

2018 / Issue 1

THE F - W O R D



FEMINISM:
THE EQUALITY OF
THE SEXES

Featuring

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FETISHIZATION OF ASIAN WOMEN

Disclaimer: We acknowledge that Asian men are also affected by harmful stereotypes. However, this article will focus on the history and modern effect of the fetishization of Asian women.

By Hana Widerman & Star Hu

On one of my first days of Transitions, we played the name game. There were three of us--three East Asian girls--in that group, and one of the boys called a girl by my name. When she said that he got her name wrong, instead of apologizing, he shrugged and said, "Same thing." In a group emphasizing diversity there still was a clear misconception that all Asian girls were the same: in personalities and in looks. We were so identical that our names didn't need to be learned to distinguish between us. Our individual identities did not matter. This erasing of individuality is also a contributing factor to fetishization of Asian women, and this fetishization ultimately begins to lead something much more dire: dehumanization of Asian women. Fetishization inherently means not caring about the person as an individual because of their gender and race.

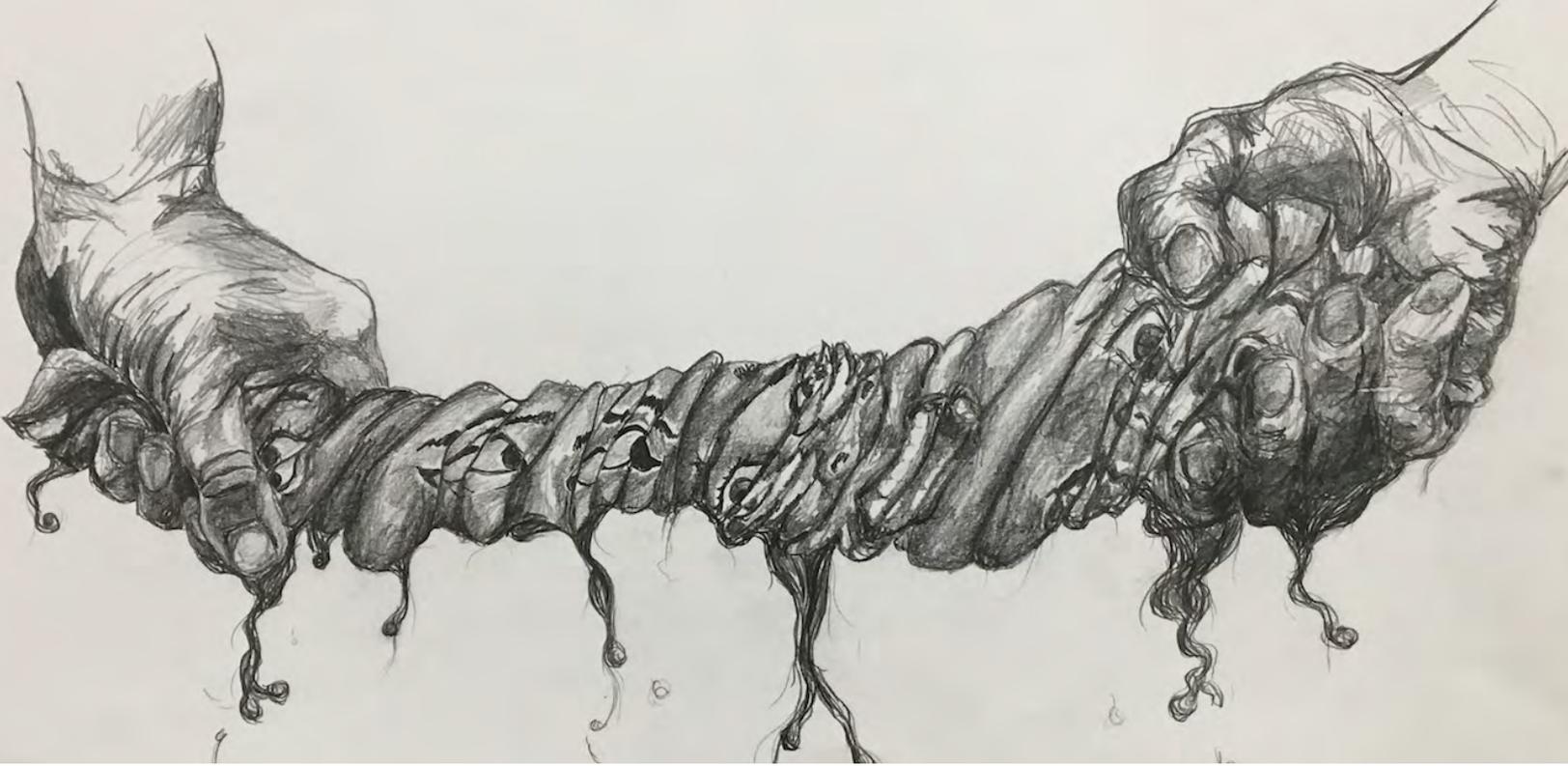
The history behind the fetishization of Asian women dates back to U.S. military presence in Asia during the Second World War, Korean War, and Vietnam War. Brothels would often cater to American soldiers and be located outside of their camps. Japan enslaved approximately 200,000 women across Asia in World War II, and US occupation authorities subverted the system for US soldiers' "Recreation Amusement Association." US military presence in Asia caused the creation of local sex industries and sex trafficking rings. Therefore, some of the first encounters of American soldiers revolved around the idea that Asian women existed to serve them sexually. Furthermore, the eroticization of Japanese geisha-- as prostitutes, demure, beautiful, always eager to please-- has remained a continued presence in the Western World. This image continues in the form of "sexy geisha" Halloween costumes as well as popular books such as *Memoirs of a Geisha*, written by Arthur Golden-- a white man. These stereotypes are often extended past Japanese women to all Asian women, blurring the distinct identities between East Asian cultures. Another idea that contributes to the fetishization of Asian women is the view that Asian women are "different" or "exotic." This idea stems from orientalism--the stereotyped lens through which the European or Western World view Asian and North African cultures. Orientalism tends to "other" and caricaturize either through demonization or idealization. Labelling women as

