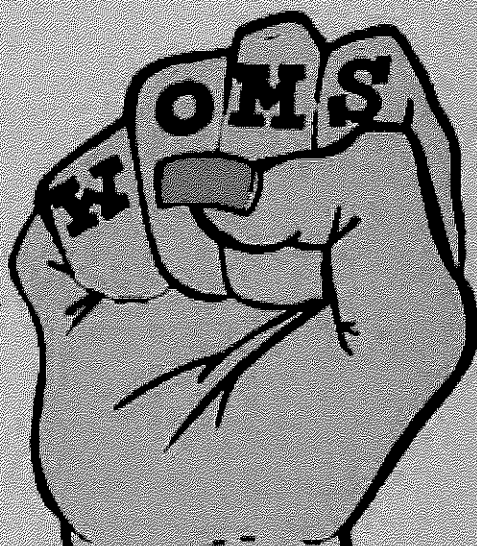


SPRING 2008



deconstruct HHS
Vol. 3

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HAIRUS!

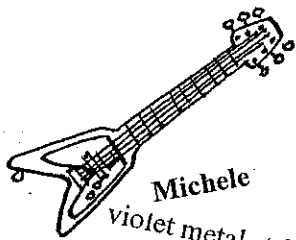


Sonia
pull up the people
red spirituality
earth woman wonder



Elena

hot sun health matters
wellness privatization
crimson tulip queen



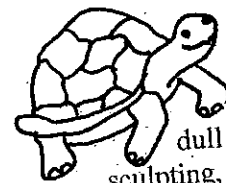
Michele

violet metal strings
individuality
forging through the dark



Francis

sun kissed black power
womanist cinema
collectivity



Ellen

dull iridescence
sculpting, painting, refusing
with love and luna



Kelly

warmly adorned
urban tribe philosophy
fushia mimesis



Ashleyanne

video stream cat
busty, pasty, full of love
uk destiny

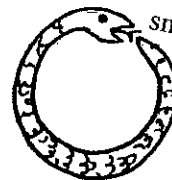


Laurie

riot lyricist
lesbian organizer
surreal feminist

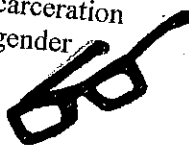
Crystal

visual culture
deconstruction media
snake circle dyke purple



Jenny

queer color justice
transform incarceration
organic gender



Mandy

fierce red-hot action
juridico-feminist
raw (re)production

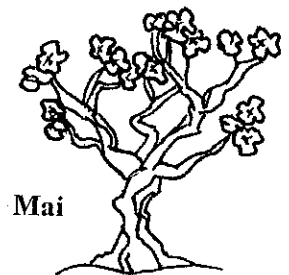


Jessa

classic pearl success
cosmetic infiltration
peach heart traveler

Berenice

sweet midwifery
industrious sisterhood
blush of rose fashion



Mai

deep black rim theory
bi-race transnational love
innovating fire

IS FEMINISM REALLY FOR EVERYBODY?

By Jenny Foxworth

I have been asked about a thousand times what Women Studies is all about. Each time, I have to think about it as if it is the first time I'm being asked. What exactly is this phenomenal discipline? Some colleges still have "Feminist" Studies and some have transitioned into the seemingly more inclusive "Gender" Studies. SFSU has maintained "Women" Studies and I feel it is representative of one of the key lessons I have learned through my undergraduate career: What affects women's lives throughout the world, affects everybody's lives. Violence done to women has a rippling effect and so, to answer the question, I say: I examine histories and narratives of women around the world and interrogate the violence that patriarchy causes. But I am often left with a feeling of confusion. Did my answer make sense? How do we, as lovers of Women Studies, make our discipline accessible and intelligible for all people, not just those with the privilege of accessing higher education?

I knew at fifteen that I would be a Women Studies major. This decision was made after a white, heterosexual, male teacher told me I would never make it to college because I was "too stupid." Joke's on him: here I am about to earn my first degree. But I wonder what it was about his comment that directed me to college when other students of color have horrible encounters every day with racist, bigoted authority and do not end up in a desk next to me in class? Where are the women of color who have been through hell and back for being born with double and triple burdens? Where are the men of color who have been dealt bad hand after bad hand in this country? Women Studies provides an open door to learn about the histories that mold our lives as well as a space to understand and deconstruct these narratives and legacies. How can we let women AND men know that they are welcome to learn and discuss without the powers of patriarchy that have made

"learning" in the past so painful and difficult? Women Studies and feminism are not just a "white thing" for people with privilege to engage with or a place for just lesbians and "man-haters." As bell hooks says: Feminism is for everybody. It is a "movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (hooks, 1984). This movement includes taking a stance against all oppressions collectively, not hierarchically.

Feminism has become a thing of the past apparently, as people everywhere often refer to bra burning and lesbianism as key markers of the movement. After lengthy conversations about taking on "feminist" as an identity, I believe it is okay to claim oneself as a feminist, but to be responsible in carefully defining this statement with whomever the conversation is being held. It is utterly important that we share our thoughts and opinions about the status of women and men around the globe. Just because feminist scholars and advocates interrogate and problematize traditional categorizations of gender, sexuality, freedom of movement, etc., does not make us all radicals, anarchists, man haters, or dykes. And if we are any of those, we have every right in the world to be without judgment or violence.

Back again to the big question: What is a Women Studies degree and why did I pursue it? My Women Studies degree has taught me the fundamentals about what it means to be an individual with full control of my life, my agency, my body, and my opinions. I have found a voice within myself that had always existed but now has the ability to facilitate group discussions, write lengthy papers about heavy concepts, facts, and theories about the world, and converse with just about anybody regarding the realities of how women are treated around the world and how it affects every one, even YOU.

Feminist theory and ideologies used to only be phrases to me, now they are concepts applied to every day life. In the world of Women Studies, you begin to see how incredibly interconnected everything is: education, the prison system, capitalism, sexuality, identity,

community, body image and fragmentation, nationalism, curiosity, gender, race, class, ableism, globalization, womynism, and so much more. Being a feminist does not mean that you are categorized and unable to be fluid in your identity because you are hyper-political and unwilling to be subordinate to hegemonic institutions. Rather, it is the opposite. The personal will always be political because women have historically been forced to bear the burdens of oppression and violence throughout time and space. What goes on at home is completely connected to what happens in the streets and within government walls. Those that do not believe this may not have critically looked at their own situations and how they benefit or suffer from politics and legislation. Looking can be painful, but it can also open many doors to freedom and liberation while challenging the structures of patriarchy and misogyny.

I ask you and all of your comrades to please take a look around your life and your friends' and families' lives, to analyze your environment and theirs. What do you see? How was their education and yours? Have they or you ever been in jail? Have they or you ever experienced violence, hatred, harassment, assault, or racism? Are they or you famous, rich, healthy, attractive, able-bodied, "smart," or "sexy?" After you have answered these questions you will begin to see this interconnectedness. The questions may not seem important or worth digging for, but they hold answers for all of our lives. We were not just born into our situations; we were placed there through years of history and legacy. Women Studies has taught me this. With this long learning experience, we can teach other's about the importance of understanding how and why our identities are intersectional and that we should never apologize for them, ever.

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MY INVISIBLE BODY: SURVIVING PRIVATIZED MEDICINE

By Elena Maria Rubio

Walking across the Golden Gate Bridge that afternoon was invigorating. The sky was blue, the air was crisp, and the sun was shining. It wasn't until I got home and realized there was blood everywhere that I knew something was wrong. Everywhere I walked there was blood, on the carpet, on the bathroom floor; yes, everywhere I walked the blood flowed out of my body and onto the surface beneath me. As terrified as I was, I wasn't completely surprised. I had known something was wrong for quite some time but none of my doctors would listen. It wasn't until that day in January, that seemingly perfect day when I walked across the Bridge, that day when I ended up in the ER, that the doctors were forced to listen to me. Once I got to the hospital they started doing tests right away; the only thing that was clear at that point was that I was losing blood fast. A normal hemoglobin level is about 14, yet when I arrived I was at 11 something, and within a couple of hours had dropped to 8 something. It was all happening so fast there was not even time for me to sign the blood transfusion paperwork. Instead, while I was being examined, the doctor had to read the form to me and I gave verbal permission. All I kept thinking was, "I'm here alone, in this cold city far away from home, my family can't get to me, and I won't stop bleeding... the doctors don't even know *why* I'm bleeding!"

