



VOL 5

▲ WARNING

This publication contains insights, passion, and resistance. Exposure may be beneficial when contents are thoughtfully digested. May cause extreme irritation or disruption of social constructions. Frequent use is highly recommended.

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

For more information about the undergraduate major and minor, and the graduate degree in Women and Gender Studies at SFSU, please go to www.sfsu.edu/~wgsdept

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BURDEN OF CONSCIOUSNESS STREET

HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL

FERROUSISM

Farita Toney

On almost any given Friday night in the neighborhood where my sister lives, the streets are comprised of excited party goers ready to get their weekend started at a local club, among friends and family, or hanging out on their front lawns. But we are not talking about the suburbs—we're talking about the Mohr House Acorn Projects in West Oakland, Ca. Bustling with young African American men and women, the Mohr House night life is influenced by a drug-infested legacy that has remained ideal, in turn making you cool, have "swagger", and be in the "know".

One weekend on a Friday night, no different than any other, I was visiting my sister who lives in the Acorn Projects. And the experience I had that night is not unique to this location. That Friday evening I decided to buy some soda to wash down the pizza my sister and I were going to eat. Even though the store was a two minute walk down the street, caution and fear made me second guess my judgment. I felt silly for thinking I should drive instead of walk. In addition, I felt cautious because I did not want to deal with the harassment that was bound to come from whoever was hanging out on the street. What's more, I felt fear because I knew that if there were guys loitering outside the store that at least one of them would ask for my phone number. If I said no, I would risk getting called a bitch, being humiliated, or worse, being raped. I call this the burden of consciousness because "part of what made it most difficult was the absence of a language to get across the complexity of the lived crises and often unspoken causes behind the conflicts" (Alexander and Mohanty 216) that I experienced. In other words, I did not want to be afraid to walk down

the street in a neighborhood populated with people who looked like me—young and Black. However, the consciousness and awareness I had about women, men, and violence, and about America's patriarchal views about women made me question if walking to the store at 9 pm at night was the "safe" thing to do. The theory and concept that best explains this rationale is that of sexual terrorism, a term coined in a short essay by Carole J. Sheffield, who defines this concept as "a system by which males frighten and by frightening, control and dominate females" (110). One may still wonder after having read this definitive term, "What the heck does that mean?" Frankly, sexual terrorism depicts how we can easily presume the wrong place at the wrong time and easily blame the victim for not knowing her place. This is not to say that all individuals who reside in the Acorns, or all men for that matter, are individuals seeking to harass and rape women, but my experience was all too telling: even when I tried to embrace my community, I still need watch my back. Furthermore, I knew that because I live in a society that has learned to normalize, trivialize, and desensitize violence against women, it is up to me to make sure I am not in the *wrong place at the wrong time*. People do not realize that behavior of this kind is something that is actually happening in women's everyday lives. What's more is that sexual and street harassment of women has become too normal that it is not considered negative when a guy cat-calls at a woman. When a plethora of women share the same thoughts of fear of harassment from men and in most instances the possibility of rape, the burden of consciousness becomes more daunting. Though many women may not express this shared mentality as a threat inflicted by a masculinist and patriarchal society, theories and ideals such as sexual terrorism are not farfetched.

Although it is assumed that women provoke attention and harassment based upon the time of night that they are out on the street, how they are dressed, or the neighborhood that they are in, the conclusion I have drawn is that women will be harassed by men because they are female. Usually men are not aggressively

harassed by women on the street. If anything, women are socially constructed to be discreet about the ways in which they make their interest known to men. Men may be afraid of violence inflicted upon them from other men or the police, but never has our society suggested that men are afraid of women sexually abusing them. If anything, this type of behavior is welcomed by men, but women usually have this fear—that they will almost always be harassed by men.

When I stepped outside of my sister's apartment and planted my feet onto the pavement to walk to the store, my heart dropped because, to my dismay, I was walking toward a group of five to six men who were "chillin" in front of somebody's apartment. I instantly regretted not driving because I knew what was coming next as each foot step brought me closer to them. Before I could say "Excuse me" to make my presence known so that they would let me walk through, one of the guys tried to make a move on me. "What's yo' name?" one of the guys asked as soon as he noticed I was in his presence. I answered with, "How y'all doing..." and kept walking. He followed up with "You coming back?" realizing that I did not tell him my name, because most females ignore this type of cat-calling. I responded in my protective yet clever and playful way, "I might", and then sashayed to my destination walking with confidence so that they knew I wasn't intimidated. "Whew!" I thought to myself, "I was able to walk past all of them without being called a bitch or someone pulling at my arm."

Upon my return, the same group was in the location where I'd seen them last. This time, a new guy from the group assumed that he would have better luck. This one, without saying a word, just waited until I got about two feet in front of him and held his arms out for a hug. I thought to myself, "I know he doesn't expect me to just hug him?!...Think quickly!" My steps were getting closer. Step. Step. Step. Step. "You have to say something to avoid him" I warned myself... "But whatever happens I am not huggin' him!" One might wonder why I didn't just cross the street or walk a different route. If I would have done those things they would have smelled fear, felt

rejected, or worse followed me and harassed me until I got to my sisters. I thought about walking a different route, but I made the decision that I do not have to be scared of men at 9 pm at night, especially Black men who may not know how to make a Black woman feel comfortable as she walks down the street. As my steps drew me closer to him, I walked up to this guy who now had a smile on his face because he thought he'd won me over, I faked a polite smile and moved his arms out of the way and made room for me to walk past him. His friends were intently looking to see what I would do. I said to him in my best clever and fast-talking voice, "I know you tryin' to be nice... but my momma told me not to hug strangers. But y'all have a good night". Without contest he and his friends left me alone. My sister and I enjoyed pizza as I told her what happened on what felt like a journey to make it to the store and back. Even though I have written about this particular instance, I have been harassed and called out of my name many times (by men) because I did not want to give them my number or did not feel like acting friendly to get a guy to go away. I admit that not all men are this way, but street harassment and sexual terrorism happens across the United States, not just in Oakland.

Sheffield, Carole J., "Sexual Terrorism." *Gender Violence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Eds Laura O. Toole and Jessica R. Schiffman. New York: New York University Press, 1997. 110-128.

Ford-Smith, Honor, "Ring Ding in a Tight Corner: Sister, Collective Democracy, and the Organization of Cultural Production." *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*. Eds M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty. New York: Routledge, 1997. 213-258.



A PUBLIC FAITH ANNOUNCEMENT -- THE ESSENCE OF WOMEN

Ms. Diamond Dumas

"Women unite, take back the night!"

These were the powerful words I remember being chanted in unison on the streets as we marched waving our banner of victory high over sexualized oppression!

As my voice weaved into connection between my quiet sobs, I tried to appear unaffected, failing at the attempt to push back the swelling of tears that paralyzed my vision; I clutched my roommate's hand.

Here we were women from all walks of life with one sole commonality, "faith to produce better treatment."

"For whatever is born of God overcomes this world, and our faith is the victory that overcomes this world" (1John 5:4).

Young and Old, White, Black, Yellow, Red and Brown.

*Women between the ages of seventeen to sixty-two and every shape and size,
All of us women taking the streets, marching to a different beat of drums as ONE.*

Drums which symbolized healing for each individual's spirit that was present on that victorious night. "Sisters are doing it for themselves." (Aretha Franklin)

Drums that interrupted every household's usual time of leisure and out-tuned the music playing in every bar and club down the roads.

These drums declared a Public Faith service announcement, one which caught the attention of every person's prospective ear as we shouted at the top of our lungs, that we will no longer be victims of sexual abuse, rape or violence against women!

Our Public Faith service announcement had a purpose,

Our Public Faith service announcement challenged the social construction of race, class and sexuality,

Our Public Faith service announcement exposed the dangers of misconceptions and myths of the "standard" beauty ideal and conformity, Our Public Faith service announcement broke down and dismantled stereotypes about women of color being promiscuous,

Our Public Faith service announcement declared, "That whom the son set free is free indeed" (John 8:36).

THIS IS A PUBLIC FAITH SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT.....

*Women are not powerless,
Women are not punching bags,
Women are not to be treated as sexual objects or mere commodities or toys,
Women are beautiful,
Women are intelligent,
Women are the chosen vessels for the entry of birthing life into this world,
Women are the essence of the creator's breath, a gift of compassion and help.*



SO YOU'RE A WOMEN & GENDER

STUDIES MAJOR?!

Renée Drandell

When entering the field of Women and Gender Studies, never did I imagine the nature of questions directed towards me of *why* Women and Gender Studies and even more inquisitively of *what exactly is it?* Only since my transfer to the Women and Gender Studies program at San Francisco State University have these questions become most prominent to outsiders inquiring about my scholastic career. Despite frequent frustrations, Women and Gender Studies has given me the unique opportunity to inform and educate outsiders about what exactly this major *is*.

