



September 2015
Volume III Issue I

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Being the Elephant in the Room

By Monica Silny

It is time to address the elephant in the room, and unfortunately, it's me. Allow me to explain: I have Muscular Dystrophy and use an electric wheelchair full-time, and with that, it's obvious to say I am an individual who is disabled. However, don't take my opening remark out of context; I am not the issue that needs to be addressed. You see, society as a whole, including our near and dear Pitt, has an internalized mindlessness about individuals who are disabled and their needs.

For example, in nearly every lecture hall or classroom I enter, there is nary an accommodating desk I can use. Now, I'm sure I could put up a fuss and ask for proper desks in every room (and I assure you, I'll get to it after these thousands of calculus problems stop taking up all of my time), but the main problem is that they aren't there in the first place. Usually, I am left in an awkward corner of the room with an awkwardly turned-around makeshift desk or using my lap as a table. People stare, and I have become the elephant in the room.

While the University of Pittsburgh prides itself on its diversity on campus, students who are disabled are an extremely excluded minority. With the number of disabled people there are in the world, you would find this surprising. According to WorldBank.com, about one billion individuals in the world have some kind of disability, and one fifth of those individuals have severe disabilities that cause mobility issues. If there are so many of us, there should be more standard classrooms and dormitories that accommodate our needs. Unfortunately, it goes much deeper than the excuse that not many persons who are disabled are applying to Pitt.

According to the National Center for Education, out of all the students attending a public 4-year institution for post-secondary education in the United States, 11 percent of those students are registered as disabled. The majority of these disabilities are invisible disabilities such as psychological illnesses, learning and cognitive disabilities, and ADD/ADHD-related conditions. Of the 11 percent of disabled students enrolled in a public 4-year institution, 10 percent have conditions that render their mobility in some way. To many people, this news would be shocking, but if you live with a severe disability then you know why it is this way.

Throughout history prior to the mid-1970s to 1980s, individuals with disabilities were shut out of society and usually hidden from the public eye. Families would send their disabled children away to be institutionalized for the rest of their lives. Those who decided to take care of their disabled children often kept them in the house. It was rare to go out with friends or go to school, let

"We are tired of being expected to stay quiet and stay at home and strive for nothing but being 'such an inspiration.'"

alone a college. After all, it wasn't until the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 that workplaces and universities were required to provide reasonable accommodations to employees and students with disabilities and imposed accessibility requirements in public spaces.

While our times have changed, it is unfortunate that the mindsets of individuals with disabilities have not. Even people with disabilities who are raised in supportive environments have doubts about their capabilities to attend school or join the workforce because of the lack of understanding, mindfulness, and accommodations among able-bodied people. There is often no push for persons with a disability to strive for any other goal other than "being healthy." Plus, with so many public spaces that remain inaccessible, the only safe place a person with a disability may know is home, so they stay there.

People who are disabled are tired. We are tired of being expected to stay quiet and stay at home and strive for nothing but being "such an inspiration." We have lives that we want to live, and the smallest obstacles make that hard. There needs to be a push. Mainstream feminism has often perpetuated ableism, but now we have a new wave, a fourth wave, a movement of intersectionality that includes disabled individuals. If feminists can call out misogyny and sexism, then they can call out inaccessibility and ignorance on ableism issues.

It's on able-bodied people, too. If you are waiting by the elevator and a person who is disabled arrives, let them in first. Worried about there being no room for you? Wow, it sure is lucky you can use the stairs. Instead of using the accessible single person restrooms located on campus, take the extra 10 steps and go into the typical restroom, because frankly, individuals with disabilities (along with non-binary and transgendered persons) don't have time for you to be taking up spaces made for them. If the wheelchair lift on the 10A is broken and it takes a person with a disability 15 minutes to get on the bus, don't whisper cruel things under your breath towards them; instead be mad that none of the stupid lifts work on ANY of the 10As. And for gosh sake, if there is a person with a disability awkwardly sitting in an awkward part of the classroom, don't stare; after all, I have no desk. ♦

The Fourth Wave

We are a monthly feminist publication produced by college students. Our goal is to break gender stereotypes, to write thoughtful and informative articles, and to empower the oppressed through sharing a collection of diverse perspectives. We are answering to a need for a premiere feminist publication on college campuses.

