

The Queen's Feminist Review



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Editor-in-Chief:

Riley Grant is a fourth year Art History major who hopes to pursue a career in estate and cultural property law. While this is her first year with the review, she has enjoyed the experience and her editorial board immensely.

Editorial Board:

Emily Major is a fourth year Geography major. She is interested in animals, human and women's rights. She loves the creativity of the Queen's and Kingston community and would like to thank them for their excellent submissions to our edition.

Katie Conway is a second year student majoring in Economics with a minor in Math. She is interested in social issues, hockey and nerding over Harry Potter. Her favourite submission this year is our cover art, "Awake" by Laura Stewart. She felt it was vibrant created an emotional reaction.

Kelsey Taylor is a second year History major. In addition to joining QFR this year, she is a member of Queen's Oxfam and a trumpet player in the Queen's University Chamber Orchestra. She enjoys coffee, staying up late for no reason (the two are totally unrelated), as well as learning about global development and the ways in which gender intersects with various issues.

Rachel Carine Lallouz is an English major with a minor in Political Studies. She is obsessed with Christina Rossetti and a huge fan of Margaret Atwood. She is currently reading Tracks by Louise Erich and enjoying it immensely. Her favourite submission is Phoebe McQuay's "Studies of a Lady".

Tasneem Premji is a third year Health studies major with an interest in gender studies and feminist theory. She loved last year's review and knew as soon as she finished reading it that she wanted to be part of its creation this year. She could not be more please with the decision as this year's review is amazingly artistic

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The Union Gallery

We would also like to extend an immeasurable amount of thanks to the extraordinary artists and writers who submitted their amazing work for consideration. The review would be virtually impossible and essentially meaningless without the words and images from these talented contributors. It is through your work, talent and commitment to this cause that we are able to progress more and more every year. We also extend a great deal of thanks to all of our housemates, friends, family and loved ones who supported each and every one of us this year and without your support would have made this journey a lonely one. Of course, we extend the greatest thanks to our amazing readers who make being a member of the QFR community worthwhile.

Thank you.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The topic of Feminism at Queen's and within the Kingston community is an ever progressing dialogue and this year's Queen's Feminist Review is a clear indication of that. Through the work of my fantastic editorial board, and talented submitters, we were able to continue the traditions of QFR while taking it in a direction that we feel highlights the artistic and literary abilities of our fellow peers. I am truly in awe of their submissions.

For the past eight months I have looked forward to our Sunday meetings and felt that I could depend on my editorial board for an honest and in depth discussion about any topic. It was so refreshing to participate in such a cohesive committee, where our only true conflicts lay in what time our meetings should be and perhaps where to have a committee dinner. Their insight and ability to think outside social constructs is what I feel makes this issue of the review so excellent. I could not have done any of this without these five amazing people and cannot thank them enough for their dedication and support.

I need to extend a great deal of appreciation to my family and friends. Thank you for listening to me while I was frustrated with everything and for celebrating with me when things went according to plan. In large part, I want to dedicate this issue to my two amazing sisters who never cease to amaze me with their thoughts and talents. They have taught me so much as women, and I only hope that they can learn something from me and my work with the publication the way I learn from them.

Like any social issue, there is always room for transformation and improvement within the feminist dialogue. We struggle as a University and as a community to make positive changes in hopes of fulfilling our publications mandate of exploring feminist issues. Nevertheless, I hope this collection of writings and imagery inspires our readers to celebrate and explore feminism in order to strengthen our community of change. The Queen's Feminist Review hopes to incorporate the past while looking towards the future.

Thank you for everything,

Riley Grant

Editor of The Queen's Feminist Review, Volume 19.

Women's Rights, according to Justice Antonin Scalia

Halla Imam

U.S. Supreme Court Judge rules that women do not have the Constitutional right to protect themselves from gender discrimination

Justice Antonin Scalia is no stranger to controversy. The twenty five year veteran of the Supreme Court has used the American constitution to deliver countless nation dividing verdicts (Bush vs. Gore ring any bells?). In an interview with the publication California Lawyer given earlier this month, Scalia was asked if the American constitution provided women with legal protection from gender based discrimination.

His answer?

"Certainly the Constitution doesn't require discrimination the basis of sex. The only issue is whether it prohibits it. It doesn't", says the seventy four year old judge.

Justice Scalia's statement was made in reference to the fourteenth amendment of the American Constitution, which declares that "no state shall make or enforce any law which denies to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." Scalia then went on to explain that although the amendment states that discrimination is prohibited under the law, women were not included in this anti-discriminatory declaration.

Drafted in 1868, the fourteenth Amendment was meant to protect African American slaves who were not considered to be persons, and instead "3/5 persons." Nearly one hundred and fifty years later, women have yet to have the same right to anti-discriminatory protection recognized by the Constitution. When asked if adjustments to the nineteenth century declaration were in order, Scalia disagrees.

"If the current society wants to outlaw discrimination by sex, hey we have things called legislatures, and they enact things called laws. You don't need a constitution to keep things up-to-date. All you need is a legislature and a ballot box."

His recent remarks have many seeing red. Patricia Ireland, former president of the American based "National Organization for Women" (1991-2001) calls for the need to re-evaluate the American Constitution. In the January 11th issue of the Huffington Post she contributed an article in response to counter Scalia's California Lawyer interview.

Women's Rights, according to Justice Antonin Scalia

"In the long run... we should keep in mind the need to add an Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, to guarantee equality between women and men in language so clear that even Justice Scalia cannot mistake it," Ireland says.

Ireland points out that adding an Equal Rights Amendment would hold each State to the same standard. While Scalia believes that equality is promoted and preserved through legislature, Ireland suggests that women's rights would then rely on those elected into the positions of power, and their interpretation of equality. "Women's assurance of 'equality of rights under the law' continues to depend on who is elected to the White House and the U.S. Senate", she says. If the Constitution was changed to ensure men and women had complete equal status under the law, the Supreme Court would have no choice but to denounce any form of gender discrimination.

