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WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES DISCLAIMER

Kelly Sorensen

When the topic of my education comes up within my family, extended or immediate, among friends of my parents, or even among my close friends, I cringe inside as if to prepare for the incoming inquisition (contrary to Monty Python, I do expect the inquisition!). As a Women and Gender Studies (WGS) major, I've found that rather than explaining my major to people when they inquire, I spend half if not more of the time defending my educational choice. While I hoped this ritual would fade over time, I've come to recognize that even my professors still have these conversations with their friends and families. So what can I do? Is the life of a Feminist/Women/and/or Gender Studies major always to be plagued by the dreaded question, "So what can you do with that?" Hopefully, not. But I found that rather than dreading this impending annihilation of my utility (in the job market as well as everyday life) as a WGS major, I'm going to take it as an opportunity to educate people on what I see as one of the most applicable, all-encompassing, and intensely interesting majors (and perspectives) out there today. I will warn you, however, this essay will not be easy to get through. It is educational, revealing and, at times (if I'm doing it right), funny. Yes, yes, already I'm changing your perception of feminists as humorless shrews. I prefer the term, humorous shrew. It just rolls off the tongue better...

What I find most interesting about this conversation is that most people who doubt the usefulness or relevance of WGS majors have a very specific idea of what WGS majors do. "So do you just talk about your feelings all day?" is one of the more offensive questions I've encountered. This question is usually posed alongside the onslaught of questions regarding my sexuality, political alignment, and even my supposed hatred for men, which is usually juxtaposed with a mental picture of me burning a bra angrily, or gleefully; we feminists are hard to pin down. Mostly I find people are stuck on what they believe feminism and WGS have been, and don't

believe that feminism and WGS evolve. Just like any theory, practice, or activism, evolution is necessary for survival and therefore the idea that WGS is the exact replica of the feminism etched in many people's minds, is not accurate. Specifically, the idea that there is only one kind of feminism is one assumption we constantly battle. As an example, just to name a few, there are socialist feminists, radical feminists, separatist feminists, liberal feminists, Marxist feminists, transnational feminists, or people who don't identify as feminists at all. While we are no doubt indebted to the previous waves (the first being from the 19th to 20th century, the second from the 1960s to the 1980s) of the feminist movement, feminisms and WGS majors have definitely undergone quite the makeover in the past twenty-odd years. I've been setting the groundwork so I can lay some knowledge on you about EXACTLY what my major encompasses. Prepare to have your mind blown.

*"Women and Gender Studies
isn't our major. It's our lives."*

In our classes, we are active participants in the discussion, rather than passive observers. We exercise our brains for hours on end critically thinking about identities, behaviors and actions and how they are gendered, while simultaneously integrating interdisciplinary approaches to our seminars. We use sociology, anthropology, psychology, biology, archaeology, etymology, ethnology, ideology, pathology, philosophy, and any other -ology you can think of to deconstruct our theories and ideas. We constantly critique and deconstruct theories and ideas while simultaneously critiquing and deconstructing our own beliefs and theories. We are of different cultures, races, genders and sexualities, and this only makes our discussions about globalization, intersection of identities and neoliberalism that much more rich. We are catalyzed by the desire to end all

kinds of oppression; colonial, economic, social, cultural, sexual, religious, gendered and racial are only a few forms of oppression we work to combat. WGS isn't our major: It's our lives. And when someone looks down on us for what we choose to learn and act on, we beat them down with our big, bodacious brains. Well, not really, but you understand.

While I haven't been particularly specific about what we learn exactly, I feel that an outline of our interdisciplinary major and all the major topics we talk about is rather telling

of how important and intricate our major is. So next time you feel the urge to classify WGS as an inherently esoteric field of study, or consider feminism as an archaic man-hating practice (an interesting thought considering some people in the major would be hating themselves), ask yourself if studying the impact of behaviors and ideologies on humans since the beginning of time is esoteric. If you still think it is, I guess we'll have to resort to fisticuffs...

THESE ARMS ARE CHAINS

Vanessa Bachik

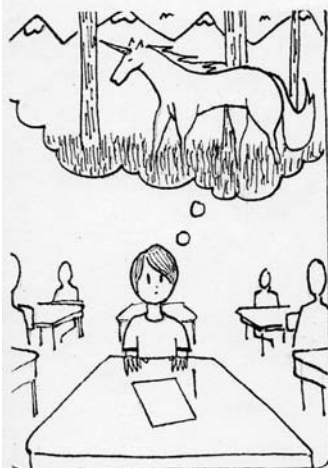
linked upon, these arms are chains.
there's darkness wherever she goes.
iron clad, precious metals.
new life, used life.
her extended belly hungers for something more.
rusted experience, precious metals exposed
to a lifetime of being shit upon.
she screams, drugless.
let her be, let her bleed.
two inches to freedom,
ten centimeters to freedom.
hush little baby, don't say a word.
she screams, drugless.
let her be, let her bleed.
new life, a life in chains,
a life in vain.

i see her everyday.

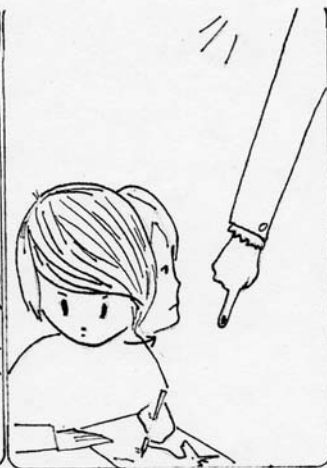
transcending the earth
bound by mortality,
bound by morality.
her face is stretched out, exposed to the sun,
but there's darkness wherever she goes.

UNICORN SKETCH

Melissa Bryant



ONE DAY IN CLASS THE TEACHER TOLD THE KIDS TO DRAW THEIR FAVORITE ANIMAL. LITTLE BILLY DECIDED TO DRAW A UNICORN, BECAUSE HE LOVES UNICORNS FOR THEIR MAGICAL HEALING ABILITY



UPON SEEING WHAT LITTLE BILLY DREW, THE TEACHER BELITTLES HIM, BY SAYING THAT UNICORNS DON'T EXIST, AND SCOLDS HIM ABOUT ALWAYS HAVING HIS HEAD IN THE CLOUDS.



ONCE ALL THE OTHER KIDS IN THE CLASS SAW THAT LITTLE BILLY HAD DRAWN A UNICORN, THEY ALL BEGAN TO LAUGH & POINT AT LITTLE BILLY, TELLING HIM THAT ONLY GIRLS LIKE UNICORNS.



