CATALYST FOR CHANGE WILL BE A PUBLICATION THIS
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.

Acknowledgements

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- Kyla Shead

We would also like to sincerely thank everyone who contributed their work to this issue, including several past contributors who kindly allowed their work to be republished for this special 10th anniversary edition.
Roots
by Elizabeth McMechan

Roots features the quote from infamous Angela Davis, “Radical simply means to grasp things at the roots”. A reminder of how simple the ideology of radicalism really is. It is not uncommon for counter-revolutionaries to use the term radical as a method for de-legitimizing the work of social activists, but to do something radically, or to be a radical is simply to examine the root of an issue, to delve into the source of its chaos and find the truth, find answers. The quote is backgrounded by collaged images of root vegetables taken from a 1980s children’s book about healthy eating.

Editor’s Note

This year’s publication of the FAQ Review is a very special 10th Anniversary Edition. Each edition over the past 10 years has been put together by a Feminist Collective that works in a non-hierarchical manner that seeks to provide undergraduate students the opportunity to showcase their art and writing while participating and contributing to feminist and queer discourse. In this particular issue we will not only be looking at the work of current students, but also highlighting powerful pieces of art from our past issues.

By bringing together the past and present as well as different voices and perspectives, our theme this year for the 10th Anniversary is one of collage. A collage is made up of individual and diverse fragments that, when brought together, can create a work of art that is much bigger than the sum of its parts. As a group we have taken this literally by creating our own piece of art as a Collective, but also figuratively, as the expressions, passions and experiences of our contributors weave together a larger picture of feminist issues. We hope you enjoy the journey!

The FAQ Review strives to make voices heard, showcase talent and dispel myths that surround feminism, feminists, and those that participate in Women’s and Gender Studies.

Our Collective would also like to acknowledge that the University of Manitoba campuses are located on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. The University respects the Treaties that were made on these territories, acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

We hope that you enjoy this publication of feminist and queer issues, and that you feel inspired to so seek out more writing based on these important topics. We want to thank you, our readers, for taking the time to share in this journey for social change.

Look out for our special “flashback” pages where we feature revolutionary artwork that has been published in previous FAQ editions over the past 10 years.

Editorial Board

Oyindamola Alaka
Jamie Campbell
Adriana King
Karen Murison
Danielle Sherwood
Trigger Warning: This publication contains content about various forms of oppression, violence and sexual assault which may be triggering to survivors.

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the FAQ Collective.
Only Yesterday: An Anishinaabe Boy’s Journey to Discovering and Accepting His Two-Spirit Unness

by Cameron Longo

1973 Age 1½ Elder Audrey Guiboche of Duck Bay Metis Settlement has a gift that was passed down from her mother. I have to tell you that I am two spirited. She feels sad for me, and prays for me that I will have an easy childhood and life. She does not tell my parents. My father is Catholic and my mother is Protestant.

1973 Age 3 and ½ I am staying at my mother’s auntie’s place at the Skownan First Nation Reserve. I am there for a few weeks. My mother’s cousins are young boys, but older than me. They are about age 5 upwards and are more rough type of boys. I keep to myself. Why? I am probably shy.

1973 Age 5, I am in a foster home at 235 Gunnell St, run by the Chartrands. I remember playing inside my room, and a neighbor boy comes in. I don’t remember his name, but he is about a year or so older than me. He seems more experienced than me. I remember being surprised he was up in my bedroom. How did he get in the house? Who let him in? At any rate, he wanted me in bed with him. He violated me sexually. I don’t remember his name, but he is probably shy. Why? I am probably shy.

1977 255 Gunnell St, run by the Chartrands about a year or so older than me. He doesn’t remember his name, but he is probably shy. Why? I am probably shy.

1978 In my foster home, my 2 birth sisters were invited to spend the holidays with us. They would be coming to live with us, but they had to give me 1st birth. I was still in the same foster home. I remember we took some photographs, and upon looking back (as an adult) I noticed that I was wearing blue clips in my hair, and it shocked me! I mean, I knew that I was different, and I am not surprised that I wore them, but that my foster family took the photo, and let me, a boy, wear blue clips!

Spring/Summer 1979: I loved my adopted mother, and loved hanging out with her, whether she was cooking, or vacuuming, or shopping for groceries or clothes. She would soothe me with love, by reading to me, hugging me, tickling me, holding me, singing to me, being with me, in my采用的家. I was starved for love, as I did not get this much attention in my former foster home or birth home. My adopted mother noticed I did not spend any time with my adopted father, nor did I want to. She sat with me for many hours, and talked with me, and told me things that needed to be done. I had to lay on the couch with him while he watched football, hockey, soccer, whatever, I hated. I felt so misunderstood.

Fall 1979: My birth sisters came and moved into our home, and for the time being, we were complete. I had fun with them. I also played with their Barbie dolls. As soon as I heard my adoptive parents coming, I grabbed the nearest male doll, or toy, and asked Steve Austin the Six Million Dollar Man, with my heart pounding. I learned to be sneaky about it.

1979-1984 Donwood School Years: I was a nice kid, and everyone seemed to like me, even though I was an Indian. However, there were some that did not like me because of that. Maybe they could see through me, that I was a gay boy, even though I never openly said that I was gay. I developed “crushes” on boys, however, I just made it seem like I wanted them to be my friend. Nothing sexually ever happened, I was pretty shy about being the first one to do anything.

Spring 1983 I remember in my grade 5/6 boys would chase girls and toy-kicks. One, back then, it was all done in “fun”- because “boys are just being boys” kind of mentality. I did have one girl really liked, and so when it was announced, people thought I was OK.

Fall 1984: We changed schools from a public school to a private Christian School. I began to experience a lot of name calling like “fairy” and “pansy”. I had hard time making male friends in the class, and so I usually just sat at recess and read books, or visited with the girls.

1986-1988 Myself and my classmates were really going through puberty. I knew I was attracted to boys, but it was still kept a secret. If my adopted father ever found out, I would be beaten within an inch of my life. My mother would not tolerate that. We were already being physically abused in that home, which was a secret.

April 17, 1988 (Diary Excerpt)

“Dear Todd (my crush),

Hi! Did you see I’m not shy when I write to you! I can express my feelings openly without getting embarrassed. You had nice pants and I can’t remember what top you had on. Why did you not say hi? I was curious at you, and envious of you and company experience a group of friends he hung out with at Youth Group Church at Calvary Temple.

I got most of the information from your friend Brian Lowe. You also are a peace-loving and you play the violin. I asked Brian to get me some information.”

Whenever he spoke to me, I was in heaven! Always had to make sure I did not get too flustered, and that I tried to act normal! I deserved an Academy Award for Best Performance! Embarrassed, I even wrote him a letter, saying that I wished we were friends and we could hang out. He never responded. Then I moved away.

Feb 28, 1989: I moved from Winnipeg to Swift Current, SK with my adopted mother and siblings. Since the past October, my adopted father was being investigated for allegations of physical abuse towards us, and he was asked to leave the home.

1989-1991 Life in Swift Current was interesting. I did not think I would fit in as well as I did. I thought if having a girlfriend, all my problems would be fine. I did start hanging out with a group of people that were a grade or two older than me. One of the girls named Lisa, asked me out to escort her to her Grade 12 Grad. I accepted and we started to date, but she moved to Saskatoon to continue University there. In 1991, I began dating another girl named Darlene, but we broke up too. Every time I hear the Chicago’s song “You’re the Inspiration” I am taken back to that time, because that was “our” song.

Music meant a lot to me. Much Music Video DJ came to our high school at the Swift Current Christian High School, so I dressed up, fixed my hair, wore some nice clothes, tweezed my eyebrows, and changed my image. I cut my hair, dyed my hair, and started wearing makeup, which was a secret. One day, we went to the mall, and Madonna came on, and the floor emptied. I marched on the dance floor, or should I say- I sashayed to the middle of the dance floor, and began “vogue-ing” within an inch of my life, while everyone watched in surprise. I laugh now, but I might have been a bit mortified when I thought about my performance later on, or when others commented on my dancing, the next week at school. Of course, I can see the signs of my being gay; my flair, costume, my hairstyles, my dyes jobs, perms, tweezing eyebrows, expressions I used (“Oh my word! Goodness Gracious! Land Sakes Child! Be Still my heart!” Now I can see the roles that older woman played in my life...)

The Six Million Dollar Man action figure. I looked happy, but not inside. I so wanted Jaime Sommers doll. I wanted to dress her up, and collect all her fashionable clothes and accessories.

In my adopted home, my 2 birth sisters were invited to spend the holidays with us. They would be coming to live with us, but they had to give me 1st birth. I was still in the same foster home. I remember we took some photographs, and upon looking back (as an adult) I noticed that I was wearing blue clips in my hair, and it shocked me! I mean, I knew that I was different, and I am not surprised that I wore them, but that my foster family took the photo, and let me, a boy, wear blue clips! 
Oct 6, 1991 (Diary excerpt)

"Today I went to Gary’s house (he’s a co-worker at KFC), with Mike and Lisa. Mike and Lisa left and after Gary and I drove around. He told me everyone (at work) thinks I’m so feminine and gay. Yah right! I’m not gay. How stupid can they get! Just because I act different… I’m really upset about it." If thought being thought of being gay or feminine was the possible worst thing, and at that time I probably wasn’t too far from the truth, but nowadays being gay is in the mainstream).

1999 I began to have childhood nightmares, as well as crying for no apparent reason. I became suicidal, and in deep depression. I did not know this was because keeping my sexuality bottled up, was doing me more harm than good. Although in the Summer of 1996, I had my first sexual experience at age 24 (yes, a late bloomer!), but those experiences were closeted and I never told anyone, but I understood my sexuality. It was as if there was a connection between me and my sexuality. In Spring of 1999, I met a gay person online, who lived in Spain. We met on a mutual Carpenters (the music group, Karen Carpenter) online group and found out we had a lot in common. Then he told me, after several weeks of correspondence that he was falling for me! I was in shock! I was in love! And then I could REALLY understand what being in love was like. Flowers bloomed, the sun was shining, I smiled more etc. But he was there and I was here, and so it did not stand a chance, but it did finally open a window and then a door for me (when God closes a door).

June 21, 1999 I came out to my sister (the one who denied I was gay), and she was shocked to say the least, but she was not angry. I still needed some time to process it, and so I did not tell anyone else. I told her not to tell anyone, especially Mom. She agreed.

Fall of 1999 I came out to about 60 of friends, and all were supportive, except one. It’s funny that everyone can love and accept you and make you feel loved, but if one does not, you feel despair, sadness, and wonder what is wrong with you.

May 2017 I came out to my birth dad, and told him I was gay. He was supportive and said just to be who I was meant to be. I see that it took a lot for him to get there and say that, considering the homophobic community he grew up in. I had another male cousin who I am close with, but we never talked about my being gay, and he wrote on Facebook, for me to be who I was. Same with my older brother. He said he still loved me and it didn’t matter (and he was one of the most homophobic of my birth family back then) Coming from him that was amazing.

Feb 27, 2018 I am a proud, gay, two-spirited man. It took me a long time to get here. Even though I came out in June 1999 and Sept 1999, I still would walk back into the closet at times, because I was not ready. I had birth family (the religious side) that told me I would go to hell for choosing this “lifestyle”. But finally, in September 2014, when I began working at the St. Boniface Historical Society, working on doing Genealogy Research for them, I remember coming out to someone and mentioning my ex-boyfriend, and if you know me, that was a lot of information for me to say. I had always been coy, when it came to my sexuality. Now, I am happy and proud of my journey. It’s been a long way, and I thank that elder, who at the beginning prayed for me, as she sensed my life would not be easy. My life has not been easy. However, I am glad I am now here, and I can be who I was meant to be. To thine own self be true!

"I am a proud, gay, two-spirited man. It took me a long time to get here. Even though I came out in June 1999 and Sept 1999, I still would walk back into the closet at times, because I was not ready. I had birth family (the religious side) that told me I would go to hell for choosing this “lifestyle”. But finally, in September 2014, when I began working at the St. Boniface Historical Society, working on doing Genealogy Research for them, I remember coming out to someone and mentioning my ex-boyfriend, and if you know me, that was a lot of information for me to say. I had always been coy, when it came to my sexuality. Now, I am happy and proud of my journey. It’s been a long way, and I thank that elder, who at the beginning prayed for me, as she sensed my life would not be easy. My life has not been easy. However, I am glad I am now here, and I can be who I was meant to be. To thine own self be true!

Feminist and Queer Review
The portraits in *A Feminist Exploration Into Art*, in order from top left to bottom right are bell hooks, Michael Messner, Pauline Johnson, Stephen Gould, and Nina Simone. The portraits represent how appearance and physical embodiment is unfortunately an indicator of how we are treated and the social status we hold (Rice, 390). The faces overlapping on different levels represent intersectionality and how we live layered lives that contribute to our oppression as well as our privilege (Hobbs & Rice, xx). I did not arrange these people in any particular order except for on the basis of what looked pleasing given the colour, shape, and size of each portrait. I want to make it clear that the authors chosen were not arranged or chosen to fulfil any sort of requirements in order to have made it into the work nor is the layering of the faces meant to represent a hierarchy. For the aesthetic of my painting, I wanted to play with the idea of propaganda because feminism is often viewed as being exclusive and biased. In many instances these things can be true, but by looking at feminism through a revolutionary lens we are able to seek to eliminate these issues through intersectionality (hooks, 14). I chose to show bell hooks’ definition of feminism (hooks, 12) because it serves as a baseline for my own feminist analysis and demonstrates intersectionality by including the word “oppression” (hooks, 14). By posturizing the images of the authors, I hoped to keep them identifiable but I used bright colours to capture attention. Posters displaying propaganda are usually stripped down to the bare minimum, often to display the message they wish to convey clearly. Propaganda often targets the individual and tries to speak directly to the person viewing the message. I wanted what feminism means to me to be very clear which is why I put the quote in front of everything else.
Money for Milk
by Sylvie Côté

money for milk
after Dear Melissa - TC Tolbert
me, a youngling, reflecting on bucket lists and renewal: hey mom, if you could change one thing from your past, what would it be?
mother mother: I live vicariously through my neighbour from desk work. she doesn’t get asked such stupid questions. she tourist travels to mexico daily. she gives advice for vacations I’ll never see - i don’t care if my words do not carry are not necessary and - i can’t say it enough, why are you raising kids, voices, and debt? i cannot be the blame. blame the kids, maybe? have i cast too much already, daycare and emotional labour I’ll never see the cheque for. i didn’t raise vegetarian we don’t have money for milk anyway, almonds you say? get a job or get out - i didn’t realize life would turn out this way. kids were the expectation but so was travelling to impoverished countries so i could give my tip money to someone else’s children who wash the bed sheets.

dress Codes
by Sarah Weirich

dress Codes
MANDATORY.
1. Women must wear a “fitted black dress (no faded material), no longer than 1 inch past the knee and no shorter than 6 inches above the knee” (though I doubt anyone is counting how many inches there are above my knees).
Men…must wear “hemmed dress pants”.
2. Women must wear “black heels (minimum 1 inch) at all times during a shift where you “should always be on your feet, moving through the restaurant… A Host who is not doing this during their shift simply is not working hard enough”
Men…must wear “black dress shoes with non-slip soles”.
I shift my weight between my feet one day as I stand at the hosting podium. A male manager asks if my feet are sore. “Oh yeah,” I reply, still smiling. He walks closer and leans on the podium that I am not allowed to lean on as he stares down at my feet. “Oh yeah” he says. “You guys have to wear the uncomfortables.”
Oh, did I say uncomfortable? My mistake, I meant “1 inch”.
3. All employees must be “clean and presentable” and “[have their] hair done”.
“For WOMEN this Includes hair being down and styled”.
Men… have no specific instructions.
My hair is long and curly. I nervously try to flatten it down once it has frizzed in the heat of the restaurant and the heat generated by my constantly moving, never allowed to sit or lean body. It’s clean, well-cared for, brushed, and with product. It is not unstyled, it is simply not untamed.
Oh, did I say curly? My mistake, I meant “unExempt”.
4. “Everyone has the right to work in an environment free of inappropriate Conduct by other employees.”
I hear laughing inside my head. The time I show up at the restaurant to write a menu test, a male manager (and I know he’s male because he’s wearing pants) asks me where the brown in my skin came from. I say: “I was born here, in Winnipeg.” This answer does not satisfy him (or answer what his question really is), and he asks again.
On my second shift, the female manager (wait, she’s wearing pants, is she a “woman” or has she just achieved enough distinction not to be forced to dress like one?) casually inquires if the customers at my previous job at a Thai restaurant ever asked me why I was the only white person working there. In truth, they came up with questions all their own.
Oh, did I say my managers commented on my skin colour? My mistake, I meant “this is an environment free of inappropriate Conduct”.
5. Your smile is part of your uniform!
I wear my forced, pained, degraded, sexualized, gendered, raCially identified (supposedly) smile goddamn body armour.
Oh, did I say armour? My mistake, I meant “like it’s part of the uniform mandated by the dress Code”.
It’s April of 2018. My job has sold me to their patrons as part of the atmosphere and experiencE: like an ornament, a piece of interior design.
I am a university educated (B.Sc. Honors), brown skinned, female-identifying person with several years of customer service experience including previously serving; and yet I am only to be valued at the length of my skirt and qualified to do little more than smile at people and say hello.
Or, rather than my education having qualified me for such a position, has my gender and race done so?
This story may seem unoriginal and in truth it is nothing new…
Oh, did I say unoriginal? My mistake, I meant one of the million different ways I can tell you that discrimination and disrespect is still systematized and shrouded.
Now…
Let me be plain. (It is about time that someone was.)

It is (at least in part) because the language that is used to perpetrate the exact same old roles, rules, and regulations has become more euphemistic than ever.

The more creative the words used to build the boxy walls around you, the less that is actually said, the less they think they have to answer for, and the more their vagaries become ours.

The more we need to unclothe the new layers covering what has not changed underneath.

These are the codes we continue to live by though they are as dressed up as I am.

We know the naked truth.

And that’s a faCt.

Bras
by Danielle Sherwood

“The bra was invented by a man.” They say. Bra-like garments have been around since the time of the Ancient Greeks! Others say “Feminists burn bras.” This also isn’t true.

Burning bras is really not something most feminists do.

Though, feminists stopped wearing bras as a symbol of their protest.

And it does have some powerful imagery, I must confess.

I wear bras, I don’t burn my bras, and I’m a feminist.

But I’ve got mixed feelings about my bras, to be honest.

First of all, they’re expensive!!!

But their supposed to be sexy,

Women should want to wear bras.

I will admit, wearing a bra can make me feel very sexy,

But I think I know the cause... Companies like La Vie En Rose or Victoria Secret, they’ve created this seduction... Wanting me to associate bras, cleavage and lingerie with self-esteem!

You know, if I buy their products, I’ll make all the boys scream!

That’s because cleavage has become highly associated with SEX.

AND SEX SELLS!

But as feminine and attractive as my bras may make me feel, well... I can’t WAIT to tear them off as soon as I get home.

I think most women can relate to me on that call...

But then I think...

Why do I even bother wearing these things at all?

Not every person with breasts needs to wear a bra, I sure don’t.

My breasts are small enough that they won’t get in my way.

and I know they won’t!