A self-proclaimed "Originalist", Scalia believes in the literal translation of each amendment. Known for taking a more conservative approach to interpreting the constitution, originalists shun any form of altering the American Constitution. Justice Scalia's stance is worrisome to those who perceive his remarks as a threat to the progress that equal rights activists have spent decades fighting towards. The current president of the National Organization for Women, Terry O'Neil issued a statement shortly after Scalia's interview surfaced.

"As long as there are men in power in this country who keep women down, we need an explicit guarantee of equality in the constitution," says O'Neil. There is a fear that Scalia and other like-minded individuals have the influence to stunt the progress made by the women's rights movements.

An amendment that fails to protect the best interests of fifty percent of the population is a clear reflection of the era in which it was written. Justice Scalia, however, firmly stands by the need to preserve the originally drafted amendment, citing that societal changes should not impact the Constitution.

"You do not need the Constitution to reflect the wishes of the current society", says Scalia.

"Feminism" for a Kali

Kalanthe Khaiat

Feminism for me is an oppression-resisting movement encompassing much more than women's activism on behalf of women. Feminist projects are based in an understanding of the intersectionality of oppressions, and operating through the constant interplay of thought and action – or, in other words, achieving social change through theory-informed activism.

Promoting collaboration between social justice groups at Queen's is something I continue to promote and coordinate, working in the AMS Social Issues Commission as chair of Education on Gender Issues last year and as SGPS Equity Coordinator this year. The importance of coalition is something The other key to effective feminist projects is to constantly question and re-evaluate the assumptions underlying the project's theoretical foundations, and the actions taken from this standpoint. My specific personal interest in this vein is how to meaningfully address oppression affecting a much broader demographic than the white middle-class heterosexual ciswomen who were/are the normative subjects of white Western feminism – while working from a positionality that fits this normative model in every respect except my sexuality. Implicit in this improvement for me is a kind of reclaiming of 'feminism' as a progressive movement to align oneself with. I advocate feminism, and I advocate working towards making that feminism as non-exclusive, meaningful and effective as possible.

What I consider the most effective feminist projects are those that operate in solidarity and coalition with other social justice projects, which may or may not explicitly identify as 'feminist'. Mari Matsuda explores the general characteristics of effective coalition based on her specific experience at the Third Annual Conference on Women of Color and the Law, held in October 1990. In "Beside My Sister, Facing the Enemy: Legal Theory Out Of Coalition" (1991), Matsuda echoes bell hooks' definition of feminism in "Feminism: A Movement To End Sexist Oppression," as a struggle against "the ideology of domination" (52). Matsuda notes that there are "predictable patterns of oppression" which transcend any one specific, discrete instance of oppression. Working in coalition and sharing different localised experiences of oppression, targeting different aspects of individual and/or social identity, allows advocates of social justice to determine these patterns. Doing so provides insight into how to create projects that address the larger network of oppressions, in order to resist several of its manifestations simultaneously. One articulation of feminism as multifaceted resistance I admire and identify with most, which a friend shared with me, is:

To me, [being a feminist] includes being anti-racist, anti-essentialist, anti-colonial, anti-imperialist, sex-positive, queer-positive, anti-transphobic, anti-homophobic, anti-classist, anti-ableist, fat-positive, very left wing, and pro-choice.

"Feminism" for a Kali

Matsuda's most poignant insight into how to build strong coalition is her emphasis on the importance of not avoiding the uncomfortable conversations that are necessary to understand certain manifestations of oppression. She identifies the alternative to participating in "hard conversations" (in which being a respectful active listener is for some people the only valid role) as "a dangerous comfort... that seduces us into ignorance about the experiences of others and about the full meaning of our own lives" (293). I consider this particularly important at Queen's, an environment in which such "hard conversations" typically attract a limited number of core participants; they do not take place in broader contexts or at institutional levels where key decision-making takes place. I agree with Matsuda that "the discomfort [of participating in such conversations] brings with it an opportunity for learning" (292). At least in the Queen's context, though, I also recognise the somewhat counter-intuitive importance of making the experience of discomfort as comfortable as possible. This allows the experience to simultaneously be meaningful to each individual participant and to ensure that there is a meaningful number of them. Matsuda's "ask the other question method" is very appealing to me as a means of exposing "obvious and non-obvious relationships of domination" (295). Encouraging people in general to think about things like how homophobia motivates violence against women just as strongly as anti-LGBT violence is an excellent strategy for making the fact that "all forms of subordination are interlocking and mutually reinforcing" (Matsuda 195) a part of general common sense – which is the first step to resisting oppression on a systemic level.

Asking and addressing important and often self-reflexive questions is an essential part of keeping feminism vital and viable. The extent to which such questioning informs effective coalition (and makes it possible in the first place, really) is evident in Chandra Talpade Mohanty's "Under Western Eyes' Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggle" (2003). She advocates for "a common feminist political project, which critiques the effects of Western feminist scholarship on women in the Third World, but within a framework of solidarity and shared values" (447). Openness to critique then underlies the possibility of feminist solidarity across differences. Along these lines, in "Multiple Meditations: Feminist Scholarship in the Age of Multinational Reception" (1990), Lata Mani poses the "questions of rhetoric and strategy" advocates of transnational feminism must ask themselves in order to "argue for women's rights in ways that [are] not complicit in any way with patriarchal, racist or ethnocentric reformulations of the issues" (394). The success of feminist projects as "struggle to eradicate the ideology of domination that permeates Western culture" (hooks 52) depends directly on theoretical and practical advocates' ability to think and act outside the hegemonic frameworks which allow oppression to exist in the first place. It also depends on feminism itself not imposing a hegemonic, prescriptive

"Feminism" for a Kali

model for feminist projects. Re-evaluating whether a strategy that worked/works in one context is appropriate to a new and/or different one is always necessary to ensure that the project is meaningful. Becoming and remaining politically reflexive and active in ideological struggle is essential for feminist theorising. It then provides corresponding feminist activism with the greatest ability to effect positive social change.

