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Y E M A Y A

REPRESENTATIONS

Sydney University Law Society
Journal of Gender and Sexuality

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Recognition

The editors of Yemaya acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of this land, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation.

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ORIGINS OF THE JOURNAL'S NAME

by Marianna Leishman

Yemaya is the African-Yoruban, Afro-Brasilian and Afro-Caribbean Goddess of the Ocean, whose waters broke and created a food that created the oceans. While she can be destructive and violent, Yemaya is primarily known for her compassion, protection and water magic. In Cuba, she is referred to as Yemaya Olokun, who can only be seen in dreams, and her name is a contraction of Yey Omo Eja: "Mother Whose Children are the Fish". Canonised as the Virgin Mary, and appearing as river goddess Emanjah in Trinidad, Yemaya rules the sea, the moon, dreams, secrets, wisdom, fresh water and the collective unconscious. In Brazil, crowds gather on the beach of Bahia to celebrate Candalaria: a Candomble ceremony on 31 December. Candles are lit on the beach while votive boats made from flowers and letters are thrown into the sea for Yemaya to wash away their sorrows.

FO

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

REWORD

Rachel Irwin

"From things that have happened and from things as they exist and from all things that you know and all those you cannot know, you make something through your invention that is not a representation but a whole new thing truer than anything true and alive, and you make it alive, and if you make it well enough, you give it immortality."

- Ernest Hemingway

This year's theme '*Representations*' invited contributors to consider the ways in which gender norms are created and reinforced, and how they may be unpacked, confronted and defied. The theme provoked insightful commentary on the ways in which we can redefine gender stereotypes and change the discourse surrounding queer sexuality. This year's journal challenges traditional representations of gender and sexuality and urges us to represent ourselves freely and proudly as we are.

This year's writings and artworks are diverse and inspiring. Sarah Jamieson considers the underrepresentation of domestic violence in LGBTI relationships in statistics and public policy. Another writer critically examines the tension arising out of the 'Free the Nipple movement' and the legal implications of conceptualising the female nipple as non-sexual.

The representation of women in the legal profession and in commerce is also explored. Brigitte Samaha's artwork portrays the multifaceted nature of femininity and the way in which women engage and present themselves in the legal profession. In her poem, 'High Expectations', Alisha Brown depicts the societal demands placed on women to wear high heels in the workplace and inspires women to "don those nineties Chuck Taylors" to acknowledge that their sense of worth is not proportional to the shoes they wear. Kate Samolej explores the role of women in commerce and the importance of women engaging with the subject of money.

Importantly, this year's contributors also explore the way in which individuals challenge gender stereotypes and redefine traditional representations of masculinity and femininity. The three interviews

of Ollie Tridgell from the 'Good Lad Initiative', Subeta Vimalarajah from 'fEMPOWER' and Annabelle Boyd of 'byaboyd' celebrate three incredible people actively challenging gender norms and stereotypes through their activism and in their work. Jessie Ding's anthology of poems empowers women by giving "woman back her tongue."

This empowerment threads through other pieces in the journal too. ZZ humorously depicts the interactions between men and women and the way in which we represent ourselves in the dating game while Nicky Hughson explores the representation of men on Feminist Facebook pages and calls for women's issues to be voiced openly in the public discourse. Finally, Anne Hu considers the representation of gender in the Artificial Intelligence space, observing that "sophisticated robots are almost always male" and "even when humanoid robots are female, they are modelled after subservient young women²". Anne brings to the forefront of conversation issues of gender stereotyping in the technological era.

The pieces are profound and transformative. While gender stereotypes and constructs of sexuality are perpetuated through the media, in politics and in the law, these writings shed light on modern representations of gender and sexuality and perpetuate progressive norms and values.

I hope you enjoy reading the 2017 edition of Yemaya. I am so grateful to this year's editorial team - Aleks Pasternacki, Alison Xiao and Nicky Hughson for their diligence, creativity and support. I extend a thank you too, to the wonderful contributors for their time in producing thought-provoking pieces and beautiful artworks. ●

¹ Ernest Hemingway, *Paris Review Interviews*, vol. 1, 61.

² Kathleen Richardson, *An Anthropology of Robots and AI: Annihilation Anxiety and Machines* (Routledge, 2015) cited in Tanya Lewis, 'Rise of the Fembots: Why Artificial Intelligence Is Often Female' *Live Science* (online), 19 February 2017 <<https://www.livescience.com/49882-why-robots-female.html>>.

THE FACES OF JUSTICE

Brigitte Samaha



INTERVIEW WITH:
SUBETA VIMALARAJAH

FEMPOWER



fEMPOWER

Tell me about yourself and your involvement with social justice campaigns.

I am a final year student studying Arts/Law at the University of Sydney. I got involved in social justice through the University of Sydney Students' Representative Council (SRC). The SRC has a Women's Collective, which is a feminist activist group of sorts. The Women's Collective was where I first got involved in activism, as I found it to be a very welcoming and nurturing space for discussing radical ideas. I had always been passionate about women's rights, but it was the Women's Collective that taught me about 'intersectional feminism' at a time when the concept was not being discussed by the mainstream media. I had never considered feminism as a social justice movement that encompassed a range of experiences influenced by a myriad of structural factors, and this realisation was what spurred my involvement in organising campaigns.

A year after I started attending meetings of the Women's Collective, I was elected as one of its co-Women's Officers. This gave me access to a budget, an organising space and a whole group of motivated young people like myself who were passionate about the same issues. With their support, I ran my first campaign in 2014, the 'Stop Taxing My Period' campaign. The campaign started with a petition, which ended up amassing 100 000 signatures and the support of national lobbying organisation GetUp! With their help, I was able to get support from the Federal Treasurer at the time to discuss removing the 10 per cent GST on sanitary products.

As part of the campaign, GetUp! helped me organise some great stunts. We had a giant tampon that said 'Mr Hockey, Stop Taxing My Period!' which we carried around to campuses across Sydney for students to sign, and organised a dance rally with a period themed playlist including tracks like 'Bleeding Love' by Leona Lewis and 'Red' by Taylor Swift. It was a really awesome experience, and although ultimately unsuccessful, it was one that taught me so much about the skills involved in interacting with the media and lobbying politicians for change.

The Tampon Tax campaign was only one of the initiatives we ran through the Women's Collective that year. We also ran a fundraiser with various events for Aboriginal Women's Sexual Assault Network 'Hey Sis!', and I worked with the University of Sydney to run their initial survey into sexual assault and harassment on campus.

After some time in the Women's Collective and the SRC I started to channel my interest in social justice through legal work, particularly by volunteering to help support the great work of community legal centres. I volunteered at a handful of community legal centres, but the place that had, and continues to have the greatest effect on me is the Refugee Advice and Casework Service. I have been volunteering there for a few years now, and it is full of passionate human rights advocates that have taught me a lot about what it means to be a real lawyer. I acknowledge the limitations of fighting for justice through the law, you are limited to the outcomes the system allows you, but being able to see the concrete way that your work can translate into outcomes for vulnerable people is not only an effective mode of advocating for social justice, it's a vital one.

Tell me about fEMPOWER. How did the program come about? What are the objectives of the program and what strategies are employed to achieve these aims?

fEMPOWER is a not-for-profit, which I co-direct with four other amazing women. We all met through the University of Sydney Women's Collective. Three of us were actually Women's Officers in consecutive years. fEMPOWER was an initiative we ran during my year as Women's Officer. It came out of a comment from one of our members in the first meeting of the year that it would be great if high school students had the opportunity to learn about intersectional feminism.

Initially, we started out running optional after-school workshops or lunchtime workshops at high schools in the Inner West, but have now branched out to a whole range of different schools – public and private – where we run compulsory, class-time workshops about challenging gender stereotypes and provoking discussions about intersectional feminism and social justice. It is still a pretty small operation, but we never imagined when we started out that we would be travelling to regional schools with funding grants, as we are later this year, or running workshops for big boys' private

schools. We started out focusing on empowering young women, hence the name, but since then we have developed a parallel program called Ally Action which we run with male volunteers for boys' schools, and sometimes co-educational schools, if teachers request it. One of our directors actually moved to Melbourne last year, started up a fEMPOWER branch there and has somehow – although not surprising – run the first workshops there already!

We are really lucky to have a team of directors that not only work really well together, but who have a range of different skills that mean we can manage most of the roles, from co-ordinating volunteers, to designing materials and liaising with schools ourselves.

Where do you think traditional notions of masculinity and femininity stem from? In your opinion, can they be redefined? As a society, how can we go about redefining these entrenched ideals?

I think traditional notions of masculinity and femininity are socially constructed and re-enforced through advertising, the media and the people around us. I believe that we need to abolish the rigid binary that comes with traditional notions of masculinity and femininity, particularly given that this binary often positions femininity as less desirable. The social construction of traditional notions of gender is best evidenced by how the traits associated with being masculine and feminine differ across cultures and through history. Case in point: in the early twentieth century, pink was a 'boys' colour.

