

GENDER AND SEXUALITY THROUGHOUT  
WORLD HISTORY



# GENDER AND SEXUALITY THROUGHOUT WORLD HISTORY

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# Introduction

This work is a collaborative project made by the students in Dr. Yarfitz's Gender and Sexuality in World History section in the fall of 2020 at Wake Forest University. The class wrote this text collectively throughout the semester, along the way honing their skills on how to research, analyze primary sources, and write history in an effort to share diverse perspectives. All of the work for this text was done remotely, as it was written amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, but we are excited that a cohesive text could still be created. While we made an effort to pick topics from a variety of different time periods and places, we also acknowledge the abundance of Western viewpoints in our selections and analyses.

The project comprises four different sections, each chronicling a different topic within gender or sexuality in history. "The History of the 19th Century Doctress" explores the development of female medical education, sexual harassment within the field, and an exceptional

“doctress.” “Feminist Organizing and Women’s Rights” unpacks the role of women in not only fighting for their liberation but for many others across the globe. “Gender Roles in Visual Culture” explores how through visual media and fashion, gender roles have been upheld by cultural norms that result in women’s conformity and the restriction of their self-expression and identity, but also how women have overcome these societal barriers, setting the stage for new standards. Lastly, “Masculinity through Time, Space, and Literature” explores through the interpretation of written and printed works how perceptions of masculinity have evolved over time, and the interactions between social expectations and individual expressions.

Signed,

Michaela Barrett

Christine Bedikian

Collin Conduah

Caroline Debloom

Christian Estrada

Maria Flores

Olivia Frank

Xander Friedel

Asha Gandhi

Deirdre Glynn

Max Greller

Annabelle Guss

Mercedes Jackson

GENDER AND SEXUALITY THROUGHOUT WORLD HISTORY

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Meagan Marks

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## Acknowledgements

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# Part I

## The History of the 19th Century Doctress

This section explores the development of female medical education, sexual harassment within the field, and an exceptional “doctress”. We begin by exploring the debate over education equality and the establishment of the first female medical college. Then we analyze the roots of sexual harassment within the medical field. Finally, we focus on the life of Dr. Mary Walker, an outstanding civil war surgeon and dress reformist.



# I

## NEEDLE OR SCALPEL? THE DOCTRESS DEBATE

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Meagan Marks

### Introduction

Prior to the establishment of the American Medical Association in 1847, no significant barriers were in place to prevent an individual from the practice of medicine. During this time, women prospered as lay healers or midwives in many areas of the United States.<sup>1</sup> In the mid-19th century, however, male physicians created the AMA as well as the requirement of a medical license to

1. For more on early women in medicine, visit Mandelbaum, Dorothy Rosenthal. "Women in Medicine." *Signs* 4, no. 1 (1978): 136.

engage in the medical field.<sup>2</sup> This subsequently created professional and gender obstacles in a woman's fight to become medically qualified.

During the turn of the 19th century, separatism was the new defining factor of a women's education. Society assumed that men and women differed in physical, moral, and spiritual attributes that obligated them to distinct social tasks. This common belief, paired with the industrial revolution and rise of urban areas, established a new definition of the woman's place in society; she was expected to contain certain moral values and domestic qualities which were best employed in the tasks of the home. As a result of this sexism, women were excluded from the male-dominated public sphere and were expected to establish their own institutions of education and occupation. In medicine, women had to open up their own schools, hospitals, and practices based on the assumption that they could not receive the same level and quality of education due to differences in strength and intellect.<sup>3</sup>

Women's medical societies – not to be confused with formal colleges – emerged in the mid-19th century with the aim of bringing more professional female physicians to the field. Organizations like the New England Hospital in Boston offered women valuable clinical training and

2. For further research on the effects of the American Medical Association, visit Riska, Elianne "Women's Careers in Medicine: Developments in the United States and Finland." *Scandinavian Studies* 61, no. 2/3 (1989): 186. and Mandelbaum, "Women in Medicine." 136.

3. The 19th century societal role of women as well as the impact of separatism is discussed in more depth in Riska, "Women's Careers" 186-187.

provided them with the medical knowledge they needed to better serve their communities.<sup>4</sup> Although these societies existed, women were far from equal in the medical field. Many argued this unequal system of education did nothing but hold women back, as men were still receiving a traditional medical education and were, therefore, perceived by society as more proficient and intelligent in their careers.<sup>5</sup> This created a distinct gender wage gap because citizens preferred medical advice from a male physician and refused to see a female.<sup>6</sup> Women also lacked representation in many sectors of healthcare. Because women were perceived to be more nurturing and fragile, they were steered into the practices of pediatrics and gynecology, and away from more “rigorous disciplines” like surgery.<sup>7</sup>

As women’s medical societies rose in number, there was a surge in debate on whether females should be allowed a full and equal formal education in medicine. Critics argued that women could not fulfill both the duties of marriage and motherhood while practicing medicine. They also strongly disagreed with the sacrifice of a woman’s primary responsibilities within the family and the home. Furthermore, many also believed the demands and stress of professional work were too much for women

4. To explore further on women’s medical societies, see Marrett, Cora Bagely. “On the Evolution of Women’s Medical Societies.” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 53, no. 3 (1979): 434.

5. Riska, “Women’s Careers” 187.

6. Mandelbaum, “Women in Medicine,” 139.

7. During the 19th century, many studies and surveys were performed to collect data on female physicians; The “Bodley and Pope” surveys especially produced a variety of results that supported the higher education of women. For further detail, see Drachman, Virginia G. “The Limits of Progress: The Professional Lives of Women Doctors, 1881-1926.” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 60, no. 1 (1986): 61.

to physically endure and that a career in medicine would destroy her health.<sup>8</sup> As previously stated, there was also the common perception that women were too feeble and unintelligent to be relied upon as doctors and would never reach equality to men in the field.

In the mid-19th century, many newspapers published articles on this debate of female physicians. The Boston Journal in particular heavily reviewed and supported women regarding this issue, as their city held the most renowned female medical society of the 19th century. Below is a column written for this publication in 1855 by Fanny Fern (pseudonym for Sara P. Parton), who strongly disagreed with the admittance of women in the field, despite the journal's dominant stance.

### Transcription of "Female Physicians"

Author's note: The source is transcribed here from the original.<sup>9</sup>

"The Boston Journal strongly advocates the introduction of females into the medical profession. We consider the needle a much more appropriate weapon in the hands of women than the scalpel or bistoury. Do you? Just suppose yourself a forlorn sick bachelor, in the upper story of some noisy boarding house, whose inmates don't care a pinch of snuff whether you conclude to die, or get well.

8. For a deeper explanation of critic's arguments, visit Drachman, "Limits of Progress" 61-64.

9. Sara P. Parton aka Fanny Fern, "Female Physicians" (Boston, Massachusetts: *The Boston Journal*, 1855) <http://doctordoctress.org/islandora/object/islandora:1496/story/islandora:1541#page/44/mode/1up?width=1000&height=800&iframe=true> (Accessed September 24th, 2020)

Suppose you've watched that spider in the corner weave his web, till you are quite qualified to make one yourself; suppose you have counted for the thousandth time, all the shepherdesses, distorted little dogs, and crooked trees, on the papered wall of your room; gnawed your finger nails to the very quick; and twitched your mustache till every hair stands up on its own individual responsibility. Then – suppose just as you are at the last gasp, the door opens, gently, and admits (not a great creaking pair of boots, containing an oracular, solemn M.D., grim enough to frighten you into the churchyard) but a smiling rosy cheeked, bright eyed, nice little live woman doctress yet? Well, she pushes back her curls, throws off her shawl (Venus! what a figure!) pulls off her glove, and takes your hand in those little fingers. Holy mother! How your pulse races! She looks at you so compassionately from those soft blue eyes; lays her hand on your forehead, and questions you demurely about your “symptoms,” (a few of which she sees without any of your help!) Then she writes a prescription with those dainty little fingers, and tells you to keep very composed and quiet, (just as if you could) smooths the tumbled quilt – arranges your pillow – shades the glaring sunlight from your aching eyes, with an instinctive knowledge of your unspoken wants; and says with the sweetest smile in the world, that she'll

“call again in the morning;” and so – the fold of her dress flutters through the door; and then you crawl out of the bed the best way you can – clutch a looking glass to see what the probabilities are that you have made a favorable impression! inwardly resolving (as you replace yourself between the blankets,) not to get quite well as long as she will come to see you. Well, the upshot of it is, you have a delightful lingering attack of heart complaint! For myself, I prefer prescriptions in a masculine hand! I shan’t submit my pulse to anything that wears a bonnet!”

### Analysis

The gender stereotypes and misogyny of the time are extremely prevalent throughout Fanny Fern’s sarcastic comments on the public issue. Quotes such as “we consider the needle a much more appropriate weapon in the hands of women than the scalpel or bistoury” and “Smooths the tumbled quilt – arranges your pillow”, indicate that the author agreed with the notion that women belonged in the home performing domestic tasks, not in the professional field of medicine. This argument of critiques is furthered with rhetoric such as “The door opens, gently, and admits but a smiling rosy cheeked, bright eyed, nice little live woman doctress”, “she pushes back her curls, throws off her shawl (Venus! what a



figure!) pulls off her glove, and takes your hand in those little fingers”, and “Then she writes a prescription with those dainty little fingers”; which not only define and sexualize women as objects of beauty, but reinforce the belief that women were too “dainty” and “gentle” to be taken seriously in the occupational field. Finally, Fern closes the column by directly stating “I prefer prescriptions in a masculine hand! I shan’t submit my pulse to anything that wears a bonnet!”, confirming her belief, along with others’, that women would not be and should not be trusted with the tasks of physicians.

Fern’s use of sarcasm and satire establish a tone of mockery towards female physicians and claim that women are much more preferred in the home, carrying the responsibilities of wives and mothers. As Fanny Fern was a well-established female journalist of the time, it is very unexpected that she would take on such a position within the debate for female progression in medicine. According to one source, Fern herself received “considerable criticism” from those who claimed her use of sarcasm was “unfeminine and indelicate”.<sup>10</sup> More critics argued she herself “defiled the ‘sacredness’ of the home by the baseness of the work she undertook, worst of all ‘for the sake of profit’”.<sup>11</sup>

10. McMullen, Kevin. “Fanny Fern: A Brief Biography | Fanny Fern in The New York Ledger.” Accessed November 3, 2020. <https://fannyfern.org/bio>. Provides a full biography of Fanny Fern.

11. Wood, Ann D. “The ‘Scribbling Women’ and Fanny Fern: Why Women Wrote.” *American Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (1971): 4. This source offers much more on the criticism and work of Fern as well as many female writers of the 19th century. As Fern’s signature use of sarcasm distinguished her as an unconventional and unfeminine woman, it is quite ironic she would use such a device to contend against the progression of education equality.

## Conclusion

While seemingly controversial, Fern's opinions on the topic were not unusual or viewed as blatant misogyny during the 19th century. In fact, many citizens shared the same opinions and fought against women's rights to higher education. Hannah Longshore, one of the first female physicians, wrote pioneering women medical students "did not find their paths strewn with flowers, nor their advent welcomed by the general public or by the profession"; and later recounts stories of male pharmacists refusing to fill her patient's prescriptions.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, many women (like Fern herself) strongly opposed the progression and incorporation of their own sex into professional culture. These women, along with the majority of society, believed that a woman's utmost duty was in the home. In order to gain access to public activity, female-critics argued that an aspiring physician's actions must not interfere with the domestic responsibilities in which they are prized. Higher education was not justified in terms of its advantages for performing household duties, and therefore was rejected by traditional standards.<sup>13</sup>

To combat the argument of critics such as Fern, feminists had to claim that a medical career only improved their role as caretaker; a female physician could not only

12. To see the full source, visit Hannah Longshore, Autobiography of Hannah Longshore <http://doctordoctress.org/islandora/object/islandora:1406/story/islandora:1582#page/9/mode/tup> (Accessed September 24th, 2020)

13. For more on the argument against a woman's higher education, see Hunt, Marion. "Woman's Place in Medicine." Bernard Becker Medical Library. *Women in Health Sciences*, (1980). Accessed November 17th, 2020. <http://beckerexhibits.wustl.edu/mowihsp/articles/McLean.htm>.

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serve women with greater intuition and less violation of modesty, but would extend her role as nurturing mother by treating children's medical needs.<sup>14</sup> With this rationalization, women's-rights activists rallied enough support to open the first female medical school, The Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania, in the 1850s. Although female acceptance into a male-dominated medical school was still rare and separatism remained prevalent, this establishment inspired the founding of seventeen more medical schools and nine hospitals specifically for the education and treatment of women.<sup>15</sup> This allowed for the influx of women into the medical field and achieved a monumental step in the women's fight for an equal, higher education.

*Meagan Marks is a second-year student at Wake Forest University.*

<sup>14</sup>. Hunt, "Women's Place".

<sup>15</sup>. "The Early Plight of Women in the Medical Field." The University of Richmond. History Engine (2008-2015). Accessed November 17th, 2020. <https://historyengine.richmond.edu/episodes/view/5150>.

# FIRST FEMALE MEDICAL COLLEGE

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Xander Friedel

When we think about women doctors we usually admire them because of their great advancements in history and the fact that they stand as a protest to sexism in its own ideals. This of course was not always the case, prior to 1850 women weren't allowed to be a part of the medical field at all. But that all changed once the first female medical school was opened.

## Changing the Times

During the year 1850 in Philadelphia, the first ever women's medical college was opened. This was quite the astounding time for women as they were finally allowed to get their M.D. and become an official doctor.<sup>1</sup> At the first graduation, Joseph S. Longshore, professor of obstetrics and founder of the college, told the eight graduates: "This day forms an eventful epoch in the history of your lives, in the history of women, in the history of the race."<sup>2</sup> He was a Quaker who heavily advocated for equal rights and the inclusion of women in the workplace. Because of this break from the "normal" that the men of the time had come to expect, they were intimidated by the fact that women could now do some of the jobs that men had previously dominated and started to bully women for it. This didn't deter them, however, and just made the women more determined to work for their M.D. and be treated as equals. After this, women were finally able to become physicians and make their way into the world of men and medicine. Finally able to put their own mark on history.

1. Bodley, Rachel. "The First Female Medical College." *The Observer Newspaper*. August 11, 1854. Women Physician.

2. Fee, Elizabeth, and Theodore Brown. "An Eventful Epoch in the History of Your Lives" 94 (March 2004): 1.



Image Source: Mandell, Melissa. "Female Medical College." Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, n.d. <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/womans-medical-college-of-pennsylvania/#23105>.

## History of Sexism in the Medical Field

Sexism didn't end immediately after the college was built, but a lot more opportunities opened for women after they got their M.D. Once the civil war broke out in 1861, doctors were in need and this was women's time to shine. With their new M.D.'s, women were doing operations on the wounded and the ill much faster and better than some men could. This time in history was quite pivotal for women to show their skills – and that they did. Among these women was Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, who helped establish WCAR. An initiative designed to help get supplies for union soldiers.<sup>3</sup> Another prominent doctor

<sup>3</sup>. Green, Jocelyn. "5 Pioneering Women Doctors and Nurses of the Civil War." Informational. Jocelyn Green Inspiring Faith and Courage, n.d. <http://www.jocelyngreen.com/2015/03/29/5-pioneering-women-doctors-and-nurses-of-the-civil-war>.

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was Dr. Mary Edwards Walker, who helped the union and got the medal of honor for her hard work. Of course we cannot forget Clara Burton, who was an amazing nurse during the civil war and helped many men survive. Once the war was over, women were more prevalent in the medical field – holding doctor and physician positions as well as being nurses and other medical aids.



Image Source: Freiler, Lauren. "Civil War Nurses." Civil War Nurses, n.d.

## Conclusion

Since the Civil War, many women have made their way into the medical field and have done so many great things for humanity. Because of the ability of women to become physicians, they have shown their prowess in the field and have shown men that women can do just as much as they

can (if not more). All thanks to the founders who felt like it was time for a change<sup>4</sup> and the fact that they had to persevere in their work to get the change in the world done right. Without them and the first female medical college they built, women would not have the rights to become licensed physicians to help themselves and others.

*I am a feminist and enjoy playing games with my friends. I enjoy the deep discussions that we have in class and I am glad that I am a part of them. It was so much fun this year learning so many interesting things about feminism and the different stories of women that might not necessarily reach our history textbooks.*

4. This is meant to be Joseph S. Longshore and other people like him who encouraged women to go for their dreams and achieve greatness.



# “DOCTRESSES” AND THE DEEPLY-ROOTED SEXUAL HARASSMENT WITHIN OUR CULTURE

---

Alexandra Wamsley

## Women in the Medical Field

The reaction to women going to medical school differed throughout regions. A lot of newspapers reported on these women, including articles mocking them or supporting them. The ideas behind being supportive or against them were pretty consistent, however. The people

that supported women doctors felt that women would be better able to treat other women or children than men were. On the other hand, people that were against women doctors felt that it was inappropriate for women to be studying anatomy alongside men. They also believe that women should not have careers outside of being a mother and housewife.<sup>1</sup> One article in particular seemed relatively positive in the beginning, but then led to a more mocking tone. The article is shown and transcribed below:

1. Morantz, Regina Markell. "Women in the Medical Profession: Why Were There so Few?" *Reviews in American History* 6, no. 2 (1978): 163-70. Accessed November 19, 2020. doi:10.2307/2701292.

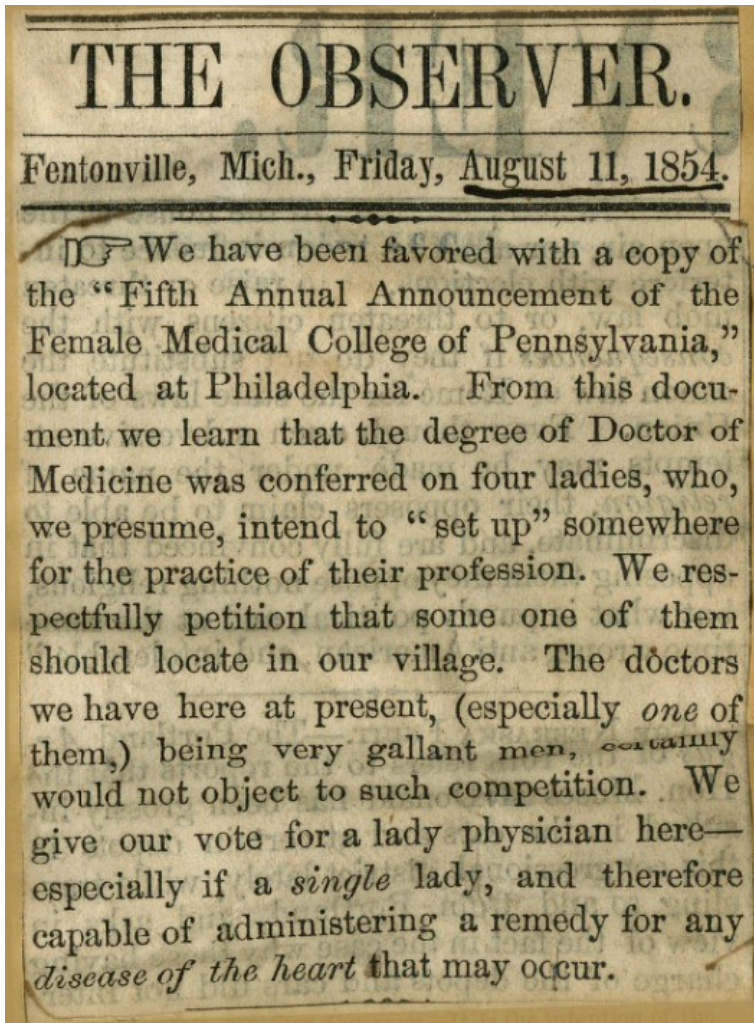


Image Source: The First Female Medical College: Will you accept or reject them?. Doctor or Doctress?: Explore American history through the eyes of women physicians. The Legacy Center, Drexel University College of Medicine Archives & Special Collections. Philadelphia, PA. Accessed November 19, 2020.  
<http://doctordoctress.org/islandora/object/islandora:1496>

### Transcription of *The Observer* Newspaper Clipping

“We have been favored with a copy of the ‘Fifth

Annual Announcement of the Female Medical College of Pennsylvania,' located at Philadelphia. From this document we learn that the degree of Doctor of Medicine was conferred on four ladies, who, we presume, intend to 'set up' somewhere for the practice of their profession. We respectfully petition that some one of them should locate in our village. The doctors we have here at present, (especially one of them,) being very gallant men, certainly would not object to such competition. We give our vote for a lady physician here—especially if a single lady, and therefore capable of administering a remedy for any disease of the heart that may occur.”

It is important to note that the Female Medical College of Pennsylvania was first founded in 1850.<sup>2</sup> This article was released nearly four years later. The newspaper clipping starts off as supportive. The author states that their village is wanting one of the female physicians to work there. While this seems like a great thing, the mockery begins soon after. They state that the current male physicians would not oppose the competition. The author also makes it sound like they are mainly wanting a woman doctor to date one of the single men. They stated that they preferred a single woman who is capable of helping a disease of the heart. The way the article talks about the situation makes

2. Elizabeth Fee and Theodore M. Brown, “‘An Eventful Epoch in the History of Your Lives,’” *American Journal of Public Health* 94, no. 3 (March 2004): 367.

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it seem like they view the women doctors as a joke and as an object of affection.



Image Source: Class of 1891..., 1893, Photograph, 35.5x26cm, 1893, ACC, Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania Photograph Collection, <https://idea.library.drexel.edu/islandora/object/ica%3A2297#page/1/mode/1up>.

### Relation to Sexual Assault in the Workplace

The way this article referred to these women aligns with the issues with sexual harassment in the workplace. The #MeToo movement that has been happening in recent years has been primarily focused on the entertainment industry. Slowly there has been more recognition with other fields, including the medical field. Studies have shown that women in the medical field have a high chance

of experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace by either coworkers, superiors, or patients themselves.<sup>3</sup>

The current movement against sexual harassment in the workplace is much more progressive than the prevention used much earlier in history. In the 1800s, Florence Nightingale recognized that sexual harassment was an issue with the nurses. In order to prevent these situations, she adopted a preventative approach. However, her means of doing this implied that the nurses were to blame. She only hired nurses she believed to be of high moral character and also put rules in place such as curfew, dress codes, and standards of behavior. She viewed these rules to be helpful to prevent the harassment as well as be some sort of coping mechanism for the nurses.

For many years, women were unlikely to report any instances of mistreatment in the workplace. The women that spoke up and complained were dismissed and told her problems were trivial. This began to change in the mid-1970s. Women began to challenge the judicial system that ignored the concept of consent. It was around 1975 when the term “sexual harassment” became more widely used. A woman previously employed at Cornell University filed for unemployment benefits after she resigned because of a supervisor touching her without consent. The university denied her request and stated she

3. Emily A. Vargas et al., “#MedToo: A Large-Scale Examination of the Incidence and Impact of Sexual Harassment of Physicians and Other Faculty at an Academic Medical Center,” *Journal of Women's Health* 29, no. 1 (September 12, 2019): 13–20, <https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.2019.7766>.

resigned due to “personal reasons.”<sup>4</sup> This story became widespread and more women began to speak out about their experiences.

One event that is considered a turning point in the U.S. is the Anita Hill case. In 1991, the Senate Judiciary Committee held hearings that dealt with sexual harassment allegations against Clarence Thomas, a Supreme Court nominee. Anita Hill spoke out against Thomas and an investigation was launched. The hearings were rough, and Hill was accused of lying multiple times. While Thomas still won the vote to become a Supreme Court Justice, this was one of the first national news stories on sexual harassment. The following year became known as “The Year of The Woman” because there were four new female members of the Senate elected when female voters rebelled against the Thomas and Hill outcome.<sup>5</sup>

The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine lists five situations where sexual harassment might become more common.<sup>6</sup> These are listed below:

1. Perceived tolerance for misconduct
2. Environments in which men outnumber women, the leadership is dominated by males, or the jobs are atypical for women

4. Sascha Cohen, “A Brief History of Sexual Harassment in America Before Anita Hill,” *Time*, April 11, 2016, <https://time.com/4286575/sexual-harassment-before-anita-hill/>.

5. Spencer, Camille. “The Chronology of the Clarence Thomas Confirmation.” *The Black Scholar* 22, no. 1/2 (1991): 1-3. Accessed November 19, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41067724>.

6. Engineering National Academies of Sciences and Medicine, *Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine* (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.17226/24994>.

3. Hierarchical power structures
4. “Symbolic” compliance with Title VII or Title IX
5. Lack of leadership to address sexual harassment

Studies have shown that over half of female nurses, physicians, and students have reported sexual harassment situations, and even more have experienced these situations.<sup>7</sup> Sexual harassment results in a hindrance of performance, which is unwelcome in any job but especially so in healthcare.

While sexual harassment seems to have deep roots in history, there are improvements being made over the years. Women are less likely to be publicly mocked, like the Fentonville Newspaper clipping showed.

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7. Committee on the Impacts of Sexual Harassment in Academia et al., *Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine*, ed. Paula A. Johnson, Sheila E. Widnall, and Frazier F. Benya (Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.17226/24994>.



DR. MARY WALKER: A  
PANTSUIT LEGEND OF THE  
CIVIL WAR

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Lily Silverman and Caroline Debloom



Image Source: C. M. Bell, Dr. Mary Walker wearing her Congressional Medal of Honor, pants, and a dinner jacket. Photograph. (Philadelphia: 1870), The Legacy Center, Drexel University College of Medicine Archives & Special Collections. <http://doctordoctress.org/islandora/object/islandora:1494/record/islandora:1686> (Accessed September 24, 2020)

## Introduction

In 1832 in the town of Oswego, NY, Dr. Mary Edwards Walker was born<sup>1</sup>. The daughter of a doctor, Walker knew from an early age what she wanted to be when she grew up. At just twenty-four years old, Walker received her M.D. from Syracuse Medical College in upstate New York. Just five years later, the Civil War began. Having deep rooted loyalties to the Union, Walker decided to volunteer as a doctor in Washington D.C. where she assumed her services would be greatly welcomed and appreciated<sup>2</sup>. To her surprise, despite her various assets, those in positions of power often failed to see past her gender. Consequently, she was denied a commission and told she was only allowed to be a nurse. Walker was continuously denied employment as a Union army doctor, despite her several years of medical practice prior to the start of the war. As a result of these challenges as well as her upright character, Walker instead volunteered her time and skills to the Union for two years with no pay<sup>3</sup>. Finally, in 1864, Walker became a commissioned surgeon for the 52nd Ohio Regiment<sup>4</sup>.

## Analysis

This reality was not faced only by Dr. Walker; as you may

1. "A Female Civil War Surgeon: 'How Dr. Mary Is Remarkable.'" Doctor or Doctress? Drexel University. Accessed November 10, 2020. <http://doctordoctress.org/islandora/object/islandora:1494>.

2. BiblioBoard. (n.d.). Retrieved November 4, 2020, from <https://library.biblioboard.com/viewer/169172f6-3fac-4cf4-8cd4-56217c492c17>

3. Eggleston, Larry. Women in the Civil War: Extraordinary Stories of Soldiers, Spies, Nurses, Doctors, Crusaders, and Others. Women in the Civil War. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Incorporated Publishers, 2009. (Ch. 41)

4. "A Female Civil War Surgeon: 'How Dr. Mary Is Remarkable.'"

have guessed, 19th century America was not known for its superb gender equity. Although the total U.S. population in 1860 was almost evenly split between male and female<sup>5</sup>, women only represented approximately 300 (1.6%) of the 18,300 total degreed doctors in 1858<sup>6</sup>, showing the true imbalances in the opportunities that existed between the sexes, in addition to the expectational differences for men and women's occupations. Not only was the representation of women in the medical field disappointing, as was the public opinion of the existence of female doctors. A statement by Captain Ross, a soldier who (actually) respected and worked closely with Dr. Walker wrote, “‘popular opinion everywhere and the customs of our country are against the advancement and usefulness of the fairer sex’ in spite of the fact that their capabilities were unlimited”<sup>7</sup>.

Unsurprisingly, the Union was not the only region of the country that oppressed women, the Confederacy did their fair share as well! In fact, many of the Georgians that Dr. Walker treated during the war had never encountered a female doctor<sup>8</sup>. Though, more and more Georgians began recognizing Dr. Walker for both her femininity and lack thereof. She had become the token female doctor, but also challenged the boundaries of gender expression—another unheard-of phenomenon in 19th century Georgia.

5. Aaron O'Neill. *Population of the US in 1860, by Race and Gender* (Statista, 12 July 2019), [www.statista.com/statistics/1010196/population-us-1860-race-and-gender/](http://www.statista.com/statistics/1010196/population-us-1860-race-and-gender/). (Accessed October 15, 2020)

6. Eggleston, Larry. *Women in the Civil War: Extraordinary Stories of Soldiers, Spies, Nurses, Doctors, Crusaders, and Others*. *Women in the Civil War*. (Ch. 41)

7. Harris, Sharon M. *Dr. Mary Walker: an American Radical, 1832-1919* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009.) (Pg. 54)

8. Harris, Sharon M. *Dr. Mary Walker: an American Radical, 1832-1919* (Pg. 56)

In fact, when Walker began conjuring fears of being taken as a prisoner of war by the Confederates, she would disguise herself by wearing a dress, as no one would recognize her if she wasn't wearing her infamous pants and jacket. An unfortunate consequence of this disguise, though, was a new fear— not of being taken as POW<sup>9</sup> and potentially murdered, but of sexual assault<sup>10</sup> . Unfortunately, these fears that women faced have not become any less inherent through the last two centuries.

So, what differentiated Dr. Mary Walker from other women working during the war? Was it just her role as a surgeon? Her skill? Dr. Walker was not only an outstanding woman by virtue of her occupation and persistence, but by the way she committed herself to challenge every sect of 19th century gender conformity. Women did, in fact, inhabit the roles of nurses and aids in the war efforts. Although this may seem like social progress— allowing women in the medical field during wartime— their roles were accepted by society because they were societally-deemed feminine. These women not only assumed “inferior” roles to men but maintained their traditional femininity and upheld every other aspect of womanhood, i.e., they did not attempt to be equal to men. Dr. Mary Walker was the exception, and thus, why she faced the scrutiny that she did. She did not just implement her talents in a men's sphere; she had autonomy and a voice— two things most 19th century men despised for a

9. POW: Prisoner of War

10. Harris, Sharon M. *Dr. Mary Walker: an American Radical, 1832-1919* (Pg. 56- 57)

woman to possess. While performing the same job as the men around her, Walker knew her value and demanded it be recognized<sup>11</sup>. In response, Dr. Cooper, a fellow member of the Union medical force, wrote to the surgeon general that Dr. Walker was “useless, ignorant, trifling, and a consummate bore,” in an effort to have her wartime contract revoked<sup>12</sup>. As examined, her occupation was only one element of her being that the public disapproved of; her radical choice of dress served as a chief determinant of her public image.

The doctress’ daily uniform did not vary much from that exhibited in the photograph above. Her loose-fitting pants and jacket were key features of her Civil War attire<sup>13</sup>, and she often wore her hair braided back tightly behind her head<sup>14</sup> — at times, even covered by a top hat<sup>15</sup>. Later in this piece, we will discuss the significance of this attire in the context of 19th century women’s fashion.

Because of these attributes, Walker encountered intense backlash from her male colleagues and even occasionally from her female admirers. One example of this came from admirer Rosa Sprig. The document pictured below is a letter written to Dr. Mary Walker from admirer Sprig:

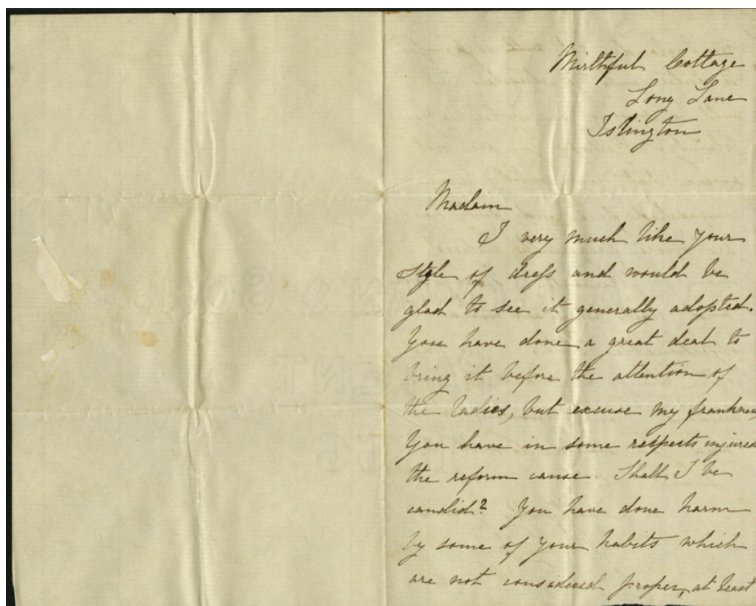
11. Clinton, Catherine, and Silber, Nina, eds. *Battle Scars: Gender and Sexuality in the American Civil War*. Cary: Oxford University Press USA - OSO, 2006. ProQuest Ebook Central. (Accessed October 15, 2020). (Pg. 107-109)

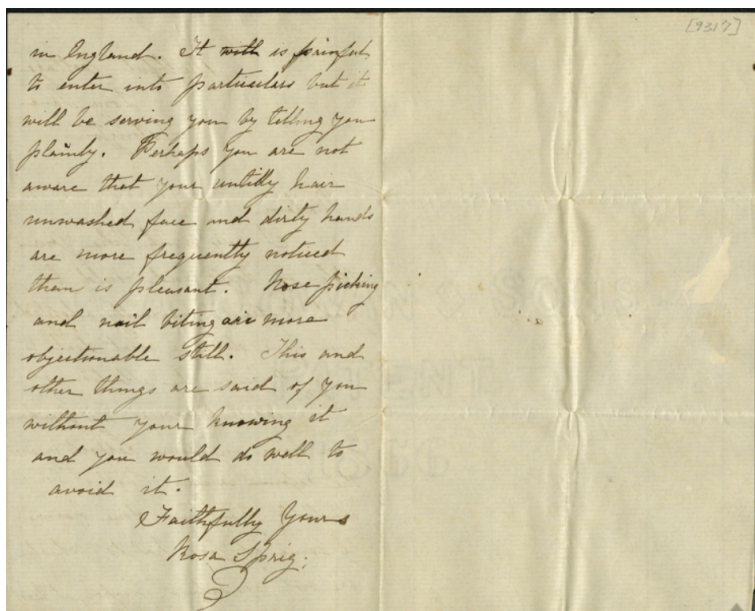
12. Eggleston, Larry. *Women in the Civil War: Extraordinary Stories of Soldiers, Spies, Nurses, Doctors, Crusaders, and Others*. Women in the Civil War. (Pg. 57)

13. Drexel University Legacy Center, *A Female Civil War Surgeon: "How Dr. Mary is Remarkable"*

14. Harris, Sharon M. *Dr. Mary Walker: an American Radical, 1832-1919* (Pg. 56)

15. Drexel University Legacy Center, *A Female Civil War Surgeon: "How Dr. Mary is Remarkable"*





Citation: Rosa Sprig. "Letter to Dr. Mary Walker from Rosa Sprig," Correspondence, 1870. From Drexel University College of Medicine Archives & Special Collections, <http://lcdc.library.drexel.edu/islandora/object/islandora:1494> (accessed October 22, 2020)

### Transcription of Letter:

"Madam, I very much like your style of dress and would be glad to see it generally adopted. You have done a great deal to bring it before the attention of the ladies, but excuse my frankness – you have in some respects injured the reform cause. Shall I be candid? You have done harm by some of your habits which are not considered proper, at least in England. It is painful to enter into particulars but it will be serving you by telling you plainly. Perhaps you are not aware that your untidy hair, unwashed



## GENDER AND SEXUALITY THROUGHOUT WORLD HISTORY

face, and dirty hands are more frequently noticed than is pleasant. Nose picking and nail biting are more objectionable still. This and other things are said of you without your knowing it and you would do well to avoid it. Faithfully yours, Rosa Sprig”<sup>16</sup>

The letter talks about how she admires the way Walker dresses because it is different from the typical dresses and skirts. However, the letter then goes on to warn Walker to start cleaning up her act a bit so that people will take her idea of dress reform more seriously. She goes on to make note of Walker’s “untidy hair, unwashed face, and dirty hands” and her habits of “nose picking and nail biting”. Sprig was a strong admirer of Walker’s dress reform ideas but worried that if Walker didn’t appear more tidy and feminine, people would not take her ideas seriously<sup>17</sup>.