Maybe it's because WGS seeps from my pores, a certain glow that only other WGS majors can pinpoint which leads to the inevitable questioning, teasing, making fun of my beloved major from the outside world: "So uh... you study women? Me too," has been one of the most frequently asked questions in respect to my field of study along with "What exactly *is* it? Do you sit around and talk about books?" followed by "Lesbian studies, huh?"

I am here to confirm each outsider's inquiries related to Women and Gender Studies. Yes, we do study women—particularly the social discourses around the categories of "women," "woman," and "womanhood" and how the definition of each one changes in relation to humanity of a particular history and space (but of course, when I use the term "humanity" I am referring to the male construction of how to treat women as humans). Even more specifically we talk about "women" in relation to womanhood and how oppressive this term actually is in reality due to its marginalization of varying identities (those identities straying from the white, heterosex-

ual, middle-class "woman"). More so, we speak of troubling womanhood and even attempting to deconstruct it.

And you guessed it. We sit around and talk about books—dense theoretical books based on and around intersectionality, feminism, *Africana womanism*, heteronormativity and the heterosexual matrix, genderqueer studies, coalition building, dynamics of the oppressed and the oppressors, deconstructing binaries, resistance, and the social constructs of the human body just to name a few subject matters.

And what about lesbian studies, you ask? Sure, we talk about the myriad facets of sexuality. However we talk about sexuality in terms of how sex is raced, race is sexed, gender is sexualized, sex is gendered, gender is classed, and class is raced. Too broad still? Let me narrow it down to Foucault's take on sexuality which leads to all signs pointing to sexuality as being a discourse used as a form of power leading to sexism, racism, heterosexism, and classism just to name a few: "What is important is that sex was not only a question of sensation and pleasure, of law and interdiction, but also of the true and the false" (76).

"What is Women and Gender Studies?" you ask again. It is the essence of our very being as a societal whole that most of us are not even aware of. It is the way you think of yourself in relation to the world. It is the way your parents learned from their parents and even their parents before to raise you to be an active male and a passive female. It is the way binaries such as these have maintained themselves over time. However it is within such maintenance that resistance lies—inviting you to deconstruct this.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1*. New York: Vintage Books, 1978.

A WOMANIST'S PROSE.

Kescha S. Mason

For the Womanists in my life who served as inspiration... Brinda, Gwendolyn, Karen, Dr. Spriggs, Valaida, ReWanda, Chestene, EverJean, my sisters, "sistas", professors and the littlest future Womanist, Jaiyah-Shalon, this wouldn't have been possible without you...thank you for your love, strength, encouragement and support throughout this journey!

As a Women and Gender Studies major I have been allowed the opportunity through feminist/womanist thought to find my voice, my strength and respect not only for myself as a woman of color, but for all women of color who consciously and subconsciously embody the feminist/womanist spirit. When my journey began I saw myself as a feminist attempting to do my part in addressing the many intersecting oppressions that women of color face, but because much of feminist discourse was from a eurocentric and western perspective, I felt as though women of color and their concerns were left out of these discussions. I found myself questioning, what about me, what about women like me? This was until I was introduced to transnational feminism, which includes women of color in the conversation by allowing women of color to speak for themselves and from their own lived experiences, and address these experiences in their own terms and from their own perspectives. Through transnational feminism I was introduced to the concept of womanism, which for me was an awakening and a breath of fresh air in feminist thought. Womanism is inclusive of women of color, and allows women of color the ability to bring to voice their lived experiences and concerns in dealing with the intersecting oppressions of racism, sexism and patriarchy. For me womanism is important in order to help women of color feel connected to each other, their families,

and communities; it is important so that women of color feel empowered and visible in a society that otherwise renders them invisible. Through feminist/womanist thought I found understanding in what it means to a woman, regardless of race, class and ethnicity. My transnational feminist/womanist journey has given me the ability of being able to come to voice in addressing the issues and concerns that women of color face. My journey ends now not as just a feminist, but as a womanist as well: through this journey I have found pride, empowerment and the beauty in what it means to be a woman of color, feminist and womanist, standing firm on the backs of the many black women before me, who had intense spirituality and belief systems that were so profound, so deep, and unconscious they themselves at times could not recognize the richness and power held in their personal struggles. For me this is the foundation of being a feminist and a womanist.

So, you may ask, what is a womanist? The answer is best found in the Womanist Prose of Alice Walker's *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* (1983). Walker, eloquently and artistically uses words to define, give life, rhythm, soul and spirit to shaping the woman of color, her lived experiences, and what it means to be a womanist.

A "Womanist"...derived from the ole' down south term "womanish", opposite of "girlish," i.e. frivolous, irresponsible, not serious. She is a black feminist or feminist of color. The black folk expression of mothers to female children, "you acting womanish," i.e., like a woman. Usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous or the willful behavior the black woman signifies. Wanting to know more and in greater depth than is considered "good" for one. Interested in grown-up doings. Acting grown up. Being grown up. Interchangeable with another black folk expression: "You trying to be grown." Responsible. In charge. Serious. A Womanist is also, a woman who loves other women, sexually and/or nonsexually. Appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's

emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counterbalance of laughter), and women's strength. Sometimes loves individual men, sexually and or/ nonsexually. Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically, for health. Traditionally universalist, as in: "Mama, why are we brown, pink, and yellow, and our cousins are white, beige, and black? The answer: Well, you know the colored race is just like a flower garden, with every color flower represented." Traditionally capable, as in: "Mama, I'm walking to Canada and I'm taking you and a bunch of other slaves with me." Reply: "It wouldn't be the first time." A womanist loves music, it's the music that allows the soul to be unleashed and artistically speak, and relate. Loves dance for its expressive rhythms set the soul free. Loves the moon. Loves the Spirit for it is what has brought "us" this far. Loves love, food and roundness. Loves struggle...did you get that? LOVES STRUGGLE, as in: "What we goin' do? We got problems, issues and loads of historical baggage!" Reply: "Girl, it don't mean nothin', just keep prayin, we been doin' it since the beginning and it ain't nothin GOD can't fix." Loves the folk with all the baggage. And most of all, LOVES HERSELF, REGARDLESS.

The Womanist is the symbol of the colored woman, black, yellow, and red woman's lived experience, it signals an appreciation for the richness, complexity, uniqueness, and struggles involved in being black and female in a society that is hostile to blackness and womanhood. *Yes, Womanist is to Feminist as purple is to lavender.*

Walker, Alice. *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*. New York, NY.: Hartcourt Brace Jovanovich. 1983. (xi-xii).



POP LOVE

Susete Machado

I love to drive. I especially love to drive and listen to the radio, singing my little heart out until my throat hurts. I *hate* that I love to sing along to these songs. These mainstream, consumer-driven, one-note, recycled message, heteronormative songs that a Women and Gender Studies major should just not love (or at least that's what I thought). I made the right choice in my academic career. Although I am one of the quieter ones in most classes, Mohanty, Crenshaw, Beauvoir, Enloe, Paglia, Goldman, Butler, and others will forever be my heroines, but oh how I enjoy a night at home when my roommate and I simply sit in front of the T.V. and watch reality shows, talk about who is dating who, and what she just bought to wear for one of many outings that upcoming weekend. Although Women and Gender Studies has given me so many tools to deconstruct ideologies of domination, sexism, post-colonialism, subjectivity, capitalism and "sameness" in the media, it has also seeded a feeling of hypocrisy and shame inside me every time I turn on a T.V. or buy a new blouse or even read a book for fun. With the risk of oversimplifying, I felt like I was turning my back on feminism when I enjoyed a rap song, or thought, "Yes, I could lose a couple pounds". What I've come to realize is

that although I will never throw away my television, or actively lose touch with popular culture, it's really about connections, and how we use them; not to isolate one world from another, that is, the WGS world from the pop culture world. There must be a discussion of knowledge from both spheres but not in opposition to one another.

There is still a lot of weight in what Susan Faludi spoke about in *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*, and what others continue to discuss about popular culture, that the media was the first to warp the perception of the feminist agenda and that it actually caused more separation and chaos than it did unity and progress. Yes, the media has an evil side, one that that has caused too many problems to count, and that evil side should unapologetically be taken seriously. However, the media is a connection between the academic WGS routine and actual progress; the media is the connector, not the obstacle. This is not to suggest that we go along with all the manipulations that the media imposes, but to go from the inside out, to work with it so as to change together. Most families have access to a television, radio or a computer, so modern families are well equipped to join any coalition, especially one that WGS continues to push.

There needs to be an appreciation of current popular culture, at the very least as a new angle to approach grassroots movements, coalition building, and further progress. Knowing who the latest artist is and what kind of television shows are playing might seem pointless, but it will lead you to be able to relate with most people. You certainly don't have to prefer Lady Gaga's new album or religiously watch episodes of *Lost* but knowing what is out there and how it is affecting or influencing our cultures could surprisingly help in figuring out new methods of revolution. It's easy to get lost in critical theories, academic jargon and impressing your

classmates with big ideas, and it's understandable that not everyone has such a passion for dissecting the media in relation to WGS. Even if we just stop disregarding it as meaningless, or less important, we will open our scope and acquire new lenses through which to look.