"Oriental" objectifies East Asian women as exotic commodities, and it lumps Chinese, Japanese, and Korean identities as one.

The term "Yellow Fever" usually applies to men who often date Asian women--seeming to have a sexual preference for them because of harmful stereotypes attributed to Asian women. These qualities can include being submissive, delicate, and meek. They are seen as pretty dolls, delicate vases, or "Lotus Blossoms." Being docile is about being obedient to men--the fetishization of Asian women is another clear example of misogyny. That attitude is demeaning and have real consequences. In the US, up to 61% of Asian women experience physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner during her lifetime. Fetishization is about power dynamics, and Yellow Fever is more than an innocent preference. The fact that docility is a favorable quality in Asian women implies that non-Asian women are too opinionated and that men prefer women who submit to their every demand. The fetishization of Asian women serves the fantasies of Western heterosexual men as our gender, race, and sexuality, or its perceptions, become ruled by it.

Moreover, the fact that docility is a favorable quality in Asian women implies that non-Asian women are too opinionated and that men prefer women who submit to their every demand. Yellow Fever is more than an innocent preference for straight, black hair and almond eyes.

The fetishization of Asian women serves the fantasies of Western heterosexual men as our gender, race, and sexuality, or its perceptions, are ruled by it.



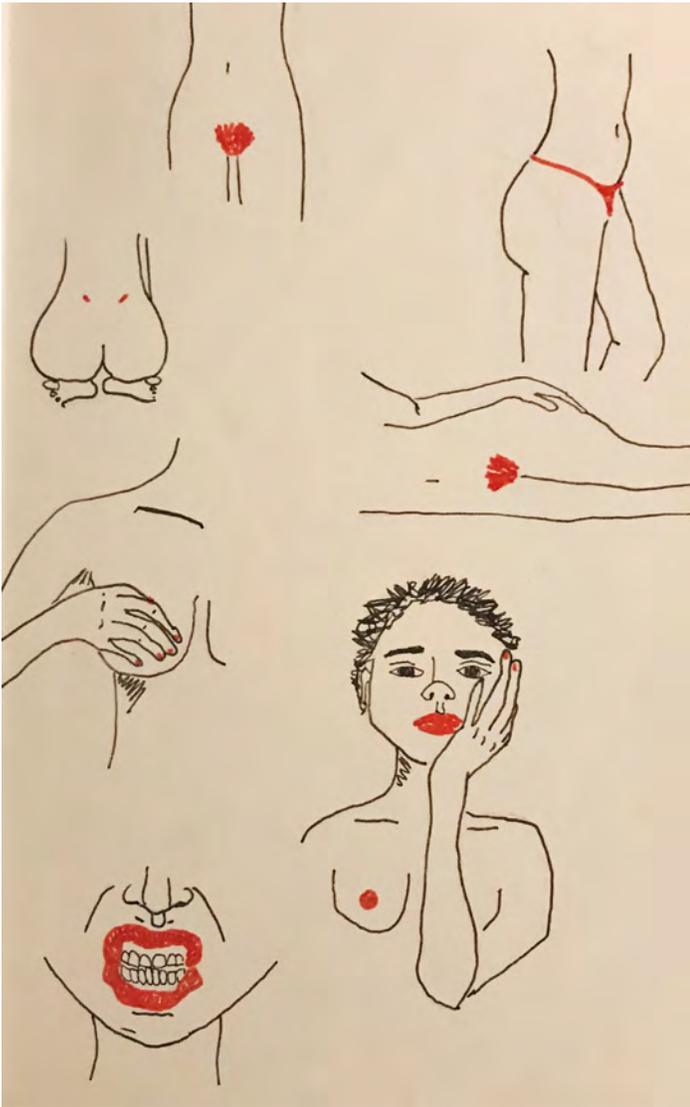
AN OPINION ON HOOKUP CULTURE

Anonymous

Talking with other girls about how they've experienced hookups makes me genuinely sad. Before I had ever hooked up with anybody, I didn't really think of it as anything major. We live in a generation that's much more progressive than previous ones, one in which many women are feeling comfortable reclaiming their sexuality; Amber Rose managed to create a movement with her Slutwalk. I think that this newfound pride in being "slutty" is very empowering; women should feel comfortable doing whatever they want with their own bodies. But the truth is that it's only empowering for some