Relief finally came when the doctor found the problem: I had a uterine polyp that prolapsed through my cervix. Because we needed to remove it and stop the bleeding ASAP the doctor did a polypectomy right there in the ER without administering any pain meds. As uncomfortable as it was I was relieved to have it out and like a miracle the bleeding stopped almost instantly. I was admitted for observation, given tons of fluids and hormones (to ensure I would not bleed for a while) but otherwise things were looking up. After I was discharged I was to see the doctor in two weeks for what was supposed to be a routine follow-up appointment; it turned out to be anything but routine.

The doctor came in and told me that the pathology report for the polyp came back with abnormalities. My heart immediately started racing and instantly I had a million questions. I asked for a

copy of the report and with every word I read I kept thinking, "I have cancer." The actual term on the report was "low-grade adenosarcoma." The doctor was extremely encouraging and kept telling me, "This is not a diagnosis of anything, it just means we need to do a biopsy to investigate further." I clearly remember thinking about school and wondering how on earth they were going to "investigate" and not have it interfere with my semester; not graduating in May is just not an option! Fortunately they scheduled me for surgery right away and two days later, on Valentine's Day, I was in the OR. The procedure itself wasn't bad; it was the two-week wait for the results that was excruciating. I will never forget the late night call from my doctor's personal cell phone. As soon as I heard her voice I took a deep breath and prepared myself to hear whatever she had to say. Her words, "everything came back fine, you are completely fine" sounded so sweet! I cried tears of joy and thanked her repeatedly in between my sobs. To say I am grateful for my health is an understatement. I will still need to have my uterus checked once a year to make sure all stays well but all in all my story seems to have a happy ending. What infuriates me however is to think about how I was ignored by previous doctors for so long.

For the last two years I have gone to different doctors complaining of increased vaginal bleeding. I knew from doing my own research that that can be a symptom of certain types of cancer, so not only was the constant bleeding annoying it was worrisome. Despite my numerous doctor visits the only solution I was offered was the birth control pill. Even when I started to bleed through the pill I was told I just needed a stronger dose. I did as I was told and tried different pills all the while knowing something was wrong with me. In my mind the problem was not that they didn't have answers for me, it was that they never took my concerns and symptoms seriously and thus never bothered to investigate. I find it interesting that our foremothers were often diagnosed with "hysteria" when they visited the doctor; never to be taken too seriously, the remedy for these hysterical, sexually repressed women was orgasm (Talbot, par. 2). In the 21st century I go to the doctor and am dismissed in the same manner; I'm just being an overly sensitive, hysterical female. The remedy, give me hormones. One must ask the question, has the treatment of female patients improved much? I am fortunate that I have access to medical care and am able to adjust my schedule for doctor appointments.

But what about the millions of women who suffer from the effects of unaffordable, privatized health care? Addressing the social and health care inequities in our society is no small undertaking and I make no attempt to offer solutions here. I do however, urge every woman to take her health seriously and listen to her body. If you know something is wrong with your body DO NOT let your healthcare providers tell you otherwise without investigating. I acknowledge that countless factors prevent many women from seeing a doctor, let alone insisting that the doctor listen to them. The fact that my polyp was relatively large indicates it had been growing for quite sometime, yet it was never detected. How many other women have things that go undetected? It is unacceptable to allow ourselves to be ignored or trampled on by the privatization and deregulation of health care. As the public sector shrinks and the profit-driven health care market expands, the health gap between the wealthy and middle- poor classes widens. "Where free choice and competition are the golden rule, health is not an absolute human right but rather a private good" (Fort, 35). I suppose the personal really is the political. But we are worth more than the profits of healthcare corporations. Knowing our own value makes it all the more important for us to work together to empower and advocate for one another. Our lives are literally at stake and we can no longer *afford* to be ignored!

Be the change you wish to see in the world.
- Mahatma Gandhi

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DANCING FEMINSIMS

Kelly Ryan

Dancing is my heart, it is my bliss. In it I find comfort, strength, and power. Perhaps it is from the power alone that I come to love it so much. It has allowed me to know my body and myself, the power comes from the ability to create and interpret the

world around me through movement and sound. My chosen form is a fusion of belly dance, which has been known to raise a few eyebrows or two throughout the years from family, friends, and uncertain but intrigued strangers. I have studied dance for ten years, including four years dedicated to study with Heather Stants, director of Urban Tribal Dance Company of San Diego, California. UTDC is an innovative and creative dance company fusing together belly dance (both folkloric and cabaret), with contemporary forms of dance including hip-hop and modern dance. This style includes more than what most expect out of a performance in such a genre, the focus is on unique choreography.

In early 2004, I was accepted as a company member. In the summer of 2004 we participated in Celebrate Dance, a free dance festival featuring many dance forms from the local community. The experience was nerve racking and beautiful. We were elated at what we had accomplished and shared with our community. Yet in the audience lay a skeptical eye.

Jennifer De Poyen, a dance critic of the San Diego Union Tribune, wrote a review of Celebrate Dance giving a sexist, racist, classist opinion or "critique" of the dancers present. We were highlighted, but not for the gift we shared,

Tack-ometer: Belly dancing is an ancient, sexy art form that honors female beauty and camaraderie. It is practically dead in the Middle East, where it originated, due to the ascendance of repressive, misogynistic governments. Yet watching Urban Tribal Dance Company perform Saturday evening at the Prado Theater, I got a sinking feeling. The company style is all eye candy and T&A. For all that, the crowd loved it. Go figure. (San Diego Union Tribune Aug. 29th, 2004)

It is not "belly dancing" it is "belly dance", it is not "sexy" as much as it is "sensual" which is determined by an individual dancer not the dance itself and can often be misinterpreted. The dance is not to honor "female beauty", but rather the movement of the body itself, that can be feminine, but is sometimes performed by men and challenges this view. It is a tradition that has been passed down through generations that expresses rhythms and sounds through the body. These differences of words and ideas can be from my own experience with the dance, which my dance company shares. We have a

profound respect for the dance, its origins and do not see it as a seduction but closer to enchantment, which has more to do with intrigue than sex. De Poyen's idea of "belly dance" has tinges of orientalism, describing an exotic dance of the mysterious other. In its early introduction to the west, the dance was performed by many western women gyrating profusely making a spectacle of themselves and the cultures they wished to emulate. The cultures which were grouped together as all the "others" lost in time, distanced from modernity and progress of the western world.

The most disappointing aspect of Poyen's critique is not that we were poorly received but that the dance itself was so poorly misrepresented. The basis for this rests on the residual ignorance perpetuated by Orientalist ideas. These ideas are intensified by the present-day politics of Western-centric phobia of the Middle-East which touches on Islamophobia. "It is practically dead in the Middle East"... Really? Poyen fails to acknowledge where the dance is declining and where it is deeply engrained in Middle Eastern culture (although it is experiencing scrutiny in recent times), yet it extends throughout the Mediterranean and Northern Africa, and embodies so much more than one central location, culture and history. The relation to the disappearance of the dance form, she states, is due to the "repressive misogynistic governments"—that's funny, her government is one which continues to express itself throughout the structures of its politics, society and culture.

The questions that I have are many. First, how is it that a female body becomes degraded for the creative energy it produces? In the beginning of her critique Poyen tries to explain the performance to the best of her ability as women celebrating womanhood, using the word "sexy," but ends describing the performance as a sex show. Would it have been more 'authentic' if we were Middle Eastern women, therefore somehow obtaining a cultural authority to be dancing with such pride? Would it have been more novel and fitting if Poyen could view us as "the other"? Perhaps it would have been liberating to find Middle Eastern women dancing in the land of freedom and equality. For they would have been saved by the greatness of America where their dance form can finally be expressed. Or would she rather have it all done in a restaurant where she could throw dollars at the dancing girls.

I question not only the critic but also those who hired her. The San Diego Union Tribune, one of the most conservative newspapers in California, in one of the most conservative counties of California, home to the navy and the marines. Three years after 9/11 this was most significant and is reflected in Poyen's comments of the Middle East and belly dance. These comments promote a divide between two cultures, which I feel our performance could have been seen as a bridge. The critique has a tinge of the nationalist patriotic fever promoted in the politics of the time and also serves to further alienate women from their bodies.

My challenge to the audience of such a performance would be to let go of the self that wishes to objectify the woman or culture and instead witness the evolution of the sound and rhythm through the body, to find a center of strength in it. This dance offers us a bridge between cultures and systems of gender into a new world of understanding. If we allow it to, the dance can bring us together in order to learn, grow, share and inspire oneself to create and interpret. It is important to understand that belly dance is a fusion of many diverse cultures and historical moments, including present-day western culture. Migration, immigration, and the formation of diasporic communities, movements which are often sparked by war, have created a hybrid of cultures. This dance is a product of such an occurrence and is beginning to be as much a part of our culture as it has been a part of the cultures it has been derived from and we are only beginning to understand its story. I will say again, it is a bridge to what our society and culture could be—a place of creativity and vitality, an embrace of what is unknown and what is familiar. It is beyond “exotic” and shallow Orientalist expectations. It is a dance of feeling, a feeling we all should be more in touch with, a feeling of dance, rhythm, beat, and most importantly, for me, the bass.