Faludi, Susan. *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*. New York: Crown Publishing, 1991.



Reading poems over her shoulder

None so beautiful

As her hair

- Glenda Green

- Gender: Just an Act

William Norling

One's gender is often thought to be a concrete and biological component of one's identity. However, gender is a discursively created social category that is fluid, evolving, and performed repeatedly. That is to say that gender constitutes specific social norms, beliefs, and assumptions attributed to an individual's identity, yet the categories assigned as normative are mere imitations of a presumed standard. Judith Butler (1990) argues further that one's gender identity is established through repetitive acts that function to (de)stabilize gender normality by asserting: "and if the 'I' is the effect of a certain repetition, then there is no 'I' that precedes the gender that it is said to perform; the repetition, and the failure to repeat produce a string of performances that constitute and contest the coherence of that 'I'"(18). For Butler, gender and identity formation are linked to repeated acts and performances, suggesting that no *a priori* identity or gender exists. One performs gender and is not biologically engendered.

Gender performances uphold and resist hegemonic discourses surrounding gender/sexual norms. For example, drag kings/queens perform gender roles that are not ascribed to them by dominant gender expectations. Performing drag demonstrates the fluid and unstable nature of gender categories and how they are performed with or against social norms through repetitive acts and displays. An analysis of Butler's theory of 'the constructed self' reveals that there is no difference between a man or woman's pursuit to act *like a man* because both individuals are *performing* an idea of a man, an ideological assumption or belief of what that idea comprises, reinforced by a majority/dominant culture. Like gender, one is also not born with inhe-

rently feminine/masculine, heterosexual/homosexual, sexually active/passive characteristics; rather, one performs social ideals. Both the drag queen/king and prom queen are performative acts.

Notions of femininity and masculinity are also performances that are discursively linked to gender. Take for example, the colors pink and blue. Western Society has appropriated the color pink with feminine and blue with masculine, and constructed masculinity as inherent to men, and femininity as womanly and inherent to women. Pink is constructed as feminine in the same way that femininity is constructed as womanly. There is nothing biologically feminine about the color pink, just as there is nothing biologically feminine about being a woman. Any individual, regardless of gender, can wear the color blue and is no more masculine than anyone else wearing the color blue. The idea of femininity/masculinity can be worn or performed by any individual, highlighting the importance of performance in constructing gender identity.

If gender is a socially/discursively constructed category, then there can be no original or objective performance. The idea of what constitutes a man or a woman can never be fully accomplished because there is no completion of one's performance of gender. To illustrate this point compare Marilyn Monroe and James Dean. Monroe constructed herself as overly feminine, while Dean constructed himself as hyper-masculine. Each constructed their gender based on cultural interpretations of masculinity and femininity. Dean could have done something to make himself more masculine in the same way that Monroe could make herself more feminine; however neither would actually become masculine or feminine. Ideas of masculinity and femininity are beliefs about certain behaviors, mannerisms, and attitudes that function to fulfill perceived ideas of gender. Thus, Monroe and Dean represent an idea of masculinity/femininity,

yet their performances never transgress. Rather they re-enforce gender norms. Butler systematically dismisses the idea of an original form of gender, stating, “the notion of gender parody defended [in drag] does not assume that there is an original which such parodic identities imitate. Indeed, the parody is of the very notion of an original; just as the psychoanalytic notion of gender identification is constituted by a fantasy of a fantasy”(188). The parody of drag performances functions to reflect the parody of non-drag performances, situating gender as an understanding of what makes a man or woman. If Dean decided to pursue femininity he would use similar beliefs and tactics as Monroe, in which both individuals pursue a belief or theoretical concept of gender.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

GET ME BODIED

DECONSTRUCTING LIBERAL FEMINIST MEDIA#

Brendan McHugh

Last spring, Seal Press released a new addition to the academic series “Seal Studies,” entitled *Men and Feminism* by Shira Tarrant, PhD. While contemplating Tarrant’s book I also read an interview with Tarrant that I found on *BitchMedia*, the cyberspace component to *Bitch* magazine. While Ellen Papazian’s interview with Tarrant is strong, the opening paragraph to the interview troubles me. The interview opens with some questions for the reader:

“We all know that feminist guy, right? The one who successfully sideswiped years of Neanderthal behavior to forge a path to guyville uniquely his own. And I’m not talking about the

guy who wears a “This Is What a Feminist Looks Like” T-shirt and calls it a day. I’m talking about the men in our lives who acknowledge the feminine within them every day, without shame, and who stand up for women’s rights as easily as they stand up to pee greet you. These are men who understand the value of feminism and of doing feminism to better girls’ and women’s lives in a culture as waywardly misogynistic as ours can be.”

(<http://bitchmagazine.org/post/six-questions-on-men-and-feminism-for-author-shira-tarrant>)

So what does this mean for me? I am a feminist and I acknowledge the femme side of myself right? And I can easily stand up for women’s rights as easily as I stand up to pee, I mean greet, everyday people? Have I successfully sideswiped years of Neanderthal behavior? Am I in guyville now? Do I go beyond a commercialized and consumable form of logo-ized t-shirt feminism? To say the least, I was offended by Papazian’s witticisms, but I do not blame her and they are definitely not the most offensive thing I have ever read. How could I ever expect such writing NOT to appear this day and age when equally, and definitely more so, offensive and sexist writings appear about women at every turn in this particular society. That being said, I do think it is important to remain critical of what Papazian’s writing is reinscribing: an essential difference between women and men, and most of all a belief that feminism is solely focused on a struggle with a monolithic sexism. For one thing, I am a queer man and a feminine one at that. It is not necessarily true that being feminine or embracing femininity automatically means that I embrace feminism and femininity is not something that automatically equals a dedication to feminist struggle, even for “women”. It also seems that she is referring to straight-identified cisgender male, with no credit given to femme men or trans-

identified males who are queer and femme. This erasure on her part, and in a way on Shira Tarrant's part in her book, shows that heterosexism is still a subtle though serious issue in feminist media. Feminine men and queer men are not automatically feminist, just as women are not automatically feminist. Women should not be reduced to their genitals nor should their feminist politics. The same also goes for male-identified individuals, because a "vagina=woman" framework does not necessarily hold true and neither does "penis=man." This continual return to a focus on men taming their "Neanderthal" instincts, as well as alluding to some sort of "battle between the sexes," re-centers the need for an intersectional analysis of this movement as opposed to a liberal feminist agenda. This type of dialogue around gendered relationships between bodies reinforces the idea that feminism is strictly the domain of dealing with patriarchy, as opposed to fighting racism, homo/transphobia, and, dare I add, capitalism. Though it might seem to be a bit of nitpicking, I find it necessary to look at such a minute example of essentialism and racialized language when describing transgressive acts in connection to gendered bodies. Why? Because for one, it is a struggle that I am proud to be a part of, to stand up for social justice and recognition of marginalized peoples; for another reason it is not all that easy for me to just take part of this movement as easily as I urinate. If mocking "male" participation in feminist movements is the way of going about fighting patriarchy, something is off. Especially if the vision of a male feminist that Papazian conjures up is straight and cisgender, the whole discourse ignores that feminism should also fight homophobia. To act as if embracing femininity or being a feminine queer man is easy in this society is just a tad ridiculous, unrealistic, and erases my own personal life experiences, experiences that lead me to feminism. If this movement is based on alliance and

coalitional politics, much work remains to be done within such a movement, while Bernice Johnson Reagon states in her monumental work, "Coalitional Politics: Turning the Century", to be aware of single issue people. I would add that these "single issue people" (363) tend to be folks some of whom are liberal feminists, who are fine with the system but simply want a few tweaks made here and there. They are huge changes no doubt, but are they enough? This tendency to see feminism as a place of focusing on the independence of women in this economy is one such instance of a single minded liberal feminist issue that can be damaging in alliance/coalitional politics. I use my own personal experience as evidence, but I recognize that experience is in and of itself is also a form of knowledge production which is socially constructed. But, I use this experience as a form of oppositional politics against the identity-politic laden and self-engrossed liberal feminist agenda. Feminism is not just about men vs. women or women escaping men, it is about creating a just landscape for all gendered AND raced AND classed bodies. The road to such a future is not through a focus on the innate differences among us but the realization that such differences are socially constructed and can change to benefit those that are marginalized in this neoliberal capitalist white supremacist patriarchal state. Feminism does not lead men or males to their individual unique paths in guyville, it should lead us all on a unique path to a more humane world.

Reagon, Bernice Johnson, "Coalitional Politics: Turning the Century," in *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, Ed. Barbara Smith. New York: Kitchen Table Press, 1983. 356-368.



DRESSED TO OPPRESS

Valerie Galindo

Because gender is a social construction, when we closely examine what have become normative forms of femininity or femaleness, we see that women struggle to represent themselves to their liking. So how is one able to navigate and develop an identity of one's own when so much emphasis is placed on visuals rather than individuals?