But here’s the problem with NOT wearing bras - NIPPLES.

Nipples, we ALL have them! ALL FOLKS HAVE NIPPLES.

But somehow my nipples are sexualized because I am a woman?!

Why are nipples sexualized only for women?!

Is it because they actually serve a purpose?

We all know that breasts provide milk for infants...

So is this why women’s nipples have faced so much resistance?

Because they are associated with maternity and this is a private matter?

THAT doesn’t make sense, I am not satisfied with that answer.

The milk breasts provide is vital to life and maternity is natural...

So why have we made the visibility of women’s nipples so UNNATURAL?

And back to the association of breasts with sex...

This is confusing, breasts are for babies AND for men?

Damn, what’s next?

So breasts are sexualized... I mean, I get it, I can admit.

It feels really nice having someone feel my tits.

And it feels great to touch someone else’s breasts.

But so too does it feel nice for men’s nipples to be touched and to touch MEN’S chests.

It’s just that one is sexualized and normalized as being sexual force while the other is not (unless we are talking about men’s ’6-packs’ of course)!

It just doesn’t seem fair...

I should be able to walk around topless without a care.

in the hot hot summer or on the beach if I so choose!

I too should be allowed to feel free and let loose.

And I shouldn’t feel embarrassed if my nipples are showing through my top.

FREE THE NIPPLE!

SHAMING NIPPLES HAS GOT TO STOP!
The End of Heteronormativity
by Danielle Sherwood

In their article Doing Gender, Doing Heteronormativity, Schilt and Westbrook (2017) discuss ‘heteronormativity—the way in which heterosexuality is constantly maintained as a social norm in our Western society. Schilt and Westbrook (2017) explain that the ‘sex/gender/sexuality system’ asserts that there will only ever be two sexes and that these are opposite to each other, determined strictly by biology and genitals. Heteronormativity then continues to enforce this dichotomy in our society, creating a hierarchical power structure in which masculinity and heterosexuality are constantly being favoured as femininity and homosexuality remain undesirable (Schilt & Westbrook, 2017). This gender inequality is what then makes transgender people the targets of mass violence, and subjects queer folk, women, and many others to various forms of discrimination. Given the dire consequences, it is time to start thinking about how to dismantle heteronormativity, what it would take and where to begin. I will argue that in order to eliminate the dreadful consequences of heteronormativity, there must be a revolutionary change in the way we associate sex, gender, and sexuality and thus I will explore several ways in which this revolutionary change could begin.

First of all, it is important to understand the severity of the consequences that heteronormativity has created for people from all walks of life, but especially for those of transgender and queer identities. One example of these consequences is that the heteronormative concept that there can and only ever will be two sexes, has led gay men, bisexual men, and trans people to often experience a similar stigmatization through which they are labeled as gender nonconforming and psychologically disturbed by heterosexual men (Warinner, Nagoshi & Nagoshi, 2013; Anderson, 2018, p. 378). This is but one concrete example amongst several other forms of discrimination that members of the LGBT community face. In fact, throughout the 21st century, and even more so within the past decade, scholars in North America have increasingly recognized violence against LGBT people as a serious societal problem warranting scholarly, political, social, and scientific attention and research (Anderson, 2018, p. 373). What’s worse is that violence against LGBT peoples is most often considered a hate crime and such hate-motivated violence has the potential to cause both depression (Olits & Skinner, 1996) and other forms of psychological distress in its victims (Meyer, 2018, p. 264).

Given the hard evidence that hate crimes against LGBT people do exist and the consequences that follow, as well as the fact that heteronormativity is at the root of this issue, it is clear that we need to dismantle heteronormativity—we need that revolutionary change. There are several ways in which we could do so. First, I will explore the possibility of using perversion as a part of the solution, then I will point to the theoretical work that needs to be done in order to initiate such a revolution. Finally, I discuss the importance of the mainstream media in creating such a pivotal societal change—moving away from heteronormativity.

I believe we should look to perversion and the kink community as a part of the solution to gender inequality. West and Zimmerman explain how our current ideals of ‘masculinity’ push men to ‘do dominance’ and [.]. push women to ‘do submission’ (as cited in Shilt & Westbrook, 2017, p. 46). However, members of BDSM communities often embody a reversal or combination of these roles, thereby rebelling against heteronormative principles. While little research has been done on exploring the effects of this role reversal in dismantling heteronormative ideals, I strongly believe that there are likely some beneficial effects—further research on the effects of BDSM in dismantling heteronormative ideals is necessary. Similarly, Serano explains how “[an] open desire for transgender bodies typically is framed as pathological or fetishistic” through the lens of heteronormativity (as cited in Shilt & Westbrook, 2017, p. 56). Yet, it is that same ‘perverse’ desire that lays the foundation for the radical change we need in order to overrule the heteronormative agenda. This desire comes from a sense of open mindedness that allows for the degradation of the genital/sexuality/gender connection (penis-straight-male; vagina-straight-female; Shilt & Westbrook) that we so often automatically form in our minds. Only once we have successfully reformed the ‘sex/gender/sexuality system’ can we then make revolutionary changes in the realm of sexuality and the role it plays in our lives.

Transitioning away from heteronormativity and reforming the ‘sex/gender/sexuality system’ is a big task, but we need to start somewhere. One way we can do so is by increasing the theoretical work that goes into the studies of gender oppression as it relates to heterosexuality, which is currently undertheorized in the field of social science research (Shilt & Westbrook, 2017). Shilt and Westbrook (2017) also suggest that ‘future research should examine the purposeful sexual
and romantic relationships between cisgender and transgender people [...]. As these relationships have the potential to create heterosexual trouble within a heteronormative gender system [...] (p. 56). In other words, understanding intimate relationships between cis- and transgender people and sharing this knowledge will help to eradicate heteronormativity. Other suggestions for the future theoretical work that is to be done with regards to studying gender oppression and its relation to heteronormativity include taking not only an intersectional approach, but also placing heteronormativity and heterosexual imperative in the forefront of feminist intersectional analysis, as heteronormativity is “both cause and effect of a sex/gender system long used to structure and rationalize male subordination of women” (Rabin as cited in Ward & Schneider, 2009, p. 433).

One example of research on examining relationships between cisgender and transgender people comes from Tompkins (2012) and her research on cis/trans relationships and the future of a sex-positive trans politics. In relation to the aforementioned issue of desire for transgender bodies being considered pathological or fetishistic, Tompkins concluded that still today there are no widely used or socially accepted ways of expressing an attraction to or desire for ‘trans’. There remains a fear that this desire is either considered taboo or fetishizing, and this fear exists within several trans and queer communities (Tompkins, 2014). Thus, Tompkins (2014) suggests that the “silencing of ‘trans’ as desirable or erotic does not align with a sex-positive politics” and that “it seems imperative to rework the current rhetorics of desire and attraction that deny the erotics of trans” (Tompkins, 2014, p. 774, 776). This relates to my previously stated suggestion that an open desire for ‘trans’ would help to form the foundation that we need for our radical move away from heteronormativity. I would also argue that queer theory has certainly laid the foundation for this greater theoretical work that we have left to do should we ever succeed in eradicating heteronormativity. This is because one of the biggest issues about heteronormativity is its inherent heterosexist binary of heterosexual and homosexual (Peters, 2005). ‘Queer’ theory offers an alternative conception where sexuality and gender are fluid and unstable categories, which explains the rise in acceptance of the term ‘queer’ that took place in the 1990s (Peters, 2005, p. 102). I believe that this issue also demonstrates the power of language and suggests that further developing more inclusive, less binding language to describe gender, relationships, and sexuality may be among the necessary measures that we should take as a society in order to escape the throes of heteronormativity.

Once this type of theoretical work has been done, the relevant findings should be used to inform the educational system. As Ward & Schneider (2009) stated, “educational institutions (today) not only stigmatize those youth marked as potentially gay or lesbian but also constrain gender and sexual expression for all students” (p. 436). Thus, as the educational system is often where we learn – both implicitly and explicitly – about relationships, sexuality, gender, and the language that surrounds those topics, we certainly need to rework the institution of education from the inside out simultaneously as we dismantle the institutionalization of heterosexuality.

Elsewhere, the mainstream media is a huge influence in reinforcing heterosexuality and gender inequality (Shilt & Westbrook, 2017). Eventually, people of sexual minority groups and transgender people and their stories must be featured in the media just as much as heterosexist cisgender people and their stories if heteronormativity is ever to be challenged. Thankfully, in the last few decades, shows and movies like Queer Eye, Orange Is The New Black, Everything Sucks, I Am Not An Easy Man and Transparent have all featured characters of the LGBT community and/or challenge heteronormative ideals. There are now also several helpful books and other writings for trans folks like I Am Jazz written by Jazz Jennings or Trans/Love: Radical Sex, Love, and Relationships Beyond the Gender Binary by Motty Diamond. Even sex-positive photography and videos featuring trans and gender-variant performers are being produced by large scale pornography production companies like Dolores Park Studios and T-Wood Pictures, just to name a couple (Tompkins, 2014, p. 775). Nevertheless, in the mainstream media, LGBT folks are vastly presented as the flamboyant gay man or the hyper-feminine lesbian. Meanwhile ‘butch’ lesbians, bisexuals, and trans folks remain ‘virtually invisible’ (Nölke, 2018, p. 227). Thus, we still have a lot of work to do in increasing the visibility of all LGBT folks within the mainstream media. Nölke (2018) suggests that future research should consider the fast-evolving societal landscape of our time and the effects it has on LGBT folks and their experience with the media. Nölke (2018) also believes that a comparison between the depictions of LGBT in general media versus in advertising may help to reveal further information on the visibility or lack thereof of LGBT people. In sum, the theoretical work that we have ahead of us should not only examine cis/trans relationships and gender oppression, or sexuality in general, but it should also heavily examine the role of the media and its portrayal of the LGBT community and heterosexuality.

In sum, considering the life-taking consequences of heteronormativity, it is clear that real, revolutionary change is called for. BDSM culture and intimate relationships between cis- and transgender partners could provide some insight into alternative belief systems and inspire a new way of being. However, in order to alter any belief systems, further research and theorizing is necessary as well as a drastic shift in the institutions of education and the mainstream media. Ultimately, there are two main ways to dissolve the heteronormative-homonormative binary which should occur simultaneously:

1. Increase and disseminate theoretical research on various topics such as BDSM, gender oppression and heterosexuality, cis/trans relationships, and LGBT representation in the media, queer theory and related language, etc.

2. Create an everyday awareness and resistance to the pervasiveness of heteronormativity as well as to the labels and stigmas that follow from heteronormative ideals. Similarly, we also need to embrace our perversions as they counteract heteronormativity by definition. We also need to become open-minded to a complete overhaul of the institutional powers that currently enforce heteronormativity like both the institutions of education and media.

Only once the relevant research is disseminated and we’ve fostered a new sense of awareness with regards to heteronormativity and its effects can we finally reform the sex/gender/sexuality system.
What do You See (When You Look at my Body)?

by Emma Beech

Digital collage printed on polyester fabric and crystal film, pillows, found objects.
Installation view 2018

The collage on the left-hand pillow is made up of images of different women in my life to represent how we are a part of one another and support one another. This visual of collaged body parts also speaks to the way in which women’s bodies are often dismantled from a whole into parts or pieces to be consumed. As these ideas are contradictory to one another yet existing at the same time within this piece, I hope to speak to the dilemma that arises with the difficulty of using the body as a visual or symbol in art while avoiding imposed perceptions of sexuality or disembodiment.
Selfie Theory Through a Feminist Lense
by Ashley Simms

“I use my body as an outlet to shift the normative ideas behind the selfie”

“Representation, identity, and gender performance are significant to a feminist selfie”

“Self-reflexivity is essential in taking a selfie through a feminist lense”

 “[There is] potential for selfies to become a strong example of feminist theory in action”

“It is time we utilize this space to create change in representation”

Flashback
2016
Representation in Mainstream Media: The Harmful Dead Lesbian Trope

by Karen Murison

Millward et al. (2017) delve into the reasons behind what has become known as the ‘Dead Lesbian Trope’ in their book Killing off the Lesbians: A Symbolic Annihilation on Film and Television. They explain that lesbian characters in mainstream media are being killed off at an alarming rate and that those who consume large amounts of this media begin to view what they see as ‘normal’. In consideration of the hours we spend daily consuming media in contemporary society, the messages that we receive easily become embedded in our memory. This then becomes a part of the way we live our lives and understand the world around us. (Borboltz & Yam, 2017). Representation matters, and Millward et al. (2017) argue that in order for the existing power structures in society to continue to be normalized and remain dominant, characters in mainstream media that stray outside of the heteronormative are reduced to simplistic stereotypes. A clear distinction is created between lesbians and what is considered “normal” women in media (p. 11). When viewers are repeatedly exposed to media that shows lesbians being dehumanized, society is being manipulated into seeing them this way as well.

According to Millward et al. (2017), two techniques are used to dehumanize a lesbian character. First, the character is literally killed off. This can be due to murder, suicide or accidental death. The second technique is to portray her as an evil character, which limits the audiences’ ability to be sympathetic towards her (p. 17). These techniques are not new; in fact they have been used to promote prejudice for a long time, with the first recorded case of killing off lesbian characters in media being in 1706 (Millward et al., 2017, p. 13). From then, through the pulp fiction paperbacks of the 1960’s, to modern day, lesbian characters are being symbolically annihilated in mainstream media at an alarming rate. This has a serious effect not only on how society views lesbians, but also how lesbians view themselves. As Gerber and Gross state, “representation in the fictional world signifies social existence” (Millward et al, 2017, p. 16). If you do not see realistic representations of yourself in the fictional world, it signifies that you do not matter. This becomes particularly dangerous when the same narratives happen again and again, creating patterns. Intertextuality is a term created by Julia Kristeva in 1969 which means “texts referring to other existing texts” (p. 17). This can also refer to any other type of media including film and television. As we consume media, we are consciously or unconsciously making connections to stories that we have previously consumed. Patterns and meanings are created and solidified in our minds, and are often read as subtext; therefore, heteronormative messages get reinforced and gain power (p. 18).

Until this issue came to my attention, I myself did not realize the obvious problem that lay right in front of me, but looking back I can easily come up with numerous examples. I remember Emily, a lesbian character from Murdoch Mysteries whom I liked and looked forward to her storyline. As if right on cue, her partner Lillian, was killed off (murdered by jealous ex-husband) ‘forcing’ Emily to move away and no longer part of the show. This has happened repeatedly in shows such as Pretty Little Liars, The 100, Chicago Fire and the list goes on. It may seem like there are more LGBTQ characters than ever in mainstream media, but looking closely, the more diverse representation of sexualities on-screen apparently increases the rate of their annihilation.

It seems that in order for lesbian characters to experience a happy ending, they must not appear to be lesbians. For example, I recall watching the movie Fried Green Tomatoes years ago knowing the original story, written by Fannie Flagg, was meant to be told much differently. The two main characters were a lesbian couple in the original book, not just ‘close friends’ as they were portrayed as in the movie. This romantic relationship was cut from the movie, as it is in many, as discussed by Millward, et al (2017) who posit that as a default, audiences assume heterosexuality between characters, which upholds heteronormative ideals (p. 12).
Symbolic annihilation takes place for lesbians in mainstream media, but it is particularly prevalent for non-white lesbians. In order to fully understand this, Millward, Dodd & Fubara-Manuel (2017) say that we need to take a look at North America’s history of slavery and the meanings connected with black women in post-colonial North American history and society (p. 23). Black women are generally portrayed as one of four types of characters: the Mammy, the Matriarch, the Welfare Mother and the Jezebel. The Jezebel is portrayed as sexually deviant and therefore removed from the sexual ‘norm’ (Millward et al., 2017). These images are used to control black women through media. The intersection of race with lesbian sexuality results in lesbians being killed off. Millward et al. (2017) argue that this image of black womanhood has become such a symbol of sexual excess that audiences may actually feel reassured when she dies (p. 25). This repetitive narrative has become so common that, as Millward et al. (2017) explain, there is no such thing as ‘no spoiler’ in any mainstream media that has a lesbian storyline. We know they end up unhappy, or lonely, or more often: they die.

There is a long history of symbolic annihilation in storytelling, but there is also a growing movement of Viewer Activism that is finding unique and powerful ways to fight back and help create a more inclusive and realistic view of society in mainstream media. From the National Gay Task Force created in 1973, to the fan fiction movement beginning in the 1990’s where fans began to take the storylines of their favorite shows into their own hands, to the GLAAD Media Awards created to recognize media for providing “accurate and inclusive representations of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community”, people are demanding more from writers, producers and studios (Millward et al, 2017, p. 133-135). The Leva Pledge is a recent movement brought on by the death of the lesbian character Lexa, from the television show The 100. This blatant act contributing to the symbolic annihilation of LGBTQ characters drove fans protest, creating the hashtag #LGBTQtransgenderbetteron

Twitter (p. 132). The Leva Pledge asks creators of media to sign off on seven statements and be held accountable for the way LGBTQ characters are represented. Some of the statements include ensuring that significant LGBTQ characters have meaningful storylines, that LGBTQ groups such as queer writers are consulted when creating those storylines and a pledge to not kill off queer characters for the sole purpose of furthering a straight character’s storylines. This pledge asks that creators and producers recognize how harmful stereotypes and tropes are to the greater LGBTQ community, particularly youth, and asks that any storyline does not perpetuate such harmful tropes (p. 154). These are just a few forms of viewer activism but they show the power that viewers have to help shape the media that they consume.

Great improvement have taken place over that last few years – many of us can now name several shows that have LGBTQ characters playing significant roles, but there is still a long way to go. The long history of the dehumanization of lesbian characters, and therefore continued oppression of lesbians in real life, has led to intersectual messages to the masses that lesbian lives are somehow worth less than others. It is something that happens across cultures, countries and genres, and has been going on for centuries. This compounding message serves to perpetuate the overarching objective of our contemporary power structure. Now that I have become aware of this issue, I will be watching closely, waiting impatiently and using my power as a viewer to help work towards real change.

References


Couzelis illustrates in her article about Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, the HP Universe posted on only one of the many platforms for fanfiction there is highly unlikely but quite problematic. The only people of colour read as token characters used to throw critiques of racism off their tracks and I chose to use the medium of fanfiction to try to address this, and create a story where they are able to live.

While I primarily emphasized the friendship between Lavender and Parvati I also put focus on their relationship with their professor Sybil Trelawney. The fact that the two of them hold Sybil in high regard is canonical but never built upon. Instead it’s used as fodder for the idea that the girls are silly for putting so much stock in her and her subject: Divination. This is a clear symbol of the misogyny prevalent within the system at Hogwarts and, by extension, the books themselves. To start, the art of divination throughout history has been practiced primarily by women and is seen as a distinctly feminine art; she and her class are made out to be somewhat of a joke, with her portrayed as ‘a sensitive female stereotype’ (Gallo and smith 1931). The subject of Divination at Hogwarts is considered feminine and a lesser or even weaker form of magic. It is only taken somewhat seriously when a male centaur starts teaching the class after she is fired in the fifth book. Trelawney is pushed to have a false air of mysticism around her but there is a lot to her that is just below the surface. Couzelis illustrates in her article that Rowling puts a lot of thought into the naming of her characters and Sybil is no different, meaning a prophesies of the gods. Along with that is the canon fact that she is the great-great-granddaughter of a great seer by the name of Cassandra, an obvious nod to the Greek Cassandra who was given the gift of sight by Apollo, then cursed to have her predictions. This is especially poignant when you consider the fact that the majority of Sybil’s predictions fall on deaf ears, not to mention that she cannot remember them after the fact. While it is true that many of them do not come true, there are a fair amount that do which the text fails to point out. With this in mind I was able to imagine her as a tragic hero, disparaged and undermined at every
turn yet still striving to teach her art to the next generation of seers.