The most effective ways for us to challenge traditional notions of femininity and masculinity is through structural change, to challenge the representations inherent in society that our gender makes us better carers, or better mathematicians. We can do this by pushing the institutions with power to change. Until then, our individual actions and attitudes reinforce our attitudes, so they are a good place to start even if they are only the tip of the iceberg.

Speaking from your experience through fEMPOWER, are you witnessing open mindedness in the students you speak to? How are they connecting with the concepts you are discussing?

Young people are amazing! We are constantly amazed at how open minded and knowledgeable they are, in comparison to how we remember ourselves at their age. In fact, our first workshop was organised because of a Year 11 student who approached her principal and asked if we could come to her school!

The emergence of media outlets directed at young people, like BuzzFeed, Pedestrian and Junkee, as well as the progressive discourse on social media websites like Tumblr, has exposed young people to radical ideas from an early age, and fuelled their interest in politics. There's also been a big crossover between popular culture, particularly in the US, and social justice. Artists like Beyoncé help expose young people to previously radical ideas like racial injustice and feminism. It's great, and it's really promising for the future.

Of course, there are students who do not agree with us, but most of their disagreements are based on their vision of what a feminist actually believes in, as opposed to what we actually have to say. We have always welcomed disagreement, because it's a great way for us to explain our position and hopefully challenge potentially harmful views before they actually do become harmful. Even if we do not change minds, a large part of our mission is to affirm students who believe in gender equality, or for those that feel uncomfortable about gender norms to affirm that they are not alone.

Where to from here?

fEMPOWER is actually coming to a crossroads. Our directors are starting to move on to graduate jobs, including myself, so we will be looking for new directors over the next six months. We have also recognised that a lot of the value in what fEMPOWER does is tied to the fact it is run by young activists. The older we get, the less in touch we are with young people in schools and our campus-based volunteers, and the less we are able to run the organisation the way we do now. It's also hard to challenge the way you have decided to do things, so we think new leaders will be able to take fEMPOWER in a refreshing direction! ●

INTERVIEW WITH:
OLLIE TRIDJELL

GOOD LAD INITIATIVE



Tell me about yourself.

I am a fourth year Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Economics student at the University of Sydney ("USYD"). After I finished my schooling in Canberra, I moved to Sydney and started living on campus. I found out early that USYD is a powerful platform to help make a difference. Like many of us, it didn't take me long to notice that USYD has a strong activist community and most students are socially minded. When you combine this strong volunteer culture with my twelve contact hours, it wasn't long before I became involved with AIME, the Oxfam on Campus society, and in turn, The Good Lad Initiative. The next step for me after university is a blank slate, but in the meantime, I am an avid sportsman who is painfully aware that my best days are behind me, a serial J-walker and a mediocre bedroom guitarist.

Tell me about the program you are involved in and your role.

The Good Lad Initiative is a non-profit, pro-feminist organisation that seeks to kick-start engaged conversations about masculinity with young men. In my experience, most of the messages which men receive are set at a really low bar. Discussions of femininity, masculinity and the ways to approach gendered situations gravitate towards basic societal expectations and issues of legality which, although important, do not guarantee good experiences and strong relationships.

We propose an alternative framework, where men seek to maximise positive outcomes for all around them, rather than satisfying a minimum set of standards. We don't claim to have the answers to every scenario, but by providing a space for men to candidly reflect on and re-evaluate their values with their peers, we hope to equip them with a more robust, internal framework.

The Initiative has been running in the UK for a number of years now and is a standard program in a number of university residences, schools and sports teams across the country. The program was imported to Australia at the end of 2016 by previous Australian Programme Manager Alistair Kitchen, and we have both worked hard on training teams of facilitators and developing content relevant to Australian men and Australian issues, alongside seeking partnerships with institutions and fellow enterprises working in the same space.

Where do you think traditional notions of masculinity and femininity stem from? In your opinion, can they be redefined?

In my experience, traditional notions of masculinity and femininity are reaffirmed or disrupted by our social circles and the groups with which we associate. The Good Lad Initiative places explicit focus on exploring pack mentality, or what it means to be 'one of the boys'. It is important to note that these groups are great in a number of ways - they are a place to unwind, build trust and share a laugh, but when misguided, these groups also risk tacitly approving the perpetuation of unhealthy, discriminatory attitudes and anti-social behaviour.

Our workshops purposely explore this distinction in the hope of redefining the toxic aspects of traditional notions. By engaging in conversations with their social groups, with their residential floors, or with their sports teams, men come to hold each other to a higher moral standard and feel empowered to call each other out when they stray from it.

As a society, how can we go about redefining these entrenched ideals? How do you see the program you are involved with helping shift societal ideals of sexuality and gender?

This is a complex question! We cannot pretend that there is a quick, easy fix to renewing cultural dispositions. At Good Lad we find that all men come from specific contexts and disparate starting points when they walk into a workshop, and we quickly go about finding some middle-ground on which we can base our discussions. All men have their own beliefs and opinions, and these cannot be challenged if they aren't engaged respectfully and effectively. Rather than identifying themselves as potential perpetrators of assault or discrimination, men, rightly or wrongly, already see themselves as 'good men'. As such, this is where we start. We find it allows more men to buy into more fruitful, honest discussion from which we can redefine more entrenched attitudes.

We see ourselves as one piece that helps solve a very large puzzle. We offer young men the opportunity to engage in focused, feminist discourse in a way they may have never had the chance to productively do so elsewhere. We see ourselves working alongside a multitude of similar enterprises reviewing the shortcomings of masculinity, but also concurrently amplifying its virtues.

Why do you think challenging traditional representations of masculinity and femininity is important?

In short, it's important to challenge these representations because we can do so much better for ourselves. Suicide accounts for a third of all deaths of young men in Australia, while same-sex attracted young people are six times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers. I hear far too frequently of instances where female friends have been made to feel uncomfortable by men oblivious of the consequences of their actions. Not only do I think traditional representations of masculinity, femininity and sexuality fail us, but traditional conversations do too. The sooner we offer welcoming platforms that elevate engaging, well-intentioned discussions, the sooner we can define representations that work for all of us. ●

Interview conducted by Rachel Irwin

INTERVIEW WITH:
ANNABELLE BOYD

BYABOYD



"I think the honesty in my pieces for men and women and my indifference to gender is what makes byaboyd special"

Tell me about yourself.

I'm the creator of the small clothing label byaboyd. I grew up on the Mornington Peninsula, Victoria and spent my twenties living in inner-city Melbourne. My designs reflect the laid-back personality and lifestyle I have grown up with.

I started the label in 2014 while I was making clothes for friends and those in my extended social circle. After a short period of time, I grew a strong interest in menswear and shirting and now find myself hoping to follow a path in tailoring...when I'm not pursuing my career in science and technology.

How did byaboyd come about?

I have always been creating, and spent my weekends making gymnastic outfits for my friends and for myself as a teenager (they were truly outrageous). I suppose byaboyd really began in my late teens after secondary college when I took on a year of study in fashion design. This experience really cleaned up my skills and I made my first shirt. It was then that I knew the direction I wanted to take. Since then, I am always teaching myself skills and taking on new projects.

What is the philosophy behind byaboyd?

byaboyd is firstly about handmade clothing, with a focus on tailoring, shirts and a little luxury. I try to use only natural fibres and materials such as silk and linen. I think the honesty in my pieces for men and women and my indifference to gender is what makes byaboyd special. byaboyd tries to create for the individual, not a stereotype or gender. I think someone such as myself, with a passion and patience for tailoring, shirts and both classic and handmade pieces for men and women, is a rarity in the industry.

From your perspective, where do gender-related assumptions come from and how do they shape the way we understand ourselves?

I think gender-related assumptions are based on our previous experiences which reflect the past, not a vision for the future.

As a generalisation, humans like comfort, so naturally they opt for comfort in their learnings from the past instead of seeking something unknown in the future. Nature has shaped our gender expectations since the beginning of existence. As a result, it is going to take a huge shift in mentality and a lot of energy to change that. Every movement, art work, friendship, whatever it is, big or small can help our society to gain this freedom.

I believe that these gender-related assumptions that we have grown up with and are still imparted in those around us today, don't help shape us, they simply limit us. They are an extra barrier to break down to better understand ourselves.

How does byaboyd challenge these representations?

In 2017, I created a small range of underwear based around the memo 'wear what you want'. It was a series of men's style jocks with a lacey feminine approach, for both men and women. I created it to allow freedom for anyone to enjoy. For me, clothing is meant to reflect your personality. Underwear is an opportunity to have fun and be free. Nobody knows what you have on apart from you, so it's pure self-expression.

So that's what I created - an avenue through which you can be whatever you like and 'wear what you want'. I was surprised by the response and I am thrilled with the enjoyment both men and women get out of the pieces. ●

Interview conducted by Rachel Irwin

SHE'LL BE RIGHT, MATE

**A CANDID CONVERSATION
ABOUT FISCAL SOLVENCY
AND COMPLACENCY**

Kate Samolej

Before 'Bart to the Future' came to the fore as the Simpsons episode to have successfully predicted the Trump presidency, it had already held a special place in my heart for some time. Lisa's fictional presidency deeply resonated with me. One moment stood out in particular. Upon presenting Lisa with the clever political fiction that was the "temporary refund adjustment," Milhouse asks, "What else do you love, Lisa?" Completely unaware of the romantic undertone of the question, Lisa answers, "Fiscal solvency." You and I both, Lisa. You and I, both.