TESTIMONY OF A FEMALE BLACK METAL MUSICIAN

By Michele Flores

The road to becoming a female black metal guitarist has been an interesting journey. It all began when I was twelve and began playing my dad's classical guitar which he had brought back from South America. It was beautiful and it sounded

beautiful when I played it. I wanted my music to take me away from my suburban community and my overprotective christian parents.

Going to metal concerts and being in metal bands gave me a space where I felt like I belonged. Bands like Iron Maiden and Megadeth showed me what I needed to do to continue my growth as a musician. As the end of my high school career approached, my love for technical melodic music transpired into something even darker—Black Metal.

Black Metal is a darker style of metal with anti-christian lyrics and imagery. The musical style is influenced strongly by classical music and is even heavier and more melodic than previous styles of metal. It all began with a band called Venom and their album entitled “Black Metal.” This metal was later identified as Northern European in origin—specifically Norwegian—which represented their resistance against the christianity that had been forced upon them by British monarchy.

I identified with their anti-christian concepts because at the time I felt that the gender norms preached down to me by my parents were “justified” by christianity. Not only did black metal give me a space to defy my oppression as a woman, it also offered space for women to be included as *musicians*, instead of as “one of the boys” or as groupies. Female-led bands like Mythic and Demonic Christ showed how women could be respected musicians without having to fit into one of these categories.

Although Black Metal gave me a space where I belonged more than anywhere else, it still was imperfect. For women who were not *musicians*, the situation is likely to be very different than my own experience. Since metal fans are usually also musicians, I always thought it was odd when I met any metal fan who did not play an instrument. More often than not, these non-musicians were women. These women were not readily accepted as being the same as the musician/metal fan. They were not seen as fans as much as they were seen as a male musician/metal-fans girl friend. It always bothered me that the sexism in black metal has imposed this identity onto women. It bothers me even more that so many women have embraced this identity instead of making music themselves.

I started asking myself, why aren't there very many female metal musicians? Is it because of a lack of access to instruments or is it because playing metal is gendered as a non-feminine activity? If women were denied access to instruments—then why? As

David Lee Roth states, "What if a little girl picked up a guitar and said 'I wanna be a rock star.' Nine times out of ten her parents would never allow her to do it. We don't have so many lead guitar women, not because women don't have the ability to play the instrument, but because they are kept locked up, taught to be something else" (Walser 129). Is this really the way it is? Parents believe that being a "rock star" is unfeminine; therefore they keep their children locked up, without any hands-on musical education (at least not with masculine-gendered instruments such as the guitar) until they get to the age where they can be "eye candy" for the people in the bands.

This "locked up theory" seems likely for some women, but women are probably also regulating themselves as to what is and is not "feminine behavior" based on societal pressures. Images from early metal bands' music videos portray women as groupies or as half-naked dancers in the background—only there for the enjoyment of the male band members and fans. These videos send a message to adolescent women that their place is not that of *musician* but that of *musician's girlfriend* or *sex object*. Therefore there was no need for them to learn guitar.

Although women *do* have the room to be musicians within black metal (if they have the musical ability) past metal videos have discouraged them from learning to play in the first place. Metal bands from the 1980s have put up barriers which make it difficult for the recent sub-genres of metal such as black metal to be more inclusive.

Not everyone in black metal feels that women have equal control within the scene although there are plenty of women who actively participate and are respected within it. There are many different types of people with different types of ideals who are fans. Although I believe that new sub-genres of metal are easier arenas for women's inclusion than other musical genres, I still believe that past genres of metal have made it difficult for women to embrace being metal musicians, and by not being metal musicians, they are still not completely accepted into the scene.

Observing how other women have not been accepted in the scene because of this reasoning has bothered me because I am a woman who loves metal. At the same time, I cannot say that I have, in the past, not regarded these women in the same way as many male metal fans do. After analyzing why women do and do not become metal musicians, I have come to

the conclusion that society has to change what is perceived as "appropriate feminine behavior." Women should feel comfortable about pursuing any musical endeavor they wish instead of conforming to society's sexist standards.

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BODY AND POWER

By Mai Doan

[I]n order to perpetuate itself, every oppression must corrupt or distort those various sources of power that can provide energy for change. For women, this has meant a suppression of the erotic as a considered source of power and information.

- Audre Lorde

Constructions of appropriate female subjectivity are obscured by the fact that our bodies are powerful tools for knowledge and resistance. As women, we come to understand ourselves in relation to institutionalized ideologies and histories that define us in relation to our race/class/sexuality and in terms of physicality, morality and purity. These definitions socially restrict women from controlling their relationships with their bodies and desires. Women experience this in many ways, with dramatic disparities according to the geographic, social, and political contexts.

As women in the United States, we are hyper-visible subjects of consumerism, making our bodies a market and our minds a threat. We are taught to fear the love and exploration of our bodies and sexualities as we are bombarded with messages that pathologize body fat, making any sign of curvy flesh an offensive excess. Yes, as modern subjects in a capitalist society, we are acculturated to buy things, including an idealized body type, a naturalized form of beauty. But unfortunately, it is not only the diet and fashion industries whose existence relies on our self-conscious regulation and preoccupation with size and appearance. It is also the state's best interest to create a culture in which the questioning of authority and acts of resistance are suppressed. While national discourses normalize the oppression and exploitation

of racialized and gendered women by and for capitalism, concurrent discourses instill a preoccupation with body image and consumerism for those who can afford it. Thus, complicity exists with little noticeable effort.

As long as women's bodies, sexualities and desires are regulated, power will be operated on and through them in ways that serve patriarchal interests and agendas. But our bodies *are* sites of power; beneath our skin exists a place of autonomy and agency. So as French feminist Luce Irigaray hails, "let's try to take back some part of our mouth to speak with," (208). Let's come up with a language to think of our bodies not in terms of size and excess, but in terms of their uniqueness, lusciousness, and ability to be resistance in the ways we can genuinely love it and use it, free of charge.

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WELCOME TO THE NOT SO FABULOUS LIFE OF FASHION!

By Berenice Estrada

What do you think when you hear the word fashion? I'll tell you what I used to think before becoming a Women Studies major. For me fashion was the latest trends, expensive jeans, bug-eyed sunglasses, huge purses, and skinny girls looking amazing in the latest trend. What do I think of fashion now? Nothing like what I thought two years ago.

My passion for fashion started long before my first retail job with GUESS six years ago. As a little girl, I loved to play dress up and I would spend hours in the mirror before school. From that moment, I was destined to work in the fashion industry and become a Fashionista. Not much has changed since I was five (except for my jean size). Getting hired at Nordstrom three years ago was very exciting. I knew I was born to be a Nordy's girl. "Everyday is a fashion show and the world is your runway."

Well in my case that is true, but it's not all

about the clothes I wear and where I work. We see fashion change with the season; I feel that I change as well with every season. Being a Women Studies major has taught me to think outside the box. I no longer envy the skinny models as I used to. Every time I see a runway show I now think to myself, "WOW ... this girl is a tad bit anorexic and should worry about her health first rather than how hot she is going to look walking down that runway in the latest Dolce and Gabana". Or I think "wow the Marciano Brothers have really exposed women as sex objects in their spring collection for Guess." Now as a critical thinker, I ask myself, has the fashion industry gone too far in exposing women in this way? Are they trying to send the message that only skinny women can be fashionable? What are they trying to show little girls who see fashion everywhere and think it is the greatest thing ever to be able to wear Juicy Couture?

Working for Nordstrom while being a Women Studies major has been quite an experience and I have begun to notice certain aspects of the fashion industry that I didn't before. Since working for Nordstrom, I've come to realize that certain races dominate certain departments throughout the store. I have worked at three different stores and they are all the same. It makes me wonder if these people are being treated fairly. Is it noticeable to others what sticks out like a sore thumb to me? Do they place racialized people in the support area so that the world doesn't see them? Are they ashamed of who they hire? I believe that although a company may say they are an equal opportunity employer they still manage to get away with discrimination by putting people they feel are not "fashion forward" at the back of the house to do the dirty work.