LITTLE BILLY IS VERY UPSET BY ALL THE KIDS REMARKS & BEGINS TO DOUBT THE POWER OF UNICORNS. RIGHT AS A SINGLE TEAR FALLS ONTO HIS UNICORN DRAWING A HUGE MAGICAL BEAST APPEARS WITH A SINGLE HORN IN THE MIST OF FOREHEAD



RAINBOWS APPEAR ALL AROUND LITTLE BILLY AND HEARTS WITH MAGICAL HEALING POWER FALL OVER LITTLE BILLY AND HE BEGINS TO FEEL MUCH BETTER AND MORE COURAGEOUS



LITTLE BILLY STANDS IN FRONT OF THE CLASS AND TELLS THE TEACHER THAT UNICORNS DO EXIST, BECAUSE HE CAN FEEL IT IN HIS HEART. THEN HE TELLS THE KIDS THAT IT'S OKAY FOR BOYS TO LIKE UNICORNS BECAUSE FEMINISM TEACHES ABOUT FREE GENDER EXPRESSION

MY FATHER'S DAUGHTER

Kelly Guajardo

My father is a gifted storyteller. He has a way of captivating an audience with a paced, passionate humor and skillful articulation. I have admired his ability to tell stories for as long as I can remember. My sister and I have been his biggest fans since we were little girls. Whether it was stories about his childhood or of our lived experiences growing up in Canada, we've been requesting and sometimes begging for a recounting of these memories for years. Thematically my father's stories all seem to revolve around certain dynamic individuals my father has encountered in his life. This long list of characters includes a quirky neighbor in Montreal who loved, above all things, garlic and the number four, the Mexican American janitor at the middle school in Lost Hills where my parents taught who once told a man who assumed he didn't speak English that he had "the wrong damn Mexican!" and various other, more often than not, tragic heroes. I listened quietly and I learned how tell stories.

"I have often felt that my hair is about five inches too long to be taken seriously as feminist or queer."

My stories, the ones I liked to tell, however, were increasingly about all the things I identified with in opposition to my family identity or things that didn't seem to have room in the collective family narrative. As a teenager I found more and more the things that I believed to be definitive of my individual identity (namely my emerging queer and feminist identity) somehow seemed to contradict my family's understanding of me. My placeholder in my father's heart had to do with me being the baby, with me being "Koki" (my father's nickname for me), with me being sweet, reserved, funny and all the other things he'd always known about me. I felt that the

silent or unknown parts of me would only forfeit my standing, that being feminist and queer could only complicate things. So I worked to keep these two worlds separate.

When I moved to San Francisco two and a half years ago, this divide only grew deeper. For the first time in my life I could be openly queer and feminist (though I don't mean to say that San Francisco is some sort of utopian safe haven, for I have often felt that my hair is about five inches too long to be taken seriously as feminist or queer), but I kept these things hidden from my family. Visiting my family in Bakersfield provoked an ever-increasing amount of anxiety in me. On the 350+ mile travel south on Interstate 5, I prepared myself for all the necessary omissions, all the editing, changing pronouns and signifiers where my partner became a close friend and women studies became sociology ... all of the work that was necessary to keep these two identities from colliding. Last fall, I realized this work was starting to take a toll on me. I was exhausted and running out of steam so that when I finally came out to my father it felt like collapsing after crossing a finish line. It wasn't pretty or planned, it was hurried, breathless, teary and messy. But my father received me gently and gracefully explaining to me that it was fine and that he already knew.

Now when my father comes to visit he drinks wine with me and my queer friends telling all the best jokes and stories as usual. When he recently asked one of my friends and I as to the meaning of the word "queer," we did our best to give him a rough working definition. Moments later as the last of the white wine had been drunk and my father moved to a glass of red he joked, "See, I can cross gender too!" The closest I can get to describe the swelling I felt in my chest at this moment is to defer the work of another gifted storyteller, to Dr. Suess's Grinch whose heart "grew three sizes that day."

TAKE BACK THE FRONT ROW

Jason Leach

In 2001, or 2002 (it is hard to tell exactly when, it seems like it was all one long day), I was in a San Francisco, Bay Area punk rock band. It does not matter, but we called ourselves Confidante. Time back then was simultaneously infinite and finite. Being part of a community, like my friends and I were, allowed us to feel connected to a collective stream of time that went back for generations of anarchists and anti-authoritarians. The punk scene—as it is sometimes called—is actually a loose collection of individuals, from different backgrounds and with varied histories. In our scene the individual was honored yet obsolete. We existed in space within space without location or name. The main theme, which connects all of these different people, is a loud and fast music style: punk rock.

The punk movement is not a concise idea; rather it is a community ruled by a group of ethos that promoted anti-authoritarianism, self-reliance, and community involvement. I have been involved in the San Francisco Bay Area punk rock scene for over half my life. Over time, the lines between the punk world and the rest of the world burred, shrank and disappeared. The punk community is a small sub-culture of the mainstream. There are, in effect; punk jobs, punk aesthetics, and punk lifestyles. We do things our own way, police ourselves, and exist as an alternative to everything else out there. The punk world is intentionally segregated from the mainstream and held together with the common thread of opposition.

Unfortunately, within this microcosm of optimism lie an oligarchy of trends and selective morals. There are strongly enforced gender roles, which mirror those we claim to fight against. Bands are almost exclusively male, and usually white, and assumed to be straight. In fact, the audiences the promoters, volunteers, record collectors, fanzine writers: mostly all white males. The punk movement has lasted for so long because of the attraction that common ideals hold. It is fluid and nonlinear in nature. The criticisms I offer are time and location specific. There are moments within punk history where the scene was truly unified. My four band mates and I wanted to bring those times back. As a part (and a representative) of all of it I wrote the lyrics to a song, “Take Back the Front Row.”

www.myspace.com/takebackthefrontrow

The song begins with a start, two guitars playing angular notes over each other in almost harmony. Bass guitar and drums come in after a short while; their rhythm is based on short phrases and quick burst of energy. Finally the vocals come in—half shouted to be heard over the rest of the instruments. ***in the future we forgot the word gender in the future we remembered how to dance and sing.*** The lines are repeated in syncopation with the entire band. I am not projecting a post-gender community, as much as I reference the lack of importance gender will eventually play in this scene. Half-way through the song there is a break, and a new guitar driven build up starts, then a marching beat starts on the drums, eventually all the instruments join in and at the peak of crescendo the vocals start again. ***let me sing let my voice be heard let me be seen let me dance, dance.*** Everyone’s voice takes part—band and audience. We call out a command to be involved. By end of the song the tone is soft and optimistic.

What does it mean when a group of five men, within a patriarchal sub-culture, address gender issues in a public forum? This near-contradiction found justification within the social structure of the punk movement. Living under the guise of do-it-yourself (DIY) ethics and anarchist-based politics had always taught the benefits of taking initiative and, despite difference, equally valuing everyone’s participation in the community. Secondly, we believed that gender relations, and feminism, needed male participation, lest it be relegated to the responsibility of women alone. We sought to be allies, along with many others.