As I see it, shaping coalitions within and across local contexts, in which all participants streamline their own approach to social justice through self-questioning and self-critique (which can be informed by the experience of other participants), presents the greatest opportunity for resisting and unravelling the network of oppressions that also manifests at once globally and locally. I embrace and advocate feminism because of the breadth of social justice issues it works to improve. To continue doing so meaningfully, I need to continue to participate in (building) coalitions, and must be self-reflexive in all the feminist projects I undertake – regarding the project, and regarding my place within it. Then I can uphold and demonstrate my conviction that feminism holds "the power to transform in a meaningful way all our lives" (hooks 54).

"Conversational Death"

Julia Krolík

Let the first rain melt the last of snows
Let the aching throbbing head fall off
As the understanding comes and goes
I feel like a droplet in your cough

Let the last rain fight the last of suns
Let the body wither into time
Conversations fought with loaded guns
Reestablish elements of crime

Let the first rain kiss the last of hours
Let the sadness anchor down your spine
Walking on me, don't forget the flowers
This memory needs colour on my shrine

Let the last rain kill the last of sleeps
Don't let our love make you oh so blind
It is only memory you weep
Don't forget I'm only in your mind

Vivienne

Aaron Rabasca

Perhaps it ought to be recognized that a fashion designer deserves to be recognized for her work on behalf of feminists. Vivienne Westwood adopted an unusual ideology in order to transform clothing into an outlet of sardonic expression in substitution of conventional fashion. British punks wore garments that reflected offensively sarcastic views, and readily restyled their clothing in a backward direction. Punk fashion represented the distortions of consumer values by institutions, as well as the mistreatment of the body necessary to fulfill those very distortions. The reason this is significant to Feminism is that the representation of the female body has long been conceptualized as a weakness for women. Therefore, one should acknowledge that Westwood's fashion eliminated all connotations of the female body in order to 'start from scratch'. The redefining of the body and its outward appearance; fashion, is critical in ending inequality that women experience. This process began in the second half of the 1970s with Westwood's clothing store in London.

Vivienne undoubtedly did quite well with her self-branded 'confrontational dressing'; taking anything that could be "an inappropriate item, so long as the rupture between 'natural' and constructed context was clearly visible, and bringing it within the province of punk (un)fashion." Punks therefore were not attempting to destroy the institution of art, but were "bent on destroying the very institution of fashion." Punk, having the meaning of "(anything) generally worthless, banal and trivial, was to be the starting point for an artistic practice that uses the waste products of everyday bourgeois life. This thus created a reversal of the principal of advertising." The use of 'backwardness' in construction allows the viewers of Westwood's fashion to reconsider the values that British society had attached to women and their physical appearance. With punk's shapeless form Vivienne Westwood guided the culture's fashion and challenged the industry's use of the body. The body's employment was rebuilt by punk fashion and Westwood was materializing the opposition to homogenization. Attempting to redefine the body equates to abolishing the unfair attributes that were awarded to the female body and consequently used to uphold poor assumption on their inferiority. It is now expected that women should rightly declare that they have the same capacities and potential as men. A good example is how Bernadine Dohrn wrote a declaration of war against the United States on behalf of the Weather Underground in 1970.

Vivienne

Westwood as a fashion designer employed her clothing to force social presumptions to be reassessed. The process of judging the female body was reinitiated, thereby allowing negative qualities applied to the female body to be replaced with more fair and more accurate ones. Other renowned feminist thinkers such as Friedan and early Suffragettes really helped develop feminism, but perhaps Westwood also should be given credit for challenging long-standing beliefs about the physicality of women that needed correction. Opposing traditional fashion had the concurrent effect of forcing the audience of the clothing to seize an opportunity; the chance to reject poor notions about the female body and restructure the status of women on a new basis. This worked to erode the misconceptions that were manifested in women's physical appearance by earlier generations.

"A Perfect Need to Float"

Tara Cater

Mourn for what we were
Mourn for what we were not
For the awkwardness
That moment you didn't take my hand
Though I reached out
Feeling the space between us
The tension that surrounds
Some good: that hair-pulling
Beauty when breathing
Cannot match the beating hearts
The hungry bodies
The human need for touch
Sex.
But also the strange
The moments when
I couldn't remember your face
Your words spoken
That I prayed you didn't mean
Your ignorance and belief
That money could sway the tides
Make all beautiful
In those moments
We were little more than
Strangers,
And as it ends
Even in those last frames
Of our romance
The distance between us
Speaks with a deep tone
One can only hear
If they listen with their heart

I wonder if I have broke
You: My resistance
Hurt your heavy spirit
These games that should not be
Played
But as I send you my love
I celebrate our passion
Our success in joining two hearts
And soberly remember
Our disjunction:
Two lines that never
Could truly meet
Lost in a universe
Of unthinkable space
With complex desires for
Warmth
And a perfect need
To float

"How shall I love you?"

Tara Cater

Shall it be fast?
Hard and impatient
As the hands
Find the clothes
Find the skin
Find the in
Find the need
Shall that be the love
That I give?
Or shall it be slow
The patient letters
The wait
All the while
Whistling tunes
Of familiarity
And waiting
For the dove
To knock the window
Claim
"It is time."

Shall I love you
With my wings
As I step out
Into the vast wild
Travelling
To wherever you may
Land

A cartographer
In my own light
Searching for
You
Shall I love you
In a simple mark
On the world map
Holding a place
Never moving
So you
Know where I
Will be?