Situations like this make me grateful that Women Studies has given me the opportunity to get a different perspective on something that I use to think was so marvelous. After three long years of giving my heart and soul to Nordstrom, I have come to the realization that I am not destined for FASHION. Putting in my two week's notice has never felt better. Somewhere down the line I may regret this or wonder what could have been. But if that happens I will remind myself of the inequalities the wonderful world of fashion has to offer.

A FAMILY HISTORY

By Mai Doan

The pond dried up when
The cats ate the koi, and the scent
Of dead grass and jasmine
Seeped into the bathroom like it was a
graveyard.

Ghosts and boxes laid
Dormant with secrecy, while women
Loved through their labor—
Constant and Tangerine-finger tipped.

Children ran, unaware
Mauve carpet felt happy under bare feet
And adults stood still,
Bowing, praying, knowing too much

The dim lit room, framed
With ancestors and incense
Grew full with loss and labor
And longing for home.

So to know why pasts stay in boxes
And die, is to know why distance expands
With the knowledge of hands and
The evolution of tongues—

Survival of the fittest is murder.

WHAT I AM

Elena Maria Rubio

I am **not** weak because I cried at his funeral
I am **not** delicate because I appreciate flowers
I am **not** passive because I didn't respond to your comment
I am **not** nurturing because I help raise my niece and nephew
I am **not** available for sex because I am a woman
I am **not** a lazy person because I took a day off
I am **not** exotic because I don't look like you
I **am** weak because I am human
I **am** delicate because I want to be handled with care
I **am** passive if I am not feeling assertive that day
I **am** nurturing because I have a heart
I **am** available for sex when I want it
I **am** a lazy person after I've worked *the second shift*
I **am** exotic by virtue of being a beautiful woman

I am a woman with flaws, **but I am flawless!**

DECONSTRUCTING *The Gendercator*

By Laurie Lindsey

The significance of Catherine Crouch's film *The Gendercator* (2007) might not be fully understood until years have passed and this specific historical time period is deconstructed. However, the film's underlying premises regarding trans identity can be presently deconstructed for problematic implications of identity politics. The lesbian director Catherine Crouch, expresses her artistic and personal perspective through this film. As a prominent lesbian film director, her viewpoints can be regarded as representing the views of the "imagined" lesbian community. This has presented problematic issues involving queer identities and representations of trans people.

The film is appropriately titled *The Gendercator* because of the power and influence that society has on the expression of our gender identities. The main character in the film, Sally, is forced to come to terms with being a lesbian in a new world order controlled by Evangelicals, where the lines between church and state do not exist. The rule of society as a "Gendercator" comes into play after Sally goes into a drug-induced coma in 1973 and awakes in 2048, realizing that her friends, who were a lesbian couple in the seventies, are now seemingly "hetero" after the butch woman in the relationship was forced to transition to being a man in order to assimilate into society and stay with her partner.

Crouch used a hypothetical and imaginative script to interpret a scenario of what gender will mean in the future if neo-liberalism and conservative government platforms actually command the ability to reassign sex in order to sustain hegemonic power.

The film's intended demographic is biological women who are lesbians and excludes the acknowledgement of trans people in the dialogue. The film does not explain the history of trans identity and instead offers a highly problematic vision of trans identity as a created, and therefore an inauthentic, human experience.

Overall the film reinscribes a mainstream ideology of sex and gender. The underlying premise advocates against heteronormativity while advocating homonormativity, which can also be tied to neo-liberalism as analyzed in Lisa Duggan's *The Twilight of Equality*. I respect the concern Crouch has for the "imagined" lesbian community over the amount of

women and primarily butch women who are transitioning and modifying their bodies. However, I believe that Crouch's gender anxiety, in relation to queer identities and people who self-define their sexuality and gender, is threatening to the inclusiveness of her "imagined" lesbian community and to "lesbian" politics. In her interview in *Off Our Backs*, a lesbian-feminist journal, Crouch says that she is concerned about female body modification in general and thinks that because we critique women who have plastic surgery to enhance femininity we should also critique the modification to enhance masculinity. The reasons for female body modification in this example is somewhat comparable, but does not examine identity or challenge homonormative sex/gender/sexuality binaries in LGBT culture.

Catherine Crouch's reason for creating the film was to produce dialogue, and critique, of female body modification, but what surfaced and became a much larger social issue was her transphobic narrative and stigmatized identity of trans people. Her film was the first ever to be pulled from Frameline, a queer film festival in San Francisco, in the summer of 2007, and was only available for a screening at the LGBT Center on behalf of Center Women Present in October 2007. Trans people came together against the film because of its transphobic content.

Although the film presents a false idea of trans people, I believe that the effort to create criticism analyzing present-day issues of gender and representation in the "lesbian community" are worthwhile. The most important thing that came out of the creation of the film was community involvement in identity politics and the exchange of thoughts and ideas.

The month after the screening at the LGBT Center, people were invited to attend a personal and direct group discussion at the San Francisco Library. I attended the event and found the discussions were primarily about the same ideologies and coalitional politics that we debate in Women Studies and that the intersectionality within coalitional politics remains a never ending process of analytical deconstruction. It is within this process that we have a chance to rupture hegemony and reveal the ontological falsities that calibrate coalitional success.

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THE RESPECT FOR ALL PROJECT

By Sonia Saverio

After five of years of college education in areas of Anthropology, Philosophy, Religion, and, most influential, Women and Gender studies, I struggle with how I can use my education to implement change by educating others. Transnational feminism recognizes the differences and intersectionalities of race, class, gender, sexuality, and religion. As I have learned from my studies at SFSU, the politics of difference has been a major theme from which many theories of multiculturalism and diversity arise. Identifying with intersectionalities, coming from a different race, gender, class, religion, and sexuality, I realize that my differences and the diversity of others were never acknowledged in my primary education. Growing up, I was taught universalistic values and a color-blind perception of the world, which was especially emphasized in the primary public education. Currently, multiculturalism is embraced and celebrated in public social spheres. However, the issues of difference and tolerance were never directly stated or explored in my lower education.

Figuring out how I can use my education to implement change and break the continuing cycles of prejudice and discrimination remains a challenge. The experiences at my senior internship for GroundSpark—a not-for-profit organization that creates visionary films and dynamic educational campaigns that move individuals and communities to take action for a more just world (www.groundspark.org)—developed my sense of direction towards what to do with my five years of college education and knowledge of diversity. Sherezada Kent, a former employee at GroundSpark, writes “GroundSpark has crafted a multifaceted human rights education program accessible to both children and adults to stem discrimination in schools while teaching youth how to respect others of different races, religions, family backgrounds, and

sexual orientations” (48). The “Respect For All Project,” a campaign created by GroundSpark, is a coalition for breaking down prejudice and discrimination that reproduces violence and intolerance in primary level schools and high schools.

Organizations like GroundSpark and their programs facilitate the development of diversity education, inclusive, hate-free schools and communities that run strategic campaigns around diversity issues. Standard education at the primary level in public schools is problematic and detrimental because the curriculum lacks such approaches. All children deserve to grow up in safe schools and communities that are free from the damaging effects of prejudice and diversity education campaigns such as GroundSpark’s “Respect For All Project” is one method for achieving that. The reality is that students in public schools come from different histories, struggles, and oppressions because of their different races, classes, genders, and sexualities. Education is a human right. Although I am not suggesting that there is *one solution for all people*, I do feel lucky to have been exposed to knowledge that could change most peoples’ lives, if only they had the same opportunities I have. If diversity curriculum is implemented into elementary, middle and high school education, younger generations could grow up in a more progressive, equal, and diversified future, hate-free and inclusive.

Innovative and effective, the “Respect For All Project” provides youth and adults with the developmental tools they need to engage in age-appropriate discussions about human differences—preventing prejudice and building caring communities. This project offers comprehensive resources, including documentary films, curriculum guides, and workshops, for educators and youth-service providers. Currently, GroundSpark offers four films with accompanying curriculum guides.

It’s Elementary (1992) explores how teachers can provide age-appropriate discussions about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in kindergarten through twelfth grade curricula. The documentary film showcases educators across the country actively addressing LGBT history and anti-prejudice issues in elementary and middle school curricula. With anti-gay bullying rampant on the playground and LGBT issues taboo in the classroom, “the film aims to demystify what it means to talk to kids about gay people and to show how anti-gay prejudice and violence can be prevented when

children have an opportunity to discuss these issues while still young" (49). The film *That's a Family!* (2000), is told entirely from the perspective of elementary school-age children, and allows children from families often ignored by mainstream culture and media to tell their peers what it is like growing up in a family with parents of different races or religions, divorced or single parents, gay or lesbian parents, and adoptive parents or grandparents as guardians. *That's a Family!* provides both a window into situations young viewers may never have considered before, and serves as a mirror, showing kids reflections of their own lives. The film *Let's Get Real* (2003), examines and addresses the prejudice behind name-calling and bullying among youth today, and includes stories from students who have courageously taken a stand against bullying. These documentary films express the challenges that youths face everyday and explore how their schools and communities can make change by providing a space for dialogue in order to create positive change.