As my course of studies has demonstrated, the type of labor a woman performs often dictates the amount of agency she has regardless if it is in the public or domestic space. Over time, her individuality is ignored and she is represented based on society and

visual culture's conclusions that the duties a woman performs, in turn, determines her race, class, and gender. Likewise, while more recent feminists have attempted to "clean up" the spills and setbacks of our second wave, I've noticed that a failure to understand the intersections of an individual's identity creates hierarchies amongst women. For example, some western feminists feel the need to liberate "third world" women who are in no need of saving. Therefore, I would like to challenge the myth of the anti-feminist and oh-so-oppressed-housewife through the deconstruction and reconstruction of her uniform.

As a naturalized symbol of compliance, discipline, conformity and control, this uniform signifies sociopolitical unity and regulation. Nevertheless, by wearing an anything-but-traditional uniform, the piece "Dressed To Oppress?" highlights a free and independent attitude that counters the spectators' spoon-fed idea of what *traditional* means. Furthermore, as commentary on women's labor in the domestic space, the piece "Dressed To Oppress?" attempts to debunk social misconstructions of representation and feminist hierarchies. The inspiration for this piece can be found under the kitchen sink, on the bathroom shelves and pantry cabinets. Likewise, inspiration can be found in the sweat and pride of hard work and meaningful labor. Adorned with everyday household products, the woman has literally become her work. While hazardous to say the least, bold chemical labels make up her uniform in an attempt to rinse away attitude, eliminate identity and dilute self worth, but that's clearly not the case. Just as the labels have been stripped away from their products, so can social labels which are placed upon the individual. By reworking and rethinking the stereotypical housewife or maid's uniform, the woman has resisted social constructions thus regains her sense of agency.

Deconstruct This! Contributors

Volume V
Spring 2010



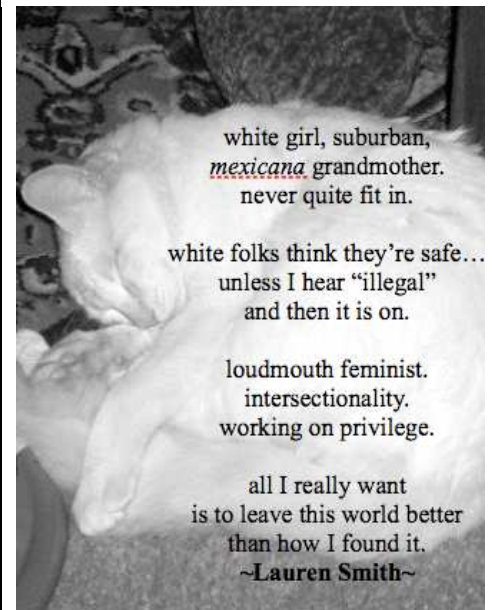
Renee Drandell
Mountain Scaler/ Singer/
Songwriter Feminist



Natasha L. Simpson has a zeal for feminism and will complete a bachelor's degree in Women and Gender Studies in May 2010. She worked for the Women of Color Resource Center (Oakland, California) and at the Journal of Homosexuality (San Francisco, California). She enjoys reading, analyzing out loud, cooking (and eating) vegan foods, and sleeping when she can – still not a graduate yet!

Tamara Thrasher is incredibly thankful she pursued a degree in Women and Gender Studies. Her wide range of Women and Gender Studies-related interests includes transgender studies, gender and film, women and work, and the prison industrial complex. Her other interests include baking, good books, good coffee, and walks on Ocean Beach with a little dog named Otis.

William Norling thinks that Michel Foucault said it best: “where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power. Should it be said that one is always ‘inside’ power, there is no ‘escaping’ it, there is no absolute outside where it is concerned.” You are already part of the power, will you become part of the resistance?



white girl, suburban,
mexicana grandmother.
never quite fit in.

white folks think they're safe...
unless I hear "illegal"
and then it is on.

loudmouth feminist.
intersectionality.
working on privilege.

all I really want
is to leave this world better
than how I found it.
~Lauren Smith~

Farita Toney--I am not sure how many African Americans from Oakland are Women and Gender Studies majors or if there are any from my particular demographic who will be traveling to Ghana, West Africa to study abroad. Born and raised in Oakland, CA., a city where people do not expect graduating college students, I look back on my life and think “wow, according to statistics, I'm not supposed to be here.” I know that could never stop my drive to achieve my greatest aspirations and goals. After reading “Sexual Terrorism” in high school, I knew I had to learn more about women's complex issues. Now embarking upon my journey to Ghana, I am a proud Women and Gender Studies major.

Lisa Taylor—As a devoted feminist I have been passionate about Women and Gender Studies for quite some time. I take pride in this major and the work that I have done. This major has motivated and even frustrated me over the years, but I have no regrets. There have been so many positive women influences and figures in my life that have affected my learning and experiences; from people like my mother and college professors to musicians, artists, and fashion designers. Each influence has contributed different things to my life and I am grateful for everything that I have taken away from them and my learning throughout. Most of all I am excited to graduate and to take what I have learned while studying into a career.

My given name is **Quanita Dumas**. My spiritual and God given name is **Diamond**. I came into the Women & Gender Studies major by accident, but I've come to understand that everything happens for a reason and the hand of God is leading your path. I am a Christian woman first, who has had her share of trials and tribulations but have come to cherish the experiences and the growth of all. Upon graduation I am going to attend law school and someday be known as Juvenile Court Judge Diamond Dumas, the judge who believes in second chances and forgiveness in her judgment. So watch out world because I'm coming full force and know that I can do anything except FAIL! Because the God I serve (Jesus Christ) is all-conquering and so am I.

Inderjit Pandher's family is from the Fijian Islands. She is bilingual in Hindi and English. She is very family-oriented, coming from a family that consists of nine people. She loves her family very dearly and thanks them for contributing to her awesome personality and character. She is a feminist because of her role and the treatment of women in her culture has impacted her life and path. Inder wrote her DT! poem as a reflection of non-profit industrial complex to highlight the exploitive nature of capitalism.



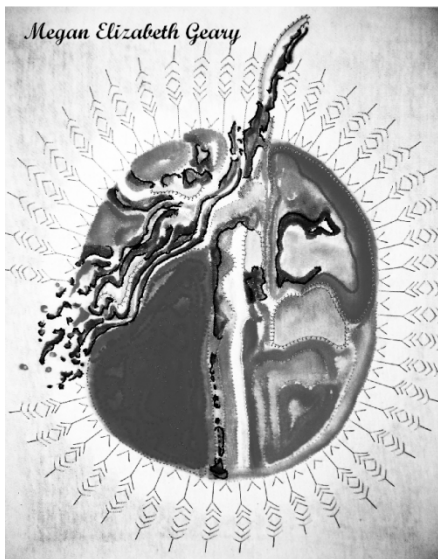
Kescha S. Mason--28 years ago my Father passed through these doors completing one phase of his journey in higher learning. 28 years later I follow in his foot steps, FINALLY completing this phase of my own journey...In Honor of you, Dad...

Susete Machado will be graduating in Fall 2010 as a Women and Gender Studies major. She intends to continue on to graduate school emphasizing on either law or literature. She hopes to continue her work with the non-profit About-Face and find work in the non-profit sector with a concentration on women and the media/pop culture. Lastly, she will continue to use Emma Goldman's wise words as her personal motto: "If I can't dance—I don't want to be part of your revolution."

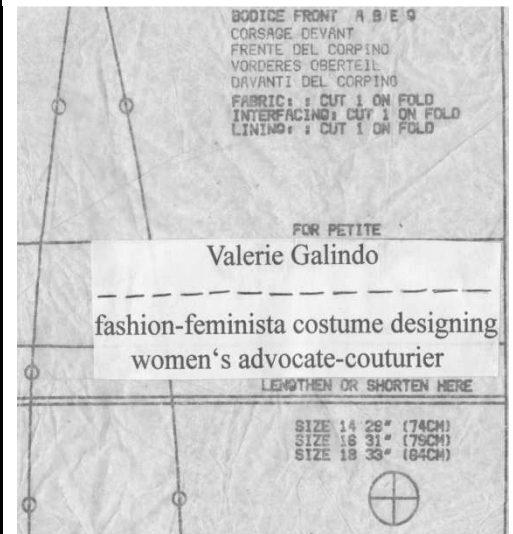
Glenda Green is a bleeding heart liberal, vegetarian, and video game geek that seeks to blend her love of technology, education, equality, environmental justice, and anthropology in her feminist theory and life. Whew!

Talia Jacobson—"The world is before you and you need not take it or leave it as it was when you came in."—James Baldwin

Kristy Hall is a graduating senior this May. After departing from her career as an undergraduate student, she plans on applying to a grad program in nursing next year. In the mean time, she will be studying for the GRE, practicing her Spanish, and learning to ride a cruiser motorcycle.