IMAGINING FROM BLUE-GRAY EYES

Kathy Jacobson

There's a lot of me that finds it hard to believe in anything
Mass shootings and a 21 day war lasting years
Economy collapsing, bankers and bonuses
There are just too many big things to believe

So I find it easiest to try to believe
in the smaller things
to gain the energy

My chinchilla is plotting to take over the world
I swear I've seen him stash a monocle underneath his alfalfa
Rodents are known for being revolutionaries, so why not Illachilla

Everyone should raise a pet
Because when death takes away a hamster or goldfish or treefrog
Maybe we are a little more prepped for others to be taken from us

I believe in Ms. Chavez
The only 5th grade teacher I ever met who on the first day of class says
Don't trust me
Being adult means nothing

Schools can squash creativity
With a label like hyperactive
I believe in a girl who never could sit still in class
She danced to think, and she choreographed Cats

I *do* tell the children I nanny that monsters can hide in closets
and under benches and beds
Because monsters are something for us to conquer,
before we feel the world trying to consume us

I try to believe my memory and the tall tales my family told me
My mother danced and was given a scarf by Elvis
My dad started a religion and has thousands of members
And my dad's dad was a Swedish Jew banished to Siberia who ended up homesteading in South
Dakota
I believe in the tales

I believe we need to believe in something that isn't believable
Whether it be cats that don't hiss or pirates with squirrels on their shoulders
Imagination creates knowledge and the everyday tales mean the most to me
Believing small to big is my method

STABLEISM: THE POLITICS OF “CRAZY”

Kate Abarbanel

I want to find the ones in the cracks
Tell them to remove their masks
Spread the wings that grow
From their brains to their backs

How many times do you say “crazy” in one day? Chances are, you say it more than once a day *and* it would be hard to find a day in your adult life that you *haven’t* said it. “Wow, I’ve never thought about it” is the most common response to the above question. Why is it that we think so little about something we say so often? It is those words that are so common, so unquestionably embedded in our language, that deserve the most careful attention. It is important to trace not only the root of the word, but also its various social connotations. I would argue the frequent and vast use of ‘crazy’ speaks to our society’s fear and prejudice toward mental illness, what I would like to introduce as *stableism*. This word is based on the term *ableism*, discrimination in favor of able-bodied people. While *ableism* refers to a societal prejudice based on physical ‘disabilities’, *stableism* refers to a societal prejudice based on psychological ‘disabilities.’ I have placed ‘disabilities’ in quotes because I believe a person is labeled ‘disabled’ if their condition is incongruent with their environment, if they fail to operate within its parameters. Mental ‘illness,’ a more pathological term used to describe one with mental ‘disabilities’, is an emotional and behavioral state that disrupts an individual’s normative relationship with society. It is not only seen as pathology, but as one of the most extreme forms of othering. ‘Crazy’ people are always *those* people, the ones we see on tv or glance away from casually on the street. ‘Normal’ people distance themselves so strongly from ‘crazy’ people, that the word can be thrown around like a baseball but never seems to get caught. If one experiences something outside the norm, it is instantly and quite naturally, labeled as ‘crazy.’

Further, it is very important to analyze the different contexts and meanings behind the frivolous use of this word. I would argue this word represents not only markers of mental ‘illness,’ but also embodies the individual’s distant curiosity and fascination with madness. People are commonly attracted to the unusual, the wild, the mysterious, the vivacious, the disruptive. For example, people commonly refer to an enjoyable party as ‘crazy’, referring to the wild, impulsive, and unabashed antics of its attendees. According to our society, parties are an acceptable digression from the norm. Yet, if one were to engage in wild party behavior outside in the world, they could possibly be institutionalized. While the party is a socially acceptable retreat from normality, where an individual can let loose and “go *crazy*,” an individual who is experiencing these qualities is disruptive and dangerous. This could be compared to the qualities of a person experiencing mania: wild, “larger than life,” grandiose, impulsive, etc. It seems interesting that while these qualities describe the greatest party, they are symptoms of an illness in an individual. Why is it that one’s behavior can be celebrated and encouraged one night, but pathologized the next day?

*“the frequent and vast use of ‘crazy’
speaks to our society’s fear and
prejudice towards mental illness”*

These contradictions and double standards reinforce stableism, as it pathologizes individuals who cannot fit in with the unstable and ever changing norms of our society. Stableism is a product of society’s instability, as one must be stable in order to keep afloat in the constant ebbs and flows of morals, economy, laws, media, and more. If one is ebbing and flowing on a different plane than the mainstream current, they will throw off the pattern, therefore it is in society’s best interest to *control* this person. It seems the

dominant forces of our society understanding the human fascination with mental and behavioral variety. If they do not intervene, alternative realities and understandings will thrive and challenge the existing status quo. Recognizing stableism, through our language and behaviors, is vital to creating a safe and accepting world for those with “dangerous gifts” (Icarus Project).

Stableism keeps people in intellectual, emotional, and ideological boxes. It instills a fear of difference and a stigma toward anyone with mental challenges. People with mental (dis)abilities have extraordinary gifts: a window into another world, the gift of emotional flight, the power to hear voices others cannot hear. If one were to look at the qualities in a new light, they can be seen as magic instead of malignant. Perhaps we should be critiquing the society that rejects

these unique powers, rather than rejecting the people who struggle within its structure. Why can’t an adult woman scream, sing, talk to herself, and spin around in circles in public without being thrown in a cage? The mad ones have the most power and insight into a world that can challenge the existing structure, therefore they are the most contained, silenced, and stigmatized. We must not only make space for these gifted people in society, but challenge their subordinate and demonized position. It **hurts** to feel ill, to feel excluded, to feel dangerous. Let’s create a world where mad people do not have to hide in the cracks.

“The Icarus Project” is a radical collective devoted to alternatives to the current mental health model (www.theicarusproject.net)

SWEATSHIRT IN A TREE

Lauren von Koss

Muggy turbulence settles and it rains soft shadows.
Memories of that one time, oh you remember,
A sultry seduction as you lean forward
Ignoring the twelve steps you betray oh so easily
Every time you say,
“This is the last time, baby girl.”

Too bad your addiction trembles under your breasts
Waiting for my touch to send it scrambling oh so quickly
Behind the wall your rage oh so neatly built for you.

Your trauma bent to a neat question mark by my compassion.
An answer, a solution mocked me,
Just beyond that emotional mystery.
Tomorrow, of course, would be oh so different.
She loves me, right?

And then the rain washed away
Your lovely mask.
Leaving behind only empty bottles,
Hand-me-down words,
Secondhand promises,
And a soggy sweatshirt in a tree.

A FEMIFESTO: APPROACHING WHOLENESS

Erin Prendergast

all humans are worthy & capable of love.
we have to remember that struggle *contributes* to our wholeness. from neighborhood to
neighborhood, & nation to nation, these struggles will always be different.

there is absolutely no doubt that
each
and
every
one
of
us

faces these struggles. But if we can meet each other along the way of resisting our
oppressors,
we can challenge what makes us unwhole.

talk to your sisters, nieces, mothers, brothers, nephews, and fathers.
Communicate, Disrupt and Deconstruct.
realize your sexual fluidity and strive for comfort in gender ambiguity.
experience natural healing. look at the moon, we are soulfully and spiritually connected to
the moon and it's cycles.
embody & embrace yourself as a fundamental
Part of a larger *Whole*.
be confident with bold ownership.
consider a humanist approach to difficult decisions and choices.
let yourself feel challenged and
always challenge "always."

recognize healing as a process that feeds off of
Curiosity, Consciousness and Energy.
desire and manifest sitting alone on a rock in the middle of a Redwood forest, imagine you
as a being in this world. map out the steps and changes needed to get you there. under
what circumstances could this life be possible?
What fosters your feelings?
What actions can you take to support your life?
as an individual approaching wholeness, let this energy and consciousness leak into the
lives of the people that you know, the people that you spend your days and times with.

soon you will notice the situations in which you find yourself will be significantly more similar to the vision you had that day on the rock.

healing is a process and wholeness is approached. feminists are reminded of this everyday.
as new progress is made, we face new questions.
through experience we are taught, wholeness is constantly approached.
know these vital ideas about difference:
difference exists everywhere
difference is dynamic
difference is
Tolerated, Encouraged and Embraced.
this is my mission statement, my declaration. my definition of feminism.

