



AN INTRODUCTION TO FEMINISM, GENDER, & SEXUALITY

Arianne Shahvisi, Lecturer in Ethics and Medical Humanities

Content warning!

This workshop contains sensitive and challenging material. Please take a break if you need to.

THIS GUY ~~is~~ WANTS TO BE PRESIDENT

in Donald Trump's own words:



On Hillary Clinton:

"SHE GOT SCHLONGED"
in the 2008 election

On women:

"dogs" "fat pigs"
"disgusting animals"

On military sexual assault:

**"WHAT DID THESE
GENIUSES EXPECT"**
when they put men
& women together?"

On what the media
says about him:

**"It doesn't really
matter... As long as
you've got a YOUNG
AND BEAUTIFUL
PIECE OF ASS."**

On motherhood:

Called a
breastfeeding
employee
"DISGUSTING."

SOURCES: WEAREULTRAVIOLET.ORG/TRUMP



Objectives

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- Define and use specialist terminology within gender theory.
- Grasp the difference between **structural/systematic** and **accidental/individual** features of the social world.
- Understand the importance of **intersectionality**.
- Recognise and understand the origins of **gender myths**.
- Examine **objectification, violence, and globalization** in the context of gender studies.

Context

Across the world, 35% of women experience domestic or sexual violence at some point in their lives (WHO, 2014).

Across *all* world regions, women spend twice as long as men on unpaid domestic work (UN, 2010).

The UK gender pay gap is around 20% (Equal Pay Portal, 2013).

Globally, 17% of parliamentary seats are held by women (UN, 2010).

Two-thirds of the world's illiterate people are women (UNDP).

Preliminary claims

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“No society treats its women as well as its men” (Wamala and Kawachi).

I will argue for, and draw upon, two facts:

- ❑ women are primary caregivers in a world in which caregiving is not seen as valuable, but is viewed as dirty, unskilled, and undesirable;
- ❑ women are objectified, embodied, and hyper-sexualised in a world in which sex is seen as bad and dirty.

We are taught that women are these things *by nature*.

WOMEN ARE **HALF** 
THE WORLD'S POPULATION, WORK-
ING **TWO THIRDS** 
OF THE WORLD'S WORKING HOURS,
RECEIVING **10%** 
OF THE WORLD'S INCOME, OWNING
LESS THAN **1%** 
OF THE WORLD'S PROPERTY.



IT JUST TASTES BETTER 

IT'LL BLOW YOUR MIND AWAY

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Terminology

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Feminism

Privilege

Oppression

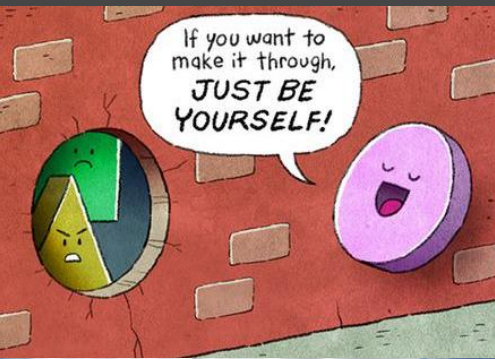
Gender

Sex

Sexuality

Intersectionality

Social construction



Oppression and Privilege

Oppression



Oppression



[Oppression is] the experience of being caged in.... Consider a birdcage. If you look very closely at just one wire, you cannot see the other wires. If your conception of what is before you is determined by this myopic focus, you could look at that one wire, up and down the length of it, and be unable to see why a bird would not just fly around the wire ... it is only when you step back, stop looking at the wires one by one, microscopically, and take a macroscopic view of the whole cage, that you can see why the bird does not go anywhere; and then you will see it in a moment. (Frye, 1983,5-6)

Oppression

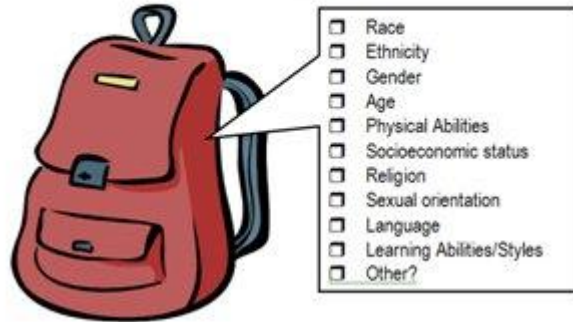
“One of the most characteristic and ubiquitous features of the world as experienced by oppressed people is the **double bind**—situations in which options are reduced to a **very few** and all of them expose one to **penalty, censure or deprivation**. For example, it is often a requirement upon oppressed people that we smile and be cheerful. If we comply, we signal our docility and our acquiescence in our situation. We need not, then, be taken note of. We acquiesce in being made invisible, in our occupying no space. We participate in our own erasure. On the other hand, anything but the sunniest countenance exposes us to being perceived as mean, bitter, angry or dangerous. This means, at the least, that we may be found “difficult” or unpleasant to work with, which is enough to cost one one’s livelihood; at worst, being seen as mean, bitter, angry or dangerous has been known to result in rape, arrest, beating and murder. One can only choose to risk one’s preferred form and rate of annihilation” (*ibid.*)



Definitions: privilege

What's in YOUR invisible knapsack*?

McIntosh, P. (1989). White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack. *Peace and Freedom* (July/August), pp. 10-12.



Definitions: privilege



“...unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was ‘meant’ to remain oblivious... like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks.”

-- *Peggy McIntosh*

Structural and accidental

15

There is an important distinction between structural social realities, and accidental ones.

This is why “reverse-sexism” and “reverse-racism” are not meaningful concepts.

Group	Privilege	Oppression
Individual	Advantage	Hurt

What
about
the
science
?