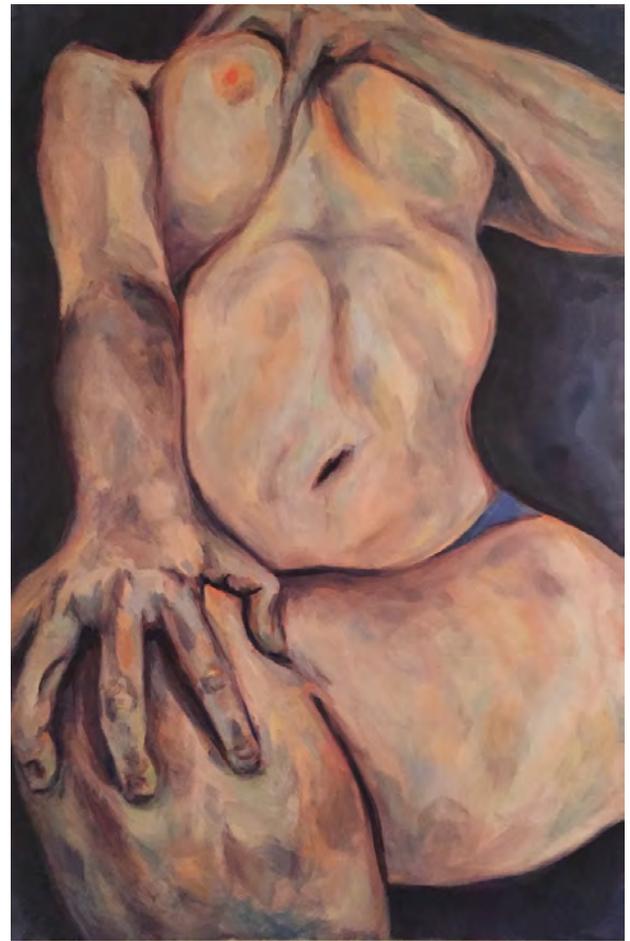
people. For others, guys and girls alike, hooking up might feel like something more vulnerable than just the physical, and it feels as though a nonchalant attitude about hooking up is now expected of all girls, which is equally as toxic. The amount of things that circulate, from whether or not a girl gives good head to whether or not she decided to shave (which is her choice), makes emotionless hook ups rather unenjoyable for some people. As opposed to being concerned with your comfort, all there is to focus on is if you're doing it right. The pressure that girls feel to hook up is insane, so

insane that sometimes we feel forced and I can't tell whether anyone really knows that or cares. To an outsider looking in, denying a hookup appears easy, but a million things run through your mind all at once: am I going to hurt this person's feelings? Will I be labeled as unworthy of attention? I wasn't sure if my experiences were very universal, but the amount of people that I've talked to who feel just as used is shocking. This "obligation" to cater to the hook up scene as it already exists makes one worry that this cycle will never change.