FEMINISM IN ACTION AND THE POLITICS OF ORGANIZING

Lauren Von Koss and Allison Mingus

Grassroots organizing is a powerfully subversive tactic in the fight for social justice. Some of history's strongest movements, like the Civil Rights Movement, gained momentum through grassroots organizing. Unlike non-profit organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), grassroots organizations often do not have to answer to restrictions donors and funders enforce or work under the constraints of already established institutions. They can make their own rules and go about fighting for change in whatever way they see fit. Through collectivism and leadership by the oppressed, grassroots campaigns seek to change power relations and strengthen disenfranchised communities.

In the fall of 2007, following the discovery that San Francisco State University lacked a student-run feminist club, we set about creating our own feminist activist presence on campus. After sitting day after day in our Women and Gender Studies classes learning about issues around race, class, gender, and sexuality, we knew that we needed to do something with the information. Other people outside of our classrooms needed to start

hearing what we learned, and we knew that we could do that. Unfortunately our zeal for political change and knowledge of the intersections of systems of oppressions was not enough to establish a successful self-governing collective.

We wanted our club, Feminism in Action (FIA), to create and nurture a community of active and aware feminists who, instead of spending our time just talking and discussing issues, actually held events to raise awareness and disrupt oppressive power structures. We pondered consciousness raising events, such as sexual violence prevention and healing workshops. We wanted to celebrate the merging of different women from different backgrounds in a spirit of transnational feminist activism and liberation.

In our attempt to actualize these goals, it became abundantly clear that university policies do not favor horizontal democratic structure and collectivism. From the start, clubs must create a very specific official constitution, which outlines the club's hierarchy. Every club on campus must have at least a president and a treasurer, and they are the only people who can obtain permits for

events and tabling. The selective issuing of privileges limits members' ability to participate in crucial recruiting activities and execute events independent of the approval of the officers.

Collectivism is meant to be non-hierarchical and self-managing, but often such a structure crumbles with a lack of communication and accountability. In "Ring Ding in a Tight Corner," Honor Ford-Smith considers: "If we were to be a genuine collective, we could not reproduce in our internal structure the inequitable power relations found in the wider society" (236). Only FIA members with the knowledge, experience, and will are too often saddled with the majority of the facilitation of events and management of the group. We thought officers had to facilitate meetings, obtain permits, meet outside of regular member meetings, table, and fulfill all responsibilities for making events happen. In this way, the internal structure of FIA is guilty of duplicating the exclusionary and uneven power structures we are working to minimize.

"We wanted to create and nurture a community of active and aware feminists who ... held events to raise awareness and disrupt oppressive power structures"

Along with university bureaucratic issues, FIA spent a lot of energy on fundraising, even though in the end we never needed that much money to function. We did not invite outside companies on campus in our name, as the university encouraged, because we often disagreed with their labor practices and core values. We raised our money through old-fashioned bake sales and asking for donations at our events. The bake sales made people more interested and friendly toward us and were always able to make significant profits.

Aside from the arbitrary restraints from the university, as a feminist organization we were able to achieve many of our goals. At the

start, we worked with City College of San Francisco to put on an educational and activist-oriented conference on the femicide in Juárez, Mexico. Later that year, we promoted local women artists by holding an art show complete with visual art and live music by local musicians. Continuing this vein of art as activism, FIA held an anti-commercial Valentine's Day open mic event on campus to allow students a forum to creatively express love, heartbreak, sexuality, and anything in between. We also led the "Vote Down Props 4 & 8" campaign on campus, which featured a student rally with Mayor Gavin Newsom. These eclectic events show the multiple perspectives and priorities in FIA and our idea of feminism.

Looking back at all that we accomplished with FIA, we wonder what we could have done without university constraints. We relied on the university to provide us with free event spaces and publicity opportunities. They also held special workshops for officers to hone their leadership skills. While this was helpful, it perpetuated hierarchy in club structures because these opportunities are only available to officers. It is difficult to push for member involvement when the university excludes members from major aspects of club organizing. We are grateful for the opportunity to have a feminist presence on campus and educate people on important issues, but we wish we had more freedom and less bureaucracy to accomplish more radical campaigns. Organizing on the university level proved to be a safe place to learn how to effectively pursue change, and we hope to take these lessons with us beyond campus.

Reference:

Honor Ford-Smith, "Ring Ding in a Tight Corner: Sistren, Collective Democracy, and the Organization of Cultural Production," in M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty eds. *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

LOVE AND RESISTANCE

Lauren Perlman



EMBODYING THEORY

Jessica Sederquist

lips to speak, to pleasure, to explore

academia forces us to speak with one set

gender studies asks us to deconstruct, to challenge, to complicate

gender-citizenship-race-class-sexuality-nationality-our beliefs-our biases....

our bodies?

we stimulate the mind by isolating the body

couched in institutionalized academia

responding with our bodies is not encouraged

wouldn't want to be perceived as overly emotional (overtly feminine)?

why does liberal discourse frame *our* conversation?

liberalism perpetuates the inequalities we seek to disband

the other set of lips are aching to speak

of Butler, Kaplan, hooks

our limbs, breasts, and stomach need to feel the theory our mind drowns in

the body needs to be fed

as the mind constantly overflows with systems of power

systems that breed disconnection

gender studies opens us to the complexities of inequality

and the imbalances of this stimulation magnifies separation

embodying theory does not delegitimize us

it emboldens us to heal wounds

created by liberal institutions

the phallogocentric foundations of knowledge need to be disrupted by our discourse

not reinforced by our impulsion of inclusion

inclusivity is not phenomenal spectacular nor revolutionary

the language of oppression will not stir revolution

this is a call to reclaim a language

that is forgotten and ignored

a language that does not seek isolation nor simple integration of the body

we cannot wait for the reclamation

if we seek permission, we will never be satisfied

i am done waiting

my mind is exhausted

my body is yearning to speak of what cannot be processed in seclusion

embodying feminist thought will charge us

cultivate those proverbial

“coalitions”

when both lips, our limbs, our bodies are able to speak

when we stop apologizing for taking up academic space

stop encapsulating ourselves in their

l-i-n-e-a-r world

that's when revolutionary acts become possible

WATER CRISIS

Melissa Young-Manzone

The world is running out of water—this may seem impossible. After all, we were taught our fresh water supply was essentially limitless because we have a closed hydrologic cycle. Everyone knew if we took care of the water, it would always be there for us. What we didn't know a few years ago was that humans are capable of depleting, polluting, and diverting the available sources of fresh water, especially surface water supplies. Today we know our generation is depleting the fresh water supply at a rate far faster than Nature can replenish it.