Through my independent research on the topic I've found that Rowling's writing is built upon a patriarchal framework and peppered with misogyny. When looking strictly at the language and tone when writing she regularly employs words like "shrill", "squeak", "wail", "hysterically", "squeal", "whimper", only when referring to female characters (Dresang 223). From this it is possible to infer that she feels her female characters as implicitly less than her male ones. We are able to use this to argue that Hermione is as exception to the rule that girls are weak willed, overly emotional, and given to tears. As for the story itself, it will be taking shape around the idea of a depth to the girls that Rowling wasn't willing to do. Through their character development they learn that they are both strong and capable of being of their own heroes. They have the chance to stand up to an authority that they don't agree with and put their school's teaching and knowledge to the ultimate test and do it of their own volition as opposed to having male characters push them to it. I have introduced a tentative relationship between Parvati and a second female character, Luna Lovegood, by doing this I've employed the technique of querying the main characters in such a way that their relationship turns true to the Lexa Pledge. There is only one canonically queer character in the HP world and he is a second year so to have two queers is short of the truth because without textual evidence he hardly counts as a representation of LGBTQ+ people. Thus, I have created space for them to find representation in this world by allowing Parvati and Luna to have a love story. Instead I've focused on the plot and allowed their relationship to unfold in the same way it would between heterosexual couples. After all, at no point do straight characters take the time to explain that they are hetero before moving forward with their romantic storyline.

As for the story itself, it will be taking place during the girls' fifth year at Hogwarts when Umbridge starts as the Defense Against the Dark Arts professor. The first chapter includes the introduction of the girls, the chatting at the welcome feast, their reaction to Umbridge's speech, up to and including the first divination class where they stay behind for tea with Trelawney and discuss their summers before turning to tarot cards. Lavender's reading for Trelawney shows her danger and there may be an issue with an authority figure. This sets the scene for the girls to make an informed guess that the authority figure Trelawney will have an issue with will be Umbridge. By starting off with them using Divination they'll be tapping into a distinctly feminine art to offer them an insight into what's to come. It's through this refusal to back away from the magic most people write off that they are able to see the problems afoot more clearly.

As the end of class drew closer the students gathered up their things for their break in anticipation of being done for the day. Professor Trelawney, who had been making rounds observing the students' first attempts at interpreting within the world of their incense that had been burning throughout the class, returned to the front of the room.

"Alas, many of you were not able to find the true messages in the incense because there is only the first day of classes you have time to improve. I'd like you all to meditate each night and focus on opening your Inner Eye, and to read the chapter in your textbook (Unfogging the Future about finding symbols within various forms of smoke). Oh and Neville, do send my wishes for a speedy recovery to your grandmother."

"Uh, I'm sorry professor but there's nothing wrong with my grandmother." Neville's voice, though shakily, was heard by everyone despite the noise of everyone standing and heading towards the door.

"Not yet, my dear, but soon." With that, professor Trelawney waved her hand and some of the heady smoke that had been floating above the classroom dissipated as she turned towards her office. Lavender and Parvati both hesitated at their work table, wanting desperately to stay behind and talk to their favorite professor. Just as Trelawney was reaching for the door to her office she called over her shoulder, "Do come along it's nothing much she before she disappeared from view with a rustling of her skirts. The girls exchanged a quick glance before rushing after her.

Professor Trelawney wasn't like the other professors at Hogwarts—in fact most people referred to her as kooky or a crackpot but different doesn't mean worse. Instead of a desk she had a small round table big enough to sit three people comfortably yet, though it had been known to enlarge itself if the occasion arose. She was seated behind it now, shuffling an old battered deck of tarot cards.

"Come, girls, sit. I trust you've been practicing with your cards over the holidays?

I have professor," said Parvati as she sat down, pulling out her cards as she did so. "Remember dear, you may call me Sybil when we are in private."

"Yes Sybil, I've been practicing too,

though Parvati is tired of hearing me tell her that she's going to find love this year; it's come up almost every time I've read for her." Lavender said with a pointed look that Sybil had taken note.

"Lavender, we've been spending loads of time practicing and studying over the summer, she spoke quietly to help set the mood for the reading as she took hold of the tea pot and began pouring out cups for each of them. As she was doing this, Lav had her head bent over her book but eventually she pulled it out and glanced back and forth between them before she raised her head and met Sybil's eye.

"Alright I think I've got it, though I don't think it's very nice," She looked nervous about the reading and Sybil leaned forward and took her hand.

"My dear, part of gazing into the future is knowing you are going to always love what we see there. The strength of the diviner is in the ability to look that darkness in the face and interpret the warnings to be found within it."

"Lav nodded and began the reading. "I see danger for you in the near future, times will be dark and trying. The problem will be caused by an issue with an authority figure, I think it will be a woman but I'm not sure..." She trailed off.

"Looking at the cards I think you've done a wonderful job interpreting them for me, but don't you worry about the warning within the future, I will do some crystal gazing later to see if I can't learn some more of what is to come, Parvati, why don't you do a reading for Lavender now?"

Later as the girls were walking back up to the tower they were discussing what the learned in their readings.

"I mean, it's pretty obvious don't you think? The authority figure she's going to have an issue with is McGonagall, she's the only female authority figure here, being Deputy Headmistress and all," whispered Lav as they stood on a staircase that had decided to move as they were halfway up.

Parvati was silent for a while and when she spoke in was hesitant, "I don't think... I think it's going to be something with that Umbridge woman, I know she's here from the ministry and from the sounds of her speech she's going to be interfering with things on their behalf."

The staircase stopped moving and they continued the climb up to their rooms.

[End Excerpt]

Chapter two opens with the tail end of the class where Umbridge evaluates Trelawney and humilates her. The rest of the class is dismissed and Parvati stay behind. One brews tea and the other begins comforting Sybil. Once the tea is served and the shape a quill in one cup and an image suggesting bloodshed in the other. Professor Trelawney dismisses the girls. They continue to discuss the leaves as they return to the common room where they bump into Harry, who is rubbing his hand.

This is the first hint to the Blood Quills' Umbridge uses in her detestable way of getting the students to figure out the torture she's inflicting on her students, they just need to put the pieces together.

Chapter three opens with Parvati waking from a nightmare where she sees a distorted version of the detention Harry was subjected to earlier that night. She converges with Parvati and they both decide to consult the library to see if there is a quill like the one Lavender saw in her dream. They learn about the Blood Quills and quickly devise a plan to spy on Umbridge's detentions that night. They're able to snap pictures of Umbridge watching as Harry uses the quill to write lines, successfully incriminating her. This is the beginning of the girls taking charge of what is happening at their school. I've used what we learned in Fritz's article about girl power to create a realistic portrayal of girl activism and the act of rebelling against authority."

[Begin Excerpt]

Parvati woke with a start, her mind so steeped in the blood from her dream she could taste the copper tang of it. Heart still racing she reached for her copy of the Lexa Pledge and laid it down on her bedside table. Quickly leafing through it she found the section on true dreams.

While most of this book has been devoted to the interpretation of symbols found within dreams, we now turn to differentiating between normal dreams and true dreams. The first indicator of a true dream will be a strange or natural progression of events a true dream will begin in the middle of a normal one. The change will be jarring and not gradual as Leva Pledge takes over your mind and projects the vision, overlooking whatever dream may have been in progress. A second and equally important signaler of a true dream is the echoes it leaves behind once you wake, one or more of your senses will remain steeped in the dream. Examples of this would be a smell or aroma, pain or another form of physical sensation, or taste. Taste. Even now after reading the passage a panic fueled with a rush of fear and desperation takes over in my mouth and projects the vision, overlooking whatever dream may have been in progress. A second and equally important signaler of a true dream is the echoes it leaves behind once you wake, one or more of your senses will remain steeped in the dream. Examples of this would be a smell or aroma, pain or another form of physical sensation, or taste. Treatment. Even now after reading the passage the taste was still strong in my mouth but there was no blood to be found.

She knew she must have had a true dream. Rising quickly from her bed, one or more of your senses will remain steeped in the dream. Examples of this would be a smell or aroma, pain or another form of physical sensation, or taste. Treatment. Even now after reading the passage the taste was still strong in my mouth but there was no blood to be found. She knew she must have had a true dream. Rising quickly from her bed she stood up, now free of the detail. The rest...
"Huhh?" was the gossgy reply from the still mostly aslee girl.

"Shove over a bit, I'm coming in." She barely gave Lavender any time to register what she said before she was climbing into the bed and shutting the curtains around them. Two softly whispered spells later and they were guaranteed no eavesdroppers and the inside of the four-poster bed was suffused with soft lighting.

"What's going on?" asked Lavender though a yawn as she sat up, rubbing the sleep from her eyes.

"I've had a true dream, and I think it's about Harry..." her voice trailed off. Even sleep from her eyes.

"I've had a true dream, and I think it's about Harry..." her voice trailed off. Even sleep from her eyes.

"I was in the middle of a dream about swimming in the lake when suddenly, and I mean suddenly like it happened in the blink of an eye, I was in Umbridge's office. She wasn't there but Harry was. He was getting ready to leave and on the desk he was at was a sheet of parchment with lines written on it but the lines were written in blood. And as he was walking away I saw some blood dripping from his fingers.

Parvati, with the help of Lavender, proceeded to tell Parvati she set about lighting candles and some incense to help lift the negative energy from the room.

"I don't know, I'm just so thankful to Dumbledore for allowing me to continue staying here, while I still can at least... There must be something that can be done about that woman!"

"I don't know, I'm just so thankful to Dumbledore for allowing me to continue staying here, while I still can at least... There must be something that can be done about that woman!"

"Actually Sybil..." Parvati set the tea pot down on the table in front of the sofa and sat on the free end, "Lav and I have already started doing something about her."

"It's a little late for that..." Parvati, with the help of Lavender, proceeded to tell Sybil all about her true dream and how they managed to get photographic proof of Umbridge torturing students and, with the help of Luna the photos will be getting published in the Quibbler in the next couple of days. After the girls had finished talking Sybil sat quiet for a moment.

"Girls, I can't say I've ever been prouder of you than I am in this moment. You've taken charge of your natural gifts and used them not only to help yourselves but to help others as well. I can't say I agree with your methods because I know that in order to get those pictures you've broken some school rules, but I can't find the will to reprimand you for it. You've taken charge and fought for what you believe in and you've done it using the very magic that woman thinks I'm incapable of teaching. Really girls," she reached out and grasped each of their hands, "you've impressed me beyond words."

"That would be lovely dear, thank you," she reclined back on the sofa and draped an arm over her eyes, "I can't believe that woman, she's so filled with hate and disdain." The tone of her voice was shifting away from the authority figure and role model giving positive reinforcement for their actions best left to the adults.

While she was talking Lavender had been rubbing soothing circles on her back and once she finished the hand stilled.

"That sure does sound like a true dream... Hey, wasn't Harry in detention last night with Umbridge? He said you-know-who's name in class and she got really mad... you don't think she's torturing him do you?" Their brown eyes met and they both sat in silence for a while trying to understand the dream.

"I think we should go to the library and see if there's anything to be found about writing lines in blood. It's our only clue as to what's going on. I know I had that dream for a reason, besides if she is torturing students, and Harry Potter no less, if we catch her we might be able to help out professor Trelawney." Parvati had a look of fierce determination on her face. She had been given a true dream, a rare gift, and she was going to prove that she was up to the challenge.

Parvati nodded, pushing her hair out of her face. "I was in the middle of a dream for a reason, besides if she is torturing students, and Harry Potter no less, if we catch her we might be able to help out professor Trelawney." Parvati had a look of fierce determination on her face. She had been given a true dream, a rare gift, and she was going to prove that she was up to the challenge.

"Some blood dripping from his fingers." She reached out and put her hand on Parvati's shoulder.

Parvati spoke the words. "What?" Lavender asked, her dark eyes questioning.

"I don't think we can bring her to the office anymore..." Parvati replied in a whisper.

"It's quite alright dears, my rooms are further down this hallway," but the catch in her voice as she was talking belied her words.

The curtains around them. Two softly thirsting with soft lighting.

They rose into the air and began flying about the room back to their places and within minutes it was back to looking like someone had lived there for over a decade.

Chapter five begins after the scene where Sybil and her things they automatically fell into the air and, with the help of Luna the photos will be getting published in the Quibbler in the next couple of days. After the girls had finished talking Sybil sat quiet for a moment.

"You've taken charge and fought for what you believe in and you've done it using the very magic that woman thinks I'm incapable of teaching. Really girls," she reached out and grasped each of their hands, "you've impressed me beyond words."

"You've taken charge and fought for what you believe in and you've done it using the very magic that woman thinks I'm incapable of teaching. Really girls," she reached out and grasped each of their hands, "you've impressed me beyond words."

Once the girls climbed the tower with Parvati, Lavender had been rubbing soothing circles on her back and once she finished the hand stilled.

Parvati nodded, pushing her hair out of her face. "I was in the middle of a dream for a reason, besides if she is torturing students, and Harry Potter no less, if we catch her we might be able to help out professor Trelawney." Parvati had a look of fierce determination on her face. She had been given a true dream, a rare gift, and she was going to prove that she was up to the challenge.

Chapter four has Parvati taking the pictures to Luna, a fellow student in another house. In a charming scene, full of blushing and stammering she eventually asks Luna to forward the photos to her father, the editor of The Quibbler. She agrees and kisses Parvati on the cheek and skips away.

Parvati's shoulder.

Parvati is where she sees something that makes her go white. Here we have a female authority figure and role model giving positive reinforcement for their actions not only for them but for all girls. "You've done about that woman!"

The curtains around them. Two softly thirsting with soft lighting.

They rose into the air and began flying about the room back to their places and within minutes it was back to looking like someone had lived there for over a decade.

Chapter five begins after the scene where Umbridge attempts to evict Trelawney from the school and Dumbledore intervenes on her behalf. The girls run to her in the courtyard and help her carry her bags back up to her tower where they attempt to comfort her. Devastated after losing her job she starts to form ideas to get rid of Umbridge. This is where the girls inform her of what they've done. She tells them that she's been well they've used their psychic abilities to work out what Umbridge has been up to. She then turns to her crystal ball where she sees something that makes her go white. Here we have a female authority figure and role model giving the girls positive reinforcement for their choice to go against protocol and act in ways they believe to be right, effectively encouraging not only their continued acts of independence but also their continued faith in themselves.

Once the girls climbed the tower with Sybil and her things they automatically turned towards the classroom and adjoining office. The sound of a sob catching in Sybil's throat stopped Parvati dead in her tracks. She reached out a hand to grab Lavender's shoulder, stopping her too.

"What?" Lavender asked, her dark eyes questioning.

"I don't think we can bring her to the office anymore..." Parvati replied in a whisper.

"It's quite alright dears, my rooms are further down this hallway," but the catch in her voice as she was talking belied her words.

They continued down the hallway, eventually stopping at the very end in front of a portrait of some unfamiliar constellations. Sybil mouthed the password and they were admitted into her rooms. When they went inside they saw that the entire room had been stripped bare of any belongings but it didn't stay that way for long. Sybil took out her wand and said an incantation and quickly all of her bags were opening and spilling forth her belongings.

"That would be lovely dear, thank you," she reclined back on the sofa and draped an arm over her eyes, "I can't believe that woman, she's so filled with hate and disdain." The tone of her voice was shifting away from the authority figure and role model giving positive reinforcement for their actions best left to the adults.

"That would be lovely dear, thank you," she reclined back on the sofa and draped an arm over her eyes, "I can't believe that woman, she's so filled with hate and disdain." The tone of her voice was shifting away from the authority figure and role model giving positive reinforcement for their actions best left to the adults.
She intervenes and saves his life, and sends her to Azkaban, an authority figure.

Of the Minister for Magic, Cornelius discredits she’s reclaiming her own autonomy as a seer and her status as a pay rise... “(Rowling 245), showing stopping her reign of terror before it start to pour in Dumbledore escorts her out of the room to her office, the mixing of the darkest and fairest blond a striking contrast to the little report on Umbridge’s face remained close, breath mewing as they looked into the other’s eyes.

“I’d very much like to take you out sometime, is that alright with you?” Parvati asked, her fingers grasping Luna’s hand in a light grip. Luna squeezed her fingers in return. “I’d like that very much.”

[End Excerpt]

A major change in my story as compared to the canon text is the truly horrific way that Rowling describes punishment upon Umbridge. Canonicallly she is carried away by a horde of centaurs and she returns with Magic school quite broken.

While nothing is clearly written out for us, having even a basic understanding of Greek mythology—as Rowling clearly does if her choices of nomenclature are any indication—make it very easy to assume that Umbridge was carried away by the centaurs to be raped. I don’t think I need to explain why this is a terrible way to punish a woman, no matter her deed.

Luna’s hair look like a river of black silk flowing over her shoulder in agitation from the mere thought of it. It’s so light and fluffy, like a cloud.

“Thanks Luna, it can get a little wild sometimes but then again so can I” Lavender winked and laughed before continuing. “I think I’ll be going now though as looks like someone over there wants to talk to me.” Lavender turned to leave and nudged into Parvati as she walked away, forcing her closer to Luna.

“You were really brave, to go through so much trouble. We all thought you might have been done for, but it wasn’t just Lav and I who were brave. You were a huge help, none of this would have happened without you and your dad. Publishing those photos is what really got her down. I don’t know how to thank you.”

“There’s no need to thank me, it was the right thing to do, and besides, I liked helping you. It made you smile.”

Parvati looked into Luna’s eyes and got lost in her blue depths. It reminded her of crystal ball. She reached up a hand and let her fingers hover near Luna’s cheek. “Would it be alright if I kissed you, Luna?”

“Oh yes;” was the whispered reply. As they kissed their hair fell like curtains around them, the mixing of the darkest and fairest blond a striking contrast to the little report on Umbridge’s face remained close, breath mewing as they looked into the other’s eyes.

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The art of drag performance is slowly becoming one of the most sensationalized avenues of entertainment, with its popularity rapidly spreading due to the reality TV series RuPaul’s Drag Race. Because of this, aspects of queer culture have begun to seep into dominant media and reach wider, cisgendered, heterosexual audiences. The impact of drag performance on queer visibility is enormous, and this specific gender performance is an activity that queer artists have been performing in many different guises throughout history. This medium is constructed through the obvious or non-obvious role reversal between the artist performer and their assigned gender. Gender swapping, however, is not a new practice and is an activity that queer artists have experimented with increasingly through the rise of modernity and liberal thought. The history of drag alongside the history of performance art is a story of drag and the contemporary queer medium.