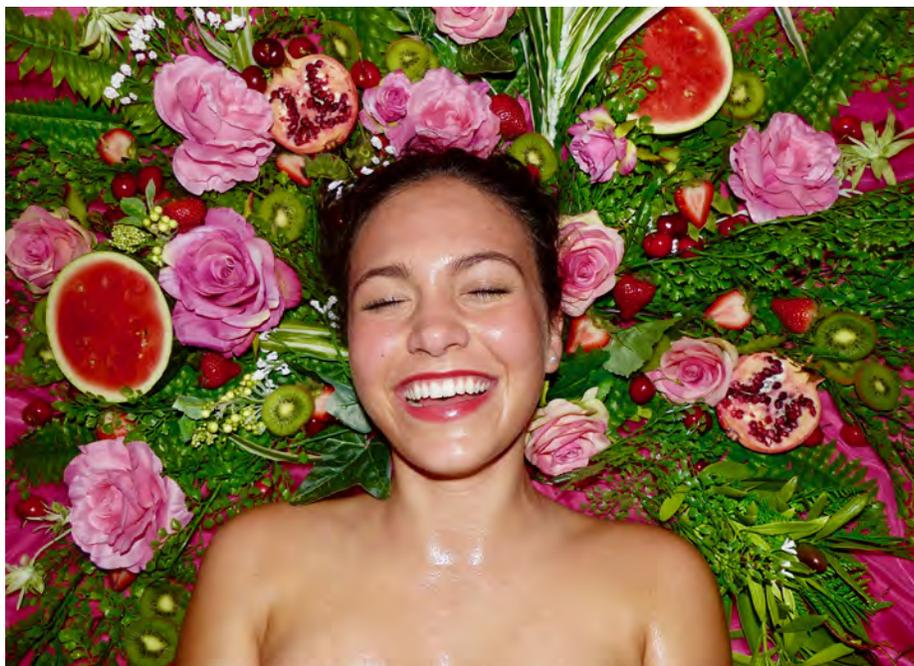
An Explicit Self-Exploration

Kano Watanabe



On The Outside

Hannah Hachamovitch



Untitled

Chloë Walker

HOW MILTON MADE ME A FEMINIST

By Olivia Wang

If you asked me three years ago what feminism meant, I would have no answer, not because I was too young, or because the community in which I lived in was so equal that I didn't need to know of feminism, but because I genuinely had no clue that people actually fought for gender equality. Growing up in China, all I knew was the culture of sexism. It seemed to me that at no point in her life was a woman ever supposed to live equivalent to males: as children, the girls around me obeyed their fathers; as wives, women listened to their husbands; as widows, women even complied with their sons. Patronized by the male figures in my life, I grew accustomed to my inferiority and to the popular phrase, '男主外, 女主内,' or men belong in the public, women belong in the home. Even my own father, who relentlessly encouraged my success in life, reinforced the conventional idea that a promising career is no better than settling with a good husband. From a very young age, I was programmed to believe that my main goal in life was to find a husband. In China, the toxic stigma surrounding marriage pressures women into settling down at the age of twenty-five. If she does not "secure" a partner by that age, she falls into the societal category of a 剩女, or leftover woman. Shamed as incapable and atypical, leftover women have become a weapon used to terrorize young girls into dropping their careers at peak timing to search for love. However, even if a woman chooses to resist the pressure of matrimony to pursue a career, she faces bleak career opportunities that match orthodox gender roles. Never on the same great playing field as men, it's no wonder Chinese women are convinced that their only place is in at home.

Another factor that normalized gender discrimination to me was,

unfortunately, school. Despite being educated in an international community acclaimed for its "open-minded" and "liberal" environment, I, in actuality, spent more than a decade in a sexist institute. Almost ironically, the most discriminatory method in which my school engineers sexism is also the first thing you notice about the school: the uniform. While I sympathize with my school's effort to promote collectivity, my mandatory blazer, button-up blouse, tie, and plaid skirt set only prejudicial standards as the norm. When male students had the option to wear either shorts or pants, a choice that came handy during the subzero winter, girls could wear only the skirt and tights. Not being able to run, climb, or jump in the playground without worrying about hypothermia or my "modesty," I was restricted through my clothing ever since the first grade. But of course, I didn't know of anything else: I had been taught that this was how "proper" women dressed in the real world. Every Wednesday, my form teacher would skim the boys to check that their shirts were tucked in but thoroughly examine the girls for skirt length, nail polish, jewelry, hair tidiness, sock length, the list goes on. When I questioned why I must buy a new fifty dollar skirt when mine was "too short," or why I couldn't wear red nail polish, or why my earrings had to be studs, I was told that I would be a "distraction" to the male students or teachers. "Oh, I get it," I replied, but I really didn't: I accepted the fact that my school objectified and labeled my body as a dangerous disturbance to the male population. Instead of teaching boys to control their judgements, school taught me how to be modest and to protect myself from their "unavoidable" judgement. Not only did my community deem it okay for males to be better than me at life, they also taught me that objectification is normal.

For the majority of my life, feminism was a radical concept, so attending Milton was a real eye-opener, in a good way. On the first day, when the transitions counselor explained that there was no dress-code, I decided then and there that I had made the right choice to come here. Instead of patronizing girls, striving for gender equality and empowering young girls is the norm here. In the classroom, my teachers always listen to (if not support) my opinions. Outside the classroom, students voluntarily assemble to discuss the significance of gender equality. In the dorm, a group of forty girls have my back. On international women's day, I can sit in the Student Center to protest for a whole day and show the importance of my existence. And everyday, I can confidently walk around with my choice of clothing, whether it be ripped jean shorts or sweatpants, not having to worry about my "modesty." Milton is not a perfect school, and we undoubtedly have some way to go in terms of accomplishing complete gender equality, but I would like to appreciate this school for building up my courage and for giving me the opportunity to thrive as a feminist. I no longer see myself as inferior, as just a marital partner, or as a distraction; what was once a void of weakness and doubt has been filled with the belief that I am in fact equal to my male counterpart, so thank you, Milton!





BUSINESS HOURS

By John Minicus

I still remember the only time I ever asked her.

Mom, why don't you have a job?

She let off a kind of chuckle that my middle school self could not yet decipher. I slumped in the passenger seat of her car, feet up, curious mind wandering.

You are my job, John.

I always thought her response was funny -- I used to believe a job is defined by gloomy cubicles, Dell computers, and dress ties, like my father's. Although her response sounded ludicrous to me at the time, with age and experience came realization. I understand the truth in her response now -- sometimes I cannot express how much I understand.

She never really likes to talk about her childhood; I have gathered only snapshots of her full, crazy story, but I know enough to look at her today and be amazed she stands unscathed. She grew up in Staten Island with almost nothing, and her family operated in ways I cannot imagine. They navigated through hardships with tough love and tough hate. She likes to subtly boast about her gentle ways of parenting by contrasting it with her father's making her hold a bar of soap in her mouth every time she swore. She makes me much more grateful for everything by describing how she use to

save up loose coins to sneak out and buy a pack of Twinkies without her parents noticing. With everything she faced, my mother's level of ambition was unheard of in her family. At Milton, many people think of college as an expectation. For my mother, college was a monumental accomplishment; she was the first in her family to even attend, nevermind graduate, college -- and she did everything so my sister, my brother, and I never had to experience what she did.