Letter from the Editor

What makes a good feminist? Until recently, I had no idea. All I knew is that I certainly didn't think I was a good enough feminist to be involved in the creation of this wonderful zine. As much as I wanted to join, something in me told me to stay away. *Don't go to that meeting*, my brain shouted. *You don't know enough to hold a conversation with these real feminists; you'll look like a fool*. And at first, I listened.

As I was scrolling through Twitter, I saw a tweet begging followers for a layout editor. I had no idea what that entailed; I had no prior experience with document editing software, let alone the knowledge that these things existed. I was about to continue scrolling when I looked above the plea to see who tweeted this. I realized that it was *The Fourth Wave*, the same group that I had told myself not to go to because they didn't need someone like me, someone who isn't educated enough on issues like these. They needed someone. *I could be that someone*.

I went to meeting and happily became that someone for a group of people I aspire to become. It was there, sitting in that meeting, that I came to understand something important: I just want to learn, and that's what makes me a good feminist. I don't know every oppressive situation; I don't know about every fight in the feminist movement; hell, I just learned what "flogging" is a few days ago. But none of that matters. What matters is that no matter how little I currently know, I am striving to learn more. And that mindset is what makes feminism even better.

So, dear reader, I hope you read this zine with a thirst for knowledge and betterment. Because so long as you are trying and learning, you are quite the badass feminist. ♦

Feminist Vocab of the Month

ableism (n): the institutional, social, and cultural system of discrimination towards differently-abled people, neuroatypical people, and people with disabilities

Example: Complaining that blind people have special perks at amusement parks. Buses that have little to no accommodation for people in wheelchairs. Telling people with depression to just "get over it" or develop a "better attitude."

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Share with us your questions and comments.

Tweet us at @the_fourthwave or email us at thefourthwavepitt@gmail.com.

Special thanks to Dr. Bishop for supporting our endeavors.

Favorite Feminist Icons!

For this issue, we decided to take it back to basics and talk about our favorite feminist icons. This ranged from serious to silly, as even cartoon characters helped us develop who we are as feminists! Who is your favorite? We want to hear! Tweet us your answers @the_fourthwave

"Beyoncé because she's the baddest of bitches."

- Olivia Marconi, sophomore

"I really love Matt McGorry because he's teaching men how to be feminists in a funny and charming way. It's so refreshing to see a celebrity, let alone a man, preaching intersectional feminism"

- Zoë Hannah, junior

"Paris Geller (from Gilmore Girls) gets shit done. The most hated, 'annoying' women characters are consistently my favorites. I wonder why."

- Maddie O'Connell, junior

"Assata Shakur – she did a lot for women's and African-American rights, and deserves recognition even though she's been exiled."

- Isha Madar, sophomore

"Sor Juana de la Cruz ... If a nun from post-colonial Mexico can stand up for her right to education and sexual freedom, I think we can too (and much more.)"

- Ana Koerner, junior

"It's a strong tie between my awesome roommate and Ursula from *The Little Mermaid*. They are both ambitious, confident, and will most likely rule the world (or deep sea) someday."

- Emily Perdue, junior

"Michael Goodhart, my Politics of Human Rights professor. He knows basically everything about everything *and* is a feminist."

- Zoe Kovacs, sophomore

"Malala Yousafzai is quite literally my girl. Someone so young going through so much and never quieting down. She stands for peace and education for all. What could be cooler?"

- Monica Silny, first-year

The Journey of Activism: A Request from One Feminist to Her Peers and Colleagues

By Zoë Hannah

The Fourth Wave, the bad-ass feminist publication you're reading right now, had its first birthday in March 2015, a moment that reminded club members new and old of the immense growth we've been through in such a short time. Our presence on campus expanded exponentially, and we even hosted our first on-campus event (thanks again, Zerlina).

Most importantly, we changed our name. Formerly *Slutciety*, the publication realized the exclusionary nature of our first name: among other issues, the word "slut" is only reclaimable by women, particularly white, cisgender, heterosexual women. The name change was a significant moment of maturity for the club and for my fellow board members and I – after numerous late night brainstorms, we officially quit the white feminism camp and changed our name to *The Fourth Wave*, which is indicative of our own wave of feminism that we do not have to reclaim because it hasn't been created yet (we're in it – right now, you're living in it!). This monumental shift was personal for myself and other longstanding members of our publication; this was one of the first moments where I realized that my feminism, along with anyone and everyone's feminism, is always changing.

