The way they looked at her with their hungry, greedy eyes; always wanting more. So unlike the way Jude had looked at her.

Even more alarming, had been her realization that each night she grew more and more intrigued by the others girls. As she watched them walk around topless, reflecting in the mirror as she did her make-up, she constantly had to pull her eyes away and stop the thoughts in her head. And always, the dominant thought was Jude. She could never get the idea out of her head, the curiosity, of what Jude was really like underneath her disguise.

As she teasingly did a last turn for the audience before heading backstage to change into her street clothes and go home, she stopped as she made eye contact with a woman tucked into the back of the room. The club was well known as a dominantly gentleman-only club. Although women are allowed in, few made the daring entry. But there was something else about the woman that made Gwen hesitate and take a second look. There was something so familiar about her face.

Gwen froze completely, still half on the stage, as the realization hit her. It was Jude. As a woman. Though still wearing baggier pants than most women did, and a button up man’s blouse, it was definitely a woman underneath. And it was definitely Jude.

Jude saw Gwen stop on stage as she was spotted. She also saw the shocked look on Gwen's face as she recognized Jude, but she had run off before Jude could decide if her look was one of happiness or displeasure.

It was the third strip club she had gone to that night. The previous two she had inquired about Gwen, describing her and trying to find someone who could help her. At the second one, a man at the bar overheard her and she was informed of a “white haired angel,” who danced at the club down the street.

Although Jude had been pre-warned of what Gwen was doing, she had still been shocked to walk into the club at the same time Gwen was removing her top; a completely distant look on her face as she went through the motions of pretending to be interested in the male crowd.

She did look like an angel though, as she twirled around the pole, her hair flying out behind her. It caught the light the same way it had that night in the ballroom. Her body was all Jude had been able to think about the past month, every remembrance of her smile and eyes driving her crazy. Seeing her so close again, and so exposed, had brought back all the painful memories of that night.

Jude waited outside the dressing room for Gwen to exit, not sure just what she was going to say. She wanted to sweep Gwen up into her arms and kiss her and tell her how much she loved her, but she was petrified of scaring Gwen away again.
What if she's still out there? Gwen thought, undoing her scarf for the third time before rewinding it around her neck. What if she left? What do I even want? She had been asking herself the question for the past month, and still had arrived at no definite conclusion. She had always gone by the motto in life, that when situations arrived, she would always know at the time what to do and what was best. But she wasn't sure she could rely on that motto this time. There was too much at stake.

But the more she thought about it, the more obvious the answer was. So she kept over-thinking it. Determined the answer would change. Stubborn in her decision that what she felt for Jude didn't really exist. But the more she denied it, the more she knew it was true.

She opened the dressing room door to find Jude standing opposite it, an uncertain look in her eyes as she looked up at Gwen. And suddenly Gwen knew.

“I love you.”

Jude's whole face broke out into a smile as she caught Gwen up into a hug, lifting Gwen off the ground and burying her face in her white hair. “I love you too.”

They laughed as they embraced and looked into each other's eyes; neither of them able to stop smiling or laughing in happiness.

“No more lies,” Jude said. “No more lies, ever.”

As Gwen climbed uncertainly onto the horse's back, she looked lovingly over at her wife, confidently sitting astride her mare. They had held off on the wedding for a few months, while Jude sorted out her business and all the changes it was going through. They had both been pleased that not too much seemed different with the company. All of Jude's business partners and contacts were at first confused about everything, but they were quick to accept, and Jude had only lost a couple of contracts as a result of her coming out.

They were lucky to have been able to escape for a few weeks; to head up to Jude's ranch in order to have some time for the two of them after the wedding. Everything had happened so chaotically and fast. Between the press conferences, gossip media, and phone calls from friends and family, the two had been kept busy. It had been an easy decision to decide to go to the ranch where there was no internet or phone service.

Gwen smiled as she thought of how happy she had been the past couple of months. It was like all of a sudden her past made sense. All the boys she had never been interested in, the way Jude looking at her had been so different. It felt good to finally be able to be herself and to be comfortable with that.

“Come on slow poke! It'll be night by the time you get up on that horse. You've been here four days already; you should be pro by now!” Jude teased. She had been working on ranches her whole life, but for Gwen it was something entirely new that she was still nervous about.

But a lot of things were new these days. Gwen was getting better at dealing with whatever came her way, and was learning how to catch onto things quickly and deal with her fears. It would take a bit before she was completely comfortable with her new self, but she found she felt happier and happier with every day that went by. And as her happiness grew, so did her confidence in her decision to finally be true to herself.

Plus now she knew. She knew everything would happen, exactly the way it was supposed to happen.
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