Consider this: 70% of our earth is made up of water, 97.5% of that water is salt water, leaving only 2.5% as fresh water. Approximately 1.5% of this fresh water is bound-up as glaciers, icebergs, and snow. Tally everything, and the numbers reveal 1% of fresh water remains in ponds, lakes, rivers, and aquifers to be used by virtually all living creatures on this planet. Unfortunately, the global demand for water is growing at a rate far exceeding the natural supply. Unless we radically change the way we use and manage the earth's fresh water supplies, human and animal populations' world-wide will be struggling to live without adequate access to this tenuous resource.

Water was the beginning of life, and it remains the essence of all life as we know it; everything that lives on this planet, in effect, has a right to water, our responsibility is to make sure that fresh water is available to everyone and everything requiring it.

Because our species has the ability, intelligence, and ingenuity to do so; we must devise and discover effective and sustainable solutions that will avert an otherwise catastrophic crisis. For example, we can organize ourselves around the central idea that access to fresh water is a universal right and that water resources are not a commodity to be privatized and then bought and sold to those who can afford it. It is also important to

recognize that women are prime users of water; therefore women bear the brunt of the burden of poor management. Women need to take an active role in the participation of water management. There is a need for a gendered approach involving both men and women to participate in the management of water. The Ministerial Declaration stated that, "in managing water we should ensure good governance with a stronger focus on household and neighborhood community-based approaches by addressing equity in sharing benefits, with due regard to pro-poor and gender perspectives in water policies. We should further promote the participation of all stakeholders and ensure transparency and accountability in all actions."¹

*"A plan for the management
and care of our water resources
is long overdue."*

It has become increasingly accepted that women should play an important role in water management and that this role could be enhanced through the strategy of gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is "the process of assessing the implication for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all level. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all spheres so that women and men benefit equally."² Most recently, the United Nations agreed that water is a human right and they also recognized the importance of gender perspectives in water resource management.

A plan for the management and care of our water resources is long overdue, and history

demonstrates that real change begins with people. Individuals can change things for the better-indeed, when it comes to our water supply, we can not afford to do otherwise.

¹ <http://www.johannesbursummit.org>

² Economic and Social Council, "Conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programs in the United Nations system, the Report of the Economic and Social Council for 1997" (Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty Second Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/52/3/Rev.1) p.33.

I AM WHO AM

Vanessa Bachik

I AM WHO AM

; said the shotgun to the head.*
Gas, Light, Ignite.
This friendly fire,
institutions of power-
in the neoliberal, noncollective,
but majoritarian kind of way.

I AM WOMAN.

caught in the line of fire.
this fire does not illuminate,
but darkens my days.
my life project, but a lost memory.
my life is in projects now,
my favela, my well-being.

Gas, Light, Ignite.
your firepower is not my brain power.
authority versus minority.
the pistol, the rifle, the fist, the word;
hand to hand, mouth to mouth.
Gas, Light, Ignite.

THIS SYSTEM IS GO FOR TAKEOFF!

* excerpt from Saul Williams

MY MOTHER MADE EACH OF MY RIBS

Micah Card



REDISCOVERING THE GODDESS THROUGH FEMALE-CENTERED BIRTHING PRACTICES

Mary DeLorenzo

In the extensive discourse of Women Studies, there is a multitude of discussion surrounding women's bodies and female genitalia. Dialogue concerning the right to choose, i.e., the right to abortions and birth control, is imperative to feminist practice. However, a focus on birth control alone is deemed very "second wave," as it ignores the horrid history of sterilization that was inflicted on thousands of poor women and/or women of color. Going beyond the woman's right to bear a child, without being policed by white male heterosexist dominated society, women should have the right to choose their own birthing process, not necessarily having to conform to institutionalized hospital births, where predominately male doctors have more control of the situation.

My focus is on Italian American women who were stripped of women-centered home births, which included midwives, in order to assimilate into Anglo-American culture. This is one example of a recent loss of deep-rooted female powered culture, where the birthing rite of passage became institutionalized and once again, another part of a patriarchal framework.

Italian American women hold a tradition of midwifery and women centered births that date back for centuries. Through these lengthy births, all of the close females of the family were present, and various strengthening rituals were performed to fit each woman's individual needs. Furthermore, powerful female goddess imagery was presented in order to connect the woman's birth with her innate religiosity. For Italian American women, this meant imagery of the Madonna.

For Southern Italian *mezzogiorno** women, birth was a female safe space where peasant women could connect to their sacred land. The midwife was revered as the sorcerer of life, worthy of praise in the village. However, in the United States women were deemed

unfit and far too unstable to deliver babies, despite the fact that women give birth. Nonetheless, birth became Americanized entirely, as society used it as another avenue of subordinating women. In order to be accepted into a modern, industrialized, and enlightened America, the *mezzogiorno* women were forced to give up woman-centered birth, which served as such an expression of female agency at one point.

*"The midwife was revered
as the sorcerer of life, worthy
of praise in the village."*

The way that society treats birth today is in a swift, numb, and sterile manner. Just as menstruation is reviled in society, birth has become a similar story. In other societies, menstruation is celebrated and seen as a fruit of female power. Still in the U.S., though, young women feel ashamed at the first marking of womanhood in a society as patriarchal as ours.

Maybe it is time for women to re-examine hospital births and the policing that surrounds women and their unborn children's bodies. In the past, birth has been a vortex of immense female empowerment, and with a return to midwifery or more female-centered spaces for birthing, aspects of cultural identity can be reclaimed. The woman's right to choose includes the woman's right to choose the way her child comes into the world. Reverting back to a female dominated birth space means radically resisting patriarchal domination over women's bodies.

*The term *Mezzogiorno* (Midday) includes southern Italy and Insular Italy (Sicily and Sardegna). The term is an Italian rendition of *meridies* (Latin for 'south', because of the sun's position at midday in the northern hemisphere). The term came about after Italy's unification. It was sometimes associated with notions of poverty, illiteracy, and crime, stereotypes of the South that still exist today.

IS DOMESTICITY FEMINIST?

Allison Mingus

“Wait ... I thought you were a feminist?”

That is how most people react when they get to know me and find out I have a passion for cooking, cleaning, and especially baking. Some people have even laughed, thinking that I was kidding when I said I was contemplating pastry school after completing my degree in Women and Gender Studies. Many of these people are my fellow activist and revolutionary thinkers. It seems that domesticity and feminism are oppositional in people's minds.

So-called domestic duties are a part of who I am. I love taking great care in making sure not to over mix my muffin batter and make sure I scrub my countertops until they sparkle. My two-tiered dessert stand from Williams Sonoma is my prized possession. When my boyfriend has a long day at work and I've finished my classes early in the afternoon, I do like to have dinner on the table for him when he gets home. Does that mean that I don't take feminism seriously or that I haven't learned anything from my education in Women and Gender Studies?