Diversity education can be a progressive step towards acknowledging differences of race, class, gender, sexuality, and a bridge across the gap that keeps us from creating a better world. Sparking change within one individual makes a difference, and diversity curriculum in lower education could provide a brighter future for the next generation and generations to come.

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"SpEd kid plays with a feminist lens"

By Ellen E. Frieboes

"People with learning disorders speak of their school experiences in the same manner as victims of trauma. There is a numb period when I hear all the facts...Gradually, the emotion begins to emerge: the hurt, the anger, the disappointment, the fear"

- Hallway and Ratey 168

"You'll be in first grade until you're 30!"
 Those words are tattooed on my brain, I will never

forget them. My first grade teacher yelled them at me in front of my entire class when she discovered that I had spent the last half hour making illustrations for a story instead of writing one as I had been instructed. Shortly thereafter, I was declared learning disabled (LD) by an unfriendly man who picked his nose as he proctored my exam. My concerned parents immediately enrolled me in my school's Special Education (SpEd) program where I remained until I graduated high school. SpEd constituted daily institutional assault, the strength of which depended on what SpEd teacher I had that year. The SpEd hall pass I had to carry with me everyday to recess, served as a flag symbolizing my inferiority to my peers. They never forgot it, and neither did I, even as we sat next to each other junior year in AP English.

Every woman has a well-stocked arsenal of anger potentially useful against those oppressions, personal and institutional, which brought that anger into being.

-Audre Lorde, 130

I first applied a feminist lens to my academic experiences/struggles during my third semester of college when Dionne, my professor for Women of Color in the US, explained the concept of professional and educational tracking. A full-fledged crisis ensued after I read David L. Rosehan's essay "On Being Sane in Insane Places" and became familiar with labeling theory. Since that day, everyday has become a search for the line between my supposed disabilities and the impact of the label. The search is relentless, isolating, and always futile.

As I have acquired more analytic skills to deconstruct LDs and my experiences in SpEd, my arsenal of anger has grown exponentially. I have become increasingly able to focus my anger on the institutional forces that produced my (feelings of) inferiority rather than just the individuals who policed it. As my anger has become more poignant, I have gradually worked up the courage to step out of the LD closet in which I urgently stuffed myself upon graduating high school. However, it has certainly not been a steadily progressive process. On the contrary, it has been an on-going, and always isolating process of push and pull.

My primary catalyst has been the recent inclusion of disability as a subject in my Women

Studies (WS) courses. Although these discussions have been few and far in between, and have only pertained to physical disability, they have given me hope that there might one day be room for my experience at the WS (ideally) round-table. After much personal debate, and a few teary phone calls to my mother, I decided to use the class facilitation requirement for WS senior seminar as an opportunity to come out of my LD closet and bring SpEd to the table.

My goal was to facilitate a highly participatory discussion in which the class would analyze the social construction of learning disabilities, along with class, race, nation, and gender. Furthermore, without getting into personal stories, I wanted to share a little about the SpEd experience, debunk a few myths, and call out some ablest tendencies I have come across in WS. Finally, I wanted to end with a discussion in which the class would collectively deconstruct the exclusion of LDs in WS, and then brainstorm ways in which WS might contribute to critical scholarship surrounding LDs.

"Anger expressed and translated into action in the service of our vision and our future is a liberating and strengthening act of clarification, for it is in the painful process of this translation that we identify who are our allies with whom we have grave differences, and who are our genuine enemies" Audre Lorde 127.

I assigned Nimala Eservelles' essay entitled "Disability in the New World Order." In short, Eservelles maintains that any quality, behavior, or modality that is not conducive to the global market's productivity demands may be hailed as a disability, and thus necessarily constituted as deviant. Furthermore, Eservelles argues that constructions of disability reproduce racial, gender, and class oppressions. Although in this particular essay Eservelles focuses solely on peripheral nation-states, and does not acknowledge invisible disabilities, based on my own experiences and observations, her assertions are also applicable to LDs and SpEd in the US.

Girls, and most especially working class girls, are less likely to be diagnosed with LDs than boys. Studies indicate that this is because most

educators are only alerted to LDs when pupils are disruptive, and generally, girls are socialized to be quiet in public. In my life, the fear of sounding stupid compounds my gender socialization, rendering me speechless most of the time.

Children of color are also less likely to be diagnosed. This phenomenon can be traced to the definition of LDs that is used by federal government, as it makes careful note to exclude children "who have learning problems that are primarily the result of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage." This definition begs the questions, how is primary cause determined? And more importantly by whom? Interestingly, the only state that uses a more just definition that does not exclude the aforementioned factors is a state that happens to have a large white working-class population: Kentucky.

The racial and class politics that surround learning difficulties function similarly to the politics of addiction. A struggling white middle class child will be medicalized, whereas a struggling working class child of color will eventually if not immediately be criminalized. Hyperactive working class white children and children of color are sent to the corner and eventually to detention. Whereas white middle class children are sent to the nurse's office to take their Ritalin, or their Adderall, or Strattera, or Concerta, and eventually an anti-depressant as well. There is violent injustice in both scenarios, but six years later, I am here, graduating college. I don't know where any of my friends of color from SpEd class are because they all got kicked out of our high school by junior year. None of us have the same phone number, and despite numerous attempts I can't find any of them on myspace.com. (But even if I could, would they want to talk to me? As I learned to mobilize my privileges in SpEd, their efforts were hindered as they struggled to juggle SpEd with their oppressions.)

When I asked my WS senior seminar classmates why they believe LDs are not discussed in WS, one of the few replies was "because we are here." But I am here too! Questioning physical absence, and interrogating silence is a cornerstone of feminist labor for which we eagerly pat ourselves on the back. Not so fast! For the invisibly-abled, asking these questions means recognizing that society's assessment of their intelligence and their talents, and in turn, their sense of normalcy, personal merit, and entitlement are founded on the cultural production of

invisible disabilities in SpEd kids, whether or not they ever get an official diagnosis or ever receive any "special" services. For us SpEd kids, it means coming clean about our struggles, reliving that pain, facing our anger, and finding a way to express it. The latter is the most difficult. SpEd kids have learned the hard way that once our label is out, our personal expressions can and will be used against us. They are violently reduced to evidence of our labeled inferiority, and automatically our credibility about ourselves is lost.

In Women Studies, we also pat ourselves on the back for reading the works of Audre Lorde. Lorde reminds us that, "It is not the anger of the other women that will destroy us but our refusals to stand still, to listen to its rhythms, to learn within it, to move beyond the manner of presentation to the substance, to tap that anger as an important source of empowerment" (130).