Zasharah Araujo loves to read anything written by Cornell West and bell hooks, listen to music, be around people she loves and learn about the lives of others. Zasharah Araujo is grateful to be Alive and honored to be graduating from San Francisco State University.



Monica Siverson is: a sister, friend, problem solver, careful, therapist, caring, funny, stingy, giving, quiet, loyal, hard-working, daughter, hard-headed, silly, feminist, blue-eyed, woman, vegetarian, scared of spiders, a horrible house-keeper, animal friendly, an x-phile, not a fighter, not watching animal planet, whiney, supportive, thoughtful, random, and always transforming.

Brendan McHugh...is so serious he can't even begin to imagine telling you how he is a 1st semester senior who daydreams and plans and imagines what a just future would look like for all people, while patiently waiting on tables and getting them breadsticks. This is not an intentional advertisement for a corporate restaurant.

Deborah Cohler is the instructor for WGS 690 and an associate professor of Women and Gender Studies. She also teaches courses on queer studies, war, and transnational feminist cultural studies. When not in the classroom, she researches the role of gender and sexual ideologies on the "home fronts" of World War I and the current War on Terror.

DOS IDENTIDADES

Zasharah Araujo

Growing up in a home that embraced two cultures and two languages was a gift; a gift I actually did not begin to appreciate until recently. I always felt different from the other kids growing up. I had a weird name, a weird look, and a unusual, upbringing. However, I had a mother at home who always healed my insecurities and helped me appreciate my differences. There is no love like my mother's love. My mother Rachel is the reason I am half of who I am. Indeed, Bernice Johnson Reagon states home as being, "That space while it lasts should be a nurturing space where you sift out what people are saying about you and decide who you really are" (Reagon 358). By gift of fortune, I've grown up with a mother who allowed me to do just that, to question myself in my own home and to question the racial categories imposed on my life that never made me feel like I never really fit in. Feminist theory has also allowed me to figure out my place in this world. It has also helped me realize that every woman has her own issues. I have my own and my mothers, aunts, friends all have dissimilar individual experiences that range from patriarchy, immigration, and women's liberation. We must remember that, "The women's movement has perpetuated a myth that there is some common experience that comes just cause you're women" (Reagon 370). Being a woman who is considered a woman of color in this country has allowed me to not only share my commonalities with other women, but also openly converse about our differences. I am lucky enough to live in a generation that actually allows me to appreciate my racial differences without feeling inferior. Feminist writers that ranged from bell hooks, Nikki Giovanni, Gloria Anzaldua and Cornell West helped me question my differences and fed my young

mind with critical theory. More than anything the gift of love that my mother bestows upon me allows me to overcome any obstacles that come my way and the strength to brush away those insecurities when they come my way. And for that I will never be able to thank you enough, Mom. Thank you for never giving up on me. I love you.

Reagon, Bernice Johnson, "Coalitional Politics: Turning the Century," in *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, Ed. Barbara Smith. New York: Kitchen Table Press, 1983. 356-368.



FILM REVIEW – AN EDUCATION

Tamara Thrasher

As feminists and film-lovers, we are accustomed to the films that are most accessed by mainstream audiences, films that uphold patriarchal structures, gender stereotypes and heteronormativity, and objectify the female body. Occasionally, however, a film comes along, clearly aimed for a wide audience, which allows for feminist critique. Although *An Education* (Scherfig 2009) certainly has its flaws (including a too-tidy concluding voice-over in which the protagonist implies that the erasure of her sexual history will ensure her happiness in future relationships), the plot leads the audience to a place that is both predictable and surprising, as well as to a discussion of class, gender roles, and race.

Directed by Lone Scherfig, and adapted from the memoirs of English journalist Lynn Barber by author Nick Hornby, the film tells the story of Jenny (Carey Mulligan). It is clear from the beginning that Jenny is privileged: a white woman in post-war suburban England, with access to a higher education. She is a witty sixteen-year-old during the time of the second wave of feminism, an A-student living a relatively charmed life in the early 1960s. Our first encounter with Jenny is an image of her attempting to balance a book on her head. Jenny is almost too smart, too culturally ahead of her time, and bound for Oxford. Enter a charming, Jewish manipulator named David (Peter Sarsgaard), who treats her to concerts, weekends in Paris and art auctions. While Jenny's parents (Alfred Molina and Cara Seymour) should be wary of David, her father states that he wants Jenny to become "well-connected" so she can marry. For what else would she need an education?

The film ultimately deals with the feminist debate: what kind of education is important to a woman if her primary goal is to find a husband? One of the most intriguing moments of the film

is the confrontation between Jenny and her teacher (Olivia Williams) after Jenny decides to leave school to become engaged to David. Her teacher asks her: "you know you can do anything you want. You are clever and pretty. Does your boyfriend care about clever Jenny?" While Jenny has always been prompted towards a higher education, she views her relationship with David as an escape from one of the few job opportunities for women, which she thinks will be inevitably dull. It is during a visit to her teacher's apartment, at the end of the film, in which it appears Jenny realizes that a career does not necessarily relegate a woman to a lifetime of lovelessness or housework, which she views as her only two options.

The film, despite a cast of white actors, deals with the racism and gender inequalities of 1960s England, where there are still limited expectations and opportunities for women, and where there is still anti-Semitism. The first thing the audience learns about David is that he is Jewish, and the next is that he is virtually a hustler. Though it is stated that David's Jewishness is not the most desirable quality in the eyes of Jenny's conservative middle-class parents, they consider marrying him a much less expensive alternative to getting an English degree from Oxford. Staying in the relationship upon discovering that David is both a liar and a cheat, Jenny implicitly condones David's exploitation of the racial tensions in British society as a means to make money. It is also in this that David exerts his male dominance over her; she either stays with him, and becomes complicit in his racist criminal activity, or she gives up her new, finer life.

With a premise that very likely could have turned into a typical, mainstream coming-of-age, boy-meets-girl tale, *An Education* is at once a snappy, entertaining period film, and a critique of gender roles, class, race, and feminism.

An Education. Dir. Lone Scherfig. Per. Carey Mulligan, Olivia Williams, Alfred Molina and Peter Sarsgaard. Sony Pictures, 2009.

TALIA JACOBSON & LAUREN SMITH

What am I about to read?

This is a brief and provisional outline of our intended layout and key points for a three hour sexuality education workshop. This guide is intended for audiences who already have some grasp of gender and sexuality studies, with the understanding that confusing elements for the students could be addressed during class time. Some aspects of the outline need to be tailored specifically for each audience. For instance, to make the workshop culturally relevant, or to address the specific laws/resources of the city or county the workshop is being held in. You will find that under some discussion points there are a number of questions; if these are not addressed directly in the section below it is because we recognize that these may be discussed in more than one section, or that the answers might alter slightly depending on the class context.

Why did we create this workshop?

We think it is essential for people to have non-judgmental access to accurate information about sex/sexuality. We are troubled by the way some organizations have approached this topic and believe a lack of accurate information reproduces oppressive and unequal relationships between people. We want to avoid practices of shaming knowledge and silencing discussions about sex and sexuality in the hopes of creating a more open, honest, and accurate place for teenagers to acquire, interact with and apply information.

Who is this workshop for?

The primary audience in mind for this workshop is a person between the ages of 13-15 of any gender, race, sexual orientation and ability. It is our hope that this workshop will enable teenagers to feel they have ownership over their sexuality, with the ability to construct healthy boundaries appropriate to their lives.

YOU WILL PROBABLY HAVE SEX SOMEDAY

1) **Who are we?** (10 min)

2) **Terms you should know** (20 min)

Sex: a category assigned at birth based on your secondary “sex characteristics.” People born with an organ recognized by the doctors or midwife as a penis will be assigned “male” and people with an organ recognized as a vulva/vagina will be assigned “female.” People with ambiguous genitalia are considered “intersex” and often doctors will recommend surgery to “correct” that baby’s ambiguous sexual organs so that they may be assigned a “proper” sex. This surgery has sometimes even been done without parental knowledge/consent. Your assigned sex is commonly understood to determine your gender (though this is inaccurate).

Gender: socially accepted/expected behaviors, personal traits, and physical appearances commonly recognized as “male/masculine” or “female/feminine.”

Cisgender: someone who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth.

Transgender: someone who does not identify with the sex/gender assigned at birth.

Genderqueer: someone who does not identify with or perform one socially accepted gender.

Sexuality: behaviors, attractions, desires, and beliefs of a sexual nature.

3) **Relationships** (30 min)

There are many different types of relationships a person will have with others throughout their lifetime; relationships with family, with acquaintances, with friends, and for many people, relationships that involve sexual desire.

Desire is an emotion everyone feels and it is not always sexual in nature. In addition, the form it takes, and specifically what

persons or behaviors are desired will vary widely from person to person. It is good to pay attention to your own feelings of desire because they can help tell you what you do and do not want out of a relationship with another person. This is important to know so that you can talk openly with your partner about what you are/are not comfortable with in the relationship (whether that relationship is romantic or not).