This way of thinking that two ideas must be defined in opposition to the other must come from other binaries society constructs. Masculinity is everything femininity is not. Whiteness is superior to blackness because it is everything blackness is not. Feminism and domesticity just can't seem to fit together because we live under a binary system in most ways we organize our society. Institutions teach us these binaries are natural and necessary to maintain order. What if a dutiful housewife started reading Angela Davis? People would not consider her a feminist because she stays at home with her children.

Even activists and feminists view domesticity as outside the realm of radical thought and actions. It seems that domesticity is so far removed from feminism because many feminist movements have fought so hard to move women into the public sphere and out of the private sphere. Again,

these binaries come up. The lines between the public and private sphere are blurred, and just because I spend some Saturdays in the kitchen does not mean I do not actively participate in the “outside world.” In fact, I have a long history of political organizing and activism—political campaigns and founding a feminist activist group at San Francisco State for example.

“I believe that every woman should have the opportunity to make conscious and educated choices about what they are doing in their life.”

Liberation, in dominant discourse, has come to mean that women throw away all connections to inside their homes, that we find new passions and interests to chip away at heteronormative and patriarchal norms. Some women do not want to feel tied to domesticity, and some women do. I think it is most liberating to realize that we have the freedom to choose our priorities. I find myself chipping away at heteronormativity and patriarchy every time I bake or clean just for myself and nobody else. I am not preparing to have a family and am not sure if I ever plan to have children. If other people choose that route, then we should support their decision rather than viewing it as oppositional to our feminist values.

The feminism I subscribe to teaches me that nothing, nobody is ever black and white. Labels never capture anybody's identity. I do not and will not fit into the neat little box of “housewife” nor will I ever fit into the neat little box of “feminist.” I believe that every woman should have the opportunity to make conscious and educated choices about what they are doing in their life. I cook, clean, and bake because I like to. I advocate feminism because I like to.

I guess this makes me a walking paradox.

HEY, IT'S OK!

Mara Mayock

Through my two years as a Women and Gender Studies major I have encountered new ideas, thoughts, and values. I've learned a lot from my peers and professors, some things that I haven't agreed with and some things have become a part of my own thought process.

Hey, it's ok!

... if you *feel* like you can't do something as an individual, just remember you can do something as a group.

... to be a woman and LOVE being in the kitchen; whoever said whipping up some homemade brownies and cleaning up the mess isn't feminist?

... if fitting in is the last thing you want to do.

... if you don't agree with what your peers have to say, just remember to listen.

... that we aren't all alike; individuality is beautiful.

... to preach your beliefs, just remember to follow them.

... to be contradictory; we all need to contradict ourselves to learn about what we believe in.

... to question the norm; what is normal anyway?

... to want to get paid for being an activist.

... to deconstruct this!

VAMPIRES AND MERE MORTALS: HOW DO WE PRACTICE WHAT WE PREACH WITHOUT MAKING OTHER PEOPLE FEEL LIKE IDIOTS? OR, THE OSTRACIZATION OF NON-ACADEMIC FEMINISTS

Alex Nichols

Today my mother is a dentist. She went through many years of grueling school to get where she is today. She balanced raising a child, school-work, cooking, an all male teaching staff, sexist favoritisms, and sexual advances from men in positions of power. Looking at this list, all I see are issues we constantly discuss in our classrooms. This microcosm of one woman's life represents the intersections of so much of what we study: child care, relationships to power, white privilege, male privilege, politics of domesticity, and the sexualization of bodies as a tool of oppression.

Why then, does my mom shy away from me when I try to talk with her about the conditions of women and men here and around the world? How is it that she spent so much energy believing in her own power as a human being but refuses to look any further than her own situation and resists the idea that there might be a broader connection between her experiences and American culture?

In an attempt to shed some light on the gap between what I know as a member of the Women and Gender Studies Department and how other people interpret the world around them, I decided to sit down with my mom and talk to her about the *Twilight* book series by Stephanie Meyer. I know my mom really enjoyed the story of Bella and Edward and did not gasp in disgust at the 1950s style logic of the entire book the way I did. It is for this reason that I decided we could have a productive chat about gender roles. It sounds basic to me, to be dissecting the very traditional gender roles present in a book published in the late 2000s. In fact, just reading it felt like I was back in the 1980s fighting all that basic middle-American sexism white girls worried so much about.

Lately I have found myself in situations

where all this hard work studying feminism and discovering all the ways we live in an oppressive society just doesn't seem to matter. Or maybe it's that I don't seem to have the drive to correct the situation anymore; four years of seeking out injustices and I'm tired. After all, reconciling the world of feminism with the rest of the world is going to be one of those things that will take many people many lifetimes to do, and do well.

“I love seeing the world around me through feminist eyes”

Maybe though, it's not the drive that's missing and I still love seeing the world around me through feminist eyes, maybe it's that what we learn in classrooms surrounded by likeminded people allows us to move far beyond the rest of society. This could make sense because after all, that's what happens in any field, the 'experts' use language and ideas so removed from the present attitudes of the average lay person. So do we spend all this time amongst each other talking about how feminism is a way of thinking, that it is a tool of 'the people' only to have ostracized most of these 'people'?

It seems that this latter idea might just be close to the truth. While I definitely enjoyed the *Twilight* series, every time I read it I was uncomfortably positioned between a world where women are always questioning their involvement in anything (my ideal version of reality) and a world where they strive to appear 'normal' (not so much). My mom, on the other hand, loved the books, identifying readily with Bella's feelings of inadequacy. When we talked about the ways she was relegated to positions of property or helplessness (like when Edwards saves the day in Port Angeles when she is being followed by a few drunk men) my mom saw it

as an act of love. After all, wouldn't I appreciate a man who could defend me?

My answer: well, assuming of course that I either want or have invited a man into my life, yes and no. Not if he is secretly tailing me, refusing to acknowledge my intelligent decision to walk the other way, fight back, or if he is barking commands at me such as "get inside" while he puffs his chest announces the claimed territory of my body to the attacking men. On the other hand, yes, if he is willing to first wait for my invitation to accompany me where ever it is I am going, or if the situation dictates otherwise to at least make eye contact with me, speak with me and not for me.

When I talk about these things with my mom, I get the old response: why do you hate men so much? When did you stop having fun? Its hard to put in to words that I do not hate men and that my fun revolves around people who are mutually respectful of each other and are not willing to blindly enjoy their lives at the expense of someone else's. I feel that this cycle of question and answer is typical, most of us have probably experienced something which can be very telling sign.

But this is what I mean when I say it feels like our movement has left some folks behind. How is it that we spend all our time consumed

about the connectivities involved in the awesome new pair of jeans we just bought and the people all over the world who are commodified, colonized, working as the equivalent of slave labour to produce our luxuries? When our own families don't even take what we do seriously and still refuse to acknowledge the basics, like gender coded behavior and how it supports and propels the destructive society our government finds beneficial to its continued existence?