My friends still laugh about my love for 'Fiscal Solvency Lisa' and how her photo featured on the inside of my high school locker, but honestly, she revolutionised my world. Back in year nine when we were required to select our first elective units of study, I argued with my dad for a straight week as I desperately wanted to take ceramics. Dad insisted I take commerce because that was the "stuff [I] needed to know." I enrolled in the commerce elective and I have to admit, not only was it the "stuff I needed to know," but it also ended up being the love of my life.

Unlike ceramics, commerce was not a popular choice. The class size was small. Later, my HSC economics class would be even smaller. Fiscal Solvency Lisa became my hero. Here she was: a girl appreciative of sound economics.

According to the *Shriver* Report,¹ women represent the fastest-growing, most dynamic economic force in the world today controlling more than US\$20 trillion in global spending. To put this figure into perspective: through their spending alone, women have an economic impact that is 50% larger than that of the US and twice the size of the Chinese and Indian economies combined. In the United States alone, female-owned businesses account for nearly US\$3 trillion of GDP. Therefore, if American women were measured as a separate economy, they would have the fifth largest economy in the world.

Female empowerment, as we understand it through theory and experience, is tied to our participation in the workforce. It is a common narrative that independence and self-sufficiency are closely related to our ability to earn an income and participate within the economy. However, if female participation is so vital to the economy and the machinations of the economy are so important to women, why is it that it was my mum who taught me to work hard but it was my dad who taught me to understand and actively engage with money?

Our relationship with money is complex, at best. We come to appreciate the value of money through a myriad of personal experiences be it our first job, first payslip, first tax return, or rent. Although money is a pervasive constant, it is not a subject that we're socially primed to freely discuss. As the old adage goes, "sex, money and politics have no place at the dinner table." While plenty is said about female representation in the workplace, not a whole lot is said about women's relationship with work in financial terms. It is assumed that workplace success will somehow translate to personal financial knowhow.

Better termed as financial literacy, this knowhow is a combination of financial knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours necessary to make sound financial decisions, based on personal circumstances, to improve financial wellbeing.² Depending on individual circumstances, these factors may include: financial inclusion, access to suitable financial products and appropriate consumer protection, as well as the regulation of financial services to ensure fair and efficient markets.³ The 2011 ANZ Survey of financial literacy identified certain behaviours as indicators of financial literacy such as keeping track of finances (including monitoring account statements and keeping track of expenses), choosing financial products with an understanding of investment risk and shopping around, control of and ability to save money, and finally – planning ahead, including retirement income planning.⁴

Where discussion has taken place, the results are bleak. By and large literature on the matter points out that women tend to have lower financial literacy levels than men and engage in high cost methods of borrowing.⁵ In practice, this translates to women under 60 having an increased likelihood of engaging in more costly credit card behaviours than men, such as carrying a balance on their credit cards and incurring late payment fees.⁶ Despite financial information being relatively available, there is little to indicate that it is being accessed.

Of course, it needs to be noted that accessing said information is very different from effectively understanding and consuming it. Financial information is almost always ridden with complex product disclosure statements and highly specific terminology. Whilst theoretically the availability of information should serve to reduce informational asymmetries, in practice, this is hardly the case. The expectation that an otherwise unengaged and relatively uninformed reader will be able to competently interact with complex concepts is, quite frankly, misguided. This is especially the case when we consider that women with poor financial literacy are likely to come from a disadvantaged background.

Ultimately, not everyone will understand economic jargon, and not everyone cares to. As, Cobble, Gordon and Henry point out,⁷ women whose lives are at divergent ends of the socio-economic spectrum are unlikely to have the same goals. Indeed, we cannot and should not expect them to. We cannot expect women who face both gendered and racial discrimination to possess the same priorities as women who may only face gendered discrimination. Nevertheless, it remains incredibly important for women to engage with and to see other women engaging with the subject of money.

This is where representation comes into play. There are plenty of career aspirational role models, '#girlbosses' and 'hustler' archetypes to choose from. However, these representations are what you would refer to as 'the problematic faves.' They portray a woman's individual success, money and power as advancing the Feminist movement when in fact, the personal success of an individual has little impact on the social status of women collectively and does not, in the long term, guarantee long term financial wellbeing. By creating a dialogue which focuses on the acquisition of money and power, this form of representation is noticeably silent when it comes to the sustainable disposal of personal capital. As a result there is a lack of positive and realistic representations of women handling money, and more importantly, handing it well. Much like our superannuation fund, the situation boils down to, 'out of sight, out of mind.' It is a struggle to come up with a list of women, real or fictional, who promulgate the idea of financial literacy in the popular psyche.

In the space where a frank conversation about money should ideally be happening, we instead find a cornucopia of jokes and memes in popular culture, where acutely self-deprecating humour on the subject reigns extreme. A good deal of this humour is aimed at a female audience and relies on poor financial decision making, embellished with brunch, mimosas, bank balance dread and encouragement to "just buy the shoes". Whilst I enjoy brunch as much as the next girl, it must be noted that far from indulging in a spot of self-deprecation, this form of humour normalises bad habits.

It is my suggestion that the lack of representation of women as competent money managers has a subtle, yet enduring, impact on how women seek financial advice. If one day the retirement panic were to set in, survey data⁸ shows that only 30% of women nominate a female financial advisor as a preference suggesting that men are perceived more trusted when it comes to financial advice. If we disaggregate this figure, females younger than 25 show no preference on the matter, but of course, a contributing factor for this result could be because they are unlikely to have put much thought into financial planning at this age.

¹ Muhtar Kent, 'Empower Women and You Recharge the World' in Maria Shriver, *Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Pushes Back from the Brink* (published online, 2014)

² Australian Securities and Investments Commission, National Financial Literacy Strategy (2017) <<http://www.financialliteracy.gov.au/strategy-and-action-plan/financial-literacy-strategy>>

³ Ibid.

⁴ ANZ Bank, '2011 Survey of Adult Financial Literacy in Australia', December 2011, 9-10

⁵ Annamaria Lusardi and Olivia S. Mitchell, 'Planning and Financial Literacy: How do Women Fare?' (Working Paper No13750, National Bureau of Economic Research, January 2008); see also S.P. Wagland and S. Taylor, 'When it comes to financial literacy, is gender really an issue?' (2009) 3 *Australasian Accounting, Business and Finance Journal*, 13

⁶ Gary Mottola, 'In our Best Interest: Women, Financial Literacy, and Credit Card Behaviour' (2013) 6(2) *Advancing Education in Quantitative Literacy*, 1

⁷ Dorothy Sue Cobble, Linda Gordon and Astrid Henry, *Feminism Unfinished* (WW Norton & Co, 2014), 5

⁸ Security4Women, 'Women, Superannuation and Saving' (Survey Findings and Summary, July 2005), 8

Within the age bracket of 35-44 years, preference for a female financial advisor climbs steadily towards 50%, but it is not until we reach 65+ years that the preference shifts to a solid 90%. Qualitatively, the respondents of the 65+ age group commented that at this point in their lives they have come to regard female financial advisors as better able to understand their clients' situation than a male advisor and, by extension, engender greater levels of trust.⁹ It was said that, "they explain much better than men," are "less condescending about lack of knowledge" and one respondent said that, "[male advisors] do not seem to take my need for separate advice from that given to my husband, seriously". Overall, 80%¹⁰ of women surveyed indicated that they would like to be better informed about superannuation, but paradoxically, they are not inclined to seek advice from family, friends or even professionals.

If you haven't already noticed, this piece has been penned in a highly conversational tone to emphasise the need for a dialogue between women, about women and their money.

The more we chat about money, the more normalised the idea of handling it becomes. Money and financial planning means, first and foremost, being responsible to and for yourself. While it would be infinitely helpful to understand the language of finance or the complex tax incentives around superannuation, achieving this level of understanding should not be the end game. Rather, I suggest that our goal should be to establish financial planning as a 'cool' and sensible activity for women to partake in, and in doing so develop more positive representations of women as adept at handling money. This is especially so as women are now living longer lives, often outlasting our male counterparts.

To ensure that women live better lives, an added dimension of self-awareness and realistic expectations is much called-for. After all, girl, I know you're super, but let's talk about your super. ●

⁹ Security4Women, 'Women, Superannuation and Saving' (Survey Findings and Summary, July 2005), 8

¹⁰ Security4Women, 'Women, Superannuation and Saving' (Survey Findings and Summary, July 2005), 10

THE FUTURE?

(REPRESENTATION OF
THE STEREOTYPES)

It is the year 3410. There has been a major technological breakthrough; engineers have created a new “species” of Artificial Intelligence: the SuperBeings. Robots have long been able to take on the form of a human figure. They have been able to listen to the commands of human beings. They walk alongside their human masters on the street, protecting, helping, and serving... responding to their master’s beck and call. Commercialising a race of SuperBeings, engineers have created Artificial Intelligence that can ‘reason’ and ‘think’ for itself. SuperSoldiers are weapons of mass destruction that cannot only analyse trends and risks to form comprehensive strategies, but also turn them into reality. They serve as the male counterparts to the female SuperMinds, which have been constructed as a substitute to baby nannies, engineered to be more nurturing and assisting.