Even before her time as a doctor and in the Civil War, Walker had always been a reformer in women’s clothing. From a young age she was taught the importance of education, literature, and finances. Aware of the fact that proper women’s clothing was more expensive than it should be, the idea of dress reform had been in the back of her mind for many years. Throughout her life, Walker would rarely wear dresses or any type of constrictive clothing because of mobility and health reasons<sup>18</sup>. During her time as a surgeon in the Civil War, Walker would

16. Rosa Sprig. “Letter to Dr. Mary Walker from Rosa Sprig,” Correspondence, 1870. From Drexel University College of Medicine Archives & Special Collections, <http://lcclib.library.drexel.edu/islandora/object/islandora:1494> (accessed October 22, 2020)

17. “A Female Civil War Surgeon: ‘How Dr. Mary Is Remarkable.’” Doctor or Doctress? Drexel University.

18. Mary Walker Stood Tall For Civil War Wounded Dare: Her battlefield courage led to the Medal of Honor - ProQuest . Mink, Michael. Investor’s Business Daily; Los Angeles [Los Angeles] 22 May 2013: A03. Retrieved November 4, 2020, from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/133401867/rftid=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprim0>

typically wear bloomers (a type of pants) versus the typical dress that women were expected to wear<sup>19</sup>. As a surgeon, pants were obviously the easiest and most practical item of clothing for her to be wearing while running around trying to save peoples' lives. But even with her profession, she was still expected to wear a dress. As mentioned in Rosa's letter to Walker, she was also advised to keep her hair tidier, wash herself more, and simply make herself look more presentable overall. Similar to the point made about the bloomers, these seemingly 'necessary' feminine tasks were simply impossible to accomplish with her profession and absurd that they were considered necessary in order to be a woman.

For Walker, "dress reform was the link between her love of medicine and her belief in women's equality"<sup>20</sup>. After the War ended, Walker continued to wear 'men's' clothes. She was often found wearing trousers and jackets, top hats, and even cut her hair short<sup>21</sup>. Walker had always been involved in women's dress reform, but after the war, she became even more invested in women's rights movements. She frequently participated in marches and delivered speeches for legislation relating to women's suffrage. It is even recorded that Walker was the first woman to ever try to vote in New York<sup>22</sup>. In her later years, she became

19. "A Female Civil War Surgeon: 'How Dr. Mary Is Remarkable.'" Doctor or Doctress? Drexel University.

20. Mary Walker Stood Tall For Civil War Wounded Dare: Her battlefield courage led to the Medal of Honor - ProQuest . Mink, Michael. *Investor's Business Daily*; Los Angeles [Los Angeles] 22 May 2013; A03. Retrieved November 4, 2020, from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1333401867/rfr.id=info%3Axi%2Fsid%3Aprimo> (pg. 18)

21. "A Female Civil War Surgeon: 'How Dr. Mary Is Remarkable.'" Doctor or Doctress? Drexel University.

22. Harris, S. M., & Harris, S. (2009). *Dr. Mary Walker: An American Radical, 1832-1919*. Rutgers University Press. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/wfu/detail.action?docID=870915>

the president of the National Dress Reform Association<sup>23</sup>. Similar to Walker's discovery, many women found that wearing pants was extremely more practical than the typical dress. Reporters started bashing their new fashion choice in the press, but reformer Amelia Jenkins Bloomer fired back by writing articles about the dangers of wearing and working in conventional clothing. From then on, the new female attire was referred to as the Bloomer dress. As time went on, more and more women began joining and supporting the reform, and eventually, an editorial called *The Sibyl* was published. This work was dedicated to dress reform, abolition, and other women's rights. Although some did not take it seriously, this editorial was a major step in the right direction for women's rights and dress reform<sup>24</sup>. As years went on, many women stopped wearing the bloomer outfit as they thought it took away from other important women rights (education, voting, property) however Walker never stopped. By the 1870s, Walker stopped wearing dresses all together and continued to receive more and more ridicule, as well as writing two books about the dangers of women's dresses and corsets. As the years went by, Walker found it hard to make money and moved back to her family's farm, but never stopped fighting for women all around<sup>25</sup>.

23. "A Female Civil War Surgeon: 'How Dr. Mary Is Remarkable.'" Doctor or Doctress? Drexel University.

24. Mary Walker Stood Tall For Civil War Wounded Dare: Her battlefield courage led to the Medal of Honor - ProQuest . Mink, Michael. *Investor's Business Daily*; Los Angeles [Los Angeles] 22 May 2013: A03. Retrieved November 4, 2020, from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1333401867/rftid=info%3Axi%2Fsid%3Aprim0/pg.10>

25. Hunt-Hurst, Patricia. "Walker, Mary 1832-1919." In *The Federal Era through the 19th Century*, edited by José Blanco F., 260-261. Vol. 2 of *Clothing and Fashion: American Fashion from Head*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2016. Gale eBooks (accessed November 18, 2020).

In short, Dr. Mary Walker's exceptionality was not solely a result of intelligence in the medical field or the fact that she rejected traditional womens' clothing; it was the cumulative consequence of her attack on gender conformity from all angles and every facet of her life that made Dr. Mary a truly outstanding woman<sup>26</sup>.

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26. Clinton, Catherine, and Silber, Nina, eds. *Battle Scars : Gender and Sexuality in the American Civil War*. (Pg. 108-109)

## Part II

# Gender Roles in Visual Culture

In the mid-twentieth century, visual media and fashion established certain ideals for gender roles, proposing challenges to females regarding equality. Some women have been given the opportunity to overcome the pressure to conform, as demonstrated in a few of our chapters. However, most women struggled to combat these restrictions on their identity, further perpetuating toxic societal norms.



5

MASTERING FASHION AND  
FUNCTION FOR THE NEW  
WOMAN

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Ella Welch

## Introduction



Gabrielle Chanel, French, 1883-1971, (Designer), ca. 1962, ca. 1964, Image: 2008. Coat, Day, Suit, Day. Costume-Main Garment-Women, Costume-Outerwear-Women. Place: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. <https://library.artstor.org/asset/ABROOKLYNIG.10312349441>.

The Chanel Suit was an iconic piece of history that defined women's escape from clothing expectations. Coco



Chanel created this look to be fashionable and efficient as the suits were traditionally made of woven textile with details of silk and different hardware<sup>1</sup>. The suit would consist of a matching jacket with long sleeves and a knee-length skirt, as depicted above in the outfit on the right. These suits were first constructed with fabrics found in the menswear department to embody the sporty look and acted as almost a “uniform” for women that could function in any season and for all occasions<sup>2</sup>. Many celebrities, such as Jackie Kennedy, emphasized that the Chanel suit was a closet staple. As Chanel brought in these male-dominant materials and styles, she began to complete her goal of diffusing what society had built up for the expectancy of women’s dress. Mastering fashion and function, she would break down the long-established look of multiple layers of tight and constricting garments, introducing concepts attractive to women who were beginning work or who were tired of dressing to these certain standards.

### Historical Fashion

Many are familiar with the figurine of a woman wearing a tightly strung corset, creating the ideal hourglass shape for a woman for multiple centuries. The use of the corset changed between these centuries as women originally wore them to maintain a feminine image and soon

1. Gabrielle Chanel, French, 1883-1971, (Designer), ca. 1962, ca. 1964, Image: 2008. Coat, Day, Suit, Day, Costume-Main Garment-Women, Costume-Outerwear-Women. Place: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. <https://library.artstor.org/asset/ABROOKLYNIG.10312349441>.

2. Chanel, “Coat and Day-Suit,” 2008.

transitioned corsets to embrace the idea of modernity.<sup>3</sup> These corsets restricted women's mobility, crushing their ribs, making it quite difficult to breathe, and giving control to others, usually men, as women could not manage with these limitations or take part in any physical activity. Straight front corsets<sup>4</sup> and hobble skirts<sup>5</sup> added to the uncomfortable lack of movement as well.

These expectations for women's shape, figure, and fashion choices compelled Chanel to create her freeing pieces defying what society pictures as the perfect female. To begin, fashion is consumption, depicting one's identity, and creating a specific culture. Previously, clothing did not have this value as it was viewed as something everyone must wear to cover up and protect, rather than what it soon came to be: gender and self-expression. Clothing is also how one conveys their social class and contributes to this material world.<sup>6</sup> Choosing an outfit or pieces of clothing every day is freedom individuals are granted and is an intimate and personal choice that we choose to display publicly.<sup>7</sup> This takes us into the exploration of Parisian haute couture<sup>8</sup>, which

3. Fields, Jill. "'Fighting the Corsetless Evil': Shaping Corsets and Culture, 1900-1930." *Journal of Social History* 33, no. 2 (1999): 335. Accessed October 25, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3789627>.

4. Straight front corsets were introduced by the Gibson Girls. This type of corset changed the original shape as it moved the bust forwards and the hips back. See Fields, "'Fighting the Corsetless Evil,'" 358.

5. Hobble skirts were longer in length and had a narrow hem, restricting women from walking normally as they had to "hobble". The skirt is also responsible for several deaths in the early twentieth century. It was only popular for not even a decade. The pencil skirt can be attributed to a modern version of the hobble skirt. See Fields, "'Fighting the Corsetless Evil,'" 358.

6. Villette, Solange Montagné and Irene Hardill. "Paris and Fashion: Reflections on the Role of the Parisian Fashion Industry in the Cultural Economy." *The International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 30, no. 9 (2010): 462. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/014433101022235>.

7. Evan Casey, and Deirdre Clemente. "Clothing the Contadini: Migration and Material Culture, 1890-1925." *Journal of American Ethnic History* 36, no. 4 (2017): 5. Accessed October 29, 2020. doi:10.5406/jamerethnhist.36.4.0005.

8. "Haute Couture" is french for high sewing. It is a term used to describe handmade clothing that is custom fit and uses high quality and expensive materials. Haute couture is typically made for a specific client and made with extreme attentiveness to detail by superior and experienced seamstresses. See Villette, Montagné and Hardill, "Paris and Fashion," 464.

defined fashion for the rest of the world. This type of fashion was established by Charles Frederick Worth<sup>9</sup> who also broke gender barriers by being one of the first renowned male dressmakers, a position usually dominated by females.<sup>10</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century, Chanel redefined haute couture by incorporating different materials, shapes, and designs. Gabrielle Chanel<sup>11</sup> grew up in extreme poverty and was born out of wedlock in a hospice; her mother passed by the time she was 12, and her father consequently abandoned the children, forcing Chanel into an orphanage.<sup>12</sup> Her humble upbringing contrasted with many of the previous figures in “haute couture” in France. While she learned how to sew from nuns<sup>13</sup>, those in the elite fashion industry mastered the important trade by working as skilled apprentices through multiple fashion houses.<sup>14</sup> Chanel herself wore masculine clothing inspired by both the men she had spent time with: Etienne Balsan<sup>15</sup> and “Boy” Capel.<sup>16</sup> Through these men, she began her appreciation for luxury, developed her ideas for incorporating men’s style, received financial assistance to launch her boutiques, and established a

9. An Englishman who created this trend in the 1850s in France. He trained in London working with different high-class individuals. He developed unique ideas and designs and implemented them into trending fashion. See Villette, Montagné and Hardill, “Paris and Fashion,” 465.

10. Villette, Montagné and Hardill, “Paris and Fashion,” 465.

11. Chanel was previously a cabaret singer and received her famously known nickname “Coco” while at Moulin’s café La Rotonde. The cavalymen of the Tenth Light House took her words from a song and referred to her as “Coco”. See Brower, Brock, 2001. “Chez Chanel.” *Smithsonian* 32 (4): 60.

12. Brower, “Chez Chanel,” 60.

13. As she was in an orphanage after she was left parentless, the nuns taught her how to sew. See Brower, “Chez Chanel,” 60.

14. A fashion house is a fashion company that produces high-fashion clothing. The world’s top fashion houses are Chanel, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, and Hermes. See Villette, Montagné and Hardill, “Paris and Fashion,” 468.

15. Etienne Balsan was a wealthy French ex-cavalry officer, and Chanel lived with him at his Chateau for three years. She was able to participate in equestrian activities and hunting and was exposed to luxury. See Villette, Solange Montagné and Irene Hardill, “Paris and Fashion,” 467.

16. Arthur Edward “Boy” Capel was Chanel’s lover for a certain period of time who funded her first boutique and gave her inspiration for her designs through his Englishmen attire. See Villette, Solange Montagné and Irene Hardill, “Paris and Fashion,” 467.

clientele list from high society across France. She created simple yet elegant hats that were popular among the wealthy women and soon created haute couture, specializing in the use of jersey fabric that had never been utilized before. Not only did she switch to an alternative fabric, but she began by incorporating less fabric in contrast to the previous decades where women were adorned with multiple layers of clothing, something irrational and awkward.<sup>17</sup> Her first couture collection launched in the fall of 1916, directly in the middle of World War I, when fabric options were limited, leaving her with jersey material.<sup>18</sup> During the time of war when the majority of men had left to fight, there was a power dynamic shift as women were faced with filling roles usually occupied by men. Many used Chanel's pieces as they were thrown into the workforce and had nothing to wear that would allow them to work in these physically demanding positions. Previously, the French police outlawed the use of trousers by women in public by enacting the decree of 7 November 1800. The law was strictly enforced throughout the entire century until feminists arose, discovering their voice.<sup>19</sup> Officials deemed those who broke the act as someone who was attempting to cross-dress and commit fraud as they were taking advantage.<sup>20</sup> Trousers and pants eventually became more accepted as women trickled into the

17. LAIRD, DONALD A. "What Is Wrong With Men's Clothing." *Scientific American* 141, no. 2 (1929): 128. Accessed October 29, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24976129>.

18. Liza Heaton, "Women's Clothing," 100 Years, 100 Legacies, *Wall Street Journal*, June 28, 2014/October 31, 2018, <https://graphics.wsj.com/100-legacies-from-world-war-i/womens-clothing>.

19. Van Slyke, Gretchen. "Women at War: Skirting the Issue in the French Revolution." *L'Esprit Créateur* 37, no. 1 (1997): 33. Accessed October 29, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26288117>.

20. See Van Slyke, "Women at War," 33.

workforce during the war, as they could not complete the assigned tasks in their typical garments.

Similar movements towards a less constructed women's dress were occurring in America as well with the introduction of the new designs made for a variety of activities and jobs. There were semi-fitted bodices that enhanced the natural waistline, form-fitting bias-cut skirts, insets, and wide sleeve holes made of cotton and lightweight linen.<sup>21</sup> The Mother Hubbard<sup>22</sup> was a popular option in the late nineteenth century as it was made to free women from corsets, identical reasoning to Chanel.<sup>23</sup> Not as fashionable or intricate as Chanel's pieces, the Mother Hubbard was an everyday piece that one could wear while working or maintaining the house. The introduction of the dress occurred around the same time as the dress reform movement<sup>24</sup>, working against the physical barrier clothing gave to women. The females in this development in America also chose to not adopt men's clothes but rather create their versions based on the styles and materials, leading to physical and social liberation.

21. Strassel, Annemarie. "Designing Women: Feminist Methodologies in American Fashion." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 1/2 (2012): 41. Accessed October 25, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23617720>.

22. A Mother Hubbard is a long, loose-fitting dress with long sleeves that aimed to cover up as much skin as possible. The name is derived from a popular nursery rhyme and was worn by women of all ages and social classes. It was later brought to Africa, South Asia, and the Pacific and is still worn, but with a variety of bright colors and patterns. See Gray, Sally Helvenston. "Searching for Mother Hubbard: Function and Fashion in Nineteenth-Century Dress." *Winterthur Portfolio* 48, no. 1 (2014): 31. Accessed October 25, 2020. doi:10.1086/676031.

23. Gray, "Searching for Mother Hubbard," 32.

24. The dress reform movement occurred from the middle to late Victorian era where women were rallying against the typical corset wear and more towards "bloomers" and other athletic wear. See Prados-Torreira, Teresa. "Humor and the Nineteenth-Century Reformer." *Studies in American Humor* 3, no. 1 (2017): 31.



Gabrielle Chanel, French, 1883-1971, (Designer), ca. 1965, Image: 2006. Dress, Cocktail. Costume-Main Garment-Women. Place: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. <https://library.artstor.org/asset/ABROOKLYNIG.10312346510>.

## Conclusion

Through her sportier decisions with women's fashion, Chanel reimagined femininity creating comfortable and liberating clothing that was unique, trendy, and glamorous. By merging these masculine designs with her clothing dreams, it reiterated the equality of men and women. Chanel's clothing inspired women to escape the housewife's expectations and prove their capabilities in the outside working world. Through her work, clothing transitioned from acting as a submissive item to culture to rather a piece of an aesthetic and social differentiation.<sup>25</sup> By consuming her products, one became subject to this new booming world of fashion and contributed to the change of women's clothing.

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25. Villette, Montagné and Hardill. "Paris and Fashion," 462.

A HISTORICAL  
EXAMINATION:  
PROGRESSION OR  
REGRESSION OF THE DISNEY  
DAMSEL?

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Annabelle Guss

“Girls bored me. They still do.” – Walt Disney<sup>1</sup>

Disney’s Parallels

If we look at the 1932 cartoon film *Flowers and Trees* and

1. Walt, Disney. “Girls Bored Me, They Still Do, I Love Mickey Mouse More than... at QuoteTab.” Accessed November 16, 2020. <https://www.quotetab.com/quote/by-walt-disney/girls-bored-me-they-still-do-i-love-mickey-mouse-more-than-any-woman-ive-ever>.



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the 2007 film *Enchanted* there are some obvious parallels among the gender dynamics portrayed. *Flowers and Trees* portrays two male trees and one female, and each male demonstrates his skills to win the affection of the female. The better fit male tree wins the battle and, by the end of the film, the two are married and live happily among the plant people. The 2007 film *Enchanted* details the story of Giselle, a princess who leaves her fairytale home only to end up living out her own fairytale in the real world (New York City). There, Giselle meets a wealthy lawyer Robert, and the two end up happily together, leaving behind Prince Edward in Andalasia.



The two male trees seem to care more about winning a battle of strength rather than gaining the affection of the female tree. Image Source: *Flowers and Trees*, directed by Gillett Burton, Tom Palmer, David Hand. (1932; Los Angeles: United Artists Pictures), video, 4:01, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rH-OTZmoXtk>

In each film, we see the princess and the prince, the princess and the evil or bad guy, and/or the princess and

her female duties. The female character lacks a singularity in each film, and because of this we as viewers attach her to something; she is dependent, and her domestic actions (e.g. cleaning or sewing) are solely for the benefit of her male counterpart. As viewers we should also make note of the time both the female tree and Giselle spend on these tasks. The female tree devotes the entirety of her appearance in the six-minute film to either 'receiving' (gifts or proposals) or 'giving' (dancing for the men). When she is not receiving or giving, she beautifies herself with the female plants. Likewise, Giselle is intentionally made to appear as a ditzzy and oblivious princess who, for most the movie, spends her days waiting on Prince Edward to come rescue her. Or, when she isn't thinking about her prince, she is cleaning and cooking for Robert and his daughter. Another paralleled trope we can identify is the 2:1 ratio, or the two men and one female dynamic. In each, there are two males—the good and bad male tree or Robert and Prince Edward—who lay claim to the female as their own, and then proceed to fight over her. This ratio not only places importance on the males' interests, but it removes the female's involvement in the plot entirely. The plot becomes male-centric; in the cartoon, the development of the plot relies on the male trees fight and, in the movie, the same goes for Prince Edward's rescue or the fight between him and Robert. Both films also end up reestablishing the 'true love' trope. Within the seven minutes or a couple days of knowing each other, the

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female and male are happily married or together. Giselle, for example, dedicates her life in and outside of Andalasia to finding her one true love. Although this was not Prince Edward, she ends up with Robert despite discovering a new sense of freedom and autonomy in the city. Similarly, the female tree ends up in love with the male tree without opposition, as the resolution to the film must be marriage.



Prince Edward arrives to save his supposedly kidnapped princess, because Giselle—now living in a NYC apartment with a new love interest—is in desperate need of saving. Image Source: Enchanted, directed by Barry Josephson, Barry Sonnenfeld, and Bill Kelly. (2007; Burbank: Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures), video, <https://www.amazon.com/Enchanted-Amy-Adams/dp/Boo3QSE26Q>

### Where Can We Place Blame?

The Disney franchise has created some of the world's most iconic fairytales and profited from Western conventions of romance, heroism and soul-searching. He and his franchise have also become the subject of considerable academic enquiry. More specifically, Disney's attitudes

towards gender equality in films—beginning in the 1900s until the twenty-first century—remain problematic. This is not a new concept. The franchise continues to play to sexist and paternalistic narratives which consequently, has undoubtedly defined gender norms for the rest of the film industry. Disney's dominance in the cartoon market and in the popular imagination, and the proximity of Disney's gender norm to that of society at large are to blame. This mainstream depiction of gender relationships appears both in short subjects starring figures like Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, etc. and higher profile full-length feature films. While the feature-length Disney films certainly reflect societal gender norms closely, each of these works depict a rather different universe. In each we find both male and female characters, but in the context of a male-dominated pairing or a male-centered universe. Mickey Mouse has Minnie Mouse; Mickey has a dog, Pluto; Pluto has a female partner, Fifi; Donald has Daisy, and so on. Female characters are secondary, existing only as mates for male figures, and receiving less attention in plotting, advertising and cartoon titles.<sup>2</sup>

2. Abel, Sam, "The Rabbit in Drag: Camp and Gender Construction in the American Animated Cartoon." *The Journal of Popular Culture* 29, no. 3 (1995): 183–202. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0022-3840.1995.00183.x>.

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The female tree accepts the winning male tree's proposal and they are married within three minutes of knowing each other. Image Source: *Flowers and Trees*, directed by Gillett Burton, Tom Palmer, David Hand. (1932; Los Angeles: United Artists Pictures), video, 7:34, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rH-OTZmoXtk>

We can also blame Disney's historical context. During the post-war years (1918-1932)—the years leading up to the making of *Flowers and Trees*—we see a retreat from higher education and professional life. Can we locate the decline in the resurgent conservatism of the 1920s and the Great Depression of the 1930s? Or, did college women's growing interest in matrimony and the emergence of compulsory heterosexuality and homophobia in the 1910s and thereafter, effect declines in women's professional contributions?<sup>3</sup> Either way, the collapse of women's education and professions was a historical marker to the end of the First World War; a "women's persistence in the

3. Hewitt, Nancy A., ed. *A Companion to American Women's History*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2002. Accessed November 8, 2020. ProQuest eBook Central, 239-367.

labor force [and educational institution] violated the social order.”<sup>4</sup>



Giselle creates a figure of her one true love—one she hasn't met yet. She explains that for a life of endless bliss, just find who you love through true love's kiss. Image Source: *Enchanted*, directed by Barry Josephson, Barry Sonnenfeld, and Bill Kelly. (2007; Burbank: Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures), video, <https://www.amazon.com/Enchanted-Amy-Adams/dp/B003QSE26Q>

### Disney's Values in Action

If we also consider the history of working women, there has been a general rise throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century in those who work outside the domestic sphere. More significantly, there is a rise in the number of both men and women who approve of married women taking part in employment. In 1938, one year after the release of *Snow White*, 25% of women and 19% of men approved of women working. In 1972, six years after Walt's death, these numbers grew to 66% of women and 62% of men. The

4. Hewitt, Nancy A., ed. *A Companion to American Women's History*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2002. Accessed November 8, 2020. ProQuest eBook Central, 239-367.

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major shift here can be found in the changing attitudes towards working women, not only in attitudes towards working women as a demographic, but specifically to the concept of White, middle-class, married working women. The United States needed more nurses, teachers, etc. as “these occupations were regarded as incompatible with masculinity.” Most of these professions required at least some higher education and, generally, women who had these qualifications were White and made up the middle-class.



The female tree spends the majority of the film time pampering/beautifying herself with the female flowers while the male flowers woo her with music and gifts. Image Source: *Flowers and Trees*, directed by Gillett Burton, Tom Palmer, David Hand. (1932; Los Angeles: United Artists Pictures), video, 1:55, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rH-OTZmoXtk>

World War II also spiked the number of women in the labor force in the 1950s and 60s— “women never lost their

taste for the independence of employment.”<sup>5</sup> Yet, in order to support the returning men, women were warned to exercise great care to their households once more. Marriage counselors suggested women encourage their husband to take charge of their families again, and that returning vets value admiration and submissiveness. The pressure to abandon their professional lives and return to their domestic duties arrived even before the war began. Employers began to prioritize men as applicants, and the post-war years took refuge in re-emerging cultural traditions. General MacArthur wrote: “the noble influence of womanhood and the home which has done so much to further American stability and progress, and upon which I place most implicit trust that those new and higher ideals [will remain].”<sup>6</sup> This concept, that women are an inherently stabilizing force, was present throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and certainly had much in common with the professed system of values present in the Disney franchise.

5. Hewitt, Nancy A., ed. *A Companion to American Women's History*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2002. Accessed November 8, 2020. ProQuest eBook Central, 239-367.

6. Davis, Amy M. “The ‘Dark Prince’ and Dream Women: Walt Disney and Mid-Twentieth Century American Feminism.” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 25, no. 2 (2005): 213-30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01439680500137987>.





While Giselle spends hours prepping the house for Robert to hardly notice, she also spends little time considering her newfound independence—one free from the controlling prince charming. Image Source: *Enchanted*, directed by Barry Josephson, Barry Sonnenfeld, and Bill Kelly. (2007; Burbank: Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures), video, <https://www.amazon.com/Enchanted-Amy-Adams/dp/B003QSE26Q>

### What Now?

One could say Giselle subverts the Disney princess norm as she was ultimately the one to save Robert from the evil queen. Or, that the movie itself portrays Giselle as such because it is a parody of Disney's tropes. Yet, this film does not do enough to repair the damage. *Enchanted* consciously adheres to Disney's most recognizable characteristics, but does little deviate from the toxic masculinity and outdated concepts of femininity it presents. Instead, the film appears more stereotypical than, say, *Cinderella*. If we also consider the cartoon, the female flower appears independent and nonchalant for some of the film. Yet, the film also unconsciously lays the

foundation to fairytale clichés; as one of Disney's first animated series, the plot of *Flowers and Trees* set the stage to decades of fairy tales *Enchanted* so desperately attempts to deviate from: the two men fight over the girl, the good guy wins and gets the girl, and they are married by the end of the film (e.g. Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*). In this comparison, we have a 1932 film which unconsciously establishes the conventional damsel and distress and a 2007 film designed to self-parody this classic fairy tale trope. Have things really changed? Sure, as audiences and filmmakers we're able to recognize the faults in predictable love stories and patriarchal ideologies. But, a film like *Enchanted* is as conventional as the films it tries to satirize. It satisfies all our "normal," and cultural expectations, only to further typify fairy tale films in its representation of women and patriarchal, sociocultural perspectives. The film reworks fairy tale motifs to support a conventional Euro-North American worldview that reinforces the exact rhythms of all Disney animated musicals which precede it. For instance, the female protagonist Giselle seeks personal fulfillment through domesticity; in a parody of Disney princesses Snow White and Cinderella, Giselle calls on hundreds of her city animal friends to help clean the apartment of a complete stranger. She sings and dances to the tune "Happy Working Song," with lyrics that include "We adore each filthy chore." This, of course, raises a number of issues. Giselle cleans the apartment of a man she met in the streets of New York City and in a home

she slept in without concern for her safety. The man is also apparently unable to clean his own apartment despite being an attorney at a major Manhattan law firm.<sup>7</sup> The opposite of a self-actualized feminist, Giselle defines a regressive, vulnerable and heterosexist role.

In response to social pressure, minimal efforts have been made in the recent past to incorporate moderately feminist ideals into its fairy tale films, yet this can be more accurately described as “faux feminism.” This impulse trivializes feminist ideologies or compresses the actions of female characters into conventions of popular romance while “maintaining that they are her choice, not actions instilled by patriarchal teaching and values.”<sup>8</sup> Disney films also place elements of self-determination or empowerment into the portrayal of female protagonists, only to undermine them with plot resolutions that equate her fulfillment with heterosexual romance. Even when female protagonists are spirited or bright their agency “reflects[s] a carefully scripted concept of pop femininity, constructed to be acceptable and entertaining” to a Western audience. In *Enchanted*, for example, this faux feminism is seen in Giselle’s demonstration of resourcefulness as she makes a dress out of curtains, yet these actions reinforce her allegiance to domesticity and self-beautification. Instead of finding a way back to

7. Pershing, Linda, and Lisa Gablehouse. “Disney’s Enchanted: Patriarchal Backlash and Nostalgia in a Fairy Tale Film.” In *Fairy Tale Films: Visions of Ambiguity*, edited by Greenhill Pauline and Matrix Sidney Eve, by Zipes Jack, 137-56. University Press of Colorado, 2010. Accessed November 17, 2020, 98-153, doi:10.2307/j.ctt4cgn37.12.

8. Pershing, Linda, and Lisa Gablehouse. “Disney’s Enchanted: Patriarchal Backlash and Nostalgia in a Fairy Tale Film.” In *Fairy Tale Films: Visions of Ambiguity*, edited by Greenhill Pauline and Matrix Sidney Eve, by Zipes Jack, 137-56. University Press of Colorado, 2010. Accessed November 17, 2020, 98-153, doi:10.2307/j.ctt4cgn37.12.

Andalasia, she makes clothing. Her gradual path to self-actualization—thinking for herself, realizing she loves Robert, starting her own business—is undermined by a narrative that defines Giselle in relationship to a man. The Disney version of fairy tales domesticates feminism in such a way that has always—from the 30s to the twenty-first century—made characters who cling to heteronormative and sexist ideals happy and successful. Any attempt to diverge from this universal ideal has been unsuccessful.

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# HOW ADVERTISEMENTS MINIMIZE A WOMEN'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER HER BODY

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Max Greller

The 1930's represented a decade of economic disarray during and after the Great Depression. Less capital for the average citizen, particularly women, translated to a lack of sufficient food and nutrition. This caused the average American woman to be much skinnier and resulted in a shift in the ideal form of female beauty; 1930's media influenced women to focus more on the projection of the

ideal woman, instead of emphasizing the need for unity and determination through a time of uncertainty. Unlike the 1920's where society projected the ideal body shape for women as skinny, the 1930's marked a decade where physical beauty was characterized with a fuller figure. Because of societal pressure and the cultural obligation to impress men, American women conformed to the standards that were displayed by different advertisements; many companies, particularly the ones that advertised ironized yeast, took advantage of American women's vulnerable emotional state regarding their own body image. Ironized Yeast company promoted ironized yeast as a solution to obtaining a fuller figure and an increased appetite through higher Vitamin B intake. A 1935 edition of *Motion Picture Magazine*, an American film magazine that was published for most of the 20th century, displays one of Ironized Yeast Company's many advertisements.



**MEN  
WOULDN'T  
LOOK AT ME  
WHEN I WAS  
SKINNY**

**but...**

**Since I Gained 10 Pounds  
This New, Easy Way  
I Have All the Dates I Want**

NOW there's no need to be "skinny" and friendless, even if you never could gain an ounce before. Here's a new, easy treatment that is giving thousands attractive flesh—in just a few weeks!

Doctors for years have prescribed yeast to build up health. But now, with this new yeast discovery in little tablets, you can get far greater tonic results—regain health, and also put on pounds of firm flesh, enticing curves—and in a far shorter time.

Not only are thousands quickly gaining beauty-bringing pounds, but also clear skin, freedom from indigestion and constipation, new pep.

**Concentrated 7 times**

This amazing new product, Ironized Yeast, is made from specially cultured *brewers' ale yeast* imported from Europe—the richest yeast known—which by a new process is concentrated 7 times—made 7 times more powerful.

But that is not all! This super-rich yeast is ironized with 3 special kinds of iron which strengthen the blood, add energy.

Day after day, as you take Ironized Yeast tablets, watch fat chest develop, skinny limbs round out attractively. Skin clears to beauty, new health comes—you're an entirely new person.

**Results guaranteed**

No matter how skinny and weak you may be, or how long you have been that way, this marvelous new Ironized Yeast should build you up in a few short weeks as it has thousands. If you are not delighted with the results of the very first package, your money will be instantly refunded.

**Special FREE offer!**

To start you building up your health right away, we make this absolutely FREE offer. Purchase a package of Ironized Yeast tablets at once, cut out the seal on the box and mail it to us with a clipping of this paragraph. We will send you a fascinating new book on health, "New Facts About Your Body," by a well-known authority. Remember, results are guaranteed with the very first package—or money refunded. At all druggists. Ironized Yeast Co., Inc., Dept. 258, Atlanta, Ga.

Placed by professional model

Image Source: Ironized Yeast Company. "Men Wouldn't Look At Me When I Was Skinny," Advertisement. Motion Picture Magazine, August 1935 (M. P. Publishing Company, Inc.), from University of Southern California Cinematic Arts Library (accessed September 24, 2020).

The advertisement implies that being skinny translates to being friendless; taking the ironized yeast will give the individual woman “attractive flesh” and transform them into “an entirely new person”. The advertisement indirectly conveys that body image comprises a woman’s entire identity. A fuller figure, resulting from the consumption of ironized yeast, will make a woman an entirely new person, meaning a woman should prioritize improving her body image over anything else.

Erving Goffman, an American sociologist who was considered to be the most influential American sociologist during the 20th century, analyzed advertisements and outlined numerous ways in which women were objectified. Goffman classified the portrayal of women in advertisements into six main categories. The advertisement above displays two of these categories: Feminine Touch and Ritualization of Subordination. The model in the advertisement is touching herself which has a sexual connotation because it is almost inviting or allowing the viewer to do the same to her. Similarly, she has a flirtatious pose which further subordinates her and supports the gender norm of women having to constantly please men.<sup>1</sup>

Not only were the ironized yeast advertisements controversial because of the problematic messages and portrayals of women that were conveyed through the different illustrations, but also the product was

1. Roxanne Hovland et al., “Gender Role Portrayals in American and Korean Advertisements,” *Sex Roles*, 53 (2005).



fundamentally flawed. In 1934, the Federal Trade Commission outlined the cease and desist of Ironized Yeast Company from continuing to advertise on any media platform.<sup>2</sup> The advertisements claimed that the product can end indigestion, nervousness, constipation, sluggishness, and skin eruptions overnight. The company claimed that ironized yeast is a cure for these conditions and for a more ideal body figure; however, the promises that were made were not only exaggerated but false. The Federal Trade Commission decision conveys how ironized yeast does not provide any useful purpose in the treatment of these conditions except when they are produced solely by a deficiency of vitamin B or iron. Even if ironized yeast helped women alleviate the physical conditions summarized above, the advertisements not only exaggerated the benefits and efficiency of the product, but they also directly affected women's self-conscience by extending societal pressure to adhere to the ideal form of feminine beauty- a societal pressure that manifested over time in every woman's conscience. Overall, fulfilling societal expectations, as expressed by countless body image advertisements, created a constant amount of gender role stress for women.

During the Great Depression advertisers became desperate; advertisements were targeted towards women in order to convince them that a failure to consume their

2. "Federal Trade Commission Decisions" 19 (1934): 129-39.

products would result in loneliness and divorce.<sup>3</sup> Instead of advertisements aiming to combat the deterioration of the economy, magazines and advertisements instead focused on portraying the independence of women as a main reason for familial struggle. Advertisements persuaded women to refrain from challenging gender norms where women were depended on the approval of men. Similarly, advertisements incited apprehension for most women because they communicated how a lack of initiative to look a certain way would result in loneliness. Weight loss advertisements in the 1920's convinced women that being thin would translate to social and marital stability; however, during and after the Great Depression, advertisements alerted women that being thin was now perceived as unattractive. Women had to constantly manage their body image so that they were not seen as too thin or too overweight, a standard that was not only stressful but also misogynistic.

Although advertisements were used to manipulate women to conform to what was deemed the ideal form of beauty during the Great Depression, the notion of society controlling women's perceptions of themselves and their acceptance in society (especially by men) can be traced and analyzed beyond the 1930's. Biopower, a term that was developed by Michel Foucault in the late 1970's, describes how a society controls and influences large groups of people; biopower often relates to our social and cultural

3. Karen Sternheimer, *Celebrity Culture and the American Dream: Stardom and Social Mobility* (London, United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis Group, 2014).

construction of body image. Overtime, society has controlled people's perceptions of themselves by establishing a constantly evolving depiction of the quintessential body image. Capitalism drives biopower and regulates how individuals make everyday decisions. In her chapter titled "The Roots That Clutch", Antoinette Burton extends upon Foucault's theory on societal hegemony. Burton claims, "the modern state has relied on docile bodies for its own sustainability- determining to make them conform if they resisted incorporation into the body politic. In the process, state power has often violated, reshaped and otherwise deformed the body".<sup>4</sup> The body is a vulnerable concept that capitalism has manipulated. Capitalism therefore values submissive bodies that give into the projection of the ideal body form. Capitalism profits off of the body insecurity of women. It also maintains norms of femininity by coercing women into believing that acceptance and status in society is gained through the conformity to gender norms.