I have only nine months left with her before I am off into the adult world, so now, more than ever, I think about the time years ago when I asked her that question. I think of all the times I come home late at night and find her still awake, waiting to make sure I get home safe. I think of every time she has done my laundry, made my meals, drove me around, or anything in between. But most of all, I linger on all the times her actions went under appreciated. I am not the perfect son, and sometimes I give her less credit than she deserves, but I hope to make her know that, yes, I realize her response was one-hundred percent correct:

Although modern women are more than qualified for any job, it's often overlooked that parenting is a job, in and of itself. I am her job, her never-ending shift, and she works harder at her job than anyone I know.



TALL GIRLS

By Amira Brown

Hi, I'm Amira, I'm 6'1, and I'm going to expose a female narrative rarely ever talked about: being tall. Before you scoff with irritation, hear me out. A girl who is 6 foot and taller lives a majorly different experience than one who is, say, 5,7. In our heteronormative world, height in girls works the same way that a lack of height works for boys; it renders one unattractive. While our culture upholds that someone 'could' be hot if it weren't for her height, our culture doesn't acknowledge how this negatively impacts women more specifically than it impacts men. Someone who says that a guy is too short to be cute attempts to emasculate him because height represents power and authority. A man without

height is less powerful, and therefore less attractive. When someone says that a girl is too tall to be cute, he is stating that a girl can not be both authoritative and attractive. Being with a taller girl or girl of the same height feels emasculating; it's intimidating. Short guys can always be with short girls, but tall guys don't want to be with tall girls. This concept damages tall girls' self-esteem because no matter what she does, she will not be attractive or wanted. Many young girls grow up conditioned to rely on male attention for validation and self-worth. This concept is especially damaging for younger girls who sprout early, encouraging girls to confine themselves to submission, such stereotypes lead assertive tall

girls to hate themselves for being too masculine and making themselves even more 'unattractive'. These ideas manifest self-submission in the classroom, with friends, in leadership and in partnerships-- anything to make themselves more likable.

We see memes confirming this stereotype all through social media and in day-to-day life—"girls over 6'0 belong in the NBA"; "every tall boy needs a short girl"; "green giant"; "any female over 5'9 is a grown a** man"; "too tall to wear heels"; "4'10-5'1: baddie, 5'2-5'4: mami, 5'5-5'8:cute, 5'8+:seahawks starting quarterback", etc. Even though they are all (at times, admittedly funny) jokes, these jokes can be disheartening. When people see me, the first things they see are that I'm big and black. Not only am I too tall, but I'm too black, too! I understand, however, that looking like tall and skinny models is attractive, but these models are usually white and no taller than 5'11. I also understand that I can see above most people, play basketball if I wanted to, and reach things on random shelves. Regardless, I grew up hating my height because of the teasing, the un-approachableness, the awkwardness, and the jealousy from wanting to be cute, short, and wanted. If you are a tall girl or is close to someone who is, remind them or yourself how cute and pretty she is, and how your height doesn't mean a thing.

KIM KARDASHIAN: A VICTIM OF SEXISM

By Liz Foster

Kim Kardashian is often dubbed the “famous for nothing” icon of this decade. Her achievements are constantly dismissed in an effort to preserve the narrative that she’s nothing more than an attention seeking ‘whore’. With a net worth of \$175 million, Kim Kardashian is much more than a leaked sex tape.

After the tape of Kardashian and rapper Ray J was leaked (many assume it was Kim’s own mother who sold the tape), the Kardashian family was thrust into the spotlight. Kris Jenner and Ryan Seacrest joined together to create the iconic television show Keeping Up With Kardashians in 2007. Ten years later, the Kardashian-Jenner clan is an unavoidable multimillion dollar empire. Yet, Kim Kardashian remains hated by the masses. To dislike Kim for her problematic mistakes is okay; she’s said some things that undoubtedly rub people the wrong way. However, the blatant sexism thrown at Kim is unacceptable. After taking a now infamous nude selfie in 2016, cheekily captioned “When you're like I have nothing to wear LOL,” she faced harsh backlash, much of which was from other women. Personalities like Sharon

Osbourne called her public nudity “unfeminist” and many saw it unmotherly to be naked on the internet. How is owning and profiting off of her body “unfeminist?” The media scrutinizes and sexualizes women’s bodies constantly, but when a woman takes that power into her own hands it’s “unfeminist?”

Attacking a grown woman for a decision made concerning her own body is immature and inherently sexist. The constant criticisms against Kim for her assumed plastic surgery choices follows this pattern. People whom Kim Kardashian will never know still find the time to complain about choices another grown woman has made. Choices she has made knowing they won’t negatively impact those around her.

The Kardashian empire is worth millions, and it has been through careful strategizing and marketing that the family has been able to amass such wealth. Kim Kardashian’s role as the star of the central is to their collective success. She has taken advantage of the media’s love for tearing down women and used it to keep her name in everyone’s mouth. Whether she is promoting her makeup line, out at dinner in L.A., or working on another

side project TV show, Kim’s name and face are scattered across magazines both on and off line.

If Kim Kardashian was “just a sex tape,” her name would have faded into obscurity soon after her tape leaked. A decade later, she is still one of the most famous and successful women in the world. She’s a media mogul, producer, mother, and ultimately: a businesswoman. Her accomplishments have not appeared out of thin air, but rather been created through her intelligent business strategies (and the magic of Kris Jenner.)