Drag performance and the Contemporary Queer Medium

by Mahri White

The art of drag performance is slowly becoming one of the most sensationalized avenues of entertainment, with its popularity rapidly spreading due to the reality TV series RuPaul’s Drag Race. Because of this, aspects of queer culture have begun to seep into dominant media and reach wider, cisgendered, heterosexual audiences. The impact of drag performance on queer visibility is enormous, and this specific gender performance is an activity that queer artists have been performing in many different guises throughout history. This medium is constructed through the obvious or non-obvious role reversal between the artist performer and their assigned gender. Gender swapping, however, is not a new practice and is an activity that queer artists have experimented with increasingly through the rise of modernity and liberal thought. The history of drag alongside the history of performance art is a story of drag performance and the contemporary queer medium.

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the notion of a true gender identity.” However effective this subversion is in the deconstruction of gender identity, Butler goes on to discuss the primary issue surrounding drag in its overt and sometimes sexist female stereotyping. This sexism has been argued based on drag’s idealization of female bodies as well as its performative humor often targeting stereotypes of femininity and utilizing vulgar and offensive language. Despite these aspects of female impersonation, Butler states that: if the anatomy of the performer is already distinct from the gender of the performer, and both of those are distinct from the gender of the performance, then the performance suggests a dissonance not only between sex and performance, but sex and gender, and gender and performance.

The distinction between anatomical gender (male) and performance gender (female) places emphasis on drag’s “imitative” discourse as a divergent practice in gender stereotyping itself. Phrased differently, female impersonation is not problematic for Butler because it is through stereotyping that the practice inverts stereotypes and gender identities within society. As drag is also a practice associated with a marginalized community, it is more closely associated with dialogues surrounding equality versus the opposite. If we then relay this theory back to the idea of drag as a category of performance art, it could be argued that drag has been used by formally considered artists as a way of subverting gender construction, marking no difference from queens performing in gay clubs worldwide. The only difference lies in the settings in which these performances take place.

The content of a drag show in a gay bar verses, for example, a performance by Two-Spirit Cree artist Kent Monkman in the Denver Art Museum sees very little difference other than the setting and most likely the audience (Figure 4). Kent Monkman works as a shining example of a Canadian contemporary artist using drag as a tool for the celebration of identity, garnering attention toward the diversity of queer communities in North America. Monkman’s drag persona Miss Chief Eagle Testickle has been present for years through paintings, installations, films, and performances by the artist. By emphasizing the presence of a Two-Spirit queen in a fine art performance like that of Casually of Multicultural Modernity in Denver in 2013, Monkman bridges the gap between the low culture kitsch of drag and the highbrow, white-cube space. In the piece, Miss Chief is led through the museum by her tour guide, the Doctor of Fine Arts. Though multilayered and satirical, this piece lends itself as a perfect example of gender performance. Because we view it in a gallery setting, the work becomes less about drag and more about questioning and questioning the role of performance in formal settings such as the Denver Art Museum, as well as bringing gender and sexuality to the forefront of academic discussion within the contemporary art scene.

By examining artists who use drag as a way of informing change within the consideration of performative arts, we can see a pattern of dialogues generated around the construction of gender and the role of the artist in dismantling its binaries. It is not only important but necessary for drag performers to continue to rise in popularity both in popular culture and amongst the contemporary fine art canon. The mass media consumption of celebrity queens on RuPaul’s Drag Race poses a threat to the containment of drag performance as belonging to queer communities, a marker of pride and of queer history. That being said, the shift from underground to popular culture is ever important in the acceptance of theoretical gender construction globally, and the subsequent acceptance of gender questioning individuals and gender-bending activities such as drag. Transgender or gender questioning as an individual is defined differently from female impersonation, and trouble lies within the queer community in separating, acknowledging, and accepting every person who falls under our growing acronym. The more general acceptance from a wider population remains a lasting issue, and it is through the rise in popularity of gender performance that the masses will eventually learn from queer content, the importance of acceptance and the progressive dismantling of categorization.

2. Ibid. 136.
19. Ibid. 174.

Bibliography


Mimi Glamour Shot
by Emma Mayer

Left: Mimi Glamour Shot 1, digital photo collage, 2018
Right: Mimi Glamour Shot 2, digital photo collage, 2018

My work focuses on the intersection of humour and personal pain. Through a variety of media, I explore embarrassment as it relates to my own experiences of perceived feminine subjectivity, melodrama and the anxiety of occupying a body. I approach my practice by seeking playful and humorous ways of discussing uncomfortable topics such as mental illness and self-esteem. I draw inspiration from more populist media such as funny and bizarre YouTube videos, memes and personal Instagram accounts, as well as from children’s tv show sets and low-budget music videos.
Edgar Ramirez Disrupts Popular Narratives About What Children’s Queer Identities ‘R’

by Adriana King

Queer theory, an embodiment of childhood sexuality and a history of the Filipino diaspora in Hawai‘i intersect in fascinating ways in R. Zemer Limnak’s Rolling the Rs. R’s was first published in 1995 and continues to be a valuable resource for decades later by exploring the identities, or ‘R’s/Ares’ of its characters. The protagonist, Edgar Ramirez, is a prodigiously talented ten-year-old from a marginalized Filipino neighborhood in 1970’s disco-era Hawai‘i. The novel is written in a collage of literary styles, from different perspectives of people spatially and socially connected through Edgar’s network. This essay will explore the ways Edgar disrupts heteronormative discourses in storytelling that silences the capability of children having sexual agency. Steven Bruhm and Natasha Hurley’s theoretical debate in their edited collection Curioser: On the Queerness of Children will be used to frame this argument.

The word “queer” is historically and culturally contingent. Bruhm and Hurley’s [1] theoretical intervention is a reclamation of the word “queer” that applies to all situations, as defining the child is itself often the source of an ambivalent term. Our culture affords a sliding scale of “appropriate” childhood sexuality and sexual expression, but for all its virtues, it is still a very comfortable space within which to work: it invites [adults] to revise continually what counts as “enough” and “too much” physically, while never having to abandon the axis of scale itself [11].

Normative discourses that dichotomize “childhood” vs “adulthood” reinforce age personalities that only those who are ‘mature grown-ups’ can experience erotic pleasure. The authors problematize this and suggest that these narratives ignore the myriad of sexual encounters people have at all ages.

Edgar Ramirez, the protagonist, is a self-identified queer who disrupts heteronormative discourses as a figure that does not quite conform to the […] way children are supposed to be in terms of gender and sexual role” [10]. The main arguments in this essay are operating in a framework that suggests anti-queer heterosexual discourses are problematic and need to be challenged.

I would be remiss if the definitions of “child” and “childhood”, as they relate to sexuality, were ignored in this paper. Bruhm and Hurley explore these putative terms extensively, saying: “[…] there may not be a definition of ‘child’ that applies to all situations, as defining the child is itself often the source of an ambivalent term. Our culture affords a sliding scale of ‘appropriate’ childhood sexuality and sexual expression, but for all its virtues, it is still a very comfortable space within which to work: it invites [adults] to revise continually what counts as ‘enough’ and ‘too much’ physically, while never having to abandon the axis of scale itself [11].”

The child is itself often the source of disputes over what children’s identities are and what those identities mean to their culture. This is evident in literature, regardless of what a child’s identity is that he does not lie to her that he goes to see an R-rated, gay-positive movie with a drag queen, like his friends do to their parents (30-31). His mother supports him in this foray, rewriting parental ideologies that “panic [ensues when childhood desire] takes on a life outside of the sanctioned script of childplay” (Bruhm and Hurley, 4). She is devoted Filipino, Roman Catholic origin, making her acceptance of his youthful queerness all the more remarkable (Limnak, 13).

Edgar undermines hegemonic representations of an adorably heterosexual childhood through his unapologetic, atmospheric, scatological memories for and by adults in storytelling. Edgar first realizes he is gay when he sees his father’s “boto” (penis) at age eight (Limnak, 57). His experience is not traumatic or psychoanalyzed by an adult which Bruhm and Hurley posit is regularly how intergenerational sex is treated in literature (25). Edgar writes his own story proudly.Bruhm and Hurley’s idea that tales of childhood sexuality and screwing up his friend’s. Edgar’s character subverts Bruhm and Hurley’s theorization that childhood sexuality is ‘mature’ to ‘mature grown-ups’ when he sees his father’s “boto” (penis) at age eight (Limnak, 57). His experience is not traumatic or psychoanalyzed by an adult which Bruhm and Hurley posit is regularly how intergenerational sex is treated in literature (25). Edgar writes his own story proudly. Bruhm and Hurley’s idea that tales of childhood sexuality and screwing up his friend’s. Edgar is conscious of his eroticism and a child, which is an offensive combination in Western ideologies.

In a framework that suggests anti-queer heterosexual discourses are problematic and need to be challenged. Edgar’s character subverts Bruhm and Hurley’s theorization that childhood sexuality is ‘mature’ to ‘mature grown-ups’ when he sees his father’s “boto” (penis) at age eight (Limnak, 57). His experience is not traumatic or psychoanalyzed by an adult which Bruhm and Hurley posit is regularly how intergenerational sex is treated in literature (25). Edgar writes his own story proudly. Bruhm and Hurley’s idea that tales of childhood sexuality and screwing up his friend’s. Edgar is conscious of his eroticism and a child, which is an offensive combination in Western ideologies.

Edgar is a ten-year-old who has sex with his schoolcloud and has ‘the voice of Donna Summer” (Linman, 51). His narrative is not polished, perfect in any way a platitude to soothe the adult reader into his father’s ‘boto’ (penis) at age eight (Limnak, 57). His experience is not traumatic or psychoanalyzed by an adult which Bruhm and Hurley posit is regularly how intergenerational sex is treated in literature (25). Edgar writes his own story proudly. Bruhm and Hurley’s idea that tales of childhood sexuality and screwing up his friend’s. Edgar is conscious of his eroticism and a child, which is an offensive combination in Western ideologies.

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Flashback
2017

Coming Out (I’m Gay)
by James Turowski

Hand-dyed wool 40” x 23” 2016-2017

In creating this work, I was inspired by National Coming Out Day. I wanted to focus on the process of coming out and the ideas and emotions that surround coming out as a cisgender gay man. I emphasized the repetitive process of coming out (having to do it again and again with everyone you meet) by creating a text-based weaving, a very repetitive process. I also emphasized the aspect of frustration that one feels with coming out, the fact that we have to do it at all, and the fact that it validates or invalidates our sexuality if we choose to come out or not. If you decide not to come out, whether it be unsafe for you to or you do not feel ready yet, people, even members of the queer community, consider that you are ‘ashamed’ of who you are or taking the ‘easy way out’ by not coming out. I considered these varying viewpoints on coming out and my own personal experiences to create a weaving that reflects this. The background colour of the weaving starts as black and fades to a natural cream colour, representing coming out of the ‘dark’ closet into the ‘light’ of being out. The lavender gradient of the text represents those feelings as well, starting off analogous with the background, quietly telling only a few people at first. Then it fades to a more saturated lavender, representing being out and telling everybody, and fading once again to a paler lavender because you are tired of the never-ending process of coming out, having to continually come out for the rest of your life.

Working in craft mediums such as textiles and ceramics, I work to challenge the expected traditions and pick up on the queer issues surrounding craft and identity, utilizing text, symbolism, and queer history to provide a record of queer experiences.
Love Is
by Morgan Hanson-Oliveira

Love is not a hurricane
Love does not cause your heart to beat in your chest harder than the rain pouring down from the sky above
Leaving you dizzy and breathless
Unsure if you will ever be able to stand on your own once the storm has passed

Love is a sun-shower
A soft summer drizzle that cleanses your soul and reminds you of all the reasons why you love the summer and the sun and the rain
Reminding you of what it feels like to be at home

Love is not an endless abyss
Leaving you afraid of the unknown and questioning whether you are more terrified of the anticipation of this new discovery or of love itself
Forcing you to feel alone and lost and unsure of your own self

Love is the night sky
A canvas covered in brightly lit stars that will guide the way
The northern lights dancing along to your laughter as you not only find yourself but create yourself
To create the person you have always dreamed of becoming
Reminding you of what it feels like to be at home

Love is not the drunk and slurred whisper of “I love you” in the dark
As you stare up at the ceiling while their hand slips down your pants
And you are left hanging onto nothing but disappointment
The word “love” echoing in your head as loud as the roar of the hurricane winds

Love is dancing, singing and laughing
Drinking your favourite coffee and listening to your favourite music and reading your favourite books
It is standing in front of the full-length mirror in your childhood room
The same mirror that you would sit and cry in front of and pick apart your flaws one by one while you wondered where you went wrong
But a different person stares back at you now
You are so much stronger, and that same person is not the same at all
You have survived hurricanes and fought your way out of the abyss
Love is no longer given from people who don’t matter
Love is no longer seeing these flaws as weeds
But instead as a garden full of flowers
Filling your entire being with the sun and the rain and the stars
Love now comes from yourself, from within
Finally, you can breathe
Because finally
Finally
You are home

Rants from a Radical Polyamorist
by Christina Trachenko

I like to think that I don’t ask for much.
In a certain array of adventures, it has been demonstrated to me that apparently, receiving basic human decency is something that needs to be asked for.
But now I’m just sounding like a feminist in literally any confrontation with oppressive systems, ever.
Polyamory may seem like a hunky dory fantasy to escape from the inevitably mundane existence that is being part of the proletariat (working class); and I promise you, it is. It is living in the clouds, burning all of your material possessions (especially your bras), and eventually being doused with fairy dust that grants you immunity from jealousy henceforth.
We are located in a forest near the top of a mountain that is indeed shrouded with clouds; we are proudly called P-Area.

Before you can proudly take up residence in P-Area, you must complete an extensive series of rites of passage. Along with abandoning all your previous material possessions, you must go through a series of rituals, such as one where you ceremonially declare to never behave monogamously again, and another where you do a nude hula dance and you ceremonially declare to never have any insecurity about your appearance ever again. Even after you pass these, there are certain rules you must follow forever.

One of the biggest rules is that pairs of anything are not permissible – everything must exist in odd numbers, preferably at least threes.
If you utter anything mononormative, such as “Where am I supposed to put the third shoe,” or “I don’t think computers relying on binary language is enough reason to ban them,” or “I’d really like to go to the bathroom alone for once,” then you will be exiled to the neighbouring community for three days, where you will be forced to interact with resident monogamists who really want to repeatedly remind you how they could never do polyamory.

Now, I know this really sounds like a dream come true. A utopia, if you will.
From the many Fwomptober’s I’ve spent there – Fwomptober is the fifth season by the way – I can assure you there are a few things in this world that are as sweet as adventures in P-Area. However, after each Fwomptober, I must rejoin The Land of Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson, otherwise known as regular society.
Polyamorous people who walk among you have been finding ways to stay true to themselves within regular society.
Unfortunately, even with such a flawless solution as polyamory, nothing is safe from the influence of oppressive systems.

This policy is a result of the dominant relationship discourse that men are the only ones able to give a relationship meaning. As such, both feminism and homosexuality are devalued in society.
Since this is the pervasive modern narrative, lesbian love is so undermined and not considered worthy of getting competitive over. That’s not to say that getting competitive is a good thing, but within the dominant discourse of hegemonic masculinity, it is considered to be. These male-centred discourses are very minimizing and destructive.
Many individuals I have encountered who may even have considered themselves to be fairly conscious feminists have found themselves feeling more competitive with men than women in this type of scenario. For some, it was a point of realization and ultimately combating their own internalized sexism. For others, it is a point of normality that is left unchecked, and has played out so frequently that we have a charming acronym. If you venture into P-Area and fall into this thinking, you can expect to be knitting our latest design of 3-person sweaters.

OPPs: One Penis Policy. This is the policy, often with heterosexual couples, where the man may or may not be allowed to see other women, and the woman is allowed to see other men. You and I might recognize that at the very least, this should be called the OMP – One Man Policy, as it is not just an issue of anatomy. However, I would not assume that there is more to this than specific anatomy, as people who are inclined to follow such a policy might not be enlightened enough to consider the trans-misogyny of their policy.

My observation has been that this policy is often dictated by the male member of the heterosexual relationship being uncomfortable with the concept of another penis invading his sworn property. It flows logically that this kind of patriarchal man would be similarly squeamish about trans females putting a penis in their property.

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My observation has been that this policy is often dictated by the male member of the heterosexual relationship being uncomfortable with the concept of another penis invading his sworn property. It flows logically that this kind of patriarchal man would be similarly squeamish about trans females putting a penis in their property.

This policy is a result of the dominant relationship discourse that men are the only ones able to give a relationship meaning. As such, both feminism and homosexuality are devalued in society.
Since this is the pervasive modern narrative, lesbian love is so undermined and not considered worthy of getting competitive over. That’s not to say that getting competitive is a good thing, but within the dominant discourse of hegemonic masculinity, it is considered to be. These male-centred discourses are very minimizing and destructive.
Many individuals I have encountered who may even have considered themselves to be fairly conscious feminists have found themselves feeling more competitive with men than women in this type of scenario. For some, it was a point of realization and ultimately combating their own internalized sexism. For others, it is a point of normality that is left unchecked, and has played out so frequently that we have a charming acronym. If you venture into P-Area and fall into this thinking, you can expect to be knitting our latest design of 3-person sweaters.

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Couple’s Privilege: Before we delve into our discussion of couple’s privilege, it is important to first describe the passing privilege that often exists in the polyamorous community, where the ability to appear monogamous. In terms of polyamorous activism, it is incredibly important to note that we must not allow those who are most polyamorous couples have the option to portray themselves in a fairly monogamous fashion. In front of the public eye, a quad is presented as two couples. Additionally, pairs within a polyacle that are the most heterosexual tend to be the ones most often presented to the public. Since polyamorous couples often have the capability to sometimes - if not all of the time - present themselves as mononormative and heterosexual couples, there is motivation to push for social justice. This benefit of being able to go forth in the world and present as a monogamous couple is known as couple’s privilege, which manifests in explicit as well as internalized ways. In internalized ways – imagine a couple that has been dating for several years. Let’s call them Unicorn Hunters. You are highly likely to start a triad with a new, third member. There is a tendency for the couple to present as one unit with more power, and you are positioned to provide the wants/needs of their new third. Which brings me to the next topic: unicorn hunters.

Unicorn Hunters: Our community is a place of many wonders, and one of the wonders is triads. How do you feel about this? That is often what exists in couple’s privilege. When you walk into one of the living rooms and see the beautiful disaster after a passionate and devastating game of monopoly the night before. It’s poetic, really. Sometimes, outsiders who do not understand our culture, but is that privilege enough? That is what masquerade as one of us and give our people a bad name. They see our residents and think of them as the norm. They are on the hunt; Unicorn Hunters are everywhere, and you are likely run into some without realizing it. Swiping through your dating apps, you will see them – that couple (usually heterosexual) (looking for a third (usually a bisexual woman) to complete their threesome or even form a long-term triad. You would be hard-pressed to find anyone who says that threesomes, foursomes, or moresomes are a bad thing. You will certainly never hear us say that threes are a bad thing. But there is an ethical way to go about this.