Advertising is a platform in which biopower is often employed. Jean Kilbourne, an activist who is known for her public speaking regarding the portrayal of women in advertising, warns people that they need to take advertising more seriously. She claims that advertising is one of the most powerful socializing forces in our culture and is an inexorable influence. Kilbourne discusses how advertisements contain their own agendas that promote

4. Antoinette M. Burton, "The Roots That Clutch: Bodies, Sex and Race from 1750" (Routledge, 2013), 511-522.

certain values that manipulate individual mindsets and practices. She references a 1970's United Nations report that discusses gender equality. The report stresses the fact that advertisements perpetuate the concept of women as an inferior class and objectify women by portraying them as sex symbols and illustrating an ideal form of female beauty. Advertisements create a precedent and rigid roles where women who fail to mirror the ideal form of female beauty should feel guilty and implement change at any means necessary.<sup>5</sup>

Early 20th century media surrounded women and infiltrated their minds by targeting their desire to conform to the constantly shifting and ideal form of beauty. Advertisements for ironized yeast were not the only mechanism used to influence women; certain fashion innovations were advertised and had direct ties to women's body image. The corset, an undergarment that women wore to define their figure, further perpetuated the notion of female imperfection. Corsets were advertised, similar to the ironized yeast, as a means to mitigate women's "figure faults".<sup>6</sup> During the 1930's, ironized yeast and the corset maintained the concept that there was something innately flawed with a woman's appearance. The stigma of a woman's body was represented in every facet of her life. Unfortunately, because of advertisements like those for weight gain products and body shaping

5. Kilbourne, Jean, *Killing Us Softly - Advertising's Image of Women*, 1979, <https://wfu.kanopy.com/video/killing-us-softly>.

6. Jill Fields, "'Fighting the Corsetless Evil': Shaping Corsets and Culture, 1900-1930," *Journal of Social History* 33, no. 2 (1999): 355-84

clothing, women had to continuously monitor and stress about their own body image in order to be appreciated by men and accepted in society.

The ironized yeast advertisement is so problematic because it prioritized societal expectations and capitalism over the mental and physical well-being of women. Advertising was and continues to be a very powerful and exploitative tool; not only did Ironized Yeast Company prioritize their own capitalistic agenda without considering the negative toll the advertisements would have on women's perceptions of themselves, but they also created the advertisements during a decade of economic and social chaos. Instead of advertising acting as a unifying force, it further subordinated women and suppressed the freedom and choices they made over their own bodies.

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# MARILYN MONROE'S EXPRESSION OF FEMALE SEXUALITY IN THE '50S

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Deirdre Glynn

## Introduction

During a time of suppressed female sexuality in the 1950s, Marilyn Monroe thrived off showcasing her sexuality, or so it seems. She appeared to feel at home in the limelight, while most women felt at home in their domestic bubble. What I want to look at is why did she feel compelled to showcase her body. How did it feel for Marilyn to receive

so much male attention, and simultaneously universal praise and criticism? It's hard to know what was going through her mind, and it's clear her life wasn't everything she hoped for in the tragic way it ended. A lot of Marilyn's aura is held in her mysterious physique. It has been said that the challenge of making sense of Marilyn Monroe in academic pursuit is a "daunting one."<sup>1</sup> I want to make sense of why she chose to sell her body and display herself in such a public way.

### **Marilyn's upbringing and her early desires for sexual expression**

Marilyn Monroe, born Norma Jean Mortenson, did not have a traditional upbringing. She was brought into this world by her Mother Gladys Baker who suffered from schizophrenia and depression. Baker put her daughter in the foster care system at the young age of 2-weeks old. Although she visited her often, she was not a stable mother figure throughout Marilyn's life. Marilyn's dad was out of the picture and she has been deemed an illegitimate child.<sup>2</sup> It was never determined which beau of Gladys was Marilyn's father. Norma Jean was brought into a foster home where she lived for many years, her mother would often show up unannounced and take Monroe for outings. The foster care house she grew up in was incredibly strict, and her foster parents forced modesty

1. Laura Mulvey, "Thoughts on Marilyn Monroe: Emblem and Allegory," *Oxford Academic* 58, no. 2 (2017): <https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/hjxz019>.

2. Laura Mulvey, 2017

and religion onto Marilyn. She expressed as an adult, that she once dreamt of “standing up in a church with no clothes on, and all the people were lying at her feet.” She revealed that she sensed “freedom.” This vision of Marilyn’s to me is a clear foreshadowing of the future that was to come. At a young age, she had the desire of expressing her sexuality and showcasing her body in a public manner.<sup>3</sup>

### The nude calendar display and first *Playboy* magazine

In May of 1949, Monroe sat for a nude photoshoot for a calendar. At the time she did not know that these photos would be on the cover of one of the most famous magazines for men in America — *Playboy* magazine. It wouldn’t be for another 6 years that she would be featured in *playboy*, but these photos caught the eyes of many. It is said that Marilyn originally hesitated in participating in the nude photoshoot, but ultimately complied. Allegedly Marilyn was struggling financially, late on rent, and did not have enough to eat. She had already established herself as an actress and this would be her first venture into nude photography or pornographic exposition of herself.<sup>4</sup> Although she was an actress, she was nowhere close to her peak fame and did not have a solid income. One photo taken this day would establish the famous

3. David Spoto, “Marilyn Monroe”. Rowan and Litchfield (2001) [https://www.google.com/books/edition/Marilyn\\_Monroe](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Marilyn_Monroe)

4. Kristi Good, “Marilyn Monroe.” *Theatre History Studies*, volume 3 (2014). Photo taken by Tom Kelley and featured in *playboy* franchise <http://www.nudepmates.com/playboy/723-marilyn-monroe-is-the-ultimate-playboy-playmate>



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Marilyn as we know her. This photo would be the epitome of what Marilyn as a sexual icon looked like. This photo would be titled “Golden Dreams,” the same photo later featured inside the first edition of Playboy.



Image Source: “Golden Dreams” shot by Tom Kelley in 1949. Published by Playboy enterprises  
<https://www.revelist.com/celebrity/playboy-marilyn-monroe/9647>

*Playboy Magazine*

A few years after her first nude photoshoot, Marilyn was featured on the cover of the first-ever edition of Playboy magazine in 1953. Her nude photos were additionally featured inside the magazine. The notorious Hugh Hefner, founder, and editor of Playboy magazine had what seemed to be an infatuation with Marilyn. Hefner purchased the photos from the calendar and published the magazine without Monroe's permission.<sup>5</sup> This magazine made Marilyn's image as a sexual icon explode. This exposure was essential in the perpetuation of the fame that she would receive in the coming years. Millions of copies were sold and Americans fell in love with the image of her body.

5. Kristi Good, "Marilyn Monroe" *Theatre History Studies*, volume 3 (2014): <http://go.libproxy.wakehealth.edu/login?url>

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Cover of first-ever Playboy magazine (1953) produced by Hugh Hefner and photo shot by Tom Kelley (1949)



Marilyn featured in First edition of Playboy 1953. Image Source: Playboy enterprises, New York, NY. Edited and published by Hugh Hefner. <https://www.revelist.com/celebrity/playboy-marilyn-monroe/9647>

### Her First live Public Display, A Military Marilyn

In February of 1954, Marilyn traveled out to Chunchon

Korea to the N-47 Base. This was going to be Marilyn's first public display, and she would be showcasing herself to one 60 thousand American troops at a post-war show. She was brought in because at this point in her career she had established herself a sex symbol, especially to American men. She had been in over twenty films by 1954 and was reaching her peak as a Hollywood star.<sup>6</sup> Monroe has also just married famous baseball player Joe DiMaggio, who often expressed his discomfort with Marilyn's performances and sexual expressions. The issues revolving around their relationship soon lead to a divorce.<sup>7</sup> The average American man would be delighted if the presence of Ms. Marilyn, seen both as a sex icon and an American sweetheart. One of the soldiers expressed that they were "buffaloed-over" Marilyn coming. Many soldiers had seen her in her calendars and various films.

**What she said about her experience ~ A quote from  
Marilyn herself**

Marilyn expressed "I felt I belonged. For the first time in my life, I had the feeling that the people seeing me were accepting me and liking me. This is what I've always wanted I guess. Please come and visit us in San Francisco."<sup>8</sup>  
~ Marilyn Monroe

6. Kristi Good, 2014.

7. Kristi Good, "Marilyn Monroe." *Theatre History Studies*, volume 3 (2014). Photo taken by Tom Kelley and featured in Playboy franchise

8. Spoto, Donald. Marilyn Monroe: The Biography. United States: Cooper Square Press, 2001.

### Analysis

Marilyn seemed to enjoy the limelight in this instance. It may have been just what she spoke to the public, but to me it seems genuine. She enjoyed the male gaze and felt confident displaying herself, yet didn't express herself as only a sexual object. A soldier spoke on the fact that Marilyn acted as if she wanted to be there and took time to talk to many soldiers. In participating in casual conversations with the soldiers, Marilyn acted as if she wasn't famous at all. If Marilyn did not truly enjoy the attention, then why would she be so cheerful and personable? It is possible that she was just a very good actress? It is undeniable that she was rather convincing and gave the impression that she enjoyed what she did.



Marilyn Monroe performing for American troops in Korea (1954). Image source: Michael Orches Archives, "Vintage Photos Show Marilyn Monroe Entertaining Troops in Korea"

## Conclusion

Returning back to the childhood dream of Monroe's that

included revealing herself in front of the church, encapsulates what I believe Marilyn Monroe stood for. She wanted to shock and she wanted to radiate confidence that she wasn't afraid to show off her body. In the short life that Marilyn lived, she accomplished her goal. I believe she serves as a model for many women today. Although some aspects of her public display were too male dedicated and her life was very complicated, I believe that her courage to go against the grain of what was considered the norm was admirable. In many ways, it would be rightful to call Ms. Monroe a feminist. It is obvious that she catered to a male audience, but what she accomplished was considered taboo for a woman of that time. Her choice to expose herself in the way she did lead to a divorce and criticism from some fields of people. However, this did not stop her, she continued doing what she loved and performing for people. It was not until her marriage with Arthur Miller, a famous play writer, that her life started to fall apart. Her marriage troubles caused her to have emotional issues herself leading to several psychotic breaks. It can not be completely ruled out that the pressures of fame is what led to her downhill spiral, but is something we can never truly know. On August 5, 1962, Marilyn Monroe was found dead from an overdose on sleeping pills. It has been thought that it was a possible suicide but it was never confirmed.<sup>9</sup>

9. Editors, The History Channel "Marilyn Monroe Born." [www.history.com](http://www.history.com)

# WOMEN IN MAOIST PROPAGANDA: AN OVERVIEW OF FEMININITY AS STATE APPARATUS

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Stevie L.

In *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus (Notes Towards an Investigation)* (French: *Idéologie et appareils idéologiques d'État (Notes pour une recherche)*), Louis Althusser,<sup>1</sup> a renowned Marxist philosopher, proposes that the ruling class employs the *repressive state apparatuses* (RSA) as a tool to subjugate the working class; the social functions of

1. Louis Althusser (1970). *Idéologie et appareils idéologiques d'État (Notes pour une recherche)*, 151.



RSA include government, courts, police, military, etc. and serve to repress the social classes on demand via violent and/or nonviolent methods.<sup>2</sup> Althusser further distinguishes repressive state apparatuses between *ideological state apparatuses* (ISA), which are social institutions and entities that propagandize ideologies in favor of the ruling class. Such apparatuses include the educational institutes, churches, family, social clubs, etc.<sup>3</sup>

Althusser further theorizes that ISA use physical nonviolence to achieve the same goals as RSA in institutions that are ostensibly apolitical, rather than being formally a part of the state as RSA are. ISA propagates ideologies, rather than expressing and imposing violence or the threats thereof, that strengthen the dominance and control of the ruling class. In attribution to psychosocial theories, it is contended that those who are subject to ISA are coopted in fear of social rejection, ostracization, isolation, and ridicule.

In this essay, the ideological state apparatuses are contextually examined in the visual media of propaganda posters from 1950s and 1960s communist China encompassing images of women and other representations of femininity, whereby arguing that such images are epitomic of the pervasive—as well as intrusive—applications of ideological suppressive apparatuses. The will of the state is thereby imposed upon men and women, in accordance with the will of the state

2. Vincent B. Leitch (2001). *The Norton Anthropology of Theory and Criticism*. 1491-1492.

3. Leitch, 1488-1491.

and its specific political agendas, via establishing and normalizing the standards of socioculturally acceptable femininity and womanhood. In other words, the states exploit its power over the media and manipulate what is wanted to “be a woman,” so as to achieve its political purposes and to maintain desired social orders.

After the *Chinese Communist Party* (CCP) prevailed in the Chinese Civil War over the *Kuomintang* (“*The National Party*”/KMT) in 1949, the state-led movement called Women’s Liberation. During this period a variety of policies had been experimented with and codified. The very first law passed in *People’s Republic of China* (PRC) was in fact a marriage civil law enacted on May 1, 1950. The *New Marriage Law* was a radical divergence from the existing patriarchal traditions and statutory practices. Traditionally, Chinese marriage often took place through arrangement or coercion; women were not allowed to seek nor initiate a divorce, while concubinage was a commonplace. The new law explicitly banned bigamy/polygamy, concubinage, and marriage by proxy and prioritized the consent from both the man and the woman upon marriage registry.<sup>4</sup>

4. Chen, Xinxin (March 2001). “Marriage Law Revisions Reflect Social Progress in China”. *China Today*.



Ziyou Hunyin Meiman Xingfu. "Freedom of Marriage, happiness and prosperity". Image source: Yu, Yunjie (1953). Shanghai: Huadong Renmin Meishu Chubanshe 華東人民美術出版社.



Ziyou zizhu jiehun hao, tuanjie shengchan xingfu duo. "A free and independent marriage is good, there is great happiness in unified production." Image Source: Bi, Cheng (1953). Beijing: Renmin Meishu Chubanshe 人民美術出版社.

Old-fashioned aesthetic ideas on women, however, were tenacious. Therefore, it is of vital importance to see what

women in the past were presented so that one understands how CCP-revolutionaries envisioned women's role in the nascent (ideally) socialist economy in contrast with its capitalistic counterpart that the CCP had just upended. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the visual tradition that establishes women as objects for male consumption via male gaze had been established. Advertisers, one that went extinct later due to the communist revolution which ceased market economy in China, featured young, attractive women in the tantalizing—yet still considered modest in accordance with the Confucian traditions—dress *Cheongsam*, a new sartorial invention that draws attention to the wearer's voluptuous physique and caters to a specifically Chinese sense of aesthetics. Much of the advertising was ubiquitous in port cities like Shanghai or Tsingtao—forefronts of China's first engagement with the globalized economy—where imported products gained much popularity.



Example of a Yuefenpai Calendar Poster created for businesses as adverts. This one was created by Jin Meisheng for Tolley, Scott, & Tolley's Pure Grape Brand.



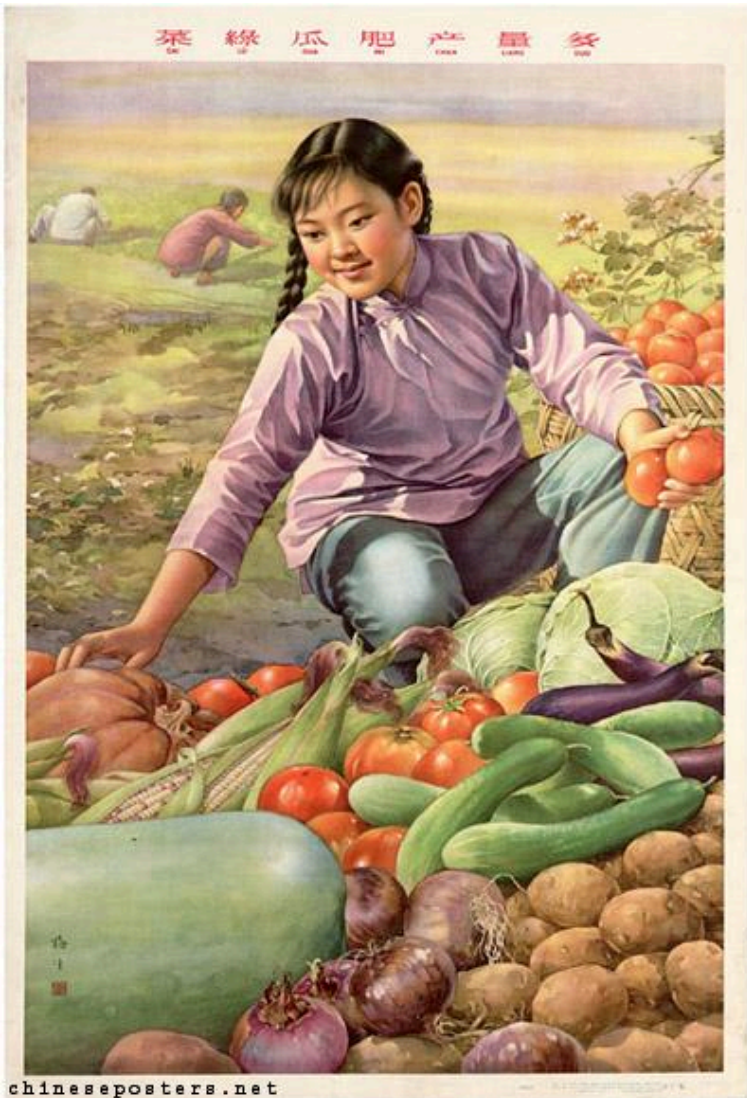


Image Source: Jin, Meisheng (1959). Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Meishu Chubanshe 上海人民美術出版社

However, artists having been known for their work of beautiful women, ironically, shifted gears after Mao's

ascension to power in fear of their old stylistic choices were representative of their “petit-bourgeois-class aesthetics,” which could be used against them as evidence of their political disloyalty. Artists, such as Jin Meisheng, positioned their artistic thematic foci later in political adulation as well as dissemination of state policies. The artists strive to construct images of women that nonetheless pertains to the traditional beauty standards of women that exemplify demureness, elegance, and modesty.

Despite such consistency in objectifying approaches to depict women, the new genre of art on propaganda posters in general endeavors to convey the emancipatory message of women. An overarching element in poster art in this period is female professionals, many in uniforms, participating in a wide range of activities agriculture, industry, scientific studies, etc. Therefore, for good reasons, the CCP has been active in lauding itself as the champion of women’s liberation. Mao Zedong’s famous dictum, “Women hold up half of the sky,”<sup>5</sup> (later becoming a cultural sensation and icon within the progressive left in the West) explicitly urges women to consciously and actively engage in the great endeavor of reconstructing the socialist China. Therefore, women in these images are often shown to be somewhat muscular—and even masculine—so as to justify the political proposition that

5. Perry Link notes that, in *An Anatomy of Chinese, Rhythm, Metaphor, Politics* by Perry Link, the Mao is quoted to have said, literally, that “women can hold up half of the sky,” not that they in fact do hold up, as indicated by “neng” in Chinese. The quote’s original date is claimed by Link to be “apparently in 1968,” albeit any contemporary source has been found. The original text is 婦女能頂半邊天, or *funü neng ding banbiantian*.



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women are just as valued, if not more, in professions that entail much physical labor. The following poster showcases a woman in “The Great Leap Forward.”



Unknown artist (1973). Shanghai: Shanghai People's Fine Arts and Publishing House Propaganda Group.



Women wei canjia guojia gongye jianshe er zihao. "We take pride in participating in the founding of our country's industrialization. Image Source: Ding, Hao (1954). Shanghai: Huadong Renmin Meishu Chubanshe 華東人民美術出版社.



Funü neng ding banbiantian, guanjiao shanhe huan xinyan. "Women hold up half of the sky, they force mountains and rivers to change colors. Image source: Wang, Dawei (1975). Beijing: Renmin Meishu Chubanshe 人民美術出版社.

It is worth mentioning that, however, these representations of women in no ways mean the absence

of traditional roles of women as caregiving, child-rearing nurturers in the State narrative. In the first few years Mao held the conviction that the larger the population, the greater the industrialization force. Soviet-style policies were implemented to encourage reproduction; awards such as “Model Mother” and “Hero Mother” were granted to women who gave birth to, respectively, five and ten children. The policy later made the drastic change into the infamous “Family Planning” policy and added to the Chinese constitution as a basic state policy, which restricted most Chinese households to have one (in a few cases, two) child(ren). The evolution of the propaganda posters records exactly how the state exercises its—first advisory and then complete controlling—influences on Women’s bodies. The first two of the following posters, albeit not explicitly encouraging pregnancy, nonetheless suggests that a household of three or four kids are to be aspired; while later propaganda for Family Planning policies explicitly addresses women’s pregnancy: that women shall follow the rules of the country.



Rang mama anxin gaohao shengchan. "Let mothers do their work in peace." Image source: Jin, Zhao (1954). Shanghai: Shanghai Xushengji Yinshuochang 上海徐勝記印刷廠.





Songyao shangmen zuohao jihushengyu gongzuo. "Deliver the contraceptive pills to the doorstep, do a good job in birth control work. Unknown artist (1960s?).



The texts literally read: "Practice birth control for the revolution. It's advantageous for learning Marxism-Leninism and Maoist ideas, for rearing the next generation, for the wellbeing of women and children, for our revolutionary enterprise and its preparatory work, and for the prosperity of our nation." (1974)

These propaganda posters provide a unique perspective on how the ideological state apparatus come in effect via the visual avenue that no one in Maoist China was exempt from; they also serve as an example of how ideological state apparatuses often intersect and act in synergy with one another. These propaganda posters instill the people with the state-approved ideas on what socially acceptable womanhood is: one that is conscious and grateful for CCP's emancipation, one that actively contributes to the state and its lofty feat, one that is no longer bound by the outdated expectation of subjugate to patriarchal marriage system, yet is still expected to be ready to go back to the childrearing roles should so the state wishes—to any extent as the state wishes. These propaganda posters

unveil the complex dynamics between the deeply ingrained ideas on women, and the communist dictatorship that strives to redefine womanhood and femininity, the dynamics that are still present today, as China faces an aging population and the emerging middle class undergoing unprecedented liberalization.

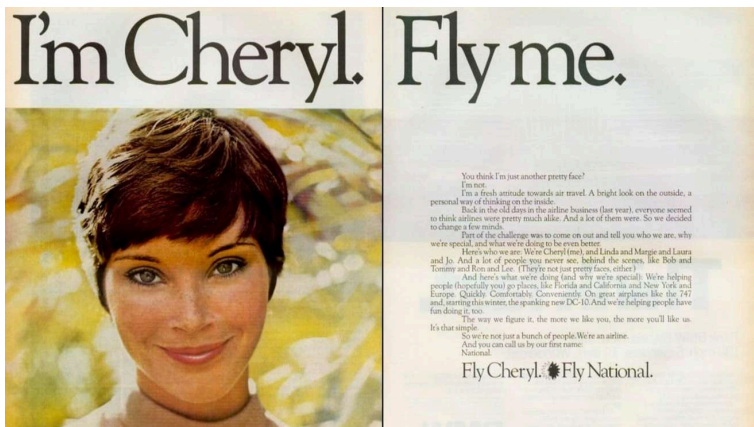
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# SEXISM TAKES FLIGHT

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Olivia Frank



A 1971 National Airlines advertisement sexualizes stewardesses by inviting customers to “Fly me.” Image Source: National Airlines. “I’m Cheryl. Fly me.” Advertisement, 1971, <https://theatticjezebel.com/how-flight-attendants-organized-against-their-bosses-to-1830282960> (accessed October 22, 2020).

In the 1960s and 70s, a stewardess' ability to sell sky high sex was every airline's top priority.<sup>1</sup> Sexualized stewardesses were marketed as objects for consumption, ready to serve your every need. Between sexist job requirements to skimpy uniforms, airlines did everything they could to manufacture and market the sexiest stewardess.<sup>2</sup> Weight, marital, and age requirements ensured that these stewardesses met Hollywood-like standards for beauty and grace.<sup>3</sup> Advertisements left little to the imagination marketing sexual availability as a complementary addition to your in-flight experience.<sup>4</sup> Finally, tight, bright miniskirts put the finishing touches on making these women the object of everyone's desires.<sup>5</sup> Although being a flight attendant was a unique opportunity for women to escape the confines of the home and enter the job market, a stewardess' physical appearance was valued much more highly than her ability to perform important in-flight tasks.<sup>6</sup>

1. Philip James Tiemeyer, "Stewards and the Vestiges of Sexism," in *Plane Queer: Labor, Sexuality, and AIDS in the History of Male Flight Attendants* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 135-138.

2. Peter Lyths, "'Think of Her as Your Mother,'" *The Journal of Transport History* 30, no. 1 (June 2009): 11-12, <https://doi.org/10.7227/JTH.30.1.3>.

3. Allison Vandenberg, "Toward a Phenomenological Analysis of Historicized Beauty Practices," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 46, no. 1/2 (Spring/Summer 2018): 176-177, JSTOR.

4. *Sexing History*, season 1, episode 6, "Sexism Takes Flight," hosted by Gillian Frank and Lauren Gutterman.

5. Vicki Vantoch, "From Warm-Hearted Hostesses to In-Flight Strippers," in *The Jet Sex: Airline Stewardesses and the Making of an American Icon* (Philadelphia, Penn.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 166-168.

6. Vandenberg, "Toward a Phenomenological," 176.



Pacific Southwest Airlines stewardesses pose for a publicity shoot in the early 1970s. Image Source: San Diego Air and Space Museum Archive. "PSA 06-00717," Photograph, 1970, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/sdasmarchives/4831807802/in/album-72157651431957172/> (accessed October 22, 2020)

To even be considered for the position, women had to meet extremely high sets of standards. Nothing was off the table. Every part of the body was subjected to scrutiny to ensure industry expectations were met. Although some characteristics like comportment and class could be

taught, for many their physical appearance wouldn't even get them through the initial interview.<sup>7</sup> Unsurprisingly, weight was a main focus of attention and body measurements were a required portion of the job application. In an interview, Kathleen Heenan recounts her experience as a flight attendant for Trans World Airlines during 1965-1977. Before taking flight, she remembers being subjected to routine weight checks. If a stewardess was not maintaining or losing adequate amounts of weight, she could be suspended without pay for not meeting the airline's desired image. Due to this policy, many flight attendants resorted to diet pills and diuretics to stay employed.<sup>8</sup> In another interview, former Pan Am stewardess Patricia Ireland emphasizes how heavy the factors of weight and overall body type truly played in the hiring process.<sup>9</sup>

*"One of the airlines that when they interviewed me, uh, the first thing you did when you walked in the room was get on a scale. I went to interview for another airline and I had on a skirt. It was kind of flared at the bottom, and the interviewer asked me to pull my skirt—you know, pull it back tight against my legs so he could see the lower part of my body, um, in case I was disguising thunder thighs under my flared skirt."*<sup>10</sup>

For airlines, what mattered the most was physical appearance. As long as her body met their desired image,

7. Vandenberg, "Toward a Phenomenological," 176-177.

8. Sexing History, "Sexism Takes."

9. Sexing History, "Sexism Takes."

10. Sexing History, "Sexism Takes."

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they would figure out a way to prepare her for a stewardess' actual in-flight duties.



Pacific Southwest Airlines flight attendants show off their new uniforms. Image Source: San Diego Air and Space Museum Archive. "PSA 06-00828," Photograph, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/sdasmarchives/4831132367/in/album-72157651431957172/> (accessed October 22, 2020).



Image 4 Source: San Diego Air and Space Museum Archive. "07.05-A-0025," Photograph, PSA Slide Collection, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/sdasmarchives/4834439330/in/album-72157651431957172/> (accessed October 22, 2020)

Skimpy uniforms then perpetuated this image of sexual availability. By leaving little to the imagination, tight

miniskirts and go-go boots, like the ones featured above, marketed a sexually promiscuous stewardess to passengers. Bright colors were also used to sell a flight attendant's body as a fun, luxurious object for consumption. During this time, a sexual and cultural revolution was sweeping across the country. Bright colors became a symbol for glamour and extravagance. Flight attendants soon began sporting bright shades of pinks and oranges to reflect the changing attitudes across the nation.<sup>11</sup> However, a stewardess' uniform did not stop at the outerwear, many airlines required restricting girdles and bras. To ensure that a stewardess' body was properly shaped and flaunted at all times, superiors were also allowed to visibly check and confirm that these undergarments were worn properly. Finally, to put the finishing touches on their ideal physical appearance, many airlines then strongly encouraged the use of false eyelashes and primped hairstyles.<sup>12</sup>

The requirements of the job were not limited to concerns about physical appearance. Stewardesses had to sign off any and all rights to pregnancy and marriage. If either of these two things occurred, they had to honor their initial agreement and resign immediately. Flight attendants also entered this market well aware that this would only be a short term job. Many airlines adopted a mandatory retirement age between 32 and 35. Once stewardesses reached their mid-thirties, they knew that

11. Vantoch, "From Warm-Hearted," 153-185.

12. *Sexing History*, "Sexism Takes."

they would be tossed aside and replaced with a newer, perkier version of themselves.<sup>13</sup>

Additionally, the slogans and images featured in airline advertisements worked together to broadcast a flight attendant's sexual availability. In 1965, United Airlines debuted the familiar slogan "Come fly the friendly skies of United" to keep up with an era defined by sexual freedom and glamour. Here, United capitalized on the objectification of women to increase revenues by inviting the consumer in to enjoy much more than just smooth, efficient flights. By promoting a caring, personal side to the company, United also implies that these stewardesses were there to serve your every need.<sup>14</sup> Other advertisements from United promoted similar agendas. In 1967, they ran an ad campaign promising that "We go all out to please you!"<sup>15</sup> During this year, they also redesigned company uniforms to properly flaunt their stewardesses. A wave of miniskirts and A-line dresses, like the ones below, took the company by storm.<sup>16</sup>

13. *Sexing History*, "Sexism Takes.

14. Vantoch, "From Warm-Hearted," 171-173.

15. Vantoch, "From Warm-Hearted," 178.

16. Vantoch, "From Warm-Hearted," 177-178.



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Flight attendants pose for a United Airlines 40th anniversary MOD photoshoot. Image Source: The United Airlines Historical Foundation. "United Airlines MOD Photoshoot," Photograph, 1970, [http://www.uahf.org/ua\\_flight\\_attendants\\_fashions.asp](http://www.uahf.org/ua_flight_attendants_fashions.asp) (accessed October 22, 2020).

Among passengers, it became a common belief that when you purchased an airline ticket, you also purchased the right to consume these women. The combination of sexualized advertisements, skimpy uniforms, and high beauty standards made her an object for the male and female gaze alike. She was the object of everyone's desires. If you didn't want to get with her, you wanted to be her.<sup>17</sup> Testimonies from former flight attendants reveal the true extent to which airlines promised the stewardess' body a part of the in-flight experience. In an interview concerning her time as a flight attendant in the early 1970s, Paula Kane remembers feeling like "...because I had a uniform on, I was somehow public property."<sup>18</sup> Everyone from passengers to pilots felt entitled to consume these women.

17. Vantoch, "From Warm-Hearted," 153-185.

18. Sexing History, "Sexism Takes."

This was not an uncommon feeling among stewardesses. When describing her experience, Cindy Hounsell remembers feeling like Pan American World Airways had promised customers that she would fulfill their every desire, no matter if this was related to sex or safety. *"The minute you said you were a stewardess or a flight attendant, it was like there was this presumption that you were readily sexually available."*<sup>19</sup> Whether on the jetway or at home, once a woman was viewed as a flight attendant, it was almost as if they were no longer entitled to their bodies.

Over time, these problematic industry standards were slowly rescinded. By the mid 1970s, all US airlines had removed bans on pregnancy and mandatory retirement ages. The revoking of these policies also allowed the role of a flight attendant to become a long-term, profitable career for many women. However, it was not as if everything immediately got better for these stewardesses. Many sexist policies stayed in place throughout the 1970s. Flight attendants were still subject to strict weight requirements. Restricting girdles also remained part of a stewardess' uniform.<sup>20</sup> Beyond this, sexist advertisements continued to be broadcasted across the country. In 1971, National Airlines ran a series of "Fly Me" campaigns including the one featured above. Taglines like "Hi, I'm Cheryl and I'm going to fly you like you've never been flown before" left little room for interpretation amongst

19. *Sexing History*, "Sexism Takes."

20. Tiemeyer, "Stewards and the Vestiges," 135-138.

## GENDER AND SEXUALITY THROUGHOUT WORLD HISTORY

customers. Flight attendants were marketed as objects for consumption. This advertising campaign, packed with sexual innuendos, made sure the customer knew these stewardesses would get you where you wanted to go. “Fly Me” advertisements remained in flight and circulated across the country for the next five years.<sup>21</sup> Other airlines had similar aspirations of selling jet sex. In 1971, Pacific Southwest Airlines promoted “giving you a lift” (shown below), ensuring that a passenger’s every need would be met.<sup>22</sup>

21. Lyths, “Think of Her as Your,” 11-12.

22. Lyths, “Think of Her as Your,” 11-12.



A 1971 Pacific Southwest Airlines ticket jacket promotes that their flight attendants will give you a lift. Image Source: PSA Airlines. "PSA gives you a lift." Advertisement, 1971, <http://www.psa-history.org/memorabilia/ticket-jackets/ticket-jacket-1971-4/> (accessed October 22, 2020).

Eventually, female stewardesses were able to find their voices once and for all. In 1972, a new feminist group entitled Stewardesses for Women's Rights took the first step in empowering stewardesses to stand up and fight

the sexism and discrimination dominating the industry. Around the same time, males were also beginning to be allowed into the industry. Not only were stewardesses now backed by the voices of many, but they were also armed with the fight for equal rights amongst genders. Without this newfound confidence and power, expectations for female flight attendants would have never changed.<sup>23</sup>

Up until the early 1970s, a flight attendant's skirt kept getting progressively shorter. In 1974, males were used as leverage to finally ditch the miniskirt once and for all and usher in a new wave of professional attire. Many other policies followed a similar trend. The requirement of nail polish, for instance, was revoked because airlines could not apply this rule to both genders. The largest abolition came with the girdle requirement. Stewardesses cleverly demanded that the men also be required to wear jockstraps, putting the airlines in a lose-lose situation and forcing them to get rid of this sexist policy. In the 1980s, stewardesses finally won the fight against workspace objectification when the lingering pregnancy and weight requirements were revoked at last.<sup>24</sup> One thing is for certain, until the sexualized advertisements, skimpy uniforms, and high beauty standards were finally off the table, the main purpose of a stewardess was to be a sexual object for consumption.

For more images of flight attendants during the 1960s

23. Tiemeyer, "Stewards and the Vestiges," 135-138.

24. Tiemeyer, "Stewards and the Vestiges," 135-138.

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY, HST 114/WGS 214, FALL 2020

and 1970s, see San Diego Air and Space Museum Archive  
on Flickr: [https://www.flickr.com/  
search/?user\\_id=49487266%40No7&view\\_all=1&tags=stew  
ardess](https://www.flickr.com/search/?user_id=49487266%40No7&view_all=1&tags=stewardess)

*Olivia Frank is a Sophomore at Wake Forest University.*

## II

# “RICE IDEAS MEN LIKE”

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*The Language Highlighting the Treatment of Women in 1970's  
Advertising*


Asha Gandhi

### Introduction

In 1969, the Houston-based Rice Council of America (the RCA) launched an advertising campaign for a book of recipes called “Rice Ideas Men Like,” in the magazine *LIFE*. These ads were targeted at women, suggesting one could ignite her husband’s interest in her just by serving dishes featured in the advertised book. On top of including sensual photos of women as the faces of the

campaign, this message was brought front and center through peppering suggestive, inviting language throughout the ads. A campaign like this might shock Americans today, but media propagating restricting attitudes towards women would not have been considered out of place that long ago. In the early 1970s, objectifying women and reducing them to one-dimensional figures was much more of an everyday occurrence than it is now, only fifty years later. The “Rice Ideas Men Like” campaign relied on the belief that one’s feminine inclination to please others was more motivating to a woman than her personal desires. Building on the assumption that one’s sexuality defined her, these ads ultimately suggested that women only thrived when they based decisions on how men viewed them.