Biological determinism and social construction

Biological determinism

17

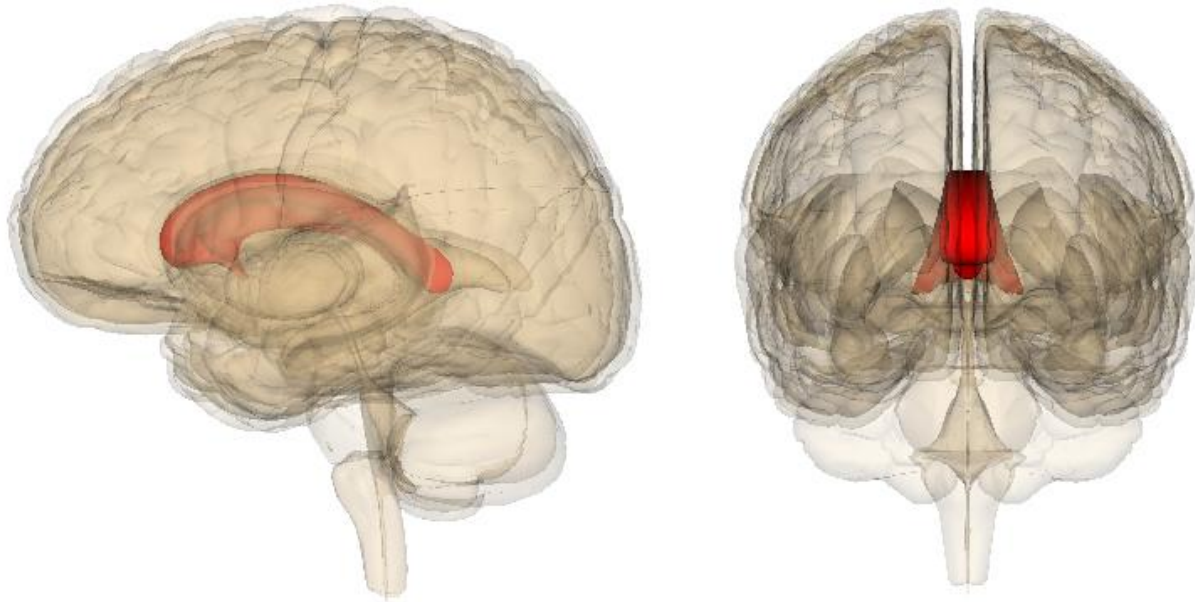
In 1889, Thomas claimed that sex-variant metabolic states brought about differences in social, psychological, and behavioural traits. That is: women conserve energy, which renders them stable, inert, passive, and uninterested in political life. Men, on the other hand, expend their excess energy, and are therefore fit for violence, war, sport, and politics.

In the 1970s, it was claimed that women should not be employed as aeroplane pilots lest their menses interfere with their ability to reliably carry out their jobs.



Biological determinism

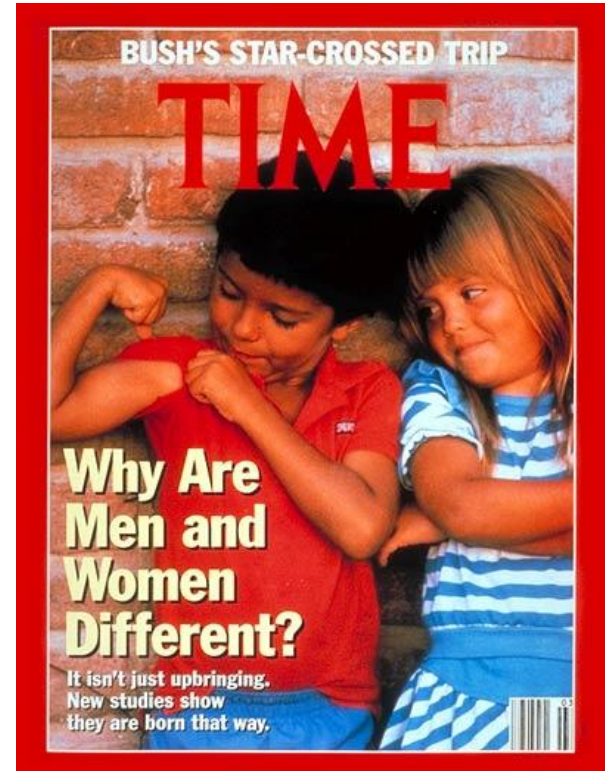
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Biological determinism

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In 1992, *Time* magazine published an article which posited a sex-based difference in cognitive ability based on the thickness of the **corpus callosum**, which bridges the hemispheres of the brain. It was claimed that the bridge is wider in women than in men, allowing for more connections between areas of the brain, which ostensibly accounted for women's “intuition” and ability to multi-task, whilst impairing our ability to perform focussed visual-spatial tasks, like parking a vehicle or complex mathematics.



Biological determinism

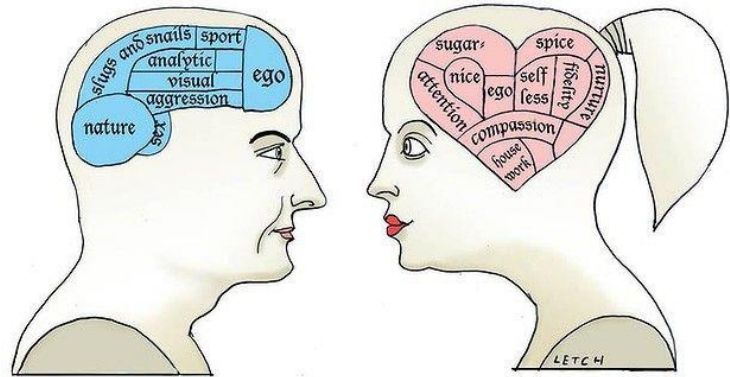
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Fausto-Sterling (2000):

- (a) the corpus callosum exhibits considerable natural variation;
- (b) purported sex-differences not observed in infants, therefore differential treatment is a better hypothesis;
- (c) visual-spatial skills and multi-tasking skills are hugely improved with practice.

In fact, a meta analysis of 49 studies on the corpus callosum since 1980 found no difference between the sexes.

The mainstream media ignored this study.



Biological determinism


21

football opinion culture economy lifestyle fashion environment tech money t

Scientists find secret ingredient for making (and losing) lots of money - testosterone

- Study links male hormone with earning power
- But too much can lead to irrational risk-taking

ce



In the film *Wall Street*, which symbolised the excess of the 1980s, the most successful traders were odious alpha-males with aggression seeping from every pore.

But stereotypes often have a kernel of truth, and researchers from Cambridge University have concluded what everyone outside the City has always suspected.

Men do seem to be the world's natural risk-takers. The more testosterone they have, the more likely they are to take risks, and the more money they make. But too much testosterone can lead to irrational risk-taking, and researchers from Cambridge University have concluded that the link between testosterone and risk-taking is not just a stereotype.

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High Testosterone Means High Profits

By Adam Smith/London | Monday, Apr. 14, 2008

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You can almost hear Gordon Gekko cheer. Financial traders are widely seen as filthy rich, brash, and, well, ballsy. Now it turns out that there's cash in those *cojones*. According to new research from the University of Cambridge, a male trader's daily testosterone level is higher on days when he makes more than he would in an average day. What's more, the higher a trader's morning testosterone level, the more money he'll likely have netted before the close of business that day. Testosterone, in other words, can be good for business.



Biological determinism

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“Conclusive” study (2008)
sample of 17
testosterone
hormones in saliva
University of Cambridge
Widespread media coverage

Inconclusive study (2009)
sample of 200
testosterone and oestrogen
hormones in blood
two universities in Sweden
Resounding silence

Biological determinism

23

A major scientific idea which feminists aim to complicate is that of **biological determinism**. This is the idea that the most important causes of certain human phenomena are genetically determined within individuals, rather than culturally determined across societies.

This is fine as a source of explanations for particular facts, but most human behaviour and relationships are so heavily determined by society and culture that weighing in favour of biological/genetic explanations is not justifiable or helpful, and is often false.