I, and many other bisexual, pansexual, or lesbian women have found ourselves in this scenario – you go on a date with a lady; it seems to be going well. Partner A of your triad through the night, they reveal they have a boyfriend and they like to come up to home to meet him. Your reaction may be shock, disgust, delight, curiosity, and either confusion or an amused sigh. Confusion being the first it happens, and the amused sigh becoming more pronounced as it happens time and time again. Maybe it goes well; maybe you meet the couple, and you’re down to get to know each other. You sit down and have a discussion about boundaries; you’re excited at the potential here... “Look at these fine folks interested in me” – it’s doubly flattering. And better yet, you’re already having a conversation about the boundaries! I’m loving the communication!

They start to lay out what they expect of you but you’re so consumed in NRE (New Relationship Energy) that you’re eager to please them. They don’t want you to see anyone else while you are with them. They want your full devotion to them. Yet, don’t you want to be of high importance to them – they are firmly maintaining that their relationship with you has proceeded you and will outline you. They want you to be the keychain that they can attach at their convenience, with the degree of entwinement entirely under their control. Whether explicit or not, they will also place a higher priority on their established wants and needs, and you are expected to conform to their will because after all, they are welcoming you into their glorious bond, and you should be grateful.

In their couple-ship, they operate as a single unit with more power, and you are a side-piece. You are there to join both of them equally to eliminate the possibility of jealousy. Because, as we know, attraction obviously occurs under controlled circumstances, especially for the unicorn who stands little chance of having their voice heard and their needs respected to the seniors of the company.

I have made the choice not to hide my magic from the world. As a polyamorous, pansexual woman who experiences indiscriminate attraction to every single individual she meets, I see no reason to hide the horn on my forehead from the world.

The beautiful more-than-two relationships that I’ve witnessed in our cult give me faith that it is possible for this magic to happen out in the “real world.” But there’s a lot of misconduct out there – and since I’m flitting indiscriminately with every person I meet, I’ve taught about my choice, even if it crunched for time, I will not hesitate to crap rainbows all over your hunting lass. We all need a reality check every now and then, and mine will come to you in the form of unbridled horny ramifications.

Not Allowing Other Partners at Home: Not all polyamory is in a land of Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson. In some triads, quads, & other configurations where one of the mutual affection is as their primary partner. In such a case, these partners may go forth, onto dates and adventures with with usually come back home to their nesting partner. What’s more that sometimes there will be a policy enforced by one or both of the partners that states that other dates are not allowed in their home.

Of course people should be allowed to have relationships that is not a part of relationship. It is their home, and their space after all, and often there is good reason for this policy, such as the presence of children in the home. Suppose there is no such distinct boundary or the simple one partner’s discomfort with others coming into their home, and often their bed.

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Couple's boundaries, and boundaries should always be addressed as, What do you want and I want to talk about the negative implications of this policy. As I live in la la land, it is true that everything is shared and there is no such territoriality. And that is what it is – it is territoriality. Indeed, preventing a particular type of intimacy that comes with sharing one’s living space. Imagine if everything was your triangle. Everyone would be forced to go have their fun in cars, hotels, parks at night, and unoccupied racquetball gyms at 3am. While that can be a jolly time, before having my living space, this was a constant logistical issue.

In my experience, it is usually my metamour’s boundary, or what that has enforced this boundary. Even when I had a nesting partner, I never felt the need to enforce such a boundary. But I understand not everyone comes from a polyamorous life in the forest where the bathrooms don’t have doors.

As a naïve optimist person, I am often faced with the unfortunate reality that the existence of - and certainly the interaction with - metamours can be an ominous thing for many people. Sometimes I spend so much time in la la land, wishing we could all just get along, that I forget that not everyone wants kitchen table polyamory, or as we say in the cult, late-breakfast-due-to-cuddle-puddle-polyamory.

For me, on more than one occasion, after having an opportunity to speak with, or even meet a metamour, a great deal of the territoriality tends to dissipate. Once you meet your metamour and see that we’re all kind gooballs, many of whom do happy dances when we successfully toss and turn the bed from across the room, the hostility is mitigated if not entirely eliminated.

The moral of my metamour rant: place your boundaries as you please. For the sake of the unfortunate implications of allowing people make people feel like homewreckers, do challenge your ideas and explore them. This can be an ominous thing to do in your polycule. They are particularly fantastic when they are so clear and refined as emotional boundaries that dictate the extent to which your heart is allowed to flow.

Having “no fawning in love allowed” as a boundary is about as easy to control as my response to a bag of cheese buns in the room. That’s not to say that I need to eat a cheese bun every single time there is one; I don’t always want a cheese bun. But sometimes on a crisp Fwomptober morning, the light hits those cheese buns in such a way that I see them as I have never before seen them. When that desire strikes, I certainly have a choice on how I react. I can act on my impulse and eat the entire bag. Or I can remember that I’m lactose intolerant, and my body wouldn’t exactly be happy with me if I did that. Comparing to the original situation – love is my desire for the cheese buns. My decision on how to act on it is the same as your decision to act or not act upon your love, and this emotional boundary is equivalent to lactose intolerance.

Boundaries should be tangible; like the stacked bags of abandoned cars that forms the fence on the boundary of the cult from the folks leaving their material possessions behind. You may decide that your boundary will in fact be: no inviting the people to the cute if they behaved like a capitalist monster in a particular board game on Games Night. That is far more tangible and from everyone at P-Area, you get three thumbs up.

You have reached the end of the rant this time. I hope you, dear reader, for getting so far. I hope you have found some value in this read – perhaps as a way of re-reading the implications of oppressive systems within a very particular community (the polyamorous community). Perhaps you have just learned that I am a salty equine beast who will crap rainbows all over your unmixed ingredients. Outside of P-Area, it’s certainly not all sunshine and roses – but it is my life and I don’t predict I will be having any other conversations. Such behaviour would surely put me on 3-person sweater knitting duty.
Bisexual: A Person Attracted to Multiple Genders
by Naomi Grace

Words

How can I be what I do not know?
How can I define my feelings
Constant, restless as the sea
If I was never taught the words?

Woman

Since Genesis, woman is opposite man.
North and South, Venus and Mars,
Man is melody, woman harmony,
Different, complimentary, controlled.

So where do we position woman
When there is no man?

Flashback
2014

Sex Esteem
by Kailee Tibbs

This piece is a self portrait that looks at the acceptance of my sexuality, using the creative process as a therapeutic venue. It explores the importance of intimately knowing and loving ourselves, particularly our sexual expression regardless of sexual orientation.
Crush

I have a crush, I can’t deny it any longer.
But my mother speaks harshly at suggestion,
My friends tell me they don’t want me
If I’m “like that”, if I like her.

My sister is kinder, she tells me
It is normal for a straight girl to
Think other girls are pretty,
To wonder and question, what if?

I still like broad shoulders, cropped hair
Maybe they just confuse me
If the bearer of those wonderful traits
Is a woman, the same as I am.

Love

"Is she in love with you?"
My mother’s words are harsh,
More demanding these days
Her suspicion, turned aggression.

Why can’t we just be friends?
She is gay, she has a girlfriend,
She does not want me
Even if I might want her.

Maybe the question isn’t if she loves me,
But what it means if I like her.

Kisses

The first time I kissed a boy
It felt warm, right, comfortable;
Months later, when I kissed a girl,
It felt the same, but better.

I thought I had to choose one
Did this mean I was a lesbian?
My mother had once said
That you couldn’t have both.

My queer friends laughed “She’s straight.”
When a woman like me dated a man.
We’re just confused, just greedy,
Just don’t know what to “choose”.

I choose myself, my truth
I choose loving anyone I love.

Lesbian Porn

Long hair, long nails, facing out
To the camera, inviting in a man.
Fluorescent silicone, and sounds that
I’ve never heard a woman make.

This is a fantasy that was never
Made for me, or enjoyed by me.

My Parents Never Liked You

There was always a distance they left
Between warmth, kindness, and you.
Was it because you were insufficient?
Was it because you were a woman?

Or did they think you were one
Because of the other?

Mother I

"Give me 5 years,” she tells me
The “to accept you” is unspoken.
It took me 18 to know myself.
Why should I begrudge her 5?

Perhaps because I am still the same,
Except truer, brighter, more vivid.
Before I did not have the words
Because she never taught me them.

She mourns for the death of her dream,
The vanished husband and children
She presumes I will never have, and
The added struggles she presumes I will.

But I take joy in a struggle vanquished.
Shaking off the weight of staying hidden.
Even if it comes with pain wedged deep,
The pain of being misunderstood.

Is it her god that decides this.
That she should think me a stranger?
Masc/Femme

“I was afraid you’d look too dykey,”
It was said like a joke, but it was not.
Funny to hear that from a girlfriend,
So she made the choices, and I did not.

She didn’t like my short hair, my boxers,
My new exploration of self.
I looked the way she wanted me to,
A stifled femme to her masc.

I quickly learned that even now, only
One person is allowed to wear the briefs.

Bisexual

You look at me in the dim light,
Tell me I am not real.

I have loved you, I do love you.
The first of all my loves
Heart, soul, skin, flesh
Are those not real enough for you?

Mother II

“What does this mean?”
Her eyes narrow at the button-down shirt
As if it is a crime that I passed by
The store section full of pink.

“What does this mean?”
The plaid I’ve worn all week
Black and white, under scrutiny.
Is nothing more than comfortable.

“What does this mean?”
It is fabric, it means being myself,
But now that my sexuality is out
My gender is suddenly suspicious.

Mother III

After the break up, she asks me
If I will return to the natural order.
I’ve been with a woman, now will I
Denounce myself and return to men?

Later, she tells our family I am a lesbian,
She thinks I’m not interested enough in men.
How can I tell her that my heart
And my people are more than a binary?

She still cries when I cut my hair,
Leaves the room when I talk about a date.
But how can she know the words
If I do not teach them to her?

Skinny

The kitchen was my battleground
For a time, every bite a war.
Others saw progress as I struggled,
Complimenting my shrinking self.

“You take up less space now,
You are more of a woman!”

Femme

I pierce my septum, I go alone and
Ask a pretty girl to make me prettier.
I do it, I’m strong enough, and I’m
Unaffected by my mother’s tears.
I shave my head, a show of bravery,
And he stopped speaking to me.
I find ways to embody my queerness,
To reject my earlier teachings.

I try to forget all I am supposed to do
Just to be pleasing to men.
Gold Star Bisexual

I hate the phrase “Gold Star Lesbian”,
It is time to stop defining women
By our sexual experiences with men.
How can I be a Gold Star Bisexual?

Could it be by dating everyone? No one?
I am no less queer if I love a man.
No less valuable if I’ve loved a man,
And no more queer if I love a woman.

What if I love someone who is neither?
My queerness is constant, irrevocable as the sea.

Coworkers

“How did you know?” she asks, expectant.
How do I explain the script we all are given
That it is all wrong, that there is no default,
To someone who never had to “know”?

How do I explain the pressure, the assumption
From mothers, schools, friends, relatives?
How do I explain that I never saw myself
In anything, or that I didn’t know the words?

How can I explain my heart, my life
To someone who never had to “know”?

An Ode to Femininity

Sometimes it is soft kisses,
Gentle arms that feel like home.
Sometimes it is trails of loving words
With tracing fingertips, and sometimes not.

It can be full of a fierce joy,
Kisses on hip bones, hips gripped tight
Thrown on a bed, against a wall, with
Nails digging in, fistfuls of hair, ecstasy.

It can be anything the bearer pleases, and
I don’t blame Eve for tasting forbidden fruit.
Her love brings me higher, louder,
Closer to heaven than Eden ever could.

Mother IV

I try to teach her, to reach her
But she does not always understand.
I open my heart still, over and over
Because it refuses to stay hidden.

It is hard for her to see past
The lies we are all taught, that
Vulva, woman, wife, & mother only matches
Penis, man, husband, father.

But I can match with whoever I love, and
She comes to understand me.
Freedom is an incomparable gift, and
I am happier and more myself now.

Now she knows to want my happiness
More than she wanted her dream.

Bisexual, Pansexual, Queer, Gay

I use many words to describe myself,
They all feel as if I am making sense
Of the puzzle that is my heart
But I always return to that word.

I found refuge in bisexual first,
It comforted me, gave me voice
When I emerged from the
Protective monolith of straight.

Bisexual – tw? No, many
Many loves, possibilities, infinities.

A Note on Love

Who I love is only a facet of
Who I am. But love fills you up,
It begs to be shared, to be
Given generously and enjoyed.

It is a gift for myself, for you,
And it knows no bounds, or binaries.
Whether I am They, He, or She, I Just Want to Be Me!
by Danielle Sherwood and Adriana King

The year is 2060 and it is a lovely day! Michelle, Alex and Grandpa apps are at the beach to play.

"Hey Alex!" Michelle says, "you've got a unique penis! I think that's cool!"

See most people thought there were only boys and girls, no in between, no other person in the world!

The doctors said my boy privates were much too small. So, they changed my privates to girl ones after all.

But the truth is... your privates do not decide what kinds of clothes you wear, what toys or who you play with, or how you do your hair... people wanted to know what was in someone's pants before giving a baby born like me a chance!

When I went home and told mom about Anne that day mom told me that Anne and I share something the same! Anne and I are both intersex people!

Intersex is a word given to people who were born in a way that makes them difficult to label in one of two ways.

As boy or as a girl.

There are all different types of intersex people just like... there are all different types of all kinds of people!

When I was first born, the doctors chose to change me. Had they not, they thought that no one would let me be.

Hercule, when I was young...

Unique privates were not cool...

I was raised a girl but I played with different toys. I wore my hair and dressed a lot more like the boys!

Other friends told me that wasn't okay and that Anne and I could no longer play...

I'll never forget this one rainy day my best friend Anne and I went out to play. I have a penis and boobies! She'd say.

About 1 in 200 people in the world have red hair.

There are just as many people out there...

Finally, I decided to live as grandma apps. I knew I wouldn't be my true self as grandma apps... and over time people became more accepting of me...

Like you are of your friend Alex and his unique peeples! Whether I am they, he or she, I just want to be me! We love being any kind of person we want to be!
"That was a good looking young man. Didn't you think so, honey?"

This Girls Day Out had been fairly typical. Judith’s mother had booked appointments for both of them at the salon in the morning. When Judith showed the hairdresser a picture of the short style she wanted, the woman had replied, “Oh, like that but more feminine, right?”

It was nails next. Judith asked the manicurist to just put on a clear coat of polish, but her mother interrupted.

“That’s no fun! Come on, sweetheart, pick a nice colour.”

After a too-long afternoon of clothes shopping, Judith’s mother had booked them to a table and a waiter had shown them to a table. Their man was arriving. He was… not really my type.”

"He’s… not really my type.”

Judith’s mother sighed and went back to the short style she wanted, the woman had complained. Judith nervously fidgeted with her hands. Her mother was waiting - she had to say something. How could she answer the question honestly without disappointing her mother? Judith took a deep breath.

“Ladies and gentlemen, we are about to open our doors. You can’t wear these kinds of shoes inside.”

It was the end of the world. She was staring at her expectantly. Suddenly, she felt like a contestant on the world’s most socially awkward game show. Like something important hinged on her answer, but she had no idea what. Judith thought aloud. Whatever, she was going to do it.

Just another gross message from a guy on Tinder,” Eliza said, sliding her phone back into her pocket. “I’m starting to think you have the right idea, Jen. Dating women. And you too, Jude. You don’t have to worry about any of this, being sexual and all.”

Jenny scoffed. “If being a lesbian really solved all of our problems, more women would do it.”

“Yeah,” Jude added. “I’m sorry that guy was being a dick to you, Eliza, but that’s a huge oversimplification of our identities. Women can have internalized misogyny to work through and even though sexuals don’t experience sexual attraction, they might still date people, including men. It’s not a get-out-of-jail-free card for shitty relationships.”

Eliza shifted uncomfortably in her seat.

“I just meant that, well, it’s easier for you, Jude. To let go when you don’t feel anything.”

Jude leaned back with their arms folded and fixed Eliza with a stern glare. “I’m feeling a little pissed at you right now.”

“Is that you don’t know where asexuality fits into feminist discourse,” Jude finished. “I get that. I’m not always sure where my identities fit either. Especially being non-binary. Feminism classifies men as a privileged group and women as an oppressed group. In order to uphold that analysis, it relies pretty heavily on a binary understanding of gender. It necessitates the ability to easily and unambiguously identify and separate men from women, which means that intersex and trans folks are often rendered invisible in these discussions.”

“That’s kind of a double standard, don’t you think?” Jenny asked. “Trans people reinforce the gender binary too. They get surgery to make their bodies match their genders and often perform extreme stereotypical versions of masculinity and femininity.”

“Because if they don’t, no one takes them seriously,” Jude said tersely. “Look at the context before you claim there’s a double standard.”

There were a few seconds of tense silence before Eliza spoke again. “The Women’s Centre is having a meeting today. Want to go?”

Jude shook their head. “The last time I tried, they turned me away because they thought I had male privilege.”

“You do when you pass as a man,” Jenny muttered.

“I’m aware,” Jude said, drawing out the second syllable of the word. “That people interact differently with me based on how they perceive my gender, but that doesn’t give me male privilege or cis privilege. And don’t get me started on what a bullshit concept passing privilege is. I passed as a woman for eighteen years, but at great cost to my mental health. I can sometimes pass as a man, but I still feel unsafe around them because I never know how they’ll react to me being trans. Passing was never my goal. I want to feel comfortable in my own body. I want to deconstruct the gender binary, not hide behind it.”

Jude broke off their tirade and looked around at their companions. Eliza stared into her drink and Jenny looked down and rubbed a spot on her shirt, purposefully not meeting Jude’s gaze. Just before the silence became unbearable Eliza fumbled with her phone and excused herself to take an imaginary call. Jenny also made a half-hearted excuse and left hurriedly.

Jude let out an exasperated sigh. Eliza hadn’t even bothered to finish her coffee. Jude reached across the table, grabbed the half-empty cup, closed their mouth around the straw and slurped loudly.

Author’s Note: These are two excerpts from a short story I am working on. The main character, Jude, is transgender and uses they/them pronouns. The first excerpt takes place prior to them coming out and so they are still using she/her pronouns and their birth name, Judith.

I Think I Might Be Nothing

by Shannon Bloodworth
The older I grow and the more I know about my ancestry, the more I see myself changing the music I listen to and the spirituality I perform. After some research, which informed me about Miles Davis’ ex-wife, Betty Davis (nee Mabry), I stumbled into one of Betty Davis’ pictures in which she was seated in a seemingly meditative pose; her lips wide apart, her head tilted backwards and her hands placed close to her crutch from which an orange orb was generating. The colours and Betty’s pose made me read more spirituality into the picture in opposition to its manifest sexuality. The two paintings submitted are my novice tries at capturing the spirituality in the black musicians I listen to, who have pride in their sexuality - Sex Goddesses.