**Why not give him a little  
rice tonight, instead.**

Sure, he likes potatoes. But not every night.  
The rice will do him good. It's more than a change.  
It's a hundred changes all in one little carton or  
package. It's a chance to freshen up your weekly menu.  
There are so many ways to cook rice, you could  
serve it every day for a year and not repeat yourself.  
Your husband will  
appreciate that.

**Va-rice-ity**

Write for free booklet "Rice Ideas Men Like."  
Rice Council of America, Box 23902, Houston, Texas 77007

Copyrighted material

Text reads: "Why not give him a little rice tonight, instead. Sure, he likes potatoes, but not every night. The rice will do him good. It's more than a change. It's a hundred changes all in one little carton or package. It's a chance to freshen up your weekly menu. There are so many ways to cook rice, you could serve it every day for a year and not repeat yourself. Your husband will appreciate that." Image Source: Rice Council of America, "Why Not Give Him a Little Rice Tonight, Instead." *LIFE* 67, no. 14, October 3, 1969.

Each ad that was part of the "Rice Ideas Men Like" campaign is half a page, vertical. There's a headline in bold at the top, written in a woman's point of view. The booklet

of recipes being promoted is mentioned at the bottom of the page. All this text is superimposed over a suggestive black-and-white photo of a young woman. The photo closely zooms in on the subject as she glances at the camera. These ads work because they rely on the assumption that the target audience wants to be just like these women. Their facial expressions beg viewers to ask how they can be irresistible to men too. While the success of the images in these ads depended on the assumption that a target viewer cared more about pleasing her husband than her own dreams, the language brings home its sexualization of women like her.

## GENDER AND SEXUALITY THROUGHOUT WORLD HISTORY



**My man likes something unexpected now and then. That's why I serve him rice.**

Rice is full of tasty surprises. It's as quick and easy to vary as adding chopped chives. Or topping with paprika. Or tossing with crumbled bacon and sour cream. Or shredded Cheddar cheese. Or toasted almonds. In fact, there are so many ways to vary rice, you could have it every day for a year and not repeat yourself. That's pretty unexpected from a little carton or package of rice.

**Va-rice-ity**

For free booklet "Rice Ideas Men Like," write  
Rice Council of America, Box 23903, Houston, Texas 77027.

Copyrighted material

Text reads: "My man likes something unexpected now and then. That's why I serve them rice. Rice is full of tasty surprises. It's as quick and easy to vary as adding chopped chives. Or topping with paprika. Or tossing with crumbled bacon and sour cream. Or shredded Cheddar cheese. Or toasted almonds. In fact, there are so many ways to vary rice, you could have it every day for a year and not repeat yourself. That's pretty unexpected from a little carton or package of rice." Image Source: Rice Council of America, "My Man Likes Something Unexpected Now And Then. That's Why I Serve Him Rice," LIFE 68, no. 3, January 30, 1970.



**No man wants the same  
thing every night.  
Be creative with rice.**

Un-potato the man in your life. Starting tonight.  
Let your imagination run rice. Like rice au gratin.  
Scalloped rice with cheese. Parsleyed rice. Herbed  
rice. While you're at it, consider a few rice main dishes.  
Like rice picadillo. Saucy pepper steak with rice.  
Bouillabaisse Louisiana. And that's only a hint of how  
creative you can be with rice. Just keep a little  
rice in your pantry, you'll never ever run out of  
man-pleasing, family-pleasing ideas.

**Va-rice-ity**

Write for free booklet "Rice Ideas Men Like."  
Rice Council of America, Box 22892, Houston, Texas 77022.

Text reads: "No man wants the same thing every night. Be creative with rice. Un-potato the man in your life. Starting tonight. Let your imagination run rice. Like rice au gratin. Scalloped rice with cheese. Parsleyed rice. Herbed rice. While you're at it, consider a few rice main dishes. Like rice picadillo. Saucy pepper steak with rice. Bouillabaisse Louisiana. And that's only a hint of how creative you can be with rice. Just keep a little rice in your pantry, you'll never run out of man-pleasing, family-pleasing ideas." Image Citation: Rice Council of America, "No Man Wants the Same Thing Every Night. Be Creative With Rice," LIFE 68, no. 9, March 13, 1970.

## Analysis

Warm, suggestive headlines such as "Why not give him a

little rice tonight, instead,”<sup>1</sup> and “No man wants the same thing every night. Be creative with rice,”<sup>2</sup> establish the ads’ initial connection between serving dishes including rice and sex appeal. These phrases make an association between attempting to make rice the star of a meal and being able to impress men with one’s culinary skills. The viewer feels invited to take initiative towards doing all she can to lead her husband on, presumably because seduction is the only way women can successfully take initiative. She also feels secure in herself because she doesn’t need to step out of the role society has pigeonholed her into as an affluent, presumably Caucasian woman to continually impress her husband.

In two of the three ads I’ve selected, these headlines are followed by phrases like “Un-potato the man in your life,”<sup>3</sup> and “The rice will do him good.”<sup>4</sup> Phrases like this initially seem to suggest that once she’s internalized earlier messaging, a target viewer can make her partner’s evening by serving rice for a change. Yet when put in context with other components of these advertisements, this language suggests that trying to please one’s husband just by serving rice will make a woman not only feel like a competent homemaker but also desirable. This leading message is later bookended by language directing the viewer back to what the ad was not just saying at the beginning, but trying to show her all along. The messaging reinforced

1. “Why Not Give Him A Little Rice Tonight, Instead,” *LIFE*, Oct 3, 1969, p. 19

2. “No Man Wants the Same Thing Every Night. Be Creative With Rice,” *LIFE*, Mar 13, 1970, p. 18/

3. *Ibid.*

4. “Why Not give Him A Little Rice Tonight, Instead.”

at the end of these ads could easily convince someone she wanted to buy “Rice Ideas Men Like” because making the included recipes would guarantee that she would ultimately feel secure in her current relationship. Exuberant ploys specifically written so people wouldn’t question them like “Just keep a little rice in your pantry, you’ll never run out of man-pleasing, family-pleasing ideas,” could lead her to buy a cookbook if she believe it would help her keep her partner happy with how their relationship was going.<sup>5</sup>

These ads also hone in on describing all the appetizing things one can do with rice. This is where quotes like “Unpotato the man in your life” begin to make sense. A variety of flavorful ways to serve rice is listed in a quick, laid-back succession (“It’s as quick and easy to vary as adding chopped chives. Or topping with paprika. Or tossing with crumbled bacon and sour cream. Or shredded Cheddar cheese. Or toasted almonds.”)<sup>6</sup> This quotation not only sounds pleasing to the ear but draws one’s attention to the rich things one can do with rice, and a refined taste can easily be associated with an inherent attractiveness.

The quotations like the one above make preparing rice in a variety of different ways sound effortless. This further contributes to the idea that serving one of the RCA’s recipes will make someone seem more attractive, it propagates the idea that a woman performing domestic tasks quickly and effortlessly is attractive. It makes her

5. “No Man Wants the Same Thing Every Night. Be Creative With Rice.”

6. “My Man Likes Something Unexpected Now And Then. That’s Why I Serve Him Rice,” *LIFE*, Jan 30, 1970, p. 19

look like she's always ready to drop everything to meet her partner's every need. This viewpoint casts women as extensions of their significant others, assuming that they do not have agency over their own lives. On top of that, they appear to have such little sense of self-worth they would never prioritize their own needs over their partner's. These stereotypes reduce a woman's role in a relationship to a glorified servant, objectifying her.

The ads' emphasis on the variety of recipes found in "Rice Ideas Men Like" showed how rice's versatility can add the "something unexpected" that a man supposedly wants out of both meals and his personal life, according to the ad run in January 1970 with the headline "My Man Wants Something Unexpected Every Now and Then. That's Why I Serve Him Rice." Changing up one's usual menu to include rice dishes new to the cook and making meals including rice with a variety of savory textures and flavors is described as simple and convenient throughout the campaign. For instance, being served rice for dinner when one is usually given potatoes is referred to as "a hundred changes all in one little carton or package,"<sup>7</sup> perhaps when one continues to prepare it in a variety of mouthwatering ways.

This actually highlights more than the supposed diversity in the recipes found in the pamphlet that's being advertised. Rice's convenience isn't just presented as nice for the cook, but as something that will add to her sexual

7. "No Man Wants the Same Thing Every Night. Be Creative With Rice."/

appeal. These ads do more than perpetuate the belief that a girlfriend or wife is defined by how submissive she is as well as her ability to look after her partner's physiological needs. The RCA's emphasis on how convenient experimenting with rice can be also projects the variety found in "Rice Ideas Men Like" on who the cook is as a person. The assured, inviting language used to publicize the diversity in the pamphlet being advertised gives the impression that the RCA has given women permission to carry themselves with more confidence in how they appear to men with their ads. However, this permission didn't come from a consumer picking up "Rice Ideas Men Like" just because she wants to try the recipes in it herself.

It apparently seemed more to come from these advertisements telling female viewers that using the RCA's booklet for dinner inspiration will not only please but impress the men in their lives, supposedly the most valuable boost to self-esteem a woman could get from following a recipe. While assumptions like these acknowledge women's sex drive and autonomy, they simultaneously undermine women's sense of themselves as self-reliant, complex people. Such portrayals of women additionally send female viewers the message that they are one-dimensional, ultimately defined by the roles they play in men's lives.

*Asha Gandhi is a second-year student at Wake Forest University.*



I2

# TENNIS & TINLING

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*Iconic changes for Women's Athletics and Gear*

Lindsay Smith



Tennis outfit, worn by Billie Jean King during "Battle of the Sexes" match against Bobby Riggs, 1973. 1992.0122.01. Collections Search Center, Smithsonian Institution," accessed November 4, 2020, <https://collections.si.edu/search/results.htm?q=record.ID=nmah.748896&repo=DPLA>.

Billie Jean King advanced women's athletics, equality, and sexuality in the public eye. As a female athlete in the 1970s, King was not paid equally as men and fought for women's equality in sports. King was not only in the top of the

women's tennis circuit, but beat Bobby Riggs, a professional men's tennis champion, in the "Battle of the Sexes". Billie Jean King became an iconic feminist, advocating for women in all areas of life, but particularly on the court. King was influential in the tennis community and for women in the United States because of her passion for tennis and the equality she was set out to achieve in the sport. She took on Bobby Riggs, a male, high-ranked tennis player at the time, in a match to prove that her athletic ability could be equal, or maybe even better, than males. The match was titled and recognized by the masses as the "Battle of the Sexes". During this famous match of 1973, King dominated on the court and crushed Bobby Riggs in style. Billie Jean King created her iconic outfit alongside designer Ted "Teddy" Tinling for the Battle of the Sexes match. Together, Tinling and King designed tennis gear for the women's circuit and her team. Tinling was revolutionary in tennis style for his burst of color, while Billie Jean King revolutionized women's athletics, establishing equality for women.

Billie Jean King was a legendary tennis player and even more influential in equality for women, particularly in sports. King was a world-renowned tennis player who fought for women's tennis to become equal to men's tennis. Billie Jean King has a true passion for the sport of tennis, as a strong woman she used her skills on the court by putting equality on the line. When King and the women in her circuit were not going to be paid as much as

the men, they took a stand and left the U.S. Lawn Tennis Association, which was led by King.<sup>1</sup> King and her components successfully joined the Women's Tennis Association with Gladys Heldman and beyond the heads of the USTA's belief. The women competed in the Virginia Slims Women's Tournament, where King was eventually encouraged during the tournament to play Bobby Riggs (mostly by Riggs).<sup>2</sup> Billie Jean King was originally unwilling to play Bobby Riggs as she saw the match as something more than tennis, a fight against a chauvinist to prove women's tennis abilities were as strong as males. King was right.

1. *Billie Jean King Interview*, Internet Archive, accessed November 4, 2020, <http://www.archive.org/details/tobacco.bhq23eoo>.

2. *Billie Jean King Interview*.

## GENDER AND SEXUALITY THROUGHOUT WORLD HISTORY



Billie Jean King during the "Battle of the Sexes" in Iconic Dress, 1973. Image Source: 1973 Focus on Sport Time Magazine, Getty Images



Margaret Court, King's Teammate, in all white in July 1970 (prior to joining the Women's Tennis Association).  
Image Source: Bert Verhoeff on Wikipedia page of Margaret Court's Statistics

From King and Tinling's work, there was so much more at stake than the match itself. Riggs played Margaret Court, one of King's biggest competitors in the WTA, and crushed her. King was not the number one player in 1973; however, she knew it was her duty to play against Riggs – for all women. Riggs was an openly sexist pig and a gambler playing Billie Jean King in the competition with

stakes of a lifetime. These two were gambling the future of tennis and equality in sports for women. Billie Jean King beat Bobby Riggs in a 3-set sweep, 6-4,6-3,6-3.<sup>3</sup> King not only physically beat a self-proclaimed male chauvinist, but she set a precedent for women in sports forever. King won significant prize money from the match against Bobby Riggs. The Battle of the Sexes was legendary and King's influence grew larger because of the point she was attempting to make.

The publicity and excitement surrounding the Battle of the Sexes was incredible and inspired songs and movies regarding her success. King was so iconic that within the time period of the Battle of the Sexes, Elton John wrote a song about her called "Philadelphia Freedom".<sup>4</sup> Women's rights movements were in full swing and King fought for equality on the courts. After leaving the USTA and joining the Women's Tennis Association, leading her teammates into a risky situation, King worked hard to show that women deserved as much prize money as men.<sup>5</sup> To this day there is tremendous amounts of work to be done to completely eradicate gender discrimination. The strides Billie Jean King made for equality in sports were revolutionary for her, her teammates, and women as a whole.

3. *Billie Jean King Interview*.

4. "Elton John - Philadelphia Freedom (Captain Fantastic 13 of 13) - YouTube," accessed November 4, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sd6P2Tu8rw>.

5. Susan Ware, *Game, Set, Match: Billie Jean King and the Revolution in Women's Sports* (Chapel Hill, United States: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/wfu/detail.action?docID=655820>.



Bobby Riggs, a self-declared chauvinistic pig, sporting a Sugar Daddy coat from his sponsors.  
Image Citation: Jerry Cooke on Getty Images

Billie Jean King's work was so influential in tennis because of the impact she made for equal pay and the cultural shock that followed her work. Women were, and continuously have, been treated poorly in comparison to men in sports. Women's athletics were not given fair pay or treatment and have continuously been discriminated on. King's goal was to give females equal playing terms in tennis as men. Ultimately, King expunged some of the discrimination and stereotypes of women in sports.<sup>6</sup> The battle of the sexes still rages on into the twenty-first century; however, King made strides for women in athletics. King worked hard within the tennis world to prove women's strength and equality. The revolutionary work King did was fast paced and explosive.

6. "Gale OneFile: Contemporary Women's Issues - Document - Top of Her Game: For Billie Jean King, the Grand Slams Keep on Coming," accessed November 4, 2020, <https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=CWI&u=nclivewfuy&id=GALE%7CA393636412&v=2.1&it=r&sid=CWI&asid=33e1c2dc>.



Bringing Ted Tinling on board for the team of women in the women's tennis association as a stylist was explosive in its own way. Ted Tinling was not accepted by Wimbledon after producing undershorts that were too provocative for the "country club" sport.<sup>7</sup> King and the head of their team, Gladys Heldman, brought him onto their team as the designer of their gear. Teddy Tinling was an artist for women's tennis with extraordinary and eye-catching outfits. Tinling's most iconic dress was the one made for Billie Jean King as a tribute to the Virginia Slims Women's Tour. Ted Tinling was working with the WTA from 1971-1978, so the Battle of the Sexes dress was early on in his role in the WTA. Ted Tinling's designs hold a certain appearance because of his name and the ways in which he was breaking new boundaries of conformity for women in sports and across classes within tennis. Fashion, in general, was shifting to a "phenomenon in which all can do and participate" and, with Tinling's revolutionary advances out of the conservative and all white tennis gear, was iconic during the times of fashion change.<sup>8</sup> Along with King's goals within the realm of tennis, Tinling's work was also taking the gear into a new light and style, shifting to a more accessible and less conservative place. The match was specifically fighting the male dominated atmosphere and culture because everything was in Billie Jean King's terms. The expansive nature of the color and style of the

7. Billie Jean King Interview.

8. L. Negrin, *Appearance and Identity: Fashioning the Body in Postmodernity* (New York, UNITED STATES: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2009), 13, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/wfu/detail.action?docID=455370>.

outfits can be attributed to Tinling, and, in combination with King's efforts, was radical.



Women's Tennis Outfits 1920s; Iconic because the Shortened Knee Length. Image Citation: "In Pictures: The Evolution of Women's Sportswear," BBC News, October 25, 2017, sec. World, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-41742378>.



Billie Jean King entering the Battle of the Sexes Match

The sartorial choices made by Tinling showed professionalism and brought color into the white sport.

The white tennis gear and those who were dominating the culture of the sport itself, were blasted with color from Billie Jean King's attire and explosive work itself. The tennis attire pictured above was itself considered revolutionary because of the short length in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, the women in the Virginia Slims tour were not afraid of change and Tinling helped bring sartorial change to the sport. The tennis shoes worn by Billie Jean were electric blue and eye-catching as she moved across the court. The ways in which her outfit and appearance was shaped during the match were caught by the public eye. Simply, Billie Jean King's attire was telling a story of her mission to create equality within the sport of tennis. The time frame in which the match was taking place was culturally shifting. Tinling and King made significant shifts in the culture of the sport with their expansionary changes.

Ted Tinling's designs in combination with Billie Jean King's agenda through the Battle of the Sexes and other work, King and the dress worn during the match will be iconic throughout the history of sports. Tinling and King were progressive in an area of interest and passion for each of them, King in tennis and Tinling in fashion. Tinling was later reaccepted into Wimbledon after his work with Billie Jean. The revolutionary fight for equality and usage of color shifted tennis culture in the United States for women and different classes. To this day women in the USTA wear colored gear to express themselves and their

brand onto the court. The passion Billie Jean King had for tennis drove her to fight for equality for women as Ted Tinling utilized his passion to revolutionize tennis gear.

*Article written by Lindsay Smith, a Wake Forest University student class of 2023.*

# Part III

## Feminist Organizing and Women's Rights

Feminist organizing refers to the efforts of women to explicitly challenge their seemingly inferior role to men. Whether that refers to gendered violence, inequality in the workplace, or sexual harassment, these groups aim to call attention to and fight against gender-based inequalities. The personal is political. Depending on when or where the organizing took place, many women took the initiative to join the movement to dismantle the patriarchy. A fundamental aspect of this work lies in these groups' ability to be intersectional when recruiting

members. You cannot be for women without being for women of color, queer women as well as poor and working-class women. It is important for women to fight for their liberation and to be heard because women make up half of the population and half of its potential.

The combination of topics within this chapter highlights the universality of women organized to be heard, as well as the diversity of the topics that women seek liberation from. In South Africa, while women were fighting for their rights as women, they were also fighting against racial oppression – they chose this female forum because they felt that their voices were better heard when not being drowned out by overpowering men. In Puerto Rico, women were calling for a state of emergency for the government to recognize the pandemic that was – and still is – gendered violence on the Island, so that some semblance of justice could be brought to its victims. The role of the United Nations in being a voice for Women's rights further highlights how it is a global concern. Thus, it is evident how women play a large role in liberation movements throughout history, as well as throughout the world.

13

# THE SOCIAL PURITY MOVEMENT

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Khadija Tyson

**Table III.**  
**PROGRESSIVE LEGISLATION.**

ARIZONA TERRITORY, . . .	Ten to fourteen (Fourteen in Revised Laws of '87). Fourteen to eighteen, . . .	March 19th, 1895.
ARKANSAS, . . . . .	Twelve to sixteen, . . . . .	April 1st, 1893.
CALIFORNIA, . . . . .	Ten to fourteen, . . . . .	March 16th, 1889.
COLORADO, . . . . .	Ten to sixteen, . . . . .	April 9th, 1891.
	Sixteen to eighteen, . . . . .	April 22d, 1895.
CONNECTICUT, . . . . .	Ten to fourteen, . . . . .	March 16th, 1887.
	Life imprisonment repealed, May 4th, 1893.	
	Fourteen to sixteen, . . . . .	June 26th, 1895.
DELAWARE, . . . . .	Seven years, . . . . .	March 28th, 1871.
	Fifteen years, . . . . .	March 29th, 1889.
	Eighteen years, . . . . .	March 7th, 1895.
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, . . . . .	Twelve to sixteen, . . . . .	February 9th, 1889.
IDAHO, . . . . .	Ten to fourteen, . . . . .	January 31st, 1893.
	Fourteen to eighteen, . . . . .	February 19th, 1895.
ILLINOIS, . . . . .	Ten to fourteen, . . . . .	June 18th, 1893.
IOWA, . . . . .	Ten to thirteen, . . . . .	April 9th, 1886.
	Thirteen to fifteen, . . . . .	March 19th, 1896.

Cassidy, Jessie and Carrie Catt, and National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection, *The Legal Status of Women*, (New York: The National-American Woman Suffrage Association, 1897), 106.

The social purity movement began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century along with other moral reform movements, such as abolitionism and the temperance movement. Rooted in Christian morality, the movement aimed to preserve feminine virtue and purity by protecting young women and girls from prostitution, contraception, abortions, and male sexual predators. As a self-proclaimed feminist,<sup>1</sup> I wanted to analyze this movement to determine if it would be considered feminist in modern terms. On one hand, the social purity movement was a movement by women, for women, that protected young women and girls from older, male predators. It not only focused on regulating

1. Feminism is the belief that women should be allowed the same rights, power, and opportunities as men and be treated in the same way. "Feminism: Definition in the Cambridge English Dictionary." Cambridge Dictionary. Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/feminism>.



women, but also aimed to create purity societies to help boys and men resist sexual temptation. However, it also tried to heavily control female sexuality by deterring women from participating in sexual activities. It contributed to the notion that a woman's "purity" corresponded to her value and self-respect. As a subordinate of the Christian movement, it also preached abstinence and aimed to make contraception and abortions illegal. Furthermore, social purists focused almost exclusively on middle-class and upper-class white women, especially disregarding minority women. During that time, it was not considered illegal for a white man to have intercourse with a young girl of color<sup>2</sup>, and social purists did not work to fix that. The concept of intersectionality<sup>3</sup> hadn't been established until third wave feminism in the 1990's. Today, intersectional feminism is no longer a subcategory of the feminist movement, but is such a crucial aspect, that is an inherent characteristic of the entire movement. Because of my socialization as a young, black, radical feminist, I knew that there would be aspects of the 19<sup>th</sup> century movement I would not agree with. Knowing that the concept of feminism had only recently been born at the time of the social purity movement, and that feminist goals have evolved, I looked at some of their more timeless work to see if purists at least

2. Porritt, Annie G, Carrie Chapman Catt, and National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection, *Laws Affecting Women and Children in the Suffrage and Non-Suffrage States*, (New York City: National Woman Suffrage Publishing Company, 1917), 147.

3. Intersectional Feminism highlights the voices of those experiencing coexisting forms of discrimination based on race, age, class, socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability, gender or sexual identity, religion, ethnicity, or immigration status, in order to understand how the intersection of those different factors can affect someone's life.

had the intention of female equality. To do this, I analyzed “Seduction a felony,”<sup>4</sup> an anonymous 1888 journal entry from the *Philanthropist*.<sup>5</sup> This journal entry discussed why the legal age of consent should be raised across the United States.

### Transcription of “Seduction a Felony”

*Author’s note: the source is transcribed here from the original.*<sup>6</sup>

“Crimes against women and girls are of such frequent occurrence as to render obvious the urgent need or more adequate legal protection for womanhood and girlhood. Progress has been made latterly in this and several other states, in raising the “legal age” of consent, in cases of rape, from ten to sixteen years; in others to thirteen and fifteen; and in two or three states to eighteen. But, alas! In many states the legal age of protection is still at the shockingly low period of ten years, and in Delaware at SEVEN! One of these is Maryland, and a lady writing from Baltimore, mentions a recent case of a lovely young girl, the daughter of a poor widow, betrayed by one who should have been her protector, and when her friends determined to make an effort to have her destroyer brought to justice, and carried the matter to the court, they were coolly informed that nothing could be done, because the girl was over ten years of age. Another lady, writing from Ohio, says: “Even here; in our rural districts, we repeatedly mourn over instances

4. Document 10: “Seduction a Felony” (*Philanthropist*, 1888), 4

5. *Philanthropist*- The journal of the New York Committee for the Prevention of the State Regulation of Vice, a key organization in the social purity movement

6. Document 10: “Seduction a Felony” (*Philanthropist*, 1888), 4

of neglected and unprotected girlhood, and we have no recourse to law in case of seduction.”

In the state of New York, and most others, there is no penalty for seduction, except in cases of breach of promise of marriage. A man who would be subject to arrest and imprisonment if he should rob a girl or woman of her pocket book, may with comparative legal impunity seduce her and despoil her person. Libertines not unfrequently boast of the number of their sensual conquests. The loss of money is a trifling matter, compared with the loss of purity and honor. It is quite time that seduction as well as rape, should be made a punishable offense, and, as a felony, that it should legally subject men guilty thereof to both imprisonment and fine. Nor in this particular should men alone be held amenable to law. It sometimes happens that evil disposed women victimize young men and boys and lead them into vicious pathways. Such women should also be placed under legal restraint.

Of course we do not expect law wholly to take the place of right moral training for the individual, and a right popular education concerning an equal standard of morality for both men and women. It is, however, clearly within the proper province of government as declared by Mr. Gladstone, “to make it easy to do right and difficult to do wrong.”

In the forthcoming legislative season we hope a general and an effective movement may be inaugurated and prosecuted by women, and by true and honorable men to secure legislation which shall everywhere brand and punish seduction irrespective of age, a felony and crime.”

The journal entry appears to have feminist influences. The author begins the entry by acknowledging the frequency of injustices committed against women, and the deep emotional effects of those crimes. They argue that seduction<sup>7</sup>, “be made a punishable offense, and, as a felony, that it should legally subject men guilty thereof to both imprisonment and fine.”<sup>8</sup> The author also acknowledged that while men are most often the perpetrators and therefore, should be the primary focus, it does sometimes occur that a women be the violator, and they too, should be held responsible for their crimes. In addition, they acknowledge that you cannot simply change the law to make things illegal without having proper moral education that supports the law. The author is supporting the idea that schools can replace the police.

I find the language of this entry very interesting. For one, the author uses a simile to describe sexual assault. The author compares the theft of a physical item, such as a pocketbook or money, to “the loss of a girl’s purity and honor.”<sup>9</sup> The author argues that the latter is much worse and should be legally punishable to the same extent. The author also uses intense diction to portray the magnitude of the crime to the readers. For example, the author uses phrases such as “her destroyer,” “evil disposed women,” and “vicious pathways.” Sometimes people attribute

7. Seduction- refers to sex, or losing of virginity, outside of marriage. It can be considered similar to grooming. Grooming refers to the building of trust with a child in order to get time alone with them. The child is often manipulated into becoming a cooperating participant which reduces the likelihood of them disclosing, and increases the likelihood that they will repeatedly return to the offender.

8. Document 10: “Seduction a Felony”, 4

9. Document 10: “Seduction a Felony”, 4

committing a sexual crime to a mistake or make excuses for the offender. Additionally, in many cases men, especially those who are wealthy or in positions of power, are excused from punishment because they can be considered otherwise good people. The author uses strong language so that the grave consequences of seduction are understood, and those crimes will be taken seriously. Because the author uses phrases such as “seduce her and despoil her person” and “loss of a girl’s purity,” they are talking specifically about the loss of a female’s virginity as a result of seduction. To me, this makes it seem as if an adult engaging in sexual activities with a child is problematic because the child is no longer a virgin, and therefore is no longer pure. When in fact, virginity is a social construct that has nothing to do with a person’s purity, worth, or value. To me, there should be a legal age of consent to prevent children from being in manipulative relationships or those with unbalanced power dynamics, that can cause emotional trauma. Furthermore, the author’s focus on virginity is dangerous because a woman’s previous unchastity could be used as a defense for assault<sup>10</sup>. By specifying the loss of virginity, the author is playing into that narrative. Another thing I wanted to analyze deeper was the mention of a recent case of a young girl who was betrayed by someone that was meant to protect her. When the case was brought to court, nothing could be done because the girl was over ten years of age.

10. ]Jessie Cassidy and Carrie Catt, *The Legal Status of Women*. 99.

What I find particularly interesting, is the author's language to describe the plaintiff, calling her "a lovely young girl" and "the daughter of a poor widow"<sup>11</sup>. The author is using pathos<sup>12</sup> so that the readers will sympathize with the girl. While I understand the reasoning of this is to make the reader feel like the girl didn't deserve what happened to her, its unnecessary as no one ever deserves a sex crime that was committed against them.

Another thing I noticed was the similarity between the social purity goals of the 1880's and the goals of today. It is still true that sexual assault crimes against women and girls occur very frequently, and that more legal action needs to be taken against perpetrators. Thinking about how the social purity movement has influenced the United States society, I find it interesting that while abstinence-only education and abortion restrictions took hold in the U.S., other major goals of the movement, such as male purity societies and moral education, did not. As women couldn't even vote at the time, and there are still few women in government<sup>13</sup>, it seems to me that while women came up with the ideas, men ultimately only approved what they wanted. That being said, as a result of the organizing of social purists, the legal age of consent is now higher than it was in 1888. While social purists were

11. Document 10: "Seduction a Felony" (Philanthropist, 1888), p 4

12. Pathos- evokes pity or compassion

13. In 2020, women hold 23.7% of the seats in the United States Congress; 26% of the U.S. Senate seats, and 23.2% of the U.S. House of Representatives seats. "Women in the U.S. Congress 2020." CAWP Center for American Women and Politics. Rutgers University, July 24, 2020.

not able to achieve a national age of consent of 18, it is at least 16 in all fifty states.

Because of the many aspects and goals of the social purity movement, I was conflicted on whether to consider the movement feminist or not. Although I tried to determine if the purpose of the movement was to progress towards gender equality, rather than focusing too much on the specific actions, I still would not consider it a feminist movement. Raising the legal age of consent did help women, but I do not believe it combated the patriarchy or society's view of women as inferior. Feminism goes further than simply women organizing or improving an aspect of women's lives. I do not believe that the social purity movement was a feminist movement because I found social purists' goals to be too focused on controlling female sexuality, and that they put too much importance on female virginity. Would you consider the social purity movement an example of feminist organizing?

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## BINDER OF A TORN WORLD

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Steven Niepa

Speech given December 9<sup>th</sup>, 1948 by Eleanor Roosevelt.

Roosevelt, Eleanor. "Adoption of the Declaration of Human Rights." Speech at United Nations Assembly, Paris, France, December 9, 1948.

"We stand today at the threshold of a great event both in the life of the United Nations and in the life of mankind. This Universal Declaration of Human Rights may well become the international Magna Carta of all men everywhere. We hope its proclamation by the General Assembly will be an event comparable to the proclamation of the Declaration



## GENDER AND SEXUALITY THROUGHOUT WORLD HISTORY

of the Rights of Man by the French people in 1789, the adoption of the Bill of Rights by the people of the United States, and the adoption of comparable declarations at different times in other countries.”

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*<sup>1</sup> is included in its entirety in [Appendix 1](#).

Before the creation of the United Nations, the world just underwent one of the largest wars ever fought in human history. The second World War stretched across continents around the world and resulted in millions of deaths<sup>2</sup>. The world looked for new ways to heal and looked for sustainable ways to universally usher in peace. At the end of the first world war, the Allied powers created the predecessor to the United Nations, The League of Nations. At the time President Woodrow Wilson was an advocate for the U.S. to be active participants in the organization. Republican Senators such as William Borah and Henry Cabot Lodge rebuffed the idea of joining such an organization out of disdain for article X<sup>3</sup>. The article stated that if a member nation were in distress the other member nations had to come to their aid. The Senators realized that there was a great benefit to joining such an organization but not at the expense of America’s ability to be impartial. In the years following it proved to be a bad idea for the U.S. to not be involved in international affairs

1. United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. 1948. <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights>

2. The National WWII Museum | New Orleans. “Research Starters: Worldwide Deaths in World War II”

3. Lodge, Henry Cabot, “League of Nations,” 1919. Courtesy of Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004650542>

as European Axis powers, Germany and Italy, gained immense power and served as catalysts for the second World War. After World War II there was a great demand across the world to get back to a sense of normalcy and to prevent future catastrophic events. In 1941 FDR came up with the idea of the “Four Powers”, United States, United Kingdom, Soviet Union, and China, as a group of allied nations<sup>4</sup>. Up until FDR’s death in 1945, he worked to try to put an organization in place to prevent another worldwide atrocity. After his death, President Truman thought that the organization was a much-needed addition and tabbed beloved former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt with the job of continuing her late husband’s legacy<sup>5</sup>.

When first approached about taking an active role in the United Nations, Roosevelt was reluctant out of fear of not having the qualifications in international affairs<sup>6</sup>. Little did she know that her life experiences and previous leadership roles prepared her for this moment. Truman entrusted Roosevelt to shape the United Nations as an organization that creates “conditions of mutual trust and economic and social wellbeing among all peoples of the world.”<sup>7</sup> One of the reasons why Truman thought Roosevelt would be up to the job was her informal foreign diplomatic relations experience. Roosevelt spent a significant amount of her teen’s and 20’s immersed in

4. United Nations. “United Nations | Peace, Dignity and Equality on a Healthy Planet.” United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en>.

5. Young-Brown, Fiona. *Eleanor Roosevelt : First Lady*, Cavendish Square Publishing LLC, 2017. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, 107.

6. Young-Brown, Fiona. *Eleanor Roosevelt : First Lady*, Cavendish Square Publishing LLC, 2017. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, 108.

7. Google Arts & Culture. “Eleanor Roosevelt and the United Nations - U.S. National Archives.”

European culture and learning French. She went to a feminist all-girls school that urged the students to challenge social and economic issues and to become more independent.

As a first lady Roosevelt went to England in 1942, in the throes of the second world war to visit troops and hear their experiences<sup>8</sup> She was taken aback by the will of the English people saying it was “is something to bow down to”<sup>9</sup>. What made Roosevelt revered in the international community was her willingness to travel to other countries and learn their culture and everyday struggles. On the Homefront Roosevelt was no different. Not only did Roosevelt represent the American people abroad but also in America with the women’s suffrage movement. In the mid 1920’s Roosevelt became actively involved in the women’s rights movement. She sat on the boards of the League of Women Voters, the Women’s Trade Union League<sup>10</sup>, the Women’s Division of the New York State Democratic Committee, and the Women’s City Club<sup>11</sup>. When FDR was elected president, she lobbied to get women more access to the benefits of the New Deal<sup>12</sup>. Her passion for women’s rights showed that she could push an agenda forward when things looked bleak. Later, she visited Asian countries such as India and Japan to learn more about women’s rights across the world. Roosevelt’s

8. Young-Brown, Fiona. *Eleanor Roosevelt: First Lady*, Cavendish Square Publishing LLC, 2017. ProQuest Ebook Central, 67.

9. “Touring the British Homefront (1942) | Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project | The George Washington University.”

10. WTUL

11. “Eleanor Roosevelt and Women’s Rights (U.S. National Park Service).”

12. “Eleanor Roosevelt: First Lady, League Leader, Pioneer | League of Women Voters.”

work in the international community and America showed that she knew that the world was bigger than just the United States, she was willing to go across the world and listen to others and had a willingness to go to “main street” and lead by example. It is easier to be an effective and respected leader if others see you on the frontlines which is exactly what Roosevelt did. Through Roosevelt’s efforts, she became the “First lady of the World” and beloved across the world. That international respect made it a smoother switch from being the first lady to a leader of nations.

Due to Eleanor Roosevelt’s leadership experience and public standing president, Truman appointed Eleanor Roosevelt as one of the first delegates for the United States to the United Nations. Even though she was bestowed such a great honor the other American representatives felt that a woman should not have been appointed due to the possibility of her being “overemotional”<sup>13</sup>. Given the skepticism, Roosevelt was placed in committee 3, which dealt with humanitarian, economic, and cultural issues. Through her diligence in advocating for the rights of the millions of newly made refugees within committee 3 she quickly proved her naysayers wrong and was unanimously chosen as chair of the UN human rights commission<sup>14</sup>.