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[post]FEMINISM

By Ashleyanne Krigbaum

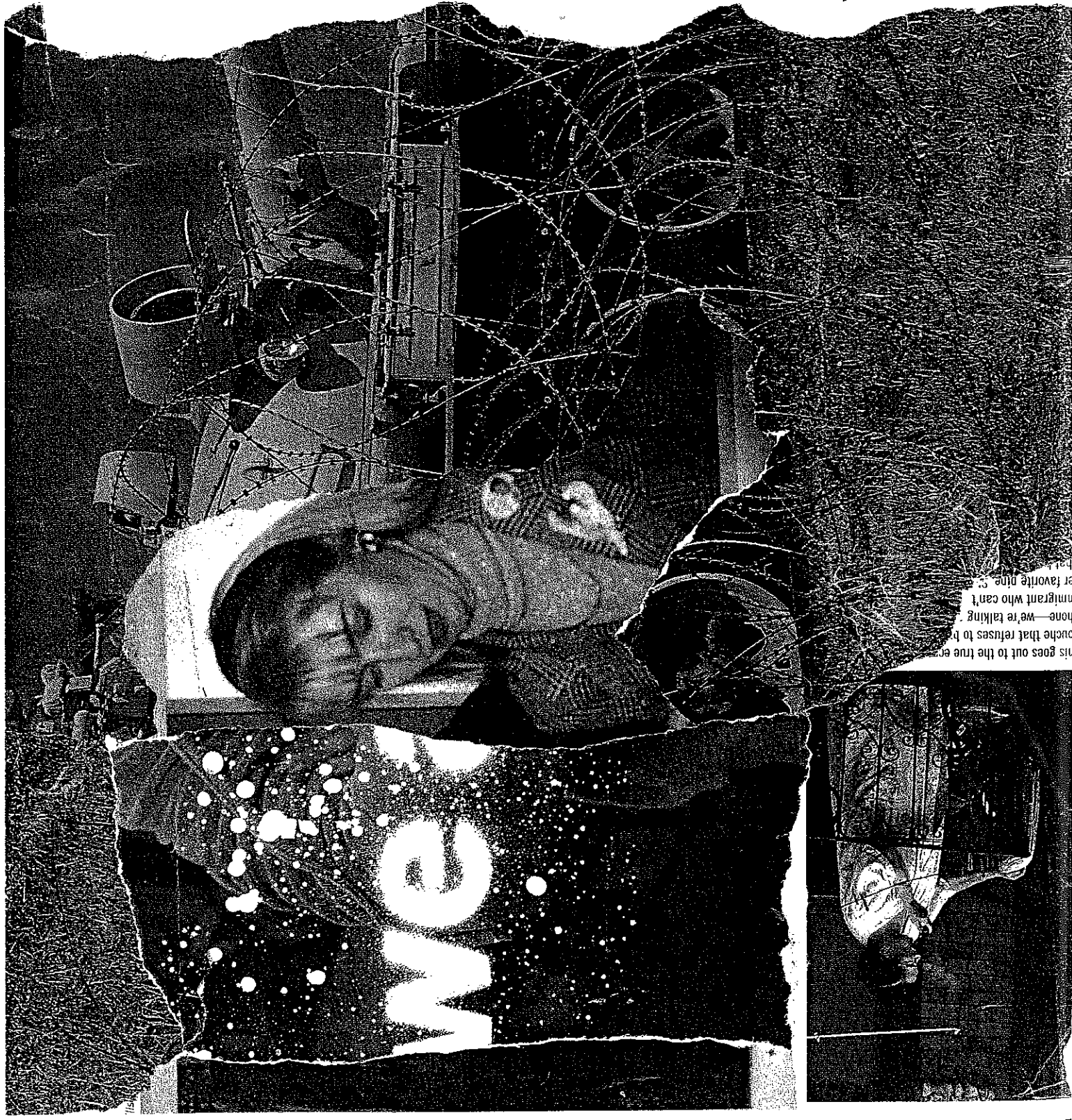
"Post-feminism" is a term used to describe the active political and social backlash apparent in the United States and the United Kingdom, beginning in the 1990s, against feminist gains made in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. As a discourse, post-feminism can be used to argue that feminism was constructed as no longer necessary or relevant in contemporary society or that attitudes supporting feminism as a dead form of activism have been thoroughly absorbed into popular representations of femininity, masculinity, independence, and empowerment within the mass media. I believe that post-feminism is a valid and useful term within contemporary gender studies, because it can be used to better understand and diagnose ideologies that are

negatively reconstructing the relationship that consumers have with popular images and attitudes surrounding gender in the media. By asserting the validity of post-feminism I am not insinuating that feminism is dead or passé, but I use the term to deconstruct how feminism has transformed into an antiquated idea and how, in juxtaposition with new constructions of popular femininity, the unflattering, popular representations of feminists could have a much larger and farther reaching effect on feminist activism than some of my peers may realize.

In her 2004 article "Post-feminism and Popular Culture," Angela McRobbie evaluates the social, political, and historical frameworks of post-feminism while also detailing the social redefinition of empowerment through femininity outside of historically-established definitions of feminism which are now considered archaic. McRobbie stresses the crucial role which the conservative US Reagan and Bush (Sr.) administrations had in the construction of the current post-feminist social moment we find ourselves within (McRobbie 255). Due to strong political voices proclaiming that "everyone's equal now," within the mass media's eyes, feminism began to lose validity as a relevant site of activism. Media images reflected this newly established consciousness with countless advertisements, films, and television shows that denounced the archetype of the feminist and pedestalled the "new woman" that was to take her place. From the social backlash against feminism, a new representation of femininity was born and she wanted nothing to do with her antiquated, "party-pooper"-predecessors.

Throughout the early to late 1990s, the newly constructed "Girl Power" movement swept through global media. This new form of female empowerment was constructed as independent, young, sassy, hip, privileged, and predominantly white. Most importantly, this new female identity was cooler than her predecessors, because she no longer needed feminist activism. This new demographic has the privilege to view older forms of feminism as unnecessary and in opposition to her own female-defined social independence and power; she has the ability to view images and films which were previously defined as sexist with a comedic grain of salt. For example, a Wonderbra billboard depicting a supermodel with highly visible cleavage was posted in the center of London during the mid-

I
you
us
we
them, they
came to be
here
in this place
to discover
the self
and along
the way
we discover
each other.
*
*
is this
Feminism?



1990s. The advertisement series was captioned with famous film quotes like "...Or Are You Just Pleased to See Me?", and elicited an arousing and comical response from the intended heteronormative male audience, but the advertisement also connected with a female consumer identity as well. This advertisement took "feminism into account by showing it to be a thing of the past, by provocatively 'enacting feminism' while at the same time playing with those debates in film theory about women as the object of the gaze" (258). These advertisements and other forms of mass-distributed media that reestablished sexist overtones left women in the 1990s with two choices of how to respond: protest like the aged, annoying and irrelevant feminist constructed stereotype or laugh along with the boys knowing that it is okay to do so because feminism has created a social space of equality where sexism is no longer "such a big deal". Don't stick cleavage in my face and tell me it's not sexist.

Acknowledging post-feminism, how it is constructed through historical actions and ideas and how popular representations of femininity have been constructed within its framework, is necessary when critiquing current media representations of gender and sexuality. How and if post-feminism will evolve is yet to be determined. This could be just one particular social moment, soon to be dispelled by the media, but considering how the flow of social power is thoroughly interconnected, I think considering the effects of post-feminism within other contexts outside of popular culture would be completely worthwhile. No matter how dominant ideologies like to spin it, women are still the outsiders in the audience, and that is no laughing matter.

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Women's rights, Animal rights??

Mandy Smith

Johnny Diablo, owner of a "vegan strip club" in Portland, recently explained to the *New York Times* "we put meat on the pole, not on the plate". At the seeming opposite end of the spectrum, self-professed feminist Dan Yemin has

compared meat consumption to the "psychological objectification that results in rape" (59). As a feminist attempting to embrace a vegetarian lifestyle, the lack of productive engagement between mainstream discourses of feminism and animal rights in the U.S. has left me with feelings of isolation, to say the least. Even more specifically, the absence, on both sides, of critical analyses of how systems of capitalism, exploitive labor practices, sexism, and racism intersect with issues surrounding meat consumption calls for a deeper reading.

For many feminists in the U.S., meat production is a feminist issue. As Aimee Dowle argued in the Winter 2007 issue of *Bitch* magazine, many feel that the consumption of meat can be likened to the objectification of the female body (60). Mary J. Adams' well-known book, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, includes an illustration of a naked woman mimicking a butchered cow. Each section of her body is labeled—rump, thigh, loin, and so forth. As she kneels in a sexually passive position, she asks the consumer, "What's your cut?"

This image is a critique of not only American society's hyper-sexualization of the fragmented female body, but also the conflation of women and meat in advertising. From the infamous Carl's Junior commercials of the 1990s featuring barely-dressed models enjoying burgers, to Hooter's Restaurants' popular buffalo wings, and KFC's nauseating "Hillary Dinner"—"two fat thighs, two small breasts, and a left wing" (61), the gendering of meat consumption in U.S. popular culture is undeniable. Similarly, as a study published in the *New York Times* in March 2008 has claimed, popular ideologies often associate men with meat-eating and women with vegetarianism. This notion perpetuates an association between heterosexual masculinity, objectified women, and meat-eating, but it has also been mobilized by many feminists as a reason to avoid meat.

Most of the white, middle-class feminists of the second wave who focused much of their analysis on food and the home inspired this

logic, but such critiques continue to fall short of an adequate analysis of larger systems of race, class, and gender. The comparison of meat to the fragmented female body may be effective for political messaging. Unfortunately, it also denies how complicated the issue truly is. The low-skilled, low-paying, and exploitive jobs that the meat industry relies upon, for instance, are filled predominately by poor, often immigrant people. As Eric Schlosser argues in *Fast Food Nation*, the physically-demanding and often life-threatening jobs that sustain slaughterhouses and meat processing plants hire mostly undocumented immigrants from Latin America who are threatened with deportation if they seek medical aid when injured on the job, or legal help when sexually harassed or raped by supervisors (Schlosser, 176). Schlosser also points out that the U.S. fast food industry, which sells a substantial amount of the meat produced in such plants, "pays minimum wage to a higher proportion of its workers than any other American industry" (74). Many such workers are poor, immigrant women who are rarely offered benefits, overtime, or opportunity for advancement.