Jump to September 2015. After a summer apart, each of us having spent two months working at summer camp and, thus, being ridiculously tired, my roommate and I sat down for our first meal of our junior years. Expecting to catch up like usual with camp stories, drunk stories, living-at-home-is-fucking-awful stories, I mentioned what a significant summer this was for feminism. Yet my best friend, roommate, supporter of my superfluous Tostitos Hint of Lime consumption habits, said, "I'm so done with feminism."

"[...]my feminism, along with anyone and everyone's feminism, is always changing."

Naturally, I shoved more chips into my mouth so that I could shut myself up long enough to hear her out despite my obvious shock. This, coming from the woman who worships Janis Joplin, Frida Kahlo, and Gloria Steinem. She explained to me her frustration with feminists who take things "too far," to the point that they are actually being regressive – those who censor themselves so much in an effort to create a safe space that they take the enjoyment, uniqueness, and creativity out of almost everything.

Broadly, a new feminist publication that's a subsidiary of *Vice*, published an article chronicling the over-the-top censorship that is bred in a British feminist Facebook group, "Cuntry Living." The Facebook group is known for encouraging its members to avoid ableism, misogyny, racism, and appropriation at all costs, something that sounds pretty good in writing. However, the group has gotten totally out of hand; *Broadly* writer Emalie Marthe highlighted one member of the group's question of whether or not wearing glasses without a prescription is ableist. Obviously, that's fucking ridiculous – but it reminded me of my roommate's exasperation with such censorship, and I found myself getting on board with her train of thought.

This summer, feminism skyrocketed in the mainstream eye: Caitlyn Jenner made almost everyone want to support trans rights, people realized that Hillary Clinton isn't a good presidential candidate just because she's a woman. This is all very important stuff, and, of course, I'm glad it happened – but something else happened, too, and that's what we can attribute this obsession with censorship to. White feminism, a term that encompasses all femi-



Zerlina Maxwell, pictured above, visited the University of Pittsburgh in November of last year to give a Keynote about sexual assault on college campuses, race issues in America, rape culture, and career advancement. (Photo from Girls Can.)

nism that is primarily advantageous to white, cisgender, heterosexual, often American women, has been on the rise for somewhere around two years, and this isn't a bad thing: white feminist thought is still feminist thought; it's still working towards dismantling the patriarchy.

But, in practice, it's detrimental because it draws attention away from the issues of non-white, non-cisgender, non-heterosexual people. This is the type of immature feminism that I was talking about earlier – the *Slutciety* days of our publication. What is so interesting is that these feminists, the ones who want to focus only on the problems of white women, are the ones policing other feminists about whether or not they should be wearing fake glasses.

According to the *Broadly* article mentioned earlier, "Cuntry Living" is made up of primarily middle class white women who went to or still go to Oxford University. Upon reading this, my principal reaction was something like, "Are you fucking kidding me?" It isn't as if this Facebook group is small with about 10 thousand members – but it's also indicative of a bigger problem, which is that white feminists love policing other feminists. I try to stray from statements like, "You're giving other feminists a bad rap," but these feminists are giving other feminists a bad rap.

This is the part where I'm supposed to rant on about how white feminism isn't true feminism, and you should all go take a women's studies course and be on your merry way. But that is not what I'm going to do! I'm going to say this: we, as a club on Pitt's campus, as a generation, as a society of humans, are always learning. There is no Higher Power of Feminism who can tell us, "Hey, you're doing this wrong, you should do it this way instead." What does that mean? That white feminism is okay and we should just keep letting white girls police each other into wearing gray sweat suits at all times to avoid offending anyone? No! That means that we should always be questioning each other, people of authority on any subject that isn't, like, math, and (drum roll, please) ourselves!