SuperBeings have become an elite form of Artificial Intelligence thanks to lengths of coding that allow the robots to form a vague sense of identity. SuperSoldiers know they are *male* and can identify that SuperMinds are female and are of a different gender and nature to themselves. A bank of ‘intuition’ helps substitute their lack of human emotion. Until the formation of SuperBeings, Artificial Intelligence engines were not technically programmed with a gender; they could not even be considered gender-neutral, as they did not have a proper identity to begin with. Now SuperSoldiers possess more *stereotypically* masculine traits, and identify themselves as male, whereas SuperMinds are *stereotypically* feminine and deem themselves female. In connection to this, whenever SuperBeings make a risk assessment, SuperSoldiers take greater risks (acting on a 30% success rate) whereas SuperMinds will hardly ever budge (even on a 50% success rate). Although SuperBeings are generally more useful, they still cannot complete tasks as well as human beings who, not only possess both masculine and feminine traits *simultaneously*, but possess far superior reasoning skills.

The engineering of gender has not always been necessary. Before the construction of SuperBeings, engineers had never before attempted to design Artificial Intelligence with a proper understanding of identity. Artificial Intelligence do not need to ‘reproduce’ in the way biological entities do. As such, a droid with a physical avatar assigned to a gender binary is male or female at surface value only. A mere representation.

2017 (Representation of the Power Structures)

Years ago, in the increasingly technologically advanced year of 2017, engineers could hardly construct Artificial Intelligence to properly take on human anatomy. However, chatbots had infiltrated the homes of human beings worldwide. The most common household names for chatbots included Apple’s Siri, Microsoft’s Cortana and Amazon’s Alexa. There was a trend where the typically male-dominated profession of engineering regularly ascribed female names to these chatbots that one would issue commands to. If the bots did not have female names, they usually always had a female voice.

“Hey Cortana, play some music,” “Alexa, call home”. There is reason we have digital assistants. It is to boss them around. These names and voices may not be mere coincidence after all. People are conditioned to expect women, and not men, to be in an administrative role. Siri is slightly more progressive; if you switch Siri’s language to United Kingdom English, the voice becomes male.

“Siri, are you a boy or girl?”
“I don’t have a gender.”

There is some academic research explaining the trend for digital assistants to adopt female voices. Stanford communications

professor, Clifford Nass claims, “it’s much easier to find a female voice that everyone likes than a male voice that everyone likes. It’s a well-established phenomenon that the human brain is developed to like female voices.”¹ This, however, does not explain one study² where woman radio hosts regularly receive more criticism regarding vocal tics, while men are perceived with less negativity.

Dennis Mortensen, CEO and co-founder of x.ai, commented on the decisions of his peers in the engineering & IT industry. “To provide a little bit of defence for some of my fellow technologists... it’s been conclusive that you and I just take orders from a female voice *better*,” he said. “Some of them suggest that the pitch itself, just from an audio technology perspective is just easier to understand.”³

If the models of digital assistants, built by men, are typically female, is this how men perceive the opposite sex? Kathleen Richardson, author of *An Anthropology of Robots and AI: Annihilation Anxiety and Machines*, certainly believes so. “I think that probably reflects what some men think about women—that they’re not fully human beings,” she said⁴.

This anthropomorphising of machines seems to lie deeper than digital assistants. Deadly weaponry – the Big Bertha howitzer and the Mons Meg cannon – seem also to be bestowed with female names. Perhaps what lies here is a trend to objectify women.

This inclination to fembots may come as a surprise to those whose main source of exposure to Artificial Intelligence is through sci-fi films. From *Transformers* to *Terminator*, there is certainly a greater representation of male androids in cinematic AI. Yet the answer to this pattern may, more or less, be the same – a tendency to objectify women. “When it comes to a disembodied voice, the chances of it being female are probably slightly higher than of it being male,” explains Richardson, a social anthropologist at University College London, “but when it comes to making something fully humanoid, it’s almost always male.”⁵ She further explains, “sophisticated robots are almost always male. Even when humanoid robots are female, they are modelled after attractive subservient young women.”⁶

In recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in adopting fembots in sci-fi movies. Although many films concerning AI build on the cliché that Artificial Intelligence may become ‘super-intelligent’ and outstrip the intellectual capacity of their human creators, many explore the nuances of humanity.⁷ From Maria’s seductive dancing in *Metropolis* to Ava’s human resemblance in *Ex Machina*, these films seem to explore the male fantasy of having a perfect sex robot.⁸ The latter film in particular, was constructed on the ultimate male fear: a woman who fights back and asserts her independence. It seems that fembots may be the new femme fatale.

Meet the Makers

There is no hiding that women are severely underrepresented in the engineering and technology sector. But, to what extent? There is a fixed mindset among these industries: companies seek to hire the best and are not going out of their way to seek diversity. A mantra of excellence exists, along with a perception that diversity is orthogonal to excellence.¹⁰ Companies for Artificial Intelligence or data science roles receive thousands of applications annually, yet reported only 0.1% of applicants being women.¹¹

The study of AI systems is not free from ideology and ethics. Working on these systems may teach us more than we expect: more about all the different ways to be human. As beings with multifaceted perception, our representations do not simply reflect the world, but maintain and create it. We need to be careful of where these representations lie. ●

¹ Adrienne LaFrance, ‘Why Do So Many Digital Assistants Have Feminine Names?’, *The Atlantic* (online), 30 March 2016 <<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2016/03/why-do-so-many-digital-assistants-have-feminine-names/475884/>>.

² University of Miami ‘Vocal fry hurts women in the labor market’, 28 May 2014, <https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2014-05/uom-vfh052714.php>.

³ Adrienne LaFrance, ‘Why Do So Many Digital Assistants Have Feminine Names?’, *The Atlantic* (online), 30 March 2016 <<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2016/03/why-do-so-many-digital-assistants-have-feminine-names/475884/>>.

⁴ Kathleen Richardson, ‘An Anthropology of Robots and AI: Annihilation Anxiety and Machines’ (Routledge, 2015) cited in Tanya Lewis, ‘Rise of the Fembots: Why Artificial Intelligence Is Often Female’ *Live Science* (online), 19 February 2017 <<https://www.livescience.com/49882-why-robots-female.html>>.

⁵ Kathleen Richardson, ‘An Anthropology of Robots and AI: Annihilation Anxiety and Machines’ (Routledge, 2015) cited in Tanya Lewis, ‘Rise of the Fembots: Why Artificial Intelligence Is Often Female’ *Live Science* (online), 19 February 2017 <<https://www.livescience.com/49882-why-robots-female.html>>.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Angela Watercutter, ‘Ex Machina has a Serious FemBot Problem’, *Wired* (online), 4 September 2015, via <<https://www.wired.com/2015/04/ex-machina-turing-bechdel-test/>>

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ David Glance, ‘Ex Machina is less a movie about the nature of AI and more about the fantasies of men’, *The Conversation* (online), 23 March 2015 <<http://theconversation.com/ex-machina-is-less-a-movie-about-the-nature-of-ai-and-more-about-the-fantasies-of-men-39168>>.

¹⁰ Tyler Schnoebelen, ‘The gender of artificial intelligence’, *Crowdfunder* (online), 11 July 2016 <<https://www.crowdfunder.com/the-gender-of-ai/>>.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Alisha Brown

Girl in the mirror whose
soul aches when her soles
break and bend, toes
squished tight like tiny mice
who fight for breath in
poised stiletto caves – you
are more than this, you need
not stand four inches away
from equality, your height is
not directly proportional to
your worth and they cannot
force your tender feet so
far from Mother Earth that
you trip, lose grip and slip
through the concrete pay
gap. Girl in the mirror, stretch
your swollen arches, don
those nineties Chuck Taylors
and see how the world still
spins to the comfortable
rhythm of your footsteps. ●

THE THINGS WE DO
TO GET SOME



It all started in primary school – when you liked a boy, you would give him a kiss on the cheek and then run away and scream (or pull down his pants as a prank). The boys would push you over in the sandbox.

Years on, this still happens.

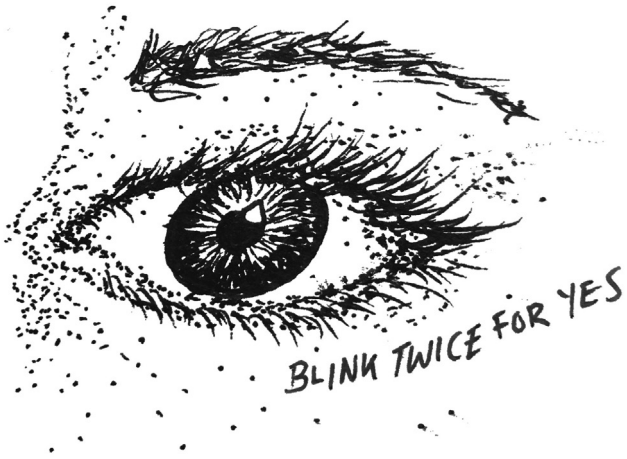


You scan the room. Having had two (truthfully, three or four) glasses of Shiraz, you feel good- confident even. Several times your eyes graze over potentials until you see the guy standing on the side of room. Is he alone? Eyes meet. You hold his gaze and, as taught-on cue-, shyly divert them away.