Over the next two years, it was the commission’s job to craft a declaration of rights that all people living within

13. Young-Brown, Fiona. *Eleanor Roosevelt: First Lady*, Cavendish Square Publishing LLC, 2017. ProQuest Ebook Central, 108

14. FDRlibrary.org. n.d. *Eleanor Roosevelt and the Declaration of Human Rights*

the borders of member nations were granted <sup>15</sup>. Initially, there were only three members assigned in the creation of the document, and quickly the Soviet Union and France shared their displeasures. To have a more well-rounded and inclusive document Roosevelt expanded the group from 3 to 8 members <sup>16</sup>. Roosevelt faced an arduous task of coming up with a way to satisfy the definition of human rights across over 50 countries. The diplomatic and leadership skills alluded to earlier helped Roosevelt craft a document that would satisfy the majority of the countries in hopes of creating a more unified world. When crafting the document Roosevelt sought the advice of not only her other council members but the opinions of other women as well. Women such as Hansa Mehta suggested that Roosevelt change article one of the Declaration of Human Rights from “All men are born free and equal” to “All human beings are born free and equal.” Throughout the remainder of the declaration Roosevelt uses language such as “equal rights of men and women” and begins each line of different articles with “Everyone” instead of all men. The slight changes made a world of difference. By making the adjustment Roosevelt signaled that men were not the only axis in which the world rotates around and that women deserve to have the same rights as a man. When giving a speech about the adoption of the declaration of human rights on December 9th, 1948 she made another subtle yet important organizational restructuring. Midway

15. “Beacon of Hope - Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - YouTube.”

16. FDRlibrary.org. n.d. *Eleanor Roosevelt and the Declaration of Human Rights*

through the speech, Roosevelt likens the Declaration of Human Rights to the Magna Carta, Declaration of the Rights of Man then, lastly the Bill of Rights<sup>17</sup>). By alluding to other countries' important documents before referencing the Bill of Rights the speech does not come across as 'America is the model of success so you should listen to me.' The adjustment makes the speech more welcoming and more relatable to the international community. Roosevelt's work garnered the respect of all member nations. When the declaration was a finished product and presented to the entire United Nations, Roosevelt received a standing ovation for her work. Not only did she receive a standing ovation, but 48 nations voted to ratify the Declaration of Human rights<sup>18</sup>. 8 nations decided to abstain and the most notable, the Soviet Union led by Joseph Stalin, decided to abstain rather than simply vote no out of respect for what Roosevelt was trying to accomplish<sup>19</sup>.

Through her years of being an informal diplomat for underprivileged Americans and the country as a whole Roosevelt gained crucial leadership skills and unquestionable respect from people across the world and socioeconomic groups. She leveraged those skills learned to transcend the idea of what a first lady is supposed to do while in and outside of the White House. After her

17. Roosevelt, Eleanor. "Adoption of the Declaration of Human Rights." Speech at United Nations Assembly, Paris, France, December 9, 1948.

18. Google Arts & Culture. "Eleanor Roosevelt and the United Nations - U.S. National Archives."

19. *Great Speeches, Volume 6: Martin Luther King Jr., Eleanor Roosevelt, George H. W. Bush, Richard Nixon, and Edward Kennedy*. Films On Demand. 2005.

Husband's death, she continued the legacy of the Roosevelt name by attempting to successfully heal a broken and battered world that yearned for peace and prosperity. By not conforming to societal norms Roosevelt was able to act as a catalyst for the mission of the United Nations and provide a set of rights that every human no matter what part of the world was guaranteed. It takes a special kind of person to balance the egos of domestic and foreign leaders to achieve a common good and that person's name is Eleanor Roosevelt.

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# GENDERED VIOLENCE IN PUERTO RICO

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*An Examination of Past and Present Acts of Aggression  
Against Women*

**Maria Fernanda**

*Editor's Note: The author of this chapter has elected to present their scholarship in a zine format. It has been reproduced here as faithfully as possible. The machine-readable full text of the chapter and attribution for all images can be found in [Appendix 2](#). A PDF can be downloaded from Google Drive.<sup>1</sup>*

1. Fernanda Flores, María. "Gendered Violence in Puerto Rico." Available from <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PUqhhC5EnFZkdntw7CpPu4kXmLLo.sz/view?usp=sharing>





# Gendered Violence in Puerto Rico:

An examination of past and  
present acts of aggression  
against women

Written by: Maria Fernanda Flores

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## Introduction

As a woman in her twenties, I've always been concerned with issues regarding gender and sexuality in both past and present societies. Even when we don't realize it, how we label ourselves is a factor that greatly influences our life experiences. Growing up, I was faced with many such instances – I would be walking down a street and get receive comments from men that would make me incredibly uncomfortable. No matter where I was, what I wore, or who I was with, I frequently seemed to encounter men who felt entitled to give their opinions on my body. Because of this, I decided it would be prudent to examine how violence against women has changed across decades - with a specific focus on Puerto Rican society. As I aimed to uncover the root of this problem, I will present as evidence key cases that have inspired island-wide uproar.



## international news

# puerto ricans march against

"Mira Lydia Camacho, asesinada en joven por un esposo...delatada Lydia Fuentes, en diez Ray, a la edad de 88 por un violador..."

Mujer Anónima, muerte a palizas por un grupo de ladrones...Teresa Dorcas Rodríguez, embarazada en un combo a la edad de 8 por un violador..."

Mira Lydia Camacho, murdered in town by her husband...delatada Lydia Fuentes, in ten Ray, at the age of 88 by her rapist..."

Anonymous Woman, beaten to death by a gang of rapists...Teresa Rodríguez, pregnant in ten combos at the age of 8 by her rapist..."

Over 1,000 women, men and children marched through the city of San Juan (Puerto Rico) in a Capitol building last November 29, chanting and talking, carrying gasoline flares and banners, pushing baby strollers, and demonstrating a crowd refusal to remain silent or hidden about the problem of violence against women.

The march was led by a simple and eloquent banner: "Rompan el Silencio (Let's Break the Silence), and start breaking down the numbers of killings of women here into statistics, by year, of murders by husbands and by rapists."

Among the groups that marched behind this banner was a strikingly disparate group of thirty women which included a bride in her

distributed an illustrated paper urging all women to meet with co-workers, neighbors and friends to discuss their shared problems and to look for solutions which will benefit all women.

The march and rally which followed was planned by a wide

**'We represent all the different roles of women -- a bride, a domestic, a teacher-- and men try to rape us all.'**

wedding gown, a domestic worker carrying a bucket and wearing rubber gloves, several nuns, secretaries, teachers and students, a nurse, a three-piece-suit executive, and a green-belted karate student. The bride (dressed in orange with red pearls) said that the group had organized themselves; she had been asked to participate dressed as a model but declined, and then chose to march in her own wedding gown. "We present all the different roles of women--a bride, a domestic, a teacher--and men try to rape us all," she said. The karate artist expressed stellar reactions for marching in her outfit, saying "I used to show that I could be a karateka and I still couldn't resist...we have to share experiences."

Other participants in the events included Feministas en Marcha (Feminists on the Move), a newly-formed group of feminists who sold T-shirts and arranged for the gasoline flares in the night-time march; Mujeres Artistas de Puerto Rico (Women Artists of Puerto Rico), a four-year-old group of women artists whose show is presently touring the U.S.; and Grupo de Mujeres (Group of Women), a recently organized group dealing with basic issues of shared housework and childcare, equality of women in society, and the right of women to exist outside of the domestic role. Grupo de Mujeres

range of women's groups, notably Taller Salud (Health Workshop/Center), Encuentro de Mujeres (Women Getting Together), Casa Protégida (Safe House), a safe-house for victims of domestic violence, named after a famous Puerto Rican poet who was found dead on the streets of New York), and Colectiva Luisa Castellón (a collective of students, workers, mothers and unemployed women, named after a 19th century Puerto Rican feminist who supported "free love" and was the first woman to wear pants outside of her house), which publishes a bulletin called *Libros de Mujer*.

The feeling of the march was best illustrated by the self-organized group of 30 women located near the front of the march. Puerto Rico is a country full of intensely strong political allegiances, and yet the march succeeded in representing no political parties or partisan points of view, and in uniting a great number of disparate groups and individuals. Just as the group of 30 women symbolized vastly different roles, positions, and concerns of women while highlighting our sameness as subjects of anti-female violence, the march as a whole represented dozens of groups and hundreds of individuals with differing points of view, but maintained a strong focus on the outrage of violence against women.



A march against violence against women in San Juan, Puerto Rico in November 29, 1981. The large sign on the right reads: Let's Break the Silence. Women Together: Let's Save Our Lives.

The first march ever held here proclaiming "No More Violence Against Women" was in November, 1982. Most of the groups participating in the march have organized themselves within the past year, many in response to the 1982 march. Women and men of all ages seem to be finding the size and the strength to follow the advice that they sought as they were through the darkened streets of Old San Juan: "No te quedes escondida/oculta, lucha por tu vida" (Don't stay hidden/hidden and fight for your life!).

Although some neighbors along the march route watched the procession from their windows, the march itself was very self-contained. There was no support or participation from the sides, and neither

was there any jeering or violence along the route.

The march concluded with a rally at the Capitol building. Lydia Falcon, founder of the Spanish Feminist Party, addressed the crowd and compared the status of women in Spain and Puerto Rico. In Puerto Rico she found women more passive and domestic than in her country, and more influenced by individual men, while in Spain the oppression of women by the government is greater than in Puerto Rico, and hundreds of women who have survived illegal abortions are now in jail for having those abortions.

The closing act of the evening was performed by the *Brigada de Teatro Popular* (Popular Theater Brigade). In the steps of the Capitol building, before a backdrop of silent dance and theater, two women chanted a seemingly endless litany comprised of a list of the names, ages, and details of the murders of 138 women who have died here at the hands of their husbands, boyfriends and rapists. Punctuating this litany was a fervent promise, shouted together by the speakers and the march participants: "Tu muerte no será en vano (Your death will not be in vain) as long as we struggle!"

by Lynn Lyons



The placard reads: I want to grow up in a world without violence.

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### The Puerto Rican feminist movement



Domestic violence is an unforgiving global problem which affects the lives of women in Puerto Rico every day. Only recently has the issue of violence against women has been mainstreamed via agencies that address health, human rights, women's rights, and refugee protection.

Grupo Feminista protests with Madres de la Plaza de Mayo by Alicia D'Amico

Although the vast majority of domestic abuse cases are not reported to law enforcement agencies, police statistics in the Island reveal an alarming trend. In 1983, eighty-one percent of the murders of women were committed by a family member or friend – which to sixty four percent in 1985. This points to incidents of domestic abuse as being increasingly aggressive that would rise in both frequency and intensity.

As a result of the Puerto Ricans government inability to ratify international human rights treaties and conventions on its own, members of the feminist movements took matter into their own hands. As can be seen by the news article above, women from all over the Island, along with various established feminist groups, took to the streets of the Capitol to protest the dismissal of this violence pandemic. Recognized groups like the *Casa Protegida Julia de Burgos* (Julia Burgos Protected House) and the *Colectivo Luisa Capetillo*<sup>1</sup> could be seen at the forefront of this march.

Over the last decade, some significant progress has been made in the area of domestic violence in Latin America. Puerto Rico, through the enactment of Law 54<sup>2</sup>, was included as one of these Latin American nations acting to end impunity for domestic violence perpetrators (Roure, 2011).

<sup>1</sup> Luisa Capetillo was a pioneer of feminism and unionism. She always stood out for being an active woman and for her fight for the equality of women and the rights of workers. She promoted the anarchist ideal and feminism through her writings.

<sup>2</sup> Law for the Prevention and Intervention with Domestic Violence, see <http://www.tvirtual.ogp.pr.gov/ogp/Bvirtual/leyesreferencia/PDF/Y%20-%20Ing%3C%A9s/54-1989.pdf>

The *Casa Protegida Julia de Burgos* is the first shelter for women who are survivors of domestic violence established in Puerto Rico in 1979. Since it was founded, *Casa Julia* has been instrumental in preparing plans for escape, security, and contingency, in creating safe spaces for mothers and their children being stalked by their aggressors or who are at imminent risk of suffering physical or psychological damage. Through shelter, orientation, and counseling, survivors are guided through an empowerment process that allows them to recognize their potential to take control of their lives and live free of violence.

You can find more information about *Casa Protegida Julia de Burgos* on their website [www.casajulia.org](http://www.casajulia.org). If you are in a situation of violence you can contact Casa Protegida Julia de Burgos at 787-723-3500 for help.





## GENDER AND SEXUALITY THROUGHOUT WORLD HISTORY

"Two principal characteristics appear in the study of machismo. The first is aggressiveness. Each macho must show that he is masculine, strong, and physically powerful. Differences, verbal or physical abuse, or challenges must be met with fists or other weapons. The true macho shouldn't be afraid of anything, and he should be capable of drinking quantities of liquor without necessarily getting drunk.

The other major characteristic of machismo is hypersexuality... the culturally preferred goal is the conquest of women, the more the better. To take advantage of a young woman sexually is cause for pride and prestige, not blame. In fact, some men will commit adultery just to prove to themselves they can do it... Sexual conquest is to satisfy the male vanity. Indeed, one's potency must be known by others, which leads to bragging and storytelling... The woman loves but the man conquers - this lack of emotion is part superiority of the male." (Ingoldsby, 1991)



**From the '80s to 2020: comparison of past and present crimes**



"In 1995-1996, 13 percent of adult women in Puerto Rico reported that they had been physically assaulted by an intimate partner. From 1997 to 2003, women were the large majority of domestic violence victims, comprising approximately 83-90 percent of the targets in domestic violence incidents. In 2003, a woman was killed on average every 15.2 days. The data from 2001 to 2008 indicates that 178 women were killed by their partners or ex-partners on the Island." (Roure, 2011).

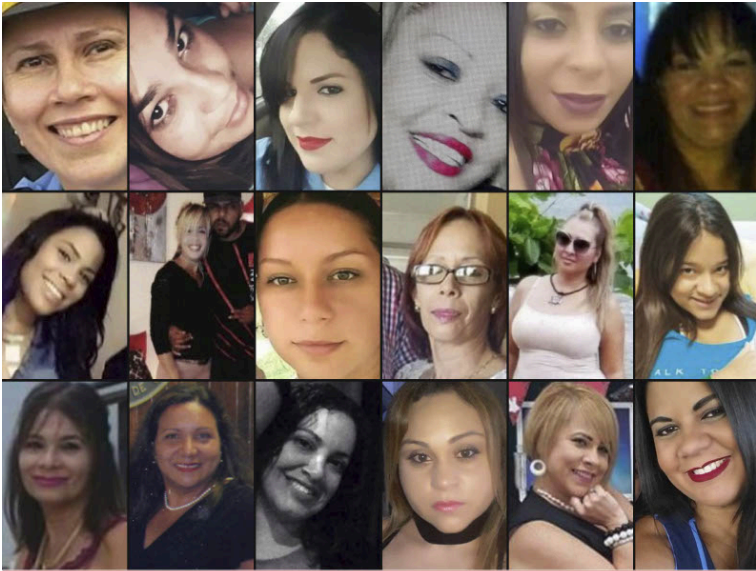
In 2018, there was an increase of more than double of deaths due to gender violence in Puerto Rico compared to the previous year. The island hadn't seen a surge in cases like this since 2011. Out of forty-four women murdered, twenty-

three were at the hands of their current or ex-partners. These women were either stabbed, beaten, or shot. Some killed front of their young children, while others were thrown onto the road like objects that were no longer useful. All of them had their dignity, their rights, and their futures ripped away.





## GENDER AND SEXUALITY THROUGHOUT WORLD HISTORY



Jaqueline Vega Sánchez, 43 years-old

- Her body was found in a state of decomposition inside a plastic bag on the streets of Río Piedras. Blood stains were found inside the residence of her ex-husband.

Zuliani Calderón Nieves, 38 years-old

- The murderer broke the glass in the driver's side door of her car before shooting Zuliani several times. The crime occurred in front of her two children, they were 10 and 13 at the time.

Moesha Hiraldo Maldonado, 19 years-old

- After being transported to the hospital for multiple gunshot wounds in her chest and legs, Moesha died. She was a mother of two.

Marisol Ortiz Alameda, 28 years-old

- Before committing suicide, Marisol's boyfriend shot her multiple times. The murder occurred in Lajas.

Ilia Millán Meléndez, 44 years-old

- Five days after being reported missing in Fajardo, her body was found in a state of decomposition stabbed multiple times in a cemetery in San Lorenzo.

### What now?



In order to truly achieve change, we need to hold accountable those in power that have turned a blind eye for far too long. There needs to be ongoing dialogue between the Puerto Rican government, the victims who manage to escape with their lives, and the community organizers so as to properly define the needed measures and how to properly protect its citizens.

The Women's Advocate Office is one of those organization already working towards eradicating gendered violence. They have developed an educational campaign that emphasizes our responsibility as citizens and victims'

protection as part of their empowerment process. One of their campaign slogans, "Love doesn't kill, but machismo does", looked to engage the community and educate women.<sup>3</sup>

It's important to understand that no one is exempt from this pandemic. If you are interested in learning more about the effects of gendered violence in Latin America, see Repetto's "Women against violence against women", Hume's "The politics of violence", Fregosos' "Terrorizing Women: Femicide in the Americas" and countless others.



<sup>3</sup> To learn more about what the WAO does in Puerto Rico, see Roure's Gender Justice in Puerto Rico: Domestic Violence, Legal Reform, and the Use of International Human Rights Principles

## GENDER AND SEXUALITY THROUGHOUT WORLD HISTORY

If you or anyone you know has been a victim of gendered violence, access this website for support: <https://www.thehotline.org>



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## GENDER AND SEXUALITY THROUGHOUT WORLD HISTORY

*I am a native Puerto Rican who is passionate about shedding light on the pandemic that is gendered violence on the Island and to bring justice to its victims. As of 2020, I am in my third year at Wake Forest University, where I hope to obtain a degree in Biology so as to continue on the path to an M.D.*

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## WORKING IN SOLIDARITY

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*Lessons Learned from Black Feminism and the Combahee  
River Collective*

**Mercedes Jackson**



Black Women marching for liberation in the 1960's. Image Source: Smith, Laura. "When Feminism Ignored the Needs of Black Women, a Mighty Force Was Born." Medium, February 23, 2018. <https://timeline.com/feminism-ignored-black-women-44ee502a3c6>

## Introduction

I am a feminist, and that means as much to me as my blackness;<sup>i</sup> it means that these two things can never be separated nor misconstrued. My lived experiences as a young, Black woman in America, has revealed the intricacies of our sociopolitical system. I have sat alone in too many classrooms as both the only Black person and Black woman. I have been subjected to too many microaggressions based on my skin color, socioeconomic status, or gender. For years, I have known that this society was not built with me in mind yet, it does not diminish my love for it nor my desire for it to change.

The recognition of the unique experiences of Black women have often been overlooked or ignored. For a long

i. Jordan, June. *Civil Wars*. (Scribner's, 1996), 142.

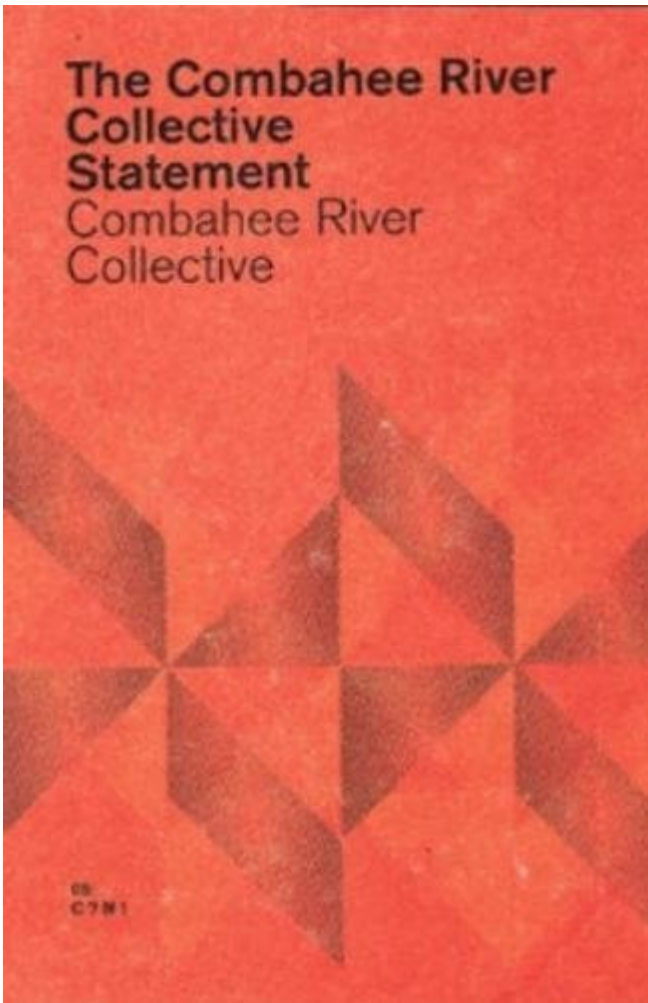
time, no space existed for Black women to think critically about their status in society that included both their race and gender. Caught between multiple and interconnected systems of marginalization and oppression, Black women developed their own politics and means of resistance: Black feminism.

As a framework, Black feminism conceptualizes the intersections of gender, sexuality, and race to acknowledge, and affirm the struggles of Black women throughout history.<sup>2</sup> If there is one thing I believe to be true, it is that Black women deserve better. Black feminism emerged out of this belief, as it was not enough to simply say that we were oppressed, we had to do more.

2. Lindsey, Treva B. "Ula Y. Taylor's 'Making Waves: The Theory and Practice of Black Feminism.'" *Black Scholar* 44, no. 3 (Winter 2014): 48–51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00064246.2014.11641240>.



Combahee River Collective



Combahee River Collective Statement written in April of 1977. Image Source: Combahee River Collective, "Combahee River Collective Statement" (1977).

Over forty years ago, the Combahee River Collective wrote their statement which introduced terms such as

“interlocking oppression” and “identity politics.”<sup>3</sup> The Combahee River Collective (CRC) was a radical Black lesbian-led feminist organization formed in 1974. The collective was founded on a shared belief that Black women are inherently valuable, that our liberation is a necessity because of our need as human beings for autonomy.<sup>4</sup> For the next 7 years, the collective worked diligently to build a politics that was intersectional, radical and by all means, accessible to everyone who wished to join.

Named after Harriet Tubman’s raid on the Combahee River in South Carolina that freed 750 enslaved people,<sup>5</sup> the CRC was very influential in Black feminism. There was a need to develop a politics that was “anti-racist, unlike those of white women, and anti-sexist unlike those of Black and white men.”<sup>6</sup> There was work to be done in terms of activism, movement building and an overall analysis of our positions. It was apparent that the only people who cared about Black women were Black women.<sup>7</sup> The most profound concept of resistance is self-love which is to say that we as Black women matter and we know that we deserve better than what we have currently.

3. Taylor, Yamahitta Keenaga. “How we get free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective.” (Haymarket Books, 2017), 4.

4. Combahee River Collective. “The Combahee River Collective Statement.” (Zillah Eisenstein, 1978), 3, <https://americanstudies.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Keyword%20CoalitionReadings.pdf>.

5. Lechner, Helen. “Combahee River Raid (June 2, 1863),” December 21, 2012. <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/combahee-river-raid-june-2-1863/>.

6. Combahee River Collective, The Combahee River Collective Statement, 3.

7. Combahee River Collective, The Combahee River Collective Statement, 4.

## Analysis

### Intersectionality

A combined anti-racist and anti-sexist position drew the founding members of the Combahee River Collective initially, and as they developed politically, the CRC addressed several issues concerning heterosexism and economic oppression under the capitalist system.<sup>8</sup> In their statement, the CRC believed that sexual politics under patriarchy was just as “pervasive in Black women’s lives as are the politics of class and race.”<sup>9</sup> It is difficult to separate the three because they are most often experienced simultaneously.

Not a day goes by that marginalized individuals do not feel the weight of their oppression. How we combat all the ways this shows up is both impossibly and possibly concrete. Black women’s negative relationship with the American political system has always been determined by our “membership in two oppressed racial and sexual castes.”<sup>10</sup> Recognizing that we as marginalized persons have the right and responsibility to analyze our positions in society as a part of a radical perspective.<sup>11</sup>

By believing this to be true, the CRC taught us that no group gets left behind; if we are to combat all forms of oppression, we must acknowledge and dismantle all the

8. Combahee River Collective, *The Combahee River Collective Statement*, 3.

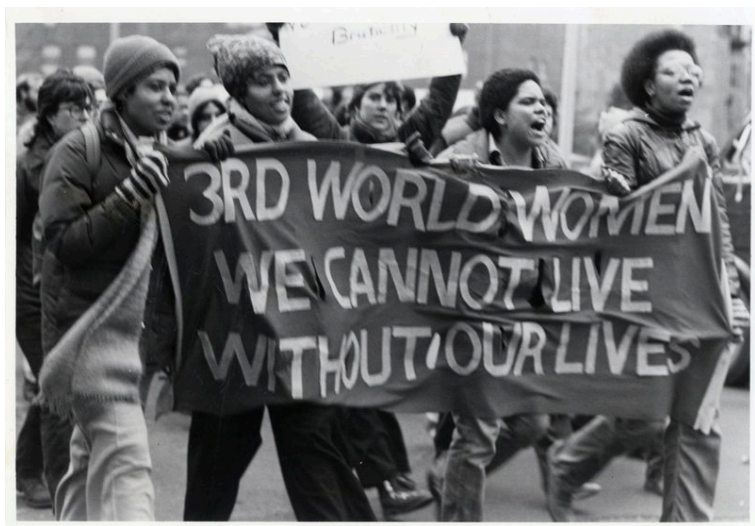
9. Combahee River Collective, *The Combahee River Collective Statement*, 4.

10. Combahee River Collective, *The Combahee River Collective Statement*, 1.

11. Taylor, *How we get free*, 117.

systems we participate in whether knowingly or unknowingly.

### Internationalism



Members of the Combahee River Collective take part in a march for Bellana Borde. Image Source: Fleischmann, Susan, "Members of Combahee River Collective take part in the March for Bellana Borde, circa 1979 or 1980," (Documented | Digital Collections of The History Project), <https://historyproject.omeka.net/items/show/14>.

Before the term “women of color” existed, there was “third world women.” Before the 1980’s, “people of color” and “women of color” did not exist as terms and when it emerged, used only on the West Coast. In solidarity and in the struggle with all third world people around the globe, the Combahee River Collective aimed to be as inclusive as possible. One of the things that set the CRC apart from other groups at the time was their internationalism.<sup>12</sup>

Barbara Smith, one of the founding members of the CRC,

12. Taylor, *How we get free*, 44.

saw that Black women were being internally colonized within the United States.<sup>13</sup> And so were others, particularly, women around the world. From this stance, it is essential to think about building relationships and working in solidarity with everyone who has a stake in social justice. When a group gets left behind, the vision of the work gets trapped and is no longer viable as a goal.

### Identity Politics

The “personal is political.”<sup>14</sup> Systems of oppression impact marginalized individuals in many ways such as sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, and racism. The Combahee River Collective believed that the most profound and radical politics come directly out of “our own identity, as opposed to working to end somebody’s else’s oppression.”

<sup>15</sup> In the case of Black women, this a particularly revolutionary concept that predates the term *Black feminist*. There is a legacy of dozens of women who have documented, theorized, and fought for the intellectual space of individual Black women’s lives.<sup>16</sup>

The major source of difficulty in the CRC’s work is that they were not just “trying to fight oppression on one front or even two, but instead addressed a whole range of oppressions.”<sup>17</sup> As such, the group did not even have minimal access to resources that groups who shared

13. Taylor, *How we get free*, 45.

14. Combahee River Collective, *The Combahee River Collective Statement*, 5.

15. Combahee River Collective, *The Combahee River Collective Statement*, 3.

16. Lindsey, Ula Y. Taylor’s *Making Waves: The Theory and Practice of Black Feminism*, 48.

17. Combahee River Collective, *The Combahee River Collective Statement*, 7.

similar identities had.<sup>18</sup> In such conditions, the main goal of the Combahee River Collective was to raise the collective consciousness of society.

As a Black lesbian led organization, the question of whether Lesbian separatism was an adequate political analysis and strategy, impacted how progressive the collective wished their work to be. In their statement, they wrote that “even for those who practice it,” Lesbian separatism casts out far too many people – “since it so completely denies [anything] but the sexual sources of women’s oppression.”<sup>19</sup>

As socialists, the collective believed that the destruction of political-economic systems of capitalism and imperialism needed to be abolished. In such systems at the time, Black women were marginal in the labor force and doubly viewed as tokens at white-collar and professional levels. Articulating this double standard required that racial and sexual oppression were determinants in their working/economic lives.<sup>20</sup> Building from an anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist standpoint, the CRC found socialism to be the gateway for transformative justice. One of the shortcomings of focusing solely on the effects of racist, gendered, and sexualized violence, we tend to miss the underlying dynamics of class exploitation.<sup>21</sup> This critical

18. Combahee River Collective, *The Combahee River Collective Statement*, 7.

19. Combahee River Collective, *The Combahee River Collective Statement*, 6.

20. Combahee River Collective, *The Combahee River Collective Statement*, 5.

21. Hamer, Jennifer, and Helen Neville. “Revolutionary Black Feminism: Toward a Theory of Unity and Liberation.” *The Black Scholar* 28, no. 3/4 (1998): 22-29. Accessed November 7, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41068802>.

analysis of their status in society was a marker of difference between the CRC and other groups.

In the totality of what it meant to be a Black woman in the diaspora,<sup>22</sup> the politics of the Combahee River Collective introduced the notion that we are multilayered people. As such, we have both the right and responsibility to build and define a political theory and practice upon that reality<sup>23</sup> that work towards liberation.

### Coalition Building

If Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since “our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression.”<sup>24</sup> The inclusiveness of CRC’s politics makes them concerned with any situation that infringes upon the lives of women, the Third World, and working-class people.<sup>25</sup> Recognition that everyone especially those holding marginalized identities has a stake in social justice is one of the most fundamental building blocks of movement-building. Issues and projects that CRC’s members worked on include sterilization abuse, abortion rights, battered women, rape and healthcare which they collaborated with a few socialist feminist unions.<sup>26</sup>

All in all, Black feminism teaches that this kind of work does not get done alone, it takes the collective effort of

22. Taylor, *How we get free*, 121-122.

23. Taylor, *How we get free*, 61.

24. Combahee River Collective, *The Combahee River Collective Statement*, 7.

25. Combahee River Collective, *The Combahee River Collective Statement*, 7.

26. Combahee River Collective, *The Combahee River Collective Statement*, 11.

individuals, leaders, and their communities to transform society.

## Conclusion



Black Lives Matter protestors in Oakland, California on December 14, 2014. Image Source: Class, The Combahee River Collective Topics: Feminism, Inequality, Marxism, Race Places: Americas, and United States. "Monthly Review | A Black Feminist Statement." Monthly Review (blog), January 1, 2019. <https://monthlyreview.org/2019/01/01/a-black-feminist-statement/>.

In the decades since the establishment of the Combahee River Collective, the statement of Barbara Smith, Beverly Smith, and Demita Frazier has lived on. The fact remains that oppression based on identity is a source of political radicalization.<sup>27</sup> Black feminism has become a framework for acts of resistance in combating the oppression of trans women of color, the fight for reproductive rights, and the movement against police violence.<sup>28</sup>

As Black feminists and lesbians, the collective knew

27. Combahee River Collective, The Combahee River Collective Statement, 8.

28. Taylor, How we get free, 13.



that they had a “very definite revolutionary task to perform” and were “ready for a lifetime of work and struggle.”<sup>29</sup> An important thing to note is that sometimes the end does not always justify the means. Members of the CRC believed that many reactionary and destructive acts have been committed in the name of “correctness.” There must be a collective process and nonhierarchical distribution of power within groups and within the vision for a revolutionary society.<sup>30</sup>

Contemporary Black feminism is the “outgrowth of countless generations of personal sacrifice, militancy, and work by our mothers, and sisters.”<sup>31</sup> In the minds of Black women everywhere, a revolution does not appear out of thin air; it is not achieved through superficial and individualistic means. The Combahee River Collective carved an approach that was multifaceted in aspect to their identities as Black lesbians, and conditions in a larger political framework.

There needs to be a collective consciousness rather than an individualistic one to combat all systemic oppression and marginalization. If we stand in solidarity with all marginalized groups, alongside our shared histories, the world has no choice but to change.

29. Combahee River Collective, *The Combahee River Collective Statement*, 11.

30. Taylor, *How we get free*, 11.

31. Taylor, *How we get free*, 2.

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NATAL ORGANIZATION OF  
WOMEN AND THEIR FIGHT  
FOR EQUALITY IN  
APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

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Michaela Barrett

## WHY THIS BOOKLET?

In October last year, NOW held a workshop to which many women from different areas came. Together, we looked at WHY WE NEED TO BE ORGANISED AS WOMEN. This booklet contains many of the ideas which came out of the workshop, and tells you about the Natal Organisation of Women.

### NOW is:

an organisation of women, formed in Natal in 1983.

### NOW aims:

1. to struggle against all racial, economic and sexual exploitation.
2. to unite women to solve problems that affect us in the community and at our places of work.
3. to strengthen women so that we are more confident of our decisions and our actions, and so that we can play a greater part in other organisations to which we belong (eg. civics, youth organisation, trade unions).

**“Women make up half of society. If women are not liberated, then society is not free.”**

**THUS UNITED AND ORGANISED WE CAN WORK FOR  
A FREE AND DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA  
WHERE DISCRIMINATION BASED ON**

**SEX**



**RACE**




**CLASS**



**WILL NOT EXIST.**



**LET EACH OF US ORGANISE!**

9



## WE SHALL DEMAND:

- Adequate housing at reasonable rents
- Public transport at affordable prices
- ★ The right of all to decide where to live
- ★ Adequate & equal pensions & disability grants
- ★ Proper creches and nursery schools
- ★ Adequate health facilities
- ★ The right of all women to decide whether or not to practise birth control, and to choose what birth control method to use
- ★ Equal rights & status in marriage & all laws
- ★ Free & compulsory education for all
- ★ Equal employment opportunities & a just & living wage
- ★ Full trade union rights for all workers
- ★ Paid maternity leave for all working women
- ★ An end to child labour & an end to the harsh & inhumane working conditions of domestic & farm workers
- ★ An end to the homeland system which denies people political rights in the land of their birth & divides us along ethnic lines
- ★ The removal of the Group Areas Act, pass laws & the migrant labour system
- ★ The rejection of the new parliament & all government-created bodies which do not represent the majority of people
- ★ The removal of all security laws & the release of all political prisoners & detainees
- ★ The right of all to free association and participation in democratic organisations.



Pages from a flyer produced by NOW advertising their goals. Image Source: Natal Organisation of Women, "Organizing Women Now" (UND SRC Press., 1985), South African History Online, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/organizing-women-now-natal-organisation-women-1985>.

The flyer above, was published in 1985 by the Natal Organization of Women (NOW). The Natal Organization of Women was founded in 1983, in Durban, South Africa.<sup>1</sup>

The primary source highlights the groups aims, as well as who they appealed to and the demographics that they were comprised of. While NOW was a women's group, and fought for the rights and equality of women, they also fought for political reform of the apartheid regime.<sup>2</sup>

Also, Apartheid was in place in South Africa from 1948 until the 1990s. It was a system of institutionalized segregation on the grounds of race. Many complex laws were instituted by the government to keep non-whites separate. Inter-racial sex and relationships were punishable by law. Non-whites had dedicated land areas dedicated to their specific race where they were allowed to live, this was known as the Land Act. Women's organizations that had a political agenda appealed to females at the time because they felt that they were often ignored at organizations where men were present, such as groups fighting primarily for racial justice.<sup>3</sup>

Women's organizations in South Africa felt that they should be inclusive of all races to diversify their reach.<sup>4</sup> However, NOW was the only group like this, that worked across race, in Natal at the time.<sup>5</sup> This was particularly

1. Amanda Durban, "The Natal Organisation of Women," AMANDLA! (blog), August 9, 2018, <https://amandladurban.org.za/the-natal-organisation-of-women/>.

2. Shireen Hassim, *Women's Organizations and Democracy in South Africa: Contesting Authority* (Madison, United States: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/wfu/detail.action?docID=3444769>. 48.