Yes, that's right: you from the past can be wrong. I know, it's weird for a college student to admit that. But this is so important for feminism right now because of this huge, crushing, blinding wave of mainstream feminism. This is a request for feminists: please do not lose every shred of personality that you have for the cause. That isn't progressive. The whole point is that we can be whoever we want, right? Policing is regressive, plus it's annoying to everyone around you. Make your choices based on what you believe in, not based on what you want everyone else to believe in. Ask questions if you don't know something. I can promise you that your positivity will rub off on others, and who wouldn't want that? Feminism is an entire movement dedicated to positivity and equality – please keep it that way. ♦

“Dear Holly,”

By Amanda Chan

I don't inspire a lot of people. And I'm not particularly fond of wasting my time on “converting” people to feminism, despite my outward and public embracement of the label. But my naive and rebellious feminist-ish attitude and my dress-code defiant short shorts of my high school days kindled a feminist-ish inclination into one of my friends, though now she is a former friend. Let's call her Holly.

Scroll through Holly's Twitter feed, and you'll find quirky quotes from *Mean Girls*, call-outs of rape apologists, sharp pokes at the behavior of boys, and other typical Tumblr-originated feminist rhetoric. A second look, however, reveals Holly's more questionable viewpoints, such as retweeting one guy who put Caitlyn Jenner's name in quotation marks and lamented how undeserving she is of a well-known award for athletes. There's also appropriation of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and scattered body-shaming.

Most recently, Holly posted a Snapchat story of her friend doing an impression of a Chinese person. Complete with the obnoxious and shameless chanting of “ching chong ching chang” and the “ni hao ni hao,” this post deeply hurt me, because Holly either didn't consider that I might take offense to a caricature of my heritage or she simply didn't care.

[...]her version of feminism only respectfully addresses the issues of white, middle-class, able-bodied, thin, cisgender women.”

Although I only use Holly as an example because her actions scarred me more than the casual racism I face from strangers, she is emblematic of a larger ailment within the feminist movement—she's a white feminist. More specifically, her version of feminism only respectfully addresses the issues of white, middle-class, able-bodied, thin, cisgender women, and for those who don't meet every single one of these criteria, Holly is not really looking out for your rights, no matter how much she loves the movie *Mean Girls*. In other words, there's a disconcerting amount of racism, transphobia, fatphobia and more within feminism.

But Holly still calls herself a “feminist,” and it's people like Holly who make the feminism train crowded and unaccommodating, either refusing marginalized groups entry or sending them to the room next to the toilet. And Holly isn't alone; in fact, mainstream feminism in the United States, as well as most of the Western world, was founded on the uplifting of white, able-bodied, cisgender white women and nobody else.

The suffragettes, for example, were shameless racists. Susan B. Anthony stated that white women had it worse than black men, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton argued that allowing black men suffrage would be allotting them too much power within society. In the second wave of feminism, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* became iconic of the women's movement in suburban America, and some still laud it as so today. Unfortunately, Friedan's vision of feminism – pushing white women into the workforce – snubbed the experiences of the many lower class women and women of color who were already in the workforce and dreamed of becoming a housewife. Furthermore, Friedan ignored the consequences of white women joining the professions of white men, namely that household work would be done by hired women of color, as noted by bell hooks in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*.

And this disease of white-centricity continues today. Emma Watson, current representative of global feminism for UN Women and token-feminist-media-darling, is ignorant to the larger picture of intersectional feminism, where agency and lived realities are

galaxies away from the cushy movie set of *Harry Potter*. Token-feminist-media-darling-number-two, Taylor Swift, rides upon the trendiness of male-catered feminism, effectively erasing all the works and efforts of nonwhite and otherwise marginalized feminists in history. As white, cis, able-bodied women continue to climb the ladder of power provided by the “women's movement,” they leave their nonwhite, differently-abled, non-cisgender counterparts behind. And when they're called out on it, it becomes a game of “solidarity.”

Fortunately, for the sake of the feminist movement and for the empowerment of all women, feminists of different genders, colors, races, religions, and abilities have been producing groundbreaking work for a long time. Kimberle Crenshaw, a black woman law professor at UCLA, coined the term “intersectionality” in regards to feminism. This concept is based on the works of early black feminist groups such as the Combahee River Collective, a group for black women in the late 1970s. Feminist thinker Uma Narayan theorized the “death by culture” narrative, which allows feminists of color to dissect the Western discourse of foreign cultures and to enhance the understanding of how the West continues white supremacy through discourse. Unfortunately, many of these works are buried in a conversation dominated by white feminists who acquire platform and power through privilege. Even if well-intentioned, the interests of the elite are the ones catered to.