Kim Kardashian isn’t flawless; she’s made racist errors and will probably continue to make problematic mistakes. However, the inherently sexist criticisms against her are unacceptable. Reducing Kim Kardashian from an entrepreneurial business woman to a dumb reality star is insulting.





SESTINA FOR GROOVYBABY

By Maggie Adedamola

A leader in color
sings a soulgood chorale,
the groovybaby music that assures our
acceptance,
that assures weeping willow tears won't be
cached
away and melted
in a blaze of conversations converted.

We need a conversion!
Just for girls, just for boys, just for whites,
just for colors,
until colors begin to melt
and all their hues are corralled,
a picket fence barring existences not worth
being cashed,
existences so grimy that their fingerprints
even ATMs won't accept.

Curl your thinking putty until it
accepts
our unprecedented conversion!
Who needs cash
when you have colors?
But you lock the picket gate of the
corral,
let sun guide colors to melting.

Hear sorrowful voices melt
together in defeated acceptance,
the once soulgood chorale
now converted
into a slate void of color,
unworthy of your cash.

Lock us in a stark cache,
Set us in the sun to melt,
like wax crayon colors.
Groovybaby is never silenced except
when her voice converts
to extinction, an abandoned chorale.

But groovybaby will not convert,
dripping waxy surrender as she
melts.

Her soulgood chorale
reminds you of the cash
you owe her persistent colors.

BOYS, BOYS, BOYS!

By **Natasha Roy**

I've fallen into a trap: one laid for me by modern feminism.

You've heard of women "reclaiming their sexuality" before. Our culture has for so long stigmatized and repressed female sexuality, but in contemporary times, women have finally reclaimed their power; they've embraced their sexualities. I wonder, however: Do modern women use—let's be upfront here, doluse—a "reclamation of female sexuality" as a tool to cater more comfortably to the male gaze? The answer makes me uneasy; to admit that I still seek validation from men questions every one of my ideological beliefs.

I like to think of myself as an 'empowered woman,' however it is we would define that in 2017. If I were, therefore, outwardly catering to the male gaze-- dressing for boys, trying to please boys, etc.—I would become furious with myself for so feeding

into our sexist culture. I'm better than that; I know I am!

I can't allow myself to overtly submit to the patriarchy, but frankly, I'm not strong enough to subvert it, either. Instead, I've found some hushed, complacent middle-ground where I can comfortably navigate my pink little third-wave feminist bubble, and still cater to men.

No matter how many feminist podcasts I listen to, Nora Ephron movies I watch, or Adiche essays I read, I'm yet a teenage girl. With that label comes the ugly reality that, as much as I theorize around the fact, I'm helplessly prone to the search for male validation. I know on an intellectual level that this search is empty, ridiculous, and inherently patriarchal. I despise this search for everything it stands for. And yet, I would be lying if I said that I don't sometimes (often?) dress for boys, act for boys, do for boys.



I tell myself that "I can wear all the revealing clothing I'd like, because I'm empowered!" And, if it were true, that thought would be great and beautiful. Only it's not; as much as I wear what I wear because I'm liberated, I also wear what I wear to impress boys (living, of course, under my own narrow framework of heteronormativity). Not always, not necessarily even often, but it's undeniable: I alter and shape my clothing choices to feed my need for male validation. My choices stop being mine; I'm catering to the male gaze. Only I've played an excellent ruse all the while: I've convinced myself—I've maybe even convinced those around me-- that I truly am an empowered young girl, making her own, free decisions.

Cont.

As counterintuitive as it may seem, I think modern feminism has set me up to so subconsciously feed the male gaze. In a response to an eternity of slut-shaming and sexual repression, modern women have moved towards the opposite-- "More sex! Sexual freedom!"— end of the dichotomy. To reclaim your sexuality, modern feminism has encouraged—working in a largely heteronormative framework—more sex with more men.

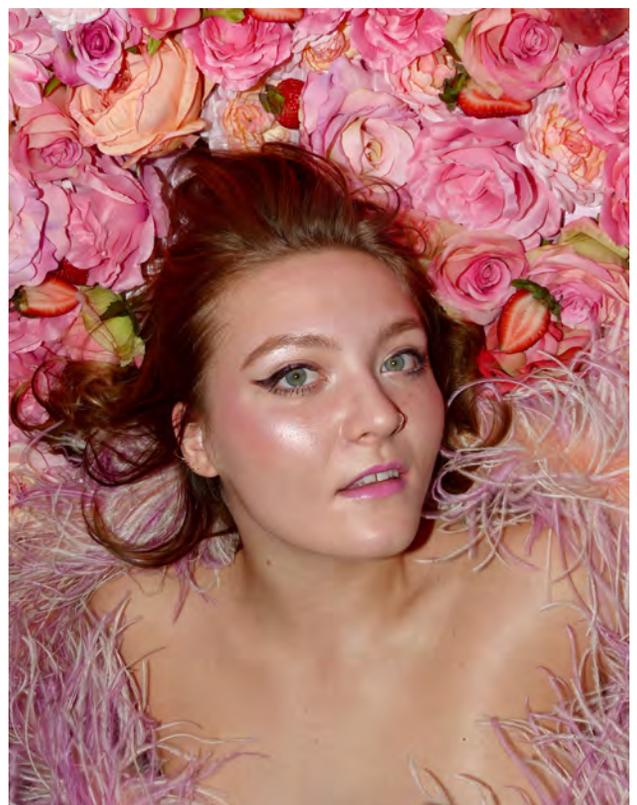
I have angrily backed this ideology since I knew what sex was—bear in mind I grew up in a progressive family of caffeinated Joni Mitchell enthusiasts. Until, that is, Cindy Pierce visited Milton. Last spring, Pierce, author of *Sex, College, & Social Media*, spent a school day working with the Class of '19 on issues of gender, hookup culture, and empowerment.