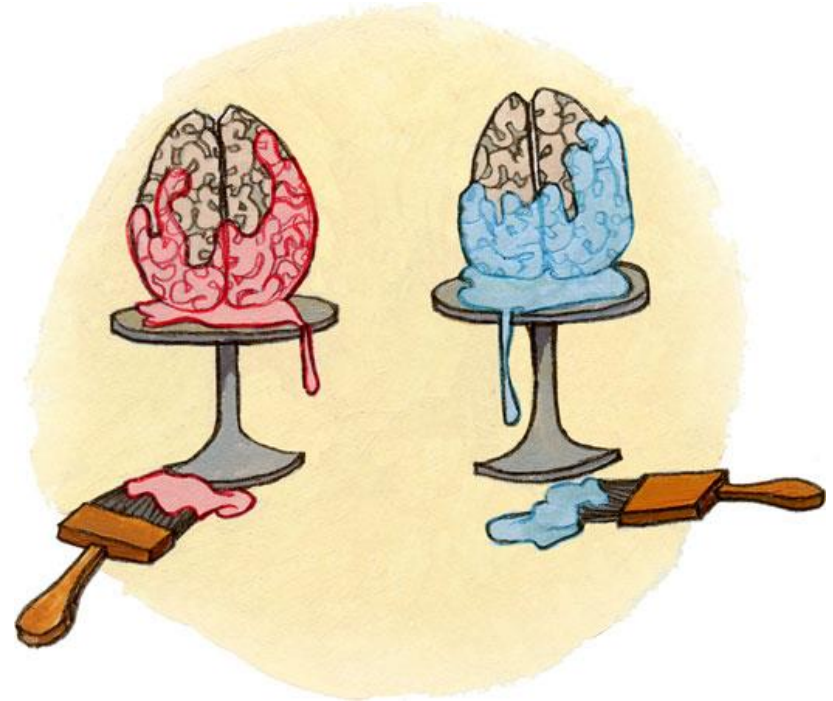
Q: Innocent over-simplification, or pernicious normalisation and apologism?

Getting our facts straight ...

What does it mean to be female/male?

What does it mean to be a woman/man?

What are the connections between them?



Making gender

25

“One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature ... which is described as feminine” (SdB, SS).



Getting clear on sex and gender

“One is not simply a body, but, in some very key sense, one does one's body. ... [T]hose who **fail to do their gender right are regularly punished**. ... [T]he various acts of gender creates the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all. ... The tacit collective agreement to perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the credibility of its own production. **The authors of gender become entranced by their own fictions whereby the construction compels one's belief in its necessity and naturalness**” (Butler, p. 99).





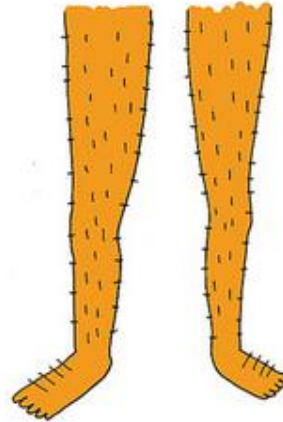
Making sex?

Whilst biology is often considered to influence cultural norms, the inverse effect is often ignored.

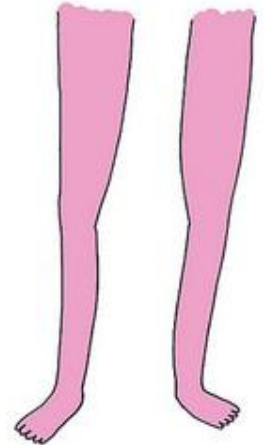
Social forces can and do influence sexed bodies.

In many societies, women are fed less or fed less well, accentuating the difference in physical size and strength; women are discouraged from playing vigorous sports and building muscles; women are encouraged and rewarded for removing body hair and undergoing surgery; covering up skin means that women are at higher risk of having weak bones, but may have fairer complexions.

WHICH IS THE
MAN?



WHY?



Making heterosexuality?

Institutional, cultural, economic, and legal systems encourage, reward, and advertise heterosexuality, promoting the assumption that it is the norm, and thereby reinforcing its power.

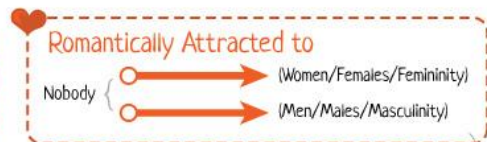
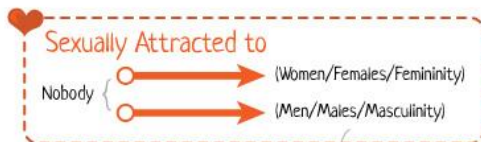
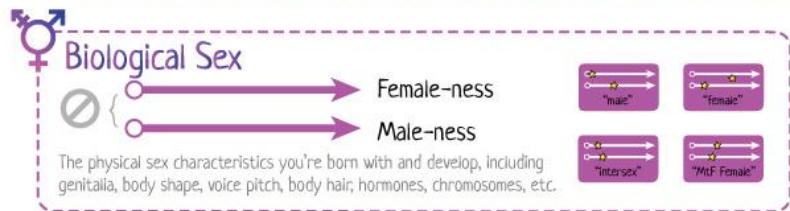
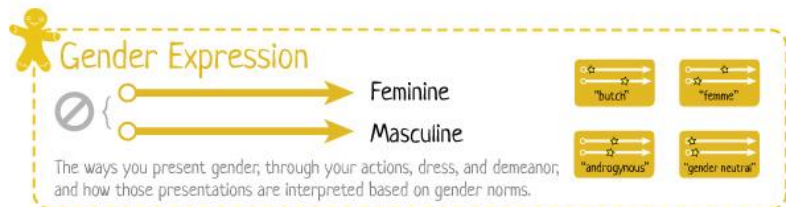
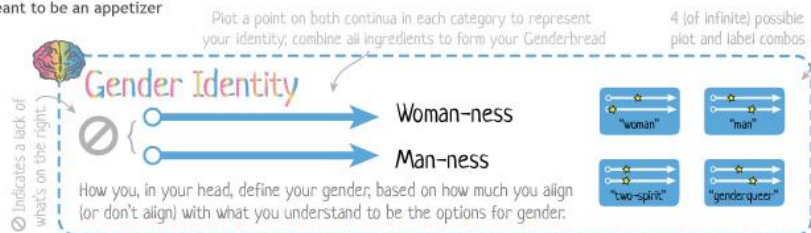
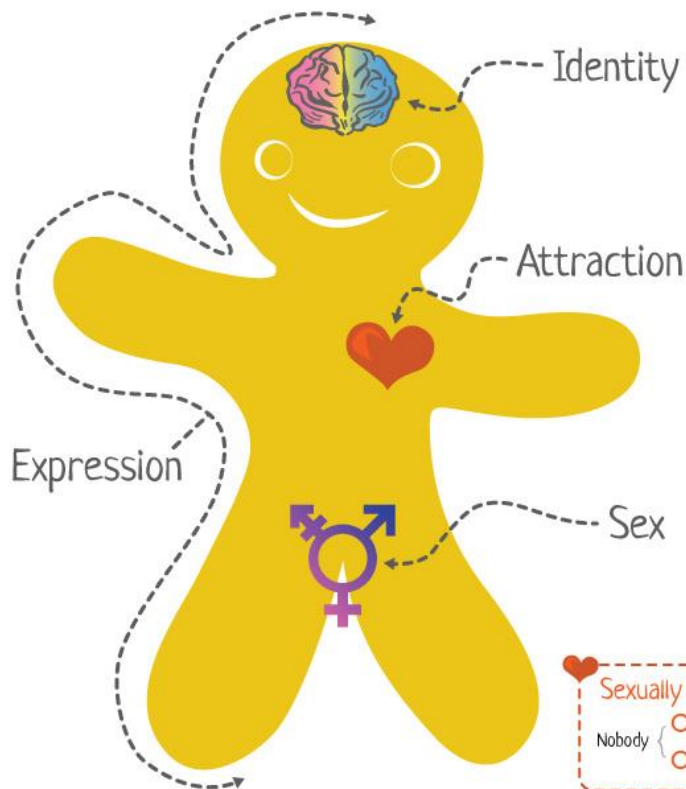