And as feminism becomes a bigger and bigger talking point, the word “feminism” becomes more and more difficult to separate from the regrettable and mediocre images of Emma Watson's ignorance, Taylor Swift's parody of black women in hip hop, Susan B. Anthony's racism, feminists refusing to accept trans women as “real women,” bloggers who steal the online work of feminists of color, Miley Cyrus's twerking appropriation and the white feminist in your sociology class who doesn't want to “make it about race.”

This pattern of white supremacy and elitism in mainstream feminism is poisonous and alienating to many, which is why many people with intersectional, marginalized identities are apprehensive to brand themselves “feminist.” And why would they, if doing so would only summon images of racial appropriation and transphobia instead of actual empowerment? Thus, the feminist movement must first contort itself into better including the most marginalized of society. These improvements must be reached first, before any feminist could ever honestly recruit others to be “feminists.” Convincing others to embrace themselves as “feminists” should be last on the agenda when there's much racism, ableism, transphobia, queerphobia and more to work on in the movement itself. ♦



Though Stanton and Anthony were forerunners for women's suffrage, their form of feminism was extremely problematic to say the least. (Photo from Wikipedia.)

Words of a Survivor

By Anonymous

“Oops, I guess I just raped Emma Sulkowicz.” This was the actual title of an article in *The Federalist* regarding the highly publicized Columbia rape case. The article is, naturally, dripping with sarcasm and heavy-handed mockery. Those who misunderstand Sulkowicz’s intentions should refrain from watching her newest performance art piece, she says, so to not “participate in her rape”. This does not translate to “you are literally raping me if you make fun of this video”; rather, it suggests “Please don’t contribute to prejudice against survivors by mocking this very personal art.” *The Federalist* was eager to misunderstand, and went on to tear apart the video, justifying callousness regarding Sulkowicz’s trauma as “the right to critique art” and insinuating she is only seeking attention.

I expect articles like this. I know a lot of people think that Sulkowicz decided to carry around her mattress for months and endure an extensive smear campaign for fun. I’ve heard from a friend who attends Columbia that there were whispers, even from people who outwardly displayed support: “How do we know she’s not lying? She’s such a weird girl.” None of this shocks me. What did shock me, and I suppose this is a testament to how naive I truly was, was hearing these thoughts echoed by self-identified feminists.

My gender studies classroom often talked about sexual assault like there couldn’t possibly be a survivor in the room. Hillary Clinton’s blatant defense of a convicted rapist was easily dismissed and forgiven in a discussion. I’ve heard LGBT advocates say “if you’re sex-repulsed, just don’t attend pride”, in response to a transgender survivor saying people walking around in BDSM gear were triggering and inappropriate. The feminist blog *Jezebel* reported on Sulkowicz’s video in a tone surprisingly similar to *The Federalist*, referring to it as a “disturbing sex tape”, and some of the comments were even more careless: “still a better love story than twilight” received over 600 favorites.

“[...] sexual abuse is not uncommon, and the interests of survivors must be incorporated further into mainstream feminist spaces.”

Even my old friend group was eager to defend someone among us as they made heinous comments about rape. That same person was later accused of rape, and the accusation was bolstered by documented proof. They are still defended to this day. This friend group was not politically ignorant or oblivious. They are active in legal advocacy for women’s rights and self-proclaimed, long time feminists.

Here is the thing about rape – the trauma doesn’t end at the instance (or instances) of assault. I processed being raped on my own. I did not feel comfortable admitting what happened to myself, let alone confiding in anyone else. I was not medicated for my PTSD until even later. I was not comfortable seeking help even within feminist spaces, where there was doubt, condescension, judgement and blame at every turn. The reality is that the presence of survivors unsettles people – they know rape exists in theory, but they don’t want to confront a walking, talking reminder.