What you are or are not comfortable with can be described as the “boundaries” of the relationship. Boundaries can be everything from how often you both spend time just with each other - versus separately- or together with your other friends, to whether you will practice monogamy, to whether or not you want to be sexually active and what exactly “sexually active” will mean for you.

It is with this last example in mind that we have put together this workshop, to provide you with information so that you might all feel comfortable making informed choices about your bodies and what you do with them, and the tools to communicate these desires to your partner(s). We realize that this sort of open communication is often not encouraged by authority figures and peers, that often people who “know too much” about sex are looked down upon, but we believe it is vitally important to understand desire and sexuality so that you will feel able to set boundaries appropriate to your life and needs.

Consent: *What are the laws about consent? What is enthusiastic consent?*

- In this context, “consent” means an agreement to engage in a sexual activity. All people have the right to decide whether or not they will engage in sexual activity.
- **The only form of valid consent is an enthusiastic “Yes” to each and every activity!** “Maybe”, “wait”, “not yet”, “I’m not sure”, silence from your partner, or any other sign of hesitation on their part should all be unders-

stood as simply “no”. In addition, consent to one activity should never be taken as consent to any other activities!

Rape and Abuse: *What is rape? How is rape legally defined? How do I make sure I never rape someone? Can men be raped? Is it true if I dress “sexy” or flirt with someone that I have to have sex with them? What is date rape? What is sexual harassment? What is “sexual silence”?*

- Rape is when someone is physically forced, threatened with physical force, or otherwise coerced into performing a sexual act they do not wish to. This can happen to anyone.

- “When either partner isn't given or allowed to have an equal voice, or when one voice or person is dismissed or silenced, we are usually looking at abuse. When one partner chooses not to treat another with respect and care for their physical, emotional and sexual health, well-being and safety, it is abuse.”(1)

- Resources: www.sexlaws.org Contains information on your local laws. <http://www.rainn.org/> Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, 1800-656-HOPE 24/7 http://www.scarleteen.com/article/crisis/dealing_with_rape http://www.scarleteen.com/article/crisis/blinders_off_getting_a_good_look_at_abuse_and_assault <http://cara-seattle.blogspot.com/>

Break (20 min)

4) **STI's and Birth Control (the stuff EVERYONE covers!)** (20 min)

Prevention: (brief overview)

- How/where to get testing for STI's, pap smears, HBC, condoms, abortion (local laws and reference to local clinics with emphasis on sex positive, queer/trans friendly care).(2)

5) **Bodies** (30 min)

People's bodies look differently from each other; there is a lot of normal variety in how people look and function, both in their faces, body types, ability, height, weight and sex organs.

It's important to feel comfortable in your own skin, as impossible as that may sound sometimes. Just remember, the fact that your body keeps you alive is, in and of itself, amazing.

Functions: Periods and Emissions (milestones for people w/ uteruses/penises)

Period devices: (disposable/cloth pads, tampons, menstrual cups)(3)

Vaginal Discharge: (4)

Gender: Most people feel uncomfortable with some or all of the expectations placed on us by others because of our gender. Maybe you are a girl and hate the dresses your parents want to put you in. Maybe you are a boy and hate sports. That boys love sports and girls love dresses are gender stereotypes and do not fit all cisgender men and women.

- Sometimes, this gendered discomfort goes further than these examples. Maybe your parents tell you that you are a boy, but you know they are wrong and you are in fact a girl, or vice versa. It is possible you are transgender.(5) Sometimes this can be confusing, other times it is not at all. But being transgender is a normal bodily configuration! It is especially important for all cisgender people to understand this, so that transgender people are not met with violence by cisgender people.

6) Sexuality (the good stuff) (30 min)

Sexual expression

- When engaging in partnered sex some people have a strong preference for certain types of bodies (gay, lesbian, straight) and some people do not (pansexual, bisexual): this is normal.

Sex: Not everyone defines sex the same way and there are many forms of sex which people participate in.

- Many people have sex, but some people don't like to; both are ok!

Masturbation: A fun, common & healthy activity, but not everyone does it.

Sex toys: Can be used during masturbation or partnered sex.(6)

- Materials & safety.

Partnered sex: Many people have varying sexual fantasies and desires, which is why communication is so important.

Pleasure: Center mutual pleasure in any sexual activities. Whatever you're doing should be something you want to do!

Lube: Important and *useful*, for instance when using condoms so they feel good and are less likely to break.

Porn: Some people like it, some people don't; be aware that this is **entertainment** and should probably not be used as a template for enjoyable sexual activities. Communicating with your partner about likes and dislikes is a more effective strategy than copying pornography!

7) Q&A: Answer questions from box and raised hands (30 min)

- Questions should be sorted while other person is speaking in previous sections.

(1) *S.E.X.: The All You-Need-to-Know Progressive Sexuality Guide to Get You Through High School and College*

(2) <http://www.womenshealthspecialists.org/>

(3) <http://www.vaginapagina.com/>

(4) http://www.scarleteen.com/article/body/honorably_discharged_a_guide_to_vaginal_secretions

(5) <http://www.transgencare.com/>

(6) <http://www.babeland.com/>



SUFFERING IN SILENCE RECIPE

Ms. Diamond Dumas

*This is the recipe for wounds, which only transgress and progress,
Making the healing process that much more difficult to see through.*

RECIPE FOR SUFFERING.

*Yet, these oppressive heartaches,
result in women of color
being labeled "inferior, unrapeable, welfare queens" damage on top
of insults being broadcast, podcast and twittered.*

RECIPE FOR SILENCE.

*However, we learn to conceal every bruise and black eye while
Internalizing blame.*

RECIPE FOR SUFFERING.

*We are taught to purchase only the best and fabulous MAC
cosmetic concealer and smooth foundation from none other than*

*"Easy, Breezy, Beautiful Covergirl!"
in hopes to cover-up and
erase the residue of abuse.*

RECIPE FOR SILENCE.

See, covering up damage is something that we as women have been

trained to do our entire childhood lives. You know the common

*slogans, "Never let them see you sweat"
"Never let on or voice discomfort,"
"Never cry."*

*Because you will be perceived as weak
or my favorite
"Emotional."*

RECIPE FOR SUFFERING IN SILENCE.

Now, we have mastered the grin and bear it method.

Grin and bare it.

Wearing fabricated smiles, while in the midst of

*displeasure and disrespect on a global scale.
RECIPE FOR SUFFERING IN SILENCE.*

*What do you do when the internalized battle
starts to leak and smear
on your surface rose colored cheeks, like mascara
running down the
inner lining of your once freshly powered face.
Tears of frustration
shed with a quickness, "I thought this make-up
was waterproof!"*

BREAK THE SILENCE.

*Waterproof maybe, but it was not constructed to
deal with deeper rivers
of pain due to oppression. Sorry to be the one to
tell, but there is not
enough cover-up in world to cover THAT up.*

BREAK THE SILENCE

*There is no simple recipe to counter the offense
of oppression
and make the taste of pain succulent or
flavorful.*

*WOMEN need to tell their stories, build community and coalitions,
become educated, empowered and RESIST.*

THE SILENCE MUST CEASE TO EXIST.



PIS FOR PRISON - THE NORMALIZATION OF INCARCERATION THROUGH CHILDREN'S DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

Glenda Green

I recently read Angela Davis' book, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*, which explores the racism, sexism, and classism embedded within the U.S. prison system and reveals the profit motives behind the unprecedented increases in the prison population. Few would argue with Davis' assertion that "the prison is considered an inevitable and permanent feature of our social lives" (Davis 1). After reading this book, I have become more concerned with the ways our society normalizes incarceration as the primary, and indeed, expected form of punishment.

Crime and punishment television shows like "COPS", "America's Most Wanted" and "Prison Break" as Davis attests, are one of the ways that the prison system becomes socially accepted. But there are other, subtler ways that these norms are instilled into not just adults, but children and toddlers as well. One of these ways is through the popular toddler and child disciplinary system known as time-out. Children themselves make the connection between time-out and prison, as evidenced by a young girl who I heard talk about her mother in jail. It was heartbreaking to hear her say that her "mommy did something bad and is in time-out forever".

In addition to time-out, there is a similar institutionalized disciplinary system for school age children, known as in/after school detention. In/After school detention evolved as an alternative to corporal punishment administered by teachers and principals. This is the same progression that was historically fol-

lowed in the implementation of the prison system, championed as a replacement of "capital and corporal punishments" (Davis 40). These detentions, like imprisonment, use isolation as the main method of the punishment and like prison sentences are calculated in terms of time, with more time given for more severe offenses.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) recently published a report titled *Arresting Development*. This report highlights the growing problem of schools going even a step further into normalizing the prison industrial complex by skipping the in/after school detention and sending kids straight to jail:

Children are being criminalized, handcuffed, arrested, booked, and sent to court for minor misconduct in school. Known by many as the 'schoolhouse-to-jailhouse track' or the 'school-to-prison pipeline,' this growing trend of relying upon law enforcement and the courts for typical, minor adolescent misbehavior is alarming (*Arresting Development* 6).