The Genderbread Person v3.3

by it's pronounced **METROsexual**.com

Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don't. Like *Inception*. Gender isn't binary. It's not either/or. In many cases it's both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that. This tasty little guide is meant to be an appetizer for gender understanding. It's okay if you're hungry for more. In fact, that's the idea.

30



For a bigger bite, read more at <http://bit.ly/genderbread>

In each grouping, circle all that apply to you and plot a point, depicting the aspects of gender toward which you experience attraction.

A brief history of patriarchy ...

31

At first sight, it seems as though the obvious explanation comes from biology, specifically: evolutionary biology.

After all, men, (a) on average seem to exhibit heavier musculature, and (b) only women have the bodily machinery for child-bearing.

In reality, ethnographies show that the division of labour, and attitudes towards child-bearing differ from culture to culture; that is, it is *not* the case that men always perform heavy labour, and it is not the case that women are devalued on the basis of their reproductive potential. Yet in *all* cases, there *is* a well-defined dichotomy of gender norms, and those norms systematically privilege men.

So we need to look elsewhere ...



A brief history of patriarchy ...

32

Patriarchy seems to have emerged from primitive kinships systems in pre-state societies. Kinship systems were premised on the exchange of women as the most valuable of gifts.

With women as gifts, and men as gift-exchange partners, the subject-object relationship was established. So too was the compulsion to control female sexuality and autonomy, and enforce heterosexuality and marriage.



The politics and psychology of oppression

33

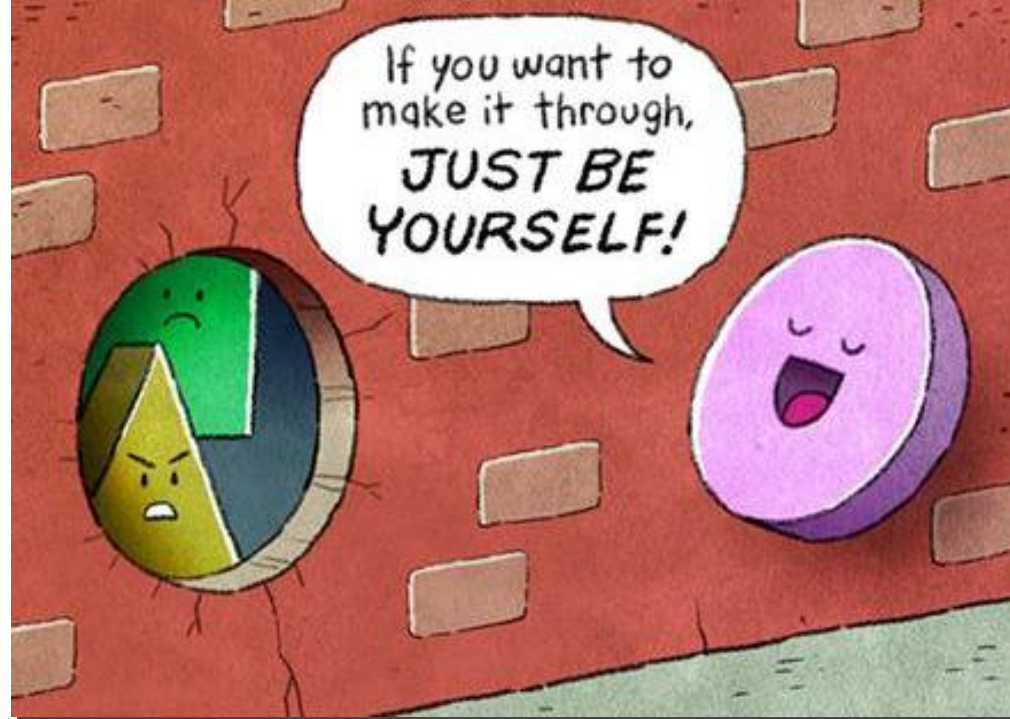
Why does oppression persist?

(a) Social **barriers**, including direct and structural violence;

(b) the **dispersal** of women throughout society precludes solidarity: women “live dispersed among the males, attached through residence, housework, economic condition, and social standing, to certain men – fathers or husbands – more firmly than they are to other women” (SS, p.5). Women are themselves differently situated;

(c) the **internalisation** of oppression, resulting in self-hatred, self-rejection, and low self-esteem: the belief in inferiority, and the avoidance of shame.





Intersectionality

Intersectionality



Race

Sex/gender

Nationality

Class

Disability

Sexuality

Cis/trans

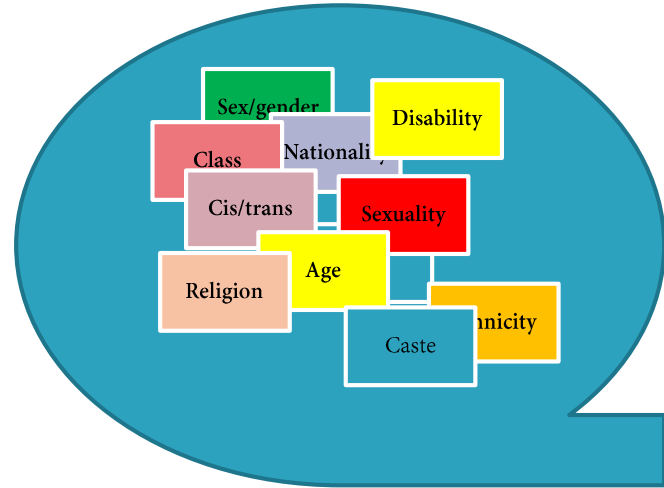
Age

Ethnicity

Religion

Caste

Intersectionality: Kimberlé W. Crenshaw (1991)



$$\text{Disability} + \text{Sexuality} = ?$$

$$\text{Race} + \text{Class} = ?$$

Starting to think intersectionally ...