Many feminists are comfortable talking about rape as a far-off, frightening possibility, but are unwilling to be vigilant about ousting abusers from their spaces. I once told a woman who was very active in civil rights activism that a feminist we mutually knew was a sexual predator. She immediately berated me for buying into “gossip” and implied the accuser was simply spreading rumors. Multiple skype conversations proving this person’s



Although Sulkowicz and her mattress project, pictured above, bravely brought attention to the larger epidemic of sexual assault and rape culture on college campuses, some have criticized the project as ableist, because not everyone has the physical ability to help her carry around the mattress, thereby erasing the widespread problem of sexual assault in the community of those with physical disabilities. (Photo by democratandchronicle.com)

predatory behavior were released not too long after. The woman in question never took back her words, and continues to defend people accused of rape even now.

I don’t like talking about trauma. I’m much more comfortable talking about the various evils in the world from a detached, third person perspective. So why do I still feel the need to talk about this, and why can’t I move on? To be blunt, the world around me doesn’t allow me to. Genuine safe spaces for survivors are rare. I’m actually one of the lucky ones – I have the opportunity to recover. But I know people whose lives were so thoroughly consumed by sexual violence that they will be on medication and endure PTSD for as long they live. I’m not bringing this up only to inspire pity or to say “at least I’m not them”. I only mean to convey that sexual abuse is not uncommon, and the interests of survivors must be incorporated further into mainstream feminist spaces. We live, work, and participate in activism among you, and we are more than just cautionary tales. ♦

If you or a friend have experienced sexual assault at Pitt

- **University Counseling Center (UCC)**
Wellness Center, Nordenberg Hall
(412) 648-7930 for Mondays through Fridays
between 9:00a.m. and 5:00p.m.
(412)648-7856 for after hours and the weekends
- **Sexual Assault Services:** 412-648-7930
- **Student Health Service:** 412-383-1800
- **National Suicide Prevention Hotline**
1 (800) 273-8255
24 hours a day and 7 days a week
Languages: English and Spanish
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
You are not alone.

Secretary Over Shades: Informed Adventure as an Alternative to Ignorance

By Kathleen Mullavey

People are complicated. No one person is going to be identical to any other in the exact same way. Love, sex, sexuality and relationships are very much a part of the confusion brought on by the human condition. So, when I tell you that E.L. James' *Fifty Shades of Grey* has managed to take all of that complexity and boil it down to a 514 page fuck-fest, you may begin to understand my fury I feel towards her writing and the effect it has had on readers. As a film school graduate with a screenwriting concentration, I've developed a ridiculous level of passion and decent understanding for the craft, which means I've seen the *Fifty Shades* concept done before, and I've seen it done better.

In contrast, *Secretary* was a 2002 film by Steven Shainberg starring Maggie Gyllenhaal and James Spader. It's common knowledge that the skeleton of *Shades* was taken from *Twilight*, but I suspect the flesh is from *Secretary*. Gyllenhaal plays as the female lead, Lee Holloway, a realistic interpretation of an awkward young lady who has barely begun to discover who she is as an adult. Conveniently, Spader's character's name is E. Edward Grey. Lee is so much more than Anastasia could manage. She does awkward things, stupid things, things that make you want to shake her. *Things we've all done*.



Lee, the protagonist in *Secretary*, explores her sexual desires and interests through her own prerogative, unlike Ana, who is manipulated into an unhealthy relationship with Christian. (Photo from IndieWire.com.)

And then we see her change, take her own life into her hands. Her own sexuality. When Edward calls things off with her, she steamrolls ahead. She reads about BDSM, looks online for others in the community – hell, she even tries spanking herself with a hairbrush. You know, actually making an effort. Learning and discovering what she wants and then having the guts to ask for it, like blatantly going to Grey and saying “I want to do this. I want you to do this with me.” *Things we all want to do*. To actually say what it is we want or need from our partner rather than playing some ludicrous game, like they're supposed to “know” what you want. If you need numerical reference: I give it 4 out of 5 floggings. The key elements of this film that I think make it so much more impactful than *Shades* are the relationship and a go-getter mentality about getting your ass paddled.

Please open your books to page 175: “Holy fuck. I can't bring myself to consider the food list,” a list of foods she was/was not allowed to eat. “I shudder at the thought of being flogged or whipped.” Those are Anastasia's thoughts after reading Christian's “terms and conditions” to their Dominant/Submissive agreement, which, by the way, read like a sound system instruction manual. Reading about someone wanting to shove giant rubber ding-dongs

“Look for answers somewhere other than the contemptuous cesspool of idiocy that is mainstream pornography.”

into someone else in such dry, legal terms really takes the magic out of it.