As with the prison system and in/after detention, time-out was also developed as an alternative to corporal punishments, such as spanking. Spanking, although still popular in the U.S., is in some places, illegal. There are minor variations among different versions of time-out, but the most common version mirrors the U.S. legal and incarceration system in many ways.

Time-out, like the above mentioned detention and prison systems, is measured in time and the main elements of the punishment are removal and isolation from friends and family. Silence is strictly enforced and considered to be one of the main elements of the punishment. Usually a specific area is designated as the time-out area, like a playpen or a bench. Repeat offenders have stay in time-out for in-

creased amounts of time, and escapees are to be quickly returned to the time-out area.

Arthur Staats, the inventor of the method, states that when using the method on his own daughter he would put her in her crib and leave her there until she stopped crying (33). I find this to be a disturbing image; a crying child alone behind crib bars, mirroring the emotional pain and physical isolation of the prison system. Of course, like prison, proponents of this method state that this silence and isolation is an opportunity for internal reflection on one's misdeeds and for meditation.

The time-out area is constructed to be dull, small, and free of objects of interest, including toys or books. This is also the current reality within prisons whose educational programs and libraries were defunded due to the 1994 Crime Bill (Davis 57-59). Thus, both of time-out and prison seek not to educate or improve lives, but rather serve only as a punishment. And like prison, time-out is a punishment which does not change based on the situation and does not include restitution or logical consequence. In every way, the structure of time-out introduces children to the idea of jail and to living in a society where people are sent away, isolated and removed from their communities.

I had the honor of listening to former Black Panther Party member Ericka Huggins, speak here at San Francisco State University. Of greatest interest to me were the stories she told of working with the children at the Oakland Community School. Ericka discussed how they taught the children yoga poses as calming techniques, used peer reconciliation, and dialogue as alternative methods of education and discipline. Some disciplinary situations offer their own potential consequences, for example, if a child throws a toy in anger, that toy is taken away.

In conclusion, there are other, more effective forms of discipline than time-outs. Discipline should grow logically out of the situation

and teach children respectful behaviors without using methods that reinforce the prison industrial complex.

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SECULARISM AND US
IMPERIALISM
EXPANDING MY FEMINIST
CONSCIOUSNESS

Kristy Hall

In this brief essay, I present personal insights I have gained through studying transnational feminist critique of US imperialism, in conjunction with coming to understand what cultural anthropology Professor Saba Mahmood calls "normative secularism." I have, since high school, self-identified as a secular humanist and atheist. In exploring the relationship between liberal politics, religion, and feminism, the mental blocks built in order to resist certain oppressive morés and folkways can occlude the windows that illuminate the complex contradictions of those intersecting identities. I am not implying that contradictions are something to be corrected due to their troubling nature, rather that identity can be explained in a variety of ways that reveal deeper understandings of humanity than what surfaces in practice. Learning about the relationship between secularism and the geopolitical situation with the US and the Muslim world has pushed me to reexamine my position as a secular humanist. This essay considers how naïve it is to assume that I can simply call myself a secular humanist while overlook-

ing the impacts Christianity has had on my own identity.

In the article, "Secularism, Hermeneutics, and Empire: The Politics of Islamic Reformation," Saba Mahmood provides a thoughtful analysis of US assumptions that secularism is inherently tolerant of all religions so long as scriptural doctrine does not influence public policy. These assumptions, as Mahmood illustrates, ignores the relevance of "privileging" the religion practiced by the social majority (327). By questioning how policy is made, it is crucial to consider the epistemological ground from which policy is produced and the social/cultural/political position of policy makers. It is not just important to consider how they represent their constituents, but also who they are representing, and how many people become grouped together, understood as one homogenous section. Accepting "majority rule" as a model entails a lot of assumptions, coercion, and blind following. Perhaps it is easy to see why this model seems more efficient than having to consider the complicated nature of individual intersections in attempts to appease everyone. It is easy to become swept up in the "majority" and not notice one's own participation in dominant cultural practices. Mahmood goes on to analyze the complex and porous nature of law and the diverse interpretations of law, in how it is informed by Christian culture not only in the US, but also transnationally.

Mahmood appropriately equates liberal/progressive viewpoints with religious tolerance by way of secularism. Perhaps I am naïve in assuming that anything labeled politically "progressive" is healthy and good. I share common interests with the mainstream liberal, Democratic Party, although my feminist politics are considered much more "radical." Separating church and state is one of the shared points between a more mainstream liberal party agenda and my own feminist political agenda. Though secularism seems to

be an objective way of providing religious tolerance in state matters, Mahmood eloquently asserts that secularism has a "relation to the current strategies of domination pursued by the US"(328), and therefore has taken on a "normative" but religiously inflected meaning. If secularism is understood as a concept used to further Western expansion, then this must mean that it is not a universal answer in approaching social governance. This complicates my identifying as completely, objectively tolerant of religious difference because now I realize that I was never depolarized in the first place. Am I participating in US domination by refusing to notice my own compliance with it?

It is careless to assume that secularism is the "lowest common denominator," as Mahmood puts it, thus making it the point at which to decide where priorities begin. Laws and governance produce a shared, culturally constructed, value system. Liberalism's objective is supposedly to promote secularism, however, it does not recognize how religion and culture inevitably influence policy. It is becoming increasingly clear to me that the customs and culture that I have been brought up in have influenced me in ways I can only evaluate in reference to an alternative culture. Much as in feminist studies, the concept of patriarchy is used in order to have a discourse about oppositional worldviews. Through understanding my own socially constructed identity, I gain a point of reference in approaching others with different background and different beliefs. The paradox of identifying as part of Christian society and identifying as secular is not disappointing, but rather invigorating in that it provides me with a tool in analyzing the schematics of lawmaking, how cultural traditions shape it, and how to better fight oppressive policies transnationally.

Mahmood, Saba. 2006. "Secularism, Hermeneutics, and Empire: The Politics of Islamic Reformation." *Public Culture*, 18, No. 2: 327-328.

Non-Profit Industrial Complex

Inderjit Pandher

A system of hierarchies,
State or federal,
Corporations or foundations,
Rich or middle class.

Control our choices,
Control our voices.

Non-profits are a service,
Activities are regulated,
Funds are needed,
Rules are violated.

This system of authorities
Regulate without heed,
Donate,
Overlook need.

Controlling society,
State or federal,
Corporations,
People.

Control our health,
Control our wealth.

Non-profits are service based,
Advocate for health,
Advocate for rights,
Fight 'til displaced.

Non-profits help causes come to light,
States limit their resources,
People donate for their right,
Corporations are tricky sources.

Stand for your right,
Stay for the fight.

You can be upset,
You have the right to.
But that's how the system works,
The non-profit industrial complex.

FASHION OR FEMINISM

Lisa Taylor

I have had a love for fashion as long as I can remember. As a young girl I developed a strong fascination with this industry and a dream to someday work in it. I was obsessed with fashion magazines, designers, and the models wearing the designs. I am constantly impressed with the work of Karl Lagerfeld, Marc Jacobs, Rodarte, and Alexander Wang. There lies immense talent among these designers, and these four represent only a small list of everyone whom I admire and appreciate. I also have an intense dedication to Women and Gender Studies, which has developed deeply over the last five years or so. This more recent passion of feminism and women's issues has complicated and made me question my undying devotion to fashion and everything it entails.

Can a feminist like myself still love an industry that objectifies women? I have struggled with this question and hope that I can have both as an active part of my life. In the past I was ignorant of the fashion industry and thought it was perfect. Recently, I have discovered that my views regarding fashion were a bit misguided. The fashion industry has many flaws and is not perfect by any means, which is something I have come to terms with. Women are objectified in this industry every day and even fired for gaining five pounds. The fashion industry promotes an unhealthy body image where the skinniest girls get the most work and are seen as the most beautiful. This ideal is unhealthy for women and has led to many eating disorders, some even ending in death. However, this industry still thrives. After learning more about Women and Gender Studies I have wondered whether I can still support an industry that does this to women and men. This

question has made me very passionate about women in the media: with how they are portrayed and the harmful effects media has. The fashion industry has been like this for decades upon decades and I am not sure if it will ever change. It is what it is, but I do hope that the struggles models have with their weight will lessen and the desire to be a size 00 will someday fade into a more healthy body weight and image. Body image is definitely not the only thing wrong with the fashion industry; these women are oversexed and seen as only objects to many. Fashion is not just about the models and how they are represented, but it is also about celebrating the talent and determination that everyone involved puts forth. It is about inspiring people through art, clothes, and photography.

I will always have a strong affection for both feminism and fashion and do not want to choose between them. Having a background in Women and Gender Studies has provided me with the knowledge to critique and deconstruct some aspects of the fashion industry, which is something that I appreciate.