37

If you don't
have to think about it,
it's a privilege.

CHECK YOUR PRIVILEGE:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WHITE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CISGENDER* |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MALE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ABLE-BODIED |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CLASS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HETEROSEXUAL |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CHRISTIAN | |

*CISGENDER: a description for a person whose gender identity, gender expression and biological sex all align

privilege: unearned access to social power based on membership in a dominant social group

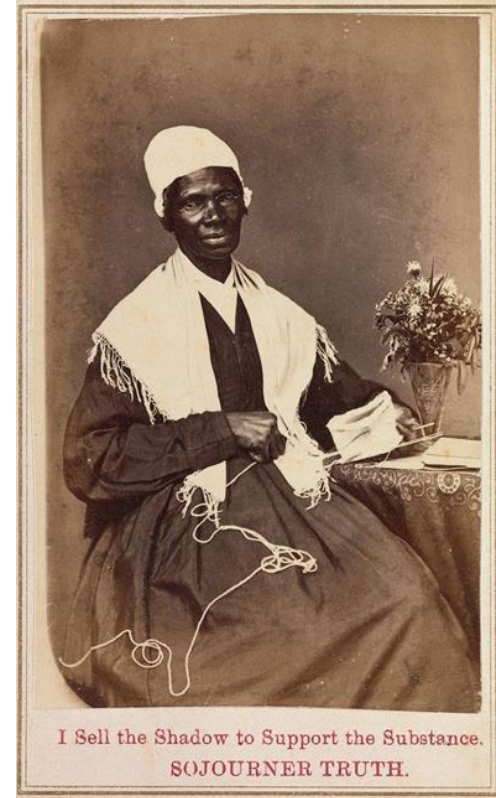
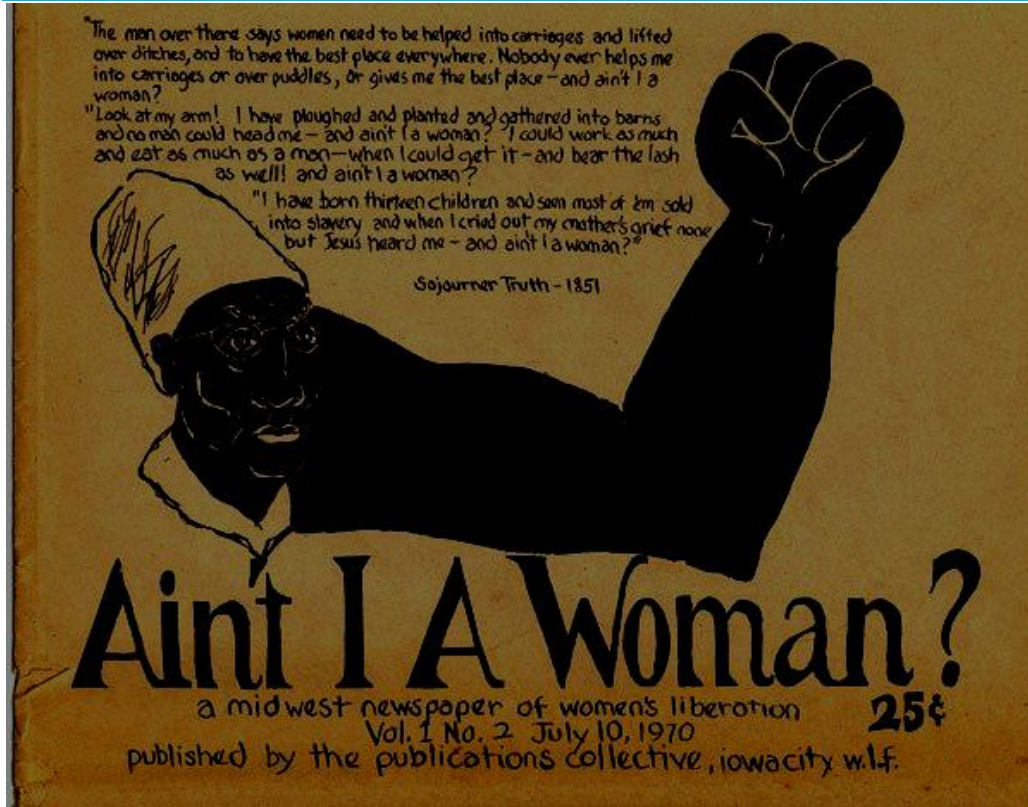
Presented by Dr. Walker (Psychology Dept.), Dr. Poole (School of Management, Marketing Dept.), Professor Murray (Design Program), and Student Life. Poster designs by Camille Esposito, Ray Choi, Veronica Cabanayan and Cat Bagg

The views presented herein do not necessarily reflect the position of the University of San Francisco.

locating yourself
admitting privilege
listening
not being defensive
granting credibility

Suffrage (1851)

38



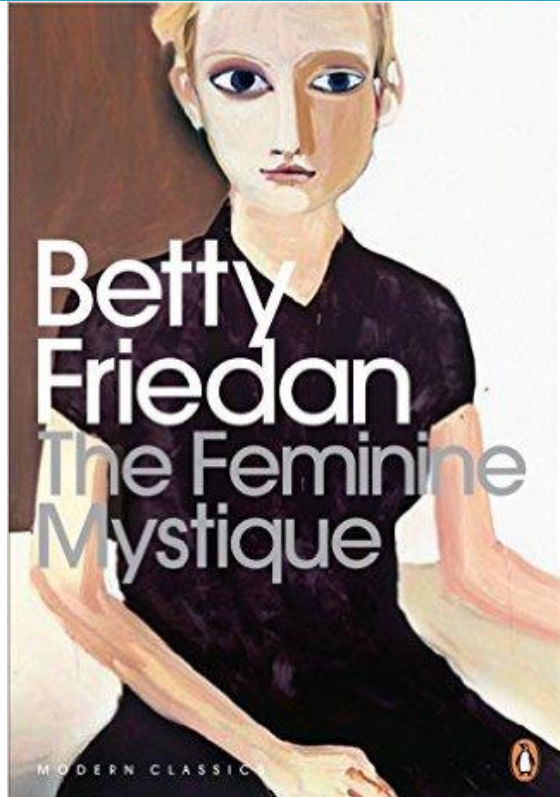
Forced sterilization (1904-1963)