3. Hassim. 56.

4. Hassim. 78.

5. Hassim. 79.

important during apartheid because it promoted unity and gave strength to the oppressed classes and races.<sup>6</sup> However, it also complicated logistics and meetings. With pass laws and travel routes intended for getting poor black and colored individuals merely to and from work, it was impossible to find a place to hold meetings that everyone could attend.<sup>7</sup>

NOW affiliated with the United Democratic Front (UDF), a political party that stood in opposition to apartheid and the governments proposed constitutional reforms.<sup>8</sup> NOW originally affiliated with the UDF in order to merge their demands as women with their demands against apartheid.<sup>9</sup> They felt that it was a development that made sense because it linked women's struggles to struggles for democracy, and women's rights were intrinsically linked to the struggle for democracy.<sup>10</sup> However, it was a controversial affiliation because it caused a shift away from the associated women deciding what they felt necessary to advocate for, towards merely becoming the voice of women for the UDF.<sup>11</sup>

NOW fought across the racial divide against the lack

6. There were four main racial groups as defined by the law under Apartheid. These were, white, Asian/Indian, Black or Bantu, and colored. The level of oppression applied to each race followed the same order. Whites were the favored race, and Asians and Indians were treated more lightly than blacks and coloreds. While there was no legal oppression in place on white English-speaking citizens, they were typically considered to be slightly more lowly by the white Afrikaaners. The terms white, Indian/Asian, and colored are still the same today in the desegregated South Africa, but "Bantus" are only called black today. Colored is the term used to refer to mixed race individuals in South Africa, and is still considered to be politically correct there.

7. Hassim, *Women's Organizations and Democracy in South Africa*. 78. On Pass Laws, they required black and colored South Africans over 16 years old to have with them at all times what was essentially a passport – referred to as a passbook, or "dompas" in Afrikaans. These passbooks contained the individual's photograph, their fingerprints, employment details included where they were permitted by law to work, and government permission to be in certain areas of the country. Police could render one ineligible to work or preside in a certain area at any time with no explanation. If an individual was without their passbook at any time for any reason – having had it stolen, misplacing it, or forgetting to carry it – they could be arrested and imprisoned. See "Apartheid Legislation," accessed November 11, 2020, <http://www.cortland.edu/cgis/suzman/apartheid.html>.

8. Hassim, *Women's Organizations and Democracy in South Africa*. 48.

9. Hassim. 265.

10. Hassim. 69.

11. Hassim. 69.

of maternity benefits and childcare, as well as for equal work opportunities.<sup>12</sup> There seemed to be an institutional oppression of women; they were narrowed into traditionally female oriented jobs, it was not required that women be paid the same as men for the traditionally unfemale jobs that they could get, and taxes were imposed on women that brought an income back to her family if she was married – penalizing her for contributing to her family.<sup>13</sup> In terms of their struggle against apartheid, NOW fought against pass laws and the Group Areas Act, the high cost of living, the creation of the tri-chimeral parliament, and adequate healthcare facilities.<sup>14</sup> These demands show that while NOW was focused on Women's Rights, they were very much placed in the context of apartheid, and the unique struggles faced by women during that regime. While women were fighting for their rights and freedoms, they were also fighting politically for human rights.

The women in these organizations believed that a struggle for national liberation, and a struggle for women's rights should, nor could, be dealt with separately.<sup>15</sup> Women involved in these organizations, such as NOW, faced harassment and violence from men that did not support their aims. Women were murdered, raped, detained and

12. "NOW-2.Png.jpg (912x632)," accessed November 2, 2020, <https://io.wp.com/amandladurban.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/NOW-2.png.jpg?ssl=1>.

13. Eleanor M. Lemmer, "Invisible Barriers: Attitudes toward Women in South Africa," *South African Journal of Sociology* 20, no. 1 (1989): 30–37, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02580144.1989.10432899>.

14. "Organizing Women Now by Natal Organisation of Women, 1985 | South African History Online," accessed October 20, 2020, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/organizing-women-now-natal-organisation-women-1985>.

15. Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, "What Price for Freedom? Testimony and the Natal Organisation of Women," *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, no. 34 (1997): 62–70, <https://doi.org/10.2307/4066243>. 67.



tortured. Often, effort was not even made to investigate those cases, thus many perpetrators were not prosecuted.<sup>16</sup> Women in these groups were willing to jeopardize their safety to fight for what they believed in.

Overall, analyzing NOW as a women's organization highlights the complexities of apartheid. Women felt they were not heard in organizations where men were present, and they felt they had a responsibility to take action for the changes they wanted to see. While they faced challenges, they worked against all odds to get their message heard.

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16. Madlala-Routledge. 63.

# LESBIANS AND THEIR ROLE WITHIN THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT IN THE EARLY 1970S

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Christine Bedikian

## Introduction

A four-page, ten paragraph manifesto became a powerful source created by lesbian activists in the early 1970s to address both sexism and homophobia. It was written during the period of second-wave feminism<sup>1</sup> where radical

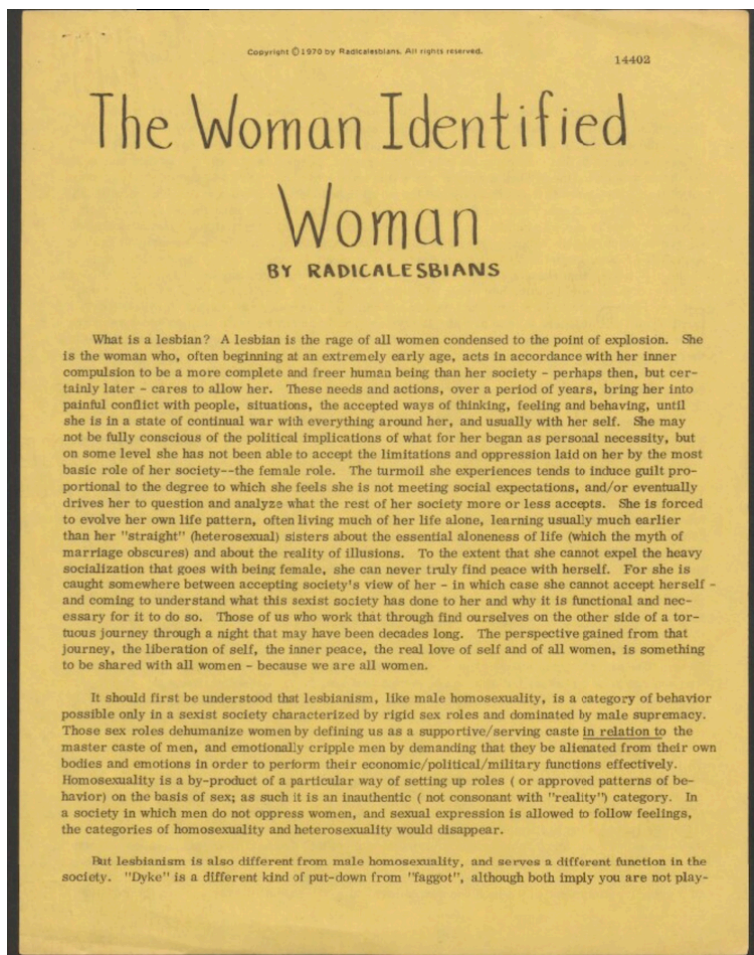
1. "Second-wave feminism of the 1960s-1980s focused on issues of equality and discrimination. The second-wave slogan, "The Personal is Political," identified women's cultural and political inequalities as inextricably linked and encouraged women to understand how their personal lives reflected sexist power structures" Sally

feminism<sup>2</sup> emerged. Many thoughts in the manifesto overlapped with second wave radical feminism ideals. The manifesto was important to both the history of women's rights and queer identified movements. It sought to create a separate, autonomous identity for lesbian women. It also articulated the struggles of lesbians, especially within the women's liberation movement, but also firmly stated their view for their search for equality within the larger women's liberation movement. In the early 1970s, not only did lesbians have trouble when it came to articulating their place within this movement as well as their place within a male-dominated society, but they were also blatantly discriminated against and excluded from the women's liberation movement. What made *The Women Identified Woman* such an important manifesto was that it acted as a voice for lesbians to communicate to other women as well as this heavy male-dominated society their rightful place. They projected their struggles in regards to existing in the feminist movement and how they were excluded and discriminated against.

A Drucker, Betty Friedan: *The Three Waves of Feminism* (Ohio: Ohio Humanities, April 27, 2018), <http://www.ohiohumanities.org/betty-friedan-the-three-waves-of-feminism/> (accessed November 9, 2020).

2. "In the fall of 1967 small groups of radical women began meeting in the United States to discuss the problem of male supremacy... Radical feminism rejected both the politico position that socialist revolution would bring about women's liberation and the liberal feminist solution of integrating women into the public sphere. Radical feminists argued that women constituted a sex-class, that relations between women and men needed to be recast in political terms, and that gender rather than class was the primary contradiction. They criticized liberal feminists for pursuing 'formal equality within a racist, class-stratified system,' and for refusing to acknowledge that women's inequality in the public domain was related to their subordination in the family" Alice Echols and Ellen Willis, *Daring to Be Bad Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975, Thirtieth Anniversary Edition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 3.

## The Woman Identified Woman<sup>3</sup>



3. Radicalesbians, *The Woman-Identified Woman* (Know, Inc., 1970), <https://repository.duke.edu/dc/wlmpc/wlmpc001> (accessed October 2, 2020).

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ing your socially assigned sex role...are not therefore a "real woman" or a "real man." The grudging admiration felt for the tomboy, and the queasiness felt around a sissy boy point to the same thing: the contempt in which women-or those who play a female role-are held. And the investment in keeping women in that contemptuous role is very great. Lesbian is a word, the label, the condition that holds women in line. When a woman hears this word tossed her way, she knows she is stepping out of line. She knows that she has crossed the terrible boundary of her sex role. She recoils, she protests, she reshapes her actions to gain approval. Lesbian is a label invented by the Man to throw at any woman who dares to be his equal, who dares to challenge his prerogatives (including that of all women as part of the exchange medium among men), who dares to assert the primacy of her own needs. To have the label applied to people active in women's liberation is just the most recent instance of a long history; older women will recall that not so long ago, any woman who was successful, independent, not orienting her whole life about a man, would hear this word. For in this sexist society, for a woman to be independent means she can't be a woman - she must be a dyke. That in itself should tell us where women are at. It says as clearly as can be said: women and person are contradictory terms. For a lesbian is not considered a "real woman." And yet, in popular thinking, there is really only one essential difference between a lesbian and other women: that of sexual orientation - which is to say, when you strip off all the packaging, you must finally realize that the essence of being a "woman" is to get fucked by men.

"Lesbian" is one of the sexual categories by which men have divided up humanity. While all women are dehumanized as sex objects, as the objects of men they are given certain compensations: identification with his power, his ego, his status, his protection (from other males), feeling like a "real woman," finding social acceptance by adhering to her role, etc. Should a woman confront herself by confronting another woman, there are fewer rationalizations, fewer buffers by which to avoid the stark horror of her dehumanized condition. Herein we find the overriding fear of many women toward being used as a sexual object: by a woman, which not only will bring her no male-connected compensations, but also will reveal the void which is woman's real situation. This dehumanization is expressed when a straight woman learns that a sister is a lesbian; she begins to relate to her lesbian sister as her potential sex object, laying a surrogate male role on the lesbian. This reveals her heterosexual conditioning to make herself into an object when sex is potentially involved in a relationship, and it denies the lesbian her full humanity. For women, especially those in the movement, to perceive their lesbian sisters through this male grid of role definitions is to accept this male cultural conditioning and to oppress their sisters much as they themselves have been oppressed by men. Are we going to continue the male classification system of defining all females in sexual relation to some other category of people? Affixing the label lesbian not only to a woman who aspires to be a person, but also to any situation of real love, real solidarity, real primacy among women, is a primary form of divisiveness among women: it is the condition which keeps women within the confines of the feminine role, and it is the debunking/scare term that keeps women from forming any primary attachments, groups, or associations among ourselves.

Women in the movement have in most cases gone to great lengths to avoid discussion and confrontation with the issue of lesbianism. It puts people up-tight. They are hostile, evasive, or try to incorporate it into some "broader issue." They would rather not talk about it. If they have to, they try to dismiss it as a "lavender herring." But it is no side issue. It is absolutely essential to the success and fulfillment of the women's liberation movement that this issue be dealt with. As long as the label "dyke" can be used to frighten women into a less militant stand, keep her separate from her sisters, keep her from giving primacy to anything other than men and family-then to that extent she is controlled by the male culture. Until women see in each other the possibility of a primal commitment which includes sexual love, they will be denying themselves the love and

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value they readily accord to men, thus affirming their second-class status. As long as male acceptability is primary--both to individual women and to the movement as a whole--the term lesbian will be used effectively against women. Insofar as women want only more privileges within the system, they do not want to antagonize male power. They instead seek acceptability for women's liberation, and the most crucial aspect of the acceptability is to deny lesbianism--i.e., to deny any fundamental challenge to the basis of the female. It should also be said that some younger, more radical women have honestly begun to discuss lesbianism, but so far it has been primarily as a sexual "alternative" to men. This, however, is still giving primacy to men, both because the idea of relating more completely to women occurs as a negative reaction to men, and because the lesbian relationship is being characterized simply by sex, which is divisive and sexist. On one level, which is both personal and political, women may withdraw emotional and sexual energies from men, and work out various alternatives for those energies in their own lives. On a different political/psychological level, it must be understood that what is crucial is that women begin disengaging from male-defined response patterns. In the privacy of our own psyches, we must cut those cords to the core. For irrespective of where our love and sexual energies flow, if we are male-identified in our heads, we cannot realize our autonomy as human beings.

But why is it that women have related to and through men? By virtue of having been brought up in a male society, we have internalized the male culture's definition of ourselves. That definition consigns us to sexual and family functions, and excludes us from defining and shaping the terms of our lives. In exchange for our psychic servicing and for performing society's non-profit-making functions, the man confers on us just one thing: the slave status which makes us legitimate in the eyes of the society in which we live. This is called "femininity" or "being a real woman" in our cultural lingo. We are authentic, legitimate, real to the extent that we are the property of some man whose name we bear. To be a woman who belongs to no man is to be invisible, pathetic, inauthentic, unreal. He confirms his image of us--of what we have to be in order to be acceptable by him--but not our real selves; he confirms our womanhood-as he defines it, in relation to him--but cannot confirm our personhood, our own selves as absolutes. As long as we are dependent on the male culture for this definition, for this approval, we cannot be free.

The consequence of internalizing this role is an enormous reservoir of self-hate. This is not to say the self-hate is recognized or accepted as such; indeed most women would deny it. It may be experienced as discomfort with her role, as feeling empty, as numbness, as restlessness, as a paralyzing anxiety at the center. Alternatively, it may be expressed in shrill defensiveness of the glory and destiny of her role. But it does exist, often beneath the edge of her consciousness, poisoning her existence, keeping her alienated from herself, her own needs, and rendering her a stranger to other women. They try to escape by identifying with the oppressor, living through him, gaining status and identity from his ego, his power, his accomplishments. And by not identifying with other "empty vessels" like themselves. Women resist relating on all levels to other women who will reflect their own oppression, their own secondary status, their own self-hate. For to confront another woman is finally to confront one's self--the self we have gone to such lengths to avoid. And in that mirror we know we cannot really respect and love that which we have been made to be.

As the source of self-hate and the lack of real self are rooted in our male-given identity, we must create a new sense of self. As long as we cling to the idea of "being a woman," we will sense some conflict with that incipient self, that sense of I, that sense of a whole person. It is very difficult to realize and accept that being "feminine" and being a whole person are irreconcilable. Only women can give to each other a new sense of self. That identity we have to develop with reference to ourselves, and not in relation to men. This consciousness is the revolutionary force from which



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all else will follow, for ours is an organic revolution. For this we must be available and supportive to one another, give our commitment and our love, give the emotional support necessary to sustain this movement. Our energies must flow toward our sisters, not backward toward our oppressors. As long as woman's liberation tries to free women without facing the basic heterosexual structure that binds us in one-to-one relationship with our oppressors, tremendous energies will continue to flow into trying to straighten up each particular relationship with a man, into finding how to get better sex, how to turn his head around-into trying to make the "new man" out of him, in the delusion that this will allow us to be the "new woman." This obviously splits our energies and commitments, leaving us unable to be committed to the construction of the new patterns which will liberate us.

It is the primacy of women relating to women, of women creating a new consciousness of and with each other, which is at the heart of women's liberation, and the basis for the cultural revolution. Together we must find, reinforce, and validate our authentic selves. As we do this, we confirm in each other that struggling, incipient sense of pride and strength, the divisive barriers begin to melt, we feel this growing solidarity with our sisters. We see ourselves as prime, find our centers inside of ourselves. We find receding the sense of alienation, of being cut off, of being behind a locked window, of being unable to get out what we know is inside. We feel a real-ness, feel at last we are coinciding with ourselves. With that real self, with that consciousness, we begin a revolution to end the imposition of all coercive identifications, and to achieve maximum autonomy in human expression.



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## Analysis

This manifesto states that a lesbian is the rage of all women condensed to the point of expulsion.<sup>4</sup> This term holds much more meaning than people really care to think about. This manifesto explains and emphasizes the importance of this term and how society has potentially used it as a derogatory term to call women out for not “being a real woman.” The text directly states that the term “lesbian is a word, the label, the condition that holds women in line” which ultimately limits their power in the eyes of men and in society.<sup>5</sup> If society as a whole is being dependent on male culture to define and control the definition of a lesbian, no woman can really be free. Heterosexual male culture should not be able to define womanhood or anything remotely close to it because it is not theirs to control. The term has been used and thrown around to any woman who dares to be independent and challenge the power of men. The underlying negative connotations that have grown on the term over time are tremendous and can be seen when we look at lesbians in relation to the women’s liberation movement.

Many radical women actively have embraced the slippage between the terms “lesbian” and “feminist” in order to emphasize the argument that all women, regardless of their desires, were oppressed by compulsory

4. Radicalesbians, *The Woman-Identified Woman*, 1.

5. Radicalesbians, *The Woman-Identified Woman*, 2.



heterosexuality. Even if a woman is a lesbian or heterosexual, she is still being oppressed by heterosexuality in a way that ends up alienating the term “lesbian” no matter what, considering it is not a part of the heterosexuality “normal” that many people still follow. The term “lesbian” has held onto many of the associations that the Radicalesbians describe. Lesbianism, to some extent, is still associated with masculinity or androgyny—and is often imagined in opposition to femininity, even as some lesbians are feminine and some masculine women are not lesbian. This can relate to where Brownmiller<sup>6</sup> in 1970 reportedly refused an invitation to speak to the staid lesbian organization, the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB),<sup>7</sup> because “she thought lesbians hypersexual and oppressively male”. A number of radical feminists agreed with Brownmiller that “lesbians were too attached to sex roles, in the form of butch-femme roles, to be likely or desirable recruits to feminism”<sup>8</sup> This was a direct stab at lesbianism considering Brownmiller declared them basically unfit to be a part of the feminism movement and associated them with masculinity or androgyny. Not only does this not create progress within the movement, it demeans a form of a woman who should be included. Furthermore, “straight” and “lesbian” are still framed as

6. “A career feminist whose work spans the distance from political activism to historical research and novel writing, Susan Brownmiller (born 1935) is most recognized for raising public awareness of violent crimes against women and children” Sara Sherwood, *Susan Brownmiller – Radical Feminist* (The Heroine Collective, December 20, 2018), <http://www.theheroinecollective.com/susan-brownmiller/> (accessed November 9, 2020).

7. “Daughters of Bilitis (DOB), one of the first lesbian organizations to be established. Founded in San Francisco in 1955... When DOB was established, there were few opportunities for lesbians to meet, and lesbians were subject to discrimination and public hostility. The organization began as a small, secret social club for lesbians, starting with just eight members” Rebecca Barnes, *Daughters of Bilitis* (Encyclopedia Britannica, November 21, 2013), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Daughters-of-Bilitis> (accessed November 9, 2020).

8. Echols, *Daring to Be Bad Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975, Thirtieth Anniversary Edition*, 211-212.

binary in which straight is imagined as normal and lesbian is imagined as the opposite of straight. The term “lesbian” has so many underlying negative connotations that could have contributed to why they were excluded from the second wave of feminist movements in the 1970s.

It is crucial to note that sexism and homophobia existed in more virulent forms in 1970 than now which has contributed to the negative associations that have accrued overtime in relation to lesbians. The biases towards lesbians made it very hard for them to find their voices within women’s liberation movements. “Those feminists who believed in a global sisterhood found it easier to attribute the conflicts to political adversaries than to acknowledge the formidable obstacles to female unity.”<sup>9</sup> Many women within the movement found it easy to disregard obstacles, in this case, accepting lesbians into the movement, and turn their attention elsewhere even when their first priority should be to unite all women. This can be seen within the National Organization for Women<sup>10</sup> As a whole, this organization had many issues with being inclusive towards lesbians and their role within the movement. Many leaders disputed lesbian involvement and visibility in the National Organization

9. Echols, *Daring to Be Bad Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975, Thirtieth Anniversary Edition*, 203-204.

10. “Established in 1966, the National Organization for Women (N.O.W.), was born out of frustration at the lack of progress on women’s issues in the wake of JFK’s 1961 establishment of the President’s Commission on the Status of women in the United States... Gathering in Betty Friedan’s hotel room and writing their guidelines on a paper napkin, the activists laid the groundwork for NOW which formally launched that October...Friedan was elected the group’s president...On October 29, 1966, the National Organization for Women issued its Statement of Purpose... to promote a group of core issues: abortion and reproductive rights, economic equality, women in political office, and an end to discrimination against women...The issue of lesbian rights has long been controversial for NOW where a bitter break occurred in the early 1970s...The early days of the movement was centered around the needs of white, middle-class women ” Elizabeth Purdy, *National Organization for Women (N.O.W)* (St. James Encyclopedia of Popular Culture, 2020), <https://www.encyclopedia.com/media/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/national-organization-women-now> (accessed November 17, 2020).

for Women. The founder, Betty Friedan commented in 1966 that lesbians were a “lavender menace” and suggested that they threatened the political efficacy of the organization and of feminism.<sup>11</sup> This is an instance where lesbians had been alienated from the movement even when they are also women. The energies, in this example, were not flowing toward other women (like the Radicalesbians wanted), but were flowing backward toward oppressors.<sup>12</sup> Women should not be flowing against other women and with the oppressors as noted in *The Women Identified Woman* because then progress cannot be achieved.

The history of publicly merging feminist and lesbian identities and activism within the National Organization for Women was not a smooth narrative and continued to be challenged. Rita Mae Brown<sup>13</sup>, who had been trying to raise the issue of lesbianism within the National Organization for Women, was inexplicably relieved of her duties as the editor of New York- NOW’s newsletter. Brown was so angered by the organization’s homophobia that she resigned from her other NOW offices, taking two other lesbians with her.<sup>14</sup> The National Organization for Women as a whole had many issues regarding lesbians and

11. Stephanie Gilmore, Elizabeth Kaminski, *A Part and Apart: Lesbian and Straight Feminist Activists Negotiate Identity in a Second-Wave Organization* (Austin: University of Texas Press, January 2007), 96, <https://doi.org/10.1353/sex.2007.0038> (accessed October 26, 2020).

12. Radicalesbians, *The Woman-Identified Woman*, 4.

13. “LGBT activist and writer Rita Mae Brown... became an early member of the National Organization for Women (NOW)... Rita Mae Brown’s career as an American writer began while she was attending NYU. At this point in her life, Brown found herself resigning in February 1970 from NOW due to anti-lesbian comments made by Betty Friedan and NOW’s attempt to distance itself from lesbian organizations...In 1973 she published her most notable and controversial novel, *Rubyfruit Jungle*. This novel eradicated the stereotype many people had of lesbian women at the time. It is a coming of age story about a lesbian” Carolina Barragan, *Rita Mae Brown* (Pennsylvania Center for the Book, 2018), [https://pabook.libraries.psu.edu/literary-cultural-heritage-map-pa/bios/Brown\\_Rita\\_Mae](https://pabook.libraries.psu.edu/literary-cultural-heritage-map-pa/bios/Brown_Rita_Mae) (accessed November 18, 2020).

14. Echols, *Daring to Be Bad Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975, Thirtieth Anniversary Edition*, 213.

their role within the movement. This situation with Rita Mae Brown shows how some women did support lesbians within the movement but they were outnumbered. At the time, NOW was an important face of the movement so to have them disregard lesbians could have caused others to disregard them as well. There was a lot of tension between activists who supported lesbians and the movement versus women who did not. This is just another reason why *The Women Identified Woman* was so important in communicating to all women and men that they deserved to be supported within the movement and in society.

### Conclusion

The early 1970s played a crucial role in creating a voice for lesbians within the women's liberation movement during the second wave of feminism. *The Women-Identified Women* redefined lesbianism as the quintessential act of political solidarity with other women. "By defining lesbianism as a political choice rather than a sexual alternative, Radicalesbians disarmed heterosexual feminists."<sup>15</sup> It helped to communicate their place to all other feminists who deemed them unfit to join the rest of the women in the movement. Unity of all women is crucial to the success of the feminist movement so to have lesbians be excluded and looked down upon by other women did nothing but cause more unnecessary complications. The early 1970s, with the manifesto *The Women-Identified Women*, became

15. Echols, *Daring to Be Bad Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975, Thirtieth Anniversary Edition*, 211.

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an awakening where lesbians were able to express their place in the movement and where they ultimately deserved to stand.

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## Part IV

# Masculinity through Time, Space, and Literature

From the Colonial Period to the 1960s and even now, cultural and social norms shape the Western standards for masculine expression. Social standards for masculinity impact not only men, but every gender identity, sexual orientation, and their portrayals in literature. This section follows these shifts in society's image of masculinity through time and space, while sharing a glimpse into how historical documentations have influenced people's perceptions of gender.





## WOMEN'S RIGHTS VS. MASCULINITY IN THE NEW REPUBLIC

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Collin Conduah

This primarily focuses on the correspondence between John and Abigail Adams about the rights of women in the new world, asking about freedoms that they would like to be afforded in the newly independent America. Abigail knows that her husband will be integral in the new society should they win their war of independence, and simply requests that “by the way in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you

would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors”<sup>1</sup> While clearly this request wouldn’t be truly acknowledged for hundreds of years, it shows how long this fight truly went on.

“The Cult of Domesticity” is the only true term to describe what women back in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were relegated to. The simplest explanation would be that women were not only created to be homemakers and to center all their attention on family life, while also being pure, virtuous, and submissive<sup>2</sup> This negative view of the role of women is what Abigail attempts to get her husband to understand for if (when) it comes time for the new laws of the country. The grievances against women that stemmed from this cultish belief were widespread, such as the only value of women being to increase social stance for their husbands. Women could only have any sort of social standing through marriage to a man, as women were incapable of owning property, lawsuits, voting, and any other governmental and higher-level economic processes. She goes on to say that men are “naturally tyrannical” and simply asks that they “give up the harsh title of Master for the more tender and endearing one of Friend”.

1. John Adams and Abigail Adams, “Abigail and John Adams Converse on Women’s Rights, 1776,” The American Yawp Reader, accessed November 5, 2020, <http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/the-american-revolution/abigail-and-john-adams-converse-on-womens-rights-1776/>.

2. “Women’s Rights,” ushistory.org (Independence Hall Association, 2008), <https://www.ushistory.org/Us/26c.asp>.

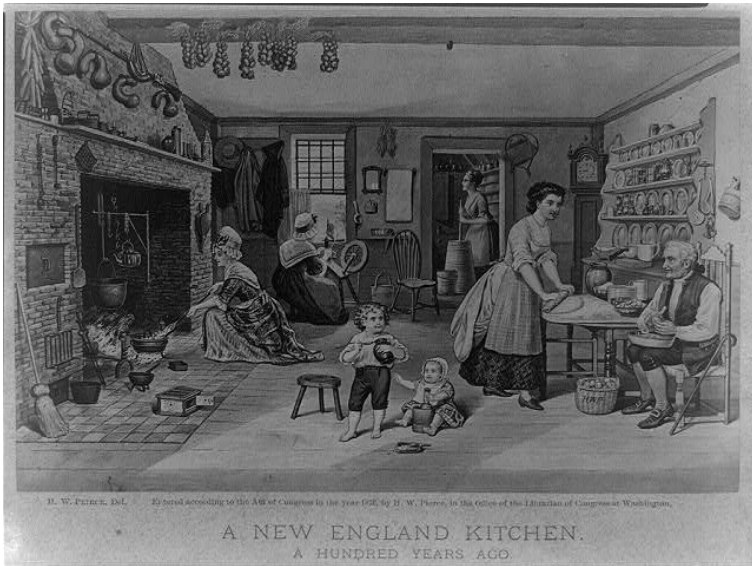


Image Source: H. W. Pierce, A New England Kitchen a Hundred Years Ago, photograph, Library of Congress (Washington, D.C. 20540 USA), Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, accessed November 4, 2020, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/200669154/>.

The above picture shows very well what she's referring to, as it depicts the man sitting around, looking to be eating food while four women (one of which I would assume to be his wife) work on various household tasks, including tending to the two young children pictured. The existence of this essentially involuntary servitude certainly is nowhere near the other marginalized groups at the time (referring to only white women here), but it certainly is a just cause to fight for the rights that they deserve to be afforded as humans.

These letters elicit quite the revealing response from John Adams, that not only gives insight to how he truly thinks and feels, but how most white, landowning men

felt back in those days. In this short letter, he opens by mocking his wife, simply saying that he “cannot but laugh” at the proposal that laws would be written to bring men and women to equality. John quite crudely goes on to say that the fight for independence in America has foolishly caused groups like the Native Americans to “[slight] their guardians” and the “Negroes [to grow] insolent to their masters”, to prove a point to Abigail that just like they had no intention of giving rights to either of those groups, women too would remain a second class group. He insists that the masculine systems in place are for the benefit of society and that Abigail and other women should be grateful that they choose not to enforce the full extent of their power on them, as at the end of the day they have the “Name of [Master]” and all of the privilege that comes with the title. He wraps up the document by essentially scoffing at the notion of all the riled-up groups, claiming a superior air over all of them. This sentiment was expressed rather playfully as well as it must be noted, even mocking Abigail as “saucy”<sup>3</sup> so when he has a similar conversation that he would take much more seriously about a month later with James Sullivan, he seemingly continues to bear down on this sentiment. He says that “Your idea, that those laws, which affect the lives and personal liberty of all, or which inflict corporal punishment, affect those, who are not qualified to vote, as well as those who are, is just. But, so

3. John Adams and Abigail Adams, “Abigail and John Adams Converse on Women’s Rights, 1776,” The American Yawp Reader, accessed November 5, 2020, <http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/the-american-revolution/abigail-and-john-adams-converse-on-womens-rights-1776/>.

they do women, as well as men, children as well as adults. The same reasoning, which will induce you to admit all men, who have no property, to vote, with those who have, for those laws, which affect the person will prove that you ought to admit women and children”<sup>4</sup> That may not seem overtly problematic, but it is important to look underneath it a bit. He says, “women and children [can have] good judgements, [but] will please to feed, clothe, and employ [themselves]”<sup>5</sup>, meaning that he’s against giving men without property the right to vote because they are dependent on others to survive, and will be overtly biased in their interests. This fear was extrapolated to women, as they were believed to be too fragile a dependent on their husband, which is paradoxical since women couldn’t be independent without property and a job, and without a job and property, they were considered dependent so that they couldn’t give themselves property and jobs. The picture from earlier in this document also seems somewhat ironic, as the women in the picture are the ones doing all the tasks that ensure the man/husband’s survival, not the other way around. In the defense of Adams, he and Abigail were both on record as not only not owning slaves but being against the concept of slavery itself. He was a supporter of a cut clause from the Declaration of Independence that stated, “The Christian king of Great Britain [is] determined to keep open a market

4. “Founders Online: From John Adams to James Sullivan, 26 May 1776.” University of Virginia Press. Accessed November 17, 2020. <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/06-04-02-0091>

5. “Founders Online: From John Adams to James Sullivan, 26 May 1776.” University of Virginia Press. Accessed November 17, 2020. <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/06-04-02-0091>

where men should be bought and sold, . . . suppressing every legislative attempt [by the American colonists] to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce”<sup>6</sup>, but was never outspoken about its prevention in the colonies, and was relatively complacent after the passage was removed from the Declaration.

This is not a case of straight bigotry and arrogance; however, it is indicative of how many people like John Adams were too cowardly to truly try and take a step towards equality. Adams not only was on record respecting the intelligence of his wife<sup>7</sup>, but seemingly believed that slavery was wrong, and yet he actively stood opposed to his values, even while acknowledging the points. This is apathy or straight up the belief that women are inferior to men is something that clearly still affects society today, and as many did back then, people continue to corroborate this message that has clearly been proven false. Adam’s masculinity was staked on the perceived masculinity of the white, landowning males of the time, which means that it is indicative of the entire colonial and post-revolutionary period because until the work of people like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, the agenda with women was very stagnant as no real changes occurred from English to American rule, but

6. “Jefferson’s ‘Original Rough Draught’ of the Declaration of Independence - Declaring Independence: Drafting the Documents | Exhibitions - Library of Congress.” Web page, July 4, 1995. <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/declara/ruffdraft.html>.

7. Journal of the American Revolution. “How Did John Adams Respond to Abigail’s ‘Remember the Ladies’?,” August 18, 2020. <https://allthingsliberty.com/2020/08/how-did-john-adams-respond-to-abigails-remember-the-ladies/>

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it is important to see that the seeds of this movement were sewn long before the sprouted.

## SOCIETY AND SODOMY

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*A Victorian Sonnet's Reflection of London's Homosexual  
Subculture*

Elsa Maurizi

*Put on that languor which the world frowns on,<sup>1</sup>  
That blamed misleading strangeness of attire,<sup>2</sup>*

In the 1700s, 'the sodomite' was a scandalous and disruptive figure, known to disregard London's orderly social classifications.<sup>3</sup> These social deviants acted in sync

1. "Languor" refers to emotional weariness, or a lack of energy and lively spirit

2. This stanza might be interpreted as the speaker (the narrator of the poem) calling their audience to allow themselves to be vulnerable, yet to express themselves authentically through dress and emotions.

3. "Sodomite" was a widely used term throughout the 18th and 19th centuries in England to refer to men who would today be labeled 'gay' or 'queer,' despite its slightly derogatory connotation. Words like "gay" were not



with an expanding sodomite community, as individuals would meet up at various locations throughout the city, resulting in certain places becoming associated with homosexual activity. Examples of meeting places during the mid-late 1700s were St. James park at night, as well as nearby theatres, pubs, and brandy shops.<sup>4</sup> Considering which people attended these places, and how they would dress and behave, it became more likely to assume they were engaging in homosexual activity, which, at the time, was a crime.

*And let them see that see us we have done*<sup>5</sup>  
*With their false worldliness and look up higher.*<sup>6</sup>

By the size and scope of of London during the 1700s, homosexual men existed in anonymity. This allowed them to explore different areas and clubs while evading arrest, but the growing population of London correlated with the growing population of men in the city's homosexual subculture,<sup>7</sup> which changed in nature by the 1800s.<sup>8</sup> A community that initially went unnoticed or ignored

popularized as slang for homosexual until the 20th century, but for the purposes of this piece, 'gay,' 'sodomite,' and 'homosexual' will all be used as descriptors for participants in this subculture of London.

4. St. James Park is the oldest Royal Park in London, and features a large lake. It continues to be a popular site for London's tourists and residents.

5. This line explains that the speaker and their romantic partner, referenced by "us," have reflected upon themselves and considered the viewpoint of those who shame or criticize them. Another interpretation is that "us" refers to the speaker's community, which may likely be London's queer community, and the group of men who would have participated in the urban homosexual subculture.

6. This line refers to a "false worldliness," or a distorted sense of self-confidence or social understanding, exhibited by the speaker's oppressors, which describes their point of view, and leads the audience to infer how they would have behaved toward the speaker.

7. "Subculture," as defined by Cambridge Dictionary, is "the way of life, customs, and ideas of a particular group of people within a society that are different from the rest of that society." This essay refers to London's growing homosexual community, characterized by effeminate and queer individuals who interacted with one another, but behaved in deviance (relative to social standards), forming a subculture.