So fashion or feminism? I have decided that I do not have to make a choice. My love for fashion has definitely changed over the years and I have become much more critical of the industry, but am still able to appreciate many aspects of it. I will always admire the designers, photographers, stylists, and the models themselves for the beautiful aspects of the fashion world that they produce. Since I feel that there does not need to be a choice between fashion and feminism, I think it is important to realize there can be fashion in feminism. The fashion world and feminism has the ability to be integrated, and this notion needs to be embraced so that no one feels conflicted like I did.

WILMA MANKILLER ACTIVIST CHIEF AND AN INSPIRATION

Monica Siverson

"Prior to my election, young Cherokee girls would never have thought that they might grow up to become chief."

-Wilma Mankiller

Throughout my journey of becoming a graduate of the Women and Gender Studies Department here at San Francisco State University (SFSU), many theories, women, and feminisms have had a hand in shaping what I deem "my feminist brain." While studying women of various races, cultures, socioeconomic status, and nationalities, I have always found myself interested in the study of American Indians and more specifically, American Indian women. It's hard to pinpoint exactly when or why the study of American Indians has been important to me, but nonetheless, there has been one constant from the beginning, and that is Wilma Mankiller.

I attended Diablo Valley Community College in Pleasant Hill and it was there that a wonderful woman by the name of Nancy Malone introduced the class to a book called, *In The Absence Of The Sacred* by Jerry Mander. The book argued that technology will be the downfall of society, and that the practices of Indian nations are not a thing of the past, but something we should aspire to in the future. Until that point, I had never thought of Indian people in this way; through the things we had learned in previous classes I had thought they were a people that were something of the past. The next semester, I took Literature of Native Americans with Professor Malone, and she mentioned a woman by the name of Wilma Mankiller. She explained that she was the first woman to be appointed Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, and at that point, with my feminist brain at full immaturity but

starting to grow, I realized that this woman is of great importance.

During my first semester at SFSU, I was pleased to finally get to read an excerpt from Wilma Mankiller's autobiography, *Mankiller: A Chief and Her People*. The excerpt described the Mankiller family's journey from their rural reservation in Oklahoma to San Francisco during the U.S. relocation program of the 1950s. In 1956, the Mankiller family, all thirteen of them, made the long trek to the west coast, on what Wilma describes as "our trail of tears" (68). The piece goes on to explain how difficult it was to adjust to this new way of life, for example, the school children deeming that she and her siblings were "different". She also brings humor to the hard times her family was encountering:

"One day, my brother Richard and I were standing by the stairway when we saw some people come down the hall and stop. All of a sudden, a box in the wall opened up. People got inside. Then the box closed and the people disappeared!...Of course we had never seen an elevator before. All we knew was that we were not about to get inside that box. We used the stairs" (72).

While living in San Francisco, Wilma attended SFSU. Her experiences at the school sparked her political consciousness and activism after she met Richard Oakes. The two were very much involved in the occupation of

Alcatraz in 1969. The reasons for occupying the island were to draw attention to the issues that Native people were dealing with at the time and had dealt with in the past. While attending college, Wilma and her first husband divorced. She realized that to be educated was not an option while being in a marriage in which her husband felt as though he should control everything.

She realized that many of the women her age had dealt with the same thing when it came to gender roles within marriage.

In the 1970s, Wilma moved back to Oklahoma after the death of her father and made the land once owned by her grandfather in Mankiller Falls her home. She continued to educate herself by attending graduate school and continuing to fight for equal rights for American Indians and speaking out against the violence against women. In 1983, Wilma ran alongside Principal Chief candidate Ross Swimmer as Deputy Chief of the Cherokee Nation. The pair won and in 1985, Chief Swimmer

became the head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Wilma faced ridicule from various people not based on her political prowess, but merely because she was a woman. She later gained respect from her critics and served as Principal Chief for nine years. In the years during and following her terms as chief, Wilma suffered from health issues including a disease in which her brother had to donate his kidney to her in order for her to live. She also suffered a near fatal car accident.



Wilma Mankiller used her education and experience to not only talk about issues in Native American society, but to do something about them. In March 2010, I learned that Wilma Mankiller had been diagnosed with stage IV pancreatic cancer. It was one of those moments in which the world stood still: it was a memory that will be burned in my brain for years to come. Wilma Mankiller passed away on April 6, 2010 at the age of 64. I will forever credit her with helping me develop my transnational feminist brain.

Mankiller, Wilma Pearl, and Michael Wallis. *Mankiller a Chief and Her People*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1993. Print.

WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES IN PRACTICE

Natasha L. Simpson

One of the most valuable aspects of Women and Gender Studies, for me, has been working on my ability to put theory into practice. Analyzing and coming to understand the theories is rewarding in itself, but what I most enjoy is challenging myself to apply these theories in my daily life. Not only does this practice increase an understanding of learned material, it can also be useful for building relationships and organizing. Thanks to Women and Gender Studies, the way I perceive my own actions and my relationships to others has been drastically altered.

Through this lens, I think about ways to empower myself and other beings I interact with, as well as challenge the ways that my actions are oppressive. Being conscious of my location in relation to others, attempting to interact with others without expectations, and letting others define and speak for themselves are all important for relationships that are necessary to organize for change. Practicing be-

haviors like not imposing on others' in any way and not judging others is hard, as in our society, oppressive behaviors are widely accepted.

In order to show the true potential of feminism and Women and Gender Studies within a society which is so invested in oppression and violence is through condemnation of and attempts to eradicate oppressive practices in our language, behavior, and ways of thinking. For instance, the way I think about education has shifted through exposure to Women and Gender Studies' ideas about feminist education and pedagogies. Although I may have done so unconsciously, before becoming a Women and Gender Studies student, I now see the ways in which education can be a tool for making changes in society. While education is predominantly viewed as a means to an end within a capitalist system, it can provide tools which, as bell hooks would say, can really transform society. This has definitely been the case within my own life, and I believe it can be useful within our personal relationships as well as our relationships to society at large.



CIRCULATING ABUNDANCE

Megan Geary

To Josephine & Martha Solange (grandmothers),

Who raised the two spirits that would nourish my seed and who stood in pure love for all that they chose. Two womyn unbound by materiality, flowing with creativity, unwilling to work within restricted, gendered means. Your blood rushes through me and I feel warm strength in carrying your legacy on my back.

To Tori (Amos, musician),

The womyn who straddles her piano with relentless ecstasy and has the power to channel cosmic waves into her body and out through her throat. Feminist storyteller, songstress, goddess, siren, and political messenger. Your music rattles my bones and has taught me more about the female soul than any religious deity or Catholic priest ever could.

To Maris (Bustamante, Mexican feminist artist),

La diosa artística feminista. Polvo de Gallina Negra Mother to this little growing hen and the womyn who gave me the gift of feminist solidarity through ink and tears. I wear your passion and sacrifice on my body eternally in physical gratitude of what you've created para las mujeres en todas partes. Your artistic vision leaves me blissfully startled.

To Alice (THE Alice, fictional?),

The wandering girl lost in a wonderland all her own...maybe falling down that rabbit hole wasn't so damaging after all. We've met many times before and you've never protested holding my hand through the journey into reality. Your curiosity resides within me even now and you are imprinted on my heart as the Goddess of imagination.

To Erykah (Badu, songstress),

Revolutionary vocalist and producer of love, harmony, empowerment who told baggage-carrying ladies like me that "all you must hold on to, is you, is you, is you." My god how

you weave words together and speak to the innermost dwellings of my feminist soul to straighten my back and force me to walk upright. Your rhythm beats my eardrums like oceanic waves of female endurance and rooted demands for equality.

To Danielle and Talia (companions),

Beautiful intellectual beings, womyn who have shown me that laughter really does mend a broken heart and wash the sheets of the past. How I marvel at the sisterhood in each of you and oh how I wish to remain in your company always, drinking, gallivanting, loving, linking arms. Your friendship nourishes my blood like feminist vitamins of the greatest potency and refreshes my tired soul in the direst of moments here on the Earth.

To Kathleen Lenore (aunt/writer/poet),

Damn it's still hard to say goodbye to you...beloved sister of Mother Earth who captured words and wrestled them to the page with her bare hands. Feminist Warrior, lavender harvester, caretaker to little dreams and light like the wind. The softest lioness who ate the alphabet for breakfast and reared her cubs with goodness. Your artistry in language and passion for life have penetrated my skin. I miss you.

To John Steven (father/professor),

A man of infinite mother tongues that wrap around a velvet center of love-laced understanding and pedagogical bliss. The one who resides deep within my being as the core Educator of Queer embrace and chemical balance, whose fervor for learning has become embedded in my brain to take the shape of a Roman candle. Your unwavering support illuminates the walls in my darkest hours and reminds me that I am never bound to my physical frame.

For Victoria Jeanette (mama/crafter/friend),
My center.

This piece is intended to be expressed as a feminist spoken performance, at the top of the lungs.

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Back Cover: Glenda Green
Concept by Art Committee
Class Photo by Deb Cohler

SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY

WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES



SPRING 2010