Shall I love you
By moving on?
By waking next
To him
Holding him in
Quiet contemplation
Letting my world
Grow
Beyond your body?

Shall I love you
Loudly?
Shall I shout my
Passion, my pain
From these four walls?
Should I wake the
City as I leave?

Walk away from
The spectacle
My heels clicking
In the rain?
Or maybe I should
Love you, truly love
You
By loving me
And letting this
Love pour
Like paint on a canvas
The abstract style
The splatter king
And just let my
Love fall
Where it may
And know
That somehow
The oceans will
Carry it to you
And carry me home.

SLUT

Jamie Greenebaum

there's a word I'm not sure I like
sex...
now there's a word I'm sure I like
but where's the overlap? And who decides?
I really hate it when my parade gets rained on.
You make the fun stuff less fun with your judgments.
I internalize, you know. Take it all in, let it mess with my mind.
Sex is a word I like. Sex is an activity I like.
Can you have too much? It's not drugs (though it feels like it sometimes)
Always safe. No harm, no foul? Harmful words. Those count, trust me.
Smart, funny, witty, slutty, nice, friendly. Which word does not belong?
Vicious cycles and stereotypes and double standards. The whole enchilada. Blech!

A Tribute to Iris Young: How not to Throw like a Girl

Pei Man Jessica Wan

I would like to share with you one of my favourite pieces I have encountered so far in my academic career. Written by the late Iris Marion Young, her innovative discussion of the female lived bodily experience as phenomenological and dependent on historicity, we are encouraged to reflect upon the limitations placed upon a person's mobility and spatiality due to his or her "masculinity" and or "femininity".

The saying, "throwing like a girl" is assumed to be grounded in the "manifestation of a biological, not an acquired, difference" based upon the "weaker muscle power of the girl. Due to the natural essence and composition of a woman's attributes, she is to behave differently from men. Her muscle structure dictates her movement, spatiality and capabilities; she is to be distinguished from a man who has a different and physically superior build which also affects his mobility. Hence, the makeup of the female body defines the "femininity" of a woman's physical experiences – she throws like a girl because she is female.

Iris Young reminds us that the bodily movement of women ought not to be understood as biologically determined. The lived bodily experience of a woman is largely situated in her historical, cultural, social, and economic conditions. At a young age, she is told that she is incapable of lifting heavy weights, participating in sports, and maintaining the level of athletic rigor the same way men do. From the bombardment of limitations, a woman's bodily capacity and possibilities are restricted by the "I cannot" instead of "I can". As a result, the space that a woman can exercise her mobility is restricted by her own spatial perception of the self. She is told that she cannot due to her physical construction rooted in biology.

When we reflect upon the modalities of the feminine lived bodily experience in contemporary society and in the everyday, we may observe that the particular situation of women is conditioned by sexist and patriarchal oppression. A woman is taught to live in her body as an object, being pressured to assume femininity which enforces the fragility and immobility of her motions. Compared to a boy who is taught to play sports, explore his surroundings and bear physical pain, a girl is told that she is weak and is susceptible to harm. In short, she is told by her peers, society, culture and historicity to act according to her "femininity" or biologically feminine construction.

A Tribute to Iris Young: How not to Throw like a Girl

What ought we to draw from Young's contribution to promote the understanding of the feminine bodily experience as lived and situated? We must remember that the next time we utter anything in our everyday speech that something is such that it is "like a girl", "like a boy", "like a woman" or "like a man", we are using the language of oppression and privilege that is based upon our own situatedness. Our social situatedness founds our prejudices and biases, which are reproduced through repetition and internalization. Instead, we ought to question the social connotations to the biological construction of the two sexes and be open to the influence that social norms have upon our conceptions of physiology. For a woman does not "throw like a girl", she is taught and raised to.

Das ist ich, und ich bin das (It is I, and I am it)

Claire Wenngren

My Grandmother died in September of 2010. A tube started it. A simple piece of plastic, flexible and hollow in the middle. I am sure it looked benign enough to Grandma and to my mother. Grandma had had several transfusions in the last year, and Mom had accompanied her to each one. She would not have found anything dangerous about the thin tube that was supposed to give my grandmother more strength, just a little more energy so that she could get out of bed, so that she could walk downstairs and watch her television, feed her cat. No one thought that the tube might deliver the wrong blood, that instead of strength, this blood would bring an allergic reaction that would fill my grandmother's lungs with fluid and slowly drown her as my mother and my aunt watched for nine days.

I flew from Canada to watch her spend her final 24 hours incarcerated in tubes in a freezing hospice room. When Grandma frowned or her breathing became laboured, my mother or my aunt pressed a button attached to one of the tubes. This one released soothing morphine into my grandmother's veins through a hole that the doctors had bored into her wrist, large enough so that all of the tubes could fit in one neat, ghastly opening in her translucent flesh. The other tubes periodically delivered sedatives and other drugs that made sure that Grandma would not wake up suddenly and scream in horror at the mask that forced oxygen into her lungs. That was connected to the largest tube, a thick, ribbed plastic wind tunnel that looked like a trachea attached to the wrong end of her mouth.

Our family was alone with Grandma much of those final 24 hours. I sat and watched my mother sponge water into her mother's mouth so that her tongue would not crack and bleed. My aunt would shift Grandma's swollen hands or just stand and stroke her mother's forehead. I watched my cousin comfort her mother, just as I tried to comfort my own as we, the women of the family, kept the vigil beside the woman who had brought and kept us all together.

I watched Grandma's chest rise and fall, listened to the phlegm curdle in her chest and choke her. It sounded as though her lungs lay on either side of a fault-line the transfusion had forced into her body. Each breath that entered her lungs shifted them along that line, shifted the precarious balance of the mucous and blood and caused a quaking that rumbled across her chest as she exhaled. The four of us shuddered in the aftershock of each quake.