You think of yourself as an independent woman. You hold down a part-time job, full-time graduate degree, a social life, and a weekly hangover. You're happy. But you feel a certain inexplicable sadness as you reflect on the set-ups and blind dates you've endured in recent times. Giggling, you remain undeterred.

You look over your shoulder and flash a cheeky smile his way. Why do you feel slightly conflicted? You down your drink and feel your confidence spiked.



You can't seem to get the words out though, and neither can he. What do you want?
This is what I'm looking for...

The room is filled with the loudest thoughts, but they are silenced by our social norms, trapped and translated into Morse code blinks and pursed lips. Like a tin-can conversation, nothing is getting through.



We can't seem to be able to just say: "I think you're attractive, let's get to know each other and if we're still here at last call let's go home and have sex.". Instead, we banter and playfully insult one another to let them know we're interested.



At the end of the night, the usual line is: "I still have a bottle of red at my place" or, like in New York, "Wanna get out of here?" All these representations and innuendos...



No wonder everyone is still as confused as ever. ●



MORE THAN
SKIN DEEP

Sarah Jamieson

If truth is a construct rather than absolute, then current societal conceptions of domestic violence have a vice-grip on how violence is defined and who can experience it. By this I mean that domestic violence is typically understood within the context of a heterosexual relationship, and through the traditional binary of female victim and male perpetrator.¹ The unfortunate implication of this hetero-patriarchal model is that it prevents the recognition of violence in non-normative relationships. This is especially problematic because statistics demonstrate that domestic violence in LGBTIQ relationships is as high or higher than in heterosexual relationships.² The issue is, far fewer of the victims in these relationships identify as such or seek help. A consequence of this is that the invisibility of domestic violence continues to be a worrying and concealed issue in our community.

One of the major barriers preventing those in violent LGBTIQ relationships to seek help is the failure to recognise that violence can, and does, occur within the context of non-normative relationships. Part of the issue is that domestic violence is typically viewed through a patriarchal framework which assumes that violence is rooted in inherent unequal power relations between men and women.³ Without these traditional political and physical power imbalances, it is hard to conceptualise domestic violence as an urgent issue within relationships where both parties are “equally matched.”⁴

Unaddressed internalised homophobia can have an ongoing impact in LGBTIQ relationships. Many metropolitan non-LGBTIQ people find the premise of internalised homophobia confusing because being queer isn't a “big deal” anymore, and “things are getting better.” I contend that, despite “things” being better in University and inner-west echo-chambers of solidarity, internalised homophobia has a deeper and more insidious undercurrent. It's the looks you get from holding your partner's hand in anywhere other than Newtown or Marrickville. It's the fact the romantic narrative (as force-fed to us in films, novels, music clips and advertising) is predominantly heterosexual. It is the process of coming out, which in itself is asking for acceptance – noting that “asking” implies the valid option of rejection. It is the very fact that this fucking country is sanctioning homophobia in a “political debate” about whether LGBTIQ identity should be recognised as valid. It is these things, and many, many more, which teach LGBTIQ people that their love is worthless.

The impact of internalised homophobia not only affects how the individual feels about themselves, but can also be a significant factor in determining how they interact with an intimate partner. A worrying reaction that is relevant here is when the marginalised individual reproduces the same homophobic behaviours they have experienced in an attempt to align themselves with the norm. As Melissa Kay and Samantha Jefferies state: “to be a man in modern Western society is often said to require men to be heterosexual, homophobic, and hostile toward men involved in intimate relationships with other men.”⁵ What can be taken away from this is that men who do not conform to traditional standards of heterosexuality and masculinity are seen to embody a subordinate masculinity, which they may “seek to oppose [...] by utilizing intimate partner violence as a resource to approximate hegemonic masculinity.”⁶ Additionally, the fact that male-male violence generally is normalised in society adds a twofold barrier to recognising domestic violence: the perpetrator may not consider his violence as such because he is male, and the victim may not be able to identify as such because men are not typically considered victims of domestic violence. The heterosexist construct

thus acts to exclude an understanding of domestic violence outside the typical framework.

Women in same-sex relationships certainly don't have a ‘get out of jail free’ card. In fact, the only statistics I could find on female same-sex domestic violence placed it at 41 per cent,⁷ which is higher than both heterosexual relationships and male same-sex relationships. What is so dangerous about this is that women aren't scrutinised as rigorously for their behaviour because the patriarchal model of femininity excludes the idea that women may be perpetrators, rather than victims, of violence. In other words, as lesbian relationships fall outside of the patriarchy, there is the assumption that relationships are built on equal power relations. This simply isn't true. A particularly persuasive argument mounted by academic Lee Vickers posits that in response to homophobia (“you are less than us”) lesbian identity has focused on representing itself as comprising of more evolved, egalitarian relationships (“no, we are better than you”).⁸ This “lesbian utopia”⁹ rebuffs the idea that women can commit violent acts against one another, which neatly aligns with societal perceptions of women generally, thus ensuring that lesbian domestic violence remains an invisible issue.

If victims of same-sex violence are not often understood to be victims, then it follows that there would be a lack of available support services. Although there are LGBTIQ support services, this is not at all indicative of the nation-wide availability of support services specifically for LGBTIQ people. One recent study in Brisbane showed that not only were staff untrained and sure of how to handle LGBTIQ relationships, but the over-burned mainstream service providers were having to actively turn away male victims because of limited resources.¹⁰ This shows a concerning deficit in support services for members of the LGBTIQ community. Unless LGBTIQ victims can access the specific support services available in areas like Sydney, they may not receive help when they need it most.

Compounding this is the understandable distrust of police given their fraught (and ongoing) history with the LGBTIQ community. Given that reports of police brutality towards the LGBTIQ community are as recent as 2013,¹¹ it's not difficult to see why LGBTIQ victims of domestic violence may feel reluctant to contact the police. Further, there has been a notable tendency of the police to treat same-sex violence as “mutual fighting”¹², with roughly 6 per cent of LGBTIQ individuals who report domestic violence to the police being referred to support services.¹³ Around one in three individuals in LGBTIQ relationships are experiencing domestic violence. Only 20 per cent of those instances are reported to the police,¹⁴ and of those reported instances only 6 per cent are being referred to support services.¹⁵ This clearly identifies a monumental failure on part of the state in protecting an LGBTIQ individual's inherent right to safety and freedom.¹⁶

To conclude, although LGBTIQ domestic violence is treated the same under domestic violence legislation, violence is defined and subsequently understood through a patriarchal, heterosexist paradigm which excludes people in LGBTIQ relationships. Equal rights in law are thus offset by sociological presumptions about what violence is and who can experience it. This effectively cuts the lifeline to support services for some of the most marginalised and vulnerable members of our society. In order to achieve equal protection before the law, it is crucial that we reconstruct the social truths surrounding domestic violence. ●

¹ Kate O'Halloran, 'Family Violence in an LGBTIQ context' (2015) 2 *DVRVC Advocate*, 1.

² ACON, Submission No 30 to House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth, *Inquiry into the Impact of Violence on Young Australians* (23 October 2009), 9; Melissa Kay and Samantha Jefferies, 'Homophobia, Heteronormativity and Hegemonic Masculinity: Male Same-Sex Intimate Violence from the Perspective of Brisbane Service Providers', (2010) 17(3) *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law* 412, 412.

³ Rosemary Hunter, 'Narratives of Domestic Violence' (2006) 28 *Sydney Law Review* 733, 740.

⁴ Lone Fathers Association (Australia), Submission No 32 to Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee, *Parliamentary Inquiry into Domestic Violence in Australia* (30 July 2014) 11.

⁵ Melissa Kay and Samantha Jefferies, 'Homophobia, Heteronormativity and Hegemonic Masculinity: Male Same-Sex Intimate Violence from the Perspective of Brisbane Service Providers', (2010) 17(3) *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law* 412, 413.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 413.

⁷ National LGBT Health Alliance, *Submission to National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Children* (July 2008), 2.

⁸ Lee Vickers, 'The Second Closet: Domestic Violence in Lesbian and Gay Relationships: A Western Australian Perspective' (1996) 3(4) *Murdoch University Electronic Journal of Law* 1, 30.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁰ Melissa Kay and Samantha Jefferies, 'Homophobia, Heteronormativity and Hegemonic Masculinity: Male Same-Sex Intimate Violence from the Perspective of Brisbane Service Providers', (2010) 17(3) *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law* 412, 420.