She discussed how many young women today go out seeking more and more sexual relationships under a guise of empowerment. More sex, she argued, doesn't necessarily empower these women; they still find themselves in relationships where they're working to please men, rarely finding enjoyment themselves. True sexual empowerment, she argued, comes when a woman stands to enjoy her sexual relationships just as much as her partners—regardless of how many partners she has. She could be completely empowered with one partner, and completely disempowered having a lot of sex with multiple partners—and, of course, vice versa. It makes sense: while stigma and slut-shaming can force women into sexual repression, an antidote of unperturbed sex doesn't necessarily lead to sexual liberation. As one of my teachers concisely put it when we discussed the topic later that night, "if you're going around giving 20 blowjobs and getting nothing in return, you're not actually sexually empowered."

When Ariana Grande rides her bicycle side to side, sure, she's reclaiming control over her sexuality. Still, I can't help but feel like the video's

popularity rests not on her empowerment but upon a group of middle aged men drooling over a 23 year old in a crop-top. In our hyper-sexualized, hyper-masculine world, perhaps it just isn't possible for a woman to reclaim her sexuality without simultaneously feeding the male gaze. Obviously, this twisted reality shouldn't stop women from seeking sexual liberation. Instead, we need to be more honest with ourselves about this liberation: about whether we're truly acting for ourselves, or are still, even subconsciously, acting for men.

An honest sexual empowerment remains a tricky topic; in a still backwards world, this very article could easily be turned around to further slut-shame women for embracing their sexualities. The work modern feminism has done to destigmatize female sexuality has, of course, been profound in its impact. It's just not enough, because it still allows room for us to succumb to that crushing search for male validation. If we more carefully consider 'liberation,' maybe we can find our ways to a genuine empowerment, instead of this pseudo-empowerment that continues to cater to the male gaze, just in a new way.



MASCULINITY AND FEMINISM

By Adrian Hackney



First, I want to make one thing crystal clear. Everyone should be a feminist. No matter one's gender identity, sexuality, race, or background, gender equality should be a priority. I see no room for compromise. A disappointing trend that I notice on campus is the lack of male involvement and interest in feminism. Often, the male participation that I do notice at Milton comes from the queer men. My observations about some, not all, men on campus lead me to wonder why this relationship between masculinity and feminism exists and how we can combat it as a community.

Many men and even some women tell me that they cannot call themselves feminists because they do not support feminism's "radical" and "extreme" views. Unfortunately, these people possess the all too common tendency to view the actions of a few as a representation of an entire group. This problematic trend also shapes the way many see entire races and religions, and it must be confronted. When people assume this position, they zero in on a certain group of feminists that has an approach that is not shared by the majority. Other men believe that feminism attempts to attack and degrade men; they do not realize that feminism advocates for the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes. Nowhere in that definition is superiority mentioned. The scale that represents the state of gender equality is unbalanced, and the goal of feminism is simply to create equilibrium. And others still, fundamentally and genuinely, believe women to be inferior. I cannot comprehend how men, especially those who attend Milton, can maintain these perspectives when their peers and the school itself persistently advocate for gender equality. Beyond Milton, the resistance to feminism plays an even more prominent role and perpetuates gender inequality on a large scale. We now live in a world where people advocate for gender equality on scales large and small, and they are making a real difference. Even though we are far from true equality, we have undoubtedly made progress. A great deal of the change feminists want to see must be instigated by the entities with power in realms ranging from politics to economics. The people who dominate these areas are cisgender, heterosexual, white men. The insufficient representation of women in places of power makes progress a

painstakingly slow process. Many factors play a role in this dilemma, but I believe that a lack of empathy is a major culprit, at Milton, nationally, and internationally. Because some, but not all, men cannot empathize with the experiences of women, or refuse to do so, they will not represent or fight for them. Without the experiences that come with being part of a minority or marginalized group, they remain unsympathetic. Traditional masculinity entails a variety of characteristics: strength, stoicism, and lack of emotion, to name a few. It encourages men, particularly heterosexual men, to craft a mask to prevent vulnerability and meet the expectations of society. Traditional masculinity also stresses dominance over women. However, privilege and false sense of masculinity cannot serve as an excuse for men's perspectives, words, and actions. If we never confront these men and inspire a shift in their mindsets, change seems almost unattainable. This group of men needs a wakeup call: to the impact of their actions, to the injustice that women and countless other groups face, and to their responsibility in creating change.