Das ist ich, und ich bin das (It is I, and I am it)

I watched the life slowly leave her body, and I began to think of the life it had brought into the world. Three sons, two already dead, and three daughters. Collectively, they raised a dozen more children. For Grandma, being a woman during and after World War II meant having children and keeping the family together after a bitter divorce and through another war, a war which took her first son.

My mother and my younger aunt, the one sitting and stroking Grandma's bloated hands, grew up when there were just beginning to be different options for women. My other aunt, only a handful of years older than my mother, was not as lucky. My mother and my younger aunt were able to choose between different definitions of womanhood, even if the choices that they made were not accepted by their family or by their peers. They broke the tradition of poverty and bad marriages carried on by their other siblings; unlike many of their peers, both men and women, they decided that «woman» was neither synonymous with «wife,» nor «kitchen,» nor «baby machine.» They worked their way through college and graduate school and refused to be treated as anything but equal to every other American despite having grown up poor in a dismal Chicago suburb. For both of them, being daughters to their mother was almost as important as being mothers to their own daughters. I spent my childhood watching my mother help Grandma run her business, a failing flower shop in downtown Denver, and then take care of her increasingly after we closed the shop and Grandma moved up North by my aunt. The last few years, both of them sacrificed almost all of their free time and dedicated what energy they had left after working demanding full-time jobs to keeping their mother out of a nursing home. Grandma wanted to be independent until the end, and her daughters, cut of the same cloth, respected her wish.

I thought about the women my mother, my aunt, and my grandmother wanted or thought that they had to be, and I questioned my own choices, my own definition of womanhood, as the matriarch of our family lay dying. Three months later, I continue to question my decisions. Unlike Grandma, I will never have a loving family around my deathbed. I have no interest in bearing children, and I do not care to remain in contact with most of the family that I do have. I doubt that I will have the courage that my mother and her younger sister showed these last three years as they supported their mother's decision to remain in her cluttered townhouse, as they watched her deteriorate. I told my mother once that she and my aunt were setting an example for me, but not a precedent. I would not know how to begin following it.

Das ist ich, und ich bin das (It is I, and I am it)

Strength is still the keystone of my concept of «womanhood,» but it is a different strength. It is not born of love or fit for caretaking, cold as that may sound. This strength is physical and mental; it is the pure willpower to carve my body and my mind as though I were playing with inanimate wood that could be bent beyond the laws of physics. I will always be disappointed, at least with regards to my body. It is physically impossible for a woman to look the way I want to look and still qualify as a «woman» in Western society.

But do I want to qualify?

I have used the phrase «definition of womanhood,» but the truth is that I refuse to be defined. I consciously and forcefully refuse. Physically, I live in an adrogynous liminal space: strong as most grown men but softened by slight curves that look almost uncanny on a body like mine. I behave more like a teenage boy than what is expected of a young female graduate student, and I dress in conspicuous frills to cover my crudeness. Ruffles of silk, lace and velvet, high heels contrast almost ridiculously with my bulging muscles. Sexually, not even I know where I belong.

My liminality makes me feel transgressive, and in turn powerful; it gives me an almost naive joy, this refusal to be defined. But at the same time, I feel that in order to be accepted in society, like my mother and aunt and their mother, I must be defined. Something has to tilt the scales towards «woman» so that my gender coincides with my biological sex. Yet nothing does. I am near the middle of the masculine-feminine continuum, gender neutral but acting gender bipolar to compensate.

In German, our words have three genders: die-nouns are feminine, der-nouns are masculine, and das-nouns are neutral. I am a das, pure and simple, as are many of my friends. But there is only place for der and die. I should be a die, but in order to be a die, I would have to get rid of everything that makes me a das: my self would have to die to become a die.

Miracles

Elizabeth Greene

I thought miracles were supposed to be easy,
less work, less confusing,
more graceful, gifts sudden as rainbows.

So here I am in the middle of a July night
hooked up to an intravenous drip
I'm sprouting machinery, monitors

no longer a simple person
it takes this array of tubes and monitors
for one to become two.

Everything's blurred
my glasses taken somewhere
with my clothes, my books

I'm naked under my hospital gown
reduced to essentials
in this lurid light

like the vestibule of afterlife.
I sleep between contractions
grabbing eternity where I can

The baby isn't coming,
seems headed for my back,
mad as hell.

Daylight comes, and doctors.
One says, the baby's turned,
transverse.

I need to push him so
he can be turned by hand.
I can't, I think. I do.

Now your pushes will
really count, says the doctor.
One, two—on the third

Alan arcs into the world
as if he's been shot from a gun.
They take him, wash him,

stitch me up.
It doesn't feel
like a miracle.

But after the confusion,
once I've slept,
much later,

with Alan in my arms
delicate as a new snail shell
or leaf,

I'm in a better eternity
feel the rush of new life
the wonder of birth.

"The Theory of Light"

Mary Ellen Csamer

If all time exists as one time, right now
she could be walking down this street
with me, this street, my daughter
lives near, I once lived near; footsteps
so in tune with mine they make no sound.
Say it's June 1960, she's walking home
from school, slowly, relieved
to have these few minutes
between one confinement and the next,
a time, still as air knowing the storm's
approach.

Dumb with fear, numb with sorrow,
lumps of swallowed rage
caught beneath the skin,
a lump of a girl with bad skin.

I know her future, how she makes her way
from then to now, which is not some perfect
happiness, just the everyday kind.
She knows no more than this:
she has to make it through the evening,
at bedtime, put the chair against the door
and pray her brother doesn't test the knob.