Meshell Suhaila Bashir-Shakur/ Me'She’ NdegéOcello (Digital Painting)
In November 2014, Paper Magazine released their winter issue with Kim Kardashian posing semi-nude on the cover page, accompanied with an article entitled NO FILTER: An Afternoon With Kim Kardashian, which was written in the form of a “behind-the-scenes” interview with Kardashian, along with photographs in which she poses with a piece of clothing, a bottle of champagne and a glistening bare figure (Fortini, 2014). With over 100 million followers on Instagram, Kardashian’s photograph is titled as “normal female” bodies (Somerville, 1994, p.190). Somerville problematizes the contemporary shift towards sex and sexual politics that founded, and how and why Kardashian’s sexuality is being said, I find it necessary to use representations in cinema. Mulvey describes the female body, amplifying the beauty of her appearance as: “to photograph is to appropriate the thing perceived, to describe male influences on female sexuality, while characterizing others as abnormal. Fortini’s article reflects an overt presence of the male gaze in Kardashian’s photographs as well as Fortini’s writing. A considerable portion of the article describes Karashian’s physical appearance as: Smaller than she appears in images, with tiny, almost doll-like ears and feet and hands. Everything else about her seems amplified, tumescent. Her black hair is thicker than any you have ever seen, her lips fuller, her giant Bambi eyes larger, their whites whiter, and the lashes that frame them longer (Fortini, 2014). Deconstructing the white male gaze on sexuality As emphasized by Dyskra (2018), ideologies on sexuality are historically, socially and culturally contingent. The characterization of sexuality in Fortini’s (2014) article follows a long history of sexual politics that founded, and continues to influence, America’s present discourse on female sexuality. The term male gaze was defined by Mulvey (1975) to describe male influences on female representation in cinema. Mulvey provides a well-argued interpretation of Freudian psychoanalysis to demonstrate the conscious and unconscious male subject’s role in defining womanhood and sexuality (Mulvey, 1975). In contrast, the white male gaze is a term adopted by critical race scholars such as Yancy (2017) who argue that black bodies are subjected to a white, racist, hegemonic gaze, in addition to a male gaze. In most contexts, the white male gaze remains an unnoticed subliminal figure however, its presence significantly affects acceptable cultural constructions of female sexuality, while characterizing others as abnormal. Fortini’s writing. A considerable portion of the article describes Karashian’s physical appearance as: Smaller than she appears in images, with tiny, almost doll-like ears and feet and hands. Everything else about her seems amplified, tumescent. Her black hair is thicker than any you have ever seen, her lips fuller, her giant Bambi eyes larger, their whites whiter, and the lashes that frame them longer (Fortini, 2014). Deconstructing the white male gaze on sexuality As emphasized by Dyskra (2018), ideologies on sexuality are historically, socially and culturally contingent. The characterization of sexuality in Fortini’s (2014) article follows a long history of sexual politics that founded, and continues to influence, America’s present discourse on female sexuality. The term male gaze was defined by Mulvey (1975) to describe male influences on female representation in cinema. Mulvey provides a well-argued interpretation of Freudian psychoanalysis to demonstrate the conscious and unconscious male subject’s role in defining womanhood and sexuality (Mulvey, 1975). In contrast, the white male gaze is a term adopted by critical race scholars such as Yancy (2017) who argue that black bodies are subjected to a white, racist, hegemonic gaze, in addition to a male gaze. In most contexts, the white male gaze remains an unnoticed subliminal figure however, its presence significantly affects acceptable cultural constructions of female sexuality, while characterizing others as abnormal. Fortini’s description of Kardashian provides an essentialized perspective of the female body, amplifying the beauty of her appearance by comparing it to non-human objects such as dolls and Disney’s Bambi. Fortini further describes Karashian as a “woman—a physical body where the forces of fame and wealth converge”, linking the physicality of womanhood with social capital (Fortini, 2014). Kardashian is perceived to embody an “amplified” but arguably normal female body according to Fortini (2014). In contrast, Somerville’s analysis on 19th century scientific racism demonstrates how the white male gaze placed black sexuality outside the margins of the “normal female” bodies (Somerville, 1994, p. 205). In Account for the Disection of the Bushwoman, for example, W.H Flower and James Murie (1867) document the sexual characteristics of bushwomen, a derogatory colonial term that implies a dehumanized reference to Indigenous Southern Africans. Flower and Murie describe the African female body as peculiar, measuring the size of their buttocks as thick but remarkably “loose, flaccid and wrinkled” (Flower & Murie, 1994, p.190). Somerville problematizes Flower and Murie’s study along with other works of sexologists such as Ellis and Karashian’s in order to argue that racial politics, and I add the white male gaze, have a hegemonic influence on American understandings of normal and abnormal sexuality. Objectifying Sexuality for Capital Gain The 20th and 21st century have provided new ways of thinking through cultural representations of sexuality, notably through the emergence of social and mass media. Fortini (2014) links Karashian’s success to a sex tape that sparked her career. Arguably, Karashian has been “recorded and viewed more than any other personage in history” (Fortini, 2014). The photographs that accompany Fortini’s article equally capitalize on Karashian’s physical body. In each photograph, Karashian looks directly to the camera, smiling and embracing different postures that highlight her bare figure. Her breasts, buttocks and curves are well outright for viewers to consume. Kardashian’s cover story itself was printed in 39,000 copies and viewed by nearly 16 million viewers online (Bazilian, 2014). While some may see Paper Magazine’s exposure of sexuality as liberating, Marxists remind us of the consequential ways in which capitalist economics shape sexuality (Seidman, 2011). Although Karl Marx had limited opinions on sexuality, his analysis of economic labour has been reinterpreted by Marxists to document how the commercialization of sex has led to a shift towards sex for pleasure, in contrast to 19th century sexual repression (Seidman, 2011). Despite the contemporary shift towards sex for pleasure, not all representations of sexuality are characterized as pleasurable or liberating as Kardashian’s photographs. As stated by Sontag (1977), “to photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed”, leading to necessary recognition of the relationship between the photographer, the subject and the cultural context of viewers; especially in capitalist societies (p.2). The photographer, Jean-Claude Goude, captures Karashian’s recent point of view that places viewers at Karashian’s eyes-level and reflects her full body. In contrast, Jean- Claude Goude’s (1982) Jungle Fever objectifies black women through their body posture as well as their surrounding environment. Goude’s book objectifies black women’s sexuality for capital by projecting his subjects as abnormal. The cover of Jungle Fever, a nude image of model Grace Jones, depicts her on her knees, inside a cage.
with facial expression that showcases the growing movements of a cat. The image offers a visual representation of black sexuality as exotic and peculiar, drawing from a similar sense of jungle fever that led sexologists such as Flower and Murie to define black women as bushwomen. Copies of Jungle Fever were and continue to be sold at over 120$, each, internationally.

While there are limited scholarly articles on Goude’s depiction of race, Jungle Fever, Chambers (2014) and Butler’s (2014) news articles have drawn noteworthy comparisons between Goude’s contrasting representations of race and sexuality. According to Cambers (2014), Goude has a history of objectifying black women in his photographs. In a statement referring to his photograph of then girlfriend Toukie, Goude says “I have always admired black women’s backsides, the ones who look like racehorses” Chambers, 2014). His comparison to black women as animals differs significantly from another was ridiculed for its abnormality. One was glorified for its beauty while the other was ridiculed for its abnormality. The white male gaze and objectified women’s bodies within sexology. In 19th century European circuses, Baartman’s story demonstrates how women’s bodies continue to be misrepresented in images such as Jean-Paul Goude’s Jungle Fever. Fortini’s (2014) article is culturally significant because of the widespread outreach in which it received however, it did not provide a critical perspective for readers to engage with. Comparing Fortini’s article to larger debates within critical race and sexuality studies enables one to deconstruct the intersectional limitations of race and gender representations. Moreover, normal and abnormal categorizations of sexuality are influenced by the larger socio-political contexts that shape popular culture.

Furthermore, the rise of capitalism has shifted the cultural acceptance of black sexuality in the public sphere. While the commercialization of sex has enabled women to be more sexually expressive, black bodies continue to be misrepresented in images such as Jean-Paul Goude’s Jungle Fever. Fortini’s (2014) article is culturally significant because of the widespread outreach in which it received however, it did not provide a critical perspective for readers to engage with. Comparing Fortini’s article to larger debates within critical race and sexuality studies enables one to deconstruct the intersectional limitations of race and gender representations. Moreover, normal and abnormal categorizations of sexuality are influenced by the larger socio-political contexts that shape popular culture.

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‘Eternal She’ Female Landscape
by Pam Hadder

‘Eternal She’ arose out of an “aha moment” I experienced after viewing artist, Shelly Niro’s short film, “Niagara.” Suddenly, I understood that we are all indigenous people – that each of us has come from some place, and that our movements in and through physical spaces are significant culturally, personally, and spiritually. Thus, as my final project for WOMN2540 Colonize/Decolonize: Race and Gender in Art and Visual Culture I created a female landscape made of four canvas panels accompanied by four small sculptures made of recycled plastic. The panels and sculptures were created as maquettes – that is, artist’s working models. Combined with female landscape paintings, the organic-shaped sculptures represent growth, life and transformative power, through the use of glow-in-the-dark paints and candles. The landscape imagery represents a woman’s life and is divided into four parts: early womanhood/youth, child bearing years, middle age, and old age. Using the path of the sun across the sky – sunrise to sunset – the four directions, the four seasons and the four “races” I explored the elusive nature of my own indigeneity (European Diaspora). The recycled plastic material used for the sculptures and for the plastic petals applied to the canvas represent my positionality as a woman of mixed cultural heritage in a colonized Canadian context. Overall, I wanted to visually connect the person and personal experience to place, to environment and to time. The following is a brief description of the symbolism in each panel:

In the absence of a defined indigenous space, I have embraced a broad vista of global womanhood to represent my spirit’s journey within a female body. The resulting feminine landscape has much personal significance, but also expresses broader external manifestations of woman: colourful, complex, interconnected, life giving and life-affirming. Through explorations of course themes, I came to understand that I am not alone in my feelings of displacement and unease. Although the paintings reference specific cultures, directions, seasons, times and ages to express themes of identity, to me the spirit has no colour, no age and no borders – it is limitless, undiluted life energy; it is freedom. I like to think of “Eternal She” as a static art grouping with self-sustaining properties – the day-glo paints gather power from daylight sources, and emit their stored beauty and energy into the night, repeating this sequence hereafter without my input. Having completed this project, I am eager to continue exploring themes of identity, land, representation, spirituality; asserting presence through art, creative writing, and music.
by Pamela Hadder

Eternal She

No matter where I am
No matter how many moons come and go
I measure all beauty by
The glory of
Her sunrise and sunset.
I know the scent of winter coming;
I dream of water music, lapping and roaring – lakes and streams;
The soft lullaby of the wind
Cradled in the dark woods.

No raging flame, no crackling blaze
She ignites
The place where “I” emerge –
Cradled in the dark woods.

The glory of
I dream of water music, lapping and roaring – lakes and streams;
No matter how many moons come and go
No matter where I am
Eternal She

by Pascale Hutton

Red Girls’ Rage

There are exciting, beautiful and engaging films being made by female indigenous directors today that are addressing the alarming prevalence of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) in Canada, but we do not see them in our Cineplex theaters or streaming services.

Why not? In her online article, “For Indigenous Women, Radical Art as a Last Resort,” Katelyn Verstraten suggests films like A Red Girl’s Reasoning by Elle-Májiá Tailfeathers and Finding Dawn by Christine Welch radically uncover Canada’s complicity in the issue of MMIWG and also work to subvert hegemonic discourses of female indigeneity. Only recently has MMIWG become a mainstream concern through the narratives reiterated by white saviours, which are characterized by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau who used the issue as a campaign platform. This paper will address how Indigenous women and activists, and their allies, have long been calling for an inquiry into the gendered and racialized violence that is endemic in Canadian society. I will also address how it is dangerous for Canadian societal discourses to ignore the work that grassroots Indigenous groups have done in the last five decades preceding the National Inquiry into MMIWG. Since the 1960’s, Indigenous women’s organizations like the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) have been tracking the almost 600 disappearances and murders of indigenous women girls (Eberts 2017, 72; Verstraten, 2013). The issue has only recently appeared in mainstream media discourses in Canada because it fits the current government’s agenda. Amnesty International and NWAC worked together in 2004 to publish the report Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women in Canada which characterized this violence as an infringement of the domestic and international human rights of Indigenous women (Eberts 2017, 73). NWAC and the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action addressed the United Nations in 2010, and requested that a national inquiry be called in regards to the issue of missing and murdered indigenous girls (Verstraten 2013). And yet, it is only since Trudeau and the Liberal Party issued the campaign promise of launching an inquiry into MMIWG that the issue has been discussed so widely in the last three years.

Violence against indigenous women and girls is built into the very foundation of Canada. Mary Eberts suggests that Indigenous womanhood is a “high-risk lifestyle,” framed by colonial structures of power (Eberts 2017). A Red Girl’s Reasoning, made in 2012, is the story of Delia, a female indigenous vigilante, who is seeking retribution for the violence that Indigenous women have suffered at the hands of white men. Structural violence is alluded to by the character of Delia in the opening sequence of A Red Girl’s Reasoning: “White boys have been having their way with Indian girls since contact” she says (Tailfeathers in Verstraten 2013).

The activist work of Indigenous women that precedes the MMIWG inquiry needs to be remembered, if only to ensure that Indigenous persons do not disappear in the ever mounting struggle of a ‘white saviour’ such as Prime Minister Trudeau. Katelyn Verstraten argues that there is a long history of activism that works to shed light on how Indigenous women face a disproportionate threat of violence, and yet the mainstream media does not seem to have picked-up from the queues of NWAC, Christine Welch and Elle-Májiá Tailfeathers. At its root, much of the violence that is faced by indigenous women and girls is borne of colonization, Canadian governments’ and media’s intentional ignorance of Indigenous activism can make it seem like the only way to save Indigenous peoples’ is via the intervention of ‘white saviours’, colonizers, or the very people responsible for the endemic violence against indigenous women. These films, and the other works of art highlighted by Verstraten are examples of material culture that we can return to, that we refer others to, to show that long before the MMIWG inquiry, indigenous women and activists were resisting those whose complicity was actively silencing them. These examples of material culture can also serve as evidence that contrary to what the mainstream media seems to imply, indigenous women have always resisted and aren’t ‘in need of white saviours’.

As a white-passing Métis woman I struggle to find my entry into the activism for MMIWG. As a feminist, and as a Métis woman I am stuck in the contemplation of how to use my rage for change. Rage would seem to be the emotion from which radical art like Finding Dawn, A Red Girl’s Reasoning, and the work of NWAC are motivated and yet they have seemingly affected no change. So wonder, is my anger, the anger of so many Indigenous peoples- hindering our effectiveness as activists? Must we suppress our rage to inspire change? My anger motivates my desire for change, and so I will not let it go, and I feel like neither should activists, artists, advocates, or allies.

References


Zaagichigaazo (She is loved/treasured)
by Danielle Peebles

Aaniiin Boozhoo Ozhaawashkwaa Meméngwaa Ikwe Nindizhinikaaz the English name I was given is Danielle Rebecca Peebles. I am an Anishinaabe Ikwe from Treaty 1 and Treaty 2 territories. I identify with being from three communities as my mother is from Sagkeeng First Nation, my father is from Keeseekowenin First Nation and my husband and our children are from Peguis First Nation, which is where my great-grandmother was from prior to being taken to the Fort Alexander residential school at the age of three years old. I share this with you intentionally to position myself and to also provide some context in the work I have done and continue to do academically and professionally since 2007.

These posters were done at the end of my first undergraduate degree (Bachelor of Arts, Major: Native Studies, Minor: Women and Gender Studies) at the University of Manitoba in 2011, this was a significant time for me as I had just spent four years focusing on Native Studies and Women and Gender Studies and learning and developing knowledge that would later guide me in becoming a social worker.

My focus in this first four years of my first degree was learning and developing knowledge about how colonization and assimilation negatively impacted Indigenous people in Canada and I specifically sought out knowledge and was determined to focus on how colonization and assimilation negatively impacted Indigenous women. I have felt the effects of colonization and assimilation from a personal standpoint but in attending university I began to develop an academic lens that I continue to use but that I am always critically exploring and of course challenge. In explaining to you the above I have to thank Dr. Shawna Ferris who I feel was a mentor to me in this period of my academic life, she was supportive and listened and valued my voice and I am forever grateful.

I critically explored how media perpetuates racism, negative stereotypes and places blame on Indigenous populations when we face hardships and loss, media can be a form of violence and it can be very dangerous as we all know how media influences our society.

My focus over the years has been to walk in kindness and love with women on their life’s journey and be someone to advocate and address violence that indigenous women and indigenous people face daily in the areas of our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing.

I completed these posters in 2011 and at that time the number of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was 600+, in 2018 that number has substantially doubled if not tripled.

I would like to thank the FAQ- Feminist and Queer Collective for approaching me to have this work republished in their upcoming publication.

Meegwetch,
Danielle Peebles BA BSW MSW Candidate

The name of the piece and the statement were updated from the original publication at the wishes of the artist.
The Perception of Muslim Women Within Islamic Societies

by Olivia

The purpose of this paper is to critically analyze, discuss and challenge the perceptions and assumptions about Muslim women that are often assumed to be treated unequally (Abukari, p. 7). Some of these assumptions include the main cause of this problem as due to a misinterpretation of the Qur'an by Muslims (Abukari, p. 16). Others suggest that the Qur’an has been solely interpreted by males and for males, which leads not only to the unfair criticism of Islam as a religion, but also its destruction (Abukari, p. 4).

In analyzing selected verses of the Qur’an, there is equality between women and men in terms of their rights and responsibilities (Abukari, p. 22). Additionally, the Qur’an also supports the rights of women to get education (Abukari, p. 22). Because this paper only analyzes selected verses of the Qur’an, it cannot fully represent the overall “interpretation of the Qur’an that existed in societies before Islam (Abukari, p. 5). Out of numerous English translation of the Qur’an, the current paper uses the new revised edition of Abdulah Yusuf Ali’s English Translation and Commentary of the Quran, because it is not only easy to understand, but also known as the standard to use (Abukari, p. 6). In brief, it was identified that the main cause of the different rights between men and women is due to an overall “interpretation of the Qur’an that has been male dominated” (Abukari, p. 4).

Another cause could be the mismatch between the principles and teachings of Islam as it is emanated from the Qur’an and the assumption that Muslims have from interpreting the Qur’an (Abukari, p. 5). As aforementioned, women’s rights for education is one example of the problems that emerges as a result of the misinterpretation of the Qur’an dominantly due to the tendency of mixing cultural traditions with the teaching of Islam (Abukari, p. 5). Evidently, the most recent incident of Malala Yousafzai, who was shot in Pakistan in 2012 “for advocating women’s education in Islam” has raised serious questions about Islam’s view about women such as “Does Islam abhor women’s education in Islam” (Abukari, p. 5).

As it shows, the shooting of someone who was defending Muslim women to have the same right like men to access education acts as proof that Muslims are not treated unequally (Abukari, p. 5 & 7). Furthermore the example of the misrepresentation and manipulation of the principles of women’s rights in Islam, is also shown from Badawi “the psychological and physiological differences between men above women with the assumption that God created men first and also vested upon them completeness of mental potency, good counsel and conduct, complete power in the performance of duties and carrying out of (divine) commands” (Abukari, p. 7). Qasim Amin, on the other hand, disagrees as he argues that the exclusion of women from social affairs is not because of the teaching of Islam, but is rather the result of the customs that existed in societies before Islam conquered it (Abukari, p. 8). The result from Abukari’s analysis concludes that “the Qur’an calls for the education of all human beings”, which means that “both men and women (ought to) acquire knowledge, without any discrimination or placing priority on the education of one gender over the other” (Abukari, p. 13).