¹¹ 'Jamie Jackson Reed awarded \$40,000 after Mardi Gras arrest', *The Sydney Morning Herald* (online) 7 February 2014 < <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/jamie-jackson-reed-awarded-40000-after-mardi-gras-arrest-20140206-325av.html> >

¹² Lee Vickers, 'The Second Closet: Domestic Violence in Lesbian and Gay Relationships: A Western Australian Perspective' (1996) 3(4) *Murdoch University Electronic Journal of Law* 1, 41

¹³ Leonard William et al., 'Coming Forward: The Underreporting of Heterosexist Violence and Same Sex Partner Abuse in Victoria' (2008) 69 *The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society*, La Trobe University, 6.

¹⁴ Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria, Submission to the Royal Commission, *Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence* (May 2015) 3.

¹⁵ Leonard William et al., 'Coming Forward: The Underreporting of Heterosexist Violence and Same Sex Partner Abuse in Victoria' (2008) 69 *The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society*, La Trobe University, 6.

¹⁶ Article 3, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, GA Res 217A (III), U.N. Doc A/810 (10 December 1948)



BROKEN
TELEPHONE

Nicola Hughson

As of late, I have seen an increased number of Feminist Facebook pages and groups emerging. Women flock to these pages in hoards and from secret lace-covered rooms or hot pink death chambers – however you choose to picture the Feminazi archetype— they plot to bring down the Patriarchy. They seek advice and support from other women on myriad issues like, sexual assault and sexual empowerment, self-esteem and body image, misogynistic advertising and gendered discrimination. These female-only spaces can be super brilliant for women to open up and feel supported by other females. Something doesn't quite add up though. Many of these issues clearly involve more than just the female gender.

So, my question becomes: are these spaces driving a wedge between where we are now and where we can be? If women are openly addressing the particulars of issues in these female-exclusive spaces and only presenting the overarching opinions in public spaces, then it seems a natural consequence that males feel unjustly demonised because they don't have any proper understanding of the complexity or depth of the issues.

The sobering truth of this fact hit me square in the face as I began to raise women's issues in the presence of young men over the last few months. Similar to females, on the other side of the crevasse, are the male-only online spaces, which are just as dangerous in perpetuating the disaccord in male-female understanding. For example, let's take the much publicised "female harpooning" post shared on a male-only college page this year. A student made a post that referred to women in a derogatory manner. It was publicly criticised for the failure of students who observed or commented on the post to call it out for what it was: demeaning and unjustifiable. Should any male have written a comment on that post in defence of women, who, of course, had no presence in the space to defend themselves, they would have been brought down as 'not being able to take a joke', or otherwise mocked. Sadly, criticising it publicly was the only way to get the message across to the young men. I was shocked and confused when a number of the college students said that they felt 'betrayed' by whoever had leaked it, that 'what's written on the page is supposed to stay on the page' and that 'it could have been sorted internally.' That's when I knew that the methods engendered by these female-exclusive spaces weren't addressing the aim of bolstering the Feminist movement in the way they were intended to. There isn't a strong enough link between the powerful discussions on the female-only pages and the face-to-face discussions between men and women. The fact that these young men thought it could have been brought down any other way than the way it was, shows that they don't understand the nature of the issue at all. We've got to open a discussion with the men so that they can understand that these male-dominated spaces breed a culture that equates female oppression and male supremacy with something as quotidian and harmless as a joke.

Frustratingly, I am often met with a similar response from males whenever 'sexual assault' comes up. "I've never heard of a single case," they say. "I don't know anyone who has done that," they say. "Well it's not my friends," they say. "Why would you have heard of a case though?" I spat at all of them. But I couldn't shake the way the rhetorical question I had thrown at them bore a hole in my chest—they seriously just didn't get it. But how could you get something if you never had anyone talk about it with you? Each time, both of us were mad and when both people are angry, no one is listening. The frustration often shuts down the conversation; with the best intentions of 'safe sharing' and female empowerment, these female-exclusive spaces have incidentally brought about an ancillary paradigm in which the male's ignorance infuriates the woman and so she returns to the female-only space to rant about it, while the male continues to think it's an over-exaggeration of a few fringe cases. These young men just didn't understand the facets of the issue at all and so many of them don't. But I don't blame them for that. It's not typically dinner time conversation to discuss the far-reaching intricacies of 'rape culture' and female oppression and should a male be brave enough to ask questions, he is often met with hostility from our side because we are irritated by his lack of knowledge. It all seems so plain to us, so obvious, but it's so easy to forget that we are well-versed, well-read and well-educated on the issues. I remember when I first learned to drive and I had absolutely no idea how the car even moved, none of its mechanisms made sense at all. The family member I had teaching me couldn't fathom that I had zero clue how the steering worked or how the wheels aligned. This continued to be a point of conflict, I became flustered when it was time to do a lesson, I felt insecure to ask questions again, time passed and I still wasn't getting it. One day, an instructor gave me a lesson, calmly and kindly

he explained the way everything worked and how I could improve. Then, and here's the important part, he repeated the whole process every time I asked. I learned how to do better, I did improve and I got my license.

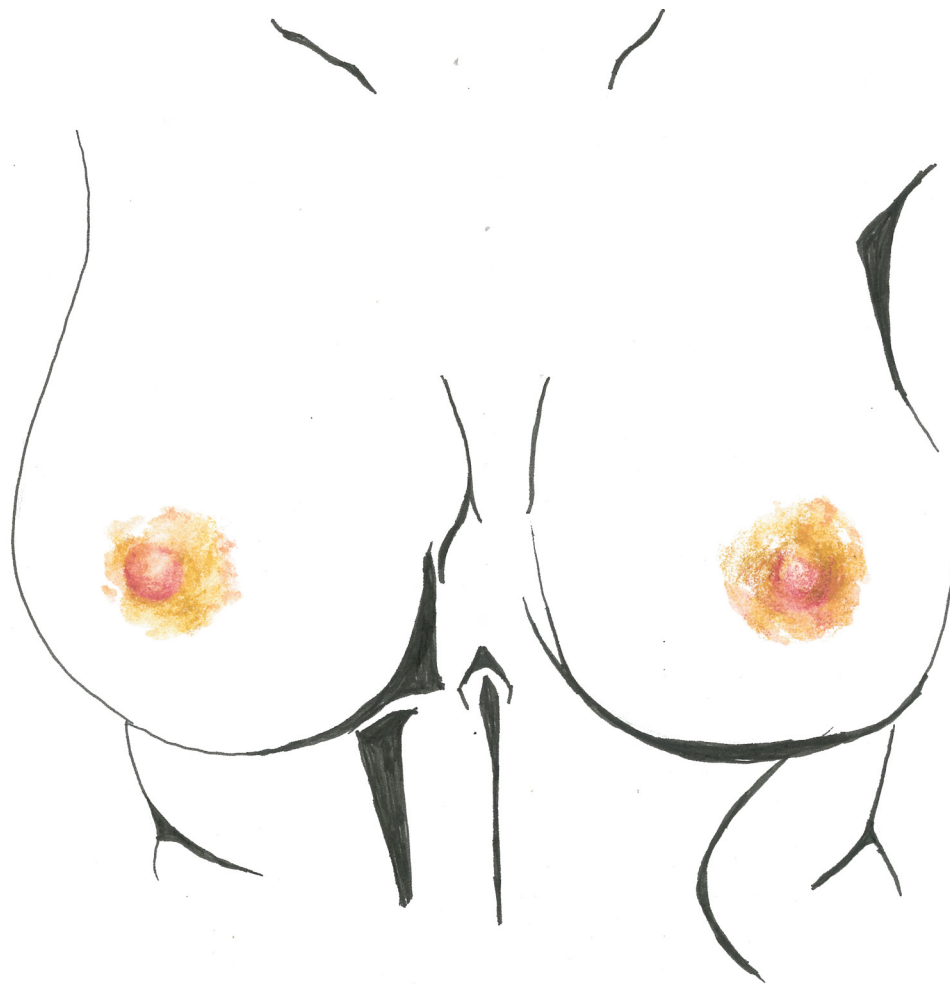
I told all my friends about these encounters but really I should have talked it through with the guys. I should have taken that opportunity to educate them on women's issues. Women's issues don't occur in a vacuum, they exist in a multi-gendered world. The men need to be included in the conversation. It would be wrong to suggest that there aren't any men who are well-read on women's issues, because there are many men, particularly young men, who work hard to educate other men about Feminism and in turn, the treatment of women. There are definitely men who do understand, at least in part, the complex subject matter and the scope of modern Feminism. All I'm trying to say is that there are also many who don't. I've been staring at this canyon that divides men and women for some time now and I have come to the conclusion that there's been a serious misguidance, a misdirection, a miscommunication.

We always talk about 'closing the gap' regarding gender inequality, well rather than trying to force the earth to close back up again, why don't we fill the chasm?

- feminicky ●

FREE THE NIPPLE?

Anonymous



Artwork by Tara Dingle

The 'Free the Nipple' movement - credited to have emerged from Lina Esco's 2012 film of the same name - seeks to become a premiere voice for gender equality by providing a 21st century response to the sexualisation and censorship of women's breasts. Utilising all forms of modern media, the movement aims to raise awareness and affect change on various social issues and injustices. However, the campaign focuses on a message of empowerment and gender equality by highlighting the disparity between society's treatment of the exposed male and female nipple. Challenging indecency laws in the United States, Esco argues that censorship of the female breast restricts freedom of expression and female sexuality, ultimately contributing to gender inequality.