I want to talk to her, if she's indeed
beside me, if Einstein didn't waste his life
on theory. I don't know what I'd say,
maybe showing up would be enough,
the wrinkles, thickened waist;
show her the triteness of beauty,
how there's time for that,
or for everything else,
and what an easy choice it is
once you plant your feet,
stare the bullies down.

"Language Arts"

Mary Ellen Csamer

Language is my art, Joe.
I seldom breath without talking,
shout out in sleep, mutter
in department stores, looking for socks.
Words bubble out of me.
I'm overflow.

But silence – I love that too,
love the sound of not me,
what's there, waiting
when words are done.

You watch my mouth for sense.
More often nonsense greets you,
joy, bubbling out in poppycock and prattle.
What use is that to you? I'm meant to help.

Can't get my mind around the thought
there's something wrong with you
though no one says the word,
instead, says spectrum, motor planning.
I don't know what they mean
and meaning matters, doesn't it?

With you a space evolves
that won't take definition,
as if we've raced ahead
and language has to catch us.

No, actually, I don't "just need a good F*#%!!"

Amanda Howell

4 reasons to stop prescribing your John Thomas to feminists and lesbians.

Hello, reader! By chance, do you:

- a) Possess a phallus (flesh or otherwise) that you use for sex?
- b) Find yourself sexually attracted to women?
- c) Desire said women to reciprocate that attraction?

If you answered "yes" to all of these questions, this is a rational appeal to YOU, from one friend to another. If you answered "no" at any point, read anyway, if only for a laugh.

What follows is a list of carefully logicked arguments for why the expression "she just needs a good fuck" is an open-shut case faux pas. In my experience, this phrase is often unholstered in conversations about lesbianism and/or feminism, seemingly as an attempt to discount or discredit the validity of those identities. I hereby present, for your consideration, a succinct, intellectual collection of reasons to deter such a reaction. The next time you find yourself experiencing the urge to articulate this unfortunate utterance, I recommend you stop, take a moment, and consult this list first.

Reasons why you shouldn't offer your cock as an antidote to feminism or lesbianism:

1) It's a waste of time.

Shockingly, there ARE women who don't like dicks. I'm still stumped as to why some straight dudes, especially, find it so difficult to conceive of a human being who doesn't worship the cock; THEY don't (allegedly). An important concept to master in this section is that the phrase "I'm a lesbian" is NOT a pick up line for men. If you wrap your head around this one, you'll be well on your way to understanding how "you just need a good fuck" is not an appropriate reply. Regardless of whether you believe in the existence of women who don't secretly lust after cocks, do recognize that a person who tells you she's a lesbian is not interested in touching your private parts. Many women who ARE attracted to dicks tell guys they're lesbians as way of discouraging romantic advances - read: they're not into you. Pretenders aside, actual lesbians do not require your phallus to enjoy themselves sexually: Strap-on dildos are wielded expertly by women for women (and for men, in fact, but that's another article). Beyond that though, two thirds of females do not reach orgasm from intercourse anyway, which means that anybody with hands and/or a mouth is more than capable of satisfying a woman-identified lover. As you can see, offering your member to a woman is not going to accomplish much in the way of dissuading her from lesbianism.

No, actually, I don't "just need a good F*#%!!"

2) It says you're insecure.

Why did your dick need to be brought up in the first place? This phrase only makes it seem as though you feel emasculated by women who challenge concepts of heteronormativity and patriarchy. You come across as fearful for your pride, or intimidated by assertive people who don't swing their cocks around like you do. It also implies that you don't know how to function in an atmosphere where you don't feel sexually dominant. Your nonsensical leap to crudeness immediately shows that you depend upon something irrelevant to the conversation as the source of your authority in that social situation. In the desperate attempt to assert yourself colloquially, you present your own impotence in the discussion.

3) It's counter-productive.

Contrary to popular belief, 'feminist' and 'lesbian' are not synonymous; there are plenty of us who do like dicks. However, careless use of the phrase under examination pretty much kills any chance of getting into a feminist's pants. Really, dude. If you're genuinely interested in securing a physical relationship with a woman, do not mock her convictions with an offensive comment. A feminist will not find this expression funny or endearing, I promise you. The irony, if any, will be lost on her. Saying that a person's political values (particularly tenets of feminism) are unimportant in the face of your glorious cock is getting you nowhere near her crotch, even if she's straight. What's more, there are these people called bisexuals, many of whom are women, and many of those are feminists. Though it's possible a bisexual woman might be interested in the potential exploring your nether regions, she will be just as happy hooking up with a sans-pecker candidate if everyone with a dick pisses her off. Regardless of a woman's orientation, however, her proverbial cafe will be closed for business to the hopeful patron who tries to force past the doors of feminism with his battering ram cock.

4) It makes you look like a fucking idiot.

You are a university student, presumably interested in formulating well-supported and convincing postulations based upon facts and critical thought. Do you really have nothing more than phallic references to offer to this conversation? If you're in an environment in which a woman comes out as a feminist or as queer, chances are it's in the context of a mature, intellectual conversation. If you're trying to "cure" a woman of her feminism, or engage in an effective dialogue to argue that those politics are not relevant in a modern context, you need to demonstrate that the societal ills she identifies are not real, (especially those which relate to men disrespecting women). How, for the love of God, do you intend to convince her of this by telling her to put your dick in her mouth? Even if you're not trying to convey relevant political commentary, this conversation is not

No, actually, I don't "just need a good F*#!!"

about you or your penis; it's about HER and her lived experiences. Nice verbal diarrhoea, mister insensitive. See Reason #3.

Hopefully, this guide serves as a useful crash course for those who find themselves tempted to prescribe their tallywhackers as the "cure" for feminist and lesbian identities. It is my sincere wish that the above rationale sparks deeper introspection about why this knee-jerk reply persists among the students of this campus (and indeed, throughout larger society). Who knows? Maybe we can even begin to question the normative dismissal of alternative political ideologies and sexual orientations. But hey. I'm just a loony lesbian feminist.