And here is where I'll make my first point: Ana is not kinky. The most important aspect of this book doesn't even exist. If this were meant to be empowering, Ana should have strangled that “Inner Goddess” she spoke of fifty-eight times and embraced her Inner Sub, which she never did. We never see Anastasia take initiative like Lee Holloway did, and she doesn't go looking for answers and information about herself and her interests.

Anastasia's interests were really just Christian's interests, which he forced on her by stalking her. On page 56, Grey and Ana barely know each other, but right after, he sends her books that cost a little over \$6,000. He and Ana barely know each other, so he tracks her cellphone, and he even calls her while she's at a bar with friends to say he's coming for her. Commence Ana shitting herself. He shows up, threatens her friend, has his younger brother distract her drunk friend while he smuggles her out. All because he really wants to top her and won't take no for an answer. This is essentially the beginnings of a Lifetime movie about a date rape. This shit is peddled to us as *erotica*. But, it's okay right? When men do that it just means they really like us, right? “They just want to take us to higher level of sexual awakening,” said no woman with a restraining order ever.

There's a 2015 article by the Hollywood Reporter that says women's searches for porn have increased since the film. Amazing. However, a professor cited in the article put out a word of warning: “While [films like *Fifty Shades of Grey*] open up opportunities and provide women with unprecedented access to new genres or ways of thinking about their sexuality, at the same time, many of the scripts that are reproduced are really patriarchal scripts around women's sexuality.” Even if it was written by a woman, she is perpetuating a destructive way of thinking. If for whatever reason you disagree, then riddle me this, Batman: if Christian Grey were 55- years-old, balding, and nearly the same height as Anastasia, would this story have had the same effect? No, absolutely not. Not only are women affected by being told an obsessive and domineering (and not in the sexy way) man is ideal, but men are affected by the asinine double standard of being some sort of dickhead gladiator.

I'm barely scratching the surface on all the issues with just that. In order for us to be sexually empowered, people need to be *educated* about sex. Simple as that. Not only should we be free to act, but to think. For us to be empowered, we need to be brave enough to ask questions, like Lee Holloway did. Look for answers somewhere other than the contemptuous cesspool of idiocy that is mainstream pornography. An article released this month from NPR cited that sex education programs that address relationship dynamics such as gender and power were five times more effective than the basic condom on a banana method. “What problem is that solving other than teen pregnancy?” you might think. It reduces sexual abuse for starters. It's teaching young men and women how to develop healthy relationships with their sexual selves as well as each other.

What did *Fifty Shades* bring to the table? Well, a study done by the Consumer Product Safety Commission found that following the release of *Shades*, emergency room visits resulted by injuries brought on by sex toys has doubled. Thank you E.L. James for spreading the ignorance surrounding BDSM. Please, for god's sake, put the rabbit down, turn off Pornhub, and go be a Lee today. Please. 🙏

Miss Un-America

By Olivia Marconi

After a serious TV binge Sunday, I experienced my first, and likely last, Miss America pageant. I know what you're thinking: a feminist magazine writing about a beauty pageant... You're expecting me to rant about how Miss America is exploitative and pits mostly white women against each other and how the women can only continue to the second round if they look hot enough in a bikini. This is all true, but isn't my gripe with Miss America 2016.

I was ecstatic when it was time for the talent and question rounds. This was the time when the contestants had a chance to show off something other than their boobs and booties. Miss Florida had some sweet dance moves, Miss Tennessee crushed the piano, and Miss Georgia had some incredible pipes, but what really had me excited was the question round. I quickly noticed that my preconceived opinions were results of mainstream movies and too much YouTube. I was prepared to hear every woman answer their question by confidently nodding their head and crying, "World peace!" Maybe I've seen the video of Miss Teen South Carolina 2007 preaching, "Like such as Africa and the Iraq, everywhere like such as" too many times.