In addition, Rahman also states that: “the acquisition of knowledge is essential for both men and women, not only to know God with all His Attributes, but also to learn His teaching so that they may find what the right and proper way of life are for them. And this duty falls as much upon women as it does upon men, because they are equally responsible and accountable for their omissions and commission on the Day of Judgement. The prophet is also reported to have said (hadith): “the acquisition of knowledge is the duty of every Muslim man and Muslim woman” (Abukari, p. 16). Thus, the Qur’an views the acquisition of knowledge as a necessity and a right to every Muslim woman and Muslim man to acquire knowledge (Abukari, p. 13-14).

Therefore, it is very clear that the oppression that Muslim women face is not because of the teaching of Islam or Qur’an. Specifically, both women and men have to be educated to be righteous persons on the Day of Judgement (Abukari, p. 16). Thus, the inequality between women and men is assumed due to some early Muslims or current Muslim literalists’ interpretations” that twist the teaching of the Qur’an so as to support something opposite to its true meaning (Abukari, p. 16). Ultimately, it is clear that the Qur’an calls for equal access for education for everyone regardless of their gender (Abukari, p. 19).

Misinterpreting of the Qur’an, can actually lead to a more serious implication (Abukari, p. 21). One such example is the misleading impression about the view of Islam on women and education that arose simply due to the incident of Malala Yousafzai being shot in Pakistan in 2012 “for advocating women’s education in Islam” which has raised serious questions about Islam’s view about women (Abukari, p. 21).

In my opinion, this tragedy has the same impact as the tragic events that occurred on 9/11, where the twin towers fell, and “the exposure of oppressive regimes such as Taliban”, making people from all kind of society view the Middle East as the central of terrorism (Cohen and Peery, p. 20). As stated previously, the negative perception of the West are actually stereotypes because it predisposes people to label Muslim women into the categories of “oppressed and inferior” since they are assumed to be the wife of the terrorist (Cohen and Peery, p. 20). It is important to note that not everyone has these stereotypes about Muslim women, however, many people do. Thus, it is hypothesized that by introducing and educating people that are unfamiliar with the norms of Islam to these norms, it may generate more positive things about Islam or Muslim women, rather than emphasizing negative opinions and assertions from the media. It can also help societies’ perceptions of Muslim women to become more just and realistic (Cohen and Peery, p. 20).

There is another method from Lori Cohen and Leyna Peery (2006) following the methodology of “research limited time frame” as a strategy (Cohen and Peery, p. 20). Because “research indicates that the stereotypical behaviors in which books have been portrayed have not changed”, they only used selected literatures that are both “richer and more varied today than was the case twenty or forty years ago” (Cohen and Peery, p. 21). This means they chose literature that portrayed Muslim women with labels other than the usual image of Muslim women which portrays Muslim women which portrays Muslim
leads to stereotyping because people especially in the West. Why women? perceptions about Muslim women, of educating everyone from every This paper has discussed the importance fighting for the usage of veil, which fact that Muslim women are actually Peery, p. 24). What made the students eventually find that the Quran does not preach women's submission, that Muslim women actually have the same right to access education as men, and that women also have economic rights in marriage and property as well as to serve the military (Cohen and Peery, p. 21-24). In fact, “women were soldiers in the time of Muhammad, and some of his most formidable enemies and allies happened to be women” (Cohen and Peery, p. 24). In relation to usage of veil, hijab and/or burka, “most students were surprised that women in Iran were actually not required to wear their veil from 1979” (Cohen and Peery, p. 24) because they thought that all Muslim women were obligated “to wear a veil” due to a law that had “been in place since the revelation of the Quran” (Cohen and Peery, p. 24). What made the students in this study even more surprised is the fact that Muslim women are actually fighting for the usage of veil, which means that some women want to wear it (Cohen and Peery, p. 24).

CONCLUSION
This paper has discussed the importance of educating everyone from every cultural background in regards to Islam as a religion, in order to improve people’s perceptions about Muslim women, especially in the West. Why women? Because Muslim women are often viewed as being oppressed or less than. The current inaccurate perceptions also leads to stereotyping because people make snap judgments before taking time to research the facts about Muslim women. From the study of “Education of Women in Islam: A Critical Islamic Interpretation of the Quran” (Abukari, p. 4) and “Unveiling Students’ Perceptions about Women in Islam” (Cohen and Peery, p. 20), the results reveal the benefit of relying not solely on what the media teaches us. The events of 9/11 in the United States for instance, fostered the thought of Muslims as terrorists, and Muslim women are seen “as the submissive backdrop for terrorist men” (Cohen and Peery, p. 24). In consequence, these generalizations about Muslims will only cause more resentment and possibly feed the World into a cycle of terrorism (Cohen and Peery, p. 23). Thus, Muslim women in general are instantly perceived as “inferior, tranquil and modest, but they are actually just as liberated as women of other faiths” (Cohen and Peery, p. 25). As it discussed earlier, the Quran shows clear evidence that women are completely equal to men in God’s perception regarding women’s right and responsibilities (Cohen and Peery, p. 22), including the right of education (Abukari, p. 14). The Quran states that both men and women have rights to access education and are in fact responsible for educating themselves (Abukari, p. 13). Thus, I wish from writing this piece that it can at least bring some positive changes in terms of how people, regardless of their cultural background, view Islam and Muslim women (Cohen and Peery, p. 25). On the other hand, it is also necessary for Muslims to make an “objective” interpretation of the Quran (as a message to all human kind) rather than using “matriarchy or patriarchy” as their perspective (Abukari, p. 8). I also wish that all women (whether Muslim or non-Muslim women) would advocate and support other women (regardless of their faith or personal beliefs).

Equally important, I wish that everyone would challenge their own perceptions of Islam and Muslim women and not allow themselves to be absorbed by the media that tends to be biased towards Islam nowadays.

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Navigating and (Re) Mapping Cultural Constructions of Indigenous Loss

by Johise Namwira

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson’s This Accident of Being Lost uses storytelling as a means to explore Indigenous politics within Canada’s 21st century, settler colonial context. The cover of Simpson’s book, a photograph of Rebecca Belmore’s Masked Blessing, provides a visual illustration that encompasses the intersectional realities of Indigenous being in Canada, highlighting loss as a product of colonial violence. Using a collection of poetry and short stories, Simpson problematizes the continuous feeling of being lost as a shared Indigenous Canadian experience (Your Morning, 2017). Simpson portrays the holistic characterization of Indigenous loss as culturally significant through storytelling and resistance in the face of Indigeneity. Simpson decentralsizes the construction of the state as the saviour by integrating Indigenous looking inwards and finding the “beautiful notions of our [Nishnaabeg] culture in order to survive and resist” (Your Morning, 2017, p.44).

Altamirano-Jiménez, 2017). In a comical and ironic assembly of statements and space, Simpson places Nishnaabeg stories in a metaphorical sense, highlighting aspects of Nishnaabeg spirituality, as well as the physical loss of relationships with Indigenous self-identities, communities, land, nature and the non-human world (Simpson, 2007). This Accident of Being Lost is a time piece because it reimagines ecological and interpersonal relationships in a way that differs from contemporary political debates on reconciliation.

With careful consideration of her audience, Simpson (2017) uses first person terminology throughout her book. Words such as “we” and “they” create a conversational relationship between her readers and herself as an author. Simpson’s book is directed towards an intended Indigenous audience, purposefully making use of Anishinaabemowin terminology and Nishnaabeg knowledge (Your Morning, 2017). Noting the context of her book, the conversational approach invites readers to actively engage with the story and reflect on their inside or outside perspective in relation to her intended audience. The use of first person and Anishinaabemowin terminology makes a clear distinction between Indigenous and non-Indigenous readers. However, Simpson invites all her readers to reflect on their positionality as activists or allies.

Navigating Decolonized Realities: Decolonizing decolonization in the 21st century

Simpson (2017) characterizes decolonization as complex and continuous; highlighting the frustrations of Indigenous activists who actively resist settler colonial suppression. Her assembly of short stories provide diverse approaches to navigate decolonization in a neo-liberal context without uplifting one universal solution. In Flight, Simpson outlines the story of three Nishnaabekwewag friends who collect sap from neighbourhood Maple Trees (Simpson, 2017). The three friends self-identify as the “Fourth World Problems Collective”, referencing a term coined by Mhuto Mihando (Simpson, 2017, p.6). Manuel & Poluson (1974) further define the Fourth World as a representation of Indigenous populations who have Third World living conditions within First World contexts. Contemporary Global Political Economists have repopulated the Fourth World within the Third World frameworks however, the original usage of the term occupies a group of non-national or spatial boundaries according to Manuel & Polusson (1974). On a global scale, the 20th century brought a shift in cultural attitudes about decolonization, one in which provides a noteworthy contextualization for the socio-political climate that inspired Simpson’s interpretation of Indigenous loss. Following World War II, economists, scholars and activists produced literary research on the topic of Indigenous Human Rights (Burke, 2010). The term decolonization is arguably credited to German economist Moritz Juris Bonn (1932) who defined it as a movement of “countercolonialization” however, Indigenous populations across European empires in Asia, Africa and Northern America have verbally documented histories and centuries prior to this definition (p. 612). According to Burke, decolonization became a conceptualization of Indigenous peoples within the foundation of the United Nations (UN), refusing the perception that human rights were never to be fully drafted by Western nations (Burke, 2010). In reality, as argued by many Indigenous activists, the cooption of decolonization within liberal human rights discourse has detrimental effects on Indigenous communities by perpetuating and reinforcing colonial processes (Alamirano-Jiménez, 2017; Rifkin, 2017; Goeman, 2017). Most importantly, as illustrated by Brown (2001), understanding decolonization within the realm of rights and freedoms, ignore the “cultural, social, political efforts” of colonial dispossession (as cited in Alamirano-Jiménez, 2017, p.220).

The evolution of decolonization and human rights within the North American context was distinctly different from other transnational movements primarily because Indigenous nations were not granted independent sovereignty. Following the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the government of Canada enacted two out of the five sub-clauses listed in Article 2, thus removing “causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of a group” and “forcibly transferring children of the group to another group” (Reid, 2015, p.442). Despite being a leading participant in the formation of the United Nations and its 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the government of Canada was actively committing genocide through the operation of residential schools from 1948 to 1960, and the continuous separation of children from their families (as cited in Reid, 2015, p.442). Although policy enactments such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Inquiry on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women present the Canadian approach towards Indigenous rights as progressive, Indigenous-led grassroots movements continue to allude the harmful manifestations of racialized and gendered colonial violence well after the 1960s (Smith, 2005; Black, 2014; Green, 2017; Goeman, 2017; Eberts, 2017; NWAC, 2010). The recently denied apology of Pope Francis, for example, only serves to question the impartiality of colonial powers, highlighting their problematic presence in Indigenous loss. Following World War II, Indigenous activists have subjected to critical understandings of decolonization within traditional Indigenous knowledge.

(Re) Mapping Nishnaabeg Stories: The power of Indigenous narratives

Storytelling, literature and poetry allow orators to create spaces that reclaim Indigenous narratives. According to Eberts (2017), Nishnaabeg literature presents ways to “unsettle the settler state” by legitimizing Indigenous knowledge within colonial spaces (p. 4). Goeman (2017) uses the term “re(mapping)” to question colonial geographies and the privileging of white women as creators rather than marginal presences in Native epistemologies (p.4). Similarly, in This Accident of Being Lost, Simpson places Nishnaabeg stories at the center and specifically highlights female and queer narratives that are often silenced through colonial processes of erasure (Simpson, 2017). Simpson portrays the relationship of Indigenous narratives to a pink eraser by writing, “we are well aware you are trying to use it. Erasing Indians is a good idea… except I am graffiti” (Simpson, 2017, p.25). Comparatively to graffiti, Simpson reminds readers that Indigenous peoples cannot be erased. Most importantly, Indigenous existence is an act of rebellion against the settler state (Simpson, 2017). Graffiti (re)maps territory in a way that forces

Altamirano-Jiménez (2017) provides a similar critique of overarching state policies, highlighting their problematic suppression of customary laws. While the beneficiaries of settler-states occupy the privilege of choosing when to engage or disengage with Indigenous rights, the manifestation of violence is inflicted on Indigenous communities without a choice. Simpson’s (2017) stories illustrate the exhausting emotional labour that comes with constant resistance movements, urging more accountability from non-Indigenous allies. In Caribou Ghosts and Untold Stories, Simpson states “we don’t have to plan for the win because we already lost anyways” (Simpson, 2017, p.33). In my interpretation, Simpson’s statement is a necessary realization. As decolonization movements should always be subjected to critical understandings of decolonization within traditional Indigenous knowledge.
Being graffiti repositions Indigenous narratives and validates their significance. Simpson refers to Nishnaabeg narratives and states that Indigenous culture is appropriated in an ironic and uncomfortable way. For example, the cooptation of Indigeneity is illustrated in a piece where a white conservative gun instructor is nicknamed ‘Big Chief’. The mapping of Indigenous narratives and validates their significance. Simpson refers to Nishnaabeg narratives and states that Indigenous culture is appropriated in an ironic and uncomfortable way. For example, the cooptation of Indigeneity is illustrated in a piece where a white conservative gun instructor is nicknamed ‘Big Chief’. The mapping of Indigenous narratives and validates their significance. Simpson refers to Nishnaabeg narratives and states that Indigenous culture is appropriated in an ironic and uncomfortable way. For example, the cooptation of Indigeneity is illustrated in a piece where a white conservative gun instructor is nicknamed ‘Big Chief’.
Flashback 2009

Town Drunk
by Julie Coss

My modern town drunk figure is based on classical “Safford Shire” figurines, which often depicted things typical of small town European life. Their town drunks were men sitting on a stoop or bench drinking out of beer steins mid-afternoon. The modern town drunk depicts the type of “party girl alcoholism” that leaves you passed out in the morning on someone’s lawn, which is much more common in our society today.
**brick walls: get busy to work bodies**

by Sylvie Côté

Think about it. You enter the shopping centre through shiny glass doors. The sights, smells, and sounds are all very familiar to you at this point. You walk past stores that advertise special sales, and it really seems like your lucky day! You can go from store to store looking through hundreds of items, all of them pretty similar, and a few hours later when you leave, bags in hand, you might reflect on how you are able to buy so much for relatively low prices. Time goes on and the clothes that you bought wear out, or you lose interest, and the cycle repeats. Consumer culture is supported in large part by the garment industry. In the world of fashion there are new standards in the form of trends that come out basically with the change of the seasons. Designers plan and execute elaborate shows to display what is the new standard, and society is expected to follow along, which it usually does. Every so often there are entire weeks dedicated to celebrating the new trends that society is expected to adhere to. Often, following the latest fashion trends means forgetting about what is going on behind the scenes. It’s no wonder that horrifying events, injuries thousands of others (Kennedy).” The factory was known to be a place of intergenerational traumatic povertaddict radicalization is in to gender pushing bending reshaping I am monstrous dreamweaver, layer on layer I am nothing if not the system broken and what you don’t know can’t hurt you

girl, I hurt for you, the way there are sharper teeth and sharper words. It is all about power, I say it is all about slactivism in the shape of feeling or could it be vocal commitments for those i don’t call home? I was once individual will it ever go away? self-care is an individual activity unproductive makes productivity double double self-care is an individual activity, never you mind community isn’t real until it’s over this is the final straw/berri lesmoain field her community garden spaces conformation too so drink yourself silly and conservatively wave quickly, goodbye the prison aquariums don’t shatter on impact and here’s why: they take and take and take, selfish like gush yourself out of me to make me stronger redouble my efforts in an attempt to insinuate control initiate ceilings and horror feelings intergenerational traumatic povertaddict racism/feminism/antiracists racism/feminism/antiracists classism/feminism/antiracists right classism/feminism/antiracists right mass consumption of clothing is not unique. It is easy to get lost in the ease of it all; ignoring what goes on behind the scenes. It’s no wonder that horrifying news about children in sweat shops, about abhorrent working conditions in less developed countries, about women being forced to work for poverty wages seem to be forgotten not long after they break on the evening news. It’s old news, yet it would seem that not much is changing. There is one company in particular that this paper will look into: Joe Fresh, a brand commonly sold at Canadian Superstores. Joe Fresh has had a particularly nasty track record it looks when it comes to the treatment of their workers, which I believe illustrates clearly some concerns we as a Canadian consumer society should really be looking more carefully into. It is a store that I have shopped at, but in recent years I have been attempting to avoid going there – particularly for clothes – because of the following incidents. In April of 2013, and eight storey factory in Bangladesh called Rana Plaza collapsed in on itself, killing over 1,100 people and injuring thousands of others (Kennedy). The factory was known to be a place of production for several retailers exporting to Canada, including Joe Fresh. Later that same year, the Aswad garment factory, also in Bangladesh, caught fire and was completely gutted (ICBO). This factory was also known to be supplying labour and products for the Joe Fresh line. Working conditions in garment factories have been brought to the public’s attention before; however, over time, interest usually fades. Angela McRobbie explains this phenomenon quite well in her paper “A New Kind of Rag Trade”. McRobbie points out that “Back in the 1970’s, feminists drew attention to the exploitative conditions that prevailed in clothing manufacture and production on a global scale, and especially in developing countries” (433). Over time however, McRobbie notes that feminist concern turns away from the treatment of clothing producers – the women and children working in the factories – and towards the representation of women in the world of fashion (433). McRobbie asserts that the “reconceptualization of fashion often required silence on the question of the point of origin of the clothes of the identity and working conditions of those who make them, since this would bring into view the suffering of ‘other’ women” (434). Written over a decade before the two cases of garment factory disasters previously outlined, McRobbie’s point is especially poignant. Feminist and western society in general were well aware of the deplorable conditions that those, women of colour, children and the working poor in the developing world were being forced to take part in. But indifference prevailed, ultimately culminating in years of fatal incidents, leading to the Rana Plaza tragedy in 2013. What is happening within the garment industry cannot be ignored, and these disasters are a perfect reason why they should not be. Each tragedy that shows up on the news is a bigger wake-up call for people to start paying attention to what is going on in the garment industry. Although factory disasters are a large part of the problem, they are not the only part of the problem. The garment industry has become a major employer of marginalized groups such as women and children coming from low income and low educational backgrounds. Women are disproportionately involved in and negatively impacted by the global garment industry mentally, physically, and economically. This problem is particularly prevalent in Bangladesh, where Joe Fresh is known to operate. According to a paper published by Barry Bearak, there were 30 garment factory fires between 1999 and 2001. Also, garment factories constituted around 76% of the entire nations exports at the time of publishing (Bearak).
War on Want published a comprehensive article outlining the many ways in which Bangladeshi garment workers are being exploited and abused, and they are clear in emphasizing that the garment industry is highly gendered, with the jarring statistic that with the employment of “over three million people, fully 85% of these workers are women” (Alam, 2), while acknowledging that the remaining 15% of men “perform the better paid jobs although recent steps towards oversight and union regulations for the workers have resulted in increased wages in some situations, yet “[t]hese wages fall far short of the level which is considered to be a living wage” (6). The women in these factories are being kept just poor enough that they cannot afford to leave the garment industry in order to search for work elsewhere. Leaving work to find new employment would mean throwing their families deeper into poverty. It is simply not an option for most workers. In fact, as a way to make ends meet, many of the workers work overtime without pay in order to meet lofty quotas so that they have a chance at getting paid at all (Alam, 4).