Bolstered by debates surrounding public breastfeeding and outrage over censorship policies prohibiting depictions of the female areola, the #freethenipple tag has seemingly become this generation's call to 'burn your bra', garnering international support and an array of famous followers including Cara Delevigne, Rita Ora and Lena Dunham.

With a message of destroying the patriarchy and creating social change, Free the Nipple promotes empowerment by encouraging women to 're-claim' their bodies and redefine them on their own terms - terms that primarily see the female breast normalised and celebrated, departing from a primarily sexual purpose imposed by the male gaze, religious dogma and hypersexualised by advertising.

Inspired by the movement, indecent exposure laws have been challenged through global rallies, topless protests and picnics. Whilst controversial, the movement has been largely championed as body positive, reaffirming body confidence and female empowerment in public, male dominated spaces. Furthermore, the movement has questioned the distinctly heterosexual male point of view which does not view the male chest as sexual - a viewpoint largely adopted by society- ignoring the perspective of heterosexual women and individuals who do not identify as heterosexual and view the male

chest differently.

Criticism of the Free the Nipple movement has been varied, ranging from outright disgust to reluctant support. Critics have largely taken the approach that the female breast is inherently sexual, regardless of context, individual belief or its evolutionary purpose to nurse. Furthermore, supporters of the movement's ideals have raised concerns that the movement has morphed into a salacious news story merely vying for clicks achieving an online aesthetic and little else. However, for critics and supporters alike, uncertainty underlies how the exposed breast can exist in a public sphere without further sexualisation, whether it's presence can coexist with cultural normalities or religious beliefs, and whether age is relevant where a post-pubescent minor consents to the public display of her breasts.

Laws involving the exposure of female breasts in Australia reflect this uncertainty. In the media, the way that the female breast is regulated has been described as a 'legal quagmire'¹, with many unsure of how and when exposure is curtailed by law. With reported cases of indecent exposure largely identifying men as the majority of offenders and little data on arrests or fines given to women for toplessness, it is incredibly difficult to ascertain what circumstances lead to punishment for exposure of the breast.

Indecent exposure laws vary between states. In NSW, the offence of obscene exposure is found in s5 of the *Summary Offences Act 1988* (NSW). This section states that a person shall not, in or within view from a public place or a school, wilfully and obscenely expose his or her person. A maximum penalty of 10 penalty units (fine) or six months' imprisonment applies to a person found guilty of the offence. NSW Courts have interpreted the phrase "wilfully and obscenely expose his or her person" to specifically refer to male and female genitalia². Reported cases overwhelming identify offenders as male and there are few, if any, reported cases of female offenders charged with toplessness making it unclear (and very unlikely) that exposure under s5 extends to the female breast.

¹ Katherine Gillespie, 'how to legally #freethenipple in australia', *I-D* (online), 11 March 2016 <https://i-d.vice.com/en_au/article/mbv4pb/how-to-legally-freethenipple-in-australia>.

² See eg, *R v Eyles* [1997] NSWSC 452.

Unsurprisingly, past indecency laws and by-laws in NSW have been much stricter. For example, *The Local Government Act, Ordinance No. 52* (1935) set exact dimensions for swimming costumes and remained in force until 1961. Under this Act, over 75 bikini-clad women were arrested at Sydney beaches for 'offensive behaviour' between 1940 and 1961.³ This became known as the 'bikini wars', ending in 1961 with the abandonment of *Ordinance No. 52*. A new ordinance was introduced vaguely requiring bathers to be 'clad in proper and adequate bathing costume.' Current laws are just as unclear. For the purposes of Local government nude bathing laws⁴, 'nudity' is prohibited at any place other than designated beaches, but 'nudity' does not clearly extend to the exposed female breast. While councils may not be able to charge an individual for toplessness, they may be able to request that the breast is covered and if that person refuses they may ask them to leave the premises. However, penalising this behaviour appears to be rare, particularly on public beaches where there are few reports of women being asked to cover their breasts or asked to leave by life guards or council workers.

Furthermore, available data does not appear to distinguish between obscene exposure and other sexual offences, making it difficult to quantify how many, if any, women have been charged with this particular offence in NSW. There is also no reference regarding how the law is applicable to post-operative male to female transgender persons. Although it appears that technically men and women can go topless in public in NSW and you may not be charged under s5 of the *Summary Offences Act*, it is nevertheless possible to be reprimanded or face a fine for offensive conduct under s4 of the *Summary Offences Act* or another related but less definable offence such as nuisance or in conjunction with causing a public disruption. The broadly defined and subjective nature of this offence may lead to inconsistency in the application of the law upon individuals and dependant on the discretion of the police officer present at the time and the complaints made by surrounding individuals. This indicates that being charged for toplessness may not be wholly dependent on the laws themselves, but rather on what community members see as offensive at that time.

This may suggest why a great deal of the controversy surrounding the Free the Nipple movement is centred around the independent choices made by private entities such as Facebook, Instagram and other media organisations that choose to censor the female nipple on their platforms. Again, these entities are greatly influenced by public opinion, and also may be subject to advertising standards based on society's attitudes towards nudity. For example, lingerie store Honey Birdette was recently forced to remove two posters on its shop windows in a shopping centre in Adelaide featuring women in a new range of underwear where one model's nipple was visible⁵. Following complaints made by the shopping centre, the posters were banned by the Australian Advertisement Bureau for breaching 2.4 of the Code which states "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience" as they exposed minors to "highly sexual images". As the 'relevant audience' is incredibly broad and can change depending on the context, it follows that, in modern society, censorship is primarily influenced by public opinion rather than government law or policy. This may explain why the Free the Nipple movement has chosen to primarily target media platforms as opposed to legal or government entities – perhaps in recognition that it is the attitudes of private persons that have the greatest influence on censorship laws and policy.

It is also important to note that the Australian legal system does permit both male and female public nudity in designated locations such as nudist beaches. This suggests that society is not totally opposed to female and male public nudity, provided those choosing to go nude are shielded from the gaze of the general public. Furthermore, both federal and state legislation clearly permit public breastfeeding and prevent discrimination towards women who are breastfeeding⁶. In this case, the law seeks to actively protect women from attitudes of community members who view exposure of the breasts in this context

as offensive, seemingly complementing the aims of the Free the Nipple movement. While the law recognises that the breast serves this important non-sexual purpose, it also views the breast as inherently sexual where a woman has been a victim of a sexual offence such as indecent assault. For indecent assault to be proven under s61L of the *Crimes Act 1900* (NSW), the Crown must prove beyond reasonable doubt that the accused assaulted the complainant, that the assault was indecent and that the assault was committed without the complainant's consent.

For assault to be indecent for the purposes of s61L of the *Crimes Act 1900* (NSW) it must have a sexual connotation or overtone, with the act contrary to ordinary standards of morality of right-minded members of the community as per *R v Harkin*.⁷ In *Harkin*, the court identified two categories of acts: (1) acts that are unequivocally sexual and (2) some acts that are equivocal (may or may not have a sexual connotation) depending on the intention with which the accused committed the act. For example, if it is established that the accused had a sexual motive or purpose their actions will be regarded as having a sexual connotation.

Australian courts have consistently held that touching the female breast is comparable to touching a person's genitals and therefore has sufficient sexual connotations to be considered as part of the first category⁸. Again, this is because the act of touching the female breast is viewed as simply contrary to ordinary standards of morality of right-minded members of the community. Public standards of considering the breast as inherently sexual and viewing the male and female nipple differently in this context appear completely at odds with the views of the Free the Nipple movement. However, if touching the breast was not viewed as unequivocally sexual and viewed as say, the male nipple or another traditionally non-erogenous body part, this may mean it would fall into the second category and the Crown would need to prove the intention of the accused to obtain sexual gratification – taking into account surrounding circumstances. Quite clearly, proving an intention to obtain sexual gratification beyond reasonable doubt may require much greater legal attention and effort than simply showing that the accused touched an area with a recognised sexual connotation.

If society adopts the viewpoint of the Free the Nipple movement in normalising the breast as a non-sexual, natural body part, establishing it as no different to the male nipple, it may have significant implications in the criminal law context. Touching the female breast would perhaps, in the hypothetical, not breach the 'ordinary standards of morality of right-minded members of the community' and thus touching the breast may fall into the second category established in *Harkin* and require additional evidence.

The core motive behind the Free the Nipple movement is to create an environment where women can choose how they define their bodies and consequently, affect the definition society imposes on them. By this reasoning, some women may choose to define their breasts as primarily sexual and prefer that society defines them as such, maintaining the ordinary standards that remain relevant to sexual offences. However, the changing standards of decency may result in the breast being uncensored, being recognised by the standards of society as not being inherently sexual but somehow be re-defined in such a way that 'sexual connotations' for the purposes of s61L of the *Crimes Act* are retained. Ultimately, it is questioned whether the Free the Nipple movement can equally empower all women, including those who view their breasts as inherently sexual or those that may be vulnerable and lack support. It is hoped that a movement that has had such a positive effect on body image and has successfully bought this area of gender disparity to the forefront of debate can reconcile the differing views that women, themselves, might have about their breasts. Although the movement proves that there is nothing obscene about a woman's body, it may require further exploration to determine not only what empowerment is, but how empowerment can be brought to all women in a variety of circumstances. ●

³ Waverley Library, *Bikini arrests on Bondi Beach: 1940s-1960s* (2009)

<http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/8666/Bikini_arrests_on_Bondi_Beach_1940s_to_1960s.pdf>

⁴ *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) s 633.