By shying away from those closest to us who do not want to grapple with these issues, we are recreating the us/them dichotomy yet again. Usually this dichotomy is reserved for inspection/critique when we create it around Third World cultures, communities of colour here in America, men and women, liberals and conservatives. I argue that perhaps we have bigger problems. As members of the lucky few who are privileged enough to gather together in such a safe space and figure out the world's problems together we might want/need to turn that focus more local. You know the saying, "Be the change you want to see in the world"? We need to embody it, why should we expect other people to confront their communities and elicit change if we cannot do it ourselves in the most basic of ways.



CANOLA SEED

Huiling Ni

My name is Huiling, a typical Chinese name, which is hard to pronounce and really nothing special about it because many Chinese families will give their daughters the same name as mine, just with different characters but same pronunciation. I grew up in a typical Chinese traditional “compromise family” 折衷家庭 (the family with three generations: grandparents, parents, and children) in Taiwan for first 15 years and then migrated to Singapore. My grandparents are still staying in Taiwan alone. Nobody takes care of them. It is considered immoral in Chinese tradition to treat their parents like this, because as children, they should provide the best for their parents. “Traditional Chinese Families” have strict values for males. This is even more so for females. What do I need to deconstruct today? I have been waiting to divulge the bitterness of what Chinese “traditional” family brought to women.

From what I understand of the Chinese culture, neither the families you grow up in nor the family you married into are your families. As women, their responsibility is to give birth to at least a son. Once you have a daughter, the daughter is actually somebody else’s “labor” and “a womb to give a son.” You need to give up your daughter one day so many people say that she is a “賠錢貨” (“pei qian huo” a “loss investment”), you raise somebody else “property.” Therefore, many people did not treat their daughter well because they believe that they are helping other people raise their “property.” The daughter will leave one day and will not contribute any wealth to the family. However, when women are married to the husband’s family, they will never become part of the family as well. They treat women as free labor and women’s status will even be lower than a domestic worker. Women will be treated as an “outsider,” even though women serve the entire family and take care of the

elders for their whole life. A Taiwanese proverb “油麻菜子命” (“you ma cai zi ming,” women’s life is like a canola plant) implies women’s life is “cheap” like a weed and they have to be strong like a weed to get over any bad living conditions.

People like to watch a type of drama in Taiwan and it was very popular many years ago. This type of drama talked about a mother-in-law torturing the daughter-in-law, the husband’s sister giving a hard time to the women, and the women are abandoned because the husband’s family thinks that she is not a good wife. As long as the story lines relate to these typical families drama, it will be very popular. Why do I say typical? Because people I have met since I was young told me that their family situation is similar to these dramas. The dramas reflect people’s family struggles so people love to watch it, discuss it, but never discuss it in political institution because it is “somebody else’s” family business. Other people should not interfere. Is this healthy? Grief, hopeless, resentment, discouraged, powerless and desperate. Family issues have become one of the reasons that have caused women to suffer, but none of the institutions are trying to discuss it, build awareness or trying to change women’s life condition.

“The dramas reflect people’s family struggles so people love to watch it, discuss it, but never discuss it in political institution because it is ‘somebody else’s’ family business.”

These dramas are so much the same as the situation women have to go through, so they love to watch it and feel sympathetic towards

the women in the dramas as they see themselves in real life. They cry when they watch the dramas with tears flowing down like a river ... "STOP CRYING!!!" Our society is too patriarchal, nobody is going to represent you to fight and stand for justice of the torment we have inside our home. Nobody is going to represent you to make your life better. Crying at home will not change anything. The only way we can change is to represent ourselves, makes this issue loud,

continue self-learning, and stand together to fight and DECONSTRUCT THIS!!!

As a nationalist and feminist, I would like to question whether this hierarchy family structure provides a better environment for younger generations and makes our nation stronger like Tang and Han dynasties? If that is true, I will yield to this family structure, norm and framework, stop complaining, and "sacrifice" myself.

FOREVER AN INCOMPLETE SENTIMENT

Vanessa Bachik

i am the strata, upon which my post-mothers lay.
the foundational arrangement,
i am who was before.
In my post-mothers, goddesses,
i am imbedded in the pearls of wisdom that
they seek in the mosaic of their hearts.
and if they shall look to the sky dripping with
Abraham's children, i will be found nestled among them.
a sparkling disaster;
untouchable, but not unreachable.

my ancestors made a mistake.
they have been lost in the sands of the Atlantic ocean,
only to be summoned by a weeping which is
the reality of my bloodkind.
gentle daily awakenings of the blood that has become
thinner than water, and bitter.

OUTLIERS AND STANDARD DEVIANTS

$$(\mu \pm 3 \sigma)$$

Elisha Prather

them always trying
to make the statistic outta you
outta me outta us
(but don't you let them trick you)

always them telling me
girl you the outlier, we don't count you
you outside the normal distribution
(they think I don't know that mean I way ahead of their curve)

they telling us we don't count together
or away from each other
they say there not so many like us
(shows how much they know)

psst! hey little man! looks like one outlier made another
tell me now what the probability of that?

at our schools so many like us
them won't count us cuz we gonna skew the data
not enough of us. no. too many
(we screw their data cuz they are not resistant to outliers)

everybody know that detection of outliers
gotta be based on the assumption of normality
that right there their problem
(most of us inside three standard deviations anyhow)

BODY SUSHI

Kaye Chew



Kaye Chew, *Body Sushi Costume*, 2008

Nyotaimori, “female body sushi,” is the practice of eating sushi or sashimi from the body of a naked woman, typically Asian. This sexual fetish is a subdivision of food play and is gaining worldwide popularity. I encountered this practice while researching ideas for my *Yellowtail* concept and was struck by how the woman becomes not just a means of serving the food but the food itself. *Yellowtail* is a working concept in which I try to explore the gendered power dynamics that play into consuming the Other and the ways in which this hypersexual exotification contributes to global trends such as sex tourism, culinary colonialism and interracial personal relationships between, specifically, White men and Asian women. I constructed this piece with handmade felt sushi pieces and a nude leotard as a contribution to the FIA art show. The piece initially began as a hanging wall piece and, later, a performance piece that I wore to compel more people to ask questions and for me to explain my intentions. I wore the piece again as a Halloween costume. However, I was no longer in a gender conscious art space and could feel the piercing racialized and sexualized gaze as I embodied the orientalist fantasy that I was trying to deconstruct. I have felt this gaze many times before, and rather than becoming numb to it as a seemingly normal everyday experience, being mentally lazy was not an option. *Yellowtail* and *Body Sushi Costume* have shaped my scholarly endeavors in food studies and transnational gender studies, and have helped me better understand, heal and become whole again.