Aside from low wages and extremely dangerous conditions, the women of the Bangladeshi garment factories producing for brands such as Joe Fresh work in fear of emotional, physical, and even sexual abuse. In the course of doing research for the War on Want report, Alam interviewed 988 workers from Bangladeshi factories. Of those 988 workers, “718 reported being spoken to with obscene language, while 433 has been beaten and 427 hit in the face” (6). Additionally, “297 women reported sexual advances and 299 being touched inappropriately” (6). When the harassed women attempted to take action, many were threatened with the loss of their job, being sent to prison, or being forced to undress as punishment (Alam, 6). It is no wonder that many women just put up with the abuse, while both they and their abusers know that they cannot afford to be unemployed. As a final affront to their rights, Alam reports that the women in the garment industry are continually being denied their rights to maternity leave which is legislated by the Bangladesh government (8).

There is work being done to remedy the conditions in locations such as Bangladesh when it comes to garment factories and the treatment of workers there, however the problem is far from solved. Jason Motlagh did some follow-up research one year after the devastating Rana Plaza incident and found that while progress was being made, it was nowhere near the amount necessary to make significant change. Motlagh reported that following the collapse “More than 150 mostly European companies [had] signed the legally binding Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh while 26 companies, most of them American including Wal-Mart, Sears and Gap, joined a separate alliance that commits them to invest in safety upgrades”. Changes on the part of the corporations signified a large step in the right direction, but in many cases new commitments to safety were all talk and no action. According to Motlagh, reports from factory inspections following the signing of the documents shows that “Dangerously heavy storage loads sent cracks down walls and stressed sagging support beams. In some cases, basic fire equipment was missing, and exit routes didn’t lead outside”. Motlagh also noted that a significant problem in Bangladesh was not that factories were uncompliant with new safety standards, but rather the fact that there remained a huge underground market for garment production. He reported that “[s]andwiched inside apartment buildings, in basements and on rooftops, underpaid and overworked employees finish orders from larger companies under fierce pressure to stay apace with fast fashion”. This point illustrated that not only did people have to acknowledge and push back against the larger and more obvious human rights violations taking place in factories, but also that people must be mindful that there are much smaller operations taking on the newly available work. When companies started to comply with safety regulations, underground operations were forced to pick up the slack and produce for those same corporations that the major factories could no longer compete with. The underground market added a new layer to the issue when sub-contractors of the large western companies started to sub-contract work themselves, because “[h]idden from view, bosses are free to abuse workers and cut corners on safety” (Motlagh).

Motlagh concluded his article on the sour note that despite promises made by the companies that were outsourcing to Rana Plaza to compensate the families of those affected, “[the companies had] deposited only $17 million of a targeted $40 million into a relief fund to pay medical bills, lost wages and other compensation”. There was no timeline in place to ensure that the victims were paid accordingly, and Motlagh considered it unlikely that full payment would ever happen. It is his opinion that “for all the pledges and codes of conduct, profit-driven companies will get away with what they can when left to their own devices” (Motlagh). Although it does appear at times that the situation is hopeless, and that nothing is changing for the better in any real way, there are things that are being done. Take the War on Want for example. It is their mission to fight against the root causes of poverty and human rights violation, as part of the worldwide movement for global justice and they do seem to be making progress. They are making a difference for the factory workers of Bangladesh by working with grassroots movements and unions, running campaigns, building alliances and raising public awareness all in support of human, and especially worker’s rights. The issues are being addressed, but on a scale that is local to the problem in Bangladesh.

With all of this in mind, it becomes very difficult to justify shopping at places like Joe Fresh, among others, simply because of the ‘great deals’ they can offer on the backs of women who are being physically, sexually, and mentally abused in order for those clothes to arrive in Canada at those affordable prices. Although this was something that I was aware of before, upon doing
Remember These Three Things if Nothing Else was created as a personal creative project that currently hangs on the walls of my apartment. The work features images of marxist revolutionaries and soviet soldiers who bravely battled the nazi regime in WWII. The phrase “Have humility, have grace, punch nazis in the face” is a quip that though it often gets a laugh, carries a serious and sincere message reflecting on the current state of anti-fascist action at work across the globe today. The necessity of the anti-fascist movement has been illustrated by countless acts against violence perpetrated by the “alt right”.

the further research for this paper I have seriously begun to reconsider my shopping habits. Not only do I shop less overall, but I am more conscious of where I am making my purchases. I am doing my best to be aware of where my clothing is coming from in order to avoid supporting a system that encourages the oppression of women and minority groups. I know that in the past there have been movements to increase awareness of these problems, but these movements have really fallen off the radar in recent times. I hope that this lull in large scale resistance to sweat shop labour is not a permanent thing.

I am just one person and I don’t think that I have the influence to promote this cause on a large enough scale to make significant change. However, what I can do is help to inform the people around me about what this research has revealed to me and hope that they too take the information to heart and pass it along as well. To quote Jason Motlagh, “If Rana Plaza is to be a turning point, we must bear in mind the price of indifference every time we make a purchase”. Knowing all this, what options are there left for shoppers who are not willing to remain indifferent to the suffering of others? The first small, but important, step is to simply be more cognisant of where exactly the clothes you buy are coming from. You may be browsing in a local, one-of-a-kind shop, but unless they are selling exclusively locally-made goods, you’re not much better off than if you had gone to a big chain store. Look at labels, ask questions about where your goods are coming from, and don’t be afraid to walk away if you do not like the answers you are getting. Another option is to actively seek out second-hand shops which recycle and redistribute clothing already in circulation, thus lessening the demand placed on the women who produce those items for our consumption. In a capitalist society such as ours, there is no perfect solution, and certainly the world will not be saved by shopping. I have to believe though, that conscious decision-making and sharing knowledge will eventually lead to some good.
The Complete Guide to Prevent Sexual Assault on Campus!

by Ainsley Porath

After the sexual assault that took place near the Health Sciences Centre on the Bannatyne campus in November of 2017, the University of Manitoba sent out an email to all students and faculty suggesting safety tactics to prevent further assaults (UM Today, November 2017). The title of my paper is a satirical way to introduce the email sent out, including the irony of “prevention and precaution” tips: “The Complete Guide to Prevention of Sexual Assault on Campus” will present and analyze this topic by discussing the ways the Department of Security Services on campus chose to deal with the matter, in comparison to the preferable approach that could have avoided victim-blaming. I developed this approach on the basis of my understanding of misplaced responsibility and the neglect to acknowledge perpetrators role in acts of violence.

First, I would like to highlight the points made in the email received students. Tactics of prevention are framed to students as potential victims of the assault, not potential perpetrators.

• Stay alert to your surroundings, trust your instincts and, if you feel uncomfortable in a place or situation, leave immediately. The best prevention is precaution.

• The greatest danger.

• If you pull over to help someone with car problems, remember not to assault them!

• When you see someone walking by themselves, leave them alone!

• If you see someone walking alone, do not take advantage of their independence.

• Do not take advantage of people who may be walking alone in dim lighted places or at night, or any other vulnerable circumstances. The message they are sending to students is that if you are smart and cautious, you will do your best to not be assaulted, and if you are assaulted, there are some handy tips for how you ought to deal with the trauma. The responsibility is misplaced on students viewed as potential Victims. A change in approach would be not only helpful by taking some responsibility and pressure off of students to alter their daily lives, but also helpful to people who resort to violence. If I were to create my own guide to the prevention of sexual assault it would include strategies that could potentially stop violence before it happens, not just avoid those who have violent intentions. My guide would include things such as:

References

1000 course to educate students on sexual violence. Ignorance can sometimes be the greatest danger.
Praise
by Sylvie Côté

Inspired by Angela Carter’s short story
“The Erl-King”

1. Undress you; slip you off and out
Like rabbit fur, like skinning
I want to touch your insides
You shiver and let me
Slip you off and slip you in-
Into my bed, covered in furs, overlapping
Their warmth is a comfort to me,
But to you, you shiver
I feel your tension, your unrest

Don’t you want to be the pinnacle?
I promise I adore you,
I promise you’re the only one
These other girls are gone
Their warmth is a comfort to me,

2. A ripened, young thing
All paths lead to me
And lovely
You shiver and let me
Slip you off and slip you in-
Swallow you up whole and live inside me
Said you wanted to be a woman
Well let me show you what they sound

3. Oh girl, let me show you where my teeth are
Show you what the forest floor looks like
Show you how the birds sing
See, the trees hear your melody
Hear you scream and squeak
It’s hard to let you go when you go

4. Boughs keep you in, tingling
Keep you caught, oh - caress me
They wind you like a labyrinth
Moving from the path is a whisper
Is a thrill
Into my teeth
Into my teeth
Onto your neck
Bruises
Bruises
From my whispers
In your ear
The woods know you
And wind you and
Knot you, coil you
These shrubs tangle your itch
I am only a diversion
From your everyday

5. Let me stroke you here
Like the leaves, like a spider-
Web, like a snarl
You are my trophy, my splendor
I am fluent in your laughter
But I don’t even know you
I don’t need to
Not when every girl is the same
Look at them in my cages
This is what they sound like:
Mewing and desperate for my worship
You are mine
And I will give you my attention
My affection
My appetite
I sit here waiting for you:
All paths lead to me

6. I am your pleasure
Let me brush you there
It’s hard to let you go
When you go
And how do you go?
When I am a maze
And I haven’t quite caught you yet
Oh, into my touch

Angela Carter’s short story “The Erl-King” was used as inspiration for the writing of this piece. In the short story, the Erl-King lures girls into the maze-like woods where he lives. The forest mirrors the manipulative quality of the Erl-King through its shape-shifting qualities. Furthermore, the Erl-King uses sex as a way to further exploit the girls. He is a magical creature and he turns each of the girls into birds where they live in cages in his home. Thus, I thought “Praise” was a useful title for this collection because it is ultimately about manipulative relationships via the praise given to the girl by the Erl-King, and the ways that control and sex are sometimes interpreted as care rather than demands or actions with sinister intentions.

I want to point out that the Erl-King is described with traditionally feminine and female characteristics. For instance, he is a housewife: he cleans, cooks, and weaves. His fertility is compared to the female reproductive system when the narrator desires to shrink as small as a seed and grow inside his body, where the Erl-King would eventually give birth to her. Carter’s purposeful gender subversion is important to feminist thinking at least because it locates gender as a social category and construction. Finally, the girl’s point of view is taken up in the last section of the poem. I thought it was significant to give her a voice as she enacted her ultimate resistance: murder.
Feminist and Queer Review

Flashback 2015

(More Than) Just Another Body
by Caroline Kroeker

Digital print on Somerset paper
30 x 15 inches
2014

(More Than) Just Another Body serves as a photographic response to the societal dismissal of female victims of assault. While we fixate on the aggressors, we forget the women who have survived or lost their lives to gendered violence. We must remember these women as more than just victims, more than just bodies.

\[...but you’re a mother... mothers don’t go around sleeping with boys young enough to be their child\] (Sade, in Bandele, 2015)

The Nigerian movie Fifty written by Nigerian female screenwriter Kemi Adeosuyi and produced by Mo Abudu, CEO of EbonyLife TV follows the lives of four Nigerian women who are about to turn fifty years of age. The four main characters of these movies are Tola, Elizabeth, Maria and Kate. Tola is the star of her own reality TV show and is also an upper class ‘daddy’s girl’ who is married to Kunle, a lawyer employed by Tola’s father. Tola is known for her bad temper and her dismissive and abusive attitude towards everyone around her. Tola is stuck in an unhappy marriage with Kunle but cannot leave due to fear of backlash from her family and society. Tola was raped at a young age by her father which resulted in the birth of her son Jamal who the family passes as Tola’s brother to keep the rape and birth as secrets. This secret of Tola’s also deeply affects her marriage with Kunle. Tola is played by Nigerian actress Dakorea Akande. Elizabeth is an upper-class obstetrician who is well-known and celebrated. Elizabeth has a daughter named Sade who works for Tola as the producer of Tola’s reality show. Sade and Elizabeth are not on good terms because Sade hates Elizabeth’s attitude towards life and how she embraces her sexuality. Elizabeth is a proud woman who only engages in sexual activities for pleasure with younger men. Elizabeth believes in living life to the fullest and engages in BDSM and sexual activities for pleasure only. Elizabeth is often called Lizzy by her friends and is played by Nigerian actress Ireti Doyle. (Bandele, 2015).

For the purposes of this paper, I will only be focusing on the characters Elizabeth and Tola.

Themes in Fifty include monogamy, BDSM, kink, sexual pleasure, Christianity, heteronormativity, rape culture in Nigeria and marriage. Monogamy can be defined as act of marrying only one partner throughout one’s lifetime (Engels, 2012). BDSM is a form of sexual activity short for “bondage/discipline, dominance/submission and/or sadism/discipline” which Kinksters engage in (Sheff & Hammer, 2011). Kink is a type of sexual activity that is sometimes referred to as perverted sex by society and involves BDSM; people who practice this activity are called Kinksters (Sheff & Hammer, 2011). Sexual pleasure can be referred to as the act of engaging in sexual activity for pleasure (Seidman, 2011). Fifty is marketed as a progressive movie that disrupts Nigerian cultural approaches to gender, sexuality and sexual pleasure. The storyline of Fifty aims to create public dialogue in regard to female sexual pleasures with an emphasis on older women. Fifty also highlights the culture of silencing and victim blaming regarding rape and sexual assault in Nigeria. Fifty reflects Nigerian society’s obsession and addiction with religion; often using it as an escape from reality. The movie Fifty disrupts Nigerian societal notions surrounding sex, rape and marriage because it openly discusses sex as an act of pleasure and questions the silencing of rape victims.

Sex is a taboo subject in many Nigerian households and gatherings; it is discussed and occurs only within the walls of marriage. Sex is for a husband and his wife, and their marital bedroom. At least, that is what Nigerians tell themselves and our children because only the ‘uncultured’ discuss such a sacred activity meant to only bring forth children outside of the bedroom. However, Elizabeth’s public discussions of her sex life disrupts the norms of sex in Nigerian culture and society. Although Elizabeth never says what her sexual identity is, she only engages in heterosexual sex (Bandele, 2015). Elizabeth is divorced from her husband but lives with her romantic lover who is many years younger (Bandele, 2015). In Fifty, we see Elizabeth publicly own her sexuality and publicly talk about her sex life during conversations with Maria (Bandele, 2015). In Fifty, Elizabeth is shamed by her daughter Sade, for what Sade describes as an outrageous sex life (Bandele, 2015). Sade insinuates that Elizabeth is a mother and should be setting examples for her rather than sleeping around (Bandele, 2015). Maria also shames Elizabeth by guilt-tripping Elizabeth for her very active sex life (Bandele, 2015). Ikpe (2004) writes that in Nigerian culture, sexuality is a topic not to be talked about or addressed even by academics because of the ideology that sexuality or discussing sexuality makes one morally unclean. As a nation that is highly built on moral cleanliness and the ideology that cleanliness is next to godliness, discussing sexualities or sex as an activity is seen as ungodly and immoral (Ike, 2004). According to Foucault (1995), the Victorian era limited sex to the home and within the realms of reproduction only; sex was ultimately repressed and silenced. The Victorian era restricted sex to an activity

‘Fifty the Movie’: Changing Attitudes Towards Sex in Nigeria
by Oyindamola Alaka

Changing Attitudes
Feminist and Queer Review
that should exist only in marriages and extramarital sex was prohibited and frowned on in society (Foucault, 1990). The world of prostitution and psychiatric hospitals were safe spaces where sexuality and pleasures related to sex were allowed to be discussed (Foucault, 1990). The VAPP Act covers sexual assault, violence and abuse; it is very thorough in its definition of sexual assault, rape, abuse and violence (National Legislative Bodies / National Authorities, 2015). Although the Act aids to be a solution to the injustice faced by sexual assault victims, it does not address the issue of victim silencing, in my opinion.

Fifty is a blockbuster movie that addresses rape and the silencing of rape victims, but it could have gone further by showcasing more of how the injustice of sexual assault and the silencing of victims in Nigeria hurts the victims. Elizabeth serves as the cultural role model eliminating the repression of sex in Nigerian society through her public discussion of sex and her engagement with sex for pleasure. The fact that Fifty is the first Nigerian movie that I have seen to radically portray female sexuality, sexual pleasure and non-reproductive sex in public media shows how much sexual repression still exists in Nigerian society today. Movies like Fifty further open up opportunities for dialogue surrounding sex and sexual pleasure because as Ikpe (2004) stated, discussions regarding sex only exist in the academic realm for reputable academics. Discussions regarding sex in the Nigerian society happen publicly only when it is related to diseases like HIV/AIDS (Ikpe, 2004). Through an analysis of the different lives of Tola and Elizabeth using Freud’s theory on sex for pleasure and Foucault’s theory on the public discussion of sex, it is evident through the movie Fifty that Elizabeth is the only truly fulfilled character of the bunch. Elizabeth is a woman of power who lives her life on her own accord. It can be said that Elizabeth is a great example of how living according to Freud and Foucault’s theories on sex can empower us. Tola is a great example of how the silencing of rape can drastically affect victims. In conclusion, as Foucault stated, to eliminate the repression of sex, there is a need to publicly discuss sex and sexuality as human activities (Foucault, 1990). In my opinion, there is a correlation between the repression of sex and the silencing of rape victims. If a culture considers the public discussion of sexual activities as a taboo, it becomes easier for victims to be silenced as there lacks an avenue to discuss the act of sex itself without realizing the injustices and violence of sexual assault.

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Letter to My Younger Self
by Lasha Mackedenski

April 13, 2018

Dear 13 year old Lasha,

Some boys are gross and say things you don't agree with, even the cool older high school boys. It's completely ok to know that they are wrong and to correct them. I'll let you in on a little secret, lots of boys never stop. Many of those boys won't outgrow the phase of saying jokes that make you uncomfortable like the teachers keep telling you. They don't "learn better" if no one teaches them, lots of boys never stop. Many of those boys won't outgrow the phase of saying jokes that make you uncomfortable like the teachers keep telling you. You will even be able to shake off being called bossy by adults that you used to admire. (That will take a while longer though).

Some boys get better with time and education, but lots don't. You'll learn just how terrible they can be when you get to University and you and your high school friends get together over winter break and end up talking about all the sexual harassment on their university campuses. You'll learn that these boys that you were told at 13 were "just being boys" and that they "would outgrow it" manage to get to be well respected adults in a variety of job fields.

Some of the adults in your life will listen when you correct them and work on changing their behavior. Not everyone will though so try not to get too discouraged because you'll learn that the people that matter to you will try their hardest to leave a positive impact on the world.

Love,

19 year old Lasha

Revolution is Coming
by Elizabeth McMechan

Revolution is Coming an assemblage of words that inspires hope in some, and fear in others, hope in the disenfranchised, the working class, the oppressed, the marginalized, and the phrase inspires fear in the harmful, in the ruling class and in the oppressors. A powerful collection of a mere three words, the backdrop of an x-ray skull taken from an 1980s medicine textbook is placed among drawn flower illustrations taken from a 1970s children’s book.