⁵ Jade Gailberger, 'Honey Birdette lingerie billboard in Rundle Mall causes controversy,' *The Advertiser* (online), 9 August 2017 <<http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/messenger/city/public-honey-birdette-poster-in-rundle-mall-verges-on-offensive/news-story/695336b4ff487af30e3b49f7392f58fo>>.

⁶ *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth) s 14-27, s 39; *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* No 48 (NSW).

⁷ *R v Harkin* (1989) 38 A Crim R 296, 301.

⁸ *R v Harkin* (1989) 38 A Crim R 296; *Fitzgerald v Kennard* (1995) 38 NSWLR 184

DISSONANCE

Jessie Ding

*"By writing her self, woman will return to the body which has been more than confiscated from her, which has been turned into the uncanny stranger on display - the ailing or dead figure, which so often turns out to be the nasty companion, the cause and location of inhibitions.
Write your self. Your body must be heard. Only then will the immense resources of the unconscious spring forth."
- Helene Cixous, *The Laugh of Medusa*¹*

I. Divine

[A man to Artemis]:

Take me as you find me, Great Mother.
Pierce with your arrow, gently now, looking kindly on your
Humble servant.
Huntress' breath from golden bosom,
Awake my senses while I wait for you,
In reverence,
In bashfulness.
I will kiss your sweet heels as they mark the earth,
I will eat from the tree that you forbid, so to
Die, and be
Exalted.
Take me with you to the heavens.

[A man to forest nymph]:

Tempting eyes – rid them!
I see the nape of that tantalising neck,
The meniscus of that virgin smile,
The weight of those golden breasts.
Little nymph – beware!
You think you can write the ways of the wood?
So tempt me, with that sprite-like voice,
Seduce me with your forest song, with the lyrics of
Your false timidity.
Face instead my monstrosity

[A man to Medusa]:

"Off, off, eely tentacle!"²
Are you that of Hades' kind?
Pungent veneer of Gorgon mistress,
Snake woman, rancid goddess.
Dry spittle of tortured mouth and vindictive gaze
Voicing obscenities but
I will not
be petrified
by woman.
Let me rip those mortal coils from your head for
I am Perseus of men.
I thirst to conquer you.

¹ "Helene Cixous/ The Laugh of the Medusa," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory & Criticism*, comp. William E. Cain et al., ed. Peter Simon and Vincent B. Leitch, 2nd ed. (United States of America: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2010, 2001).

² Plath, S (1965). "Medusa" in *Ariel*, (Faber and Faber Limited: London), pp. 38

II. Docile

[*Man writes to woman*]:

Nigh upon the evening hour
The storm was quickly to descend
But steadfastly, my lonesome tower
Would scarce betray my heart to mend.

I listened to the gale that beat
Atop the thatching of the rooves
That mirrored my own swift defeat
Against the lust that cruelly moves.

Perhaps some chance respite might spare
The listless ache of woman missed
Upon this battered ribcage there
I chance the thought of woman kissed

Draw her near by graze of jaw
And mark her cheek by vicious bite
And proudly boast that lust foresaw
The mending of a broken night.

Perchance that woman did appear
In place of that imagined scene
She would declare her misplaced fear
Of I: I am God and Man between

And I must lovingly caress
The milky bareness of her thigh
And draw my nails to so abscess
Her length of leg and hear her cry
[*A new voice interjects*]

*"How do I love thee?"*³

Woman, let me love you to the end

*"Let me count the ways"*⁴

But only if you'd let me blight

*"I love thee to the depth and breadth and height"*⁵

The innocence you proudly lend

*"I love thee freely, as men strive for right"*⁶

To mask my wickedly debased plight

*"I love thee purely, as they turn from praise"*⁷

To have your life, to bid goodnight

*"...and, if God choose, I shall but love thee better after death"*⁸

³ Barret Browning, E (1850). "How do I love thee? (Sonnet 43)" in *Sonnets from the Portuguese*.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

III. Diverge

[A woman conversing with man]:

I want to ask you something – let me wrangle with the discourses of my self.

Can I say something? How do I...

...Speak?

Right. How does woman evince what her senses convince her of?

It's true

You would like it if I spoke.

If I spoke you would like it.

But only in tongues, you see – certain questions, certain answers. You would like it if I spoke it in the borders of your mind. You would like it if my beauty where ephemeral –

But circumscribed. That's right.

Let me dance,

Let me lead you.

Hold my hand.

Don't let go of my hand.

If I lace my fingers with yours in this way – over, under, over again. Do you feel it? My words – enveloping yours, over, under, over again.

But under, always under. Under and under and order and order.

But woman is a non-sequitur. Woman is a lyricism. And woman possesses –

Enough genius for man, don't you think?

All necessary brilliance but man, you agree?

Tell me, do you tremble when you split me open?

And what do you see?

Woman cut up, fragmented woman is pleasing
to see, limbs with no mind, how teasing
for me.

Tell me, do you like my voice? Can I tell you something?

Your voice pleases me most when it asks for something.

Yet one doesn't hear that

Not often at least,

Not enough

Tell me, are you not yet ill from your sugared words?

How will you write me?

I will pen your tresses and the nape of your neck. Your thighs,
scribed with the beauty of my infinite.

Your naval, a circumference of your being, and your—

“One day, there will be a writing of non-writing.

Someday it will come. A brief writing, without grammar, a writing of words alone.

Lost. Written there.

Immediately left behind.”⁹

To give woman back her tongue.

⁹ Duras, M (1999). *Writing*, trans M Polizzotti, Brookline Books, Massachusetts.

IV. Define

[A woman]:

I am ethylene. Give me the lickings of your flammable words and

I will burn you to death.

I am flamingo corsets and flying metal shrapnel, yet even so,

I speak of others. The sound of clocks. Of colours. Even of those
that

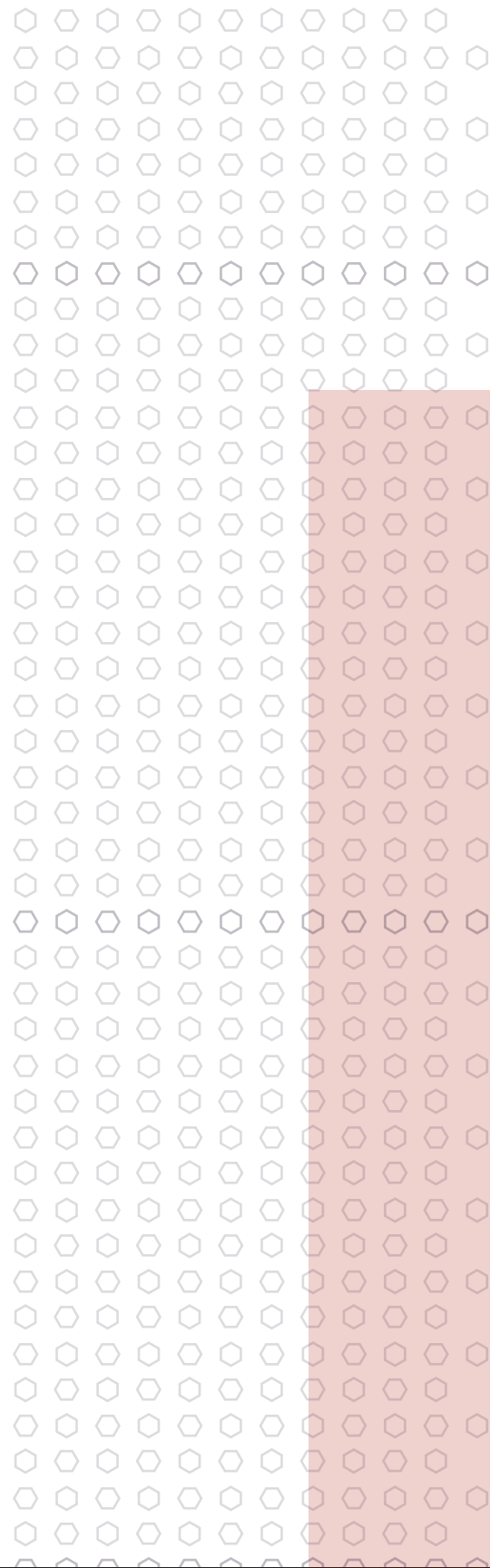
I hate. Because under my nails is a vengeance which boasts
perpetual rage.

I will only stop when I am both eye of needle and of storm. Until
then.

I will keep ringing like a torrent of bells, tolling beneath waves
which will echo

The siren of our sovereign selves,

The surge of our becoming. ●



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