Feminist criticisms of meat consumption additionally tend to reproduce capitalist notions of individuality and choice surrounding diet. It's one thing to point out how the devaluing of animals is similar to the dehumanization of women, but it's quite another to make such an argument without offering a realistic solution for people who are not rich enough to pay for and devote the time to a meat-free diet. And it certainly may not counter the appeal of a two-dollar "happy meal" to a poor, single, working mother earning minimum wage who hopes to make sure that her children don't go to bed with empty stomachs.

But how do vegetarians advocating for feminism navigate these issues with some of the most visible and powerful animal rights groups in the U.S. who utilize sexism and racism to promote their cause? Just as the meat industry has historically likened the female body to meat,

groups like PETA have used sexualized images of women as metaphors for meat. The organization's ad campaigns unapologetically features photos of sexualized women of color posing as tigers, above captions such as "Protect all exotic creatures." Other ads include women with thin, often surgically-altered bodies, frolicking in nature, naked women in cages, and even a video attempting to ironically compare dog breeders to the Ku Klux Klan.

Sure, these images may motivate more people to pay attention to animal rights. But for what reasons? And at whose expense? Of course not every animal rights organization uses such tactics. Unfortunately, this approach is the most visible and has become increasingly popular in larger mainstream environmentalist movements. Although there is much to be said about irony, I cannot help but be concerned with the perpetuation of an essentialist association of woman with nature, as well as with the risk of losing the real message of vegetarianism amidst rigidly sexist ideals of female beauty. I fear that in the end, these tactics are simply another version of the same ideologies perpetuated by a restaurant like Hooter's or KFC.

As Dowle laments, "you can't find resources for vegetarians at NOW, or for women's rights at PETA" (62). The complicated issues surrounding meat consumption are too often belittled to essentialist comparisons with women's bodies, which obscure how these concerns intersect with race, class, citizenship status, and exploitive labor practices. These linkages are a feminist issue. Many feminists have felt isolated and ignored by mainstream animal rights groups in the U.S., especially those who utilize sexist advertising, and therefore have failed to engage in useful coalition-building with vegetarian and vegan activists. At the same time, many people who are oppressed by low-paying, abusive jobs find little relevance in a feminist discourse that ignores the realities of how their lives relate to issues of food production and consumption. Until such a complex interaction occurs, I fear that ways in which meat is

produced and consumed in the U.S. will hardly improve.

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MICHELLE MATLOCK "THE MAMMY PROJECT"

Crystal Williams

On February 29, 2008 the College of Humanities, Women Studies and Africana Studies presented Michelle Matlock's one-woman performance "The Mammy Project" to celebrate the transition from African American History Month to Women's History Month. Nearly 150 years have passed since the 250-year legacy of African American chattel slavery ended, and the strategies for maintaining white economic dominance were reworked to include lynching, incarceration, sterilization, and vocational and territorial redlining. Matlock confronts the role that pop culture representation plays in maintaining the structure racial and gendered capitalist hierarchies. The mammy and other slave archetypes were manufactured within American popular culture to naturalize the logic of white economic dominance during and after slavery. In 1889, Nancy Green, an emancipation survivor, was employed to advertise a boxed pancake mix branded Aunt Jemima after a character from the blackface minstrel shows.

Current racist stereotypes, including the sexless servile mammy and Uncle Tom, and the lascivious lazy buck and Jezebel, have their roots in the minstrel shows that remained a popular form of entertainment from the 1830's through the 1950's when African Americans began to assert political power through the civil rights movement. Though blackface performance has declined in popularity over the last 50 years, it has generated racial archetypes that are intrinsic to the visual language of American popular culture. Today, 115 years after Nancy Green first performed the role of Aunt Jemima

to audiences at the 1889 World's Fair, pancake boxes display the smiling face of a black mammy disciplined into serving white economy and dominant fantasy.

Matlock begins her one-woman performance, "The Mammy Project", by stating, "I want my own fantasies." She embodies and deconstructs the mammy, reclaiming the archetype from the dominant imagination and she is reborn an angry, sexual, powerful agent of her own destiny. Matlock explains that where there is hurt and anger, there is a hidden story that needs to be told.

Matlock reimagines the history of Nancy Green and Aunt Jemima juxtaposed with the public speeches of 19th century African American activist leaders, Ida B. Wells and Hallie Q. Brown, identifying post-emancipation economic, corporal, ideological injustices against African Americans. But it isn't enough to reclaim and historicize the mammy, Matlock's performance confronts an element crucial to maintaining the popularity of the mammy archetype within American visual culture throughout the last century, white audiences continue to love her.

Matlock embarked on "The Mammy Project" in 1999 after auditioning to play Aunt Jemima in a commercial for the brand. Fed up with racist type casting, she needed a strategy to express her anger and explore the persistent stereotype that loomed over her acting career. While researching for "The Mammy Project" she conducted interviews, asking people's thoughts and feelings when faced with the mammy archetype. She found that while black audiences connected the mammy archetype to painful memories of past oppression and symbolic of current economic inequality faced by African American women, white audiences lit up at the mention of the mammy archetype, describing her as a warm comforting presence. Matlock seeks to explore this disparity by facilitating a discussion at the end of the show in which audience members are encouraged to share their emotions and observations in response to "The Mammy Project." Matlock helps black audience members and audience members of other races to navigate their history and emotions concerning ways in which their race has implicated them in a shared American history by confronting white guilt alongside black pain and anger. Matlock encourages the white audience members who are equipped with critical black history and popular culture analysis to take on the responsibility of

educating others about the physical, emotional, and economic stakes of racist representations stating, "White people need to let other white people know." She leaves the audience members who have been affected by racial stereotyping like she has with the charge, "Dig the history."

A Radical Woman of Color Contemplates Revolution in Today's Women's Liberation Movement

By Francis Mead

We live in a country where our nation-state's capitalist pursuit of profit and global domination is more important than its people's health, education or well being; where it effectively oppresses and silences poor people and people of color through its racist, sexist and classist structures, such as the Prison Industrial Complex. Angela Davis states that the populations of US prisons have grown so rapidly "that many people in black, Latina and Native American communities now have a greater chance of going to prison than of getting a decent education" (10). The racialization of our prison populations represents people of color as inherently criminal or inferior to white populations. Such institutionalized oppression then becomes internalized oppression within communities of color, which may believe they're inferior to other groups of people. Children of color may grow up believing that they aren't as good or worthy as their white peers. Capitalism is wrapped up into this as consumer culture keeps poor Blacks and Latinos wanting to buy and consume but perhaps not question the conditions of poverty that they are born into. There are reasons behind why liquor stores and advertisements litter our ghettos instead of grocery stores, playgrounds and schools. Throughout my life I have felt this institutionalized oppression as a young biracial woman going to an all-white school, where the majority of children of color and poor children were kept in the special education classes. My teachers treated me as if I were inferior and

couldn't perform as well as my white peers, because of my skin color. They would act surprised when I would, and often did, perform better than my white peers. This experience didn't dissipate after I left elementary school and moved onto a more urban middle school. My eighth grade literature teacher refused to sign an application for me to be admitted into a high school honors program the following year. She would also single me out in class with criticism in order to humiliate me. I never understood her behavior when I had an A in her class and was in the top percentage of my eighth grade class. I could not find any other reason but my skin color to explain her actions. These reactions and attitudes can be traced back to the fact that our government feels people of color cannot perform at the same standards as whites. Historically this has always been the case and it continues to be. The government knows that if people of color are educated and aware of their own histories and struggles then they could become politicized and resist this racist, classist, sexist power structure. In order to prevent this kind of politicized revolution, the government incarcerates people of color, criminalizes drugs that are prevalent in the community, and keeps them impoverished.

So as a radical woman of color today pondering revolution and the struggles to end racial, gender, and class oppression, I turn to the liberation of incarcerated women and people of color. Incarcerated women continue to be some of the most oppressed and exploited women in the country. The female incarceration rate is incredibly high and exceeding the rate of men. Angela Davis cites criminologist Elliot Currie's statistics on incarceration, "At the current rates of increase, there will be more women in American prisons in the year 2010 than there were inmates of both sexes in 1970...The prison incarceration rate for black women today exceeds that for white men as recently as 1980" (73). The drive to build more prisons and fill them with bodies, despite the falling crime rates, is fueled by racism and the pursuit of profit.