"Eyes Shut"

Lynsey M Westbury

Laying here- Eyes Shut
Taveling back to the days
I had to become an adult
Beacue of an adult.
Laying here- eyes shut
Seeing death
Lurking in the deep black corners
Corners no adult wishes to enter
But I – (A child still) – have.
These places can kill you
If you threaten them
By talking- Telling
Because you were taught – Be silent
I control you – Ignore it
By a trusted Adult
Go to these corners
And guilt overpowers you
You dirty unworthy daughter
Of course you deserve
Everything you get
And knowing no boundaries
People use you.
Here in these corners
Grief and pain become unbearable
So long ago – You become immune to it
Because these corners – Know no mercy.
Here you create locks – Masks – Walls
To survive

If you're lucky
There may be an unlocked window
But you'll have to find it
I am too weak and scared
Lost and afraid
To move.
Laying here- Eyes shut
I scream no.

**This work was submitted through the
Kingston Sexual Assault Centre*

Nikki Lemche

To let the ones that hurt us hurt
To let the ones that scarred us to be scarred
To put them through the tragic times we had
Would not add up to what they owe us

To regret what has happened to us
Our life
Our past
Our present
And may our future
All depends on if we choose to bring them down with us

To bring them down
While we're still high up
Is a sign we're all still strong
To let them rot in their denial
Makes us stronger

Whether people believe us or not
We know the wrong that they did
To be stronger we have to keep our head held high
Our back strong
Our faith faithful
Our love wide open
And our minds clear.

**This work was submitted through the Kingston Sexual Assault Centre*

"It All Depends on Me"

Nikki Lemche

Anywhere people place me
Any person that I meet
Any person that leaves me
I feel lost

Feeling like I just don't belong
Feeling like I'm just another lost person
Anywhere I want to go
It's just not my home

Wanting more for me
Seems really hard to reach
I don't feel comfortable where I am
Who I was, am and who I will be.

Feeling empty within
Feeling like I want more
For how my past affected me
All depends on me
Shall this feeling disappear
Shall I not regret me
Should I continue my life
I'm lost, hurt and it affects my living

**This work was submitted through the Kingston Sexual Assault Centre*

"God's Bell"

Nikki Lemche

People are trying to help me but
They just don't understand
That this world I live in,
My surroundings, it's all damned

My life is hard and they just don't seem to care
My past and my present, it's all too hard to bare
So I write and think why me
But I guess that's just meant to be

As we fight and fight through this hell,
We're still waiting to hear God's bell
For someone to tell us it will all be fine
To wait for any kind of sign.

Hoping, stressing and crying at night
Makes me so tired, I want to back out of this fight
They say life gets better as we go
Even when I feel low

**This work was submitted through the Kingston Sexual Assault Centre*

"New Hope"

Hope Mayson-Davis

Deep down inside her
The emptiness lies
Tearing her heart out
Her soul within
Cries

No one will listen to her torn
Broken heart, she wants
To fix it fast, but can't
Find where to start

The harsh silence haunts her
Her fist clenches tight
She's on her journey to
Happiness
It's her turn to fight

She gets rid of the
Memories and all of
The lies. She walks
Out the door and says
Her goodbyes.

She's now out in the
World, learning to cope.
This is the story of my good friend,
Hope.

**This work was submitted through the Kingston Sexual Assault Centre*

"These Scars"

Hope Mayson-Davis

These scars they burn
These scars they yearn
For some sort of simple each day
These scars they scream
These scars they seem
To not want to fade away
These scars tell a story
To how far I've come
These scars simply taught me
What it's like to be numb
These scars have no ending
They won't go away
These scars helped me learn
How to fight for a new day
These scars they shout out
Terror and fear
These scars helped me see
The world so simple and clear
But I won't let these scars
Take me away
I promised my self
I WILL NO LONGER PAY.

**This work was submitted through the Kingston Sexual Assault Centre*

"Self Portrait as Odalisque"

Claire Wenngren



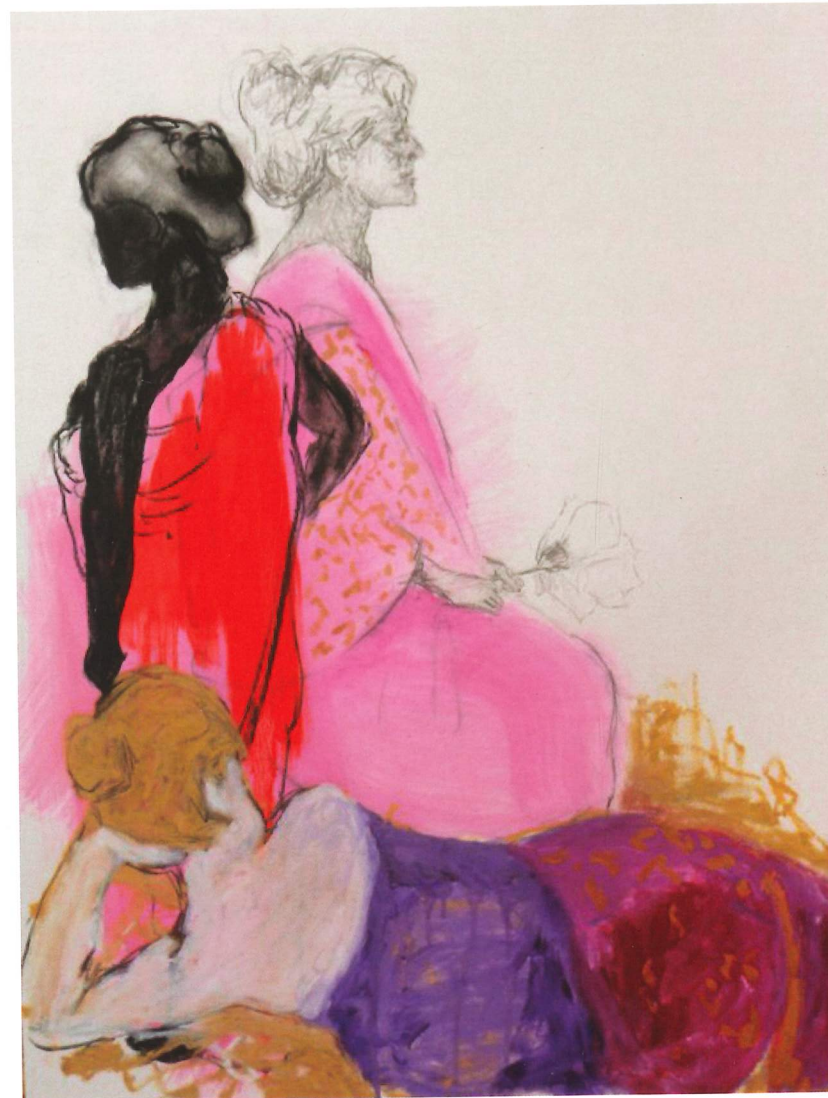
"I Felt It Just Then - Or Was It A Memory"