39



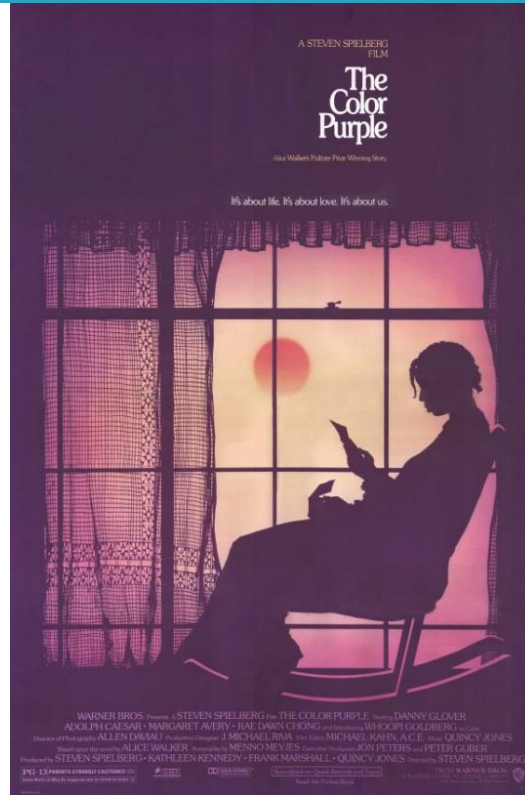
Women in the domestic sphere (1963)

40



Domestic violence (1985)

41



Slutwalks (2011)

42



Lean in (2013)

43

LEAN IN

WOMEN, WORK, AND
THE WILL TO LEAD

SHERYL SANDBERG

#1 NATIONAL BEST SELLER



Burkinigate (2016)

44





CAN SHE MAKE YOU
LOSE CONTROL?



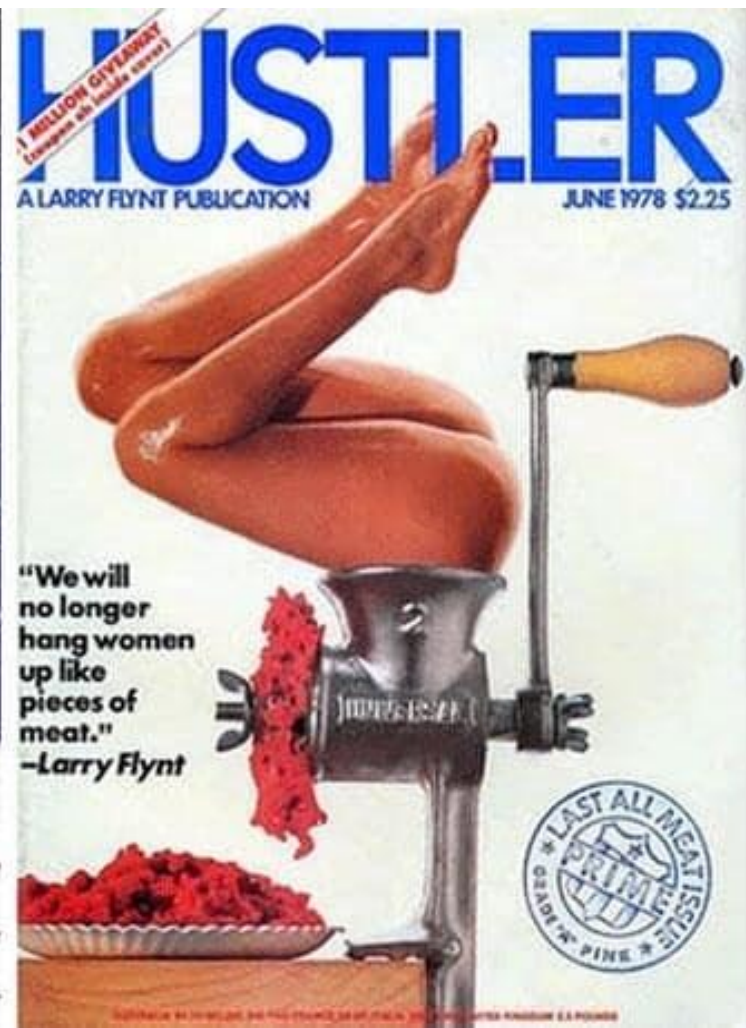
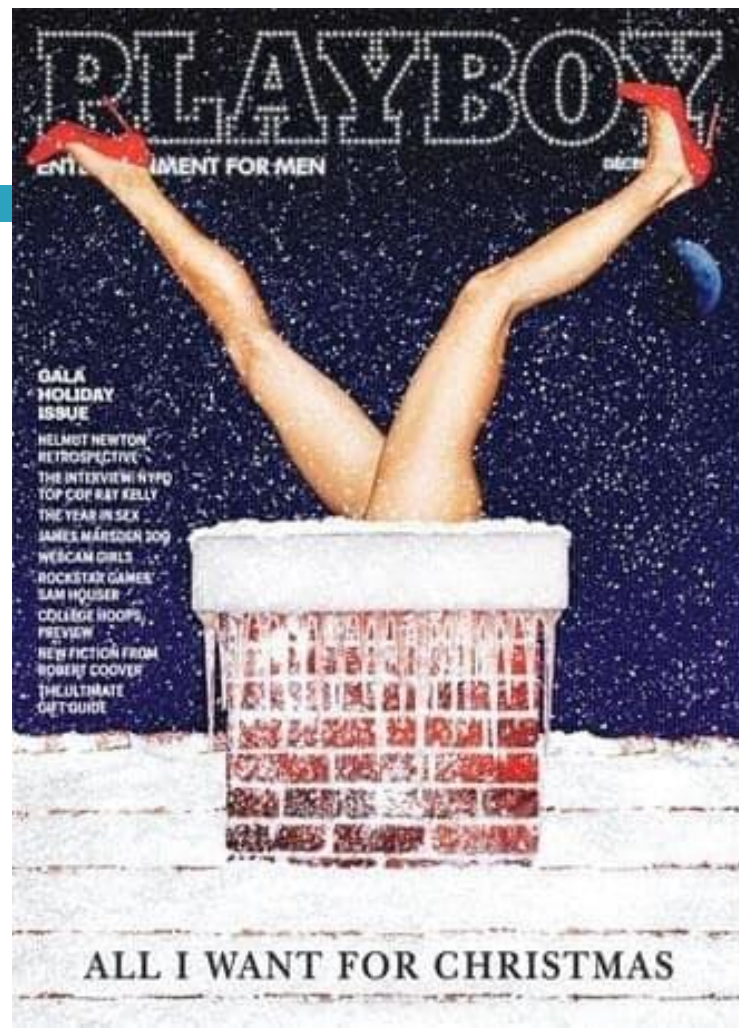
NEW LYNX DRY
FULL CONTROL
48HR ANTIPERSPIRANT

[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

Objectification and sexualisation

Content warning!

This section contains sensitive and challenging material. Please take a break if you need to.