Corporations with global markets are directly involved in this business of punishment as incarcerated women produce all kinds of goods, from clothing, electronic devices and hygiene products. Angela Davis elaborates, "The transformation of imprisoned bodies—and they are in their majority bodies of color—into sources of profit who consume and also often produce all kinds of commodities, devours public funds, which might otherwise be available for social programs, such as education, housing, childcare, recreation, and drug programs" (). In our society racism and sexism are generally considered to be wrong, and there are social movements to support fighting these oppressions, but they thrive in prison. Angela Davis reinforces this sentiment "The destructive combination of racism and misogyny, however much it has been challenged by social movements, scholarship, and art over the last three decades, retains all its awful consequences within women's prisons" (83). We as women, feminist, womanist, sistas of color, need to turn our attention to the Prison Industrial Complex and the liberation of incarcerated women to truly fight for the liberation of all oppressed women and people. I look at the traditions of struggle from the sistas before me and I can't help but think of Assata Shakur's words in her poem "The Tradition," "Pass it down to the children. Pass it down to the youth. Pass it down. Carry it on. Carry it on now. Carry it on to freedom!" Sistass I believe we can carry it on!

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WHERE TO GO NEXT

By Jessa Panagakis

When I think about my future after graduating from the Women Studies department, I can't help becoming stressed out and nervous about the path I may go down. The idea of graduating and having to start life in a new direction sometimes

makes me feel as if I am reading a map in another language. There are some people who know that grad school is the obvious next step, but I am not one of those people. Instead of having an idea about what I want to pursue once I graduate, I have been feeling completely lost about what type of career I want, that will incorporate the knowledge I have gained from earning a degree in Women Studies and Liberal Studies.

Being a Women Studies major means continually having people outside the major ask, "What are you going to do with that?" To any person who does not exactly know what they want to do after they graduate, like myself, this question is daunting. When I first started the program I thought that having a degree in Women Studies meant you either went on to grad school to eventually teach Women's Studies, to further research on a specific issue, or lastly to work for a non-profit. Since I originally thought I wanted to teach elementary school, I decided to join the department in order to further my interest in feminist studies, not necessarily to prepare for grad school. This semester I have begun to learn about all the amazing opportunities we have as Women Studies students, and the many choices of careers available after graduation.

Since there are many different paths a women studies graduate can go down, sometimes figuring out what to do can be difficult. While reading an excerpt from Women's Studies Graduates: The First Generation, by Barbara F. Luebke and Mary Ellen Reilly, I began to wonder what past graduates from our own department are pursuing in their careers, education, volunteerism and accomplishments. Luebke and Reilly state: "It is critical that graduates be heard if Women's Studies faculty and administrators are to persuade officials that their discipline is essential in higher education" (x). It is also essential for current students and incoming students to hear the stories of past graduates in order to get ideas about their own goals after graduation.

The Women Studies department has taught me about many women's stories from many different places around the world, yet stories of past SFSU graduates have been overlooked. As Cynthia Enloe states in The Curious Feminist, "One of the starting points of feminism is taking women's lives seriously. 'Seriously' implies listening carefully, digging deep, developing a long attention span, being ready to be surprised... A feminist curiosity finds all women

worth thinking about”(3-4). With Enloe’s advice I began to dig deeper and gather advice from past graduates, to try and figure out where I want to go after I graduate, and hopefully to help others with their decisions after graduation as well. I sent out an email to ask past graduates to give advice. The following are some responses:

“My experience with the Women’s Studies curriculum has become a lens through which I view everything else that I study. It is not so much a particular career path—that has become mental health for me—but it a way of approaching the work that I do.”

- Adina Morguelan

“No matter what your job is, my Women Studies background gives me a different perspective. When I worked at Schlesinger Library at Harvard it allowed me to fully understand the material I was working with.”

- Stephanie Miles

“Find people in the type of jobs you would like to do and ask them what their degrees are in. Find out how they got to be doing what they are doing and ask them for advice about how to go about getting to that point yourself.”

- Adina Morguelan

“Pick a specialization that you are passionate about – preferably one that will bring some income...”

- Irys Schenker

As I began to receive responses, I realized career choices are vast and varied. There are women from all over the country using their degree either directly or indirectly with their careers everyday. After hearing the responses from past graduates it has helped me realize that no matter what direction I go, whether it be grad school, cosmetics or working for a non-profit, my experiences within the women studies department will be integrated into everything I do.

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FEMINSIM IS . . .

Feminism is a wrench, when it doesn’t fit all bolts feminism becomes a welding torch, oxyseteline gas.

Feminism is speaking up, self-induced orgasms, and writing haikus.

Feminism is complex love and compassion, environmental responsibility; the will to power and learning to dance in the abyss

Feminism is totally awesome, for realies!

Feminism is challenging the traditional, elaborating differences that make us unique, being proud and empowered, improving equality transnationally.

Feminism is learning to coalesce, even if it hurts, for the betterment of all.

Feminism is advocating advancement of women locally and globally, eradicating gender inequities that stifle human growth, it is self-love, self-acceptance, and self-empowerment.

Feminism is good sex.

Feminism is our voice.

Feminism is celebrating and loving women and their strengths. Devoted to change that comes from love, committed to the freedom of all people, male and female.

Feminism is Available.

RESOURCE LIST

Books, Articles, Journals, Magazines

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ACCESS: Women's Health Rights Coalition:
<http://www.whrc-access.org>

Homo A Go Go: www.homoagogo.com

Feminist Art Base, Brooklyn Museum:
www.brooklynmuseum.org

Feministing (Blog): www.feministing.com

National Organization for Women: www.now.org

United Nations AIDS: www.unaids.org

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www.minjeelee.com

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Deconstruct This is the collaborative, culminating project of WOMS 690, the senior seminar for Women Studies majors at San Francisco State University.

For more information about the undergraduate major and minor, and the master's degree in Women Studies at SFSU, please go to
<http://www.sfsu.edu/~woms>

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JENNY is queer, brown, and forever grateful that she pursued a degree in Women Studies. Thank you Deb for being my rock, Re Re for endless days of love, my wife for checking me when I needed it, Oscar for waking me up in the wee hours to play, and my mother for being my shining star and giving me every ounce of strength to get through this life. **ELLEN** is grateful to everyone who has supplied her with extra periods and commas over the years, to Myke for laughing at her regularly, and to Luna Moona, for absolutely everything. When **FRANCIS** is not working to dismantle the racist, sexist, classist power structure that is the United States Government, she enjoys living a woman identified life, good hip hop records, and her mother's cooking. **CRYSTAL** is deeply grateful for the opportunity to work with the powerful faculty and brilliant students of the SFSU WOMS dept. **MICHELE** is a guitarist who likes to sing opera, go to concerts, attempt to make gourmet meals, and drink red wine. **ELENA MARIA** is a Southern California native. Upon successful completion of her degree she plans to return home to the land of warm summer nights to pursue a Master's degree in Nursing. **JESSA** is pursuing a double major in both Women Studies and Liberal Studies. She loves deconstructing bad reality TV, working in the beauty industry, being active in anti-war efforts, and sleeping in parks. **BERENICE** is a December graduate, planning to continue her education in Nursing. She loves the Padres, text messaging, pink, sushi, and is proud to wear her Greek letters Phi Sigma Sigma.



DEBORAH teaches Women Studies 690. When **KELLY** was a child she liked to play dress-up; she still does. The sexist oppression of women and the intolerance of homosexuality inspired her to create her own version of life that is about love and freedom of expression. As a fusion belly dancer and a feminist, it is her desire to combine activism with performance to continue playing dress-up while working to elevate consciousness. **MANDY** loves meeting people who talk about politics, sex, and religion in bars. Although she is super excited about becoming a lawyer, she will dearly miss participating in hours of headache-inducing feminist theory analysis during law school. **MAI** is passionate about integrating transnational feminist theory with her love of writing poetry. Women Studies at SF State was the best thing to ever happen to her. **ASHLEYANNE** is obsessed with deconstructing every dripping, delectable piece of popular culture that she can get her chubby, little fingers on. She still dreams that one day she will wake up to find that she has been transformed into a mermaid. She can be reached via snail mail, and loves letter exchanges. P.O. Box 1410, Bethel Island, CA 94511 USA. **SONIA** is a freedom fighter, martyr, listener, seeker of knowledge, and above all, a curious feminist. After earning degrees in both Women Studies and Anthropology, she is aware of and deeply impacted by her historical and cultural roots. She is passionate and believes in the power of education implementing change. **LAURIE** has always worn her passions on her sleeve. She will finally be able to ignite them after she graduates with her Bachelor's of Arts in Women's Studies in Fall 2008.