Bronwyn Loucks



"Studies of a Lady"

Phoebe McQuay



"Making Space"

Bronwyn Loucks



"Portrait Study"

Elise Bousquet



"The Pill #1"

Laura Stewart



"Moving Meditation #4"

Bronwyn Loucks



"Seated Lady"

Elise Bousquet



"Untitled"

Sophie Williams



"Not Going to Choose"

Claire Wenngren



Artists' Biographies

Aaron Rabasca is a fourth year history student who particularly enjoys Cold War history and has taken his electives in Religious studies. He hopes to read all of Steinbeck's books, and has worked through ten thus far.

Amanda Howell is a 4th year student of history and politics, much to her chagrin. She looks eagerly forward to her forthcoming freedom from academia, and lovingly dedicates this submission to her partner-in-crime, Gillian Shields.

Bronwyn Loucks is a fourth year BFAH student who specializes in oil painting. She is interested in the fluidity between reality and imagination in relation to the body--how the body had the capacity to the present in the physical world--or the capacity to be present in the vast, meditative space of dreams and memories.

Claire Wenngren is finishing her Master's Thesis on women's subordination to and incorporation into the household interior through dress in the early twentieth century. She sews avidly and has recently received a grant to study textile art and Cultural Theory at the Technische Universität Dortmund in Germany next year.

Elise Bousquet is a fourth year student in English Literature and French Studies, in the coming years she is interested in pursuing work in the Arts field. Fine Arts have gradually over the years turned from a hobby to now a passion and eventual career path.

Elizabeth Greene has published two books of poetry, *The Iron Shoes* (Hidden Brook, 2007) and *Moving* (Inanna, 2010) since her first poem appeared in the QFR in 2003. In a previous life, not so long ago, she taught English at Queen's. "Miracles" is written for a former student, Hollay Ghadery.

Jamie Greenebaum is a fourth year Psychology and Spanish student. She has no idea what she is going to do after she graduates, but it will probably be fun.

Jessica Wan is an ecofeminist dedicated to pursuing a career in social justice through academia. Her research interests include gender, development, ecology and urban migration in West Africa and Latin America. Her favourite thinkers include Iris M. Young, Martin Heidegger, Joseph Stiglitz, Noam Chomsky and Vandana Shiva.

Julia Krolik received a BScH degree in Biological Sciences from the University of Guelph. A recent placement in Clinical Microbiology combined with Biotechnology studies at St Lawrence College promoted her to raise questions about the way microorganisms are viewed and portrayed in our society. Devoting her time to pursuing ideas in both art and science, she finds inspiration and beauty in both.

Halla Imam is a second year global development studies student. She loves to travel, read, rollerblade and be outdoors. She enjoys learning about different cultures and their relation to the status of women, particularly how women in societies are depicted.

Hope Mayson-Davis is a 14 year old creative artistic young girl. She discovered her passion for writing at 11 years old. Writing helps her to cope with her past life experiences. She hopes to make a book of her poetry in the future. She was 11 when she wrote the poems found in this publication.

Lynsey M. Westbury is 16 years old, born on April 16th, 1996. Creative, artistic and an accepting person, she believes in her rights. The negative and positive things that occur in her life are what inspired her writing.

M. E. Csamer is widely published in Canadian literary magazines. Her books include Paper Moon (watershedBooks, 1998), Light is What We Live In (Artful Codger Press, 2005), and A Month Without Snow (Hidden Brook Press, 2007). She is a Past President of the League of Canadian Poets.

Nikki Lemche is 15 years old. She has been through so much in her childhood and found writing poetry to be the most helpful way of releasing her anger. Through writing, she has been able to say what was on her mind in a healthy, constructive way. She will continue writing because it helps her and she really enjoys it.

Phoebe McQuay is a third year student in Queen's BFA program with a primary focus on printmaking.

Sophie Williams was born in Toronto, Ontario. She currently studies painting and printmaking in the BFA '11 program at Queen's University. In November 2010, she took part in the group exhibition, "Nodes" at Union Gallery and has exhibited in the BFA Select '11 show, "The Change Up" at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre.

Tara Cater Is a 4th year Global Development Studies major, Geography minor. She is interested in finding the beautiful in the ordinary, poetry, music, and travel. I am so excited to be part of the Queen's Feminist Review!

SUBMISSIONS AND QUESTIONS

All submissions and queries can be emailed to us at qfr@ams.queensu.ca, or mailed to us at our address:

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