8. "Cambridge Dictionary: Find Definitions, Meanings & Translations," Online Dictionary, accessed November 19, 2020, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/>.

became increasingly criticized by outsiders who claimed the city was “overrun with sodomites.” Similarly, the binary construct of gender expression transformed and progressed in influence as “masculinity was consequently bound up with desiring women, and femininity with desiring men.” Between the 18th and 19th centuries there was a shift in how individuality and personal expression were perceived by society: sexuality and the associated concepts of masculinity and femininity became more connected to the people with whom someone had sexual relations. In London, “...for a man to have sex with another man therefore implicated effeminacy; he became ‘like a woman.’” In the past, a man with ‘a whore on one arm and a boy on the other’ would’ve maintained his masculine status, but this shift implied that any show of effeminacy made an effeminate man. Moreover, this reconceptualization was problematic, because it meant that a masculine man was perceived as the only kind of person who could satisfy an effeminate man.<sup>9</sup>

*Because the world has treated us so ill  
And brought suspicion near our happiness,*

The criminal aspect of London’s homosexual subculture certainly did not put an end to its existence, considering the community continued to form through the 1800s. The illegal nature of sodomy only intensified the social separations that began occurring to homosexual

9. Matthew David Cook, “The Inverted City London and the Constitution of Homosexuality, 1885-1914” (Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London, 2000), <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/30605597.pdf>.

men and especially those who did not conform to newly heightened masculine standards. This affiliation between crime and non-conformity presented another issue because it began to ostracize those who displayed effeminacy. By the late 1800s, London's homoerotic mapping became clearer, largely because of the growing controversy surrounding homosexuality. Parks, public transportation, brothels, and the West End theatre district continued to be areas of homosexual activity.<sup>10</sup> Through the 1880s and 1890s, St. James Park was still associated with homosocial club-life; it was a place where "desire and democracy intertwine[d]", as the scene was a mixture of homosexual expression and urban criminality. Similarly, the Serpentine lake in Hyde Park was a site where men and boys could be seen undressing and swimming for their enjoyment.<sup>112</sup> The meeting places of this subculture were documented and frequently busy, demonstrating expansion that inherently brought decreasing levels of anonymity for those associated; nevertheless, homosexuality was an intrinsic aspect of city life.

In the mid-1800s there was a series of homosexual criminal scandals in which men were arrested for their indecent behaviors. In prosecution, displays of effeminacy were used as clear evidence of their sexuality that

10. The West End is London's theatrical hub that is home to many theatres, shops, and restaurants. It was a common site for homosexual men to interact during the 19th century, and today it remains a popular district for all of London's residents and visitors.

11. Matt Cook, "'A New City of Friends': London and Homosexuality in the 1890s," *History Workshop Journal*, no. 56 (2003): 33–58.

12. The Serpentine lake, named for its curving shape, is a recreational lake located in Hyde Park, one of London's most well-known and popular parks.

‘justified’ their charges for sodomy and “unnatural offence[s]”.

The 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act was nothing new to London; the law had originally been established in 1513 to forbid sodomy with ‘mankind or beast’ and was modified in 1861 to include a wider range of offenses while also placing sodomy under these ‘unnatural offences’ alongside pedophilia and rape, thus further criminalizing homosexuality by nature of this law.<sup>13</sup>

*Let men that like to slander as they will;<sup>14</sup>  
It shall not be my fault if we love less.*

In the 18th century, violence was commonly tolerated as a response to insults upon a man’s reputation. With an increasing Evangelical influence (especially on the middle class) came a shift in masculine values that included more appreciation for physical self-restraint by the 1850s.<sup>15</sup> Violence as an act of masculine gender expression only persisted in lower working classes. Throughout London’s period of urbanization and industrialization in the 1800s, gender roles were redefined in more distinctive ways, further imposing the social binary of masculine and feminine expression. Manliness, particularly for middle and upper class men, revolved around self-sufficiency,

13. Robert William Burnie, “The Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885,” The British Library (The British Library), accessed November 11, 2020, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-criminal-law-amendment-act-1885>.

14. The men to whom the speaker is referring in this line can also be interpreted as those who criticize and insult the speaker’s behaviors or homosexual relationship.

15. At this time, a man’s reputation was closely connected to his masculinity, and a specific, stern display of masculinity was considered reputable.

“...In moral discourse there was hardly any overlap between the active, rational, resolute male and the emotional, nurturing, malleable female.” This separation came as a result of advances in women’s rights, independence, and education during the 1870s and 1880s. Thus, manliness became an increasingly exclusive term, reserved for the toughest and most specific male attributes. Consequently, tolerance for homosexuality decreased, and ‘effeminacy’ was frequently coupled with the slur of ‘degeneracy,’ and “turned the homosexual into the most threatening ‘other’ of all”.<sup>16</sup> These changing expectations for women and men caused division not only between sexes, but also between people of the same gender with varying sexual orientations – dividing heterosexual men from homosexual men, and effeminate homosexual men from non-effeminate men.

*Because we two who never did them harm,  
And never dreamt of harm ourselves, find men*

By the early 1900s, gay men in London could either affiliate with the city’s traditional values and assert their definitive masculinity, or be alienated as effeminate, as this social division persisted. The division was not helped by long-lasting phobia towards effeminate homosexuals, including that of Marc-André Raffalovich, the author of “Sonnet CXX”. Raffalovich theorized about ‘inverted’

16. John Tosh, “Masculinities in an Industrializing Society: Britain, 1800-1914,” *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. No. 2 (April 2005): 330-42.

men, who would be considered homosexual, but not effeminate or effeminatophilic.<sup>17</sup> Thus, his writings indicated, "...there is no line of demarcation between heterosexual and homosexual," and he promoted the idea that homosexuality must be encouraged because it participates in a social dynamic in which heterosexuality is not repressed.<sup>18</sup> However, while Raffalovich was one of the earliest "gay" men to study homosexuality from a scientific perspective, he "openly condemned effeminate gay men as 'sick liars and criminals.'" <sup>19</sup> These conflicting ideas about acceptance for one type of homosexual and rejection of another perpetuated the growing anti-effeminacy in London at the time.

*So eager to perplex us and alarm  
And scare from us our dove-like thoughts, well then*<sup>20</sup>

And yet, London's homosexual subculture remained an unmoving aspect of urban life. The individual city goer could find themself joining in or keeping a distance, but, regardless, "...the individual met a subculture and a subculture met society most intensely," which demonstrates the magnitude of an urban homosexual community during a time of scrutiny, criminality, division,

17. The term "effeminatophilic" refers to an affinity or attraction to effeminacy or effeminate individuals.

18. Patrick Cardon, "A Homosexual Militant at the Beginning of the Century: Marc Andre Raffalovich," *The Haworth Press, Inc.* 25, no. 1-2 (1993): 183-91.

19. Tosh, "Masculinities in an Industrializing Society: Britain, 1800-1914."

20. The dove is a common poetic symbol for peace and love, which, in this line, serves as a way to describe the harmless demeanor and intentions of the speaker, his partner, and his community members.

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and ever-changing social standards in the period of industrialization.

*Since 'twixt the world and truth must be our choice,*<sup>21</sup>  
*Let us seem vile, not be so, and rejoice.*<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> In old English, "twixt" was short for "betwixt," which means "between."

<sup>22</sup> This line builds upon how the poem explains the oppression homosexual people might face at this time, as many people in society (outside of the subculture) perceived queer people as 'vile,' even though one's sexuality would have little to do with their overall character.

“Sonnet CXX” by Marc-Andr  Raffalovich

*Author’s note:* This source is transcribed from the Victorian Queer Archive.<sup>23</sup>

Put on that languor which the world frowns on,  
That blamed misleading strangeness of attire,  
And let them see that see us we have done  
With their false worldliness and look up higher.  
Because the world has treated us so ill  
And brought suspicion near our happiness,  
Let men that like to slander as they will;  
It shall not be my fault if we love less.  
Because we two who never did them harm,  
And never dreamt of harm ourselves, find men  
So eager to perplex us and alarm  
And scare from us our dove-like thoughts, well  
then  
Since ‘twixt the world and truth must be our  
choice,  
Let us seem vile, not be so, and rejoice.

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*Elsa is a freshman at Wake Forest University!*

23. Marc-Andr  Raffalovich, “Sonnet CXX” (Walter Scott, London, 1889), <http://vqa.dickinson.edu/poem/sonnet-cxx>.



# THE EXCAVATION OF MASCULINITY

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*(Within Archeological Interpretations)*

**Christian Estrada**

## Introduction

When most people think about archeology, they probably imagine Indiana Jones exploring past civilizations' ruins, avoiding booby traps, and discovering crystal skulls. And while that might sometimes be the case, there is a lot more to this Anthropology sub-field.

Archeology is the study of human history through the

recovery and analysis of material and biological remains left from past activities. This field has proven to be a “powerful tool,” that allows us to “know, understand, and explain”<sup>1</sup> the story of humanity. However, sometimes archeologists are given too much power. Similarly to historians, when we put our trust in a small group of individuals for centuries, allowing them to analyze, interpret, and articulate history. We can run into integrity issues due to their possible biases, whether conscious or not, being interwind within their work. The archeologist interpretation is supposed to be their educated guess, after ruling out every other scenario as to what could have occurred at any given site. Still, sometimes one might think something is so apparent and is influenced by known stereotypes.

Let’s put ourselves in an archeologists’ shoes and see what we come up with...

1. Harris, Jenifer F, and Charlotte A Smith. “What Is Archaeology? How Exploring the Past Enriches the Present,” n.d.

Dr. Hjalmar Stlope



Image source: Culin, Stewart. "Hjalmar Stolpe." *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 8, no. 1 (1906): 150-56. Accessed November 9, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/659172>.

Dr. Hjalmar Stolpe was a “distinguished Swedish archeologist and anthropologist”<sup>2</sup> who lived from 1841-1905. Stolpe graduated from the University of Upsala with a Ph.D. in botany and zoology. He began his career conducting scientific investigations on “the ants on the

2. Culin, Stewart. "Hjalmar Stolpe." *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 8, no. 1 (1906): 150-56. Accessed November 9, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/659172>

island of Gotland” and not too long after; he became interested in the field of anthropology and how it related to nature and animals. The presence of flora and fauna within assemblages fascinated him, and “at his own initiative and expense”<sup>3</sup> he conducted archeological excavations. Since then, he has made several contributions within the field of anthropology and had some remarkable discoveries. One unique discovery he is responsible for is a Viking burial site, known as BJ.581.<sup>4</sup>

3. Culin, “Hjalmar Stolpe.” *American Anthropologist*

4. BJ.581 gets its name from being the 581st site excavated on Björkö.



The image above is a later version of the original field sketch of the BJ.581 unit, done by Dr. Slope in 1889. Image Source: Hjalmar Stolpe, "BJ.581 Viking Warrior Field Sketch", Sweden 1889, <https://fof.se/sites/fof.se/files/>

<https://full/public/bild/b746bc5a88faa832.org.jpg?itok=NehCwXZq>.

The BJ.581 grave unit is located on “the first Viking age settlement of Birka on the island of Björkö in Lake Mälaren,”<sup>5</sup> which is now a part of modern-day Sweden. Birka is considered “one of the most powerful towns”<sup>6</sup> within the region from “750-950 AD”<sup>7</sup> making it a convenient and popular trading hub within the Viking circles. The settlement sustained a population of “700-1,000 inhabitants”<sup>8</sup> until it became the gravesite of roughly “3,000”<sup>9</sup> during a gruesome battle. This enormous settlement site contains an extensive amount of material culture even though no “more than half of the graves have been excavated,”<sup>10</sup> making it “the most important archeological site of the Viking age”<sup>11</sup> to date.

BJ.581 (depicted to the right in Hjalmar Stolpe’s 1889 field sketch of the site) is not an ordinary Viking age burial. It is “one of only two burials from the entire island”<sup>12</sup> that has a complex set of weapons and cultural remains and is “among the 20 richest graves on the site.”<sup>13</sup> Within a “3.45m x 1.75m and 1.8m deep”<sup>14</sup> wooden chamber, concealed various remnants of BJ.581 for years until Stolpe discovered a fully clothed skeleton of a Viking warrior

5. Price, Neil, Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson, Torun Zachrisson, Anna Kjellström, Jan Storå, Maja Krzewińska, Torsten Günther, Verónica Sobrado, Mattias Jakobsson, and Anders Götherström. “Viking Warrior Women? Reassessing Birka Chamber Grave BJ.581.” *Antiquity* 93, no. 367 (2019): 181–98. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aui.2018.258>.

6. Robinson, Jennifer. “Viking Warrior Queen.” PBS, Public Broadcasting Service, August 5, 2020. <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/secrets/viking-warrior-queen-full-film/5276/>.

7. Robinson, “Viking Warrior Queen.”

8. Price, “Viking Warrior Women? Reassessing

9. Robinson, “Viking Warrior Queen.”

10. Robinson, “Viking Warrior Queen.”

11. Robinson, “Viking Warrior Queen.”

12. Price, “Viking Warrior Women? Reassessing

13. Price, “Viking Warrior Women? Reassessing

14. Price, “Viking Warrior Women? Reassessing

strategically placed on a wooden stool surrounded by several weapons, game pieces, and even animals. The weapons within the assemblage include a “broad-ax, fighting knife, two spears, two shields, a quiver of 25 armor-piercing arrows, a bow (not well preserved), a sword, and a small iron knife<sup>15</sup>.” Placed on the lap of the Viking warrior, there was a “full set of 28 gaming pieces, including a king piece<sup>16</sup>” within a bag. The addition of this game within the assemblage indicates that the warrior was also an “officer who worked with tactics and strategy and could lead troops in battle<sup>17</sup>.” Two horses, “one of which, still bridled for riding, had been arranged<sup>18</sup>” on a platform just above the remains.

Now that we know all contents of the BJ.581 site, it’s time for the difficult task of interpreting the significance behind the cultural and biological remains and determining who and what occurred within the deceased’s life.

At this moment, you know roughly the same amount of information as our Archeologist, Hjalmar Stlope, so take a few moments to reflect on the knowledge of the material remains and glance at the field sketch again. Take a **Guess!** what do you think the gender of the Viking warrior is?

Now that you’ve made your guess, you could have come up with one of three options...

A. The gender of the Viking warrior within this

15. Price, “Viking Warrior Women? Reassessing

16. Price, “Viking Warrior Women? Reassessing

17. Price, “Viking Warrior Women? Reassessing

18. Price, “Viking Warrior Women? Reassessing

assemblage is a male because he was buried with several different types of weapons (such as a sword, ax, shield, etc.), and may have been an influential figure because he was also strategically laid out with two horses.

- B. The gender of the Viking warrior within this archeological assemblage is female because her skeleton doesn't seem that large and women skeletons are typically smaller.
- C. There is not enough information to determine the gender of the Viking remains.

If you choose A, you would have chosen the same as our anthropologist Hjalmar Stlope and a sample of 13/15 of my closest peers within the Wake Forest community when presented the same information,<sup>19</sup> but you would be incorrect. If you choose B, then you would have also guessed wrong due to its reasoning. Skeletons can come in a variety of sizes for both genders. And if you choose C, you would be correct! One cannot conclude the gender of remains within a burial by merely looking at the material remains found around the skeleton. However, sometimes the assemblage and material culture can help you determine the gender of the remains within its social context. It should never stand on its own. The most reliable way to know the gender of any given skeleton is by

19. On November 15th, 2020 I asked a sample of 15 of my Wake Forest peers what they thought the gender of the Viking Warrior was after being presented with the same information stated above. 13 of the 15 choose A and the other two choose, the correct answer, C



analyzing their DNA and “using a chromosomal definition of sex”<sup>20</sup> where you would check for either 2 X chromosomes (Female) or 1 X and 1Y (Male).

### The Gender Reveal

Thankfully, after “generations of Viking scholars to the present day”<sup>21</sup> never challenging the gender decision of Bj.581 because they believed it was “both well-founded and justified by the context and contents of the grave”<sup>22</sup> geneticist’s curiosity made a jaw-dropping discovery. In 2017 geneticists from Stockholm university noticed “several characteristics of the skeleton indicated”<sup>23</sup> that it may be of a female rather than a male and looked into option C.<sup>24</sup> They mapped the DNA genome, and “the surviving genetic material contained two X chromosomes and no Y chromosomes,”<sup>25</sup> indicating the 1,000-year-old remains are of a **FEMALE** Viking warrior.

During the Stlope’s initial excavation in 1889, he did not have access to the abundance of technology we have today, so one can’t necessarily fault him for not running a DNA test. However, at the time, there were several other techniques he could have utilized, one being osteology, the study of bone structures and their functions. This

20. Price, “Viking Warrior Women? Reassessing

21. Hedenstierna-Jonson, Charlotte. “SUPPLEMENTARY Material] Viking Warrior Women? Reassessing Birka Chamber Grave Bj.581.” *Antiquity*, 2019.

22. Hedenstierna-Jonson, “Supplementary material”

23. Koffmar, Linda. “Första DNA-Bevisen För Kvinnlig Vikingakrigare.” Uppsala universitets startside. Accessed November 9, 2020. <https://www.uu.se/nyheter-press/nyheter/artikel/?id=9274>.

24. On November 14th, 2020 the Koffmar, 2020 source was google translated from Swedish to English by me (Christian Estrada)

25. Robinson, “Viking Warrior Queen.”

practice has been utilized since “1796”<sup>26</sup> when Soemmerring, a German anatomist, “illustrated the first sketch of the female anatomy,”<sup>27</sup> starting a “movement to define and redefine sex differences”<sup>28</sup> in various parts of the body. Even today, osteology within humans can be challenging because there “are fewer differences between the sexes” remains” remains. Still, if you know where the clear signs are, like a woman’s pelvis having a “bigger and wider subpubic angle, ventral arc, and pelvic inlet”<sup>29</sup> which allows for childbirth, then one could tell. But not Stlope; he “felt no intrinsic need for there to have been a female warrior buried in the grave”<sup>30</sup> and assumed that this individual had to be a male due to the elaborate, “masculine-like” burial. Also, at the time, no other female Viking warrior burial had been reported; he didn’t even question the inconsistencies within his actions.

For example, within his notes, he “even at the time” recognized BJ.581 “as being of unusual character.”<sup>31</sup> But when interviewed at the Royal Academy, he stated that BJ.581 is “perhaps the most remarkable of all the graves in this field.”<sup>32</sup> Therefore if BJ.581 was one of the most remarkable, why did he not properly examine the remains and correctly identify the gender? Would it have diminished the significance of the site to archeologists in

26. Schiebinger, Londa. “Skeletons in the Closet: The First Illustrations of the Female Skeleton in Eighteenth-Century Anatomy,” *Representations*, no. 14 (1986): 42-82. Accessed November 19, 2020. doi:10.2307/2928435.

27. Schiebinger, “Skeletons in the Closet:

28. Schiebinger, “Skeletons in the Closet:

29. Price, “Viking Warrior Women? Reassessing

30. Price, “Viking Warrior Women? Reassessing

31. Price, “Viking Warrior Women? Reassessing

32. Price, “Viking Warrior Women? Reassessing

the early 1900s? Was the thought of a masculine “fierce female-Viking fighting alongside men, although it is continuously reoccurring in” middle age “art and poetry”<sup>34</sup> too taboo? We will never know Stlope’s proper reasoning but from either his negligence due to the systems of power at the time, being against the narrative, or an honest mistake, his gender stereotyping infiltrated the field of anthropology, resulting in the misrepresentation of BJ.581 and a false report of Viking Warriors.

### Impact of Stlope’s Actions

You might be wondering, why does this simple mistake matter? What was the impact? And besides an inaccurate narrative being shared around the world for centuries ... nothing directly. However, one could say that the most crucial thing lost from this action was knowledge and the impact it could have had on the world. The BJ.581 Viking lived, fought, preserved, and died. The labels and gender stereotypes of the 19th century were not present within their lifetimes, yet anthropologists like Stlopes projected their beliefs on the corpses. Therefore, the “relation of gender”<sup>35</sup> to the profession of a Viking was irrelevant. Still, their real story gets muffled by androcentrism, centering around a masculine point of view when imposed on them.

33. Hedenstierna-Jonson, Charlotte, Anna Kjellström, Torun Zachrisson, Maja Krzewińska, Veronica Sobrado, Neil Price, Torsten Günther, Mattias Jakobsson, Anders Götherström, and Jan Storå. “A Female Viking Warrior Confirmed by Genomics.” Wiley Online Library. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, September 8, 2017. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ajpa.23308>.

34. Hedenstierna-Jonson, “A female Viking Warrior

35. Price, “Viking Warrior Women? Reassessing

In addition to the lost history of the female Viking warriors, if the first discovery of Bj.581 in 1889 was the honest discovery, it would have been the first reported burial of a high-ranking female warrior. That story would have transcended the sexism, stereotypical, androcentrism theme of the 19th and early 20th century and could have possibly encouraged an earlier start to women empowerment movements.

### Conclusion

Although the misrepresentation of the Bj.581 gender by Hjalmar Stlope for 130 years is disappointing, it can also act as a lesson for future generations. The Female Bj.581 warrior is most likely not the only case of misgendering, and Stlope's is not the only anthropologist to skew history. Anthropology is not the only field that started with the routine of imposing the beliefs of their time on the past civilizations, resulting in lost history. It can be found throughout almost every discipline. Therefore, today and even in the future, we will have to continue unpacking and reviewing the past's historical reports from all subjects, scanning for inconsistencies and biases centered around stereotypes and sexism. As educated individuals, we need to be aware of our personal biases and know whether we think we have them or not. We tend to analyze the past through the current norms of today. And once we are mindful of that, we won't make the same mistakes as those

who preceded us, bettering the process of record-keeping and research.

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# MASCULINITY: FORCED OR WELCOMED?

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Katelyn Pipes

## Introduction

What is Masculinity?

Every person has their own definition of masculinity. Let's  
ask Google...

Mas-cu-lin-i-ty

noun

“Something traditionally considered to be characteristic of a male.”<sup>1</sup>

That seems pretty vague. Let me give it a try...

Mas-cu-lin-i-ty  
concept

The idea that those assigned male at birth, not only must be, but are, strong, dominant, powerful, and emotionless.

At first glance, women are the ones who suffer from this concept of masculinity. However, I would argue that men suffer the most from these expectations. In order to do this, I chose four men that attend Wake Forest University, and showed them three ads published in *Esquire* magazine in 1963.

### What is Esquire Magazine?

*Esquire* magazine is advertised as an American Men’s magazine and it was the first one of its kind. Additionally, it was arguably the first attempt at creating a male audience. Before *Esquire*, women were the only “consumers” while men produced. Before its creation in 1933, this idea of a male consumer was unheard of. Arnold Gingrich, *Esquire*’s founding editor, was searching for what this meant. How *do* you appeal to men? The answer was simple: women.<sup>2</sup>

Similar to its much more scandalous younger sibling,

1. [www.dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com/browse/masculinity). “Definition of Masculinity | Dictionary.Com.” Accessed November 5, 2020. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/masculinity>.

2. Breazeale, Kenon. “In Spite of Women: Esquire Magazine and the Construction of the Male Consumer.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society* 20, no. 1 (September 1994): 1-3. <https://doi.org/10.1086/494052>.

*Playboy*, *Esquire* readers were looking to be desired. They wanted a quick way to find women. But not just any woman. The one who is basically begging to be with them. In order to do this, they had to be attractive. They had to be tall, big, and, above all, powerful. *Esquire* did this, not only through its articles, but through its advertisements. Each one carefully picked. Placed perfectly on the page to make the reader think: “Do I need this?”

When the 1960’s man finished his hard day, he laid back, grabbed himself a drink and perhaps opened up *Esquire*. Here are some of the things that he saw.



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The Ads

Ad 1: Tall or Big Men Only

**TALL or BIG MEN ONLY**



**McGREGOR  
GOES  
KING-SIZE!**

**We specialize in large sizes only! Sleeves to 38", Bodies 4" longer. Large Selection of McGregor Jackets; Sweaters, Sport and Dress Shirts, Slacks, Robes, etc., perfectly proportioned for all tall and big men. PLUS 70 SHOE STYLES 10-16 AAA-EEE. Sold by mail only. Full 100% guarantee. Send for your FREE Full Color Catalog.**

**KING-SIZE, Inc.**  
3115 Forest Street  
Brockton, Mass.

Image source: Esquire. Tall or Big Men Only. March 1963. Advertisement.

Ad 2: You Can Have a He-Man Voice

A Home Study Course — Founded in 1890

# You Can Have a HE-MAN VOICE

**STRENGTHEN** *your* voice this tested, scientific way. Yes—you may now be able to improve the **POWER** of your speaking and singing voice... in the privacy of your room! Self-training lessons, mostly silent. No music required.

## FREE BOOKLET

Write **today** for Eugene Feuchtinger's great booklet "How to Develop a Successful Voice." It's absolutely **FREE!** You must state your age. Booklet mailed postpaid in plain sealed envelope. No salesman will bother you. Send your name and age **RIGHT NOW!**

**Protect Voice Institute, 325 W. Jackson Blvd., Studio CW-56, Chicago 6, Ill.**




Image Source: Esquire. You Can Have a He-Man Voice. March 1963. Advertisement.

## GENDER AND SEXUALITY THROUGHOUT WORLD HISTORY

### Ad 3: Give Me a Man Who's Nice'n Tall



Image Source: Esquire. Give Me a Man Who's Nice n' Tall. March 1963. Advertisement.

### The Men<sup>3</sup>

Each of these men remained anonymous except for six characteristics: class year, hometown, gender, race, sexual orientation, and their involvement with campus activities. I chose these men because they are all different in multiple aspects. They are not all white, straight, men from the Winston-Salem area. They each have their own unique pasts, upbringing and values.

It is important to identify some of their characteristics in order for this experiment to maintain its value. Not all men look at ads the same way. They do not (and did not) notice the same connotations and details of each one. And

3. It is important to note that I do know each of these men. Some more than others.

they will look at it differently than I did when I chose them.

Let's meet them.

Male 1<sup>4</sup>

- Pseudonym<sup>5</sup>– Hugh
- Class Year-2023
- Hometown- Parkdale, Oregon<sup>6</sup>
- Gender- Male
- Sexual Orientation- Straight<sup>7</sup>
- Race- White
- Activities- Marching Band and Bio research

Male 2

- Pseudonym- Rhys
- Class Year- 2023
- Hometown- Fort Worth, Texas
- Gender- Male
- Sexual Orientation- Gay
- Race- White

4. I assigned these numbers to the males in the order that I decided to include them in the interview.

5. Each of the men chose a pseudonym for themselves.

6. Hugh is a member of a military family and only recently moved to Parkdale, Oregon. You can hear him hesitate during his interview when answering this question. He has also lived in Texas, and, most recently, in D.C..

7. I typed these characteristics exactly how they described themselves to me in their interview. You will notice that Hugh described himself as "straight" while Ray described himself as "heterosexual". I kept these the same because I wanted to respect their self identification.

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- Activities- Student Tech advising committee

### Male 3

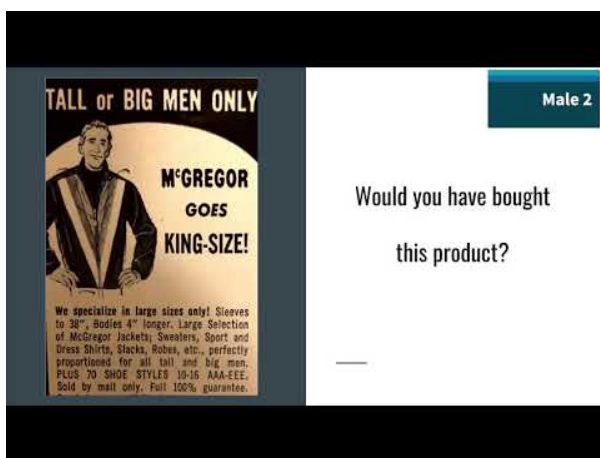
- Pseudonym- Ray Summers
- Class Year- 2024
- Hometown- Rocksborough, NC
- Gender- Male
- Sexual Orientation- Heterosexual
- Race- African American
- Activities- Momentum crew (hip hop), young life (religious), marching band

### Male 4

- Pseudonym- Sam
- Class Year- 2023
- Hometown- Chattanooga, Tennessee
- Gender- Male
- Sexual Orientation- Bisexual
- Race- Hispanic
- Activities- Marching Band, orchestra, wind ensemble

## The Interview

Each of these men were interviewed in October 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The interviews were all conducted via Zoom and recorded with each man's permission to include their voice.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://librarypartnerspress.pressbooks.pub/gendersexuality3e/?p=263>

Each of the men were asked these same questions about each ad:

1. What do you think these words would have

meant to men in the 1960s?

2. How would this ad be received today as compared to the time that it was created?
3. Would you have bought this product?
4. How would you react to this ad today? What would you change to make it more relevant?

but gave very different responses. Some of them took it very seriously. While others joked and laughed. I appreciated both responses. The former because this is a serious topic, and the latter because these ads do seem pretty ridiculous from a 21st century perspective. Now we will dive deeper into each ad and how these men responded to them.

### Ad 1

A similar reaction about this ad was the consensus that it was emphasizing the power of being big. Or, as Hugh put it “glorifying the manly man type aesthetic”. However, they all also agreed that this one was not a “super inflammatory”<sup>8</sup> ad, and none of them would have personally bought it. Rhys points out that this ad is “marketed towards a niche” and he “doesn’t fit under that category.” And, as for Sam, he “would not care that much” if he saw this as in a magazine today. Okay. Fair.

But, Ray did have a problem with this one. He pointed

8. Rhys

out that the idea of having a store for only one type of person was the wrong way of going about this. This gave him the impression that the sellers were saying “If you don’t fit in, go somewhere else.” The word “King” in this ad, is specifically what gave him this impression. He feels that because these people are tall and big, they believe they are “higher than everyone else”<sup>9</sup>.

After listening to the men talk about this ad, I was quite surprised that they had very few ill feelings about it. They all seemed to glance over it and explain it away quite easily. They were not offended, pressured, or hurt by it. It was simply a fact for them that this existed. Hugh even said he would “make the man larger” in order to get the point across. With the small addition of Ray’s differing opinion on the concept of a large men only store, they had little to no problems with this one. Ad number 2 was a different story.

## Ad 2

All of the men had one problem or another with this ad. Sam’s first words were “Wow. Okay”. The idea of success that accompanied this made each of them noticeably uncomfortable. Hugh and Sam questioned the overall validity of the product itself. As far as Sam knows, “you can’t change your voice”. But, even if you could, none of them would have bought this product because they are happy with their voices. And “changing [Ray’s] voice

<sup>9</sup>. Ray



won't make [him] a more successful person". As for the connotation of this ad and its suggestion of success, the men were pretty similar in their responses. They felt that it was 'catering towards men who feel emasculated' and it is "a bit derogatory"<sup>10</sup>.

The idea of needing a strong voice to be successful was not something they necessarily disagreed with, but the fact that the ad suggested a masculine and deep voice was where they had the problem. As Ray asked, "Why can't we put a picture of a woman?". And they disliked the suggestion of dominance or "power over people"<sup>11</sup> that was implied through the wording. When asked how they would change this ad Sam immediately replied "get rid of it" and I can't say I blame him.

### Ad 3

Ad 3 seemed to upset each of the men, especially the word handicapping. As Hugh said, "that's a brutal one". But what would it mean for someone to be handicapped in this context? Perhaps, being "caught behind"<sup>12</sup>? This fear of having everyone being taller than you seems to be the driving force behind this ad, and the men weren't buying it. They saw it as "predatory"<sup>13</sup>, "derogatory"<sup>14</sup>, and just plain "rude"<sup>15</sup>.

So, the wording really made them angry, but what about

10. Rhys

11. Ray

12. Hugh

13. Rhys

14. Rhys

15. Ray

the picture? I was personally surprised at their lack of regard for it, after all, it was the main reason I chose this ad in the first place. It makes the obvious selling point of getting a woman with these shoes. Hugh did lightly touch on this, saying that he would prefer a picture of the shoes as opposed to “a woman with a flirty [facial] expression”. But the rest of the men mainly focused on the message of “inferiority”<sup>16</sup> that was portrayed, and the idea that in order to get a girl, you need to be tall. When I asked Sam why this was, he explained to me that “tallness is associated with attractiveness” and “people like pretty people.” After explaining all of this to me about why the product existed, the only man who said he would buy it was Hugh, though Ray greatly considered it. Rhys and Sam gave a strong no. So I wonder, who are these men that understand masculinity, can explain it, identify it, but (apparently) do not give into its selling points?

### Conclusion

As a person who is obsessed with feminism, taking a step back and looking into the male perspective of masculinity was intriguing. It seemed to me that each of the men were affected differently from seeing these ads. Understandably, considering they are all so different. But, none of them were exactly comfortable talking about this. They were definitely struggling to explain these things because this is just the way things are. They don't

<sup>16</sup>. Ray

understand it just because they are men. They simply acknowledge that these are expectations that the world has for them. Whether or not they conform to them is a different story.

Hugh is happy with the way that he lives his life. This idea of masculinity is “hypothetical” to him. “Have confidence and you will appear more attractive to more people.”<sup>17</sup> He enjoys being more masculine and does not necessarily feel forced to do it. He wants to be strong. And don’t we all? I do not fault him for this.

As for Rhys, he is more aware of these pressures surrounding him as compared to Hugh. He was more amused by the ads than anything else. In fact ad 3 was “so predatory [he laughed] a little bit”. Rhys also sees hope for the future. He believed, while we have a ways to go, “the mold is expanding” and we continue to “decouple masculinity from being a man”. Rhys sees the pressures of masculinity in his everyday life, but I would argue that he sees no need to conform to them. He feels comfort in his own actions and personality. And just so everyone knows, Rhys would love to receive the product in ad number 3 as a gift!

Ray was the most offended out of all four men and felt ostracized and unrepresented in these ads. As he correctly pointed out, “all of these ads had white men in them”. The implied question of living in the 60’s during this interview, had a different meaning for Ray. Not only was he faced

17. Hugh

with talking about gender standards, but also racial stereotypes. But, just like Rhys, Ray sees change approaching. He feels that we are “shifting away from a masculine person being a white, tall, strong, man” and learning that “men come in all shapes and sizes”.

Sam definitely had the most fun. When I asked him why people wanted to be tall, he replied “easier access to higher shelves?”. But, this is who Sam is; he is a male who laughs in the face of masculine expectations. While he can explain them, they are ridiculous to him. As he points out, on the Wake Forest campus you can see a guy “wearing skinny jeans with painted nails and blue colored hair.” He encourages self expression and individuality as opposed to the distinct categories of masculine or feminine

As for me, I learned a lot through this process. These men gave me the hope that I think we all are looking for during this difficult time. We see that there are issues in our society, we have improved, and we are continuing to do so. So, for the main question of: Is masculinity forced or welcomed? I would say, the definition of masculinity itself is adapting. It is expanding, becoming less rigid and each man approaches the idea differently according to their own background. You do not have to be physically strong, dominant, emotionless, or even male to be masculine. Masculinity is changing for the better.

*Katelyn is a student at Wake Forest, Class of 2023, majoring*

GENDER AND SEXUALITY THROUGHOUT WORLD HISTORY

*in Elementary Education and minoring in Politics and Creative Writing.*

# THE BOYS IN THE BAND PLAY ON

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Evan Souza

CONTENT WARNING: Please be advised that this piece contains several mentions of slurs historically used in the harassment of the LGBTQ+ community. The author of this chapter deems them necessary for inclusion in order to speak on pre-Stonewall gay life. This piece also mentions the topic of suicide. Proceed at your own discretion.

**Harold:** “What I *am*, Michael, is a thirty-two-year-old, ugly, pock-marked Jew fairy-and if it takes me awhile to pull myself together and if I smoke a little grass before I can get up the nerve to show my face to the world, it’s nobody’s goddamn business but my own... And how are *you* this evening?”<sup>1</sup>

Two full years before police would raid the Stonewall Inn, the line above was spoken onstage Off-Broadway<sup>2</sup> in a new piece by Mart Crowley called “*The Boys in the Band*.” While the inflammatory piece drew much criticism, the show was revolutionary for being the clearest look at gay life pre-Stonewall. With an enduring legacy, the show continues to bite at and appeal to audiences today.

Crowley wrote the piece in 1967 as an answer to a challenge given by theatre critic Stanley Kauffman. Kauffman was upset with the lack of homosexual theatre content that was being written by the three greatest homosexual playwrights of the time, Edward Albee (*Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf*), William Inge (*Picnic* and *Bustop*), and Tennessee Williams (*A Streetcar Named Desire* and *The Glass Menagerie*). His challenge: “Why can’t they just write about their own kind?”<sup>3</sup> Despite the review’s small-mindedness, Crowley decided to take up a pen and start writing. “Homosexual playwrights writing homosexual

1. Mart Crowley, *The Boys in the Band*. (New York; Farrar, Straus + Giroux; 1968), page 63

2. While you might have heard of Broadway productions of shows, productions often start “Off-Broadway” before transferring to the Great White Way. An Off-Broadway theater is distinguished from a Broadway one by size; Off-Broadway theaters seat 100-499 audience members.

3. Robert Hofler, *Sexplosion: from Andy Warhol to “A Clockwork Orange”- How a Generation of Pop Rebels Broke All the Taboos* First edition. New York, N.Y: itbooks, an imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers, 2014, pg 23

characters? ‘It was an interesting notion that no one had done this before.’”<sup>4</sup>

And truly, it hadn’t been done before. Up until that point in theatre history, plenty of gay playwrights had written plays with subtle homosexual themes, but no one had dared put a truly gay character onstage that didn’t die by the end of the play, was dead at the beginning<sup>5</sup>, or their sexuality wasn’t the big plot twist at the end of the third act.