If you are reading this article, be honest with yourself. Does your privilege make you ignorant to the injustice that others, particularly women, face? I know for a fact that it does for some members of this community. Now, I am not saying that everyone should attend feminist rallies and fundraise for organizations like Planned Parenthood, though that would be nice. I simply hope that our words and actions reflect the feminist ideals that we should all possess. We need to be more aware of our biases and the relationship between our intent and impact. I will not stop advocating for gender equality, and neither should you. In the words of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, "we should all be feminists." This should go without saying, but unfortunately, as we see everyday, it does not: Women are incredible beyond words and should be viewed and treated as such. The majority of the people I look up to are women because they inspire me time and time again with their intelligence, strength, kindness, and selflessness, to name a few outstanding traits. They should do the same for everyone, everywhere. Remember that.

Dear Black Girl at MA Boarding School

So, you go to an elite** boarding school now. Welcome. Say goodbye to the jollof, the cornbread, the REAL baked mac, the rice and peas, the oxtail, and the parties where people can actually hit dem folks. And if that wasn't your experience, you're still welcome nevertheless; but people WILL ask you to teach them how to twerk and it is your duty to do so... even if you look like a vibrating hunch-back in the process.

Detailed in this letter lies the treasure to unlocking your colored, hidden potential as a black girl at an elite boarding school in New England. Read it, weep it, and keep it—

1. —real. While your education is “important to your overall success”, the most vital thing on your mind is not that problem set. It's your hair. Even if you're rocking box braids or crochet, you're still concerned about your hairline, your edges, how they're quickly balding, whether your hair is finally growing after a solid 3 years, etc. Firstly, know that your hair is gorgeous, natural or not, long or short, and you deserve to be proud of it. Secondly, hair texture does not define beauty (@4c gang); ignore the urge to envy long blonde locks or 3a hair. And if you're the type of person to always look on point, don't feel bad for slaying to school after every break with a new style. Those white boys who asks why black girls think they're cute when they get a new weave don't even know what a weave is. You are hella cute; people like that don't matter. Yet, the white girls who come back from the Caribbean with cornrows are so cool and creative!

But that's none of my business.

1. We come from a variety of backgrounds, places and socio-economic statuses. (FYI: just because a black girl lives in Africa doesn't mean you get to ask her how she got to the US because, believe it or not, airplanes exist in Africa too!! So you thought she was Jesus and walked on water? K.) You will, however, be expected to have friends mostly of color, unless you break the expectation™, are especially outgoing, and try EXTRA hard to be friends with white people. (Hot tip: using ebonics does not make me like you more. We're not “connecting”.) More often than not, your money situation might differ from your black and non-black peers. If you don't have the money to go shopping, you don't have to go. Be con\$iderate of your coins. Shop in clearance. Embrace the yachts and the Chanel, but your worth is not your wealth.
2. Holding hands and smiling giddily, imagine yourself strolling with the boy of your dreams on the quad, you know, chilling in a hammock on a 'warm' 50 degree day, you know, doing New England prep school things. Sorry to burst your bubble sis, but unless you like the 6 black boys in your grade and they like you back, you're not dating nobody. Colorism and racism run rampant here, so the black boys might not even like black girls! Students say that they rate women like this: white women, asian women, latina women, and last but not least, black women. The gag is: people with these preferences* (that are actually racist) are not worth your time. Black is and always will be beautiful. You might not feel the love rn, but you still deserve it. If you're Afro-Latina and light to Brown skinned, congrats! Everyone wants a fiery, sexy Latina. It's a shame they fetishize you more than they respect you. Oh well.
3. Warning: you may witness a casual conversation or debate where students discuss whether your culture is your culture, or whether the n-word is offensive. Fvck the h8rs. Whine if you want to, twerk if you want to, grind if you want to. Enjoying your culture≠ being a hoe™. Everything you do can be interpreted as loud, rowdy and “too much”: i.e. doinganythingwith black friends. Miss me wit all dat; have fun and do you. The haters know where they can kiss it.
4. The aforementioned brings me to a set of very important points. Your class reached the maximum quota of color in a classroom: 4, and you are the black one. Nice. Here are 3 rules.

1. Don't play submissive solely to avoid being labeled “bossy or aggressive.” Your contributions and ideas are too valuable #blackgirlmagic.

2. Confront racism you see with teachers and with students. If you see anyone snickering after a person of a minority contributes an experience or opinion, stare them in their ignorant, crusty eyeballs and confront them. Stand up for yourself against teachers, too (but more politely). You may choose to confront people in more private settings. Demand respect and embrace everything composing your identity. Hidden in beliefs and opinions lie more than meets the eye-- racism, homophobia, sexism, transphobia, xenophobia, islamophobia, ableism, anti semitism, etc.. We don't--can't let that slide.

3. Some unique people will literally have the audacity to ask you to speak for your race, but this is not required, nor is it outlined in your job description. When you're mad, people call you disrespectful though you are simply arguing your point, also not in your job description. Correcting a crying white girl automatically makes you the “bully,” ALSO not in your job description. Let's face it. Microaggressions exist in a variety of forms. The fact that one must pick and choose her battles aside, remember that you deserve as much respect and happiness as anyone else on this privileged campus. Love yourself, your melanin, and your smarts.

You were admitted here, after all.

Love and peace,

Anonymous xoxo



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Special thanks to Olivia Robbins, Heather Flewelling, and Chloë Walker (Class of 2017). We could not have done this without you!