Objectification

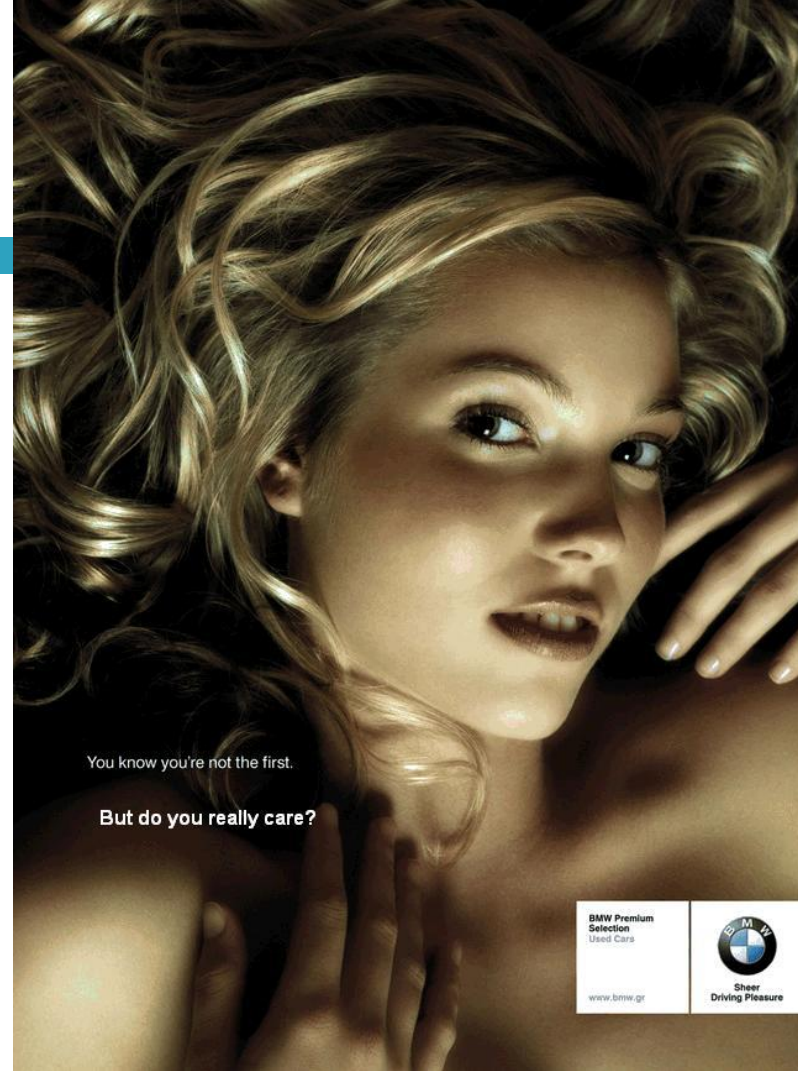
49

When a person is viewed and-or treated as an *object*, rather than a *subject*.

Objectification dehumanises the person in question and ignores or subjugates her agency.

Sexual objectification is considered to be a major component of the way in which a patriarchal society oppresses women.

Amongst other things, it involves treating women as property, ignoring women's subjectivity, silencing, and viewing them as instrumental to the desires of men.



You know you're not the first.

But do you really care?

BMW Premium
Selection
Used Cars

www.bmw.gr



Sheer
Driving Pleasure



Objectification

50

Instrumentality. The objectifier treats the object as a tool of his or her purposes.

Denial of autonomy. The objectifier treats the object as lacking in autonomy and self-determination.

Inertness. The objectifier treats the object as lacking in agency, and perhaps also in activity.

Fungibility. The objectifier treats the object as interchangeable (a) with other objects of the same type and/or (b) with objects of other types.

Violability. The objectifier treats the object as lacking in boundary integrity, as something that it is permissible to break up, smash, break into.

Ownership. The objectifier treats the object as something that is owned by another, can be bought or sold, etc.

Denial of subjectivity. The objectifier treats the object as something whose experience and feelings (if any) need not be taken into account



Like · Comment · Share · 80 · 55 · Storify · about an hour ago ·



Matti Parker Right cause two holes are better then one..

October 5 at 11:25am · Like · 2



Luke Osgood right, cause it doesn't have the ability to have it's own fucking opinion

October 5 at 11:25am · Like · 2



Chris McDirty But Matty u can make a hole in the left 1.

October 5 at 11:27am · Like



Jaymz Joob Tsoumbis Meh... Either end, theres shit comin out...

October 5 at 11:28am · Like · 2



Werner Hartweger right , you could train it to open BEERS with its feet!

October 5 at 11:54am · Like · 1



Andrew Clark left cause it can still make me a sandwich

October 5 at 11:58am · Like · 2



Paul Pettigrove Haha good one right i think

October 5 at 12:26pm · Like

Pornography

51

Pornography is one of the most extreme and obvious everyday examples of the sexual objectification of women. The consumption of pornographic material by men contributes heavily to the creation and maintenance of the view of women as sex objects.

Pornography can be defined as ‘the graphic sexually explicit subordination of women through pictures or words that also includes women **dehumanised** as sexual objects, things, or commodities; enjoying pain or humiliation or rape; being tied up, cut up, mutilated, bruised, or physically hurt; in postures of sexual **submission** or **servility** or **display**; **reduced to body parts**, penetrated by objects or animals, or presented in scenarios of **degradation**, injury, torture; shown as filthy or **inferior**; bleeding, bruised, or **hurt** in a context that makes these conditions **sexual**’ (MacKinnon 1987, 176).



Violence against women

52



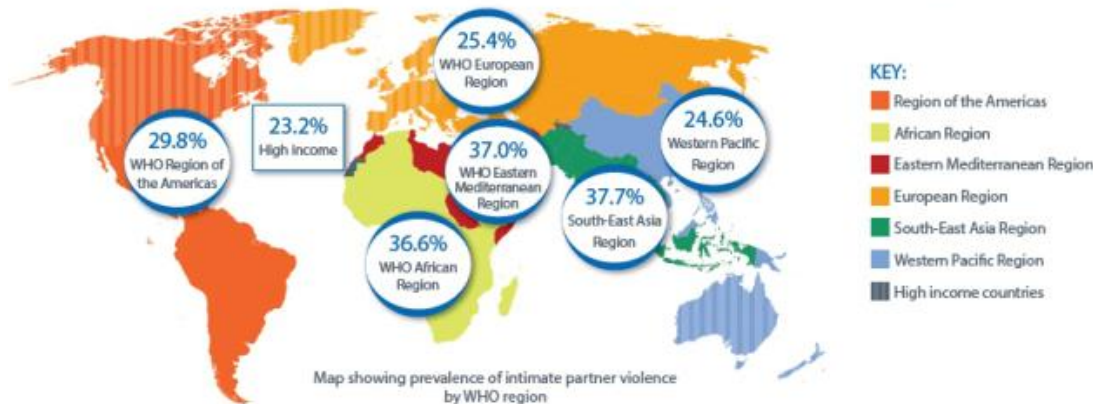
Approximately 85,000 women are raped on average in England and Wales every year

Over 400,000 women are sexually assaulted each year

1 in 5 women (aged 16 – 59) has experienced some form of sexual violence since the age of 16.