Crowley entitled his work “*The Boys in the Band*,” a reference to the Judy Garland film, “*A Star is Born*.”<sup>6</sup> The story is set in a well-decorated apartment in New York City, owned by the character Michael. Michael is throwing a birthday party for his friend Harold and has invited five other homosexuals to attend. The party starts with the various guests arriving, drinking, and catching up. The dialogue is witty, campy, and well, gay in every sense of the word. The arrival of Michael’s possibly straight college roommate in obvious distress coupled with Harold’s late arrival to his own party throws Michael and the other guests into a downward spiral. As alcohol continues to be poured, slurs are thrown more often than punches, and Michael creates a sadistic game of calling old crushes to “entertain” his guests. By the end of the party, all the

4. Hoffer, *Sexplosion*, pg 24

5. Williams’ “*A Streetcar Named Desire*” features this trope. The protagonist Blanche’s ex-husband Allan Gray killed himself after being caught in a homosexual affair, but he is only mentioned in passing and is not a character in the actual show.

6. Yes, Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper were not the first to play those roles! In 1937, Janet Gaynor and Fredric March picked up the lovers’ roles. In 1954, it was Judy Garland and James Mason. In 1976, it was Barbara Streisand and Kris Kristofferson. And of course, we are familiar with our latest 2018 remake, Charles Kaiser, *The Gay Metropolis: The Landmark History of Gay Life in America* (New York: Grove Atlantic, 2019), pg 186



guests are in disarray, the game ends unwon, and Michael is left to deal with the mess he's created.

If you're thinking that the plot sounds crazy, you'd be correct. The storyline is coherent, but the blowup of each character around the game is the central dramatic action of the piece.<sup>7</sup> How each character faces their old crush and how nasty they all are to each other about the approaches serves as an insight into the contested portion of this text: how clear can you portray homosexual life for an audience before it becomes unattractive and ugly?

Self-loathing is a large through-line for the text, which for a pre-Stonewall piece makes sense. The common fallacy that the critics had of *The Boys in the Band* (henceforth *Boys*) was that the piece portrayed homosexuals as catty, angry, depressed individuals. But Crowley's characters are not ugly to each other because they are gay; they are ugly to each other because they are human. In a world where you are constantly knocked down, harassed, threatened, and even killed for your love, how do you find an outlet for all that pain? Crowley let his characters project that pain onto each other; so they aren't being explicitly homophobic to each other, but rather projecting their lives and trauma onto others so they can tear themselves down. It's a little meta, but one aspect that might clear this up a little bit is the use of slurs in the text.

7. Some clarification on the party game. The challenge is to call someone on the phone who each player believes they have loved. If you call, that's a point. If the old flame picks up, that's two points, if someone else does, that's only one. If you say your name, that's two points. And for a declaration of love, you get five. Therefore, each player can get up to ten points.

**Donald:** Are you calling me a screaming queen or a tired fairy?<sup>8</sup>

Within *Boys*, the characters call each other and themselves every gay slur under the sun. They call each other “screaming queens,” “tired old fairies,” “queer,”<sup>9</sup> “Mary,”<sup>10</sup> “sis,”<sup>11</sup> “fag,”<sup>12</sup> “faggot,” “pansy,” “cocksucker,”<sup>13</sup> and “card-carrying cunt.”<sup>14</sup> It’s hard to listen to, even with the progress made in slur reclamation today. Racial slurs are also thrown around once or twice. While these slurs work themselves into verbal assaults, they also come up in normal conversation between the men. And why? Because this is a glimpse of what gay life looked like before Stonewall. Men of the time reclaimed slurs and called each other slurs in an odd ballet of self-loathing and self-affirmation. Crowley utilizes the language to suggest how before the gay rights movement, gay men truly struggled with their place in society, shunned and slurred by anyone who deemed them deviant. So it’s only fitting that these men use these words to describe each other and indirectly themselves. It’s just part of the truest picture that can be painted about gay life in New York City.<sup>15</sup> It might be ugly or unpalatable to audiences regardless of their sexual orientation, but it’s the truth of the matter.

8. Crowley, *The Boys in the Band*, pg 10

9. Last three slurs: Crowley, *The Boys in the Band*, pg 10

10. Crowley, *The Boys in the Band*, pg 31

11. Crowley, *The Boys in the Band*, pg 31

12. Crowley, *The Boys in the Band*, pg 32

13. Last three slurs: Crowley, *The Boys in the Band*, pg 57

14. Crowley, *The Boys in the Band*, pg 24

15. It is more appropriate to say white, middle-class gay life than make such a broad generalization. While some characters in the piece do not fit all those labels, the majority do and so the piece centers more around that view of life. Also, Crowley himself was a white, middle-class gay man, so that viewpoint colors his writing.

Crowley did not set out to give his audience a pretty, candy-sweet version of homosexuality. Because that's not what homosexuality is or was. Why, in answering a prompt about the lack of truthful homosexual literature, would Crowley sugarcoat his portrayal of gay life when homosexuals experienced hardships and hate every day? And many historians and critics agree that Crowley did give a truthful interpretation. Gay historian Charles Kaiser says that "*The Boys in the Band* was the first 'uncloseted' look at gay life inside a New York closet-with all the brittle intelligence, bitter humor and exaggerated pathos on which white, male, middle-class gay life thrived...". He goes on to say that "Although seen as self-loathing by subsequent generations of gay men, the play was revolutionary because of its honesty and its openness. 'The thing I always hated about homosexual plays was that the homosexuality was always the big surprise in the third act' Crowley said after *Boys* opened. 'Well, life is not like that. Not all faggots bump themselves off at the end of the play.' Gitlin<sup>16</sup> was impressed because 'these were people who were queer who could think, who could talk, who could read. I thought, It's outrageous and terribly courageous.'" In the *New York Times*, theatre critic Clive Barnes called it "by far the frankest treatment of homosexuality I have ever seen."<sup>17</sup>

And it wasn't just the critics talking: the audience loved it. What was supposed to be a limited engagement of less

16. Murray Gitlin stage-managed the first workshop production of *Boys*. See footnote below for citation.

17. For all of the quoted material in this paragraph: Kaiser, *The Gay Metropolis*, pg 187

than ten shows became a much longer, Off-Broadway run. The small theater was often packed full for nights on end, with lines wrapping around the block to see the production. The audiences, unsurprisingly, were made up primarily of men. Remember, this was the first time a gay audience member go attend a show that staged complex gay characters—the first time they saw a bit of themselves onstage, which speaks to its box office numbers. Monetarily the show was a hit: *The Boys in the Band* cost only \$9000 to produce off Broadway, and it returned that investment every 10 days throughout its run in 1968.<sup>18</sup>

But that's not to say the piece wasn't met with opposition. Surprisingly, though, the production and subsequent 1970 film received a lot of attention and criticism from gay people themselves. Edward Albee, who semi-produced the workshop production of the play, hated the piece.<sup>19</sup> It was clear to Albee why *Boys* was such a hit: "It attracted the gays who were eager to see themselves onstage under any circumstances, as well as the straights who were eager to feel superior."<sup>20</sup> The show and subsequent movie was also heavily criticized by Frank Kameny and his homophile movement.<sup>21</sup> Kameny said that he "hated the play and the movie. He said his slogan 'gay

18. Hoffer, *Sexplosion*, pg 87

19. Albee was an outstanding critic of the show despite being involved with the earliest workshop of it. This might be because *Boys* was meant to answer the pointed attack Kauffman made to Albee and the other homosexual playwrights of the day. Or it might have been that the plot of *Boys* oddly resembles and emulates Albee's own *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and was arguably more revolutionary and successful than *Woolf*.

20. Hoffer, *Sexplosion*, pgs 43-44

21. Frank Kameny is one of the most important names in the battle for gay rights. Kameny was discharged from federal office for being homosexual and fought tirelessly for gay rights a full decade before Stonewall. His "homophile" movement was the first gay organization to march before the White House. However, in order to remain an air of respectability, Kameny's movement was shockingly conservative, at least by today's standards. For further reading on Kameny and his impact, I recommend *The Deviant's War: The Homosexual vs. The United States of America* by Eric Cervini.

is good' was intended as a 'direct antidote to the mindset among gays epitomized by that abomination, *Boys in the Band*.'" <sup>22</sup> Post-Stonewall audiences also found the depiction of homosexuals as grinding and unhelpful to the cry for gay rights. Another early gay rights society, the Mattachine society, actually picketted a movie house showing the 1970 film in San Francisco. <sup>23</sup> Some straight audiences found the movie abhorrent or deviant, while some gay audiences found it ingratiating or demeaning. The intense self-loathing, narcissism, and outright nastiness in the piece was distasteful for queer audiences, and many civil rights groups saw the piece as a step backwards in the fight for gay rights.

But despite the controversy the piece carries, there's no way to downplay the revolution onstage that it began. Emerging off-Broadway at the same time as *Hair*, <sup>24</sup> *Boys* helped push the limit of what was acceptable onstage. Just a year after *Boys* opened, six different off-Broadway shows featured gay themes. <sup>25</sup> Gay theatre historian Drewery Wayne Gunn says about *Boys*: "It's historical importance is simple: for the first time we had eight men on stage who acknowledge they are gay, several of them even celebrating the fact, one pair reaffirming a committed relationship. It is not going too far to say that one can divide gay theater into before *Boys* and after *Boys*." <sup>26</sup> The 1970 film was the

22. Kaiser, *The Gay Metropolis*, pg 190

23. Hofer, *Sexplosion*, pgs 181-182

24. The musical *Hair* is a psychedelic rock musical that shocked audiences on Broadway with songs entitled "Sodomy" and "Going Down" as well as full cast nudity and the burning of draft cards onstage.

25. Kaiser, *The Gay Metropolis*, pg 190

26. Gunn, Drewery Wayne, *For the Gay Stage: a Guide to 456 Plays, Aristophanes to Peter Gill* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2017), pg 6

first major motion picture to depict homosexuality, which means it served as an educational tool for its audience, for better or for worse: “For the first time, millions of moviegoers became acquainted with a group of homosexuals. Visual images are powerful, especially when viewers have no previous first-hand knowledge of the subject being featured. So the film had an unprecedented impact on the public’s collective knowledge about and attitudes toward homosexuals.”<sup>27</sup>

Emory: [*Bursting in*] ALL RIGHT THIS IS A RAID! EVERYBODY’S UNDER ARREST! [*This entrance is followed by a loud raucous laugh as EMORY throws his arms around MICHAEL and gives him a big kiss on the cheek...*]<sup>28</sup>

If I might insert my own analysis on the messages the story tells, I think despite showing a limited view of white, middle-class gay life, the piece makes big leaps in the themes it tackles and the diversity it shows within the community. The work juggles almost every topic and touches on every stereotype that could ever be in a “gay play”; it speaks on police raids and cruising,<sup>29</sup> open relationships and promiscuity, internalized homophobia and closeted “Christ-I-was-drunk-last-night” syndrome,

27. Rodger Streitmatter, *From Perverts to Fab Five: The Media's Changing Depiction of Gay Men and Lesbians* (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2008), pg 36

28. Emory imitates police raiding a gay bar as a twisted joke for his first entrance, reminding the audience of the harsh reality queer individuals faced at the time. Crowley, *The Boys in the Band*, pg 24

29. Cruising is the practice of searching public places for sexual partners; it was a practice common for gay men historically.

narcissism, racism and anti-Semitism inside the community, hustling,<sup>30</sup> substance abuse for a variety of vices, and even suicide. Anything that could've been in the piece about gay life at the time, was. And I think the work speaks a lot on diversity within the community itself. While it handles race in a contested way, the characters are quite diverse in occupation (ranging from stereotypical interior designers to the common math teacher), in physical appearance (from young, fit hustlers to the aging acne-scarred), in religion (both Jewish and Christian faiths are shown, particularly Catholicism), and even in relationship status (monogamous to open relationship ideas).

50 years after the first showing of *Boys*, Crowley revived his project on Broadway with Joe Mantello on as director and an all-star cast including Jim Parsons, Matt Bomer, and Zachary Quinto.<sup>31</sup> The 2018 Broadway revival stood as a litmus test for audiences to see how far the LGBTQ+ community has come and how much hasn't changed at all. Netflix has recently released a film adaptation of the play, taking with it the revival's full cast and director Joe Mantello. Mart Crowley passed away in March of 2020, a few months shy of the second film release of his revolutionary piece of art that he wrote on a challenge.

The portion of the text I've selected comes from the very end of the piece, when tensions have exploded, final

30. A colloquial term for prostitution; one character in *Boys* is a male prostitute named Cowboy who is hired to be a present for Harold, the birthday boy.

31. Something interesting to note about the 2018 revival is that Mantello specifically casted gay actors to play each role in the piece.

moves are being made, and each of the guests are leaving. You'll see clearly the ascerbicity in the air as the phone tag game and party draws to an end. Upon first read-through, Harold's message seems like a death blow to Michael's self-destructive nature. "But hidden in the subtext is a surprisingly liberating message. Harold is proclaiming the immutability of homosexuality – and the appalling complicity of psychiatry and religion and gay self-hatred. Thousands of psychiatrists had committed unprosecutable malpractice by nurturing the mess that homosexuality could be-and should be-cured, instead of encouraging gay people to value themselves for who they were."<sup>32</sup> Michael's full blown panic attack and breakdown bring one of, if not the most, famous lines in the whole show: "if we could just not hate ourselves so much." It's a line that hits home hard. That's the essence of this revolutionary piece: it showed others that they were not the only ones struggling to be gay in a pre-Stonewall America, and continues to show audiences today the hurt and resilience that the LGBTQ+ community has grappled and is grappling with. It's not just a catty account of "screaming queens" taking their frustration out on each other; it's a peer into what it means to be human, and how those in the LGBTQ+ community must come to terms with their humanity every day. And now, without further ado, CURTAIN UP!

32. Kaiser, *The Gay Metropolis*, pg 189



A Selection from *The Boys in the Band*<sup>33</sup>

**Harold:** [*Calmly, coldly, clinically*] Now it is my turn. And ready or not, Michael, here goes. [*A beat*] You are a sad and pathetic man. You're a homosexual and you don't want to be. But there's nothing you can do to change it. Not all your prayers to your God, all the analysis<sup>34</sup> you can buy in all the years you've got left to live. You may very well one day be able to know a heterosexual life if you want it desperately enough-if you pursue it with the fervor with which you annihilate-but you always be homosexual as well. Always, Michael. Always. Until the day you die. [*Turns, gathers his gifts, goes to EMORY. EMORY stands up unsteadily*] Oh, friends, thanks for the nifty party and the super gift. [*Looks toward COWBOY*] it's just what I needed. [*EMORY smiles. HAROLD gives him a hug, spots BERNARD sitting on the floor, head bowed...*] Bernard, thank you. [*No response. To EMORY*] Will you get him home?

**Emory:** Don't worry about her. I'll take care of everything. [*HAROLD turns to DONALD, who is at the bar making himself another drink*]

**Harold:** Donald, good to see you.

**Donald:** Good night, Harold. See you again sometime.

33. Crowley, *The Boys in the Band*, pages 125-129

34. Short for psychoanalysis, meaning therapy. Harold is saying that all the therapy Michael could ever attend would never make him straight.

**Harold:** Yeah. How about a year from Shavuoth?<sup>35</sup>  
[HAROLD goes to COWBOY] Come on, Tex. Let's go to my place. [COWBOY gets up, comes to him] Are you any good in bed?

**Cowboy:** Well...I'm not like the average hustler you'd meet. I try to show a little affection-it keeps me from feeling like such a whore.

[A beat. HAROLD turns. COWBOY opens the door for them. They start out. HAROLD pauses]

**Harold:** Oh, Michael... Thanks for the laughs. Call you tomorrow.

[No response. A beat. HAROLD and COWBOY exit]

**Emory:** Come on, Bernard. Time to go home.  
[EMORY, frail as he is, manages to pull BERNARD'S arm around his neck, get some on his feet] Oh, Mary, you're a heavy mother.

**Bernard:** [practically an audible mumble] Why did I call? Why?

**Emory:** Thank you, Michael. Good night, Donald.

**Donald:** Goodbye, Emory.

**Bernard:** Why...

**Emory:** It's all right, Bernard. Everything is all right. I'm going to make you some coffee and everything's going to be all right.

[EMORY virtually carries BERNARD out.  
DONALD closes the door. Silence.

35. A Jewish festival celebrating the giving of the Torah. This is Harold joking about his Jewish identity and saying he'd rather not see Donald again.

MICHAEL slowly slips from the couch onto the floor. A beat. Then slowly he begins a low moan that increases in volume – almost like a siren. Suddenly he slams his open hands to his ears]

Michael: *[in desperate panic]* Donald! Donald! DONALD! DONALD! *[DONALD puts down his drink, rushes to MICHAEL. MICHAEL is now white with fear and tears are bursting from his eyes. He begins to gasp his words]* Oh, no! No! What have I done! Oh, my God, what have I done! *[MICHAEL writhing. DONALD holds him, cradles him in his arms]*

Donald: Michael! Michael!

Michael: *[weeping]* Oh, no! NO! It's beginning! The liquor is starting to wear off and the anxiety is beginning! Oh, NO! No! I feel it! I know it's going to happen. Donald! Donald! Don't leave me! Please! Please! Oh, my God, what have I done! Oh Jesus, the guilt! I can't handle it anymore. I won't make it!

Donald: *[physically subduing him]* Michael! Michael! Stop it! Stop it! I'll give you a Valium-I've got some in my pocket!

Michael: *[Hysterical]* No! No! Pills and alcohol-I'll die!

Donald: I'm not going to give you the whole bottle! Come on, let go of me!

Michael: *[clutching him]* NO!

Donald: Let go of me long enough for me to get my hand in my pocket!

**Michael:** Don't leave! [*MICHAEL quiets down a bit, lets go of DONALD enough for him to take a small plastic bottle from his pocket and open it to give MICHAEL a tranquilizer*]

**Donald:** Here.

**Michael:** [*sobbing*] I don't have any water to swallow it with!

**Donald:** Well, if you'll wait one goddamn minute, I'll get you some! [*MICHAEL lets go of him. He goes to the bar, gets a glass of water and returns*] Your water, your Majesty. [*A beat.*] Michael, stop that goddamn crying and take this pill!

[*MICHAEL straightens up, puts the pill into his mouth amid choking sobs, takes the water, drinks, returns the glass to DONALD*].

**Michael:** I'm the Ole Man River-tired of livin' and scared o' dyin'.

[*DONALD puts the glass on the bar, comes back to the couch, sits down. MICHAEL collapses into his arms, sobbing. Pause*]

**Donald:** Shhhhhh. Shhhhhh. Michael. Shhhhhh. Michael. Michael.

[*DONALD rocks him back and forth. He quiets. Pause*]

**Michael:** ... If we... if we could just... not hate ourselves so much. That's it, you know. If we could just *learn* not to hate ourselves so very much.

**Donald:** Yes, I know. I know. [*A beat*]

Inconceivable as it may be, you used to be way worse than you are now. [A beat] Maybe with a lot more work you can help yourself some more- if you try. [MICHAEL straightens up, dries his eyes on his sleeve]

**Michael:** Who was it that used to always say, “you show me a happy homosexual, and I’ll show you a gay corpse.”

**Donald:** I don’t know. Who was it who always used to say that?

**Michael:** And how dare you come on with that holier-than-thou attitude with me! “A lot more work,” “if I try,” indeed! You’ve got a long road to hoe before you’re perfect, you know.

**Donald:** I never said I didn’t.

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## Appendix 1: Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

*The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)* is reproduced here from <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

### Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective



recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2.

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3.

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4.

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5.

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6.

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7.

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8.

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10.

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11.

(1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13.

- (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
- (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14.

- (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
- (2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15.

- (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.
- (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16.

- (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
- (2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

## GENDER AND SEXUALITY THROUGHOUT WORLD HISTORY

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

### Article 17.

(1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

### Article 18.

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

### Article 19.

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

### Article 20.

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly

and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21.

(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22.

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23.

(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

## GENDER AND SEXUALITY THROUGHOUT WORLD HISTORY

- (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
- (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

### Article 24.

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

### Article 25.

- (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
- (2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26.

- (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
- (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27.

- (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
- (2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.



Article 28.

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29.

(1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30.

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

## Appendix 2: Gendered Violence in Puerto Rico

*An Examination of Past and Present Acts of Aggression  
Against Women*

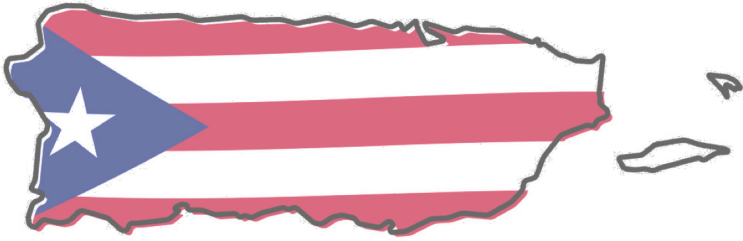
Maria Fernanda

### Introduction

As a woman in her twenties, I've always been concerned with issues regarding gender and sexuality in both past and present societies. Even when we don't realize it, how we label ourselves is a factor that greatly influences our life experiences. Growing up, I was faced with many such instances – I would be walking down a street and receive comments from men that would make me incredibly uncomfortable. No matter where I was, what I wore, or who I was with, I frequently seemed to encounter men who felt entitled to give their opinions on my body. Because of this, I decided it would be prudent to examine how violence against women has changed across decades –

## GENDER AND SEXUALITY THROUGHOUT WORLD HISTORY

with a specific focus on Puerto Rican society. As I aimed to uncover the root of this problem, I will present as evidence key cases that have inspired island-wide uproar.



Simplified map puerto rico outline by [Lubolvanko on Vectorstock](#)

# Newspaper coverage on protest

## international news

## puerto ricans march against

"Buenas noches, asesinada en tu casa por su esposo... Adelaida Ruiz Fuentes, en San Juan, a la edad de 81 por su violador...."

Mujer asesinada, muerte a puñaladas por su esposo... Adelaida Ruiz Fuentes, en San Juan, a la edad de 81 por su violador...."

"Buenas noches, asesinada en tu casa por su esposo... Adelaida Ruiz Fuentes, en San Juan, a la edad de 81 por su violador...."

Anonymous Women, beaten to death by a gang of mafiosos... Ana Maria Villalaz, at the age of 8 by her rapist...."

Over 1,000 women, men and children marched through the city of San Juan (Puerto Rico) to the Capitol building last November 29, chanting and talking, carrying gasoline flares and banners, pushing baby strollers, and demonstrating a proud refusal to remain silent—or hidden—about the problem of violence against women.

The march was led by a single and eloquent banner proclaiming *ROMPAMOS EL SILENCIO* (Let's Break the Silence), and starkly breaking down the numbers of killings of women here into statistics for the year, of murders by husbands and by rapists.

Among the groups that marched behind this banner was a strikingly disparate group of thirty women which included a bride in her



A march against violence against women in San Juan, Puerto Rico on November 29, 1983. The large sign on the right reads: Let's Break The Silence. Women Together Let's Save Our Lives.

distributing an illustrated paper urging all women to meet with co-workers, neighbors and friends to discuss their shared problems and to look for solutions which will benefit all women.

The march and rally which followed was planned by a wide

The first march ever held here proclaiming "No More Violence Against Women" was in November, 1982. Most of the groups participating in the march have organized themselves within the past year, many in response to the 1982 march. Women and men of all ages seem to be finding the time and the strength to follow the advice that they shouted as they wove through the darkened streets of Old San Juan: "¡No te quedes escondida! grita, lucha por tu vida!" (Don't stay hidden/Scream and fight for your life!)

Although some neighbors along the march route watched the procession from their windows, the march itself was very self-contained. There was no support or participation from the sides, and neither

was there any jeering or violence along the route.

The march concluded with a rally at the Capitol building. Lydia Falcon, founder of the Spanish Feminist Party, addressed the crowd and compared the status of women in Spain and Puerto Rico. In Puerto Rico she found women more passive and domestic than in her country, and more influenced by individual men, while in Spain the oppression of women by the government is greater than in Puerto Rico, and hundreds of women who have survived illegal abortions are now in jail for having those abortions.

The closing act of the evening was performed by the *Brigada de Teatro Popular* (Popular Theater Brigade). On the steps of the Capitol building, before a backdrop of silent dance and theater, two women chanted a seemingly endless litany comprised of a list of the names, ages, and details of the murders of 118 women who have died here at the hands of their husbands, boyfriends and rapists. Punctuating this litany was a fervent promise, shouted together by the speakers and the march participants: "¡Tu muerte no será en vano! ¡Mueras nosotros luchamos!" (Your death will not be in vain! As long as we struggle!)

by Lynn Yanis

For more information:  
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Avenida 1318, Esplanada Roberto Roy  
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00910  
Grupo de Mujeres  
c/o Maryte Acostado  
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Puerto Rico  
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00910  
Comunidad Puertorriqueña de la  
Baja California  
Avenida 1318, Esplanada Roberto Roy  
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00910  
Redacción: Centro de Información  
y Servicios a la Mujer  
Avenida 1318, Esplanada Roberto Roy  
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00910



The placard reads: I want to grow up in a world without violence.

**'We represent all the different roles of women -- a bride, a domestic, a teacher-- and men try to rape us all.'**

wedding gown, a domestic worker carrying a bucket and wearing rubber gloves, several nuns, secretaries, teachers and students, a nurse, a three-piece-suit executive, and a green-bellied karate student. The bride (dressed in organza with seed pearls) said that the group had organized themselves; she had been asked to participate dressed as a model but declined, and then chose to march in her own wedding gown. "We present all the different roles of women--a bride, a domestic, a teacher--and men try to rape us all," she said. The karate artist expressed similar reasons for marching in her outfit, saying "I want to show that I could be a karateka and I still couldn't resist...we have to share experiences."

Other participants in the events included feminists on Marcha (Feminists on the Move), a newly-formed group of feminists who sold T-shirts and arranged for the gasoline flares in the nighttime march. *Mujeres Artistas de Puerto Rico* (Women Artists of Puerto Rico), a four-year-old group of women artists whose show is presently touring the U.S.; and *Grupo de Mujeres* (Group of Women), a recently organized group dealing with basic issues of shared housework and childcare, equality of women in society, and the right of women to exist outside of domestic role. *Grupo de Mujeres*

range of women's groups, notably Taller Salud (Health Workshop/Center), *Encuentro de Mujeres* (Women Getting Together), *Casa Protegida* (Safe House for victims of domestic violence, named after a famous Puerto Rican poet who was found dead on the streets of New York), and *Colectivo Luisa Capetillo* (a collective of students, workers, mothers and unemployed women named after a 19th century Puerto Rican feminist who supported "free love" and was the first woman to wear pants outside of her house), which publishes a bulletin called *Tribuna de Mujer*.

The feeling of the march was best illustrated by the self-organized group of 30 women located near the front of the march. Puerto Rico is a country full of intensely strong political allegiances, and yet the march succeeded in representing no political parties or partisan points of view, and in uniting a great number of disparate groups and individuals, just as the group of 30 women symbolized vastly different roles, while highlighting our sameness as objects of anti-female violence. The march as a whole represented dozens of groups and hundreds of individuals with differing points of view, but maintained a strong focus on the outrage of violence against women.

page 4/Off our backs/january 1984

Image Source: "Puerto Ricans March Against." by Yanis, L. Off Our Backs 14. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25794211>

## The Puerto Rican feminist movement



Grupo Feminista protests with Madres de la Plaza de Mayo by Alicia D'Amico. Image Source: Photo by Alicia D'Amico. <https://hammer.ucla.edu/radical-women/research/chronology>

Domestic violence is an unforgiving global problem that affects the lives of women in Puerto Rico every day. Only recently has the issue of violence against women has been mainstreamed via agencies that address health, human rights, women's rights, and refugee protection.

Although the vast majority of domestic abuse cases are not reported to law enforcement agencies, police statistics on the Island reveal an alarming trend. In 1983, eighty-one percent of the murders of women were committed by a family member or friend – which to sixty-four percent in 1985. This points to incidents of domestic abuse as being

increasingly aggressive that would rise in both frequency and intensity.

As a result of the Puerto Rican government's inability to ratify international human rights treaties and conventions on its own, members of the feminist movements took matters into their own hands. As can be seen, by the news article above, women from all over the Island, along with various established feminist groups, took to the streets of the Capitol to protest the dismissal of this violence pandemic. Recognized groups like the *Casa Protegida Julia de Burgos* (Julia Burgos Protected House) and the *Colectivo Luisa Capetillo*<sup>1</sup> could be seen at the forefront of this march.

Over the last decade, some significant progress has been made in the area of domestic violence in Latin America. Puerto Rico, through the enactment of Law 54<sup>2</sup>, was included as one of these Latin American nations acting to end impunity for domestic violence perpetrators (Roure, 2011).

The *Casa Protegida Julia de Burgos* is the first shelter for women who are survivors of domestic violence established in Puerto Rico in 1979. Since it was founded, Casa Julia has been instrumental in preparing plans for escape, security, and contingency, in creating safe spaces for mothers and their children being stalked by their aggressors or who

1. Luisa Capetillo was a pioneer of feminism and unionism. She always stood out for being an active woman and for her fight for the equality of women and the rights of workers. She promoted the anarchist ideal and feminism through her writings.

2. Law for the Prevention and Intervention with Domestic Violence, see <http://www.bvirtual.ogp.pr.gov/ogp/Bvirtual/leyesreferencia/PDF/Y%20-%20Ingl%C3%A9s/54-1089.pdf>

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are at imminent risk of suffering physical or psychological damage. Through shelter, orientation, and counseling, survivors are guided through an empowerment process that allows them to recognize their potential to take control of their lives and live free of violence.

You can find more information about Casa Protegida Julia de Burgos on their website [www.casajulia.org](http://www.casajulia.org). If you are in a situation of violence you can contact Casa Protegida Julia de Burgos at 787-723-3500 for help.

### Machismo and violence



Image Source: An original illustration by Puerto Rican artist [Mónica Alejandra](#) for the ¡Cambia Ya! Campaign.



Image Source: Protests against gendered violence in Puerto Rico in [Nueva Mujer](#)



Image Source: Photo by [Ana María Abruña Reyes](#).





Image Source: Protest in Puerto Rico by [Otras Voces en Educación](#)



Image Source: Violence against women campaign in [Feminist Economy](#)



Image Source: Photo from [Movimiento Amplio de Mujeres de Puerto Rico Facebook page](#)

A culture of male dominance and patriarchy in Puerto Rico plays a major role in the underreporting of domestic violence by female victims.

“Two principal characteristics appear in the study of machismo. The first is aggressiveness. Each macho must show that he is masculine, strong, and physically powerful. Differences, verbal or physical abuse, or challenges must be met with fists or other weapons. The true macho shouldn’t be afraid of anything, and he should be capable of drinking quantities of liquor without necessarily getting drunk.

The other major characteristic of machismo is hypersexuality... the culturally preferred goal is the conquest of women, the more the better. To take advantage of a young woman sexually is cause for pride and prestige, not blame. In fact, some men will commit adultery just to prove to themselves they can do it... Sexual conquest is to satisfy male vanity. Indeed, one’s potency must be known by others, which leads to bragging and storytelling...The woman loves but the man conquers –

this lack of emotion is part superiority of the male.”  
(Ingoldsby, 1991)



Image Source: “Graffiti art covered by warning sign” by [Bérengère Sim](#)

## From the '80s to 2020: comparison of past and present crimes



Image Source: "Woman standing in street" by [Éric Rojas for The New York Times](#)

"In 1995-1996, 13 percent of adult women in Puerto Rico reported that they had been physically assaulted by an intimate partner. From 1997 to 2003, women were the large majority of domestic violence victims, comprising approximately 83-90 percent of the targets in domestic violence incidents. In 2003, a woman was killed on average every 15.2 days. The data from 2001 to 2008 indicates that 178 women were killed by their partners or ex-partners on the Island." (Roure, 2011).

In 2018, there was an increase of more than double of deaths due to gender violence in Puerto Rico compared to

## GENDER AND SEXUALITY THROUGHOUT WORLD HISTORY

the previous year. The island hadn't seen a surge in cases like this since 2011. Out of forty-four women murdered, twenty-three were at the hands of their current or ex-partners. These women were either stabbed, beaten, or shot. Some were killed in front of their young children, while others were thrown onto the road like objects that were no longer useful. All of them had their dignity, their rights, and their futures ripped away.



Image Source: Photo from [Movimiento Amplio de Mujeres de Puerto Rico Facebook page](#)



Protest for murdered women occupies streets of Milla de Oro by La Juntilla. Image Source: "Bodies of victims of gendered violence in PR" by [La Juntilla](#)

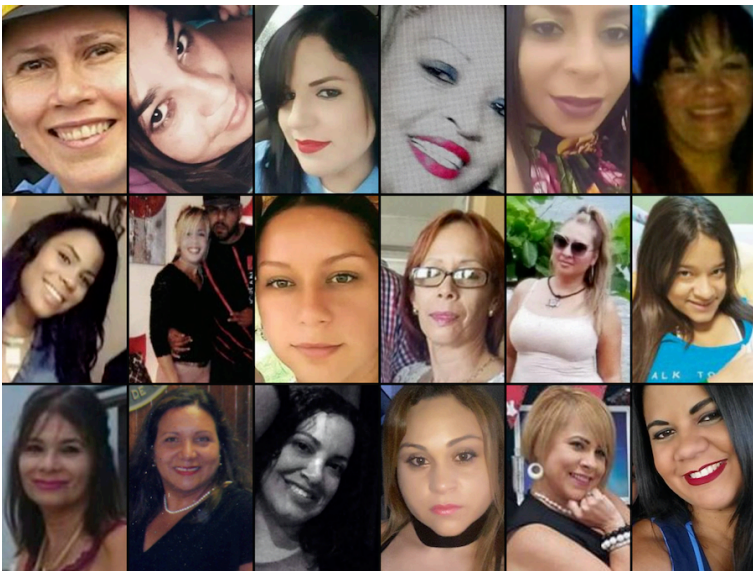


Image Source: "Victims of gendered violence" by [Heidee Rolón Cintrón](#)

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Jaqueline Vega Sánchez, 43 years-old

- Her body was found in a state of decomposition inside a plastic bag on the streets of Río Piedras. Blood stains were found inside the residence of her ex-husband.

Zuliani Calderón Nieves, 38 years-old

- The murderer broke the glass in the driver's side door of her car before shooting Zuliani several times. The crime occurred in front of her two children, they were 10 and 13 at the time.

Moesha Hiraldo Maldonado, 19 years-old

- After being transported to the hospital for multiple gunshot wounds in her chest and legs, Moesha died. She was a mother of two.

Marisol Ortiz Alameda, 28 years-old

- Before committing suicide, Marisol's boyfriend shot her multiple times. The murder occurred in Lajas.

Ilia Millán Meléndez, 44 years-old

- Five days after being reported missing in Fajardo, her body was found in a state of decomposition stabbed multiple times in a



cemetery in San Lorenzo.

What now?



Image Source: "Feminist pleas for a state of emergency in regards to gendered violence" by [Ramón "Tonito" Zayas](#)

To truly achieve change, we need to hold accountable



those in power that have turned a blind eye for far too long. There needs to be ongoing dialogue between the Puerto Rican government, the victims who manage to escape with their lives, and the community organizers to properly define the needed measures and how to properly protect its citizens.

The Women's Advocate Office is one of those organizations already working towards eradicating gendered violence. They have developed an educational campaign that emphasizes our responsibility as citizens and victims' protection as part of their empowerment process. One of their campaign slogans, "Love doesn't kill, but machismo does", looked to engage the community and educate women.<sup>3</sup>

It's important to understand that no one is exempt from this pandemic. If you are interested in learning more about the effects of gendered violence in Latin America, see Repetto's "Women against violence against women", Hume's "The politics of violence", Fregosos' "Terrorizing Women: Femicide in the Americas" and countless others.

3. To learn more about what the WAO does in Puerto Rico, see Roure's Gender Justice in Puerto Rico: Domestic Violence, Legal Reform, and the Use of International Human Rights Principles.



Image Source: "Sign on streets of Puerto Rico" by [Andrea P. Montañez González](#)

If you or anyone you know has been a victim of gendered violence, access this website for support:  
<https://www.thehotline.org>

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Image Source: Bad Bunny abandons his music career temporarily to join protests in Puerto Rico in [Head Topics: España](#)

*I am a native Puerto Rican who is passionate about shedding light on the pandemic that is gendered violence on the Island and to bring justice to its victims. As of 2020, I am in my third year at Wake Forest University, where I hope to obtain a degree in Biology so as to continue on the path to an M.D.*