The Miss America 2016 judges were asking some awesome, thought-provoking questions – questions that I was hoping would bring attention to some serious issues viewers wouldn't have previously considered. The judges asked about gun control; Planned Parenthood funding; a Kentucky County clerk's refusal to license same-sex marriage; and the Black Lives Matter movement. Every contestant deserves a thumbs-up for giving an opinion, on the spot, in an impossible 20 seconds. I even felt myself get fired up with Miss Alabama when she firmly began to respond to a question regarding why Donald Trump is leading the Republican polls, claiming, "Donald Trump is an entertainer."

"Do Americans believe that whether or not Tom Brady gets to play football is of equal importance to issues of racism an sexism and homophobia?"

But it's time to mention the question that ruined my newly formed relationship with beauty pageants. Miss Georgia approached the microphone and prepared to answer her question. The judge read, "New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady was suspended for his part in the so-called Deflategate Scandal, then reinstated by the courts. Legalities aside, did Tom Brady cheat?" Miss Georgia responded with a confused, pensive look and asked the judge to repeat the question. I shared Miss Georgia's perplexed expression. If my general attitude towards beauty pageants isn't enough to prove that I'm not pageant material, understand that if I were on that stage, I would've impatiently responded, "Who the fuck cares?"

She managed to give a completely answerless, vague answer, "Did he cheat? Um... That's a really good question. I'm not sure. I think I'd have to be there to see the ball and um... feel it and see if it's deflated or not deflated, but if there's any question there, then yes, I think he cheated." How does this question match up to the others? Do Americans believe that whether or not Tom Brady gets to play football is of equal importance to issues of racism and sexism and homophobia? Apparently.

I was appalled when I came across an article that was posted on Twitter titled, "A Communist Whore From Georgia Just Won Miss America By Saying Tom Brady Definitely Cheated." The article was posted on an online publication *Barstool Sports*, a satirical site that has repeatedly received criticism for normalizing rape culture and promoting other misogynistic ideologies. The article opens with some beautiful prose: "What a fucking whore! What a fucking



Some media outlets have implied that Betty Cantrell won the title of Miss America this year precisely because she insinuated Tom Brady cheated in football during the Q&A section. (Photo from Hollywood on the Potomac.)

bitch! Who is this cunt! How the hell did she win?" The author continues, "Does this chick know we're talking about footballs and not testicles? Probably not you whore... Most un-American answer of all time... Get out of my country whore!" Although the website claims to be satirical, it is hard to find humor in the authors exceptionally misogynistic tone. Although I was fuming after reading this, I calmed myself down enough to recognize that the author is just a horrible person, but it didn't stop there. People were upset about Miss America's response all around me.

I turned on my TV Monday morning to two news anchors discussing how the new Miss America hates Tom Brady, and later, I found myself reading an article titled, "Miss America Takes Crown Thanks to Declaring That Tom Brady 'Definitely Cheated'". The article failed to mention that she had one of the most incredible singing voices in Miss America history. Is it such an impossible idea that she took the crown because she has immense talent?

This is the first time I've seen the world mention Miss America contestants without discussing their flawless physiques, but I wasn't hoping this was going to be the reason. What about the contestant who explained why we shouldn't defund Planned Parenthood or the contestant who insisted that homophobic clerk Kim Davis was in the wrong? Why isn't anyone talking about these contestants? America will always give their attention to the easy questions. 🌐

Upcoming Feminist Events...

Tuesday, September 29, 7:00 – 9:30 p.m.

Film screening and discussion with the director, *Salvation Army*, with Abdellah Taïa
Frick Fine Arts Auditorium

Wednesday, September 30, 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.

Discussion with Mr. Taïa of his novel *An Arab Melancholia*
402-E Cathedral of Learning
E-mail Professor Reeser (reeser@pitt.edu) to register

Wednesday, October 7, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

PACWC lecture honoring new women faculty,
Lisa Parker (Bioethics), "Gender, Genes, and Justice"
2501 Posvar Hall

Sunday, October 18, Noon – 5:00 p.m.

Feminist Zine Fair
Frick Fine Arts Cloisters

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Special Thank You to

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Ami designed our wonderful The Fourth Wave logo. She is a 19-year-old student at the University of Pittsburgh. She has held several positions for various publications, including currently being the design editor for The Original Magazine at the University of Pittsburgh.