1 in 3 women

throughout the world will experience physical and/or sexual violence by a partner or sexual violence by a non-partner



According to a 2005 Amnesty survey, more than a quarter of those asked (26%) said they thought a woman was partially or totally responsible for being raped if she was wearing sexy/revealing clothing. More than one in five (22%) held the same view for women who have had many sexual partners.

N.B. Less than 2% of reported rapes are proven to be false. It is more common for a person to fake their own death than lie about rape.

Rape victims facing 'humiliating' questions about clothing and sexual history during trials, MP reveals

Women can be asked about previous partners, their underwear and even about owning sex toys

Loulla-Mae Eleftheriou-Smith | Wednesday 8 February 2017 18:10 GMT



Click to follow
The Independent Online



Campaigners called the cross-examination process 'brutal' Getty Images



READ MORE

Alleged rape victims 'being quizzed about sexual history' in court

People's sexual history can be used as evidence under section 41 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999. The **retrial of Ched Evans** brought fresh attention to this practice when he was acquitted of raping a 19-year-old woman, after a judge controversially allowed evidence from two men who had had sex with her around the time of the allegation to be heard.

Campaigners believe this high profile case will

Back in 2006, a rapist in Manitoba, Canada, was given no jail time because, according to the judge, the 26-year-old woman, who was forced into intercourse in the woods along a highway, met the rapist under "inviting circumstances." He noted that she and her friend were wearing, "tube tops with no bra, high heels and plenty of makeup."

"They made their intentions publicly known that they wanted to party ... This is a different case than one where there is no perceived invitation," the judge, Robert Dewar, said. "This is a case of misunderstood signals and inconsiderate behavior."

"If I'm walking around in my underwear and I'm drunk? Who else's fault can it be? [...] You know, if you don't want to entice a rapist, don't wear high heels so you can't run from him. If you're wearing something that says, 'Come and fuck me,' you'd better be good on your feet." Chrissie Hynde, 2015.

After 118 women were killed in acts of domestic violence in Italy that year, along with a wave of sexual violence throughout the country: "They provoke the worst instincts, which end in violence or sexual abuse [...] They should search their consciences and ask: Did we bring this on ourselves?" Piero Corsi, a Catholic priest in Italy in 2012.

Source: <https://mic.com/articles/141781/here-are-9-times-clothing-was-blamed-for-sexual-assault-rather-than-the-obvious#.LOx4eqEoQ>

Policing bodies

54

Across cultures, women's bodies are subject to **expensive, uncomfortable, time-consuming, and often dangerous** modifications, such as:

- FGM and female cosmetic genital surgery
- Hymen reconstruction
- Various forms of cosmetic surgery
- Starvation and/or malnourishment
- Hair removal
- Skin whitening/tanning
- Assorted cosmetic treatments

Historically:
Foot-binding
Corsets





Feminism in the real world

Gender in a globalised world

56



Feminization of labour

57



Trade expansion: living-wage Global North jobs relocated to Global South. New industrial working class of poor women in export processing zones (EPZs), generally in Asia.

Racism and sexism: Asian governments entice foreign corporate investors with the prospect of docile, industrious, desperate women, satisfied with tedious, unrewarding work. The same is true in new sectors of the immigrant populations of the Global North.

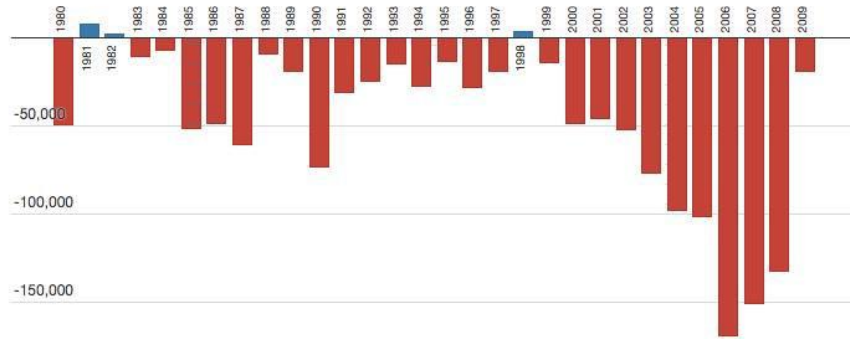
Full-time work seen as supplementary; women assumed to be supplementing salaries of breadwinner partners. Fewminised work is low security, poorly-paid, with zero-hour contracts. Sexual harrassment is rife due to desperate poverty and lack of unionisation.

Economic restructuring

58

Narrow Net Resource Transfers to Africa, 1980-2009

millions of USD



Created with [Datawrapper](#)

Source: [Global Financial Integrity](#). [Get the data](#)

Structural adjustment to service debt includes lowering wages, increasing the price of daily necessities, and decimating public services. Women bear the brunt of these changes, since they have primary care-taking responsibilities. Daughters are very often withdrawn from education in order to help their mothers make up the shortfall, trapping a new generation of girls into a cycle of poverty.

“A 2013 GFI report found that even after you account for all types of financial flows (both legitimate and illegitimate)—including investment, remittances, debt forgiveness, and natural resource exports—Africa is a net creditor to the world” Global Financial Integrity.

Sexualisation

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The rise and rise of pornography has accelerated and globalised the sexualisation of women. Sex trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation is now the fastest growing criminal enterprise in the world (98% of those trafficked are women and girls). For some countries in Asia and the Caribbean, local economies are critically dependent on sex work as their primary source of income. The disintegration of rural communities and migration to cities, coupled with poverty, have exacerbated the desperation that forces women into sex work and its associated vulnerabilities.

Environmental degradation

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Globalising oppression: domestic work and the global care chain

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A wealthy global north woman who has a well paid job does no domestic work, but ...
... pays a Global South migrant domestic worker a low salary
... who pays another Global South *non*-migrant worker a tiny salary ...
... who brings the tiny salary home to share with a daughter/mother who does *unpaid* domestic work.

(How to break the cycle? Instead of talking about women as the world's untapped economic resource, how about men as the world's untapped care resource?)

The global market in female bodies

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Globalisation, coupled with the cross-cultural objectification of the female body, has resulted in *commodification* of female bodies across a growing global market.

What kind of future should we expect?

Global South bodies are purchased by Global North consumers for:

- Surrogacy
- Sex work
- Domestic work
- Carework



Feminism for a struggling world

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Spice-girls feminism:

You can have it all!

Intersectional feminism:

The radical notion that you *can't* have it all!

Our struggle is *not* individual, it is both local and global.
Making gains at the expense of other women or at the expense of poor or racialised communities is *not* feminism.

Being an ally, extending solidarity, offering your privilege as a resource for others' self-determined needs *is* feminism.

Real feminism is a moral commitment to a fight for justice. It begins with the most oppressed, and **no-one is left behind.**