BREAKING UP IS HARD TO DO

Andrew Abundiz

To the Women and Gender Studies Department,

Considering the intensity, the affirming and negating effects of the past couple of years, it should come as little or perhaps, no surprise that I have had enough; the time has come for me to move on. I decided to tell you this in a letter because, in large part due to you, I have realized that I am a writer, and expressing myself through the medium of the epistle lends itself, in my opinion, to an easier arrival at truths. Truths are, of course, something you taught me to question, and my use of them now is not meant to signify that I have disregarded the knowledge, itself another concept you taught me to treat with suspicion, that you have imparted to me. Rather, my use of these two concepts, indeed my reclamation of them, is meant to convey my current need to separate myself, at least as best I can, from you. And I ask that you not take this need for detachment as a repudiation of our time together. For as much as I loved and treasure that time, the emotional and mental investment you continue to ask of me is too great. I am, after all, only human and my capacities, though expanded through your rigorous demands, still have their limits. Also, it is through these expanded capacities that I can see where your limitations lie. For example, you question the will to institutionalization, yet there you are, fully institutionalized and stationary in that position. The violence of constant deconstruction, tearing things down without building something new, the violence in the imagery you use, a person can only handle so much of it. And that consistent questioning of any and everything that you're so good at that has rubbed off on me can drive a person to a state of crippling insecurity. What used to be a moment of innocence, such as my ballet class for example, becomes, with that taxing burden of questioning, a moment to mediate and consider the heteronormative gender representations of the dance as well as its highly classed and privileged histories, not to mention its orientalist naming practices. At the same time, and dialectics being another valuable lesson you've taught me, this questioning, despite its killjoy qualities, is thrilling, liberating and induces a certain type of pleasure in me. The mental stimulation produced by what you have taught me has at times reached such a high level, I question how many subsequent relationships will be able to meet that level, if any do meet it at all. The challenge then becomes learning how to take what we've had and implement it in a way that materializes my personal development that you have undoubtedly influenced and that solidifies my break from you at the same time. It is a challenge that will certainly be difficult, and the irony of using your tools and techniques to get over you has not gone unnoticed, but it is a challenge that has become necessary to undertake and so, it has become necessary to say goodbye.

Sincerely,
Andrew

CONTRIBUTORS

Kate Abarbanel is a poet, gymnastics instructor, zine writer, radical dreamer with an overabundant, overflowing (often overwhelming) imagination. She enjoys singing at the top of her lungs, doing cartwheels, hugs, transcendental conversations, and shouting her poems on the corner of 16th and Mission. She is inspired by riot grrrl music, bell hooks, Maris Bustamante, Assata Shakur, Angela Davis and Marilyn Monroe.

Andrew Abundiz fancies himself to be a writer, a cook and a ballerina that dreams of writing, cooking and dancing his way to a queer utopia where butterflies, sunshine and rainbows are never in short supply. For his first cultural project, he hopes to develop his love for Mariah Carey, Selena and Gloria Anzaldúa into a revolutionary disidentification.

Vanessa Bachik is a feminist artist activist, continuously seeking to build coalitions and meet lifelong accomplices. Her ridiculously hopeful outlook on life is fueled by her desire to cultivate change through political and social consciousness via visual and performance art. She is inspired by the conscious creativity of Saul Williams and Maris Bustamante, enjoys writing poetry in Dolores Park, and can be easily identified by her purple hair.

Melissa Bryant thinks David Bowie said it best, "turn and face the strange."

Micah Card lives in a room with a cat named Yoko, her books, and a drawer full of glitter. She is a feminist artist, works with kids, and also sells sex toys. This year she dabbled in performance art and saw the Hannah Montana movie by herself on opening day.

Kaye Chew cannot seem to describe herself in two to three eloquently articulate and epic sentences. However, all she can say is that she continually aspires to think hard, love hard, cook hard and eat hard.

Mary DeLorenzo is a Virgoean earth sign who LOVES radical feminism, macrame, live music, southern italian culture, full moons, the beatles, doc martins, crystals and their properties, experiencing new things, strawberry incense, and her beautiful bearded dragon Mojo! When she's not deconstructing the patriarchal workings of society, she can be found gallivanting the city in search of faeries. Life is complete with Joni Mitchell records and any book by Angela Davis.

Kelly Guajardo believes her women studies education has functioned as a sort of magic marker that when applied to the world has the power to render hidden meaning suddenly visible.

Kathy Jacobson didn't realize her small town nature until she moved from the big windy city to sf. She clumsily dances through starred days and frolics among her favorite kitties, one tabby and one spiked

Jason Leach is a lifelong learner. His interests include: food & social justice, queer studies, and empowering youth through radical pedagogy. He also likes riding bicycles.

Melissa Manzone is a mother of four beautiful children, determined, strong willed, and ready to take on the world. I love people and places, I love giving,

caring, and sharing. I love all that makes me laugh and smile.

Mara Mayock will be finishing up her undergraduate degree at San Francisco State and heading off into the sunset with her dog, Kira. Nothing is better than a cup of tea, a pair of slippers, and woman's best friend by your side.

Allison Mingus enjoys her life as a domestic feminist—baking delicious treats and fantasizing about the destruction of our oppressive institutions. She plans to spark social change through education and become a teacher, and she has many great examples to follow from the department of Women and Gender Studies at SFSU.

Hui Ling Ni found out that her name has different versions in English. In passport, it is Ni, Hui Ling. In student visa is Ni Hui Ling. The one in student ID is Hui-Ling Ni and the one she put on her assignment is Huiling Ni. However, beside the name in Chinese character, she believes none of them are her name. They are just a symbol to represent her and she does not care about how you spell and pronounce it. It does not really matter for her.

Alex Nichols: Carpe Diem.

Lauren Perlman loves resistance, queerness, feminism, deconstructing patriarchy and hetero-normativity everyday, sewing, making cardboard journals with thread and duct tape, telling stories, peace, revolution, positivity, growth, travel, singing and challenging systems of oppression. She feels empowered and inspired by radical and fearless revolutionaries who shake up the system for social justice!

Elisha Prather was born on mid-summer's eve in Berkeley, California during the infamous Summer of Love. She lives in San Francisco with her son on the eastern border of La Mission, and hopes to emerge from her mid-life crisis with a Masters degree in Social Work firmly in hand.

Erin Prendergast seriously enjoys good conversations, reminiscing, frequent alone time, critical reflection, active learning, stretching and skateboarding early in the AM. She has been inspired by *Cunt* by Igna Muscio and thinks you might enjoy it too.

Jessica Sederquist yearns for queer revolution, not liberal inclusion! She used to be a penguin in her past life and desperately pines to talk politics in bed with Rachel Maddow.

Kelly Sorensen enjoys being a curious feminist, singing in any capacity, frequenting feministing.com, obsessing about the weather, daydreaming about Alton Brown, and playing board games. She believes that when it comes to how you live your life, if you don't laugh out loud, sing in the shower, enjoy your body, give love, encourage yourself, and stick to your guns ... you're doing it wrong.

Lauren von Koss firmly believes that a Women and Gender Studies degree is like money in the bank (in an anti-capitalist, transgressive sort of way). And now she will extend her queer-ing tentacles into spaces of juicy, lovely, unimagined possibilities.

Stephanie Waits: "she need not acquiesce; she can criticize"—Virginia Woolf.